

Ellen G. White Estate

TESTIMONY TREASURES

Vol. 2

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Testimony Treasures Volume 2

Ellen G. White

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Information about this Book

Overview

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About the Author

Ellen G. White (1827-1915) is considered the most widely translated American author, her works having been published in more than 160 languages. She wrote more than 100,000 pages on a wide variety of spiritual and practical topics. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she exalted Jesus and pointed to the Scriptures as the basis of one's faith.

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Foreword

The nineteen-year period spanned by the counsels of this volume was a time of expansion in the work of Seventh-day Adventists. In earlier decades the foundations of doctrine were laid, the work of the church organized, and beginnings made in such leading lines of church endeavor as the publishing, medical, and educational. The opportunities of foreign mission service were now beginning to open before us.

The instruction given through this critical period to guide and guard the church and edify its members speaks to our hearts today as we are faced with similar opportunities, problems, and responsibilities.

As in Book 1, the articles appear in their chronological order. The date of first publication and the source reference is given as a footnote at the opening of each chapter. While most of this material has been selected from *Testimonies for the Church*, volumes 4, 5, and 6, four chapters have been drawn from other E. G. White books and periodical articles.

That these counsels in the hands of Seventh-day Adventists the world around may lead to higher standards and more earnest service is the fervent wish of the publishers and

The Trustees of the Ellen G. White Publications. [6] [7] [8] [9] [10] [11]

The Day of the Lord at Hand

“The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord.” Zephaniah 1:14-17.

“And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil.” Verse 12.

“Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord’s anger come upon you. Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger.” Zephaniah 2:1-3.

We are near the close of time. I have been shown that the retributive judgments of God are already in the land. The Lord has given us warning of the events about to take place. Light is shining from His word; yet darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. “When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them; ... and they shall not escape.”

It is our duty to inquire the cause of this terrible darkness,^{*}

^{*}—1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:98-105.

that we may shun the course by which men have brought upon themselves so great delusion. God has given the world an opportunity to learn and to obey His will. He has given them, in His word, the light of truth; He has sent them warning, counsel, and admonition; but few will obey His voice. Like the Jewish nation, the majority, even of professed Christians, pride themselves on their superior advantages, but make no returns to God for these great blessings. In infinite mercy a last warning message has been sent to the world, announcing that Christ is at the door and calling attention to God's broken law. But as the antediluvians rejected with scorn the warning of Noah, so will the pleasure lovers of today reject the message of God's faithful servants. The world pursues its unvarying round, absorbed as ever in its business and its pleasures, while the wrath of God is about to be visited on the transgressors of His law.

Take Heed to Yourselves

Our compassionate Redeemer, foreseeing the perils that would surround His followers at this time, has given them special warning: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:34-36. If the church pursue a course similar to that of the world, they will share the same fate. Nay, rather, as they have received greater light, their punishment will be greater than that of the impenitent.

We as a people profess to have truth in advance of every other people upon the earth. Then our life and character should be in harmony with such a faith. The day is just upon us when the righteous shall be bound like precious grain in [13] bundles for the heavenly garner, while the wicked are, like the tares, gathered for the fires of the last great day. But the wheat and tares "grow together until the harvest."

In the discharge of life's duties the righteous will to the last be brought in contact with the ungodly. The children of light are scattered among the

children of darkness, that the contrast may be seen by all. Thus are the children of God to “show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” The divine love glowing in the heart, the Christlike harmony manifested in the life, will be as a glimpse of heaven granted to men of the world that they may see and appreciate its excellence.

Like will attract like. Those who are drinking from the same fountain of blessing will draw nearer together. Truth dwelling in the hearts of believers will lead to blessed and happy assimilation. Thus will be answered the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one even as He is one with the Father. For this oneness every truly converted heart will be striving.

With the ungodly there will be a deceptive harmony that but partially conceals a perpetual discord. In their opposition to the will and the truth of God they are united, while on every other point they are rent with hatred, emulation, jealousy, and deadly strife.

The pure and the base metal are now so mingled that only the discerning eye of the infinite God can with certainty distinguish between them. But the moral magnet of holiness and truth will attract together the pure metal, while it will repel the base and counterfeit.

A False Security

“The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly” (Zephaniah 1:14); but where do we behold the true advent spirit? Who are preparing to stand in that time of temptation which is just before us? The people to whom God [14] has entrusted the sacred, solemn, testing truths for this time are sleeping at their post. They say by their actions: We have the truth; we are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;” while the True Witness declares: Thou “knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Revelation 3:17.

With what fidelity do these words portray the present condition of the church: “*Knowest not* that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Messages of warning, dictated by the Holy Spirit, are borne by the servants of God, defects of character are presented before the

erring; but they say: “That does not represent my case. I do not accept the message you bring. I am doing the best I can. I believe the truth.”

That evil servant who said in his heart, “My Lord delayeth His coming” (Matthew 24:48), professed to be waiting for Christ. He was a “servant,” outwardly devoted to the service of God while at heart he had yielded to Satan. He does not, like the scoffer, openly deny the truth, but reveals in his life the sentiment of the heart—that the Lord’s coming is delayed. Presumption renders him careless of eternal interests. He accepts the world’s maxims and conforms to its customs and practices. Selfishness, worldly pride and ambitions predominate. Fearing that his brethren may stand higher than himself, he begins to disparage their efforts and impugn their motives. Thus he smites his fellow servants. As he alienates himself from the people of God he unites more and more with the ungodly. He is found eating and drinking “with the drunken”—joining with worldlings and partaking of their spirit. Thus he is lulled into a carnal security and overcome by forgetfulness, indifference, and sloth.

The very beginning of the evil was a neglect of watchfulness and secret prayer, then came a neglect of other religious duties, and thus the way was opened for all the sins that followed. Every Christian will be assailed by the allurements of [15] the world, the clamors of the carnal nature, and the direct temptations of Satan. No one is safe. No matter what our experience has been, no matter how high our station, we need to watch and pray continually. We must be daily controlled by the Spirit of God or we are controlled by Satan.

A Solemn Warning

The Saviour’s instructions to His disciples were given for the benefit of His followers in every age. He had those in view who were living near the close of time, when He said: “Take heed to yourselves.” It is our work, each for himself, to cherish in the heart the precious graces of the Holy Spirit.

Satan is working with unfailing perseverance and intense energy to draw into his ranks the professed followers of Christ. He is working “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.” But Satan is not the only worker by whom the kingdom of darkness is supported. Whoever

solicits to sin is a tempter. Whoever imitates the great deceiver becomes his aid. Those who give their influence to sustain an evil work are doing Satan's drudgery.

Actions reveal principles and motives. The fruit borne by many who claim to be plants in the Lord's vineyard shows them to be but thorns and briers. A whole church may sanction the wrong course of some of its members, but that sanction does not prove the wrong to be right. It cannot make grapes of thorn berries.

If some who profess to believe present truth could understand their true position, they would despair of the mercy of God. They have been exerting all their influence against the truth, against the voice of warning, against the people of God. They have been doing the work of Satan. Many have become so infatuated by his deceptions that they will never recover. Such a state of backsliding cannot exist without causing the loss of many souls.

The church has received warning after warning. The [16] duties and dangers of God's people have been plainly revealed. But the worldly element has proved too strong for them. Customs, practices, and fashions which lead the soul away from God have been for years gaining ground in defiance of the warnings and entreaties of the Holy Spirit, until at last their ways have become right in their own eyes, and the Spirit's voice is scarcely heard. No man can tell how far he may go in sin when once he yields himself to the power of the great deceiver. Satan entered into Judas Iscariot and induced him to betray his Lord. Satan led Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Ghost. Those who are not wholly consecrated to God may be led to do the work of Satan, while yet they flatter themselves that they are in the service of Christ.

Brethren and sisters, I entreat you to "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." To maintain the warmth and purity of Christian love requires a constant supply of the grace of Christ. Have you employed every means that your "love may abound yet more and more," "that ye may approve things that are excellent," and be filled with the fruits of righteousness "which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God"? Philippians 1:9-11.

Many who should stand firm for righteousness and truth have manifested weakness and indecision that have encouraged the assaults of

Satan. Those who fail to grow in grace, not seeking to reach the highest standard in divine attainments, will be overcome.

What the Church Needs

This world is to the Christian a land of strangers and enemies. Unless he shall take for his defense the divine panoply and wield the sword of the Spirit he will become the prey of the powers of darkness. The faith of all will be tested. All will be tried as gold is tried in the fire.

The church is composed of imperfect, erring men and women, who call for the continual exercise of charity and [17] forbearance. But there has been a long period of general lukewarmness; a worldly spirit coming into the church has been followed by alienation, faultfinding, malice, strife, and iniquity.

Should there be less sermonizing by men who are unconsecrated in heart and life, and were more time devoted to humbling the soul before God, then might we hope that the Lord would appear to your help and heal your backslidings. Much of the preaching of late begets a false security. Important interests in the cause of God cannot be wisely managed by those who have had so little real connection with God as some of our ministers have had. To entrust the work to such men is like setting children to manage great vessels at sea. Those who are destitute of heavenly wisdom, destitute of living power with God, are not competent to steer the gospel ship amid icebergs and tempests. The church is passing through severe conflicts, but in her peril many would trust her to hands that will surely wreck her. We need a pilot on board now, for we are nearing the harbor. As a people we should be the light of the world. But how many are foolish virgins, having no oil in their vessels with their lamps. May the Lord of all grace, abundant in mercy, full of forgiveness, pity and save us, that we perish not with the wicked!

In this season of conflict and trial we need all the support and consolation we can derive from righteous principles, from fixed religious convictions, from the abiding assurance of the love of Christ, and from a rich experience in divine things. We shall attain to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus only as the result of a steady growth in grace.

Oh, what can I say to open blind eyes, to enlighten the spiritual understanding! Sin must be crucified. A complete moral renovation must be wrought by the Holy Spirit. We must have the love of God, with living, abiding faith. This is the gold tried in the fire. We can obtain it only of Christ. Every sincere and earnest seeker will become a partaker of the divine [18] nature. His soul will be filled with intense longing to know the fullness of that love which passes knowledge; as he advances in the divine life he will be better able to grasp the elevated, ennobling truths of the word of God, until by beholding he becomes changed and is enabled to reflect the likeness of his Redeemer. [19]

Envy and Criticism

Envy is not merely a perverseness of temper, but a distemper, which disorders all the faculties. It began with Satan. He desired to be first in heaven, and because he could not have all the power and glory he sought, he rebelled against the government of God. He envied our first parents and tempted them to sin and thus ruined them and all the human race.

The envious man shuts his eyes to the good qualities and noble deeds of others. He is always ready to disparage and misrepresent that which is excellent. Men often confess and forsake other faults, but there is little to be hoped for from the envious man. Since to envy a person is to admit that he is a superior, pride will not permit any concession. If an attempt be made to convince the envious person of his sin, he becomes even more bitter against the object of his passion, and too often he remains incurable.

The envious man diffuses poison wherever he goes, alienating friends and stirring up hatred and rebellion against God and man. He seeks to be thought best and greatest, not by putting forth heroic, self-denying efforts to reach the goal of excellence himself, but by standing where he is and diminishing the merit due to the efforts of others. ...

The tongue that delights in mischief, the babbling tongue that says, Report, and I will report it, is declared by the apostle James to be set on fire of hell. It scatters firebrands on every side. What cares the vendor of gossip that he defames the innocent? He will not stay his evil work, though he destroy hope and courage in those who are already sinking under their burdens. He cares only to indulge his scandal-loving*

*1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:56-59 (Important Testimony).

propensity. Even professed Christians close their eyes to all that is pure, honest, noble, and lovely, and treasure up whatever is objectionable and

disagreeable, and publish it to the world. ...

Think Well of All Men

When we listen to a reproach against our brother, we take up that reproach. To the question, “Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?” the psalmist answered, “He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor.” Psalm 15:1-3.

What a world of gossip would be prevented if every man would remember that those who tell him the faults of others will as freely publish his faults at a favorable opportunity. We should endeavor to think well of all men, especially our brethren, until compelled to think otherwise. We should not hastily credit evil reports. These are often the result of envy or misunderstanding, or they may proceed from exaggeration or a partial disclosure of facts. Jealousy and suspicion, once allowed a place, will sow themselves broadcast, like thistledown. Should a brother go astray, then is the time to show your real interest in him. Go to him kindly, pray with and for him, remembering the infinite price which Christ has paid for his redemption. In this way you may save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood, sinking like a barbed arrow into some heart, inflicting an incurable wound. Thus a doubt, a reproach, may be cast upon one by whom God would accomplish a good work, and his influence is blighted, his usefulness destroyed. Among some species of animals, if one of their number is wounded and falls, he is at once set upon and torn in pieces by his fellows. The same cruel spirit is indulged by men and [21] women who bear the name of Christians. They manifest a pharisaical zeal to stone others less guilty than themselves. There are some who point to others' faults and failures to divert attention from their own, or to gain credit for great zeal for God and the church. [22]

Jealousy and Faultfinding Condemned

It pains me to say that there are unruly tongues among church members. There are false tongues that feed on mischief. There are sly, whispering tongues. There is tattling, impertinent meddling, adroit quizzing. Among the lovers of gossip some are actuated by curiosity, others by jealousy, many by hatred against those through whom God has spoken to reprove them. All these discordant elements are at work. Some conceal their real sentiments, while others are eager to publish all they know, or even suspect, of evil against another.

I saw that the very spirit of perjury, that would turn truth into falsehood, good into evil, and innocence into crime, is now active. Satan exults over the condition of God's professed people. While many are neglecting their own souls, they eagerly watch for an opportunity to criticize and condemn others. All have defects of character, and it is not hard to find something that jealousy can interpret to their injury. "Now," say these self-constituted judges, "we have *facts*. We will fasten upon them an accusation from which they cannot clear themselves." They wait for a fitting opportunity and then produce their bundle of gossip and bring forth their tidbits.

In their efforts to carry a point, persons who have naturally a strong imagination are in danger of deceiving themselves and deceiving others. They gather up unguarded expressions from another, not considering that words may be uttered hastily and hence may not reflect the real sentiments of the speaker. But those unpremeditated remarks, often so trifling as to be unworthy of notice, are viewed through Satan's magnifying glass, pondered, and repeated until*

*-1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:94-98.

molehills become mountains. Separated from God, the surmisers of evil become the sport of temptation. They scarcely know the strength of their feelings or the effect of their words. While condemning the errors of others, they indulge far greater errors themselves. Consistency is a jewel.

Is there no law of kindness to be observed? Have Christians been authorized of God to criticize and condemn one another? Is it honorable, or even honest, to win from the lips of another, under the guise of friendship, secrets which have been entrusted to him, and then turn the knowledge thus gained to his injury? Is it Christian charity to gather up every floating report, to unearth everything that will cast suspicion on the character of another, and then take delight in using it to injure him? Satan exults when he can defame or wound a follower of Christ. He is “the accuser of our brethren.” Shall Christians aid him in his work?

God’s all-seeing eye notes the defects of all and the ruling passion of each, yet He bears with our mistakes and pities our weakness. He bids His people cherish the same spirit of tenderness and forbearance. True Christians will not exult in exposing the faults and deficiencies of others. They will turn away from vileness and deformity, to fix the mind upon that which is attractive and lovely. To the Christian every act of faultfinding, every word of censure or condemnation, is painful.

There have always been men and women who profess the truth, who have not conformed their lives to its sanctifying influence; men who are unfaithful, yet deceiving themselves and encouraging themselves in sin. Unbelief is seen in their life, their deportment, and character, and this terrible evil acts as does a canker.

Criticize Self, Not Others

Would all professed Christians use their investigative powers to see what evils needed to be corrected in themselves, [24] instead of talking of others’ wrongs, there would be a more healthy condition in the church today. Some will be honest when it costs nothing; but when policy will pay best, honesty is forgotten. Honesty and policy will not work together in the

same mind. In time, either policy will be expelled, and truth and honesty reign supreme, or, if policy is cherished, honesty will be forgotten. They are never in agreement; they have nothing in common. One is the prophet of Baal, the other is the true prophet of God. When the Lord makes up His jewels, the true, the frank, the honest, will be looked upon with pleasure. Angels are employed in making crowns for such ones, and upon these star-gemmed crowns will be reflected, with splendor, the light which radiates from the throne of God.

Our ministering brethren are too often imposed upon by the relation of trials in the church, and they too frequently refer to them in their discourses. They should not encourage the members of the church to complain of one another, but should set them as spies upon their own actions. None should allow their feelings of prejudice and resentment to be aroused by the relation of the wrongs of others; all should wait patiently until they hear both sides of the question, and then believe only what stern facts compel them to believe. At all times the safe course is not to listen to an evil report until the Bible rule has been strictly carried out. This will apply to some who have worked artfully to draw out from the unsuspecting, matters which they had no business with and which would do them no good to know.

For your soul's sake, my brethren, have an eye single to the glory of God. Leave self out of your thoughts as much as possible. We are nearing the close of time. Examine your motives in the light of eternity. I know you need to be alarmed; you are departing from the old landmarks. Your science, so called, is undermining the foundation of Christian principle. I have been shown the course you would surely pursue should you [25] disconnect from God. Do not trust to your own wisdom. I tell you, your souls are in imminent peril. For Christ's sake, search and see why you have so little love for religious exercises.

The Lord is testing and proving His people. You may be just as severe and critical with your own defective character as you please; but be kind, pitiful, and courteous toward others. Inquire every day: Am I sound to the core, or am I falsehearted? Entreat the Lord to save you from all deception on this point. Eternal interests are involved. While so many are panting after honor and greedy of gain, do you, my beloved brethren, be eagerly seeking the assurance of the love of God and crying: Who will show me how to make my calling and election sure?

Satan carefully studies the constitutional sins of men, and then he begins his work of alluring and ensnaring them. We are in the thickest of temptations, but there is victory for us if we fight manfully the battles of the Lord. All are in danger. But if you walk humbly and prayerfully you will come forth from the proving process more precious than fine gold, even than the golden wedge of Ophir. If careless and prayerless, you will be as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

Some have become almost lost in the mazes of skepticism. To such I would say: Lift your mind out of that channel. Fasten it upon God. The more closely faith and holiness bind you to the Eternal One, the clearer and brighter will the justice of His dealings appear to you. Make life, eternal life, the object of your pursuit.

I know your danger. If you lose confidence in the testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth. I have been fearful that many would take a questioning, doubting position, and in my distress for your souls I would warn you. How many will heed the warning? As you now hold the testimonies, should one be given crossing your track, correcting your errors, would you feel at perfect liberty to accept or reject any part or the whole? That which you will be least [26] inclined to receive is the very part most needed. God and Satan never work in copartnership. The testimonies either bear the signet of God or that of Satan. A good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. By their fruit ye shall know them. God has spoken. Who has trembled at His word?

When I went to Colorado I was so burdened for you that, in my weakness, I wrote many pages to be read at your camp-meeting. Weak and trembling, I arose at three o'clock in the morning to write to you. God was speaking through clay. You might say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne.—1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:67. [27]

Laborers for God

Fellow laborers in the great harvest field, we have but little time left in which to labor. Now is the most favorable opportunity we shall ever have, and how carefully ought every moment to be employed. So devoted was our Redeemer to the work of saving souls that He even longed for His baptism of blood. The apostles caught the zeal of their Master and firmly, steadily, zealously went forward to the accomplishment of their great work, fighting against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

We are living in a time when even greater earnestness is needed than in the apostles' day. But among many of the ministers of Christ there is a feeling of unrest, a desire to imitate the romantic style of modern revivalists, a desire to do something great, to create a sensation, to be accounted able speakers, and to gain for themselves honor and distinction. If such could encounter perils and receive the honor given to heroes, they would engage in the work with unflagging energy. But to live and labor almost unknown, to toil and sacrifice for Jesus in obscurity, receiving no special praise from men—this requires a soundness of principle and a steadfastness of purpose that but few possess. Were there a greater effort to walk humbly with God, looking away from men and laboring only for Christ's sake, far more would be accomplished.

My ministering brethren, seek Jesus with all lowliness and meekness. Do not try to draw the attention of the people to yourselves. Let them lose sight of the instrument, while you exalt Jesus. Talk of Jesus; lose self in Jesus. There is too much bustle and stir about our religion, while Calvary and the cross are forgotten.*

*1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:132-137.

We are in the greatest peril when we receive praise of one another, when we enter into a confederacy to exalt one another. The great burden of the Pharisees was to secure the praise of men; and Christ told them that that was all the reward they would ever receive. Let us take up our appointed work and do it for Christ; if we suffer privation, let it be for His sake. Our divine Lord was made perfect through suffering. Oh, when shall we see men laboring as He labored!

The word of God is our standard. Every act of love, every word of kindness, every prayer in behalf of the suffering and oppressed, is reported before the eternal throne and placed on heaven's imperishable record. The divine word pours light into the most darkened understanding, and that light makes the most cultivated feel their inefficiency and sinfulness.

The enemy is buying souls today very cheap. "Ye have sold yourselves for nought" (Isaiah 52:3), is the language of Scripture. One is selling his soul for the world's applause, another for money; one to gratify base passions, another for worldly amusement. Such bargains are made daily. Satan is bidding for the purchase of Christ's blood and buying them cheap, notwithstanding the infinite price which has been paid to ransom them.

Great blessings and privileges are ours. We may secure the most valuable heavenly treasures. Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth ruins if it does not save. The soul that refuses to listen to the invitations of mercy from day to day can soon listen to the most urgent appeals without an emotion stirring his soul.

As laborers with God we need more fervent piety and less self-exaltation. The more self is exalted, the more will faith in the testimonies of the Spirit of God be lessened. Those who are the most closely connected with God are the ones who know His voice when He speaks to them. Those who are spiritual discern spiritual things. Such will feel grateful that the Lord has pointed out their errors, while [29] those who trust wholly in themselves will see less and less of God in the testimonies of His Spirit.

Our work must be accompanied with deep humiliation, fasting, and prayer. We must not expect all peace and joy. There will be sadness; but if we sow in tears we shall reap in joy. Darkness and despondency may at times enter the heart of the self-sacrificing ones; but this is not against them. It may be God's design to cause them to seek Him more earnestly.

Men Like Caleb Needed

What we need now is Calebs, men who are faithful and true. Indolence marks the lives of too many at the present day. They turn their shoulders from the wheel just when they should persevere and bring all their powers into active exercise. Ministers of Christ, “awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Ephesians 5:14. Your labors taste so strongly of self that Christ is forgotten. Some of you are pampered and flattered too much. As in the days of Noah, there is too much eating and drinking, planting and building. The world has stolen the energies of the servants of Christ. Brethren, if you would have your religion honored by unbelievers, honor it yourselves by corresponding works. By a close connection with God and a strict adherence to Bible truth in the face of difficulty and worldly pressure, you may infuse the spirit of the truth into the hearts of your children so that they will work effectually with you as instruments in God’s hands for good.

Many are incapacitated for labor both mentally and physically by overeating and the gratification of the lustful passions. The animal propensities are strengthened, while the moral and spiritual nature is enfeebled. When we shall stand around the great white throne, what a record will the lives of many then present. Then will they see what they might have done had they not debased their God-given powers. [30] Then will they realize what height of intellectual greatness they might have attained had they given to God all the physical and mental strength He had entrusted to them. In their agony of remorse they will long to have their lives to live over again.

I call upon those who profess to be light bearers—ensamples to the flock—to depart from all iniquity. Use well the little remnant of time now left you. Have you that strong hold of God, that consecration to His service, that your religion will not fail you in the face of direst persecution? The deep love of God alone will sustain the soul amid the trials which are just upon us.

Self-denial and the cross are our portion. Will we accept it? None of us need expect that when the last great trials come upon us a self-sacrificing, patriotic spirit will be developed in a moment because needed. No, indeed,

this spirit must be blended with our daily experience, and infused into the minds and hearts of our children, both by precept and example. Mothers in Israel may not be warriors themselves, but they may raise up warriors who shall gird on the whole armor and fight manfully the battles of the Lord.

Prepare for the Day of Test

Ministers and people need the converting power of grace before they will be able to stand in the day of the Lord. The world is fast approaching that point in iniquity and human depravity when God's interference will become necessary. And at that time His professed followers should be more marked for their fidelity to His holy law. Their prayer will be as that of David: "It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law." Psalm 119:126. And by their conduct they will say: "Therefore I love Thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold." Verse 127. The very contempt that is shown to the law of God is sufficient reason why His commandment-keeping people should [31] come to the front and show their esteem and reverence for His downtrodden law.

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Matthew 24:12. The very atmosphere is polluted with sin. Soon God's people will be tested by fiery trials, and the great proportion of those who now appear to be genuine and true will prove to be base metal. Instead of being strengthened and confirmed by opposition, threats, and abuse, they will cowardly take the side of the opposers. The promise is: "Them that honor Me I will honor." 1 Samuel 2:30. Shall we be less firmly attached to God's law because the world at large have attempted to make it void?

Already the judgments of God are abroad in the land, as seen in storms, in floods, in tempests, in earthquakes, in peril by land and by sea. The great I AM is speaking to those who make void His law. When God's wrath is poured out upon the earth, who will then be able to stand? Now is the time for God's people to show themselves true to principle. When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when His law is most despised, then should our zeal be the warmest and our courage and firmness the most unflinching. To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our

test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason. The nation will be on the side of the great rebel leader.

The test will surely come. Thirty-six years ago^{*} I was shown that what is now transpiring would take place, that the observance of an institution of the papacy would be enforced upon the people by a Sunday law, while the sanctified rest day of Jehovah would be trampled underfoot.

The Captain of our salvation will strengthen His people for the conflict in which they must engage. How often when

^{*}Note: Written in 1882.

[32]

Satan has brought all his forces to bear against the followers of Christ, and death stares them in the face, have earnest prayers put up in faith brought the Captain of the Lord's host upon the field of action and turned the tide of battle and delivered the oppressed.

Now is the time when we should closely connect with God, that we may be hid when the fierceness of His wrath is poured upon the sons of men. We have wandered away from the old landmarks. Let us return. If the Lord be God, serve Him; if Baal, serve him. Which side will you be on? [33]

Agents of Satan

Satan uses men and women as agents to solicit to sin and make it attractive. These agents he faithfully educates to so disguise sin that he can more successfully destroy souls and rob Christ of His glory. Satan is the great enemy of God and man. He transforms himself through his agents into angels of light. In the Scriptures he is called a destroyer, an accuser of the brethren, a deceiver, a liar, a tormentor, and a murderer. Satan has many in his employ, but is most successful when he can use professed Christians for his satanic work. And the greater their influence, the more elevated their position, the more knowledge they profess of God and His service, the more successfully can he use them. Whoever entices to sin is his agent. ...

As we near the close of earth's history, perils and dangers thicken around us. A mere profession of godliness will not avail. There must be a living connection with God, that we may have spiritual eyesight to discern the wickedness which is in a most artful and secret manner creeping into our midst through those who make a profession of our faith.

The greatest sins are brought in through those who profess to be sanctified and claim that they cannot sin. Yet many of this class are sinning daily and are corrupt in heart and life. Such are self-sufficient and self-righteous, making their own standard of righteousness and utterly failing to meet the Bible standard. Notwithstanding their high claims, they are strangers to the covenant of promise. It is in great mercy that God bears with their perversity and that they are not cut down as cumberers of the ground, but still remain within the^{*}

^{*}1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:137-148.

possibilities of forgiveness. The forbearance of God is continually presumed upon and His mercy abused. ...

He who holds the truth in unrighteousness, who declares his belief in it, and yet wounds it every day by his inconsistent life, is surrendering himself to the service of Satan and leading souls to ruin. This class hold intercourse with fallen angels and are aided by them in gaining the control of minds.

When Satan's bewitching power controls a person, God is forgotten, and man who is filled with corrupt purposes is extolled. Secret licentiousness is practiced by these deceived souls as a virtue. This is a species of witchcraft. The question of the apostle to the Galatians may well be asked: "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" Galatians 3:1. There is always a bewitching power in heresies and in licentiousness. The mind is so deluded that it cannot reason intelligently, and an illusion is continually leading it from purity. The spiritual eyesight becomes blurred, and persons of hitherto untainted morals become confused under the delusive sophistry of those agents of Satan who profess to be messengers of light. It is this delusion which gives these agents power.

Should they come out boldly and make their advances openly they would be repulsed without a moment's hesitation; but they work first to gain sympathy and secure confidence in themselves as holy, self-sacrificing men of God. As His special messengers they then begin their artful work of drawing away souls from the path of rectitude by attempting to make void the law of God.

When ministers thus take advantage of the confidence the people place in them and lead souls to ruin, they make themselves as much more guilty than the common sinner as their profession is higher. In the day of God, when the great Ledger of Heaven is opened, it will be found to contain the names of many ministers who have made pretensions to purity of [35] heart and life and professed to be entrusted with the gospel of Christ, but who have taken advantage of their position to allure souls to transgress the law of God.

“Spiritual Wickedness in High Places”

When men and women fall under the corrupting power of Satan, it is almost impossible to recover them out of the horrible snare so that they will

ever again have pure thoughts and clear conceptions of God's requirements. Sin, to their deluded minds, has been sanctified by the minister, and it is never again regarded in the loathsome light that God looks upon it. After the moral standard has been lowered in the minds of men, their judgment becomes perverted, and they look upon sin as righteousness, and righteousness as sin. By associating with these, whose inclinations and habits are not elevated and pure, others become like them. Their tastes and principles are almost unconsciously adopted.

If the society of a man of impure mind and licentious habits is chosen in preference to that of the virtuous and pure, it is a sure indication that the tastes and inclinations harmonize, that a low level of morals is reached. This level is called by these deceived, infatuated souls, a high and holy affinity of spirit—a spiritual harmony. But the apostle terms it “spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12), against which we are to institute a vigorous warfare.

When the deceiver commences his work of deception, he frequently finds dissimilarity of tastes and habits; but by great pretensions to godliness he gains the confidence, and when this is done, his wily, deceptive power is exercised in his own way to carry out his devices. By associating with this dangerous element, women become accustomed to breathe the atmosphere of impurity and almost insensibly become permeated with the same spirit. Their identity is lost; they become the shadow of their seducer.

Men professing to have new light, claiming to be reformers, [36] will have great influence over a certain class who are convinced of the heresies that exist in the present age and who are not satisfied with the spiritual condition of the churches. With true, honest hearts, these desire to see a change for the better, a coming up to a higher standard. If the faithful servants of Christ would present the truth, pure and unadulterated, to this class, they would accept it, and purify themselves by obeying it. But Satan, ever vigilant, sets upon the track of these inquiring souls. Someone making high profession as a reformer comes to them, as Satan came to Christ disguised as an angel of light, and draws them still further from the path of right.

The unhappiness and degradation that follow in the train of licentiousness cannot be estimated. The world is defiled under its inhabitants. They have nearly filled up the measure of their iniquity; but

that which will bring the heaviest retribution is the practice of iniquity under the cloak of godliness. The Redeemer of the world never spurned true repentance, however great the guilt; but He hurls burning denunciations against Pharisees and hypocrites. There is more hope for the open sinner than for this class. ...

“Watch and Pray”

In this age of corruption when our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, I see the necessity of lifting my voice in warning. “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.” Mark 14:38. There are many who possess brilliant talents who wickedly devote them to the service of Satan. What warning can I give to a people who profess to have come out from the world and to have left its works of darkness? to a people whom God has made the repositories of His law, but who, like the pretentious fig tree, flaunt their apparently flourishing branches in the very face of the Almighty, yet bear no fruit to the glory of God? Many of them cherish impure thoughts, unholy imaginations, unsanctified desires, and base [37] passions. God hates the fruit borne upon such a tree. Angels, pure and holy, look upon the course of such with abhorrence, while Satan exults. Oh, that men and women would consider what is to be gained by transgressing God’s law! Under any and every circumstance, transgression is a dishonor to God and a curse to man. We must regard it thus, however fair its guise, and by whomsoever committed.

As Christ’s ambassador, I entreat you who profess present truth to promptly resent any approach to impurity and forsake the society of those who breathe an impure suggestion. Loathe these defiling sins with the most intense hatred. Flee from those who would, even in conversation, let the mind run in such a channel; “for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Matthew 12:34.

As those who practice these defiling sins are steadily increasing in the world and would intrude themselves into our churches, I warn you to give no place to them. Turn from the seducer. Though a professed follower of Christ, he is Satan in the form of man; he has borrowed the livery of heaven that he may the better serve his master. You should not for one moment give

place to an impure, covert suggestion; for even this will stain the soul, as impure water defiles the channel through which it passes.

“Death Before Dishonor”

Choose poverty, reproach, separation from friends, or any suffering rather than to defile the soul with sin. Death before dishonor or the transgression of God’s law should be the motto of every Christian. As a people professing to be reformers, treasuring the most solemn, purifying truths of God’s word, we must elevate the standard far higher than it is at the present time. Sin and sinners in the church must be promptly dealt with, that others may not be contaminated. Truth and purity require that we make more thorough work to cleanse [38] the camp from Achans. Let those in responsible positions not suffer sin in a brother. Show him that he must either put away his sins or be separated from the church.

When the individual members of the church shall act as true followers of the meek and lowly Saviour, there will be less covering up and excusing of sin. All will strive to act as if in God’s presence. They will realize that His all-seeing eye is ever upon them and that the most secret thought is known to Him. The character, the motives, the desires and purposes, are as clear as the light of the sun to the eye of the Omnipotent. But few bear this in mind. The larger class by far do not realize what a fearful account must be rendered at the bar of God by all the transgressors of His law.

Can you who have professed to receive such great light be content with a low level? Oh, how earnestly and constantly should we seek for the divine presence and a realization of the solemn truths that the end of all things is at hand and that the Judge of all the earth stands at the door! How can you disregard His just and holy requirements? How can you transgress in the very face of Jehovah? How can you cherish unholy thoughts and base passions in full view of the pure angels and of the Redeemer, who gave Himself for you that He might redeem you from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works? As you contemplate the matter in the light which shines from the cross of Christ, will not sin appear too mean, too perilous, to be indulged when standing upon the very borders of the eternal world?

I speak to our people. If you draw close to Jesus and seek to adorn your profession by a well-ordered life and godly conversation, your feet will be kept from straying into forbidden paths. If you will only watch, continually watch unto prayer, if you will do everything as if you were in the immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation, and may hope to be kept pure, spotless, and undefiled till the [39] last. If you hold the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end, your ways will be established in God; and what grace has begun, glory will crown in the kingdom of our God. The fruits of the Spirit are “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” If Christ be within us, we shall crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. [40]

Will a Man Rob God?

The Lord has made the diffusion of light and truth in the earth dependent on the voluntary efforts and offerings of those who have been partakers of the heavenly gifts. Comparatively few are called to travel as ministers or missionaries, but multitudes are to co-operate in spreading the truth with their means.

The history of Ananias and Sapphira is given us that we may understand the sin of deception in regard to our gifts and offerings. They had voluntarily promised to give a portion of their property for the promotion of the cause of Christ; but when the means was in their hands they declined to fulfill that obligation, at the same time wishing it to appear to others that they had given all. Their punishment was marked in order that it might serve as a perpetual warning to Christians of all ages. The same sin is fearfully prevalent at the present time, yet we hear of no such signal punishment. The Lord shows men once with what abhorrence He regards such an offense against His sacred claims and dignity, and then they are left to follow the general principles of the divine administration.

Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the gospel. Of the means which is entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion—a tithe; but He leaves all free to say how much the tithe is, and whether or not they will give more than this. They are to give as they purpose in their hearts. But when the heart is stirred by the influence of the Spirit of God, and a vow is made to give a certain amount, the one who vowed has no longer any right to the consecrated portion. He has given his pledge before men, and they are called to witness^{*}

^{*}—1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:148-152.

to the transaction. At the same time he has incurred an obligation of the most sacred character to co-operate with the Lord in building up His kingdom on earth. Promises of this kind made to men would be considered binding. Are they not more sacred and binding when made to God? Are promises tried in the court of conscience less binding than written agreements with men?

When the divine light is shining into the heart with unusual clearness and power, habitual selfishness relaxes its grasp, and there is a disposition to give to the cause of God. None need expect that they will be allowed to fulfill the promises then made without a protest on the part of Satan. He is not pleased to see the Redeemer's kingdom on earth built up. He suggests that the pledge made was too much, that it may cripple them in their efforts to acquire property or gratify the desires of their families. The power Satan has over the human mind is wonderful. He labors most earnestly to keep the heart bound up in self.

The only means which God has ordained to advance His cause is to bless men with property. He gives them the sunshine and the rain; He causes vegetation to flourish; He gives health and ability to acquire means. All our blessings come from His bountiful hand. In turn He would have men and women show their gratitude by returning Him a portion in tithes and offerings—in thank offerings, in freewill offerings, in trespass offerings.

The hearts of men become hardened through selfishness, and, like Ananias and Sapphira, they are tempted to withhold part of the price while pretending to come up to the rules of tithing. Will a man rob God? Should means flow into the treasury exactly according to God's plan,—a tenth of all the increase,—there would be abundance to carry forward His work.

Well, says one, the calls keep coming to give to the cause; I am weary of giving. Are you? Then let me ask: Are you [42] weary of receiving from God's beneficent hand? Not until He ceases to bless you will you cease to be under bonds to return to Him the portion He claims. He blesses you that it may be in your power to bless others. When you are weary of receiving, then you may say: I am weary of so many calls to give. God reserves to Himself a portion of all that we receive. When this is returned to Him, the remaining portion is blessed; but when it is withheld, the whole is sooner or later cursed. God's claim is first; every other is secondary.

Remember the Poor

In every church there should be established a treasury for the poor. Then let each member present a thank offering to God once a week or once a month, as is most convenient. This offering will express our gratitude for the gifts of health, of food, and of comfortable clothing. And according as God has blessed us with these comforts will we lay by for the poor, the suffering, and the distressed. I would call the attention of our brethren especially to this point. Remember the poor. Forego some of your luxuries, yea, even comforts, and help those who can obtain only the most meager food and clothing. In doing for them you are doing for Jesus in the person of His saints. He identifies Himself with suffering humanity. Do not wait until your imaginary wants are all satisfied. Do not trust to your feelings and give when you feel like it and withhold when you do not feel like it. Give regularly, either ten, twenty, or fifty cents a week, as you would like to see upon the heavenly record in the day of God.

Your good wishes we will thank you for, but the poor cannot keep comfortable on good wishes alone. They must have tangible proofs of your kindness in food and clothing. God does not mean that any of His followers should beg for bread. He has given you an abundance that you may supply those of their necessities which by industry and economy they are not able to supply. Do not wait for them to call your attention to [43] their needs. Act as did Job. The thing that he knew not he searched out. Go on an inspecting tour and learn what is needed and how it can be best supplied.

Robbing the Lord

I have been shown that many of our people are robbing the Lord in tithes and in offerings, and as the result His work is greatly hindered. The curse of God will rest upon those who are living upon God's bounties and yet close their hearts and do nothing or next to nothing to advance His cause. Brethren and sisters, how can the beneficent Father continue to make you His stewards, furnishing you with means to use for Him, when you grasp it all, selfishly claiming that it is yours!

Instead of rendering to God the means He has placed in their hands, many invest it in more land. This evil is growing with our brethren. They had before all they could well care for, but the love of money or a desire to be counted as well off as their neighbors leads them to bury their means in the world and withhold from God His just dues. Can we be surprised if they are not prospered? if God does not bless their crops and they are disappointed?

Could our brethren remember that God can bless twenty acres of land and make them as productive as one hundred, they would not continue to bury themselves in lands, but would let their means flow into God's treasury. "Take heed," said Christ, "lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life." Luke 21:34. Satan is pleased to have you increase your farms and invest your means in worldly enterprises, for by so doing you not only hinder the cause from advancing, but by anxiety and overwork lessen your prospect for eternal life.

We ought now to be heeding the injunction of our Saviour: "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not." [44] Luke 12:33. It is now that our brethren should be cutting down their possessions instead of increasing them. We are about to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Then let us not be dwellers upon the earth, but be getting things into as compact a compass as possible.

The time is coming when we cannot sell at any price. The decree will soon go forth prohibiting men to buy or sell of any man save him that hath the mark of the beast.

The Lord has shown me repeatedly that it is contrary to the Bible to make any provision for our temporal wants in the time of trouble. I saw that if the saints had food laid up by them, or in the field in the time of trouble, when sword, famine, and pestilence are in the land, it would be taken from them by violent hands, and strangers would reap their fields. Then will be the time for us to trust wholly in God, and He will sustain us. I saw that our bread and water will be sure at that time, and that we shall not lack or suffer hunger; for God is able to spread a table for us in the wilderness. If

necessary He would send ravens to feed us, as He did to feed Elijah, or rain manna from heaven, as He did for the Israelites.

Houses and lands will be of no use to the saints in the time of trouble, for they will then have to flee before infuriated mobs, and at that time their possessions cannot be disposed of to advance the cause of present truth. I was shown that it is the will of God that the saints should cut loose from every encumbrance before the time of trouble comes, and make a covenant with God through sacrifice. If they have their property on the altar, and earnestly inquire of God for duty, He will teach them when to dispose of these things. Then they will be free in the time of trouble, and have no clogs to weigh them down.—1851, Early Writings, 56, 57. [45]

Diligence in Business

“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.” Proverbs 22:29. “He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.” Proverbs 10:4. “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.” Romans 12:10, 11.

The many admonitions to diligence found in both the Old and the New Testament plainly indicate the intimate relation existing between our habits of life and our religious feelings and practices. The human mind and body are so constituted that plenty of exercise is necessary in order to a proper development of all the faculties.

While many are too much engaged in worldly business, others go to the opposite extreme and do not labor sufficiently to support themselves or those dependent upon them. Brother-----is one of this class. While he occupies the position of house band to his family he is not this in reality. The heaviest responsibilities and burdens he allows to rest upon his wife, while he indulges in careless indolence or busies himself about small matters that tell little for the support of his family. He will sit for hours and chat with his sons or his neighbors upon matters of no great consequence. He takes things easy and enjoys himself while the wife and mother does the work which must be done to prepare food to eat and clothes to wear.

This brother is a poor man and always will be a burden to society unless he asserts his God-given privilege and becomes^{*}

^{*}1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:178-182.

a man. Anyone can find work of some kind to do if he really desires it; but if he is careless and inattentive, the positions which he might have secured

he will find filled by those who had greater activity and business tact.

God never designed that you, my brother, should be in the position of poverty that you are now in. Why did He give you that physical frame? You are just as responsible for your physical powers as your brethren are for their means. Some of these would today be gainers could they exchange their property for your physical strength. But if placed in your position, they would, by a diligent use of both mental and physical powers, soon be above want and owe no man anything. It is not because God owes you a grudge that circumstances appear to be against you, but because you do not use the strength He has given you. He did not intend that your powers should rust by inaction, but that they should strengthen by use.

Duty to Labor

The religion you profess makes it as much your duty to employ your time during the six working days as to attend church on the Sabbath. You are not diligent in business. You let hours, days, and even weeks pass without accomplishing anything. The very best sermon you could preach to the world would be to show a decided reformation in your life, and provide for your own family. Says the apostle: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." 1 Timothy 5:8.

You bring a reproach upon the cause by locating in a place, where you indulge indolence for a time and then are obliged to run in debt for provision for your family. These your honest debts you are not always particular to pay, but, instead, move to another place. This is defrauding your neighbor. The world has a right to expect strict integrity in those who profess to be Bible Christians. By one man's indifference in regard to [47] paying his just dues, all our people are in danger of being regarded as unreliable.

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Matthew 7:12. This refers to those who labor with their hands as well as to those who have gifts to bestow. God has given you strength and skill, but you have not used them. Your strength is sufficient to abundantly support your family. Rise in the morning, even while the stars are shining, if

need be. Lay your plans to do something, and then accomplish it. Redeem every pledge unless sickness lays you prostrate. Better deny yourself food and sleep than be guilty of keeping from others their just dues.

The hill of progress is not to be climbed without effort. No one need expect to be carried along to the prize, either in religious or secular matters, independently of his own exertions. The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, yet he that dealeth with a slack hand will become poor. The persevering and industrious are not only happy themselves, but they contribute largely to the happiness of others. Competency and comfort are not ordinarily attained except at the price of earnest industry. Pharaoh showed his appreciation of this trait of character when he said to Joseph: "If thou knowest any men of activity among them [Joseph's brethren], then make them rulers over my cattle." Genesis 47:6.

There is no excuse for Brother-----, unless love of ease and inability to plan and set himself to work is an excuse. The best course for him now to pursue is to go from home and work under someone who shall plan for him. He has so long been a careless, indolent master over himself that he accomplishes but little, and his example before his children is bad. They have his stamp of character. They let mother bear the burdens. When asked to do anything, they will do it; but they do not cultivate, as all children should, the faculty of seeing what needs to be done and doing it without being told. [48]

Overburdened Wives and Mothers

A woman does herself and her family a serious wrong when she does her work and theirs too—when she brings the wood and water, and even takes the ax to prepare the wood, while her husband and sons sit about the fire having a social, easy time. God never designed that wives and mothers should be slaves to their families. Many a mother is overburdened with care while her children are not educated to share the domestic burdens. As the result, she grows old and dies prematurely, leaving her children just when a mother is most needed to guide their inexperienced feet. Who is to blame?

Husbands should do all they can to save the wife care and keep her spirit cheerful. Never should idleness be fostered or permitted in children,

for it soon becomes a habit. When not engaged in useful employment, the faculties either depreciate or become active in an evil work.

What you need, my brother, is active exercise. Every feature of your countenance, every faculty of your mind, is indicative of this. You do not love hard work nor to earn your bread by the sweat of your brow. But this is God's ordained plan in the economy of life.

You fail to carry through what you undertake. You have not disciplined yourself to regularity. System is everything. Do but one thing at a time, and do that well, finishing it before you begin a second piece of work. You should have regular hours for rising, for praying, and for eating. Many waste hours of precious time in bed because it gratifies the natural inclination and to do otherwise requires an exertion. One hour wasted in the morning is lost never to be recovered. Says the wise man: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and [49] received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that traveleth; and thy want as an armed man." Proverbs 24:30-34.

Those who make any pretensions to godliness should adorn the doctrine they profess and not give occasion for the truth to be reviled through their inconsiderate course of action. "Owe no man anything" (Romans 13:8), says the apostle. You ought now, my brother, to take hold earnestly to correct your habits of indolence, redeeming the time. Let the world see that the truth has wrought a reformation in your life. [50]

Shall We Consult Spiritualist Physicians?

“Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease. But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.” 2 Kings 1:2-4.

This narrative most strikingly displays the divine displeasure against those who turn from God to satanic agencies. A short time previous to the events above recorded the kingdom of Israel had changed rulers. Ahab had fallen under the judgment of God and had been succeeded by his son Ahaziah, a worthless character, who did only evil in the sight of the Lord, walking in the ways of his father and mother, and causing Israel to sin. He served Baal and worshiped him and provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger, as his father Ahab had done. But judgments followed close upon the sins of the rebellious king. A war with Moab, and then the accident by which his own life was threatened, attested the wrath of God against Ahaziah.

How much had the king of Israel heard and seen in his father's time of the wondrous works of the Most High! What terrible evidence of His severity and jealousy had God given apostate Israel! Of all this, Ahaziah was cognizant;*

*-1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:191-199.

yet he acts as though these awful realities, and even the fearful end of his own father, were only an idle tale. Instead of humbling his heart before the Lord he ventured upon the most daring act of impiety which marked his life. He commanded his servants: “Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease.” 2 Kings 1:2.

The idol of Ekron was supposed to give information, through the medium of its priests, concerning future events. It had obtained such general credence that it was resorted to by large numbers from a considerable distance. The predictions there uttered, and the information given, proceeded directly from the prince of darkness. It is Satan who created and who maintains the worship of idols, to divert the minds of men from God. It is by his agency that the kingdom of darkness and falsehood is supported.

The history of King Ahaziah’s sin and punishment has a lesson of warning which none can disregard with impunity. Though we do not pay homage to heathen gods, yet thousands are worshiping at Satan’s shrine as verily as did the king of Israel. The very spirit of heathen idolatry is rife today, though under the influence of science and education it has assumed a more refined and attractive form. Every day adds sorrowful evidence that faith in the sure word of prophecy is fast decreasing, and that in its stead superstition and satanic witchery are captivating the minds of men. All who do not earnestly search the Scriptures and submit every desire and purpose of life to that unerring test, all who do not seek God in prayer for a knowledge of His will, will surely wander from the right path and fall under the deception of Satan.

Channels of Satan’s Power

The heathen oracles have their counterpart in the spiritualistic mediums, the clairvoyants, and fortunetellers of today. The mystic voices that spoke at Ekron and En-dor are still by [52] their lying words misleading the children of men. The prince of darkness has but appeared under a new guise. The mysteries of heathen worship are replaced by the secret associations and sÃ©ances, the obscurities and wonders, of the sorcerers of our time. Their

disclosures are eagerly received by thousands who refuse to accept light from God's word or from His Spirit. While they speak with scorn of the magicians of old, the great deceiver laughs in triumph as they yield to his arts under a different form.

His agents still claim to cure disease. They attribute their power to electricity, magnetism, or the so-called "sympathetic remedies." In truth, they are but channels for Satan's electric currents. By this means he casts his spell over the bodies and souls of men.

I have from time to time received letters both from ministers and lay members of the church, inquiring if I think it wrong to consult spiritualist and clairvoyant physicians. I have not answered these letters for want of time. But just now the subject is again urged upon my attention. So numerous are these agents of Satan becoming, and so general is the practice of seeking counsel from them, that it seems needful to utter words of warning.

God has placed it in our power to obtain a knowledge of the laws of health. He has made it our duty to preserve our physical powers in the best possible condition, that we may render to Him acceptable service. Those who refuse to improve the light and knowledge that has been mercifully placed within their reach are rejecting one of the means which God has granted them to promote spiritual as well as physical life. They are placing themselves where they will be exposed to the delusions of Satan.

Not a few in this Christian age and Christian nation resort to evil spirits rather than trust to the power of the living God. The mother, watching by the sickbed of her child, exclaims: "I can do no more. Is there no physician who has power to [53] restore my child?" She is told of the wonderful cures performed by some clairvoyant or magnetic healer, and she trusts her dear one to his charge, placing it as verily in the hands of Satan as if he were standing by her side. In many instances the future life of the child is controlled by a satanic power which it seems impossible to break.

Many are unwilling to put forth the needed effort to obtain a knowledge of the laws of life and the simple means to be employed for the restoration of health. They do not place themselves in right relation to life. When sickness is the result of their transgression of natural law, they do not seek to correct their errors and then ask the blessing of God, but they resort to the physicians. If they recover health they give to drugs and doctors all the

honor. They are ever ready to idolize human power and wisdom, seeming to know no other God than the creature—dust and ashes.

I have heard a mother pleading with some infidel physician to save the life of her child; but when I entreated her to seek help from the Great Physician who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him in faith, she turned away with impatience. Here we see the same spirit that was manifested by Ahaziah.

It is not safe to trust to physicians who have not the fear of God before them. Without the influence of divine grace the hearts of men are “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Jeremiah 17:9. Self-aggrandizement is their aim. Under the cover of the medical profession what iniquities have been concealed, what delusions supported! The physician may claim to possess great wisdom and marvelous skill, when his character is abandoned and his practice contrary to the laws of life. The Lord our God assures us that He is waiting to be gracious; He invites us to call upon Him in the day of trouble. How can we turn from Him to trust in an arm of flesh?

Go with me to yonder sickroom. There lies a husband and [54] father, a man who is a blessing to society and to the cause of God. He has been suddenly stricken down by disease. The fire of fever seems consuming him. He longs for pure water to moisten the parched lips, to quench the raging thirst, and cool the fevered brow. But, no; the doctor has forbidden water. The stimulus of strong drink is given and adds fuel to the fire. The blessed, heaven-sent water, skillfully applied, would quench the devouring flame; but it is set aside for poisonous drugs.

For a time nature wrestles for her rights; but at last, overcome, she gives up the contest, and death sets the sufferer free. God desired that man to live, to be a blessing to the world; Satan determined to destroy him, and through the agency of the physician he succeeded. How long shall we permit our most precious lights to be thus extinguished?

Ahaziah sent his servants to inquire of Baal-zebub, at Ekron; but instead of a message from the idol, he heard the awful denunciation from the God of Israel: “Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.” It was Christ that bade Elijah speak these words to the apostate king.

Jehovah Immanuel had cause to be greatly displeased at Ahaziah's impiety. What had Christ not done to win the hearts of sinners and to inspire them with unwavering confidence in Himself? For ages He had visited His people with manifestations of the most condescending kindness and unexampled love. From the times of the patriarchs He had shown how His "delights were with the sons of men." Proverbs 8:31. He had been a very present help to all who sought Him in sincerity. "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them." Isaiah 63:9. Yet Israel had revolted from God and turned for help to the Lord's worst enemy.

The Hebrews were the only nation favored with a [55] knowledge of the true God. When the king of Israel sent to inquire of a pagan oracle, he proclaimed to the heathen that he had more confidence in their idols than in the God of his people, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In the same manner do those who profess to have a knowledge of God's word dishonor Him when they turn from the Source of strength and wisdom to ask help or counsel from the powers of darkness. If God's wrath was kindled by such a course on the part of a wicked, idolatrous king, how can He regard a similar course pursued by those who profess to be His servants?

Trust God and Obey Nature's Laws

Why is it that men are so unwilling to trust Him who created man, and who can by a touch, a word, a look, heal all manner of disease? Who is more worthy of our confidence than the One who made so great a sacrifice for our redemption? Our Lord has given us definite instruction through the apostle James as to our duty in case of sickness. When human help fails, God will be the helper of His people. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." James 5:14, 15. If the professed followers of Christ would, with purity of heart, exercise as much faith in the promises of God as they repose in satanic agencies, they would realize in soul and body the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit.

God has granted to this people great light, yet we are not placed beyond the reach of temptation. Who among us are seeking help from the gods of Ekron? Look on this picture—not drawn from imagination. In how many, even among Seventh-day Adventists, may its leading characteristics be seen? An invalid—apparently very conscientious, yet bigoted and self-sufficient—freely avows his contempt for the laws of health and life, which divine mercy has led us as a people to [56] accept. His food must be prepared in a manner to satisfy his morbid cravings. Rather than sit at a table where wholesome food is provided, he will patronize restaurants, because he can there indulge appetite without restraint. A fluent advocate of temperance, he disregards its foundation principles. He wants relief, but refuses to obtain it at the price of self-denial. That man is worshiping at the shrine of perverted appetite. He is an idolater. The powers which, sanctified and ennobled, might be employed to honor God, are weakened and rendered of little service. An irritable temper, a confused brain, and unstrung nerves are among the results of his disregard of nature's laws. He is inefficient, unreliable.

Whoever has the courage and honesty to warn him of danger thereby incurs his displeasure. The slightest remonstrance or opposition is sufficient to rouse his combative spirit. But now an opportunity is presented to seek help from one whose power comes through the medium of witchcraft. To this source he applies with eagerness, freely expending time and money in hope of securing the proffered boon. He is deceived, infatuated. The sorcerer's power is made the theme of praise, and others are influenced to seek his aid. Thus the God of Israel is dishonored, while Satan's power is revered and exalted.

In the name of Christ I would address His professed followers: Abide in the faith which you have received from the beginning. Shun profane and vain babblings. Instead of putting your trust in witchcraft, have faith in the living God. Cursed is the path that leads to En-dor or to Ekron. The feet will stumble and fall that venture upon the forbidden ground. There is a God in Israel, with whom is deliverance for all that are oppressed. Righteousness is the habitation of His throne.

There is danger in departing in the least from the Lord's instruction. When we deviate from the plain path of duty, a train of circumstances will arise that seems irresistibly to draw us further and further from the right.

Needless intimacies [57] with those who have no respect for God will seduce us ere we are aware. Fear to offend worldly friends will deter us from expressing our gratitude to God or acknowledging our dependence upon Him. We must keep close to the word of God. We need its warnings and encouragement, its threatenings and promises. We need the perfect example given only in the life and character of our Saviour.

Venture Not on Satan's Ground

Angels of God will preserve His people while they walk in the path of duty, but there is no assurance of such protection for those who deliberately venture upon Satan's ground. An agent of the great deceiver will say and do anything to gain his object. It matters little whether he calls himself a spiritualist, an "electric physician," or a "magnetic healer." By specious pretenses he wins the confidence of the unwary. He pretends to read the life history and to understand all the difficulties and afflictions of those who resort to him. Disguising himself as an angel of light, while the blackness of the pit is in his heart, he manifests great interest in women who seek his counsel. He tells them that all their troubles are due to an unhappy marriage. This may be too true, but such a counselor does not better their condition. He tells them that they need love and sympathy. Pretending great interest in their welfare, he casts a spell over his unsuspecting victims, charming them as the serpent charms the trembling bird. Soon they are completely in his power; sin, disgrace, and ruin are the terrible sequel.

These workers of iniquity are not few. Their path is marked by desolated homes, blasted reputations, and broken hearts. But of all this the world knows little; still they go on making fresh victims, and Satan exults in the ruin he has wrought.

The visible and the invisible world are in close contact. Could the veil be lifted, we would see evil angels pressing their darkness around us and working with all their power to [58] deceive and destroy. Wicked men are surrounded, influenced, and aided by evil spirits. The man of faith and prayer has yielded his soul to divine guidance, and angels of God bring to him light and strength from heaven.

No man can serve two masters. Light and darkness are no more opposites than are the service of God and the service of Satan. The prophet Elijah presented the matter in the true light when he fearlessly appealed to apostate Israel: “If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.” 1 Kings 18:21.

Those who give themselves up to the sorcery of Satan may boast of great benefit received thereby, but does this prove their course to be wise or safe? What if life should be prolonged? What if temporal gain should be secured? Will it pay in the end to disregard the will of God? All such apparent gain will prove at last an irrecoverable loss. We cannot with impunity break down a single barrier which God has erected to guard His people from Satan’s power.

Our only safety is in preserving the ancient landmarks. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. [59]

Looking Unto Jesus

Many make a serious mistake in their religious life by keeping the attention fixed upon their feelings and thus judging of their advancement or decline. Feelings are not a safe criterion. We are not to look within for evidence of our acceptance with God. We shall find there nothing but that which will discourage us. Our only hope is in “looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.” Hebrews 12:2. There is everything in Him to inspire with hope, with faith, and with courage. He is our righteousness, our consolation and rejoicing.

Those who look within for comfort will become weary and disappointed. A sense of our weakness and unworthiness should lead us with humility of heart to plead the atoning sacrifice of Christ. As we rely upon His merits we shall find rest and peace and joy. He saves to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.

We need to trust in Jesus daily, hourly. He has promised that as our day is, our strength shall be. By His grace we may bear all the burdens of the present and perform its duties. But many are weighed down by the anticipation of future troubles. They are constantly seeking to bring tomorrow’s burdens into today. Thus a large share of all their trials are imaginary. For these, Jesus has made no provision. He promises grace only for the day. He bids us not to burden ourselves with the cares and troubles of tomorrow; for “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Matthew 6:34.

The habit of brooding over anticipated evils is unwise and unchristian. In thus doing we fail to enjoy the blessings and to improve the opportunities of the present. The Lord requires^{*}

^{*}1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:199-202.

us to perform the duties of today and to endure its trials. We are today to watch that we offend not in word or deed. We must today praise and honor God. By the exercise of living faith today we are to conquer the enemy. We must today seek God and be determined that we will not rest satisfied without His presence. We should watch and work and pray as though this were the last day that would be granted us. How intensely earnest, then, would be our life. How closely would we follow Jesus in all our words and deeds.

Make Jesus Your Confidant

There are few who rightly appreciate or improve the precious privilege of prayer. We should go to Jesus and tell Him all our needs. We may bring Him our little cares and perplexities as well as our greater troubles. Whatever arises to disturb or distress us, we should take it to the Lord in prayer. When we feel that we need the presence of Christ at every step, Satan will have little opportunity to intrude his temptations. It is his studied effort to keep us away from our best and most sympathizing friend. We should make no one our confidant but Jesus. We can safely commune with Him of all that is in our hearts.

Brethren and sisters, when you assemble for social worship, believe that Jesus meets with you; believe that He is willing to bless you. Turn the eye away from self; look unto Jesus, talk of His matchless love. By beholding Him you will become changed into His likeness. When you pray, be brief, come right to the point. Do not preach the Lord a sermon in your long prayers. Ask for the bread of life as a hungry child asks bread of his earthly father. God will bestow upon us every needed blessing if we ask Him in simplicity and faith.

The prayers offered by ministers previous to their discourses are frequently long and inappropriate. They embrace a whole round of subjects that have no reference to the necessities of the occasion or the wants of the people. Such prayers [61] are suitable for the closet, but should not be offered in public. The hearers become weary and long for the minister to close. Brethren, carry the people with you in your prayers. Go to your

Saviour in faith, tell Him what you need on that occasion. Let the soul go out after God with intense longing for the blessing needed at that time.

Prayer is the most holy exercise of the soul. It should be sincere, humble, earnest—the desires of a renewed heart breathed in the presence of a holy God. When the suppliant feels that he is in the divine presence, self will be forgotten. He will have no desire to display human talent; he will not seek to please the ear of men, but to obtain the blessing which the soul craves.

If we would only take the Lord at His word, what blessings might be ours! Would that there were more fervent, effectual prayer. Christ will be the helper of all who seek Him in faith. [62]

The Seal of God

“He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.”

“And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer’s inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.” Ezekiel 9:1, 3-6.

Jesus is about to leave the mercy seat of the heavenly sanctuary to put on garments of vengeance and pour out His wrath in judgments upon those who have not responded to the light God has given them. “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” Ecclesiastes 8:11. Instead of being softened by the patience and long forbearance that the Lord has exercised toward them, those who fear not God and love not the truth strengthen their hearts in their evil course. But there are limits even to the forbearance of God, and many are exceeding these boundaries. They have overrun the limits of grace, and therefore God must interfere and vindicate His own honor.*

*1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:207-216.

God Reckons with Nations

Of the Amorites the Lord said: “In the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” Genesis 15:16. Although this nation was conspicuous because of its idolatry and corruption, it had not yet filled up the cup of its iniquity, and God would not give command for its utter destruction. The people were to see the divine power manifested in a marked manner, that they might be left without excuse. The compassionate Creator was willing to bear with their iniquity until the fourth generation. Then, if no change was seen for the better, His judgments were to fall upon them.

With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps an account with all nations. While His mercy is tendered, with calls to repentance, this account will remain open; but when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath commences. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. There is no more pleading of mercy in their behalf.

The prophet, looking down the ages, had this time presented before his vision. The nations of this age have been the recipients of unprecedented mercies. The choicest of heaven’s blessings have been given them, but increased pride, covetousness, idolatry, contempt of God, and base ingratitude are written against them. They are fast closing up their account with God.

But that which causes me to tremble is the fact that those who have had the greatest light and privileges have become contaminated by the prevailing iniquity. Influenced by the unrighteous around them, many, even of those who profess the truth, have grown cold and are borne down by the strong current of evil. The universal scorn thrown upon true piety and holiness leads those who do not connect closely with God to lose their reverence for His law. If they were following [64] the light and obeying the truth from the heart, this holy law would seem even more precious to them when thus despised and set aside. As the disrespect for God’s law becomes more manifest, the line of demarcation between its observers and the world becomes more distinct. Love for the divine precepts increases with one class according as contempt for them increases with another class.

The crisis is fast approaching. The rapidly swelling figures show that the time for God's visitation has about come. Although loath to punish, nevertheless He will punish, and that speedily. Those who walk in the light will see signs of the approaching peril; but they are not to sit in quiet, unconcerned expectancy of the ruin, comforting themselves with the belief that God will shelter His people in the day of visitation. Far from it. They should realize that it is their duty to labor diligently to save others, looking with strong faith to God for help. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16.

The leaven of godliness has not entirely lost its power. At the time when the danger and depression of the church are greatest, the little company who are standing in the light will be sighing and crying for the abominations that are done in the land. But more especially will their prayers arise in behalf of the church because its members are doing after the manner of the world.

The earnest prayers of this faithful few will not be in vain. When the Lord comes forth as an avenger, He will also come as a protector of all those who have preserved the faith in its purity and kept themselves unspotted from the world. It is at this time that God has promised to avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them.

The command is: "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." Ezekiel 9:4. [65] These sighing, crying ones had been holding forth the words of life; they had reproved, counseled, and entreated. Some who had been dishonoring God repented and humbled their hearts before Him. But the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel; although many still continued the forms of religion, His power and presence were lacking.

In the time when His wrath shall go forth in judgments, these humble, devoted followers of Christ will be distinguished from the rest of the world by their soul anguish, which is expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God's honor and a love for souls will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. Their righteous souls are vexed day by day with the unholy works and conversation of the unrighteous. They are powerless to

stop the rushing torrent of iniquity, and hence they are filled with grief and alarm. They mourn before God to see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament and afflict their souls because pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church. The Spirit of God, which prompts to reproof, is trampled underfoot, while the servants of Satan triumph. God is dishonored, the truth made of none effect.

The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God. The Lord commissions His messengers, the men with slaughtering weapons in their hands: “Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.” Ezekiel 9:6.

Here we see that the church—the Lord’s sanctuary—was [66] the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God’s power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say: The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus “Peace and safety” is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God’s people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children all perish together.

The Worst Sins

The abominations for which the faithful ones were sighing and crying were all that could be discerned by finite eyes, but by far the worst sins, those which provoked the jealousy of the pure and holy God, were unrevealed. The great Searcher of hearts knoweth every sin committed in

secret by the workers of iniquity. These persons come to feel secure in their deceptions and, because of His long-suffering, say that the Lord seeth not, and then act as though He had forsaken the earth. But He will detect their hypocrisy and will open before others those sins which they were so careful to hide.

No superiority of rank, dignity, or worldly wisdom, no position in sacred office, will preserve men from sacrificing principle when left to their own deceitful hearts. Those who have been regarded as worthy and righteous prove to be ringleaders in apostasy and examples in indifference and in the abuse of God's mercies. Their wicked course He will tolerate no longer, and in His wrath He deals with them without mercy.

It is with reluctance that the Lord withdraws His presence [67] from those who have been blessed with great light and who have felt the power of the word in ministering to others. They were once His faithful servants, favored with His presence and guidance; but they departed from Him and led others into error, and therefore are brought under the divine displeasure.

Upon Whom the Seal Is Placed

The day of God's vengeance is just upon us. The seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those only who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. Those who link in sympathy with the world are eating and drinking with the drunken and will surely be destroyed with the workers of iniquity. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." 1 Peter 3:12.

Our own course of action will determine whether we shall receive the seal of the living God or be cut down by the destroying weapons. Already a few drops of God's wrath have fallen upon the earth; but when the seven last plagues shall be poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation, then it will be forever too late to repent and find shelter. No atoning blood will then wash away the stains of sin.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble,

such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1. When this time of trouble comes, every case is decided; there is no longer probation, no longer mercy for the impenitent. The seal of the living God is upon His people. This small remnant, unable to defend themselves in the deadly conflict with the powers of earth that are marshaled by the dragon host, make God their defense. The decree has been passed by the highest earthly authority that they shall worship the beast and receive his mark under [68] pain of persecution and death. May God help His people now, for what can they then do in such a fearful conflict without His assistance!

Courage, fortitude, faith, and implicit trust in God’s power to save do not come in a moment. These heavenly graces are acquired by the experience of years. By a life of holy endeavor and firm adherence to the right the children of God were sealing their destiny. Beset with temptations without number, they knew they must resist firmly or be conquered. They felt that they had a great work to do, and at any hour they might be called to lay off their armor; and should they come to the close of life with their work undone, it would be an eternal loss. They eagerly accepted the light from heaven, as did the first disciples from the lips of Jesus. When those early Christians were exiled to mountains and deserts, when left in dungeons to die with hunger, cold, and torture, when martyrdom seemed the only way out of their distress, they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ, who was crucified for them. Their worthy example will be a comfort and encouragement to the people of God who will be brought into the time of trouble such as never was.

Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. They had the light of truth, they knew their Master’s will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works. These who were so familiar with prophecy and the treasures of divine wisdom should have acted their faith. They should have commanded their households after them, that by a well-ordered family they might present to the world the influence of the truth upon the human heart.

By their lack of devotion and piety, and their failure to reach a high religious standard, they make other souls contented with their position. Men

of finite judgment cannot see that in patterning after these men who have so often opened [69] to them the treasures of God's word, they will surely endanger their souls. Jesus is the only true pattern. Everyone must now search the Bible for himself upon his knees before God, with the humble, teachable heart of a child if he would know what the Lord requires of him. However high any minister may have stood in the favor of God, if he neglects to follow out the light given him of God, if he refuses to be taught as a little child, he will go into darkness and satanic delusions and will lead others in the same path.

Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost.

We are too easily satisfied with our attainments. We feel rich and increased with goods and know not that we are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Revelation 3:17. Now is the time to heed the admonition of the True Witness: "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Revelation 3:18.

Living Faith Needed

In this life we must meet fiery trials and make costly sacrifices, but the peace of Christ is the reward. There has been so little self-denial, so little suffering for Christ's sake, that the cross is almost entirely forgotten. We must be partakers with Christ of His sufferings if we would sit down in triumph with Him on His throne. So long as we choose the easy path of self-indulgence and are frightened at self-denial, our faith will never become firm, and we cannot know the peace of Jesus nor the joy that comes through conscious victory. The most exalted [70] of the redeemed host that stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, clad in white, know the conflict of overcoming, for they have come up through great tribulation. Those who have yielded to circumstances rather than engage in this conflict

will not know how to stand in that day when anguish will be upon every soul, when, though Noah, Job, and Daniel were in the land, they could save neither son nor daughter, for everyone must deliver his soul by his own righteousness.

No one need say that his case is hopeless, that he cannot live the life of a Christian. Ample provision is made by the death of Christ for every soul. Jesus is our ever-present help in time of need. Only call upon Him in faith, and He has promised to hear and answer your petitions.

Oh, for a living, active faith! We need it; we must have it, or we shall faint and fail in the day of trial. The darkness that will then rest upon our path must not discourage us or drive us to despair. It is the veil with which God covers His glory when He comes to impart rich blessings. We should know this by our past experience. In that day when God has a controversy with His people this experience will be a source of comfort and hope.

It is now that we must keep ourselves and our children unspotted from the world. It is now that we must wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. It is now that we must overcome pride, passion, and spiritual slothfulness. It is now that we must awake and make determined effort for symmetry of character. "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Hebrews 3:7, 8, 15. We are in a most trying position, waiting, watching for our Lord's appearing. The world is in darkness. "But ye, brethren," says Paul, "are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." 1 Thessalonians 5:4. It is ever God's purpose to bring light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, and rest out of weariness for the waiting, longing soul.

What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of [71] preparation? Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth—these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.

Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful

hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven. Go forward, my brethren and sisters. I can only write briefly upon these points at this time, merely calling your attention to the necessity of preparation. Search the Scriptures for yourselves, that you may understand the fearful solemnity of the present hour.

Even life itself should not be purchased with the price of falsehood. By a word or a nod the martyrs might have denied the truth and saved their lives. By consenting to cast a single grain of incense upon the idol altar they might have been saved from the rack, the scaffold, or the cross. But they refused to be false in word or deed, though life was the boon they would receive by so doing. Imprisonment, torture, and death, with a clear conscience, were welcomed by them, rather than deliverance on condition of deception, falsehood, and apostasy. By fidelity and faith in Christ they earned spotless robes and jeweled crowns. Their lives were ennobled and elevated in the sight of God because they stood firmly for the truth under the most aggravated circumstances.—1879, Testimonies for the Church 4:336. [72]

An Appeal

What can I say to you, my brethren, that shall arouse you from your carnal security? I have been shown your perils. There are both believers and unbelievers in the church. Christ represents these two classes in His parable of the vine and its branches. He exhorts His followers: “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.” John 15:4, 5.

There is a wide difference between a pretended union and a real connection with Christ by faith. A profession of the truth places men in the church, but this does not prove that they have a vital connection with the living Vine. A rule is given by which the true disciple may be distinguished from those who claim to follow Christ but have not faith in Him. The one class are fruit bearing, the other, fruitless. The one are often subjected to the pruning knife of God that they may bring forth more fruit; the other, as withered branches, are ere long to be severed from the living Vine.

I am deeply solicitous that our people should preserve the living testimony among them, and that the church should be kept pure from the unbelieving element. Can we conceive of a closer, more intimate relation to Christ than is set forth in the words: “I am the Vine, ye are the branches”? The fibers of the branch are almost identical with those of the vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the trunk to the branches is unobstructed and constant.*

*-1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:228-234.

The root sends its nourishment through the branch. Such is the true believer's relation to Christ. He abides in Christ and draws his nourishment

from Him.

This spiritual relation can be established only by the exercise of personal faith. This faith must express on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will, our feelings, desires, interests, and honor identified with the prosperity of Christ's kingdom and the honor of His cause, we constantly receiving grace from Him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us.

When this intimacy of connection and communion is formed, our sins are laid upon Christ; His righteousness is imputed to us. He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We have access to God through Him; we are accepted in the Beloved. Whoever by word or deed injures a believer thereby wounds Jesus. Whoever gives a cup of cold water to a disciple because he is a child of God will be regarded by Christ as giving to Him.

It was when Christ was about to take leave of His disciples that He gave them the beautiful emblem of His relation to believers. He had been presenting before them the close union with Himself by which they could maintain spiritual life when His visible presence was withdrawn. To impress it upon their minds He gave them the vine as its most striking and appropriate symbol.

The Jews had always regarded the vine as the most noble of plants and a type of all that was powerful, excellent, and fruitful. "The vine," our Lord would seem to say, "which you prize so highly, is a symbol. I am the reality; I am the True Vine. As a nation you prize the vine; as sinners you should prize Me above all things earthly. The branch cannot live separated from the vine; no more can you live unless you are abiding in Me." ... [74]

Choosing Proper Home Environment

Few realize the importance of shunning, so far as possible, all associations unfriendly to religious life. In choosing their surroundings, few make their spiritual prosperity the first consideration.

Parents flock with their families to the cities because they fancy it easier to obtain a livelihood there than in the country. The children, having

nothing to do when not in school, obtain a street education. From evil associates they acquire habits of vice and dissipation. The parents see all this; but it will require a sacrifice to correct their error, and they stay where they are until Satan gains full control of their children. Better sacrifice any and every worldly consideration than to imperil the precious souls committed to your care. They will be assailed by temptations, and should be taught to meet them; but it is your duty to cut off every influence, to break up every habit, to sunder every tie, that keeps you from the most free, open, and hearty committal of yourselves and your family to God.

Instead of the crowded city seek some retired situation where your children will be, so far as possible, shielded from temptation, and there train and educate them for usefulness. The prophet Ezekiel thus enumerates the causes that led to Sodom's sin and destruction: "Pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." All who would escape the doom of Sodom must shun the course that brought God's judgments upon that wicked city.

My brethren, you are disregarding the most sacred claims of God by your neglect to consecrate yourselves and your children to Him. Many of you are reposing in false security, absorbed in selfish interests, and attracted by earthly treasures. You fear no evil. Danger seems a great way off. You will be deceived, deluded, to your eternal ruin unless you [75] arouse and with penitence and deep humiliation return unto the Lord.

Again and again has the voice from heaven addressed you. Will you obey this voice? Will you heed the counsel of the True Witness to seek the gold tried in the fire, the white raiment, and the eyesalve? The gold is faith and love, the white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the eyesalve is that spiritual discernment which will enable you to see the wiles of Satan and shun them, to detect sin and abhor it, to see truth and obey it.

The deadly lethargy of the world is paralyzing your senses. Sin no longer appears repulsive because you are blinded by Satan. The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. "Escape for thy life" (Genesis 19:17) is the warning from the angels of God. Other voices are heard saying: "Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm." Those who are at ease in Zion cry "Peace and safety," while heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor. The

young, the frivolous, the pleasure loving, consider these warnings as idle tales and turn from them with a jest. Parents are inclined to think their children about right in the matter, and all sleep on at ease. Thus it was at the destruction of the old world and when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire. On the night prior to their destruction the cities of the plain rioted in pleasure. Lot was derided for his fears and warnings. But it was these scoffers that perished in the flames. That very night the door of mercy was forever closed to the wicked, careless inhabitants of Sodom.

It is God who holds in His hands the destiny of souls. He will not always be mocked; He will not always be trifled with. Already His judgments are in the land. Fierce and awful tempests leave destruction and death in their wake. The devouring fire lays low the desolate forest and the crowded city. Storm and shipwreck await those who journey [76] upon the deep. Accident and calamity threaten all who travel upon the land. Hurricanes, earthquakes, sword and famine, follow in quick succession. Yet the hearts of men are hardened. They recognize not the warning voice of God. They will not flee to the only refuge from the gathering storm.

Many who have been placed upon the walls of Zion, to watch with eagle eye for the approach of danger and lift the voice of warning, are themselves asleep. The very ones who should be most active and vigilant in this hour of peril are neglecting their duty and bringing upon themselves the blood of souls.

You have failed to give your children the attention and encouragement they need. You have not bound them to your heart by the tenderest cords of love. Your business is a great tax upon your time and energies, and causes you to neglect home duties. Yet you have become so accustomed to this burden that it would seem a great sacrifice to lay it down; still, if you could do this, it would be for your spiritual interest and for the happiness and morals of your children. It would be well for you to lay by your perplexing cares and find a retreat in the country, where there is not so strong an influence to corrupt the morals of the young.

True, you would not be entirely free from annoyances and perplexing cares in the country; but you would there avoid many evils, and close the door against a flood of temptations which threaten to overpower the minds of your children. They need employment and variety. The sameness of their

home makes them uneasy and restless, and they have fallen into the habit of mingling with the vicious lads of the town, thus obtaining a street education.—1876, Testimonies for the Church 4:135, 136. [77]

Christian Unity

“I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Corinthians 1:10.

Union is strength; division is weakness. When those who believe present truth are united, they exert a telling influence. Satan well understands this. Never was he more determined than now to make of none effect the truth of God by causing bitterness and dissension among the Lord’s people.

The world is against us, the popular churches are against us, the laws of the land will soon be against us. If there was ever a time when the people of God should press together, it is now. God has committed to us the special truths for this time to make known to the world. The last message of mercy is now going forth. We are dealing with men and women who are judgment bound. How careful should we be in every word and act to follow closely the Pattern, that our example may lead men to Christ. With what care should we seek so to present the truth that others by beholding its beauty and simplicity may be led to receive it. If our characters testify of its sanctifying power, we shall be a continual light to others—living epistles, known and read of all men. We cannot afford now to give place to Satan by cherishing disunion, discord, and strife.

That union and love might exist among His disciples was the burden of our Saviour’s last prayer for them prior to His crucifixion. With the agony of the cross before Him, His solicitude was not for Himself, but for those whom He should leave to carry forward His work in the earth. The^{*}

^{*}—1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:236-248.

severest trials awaited them, but Jesus saw that their greatest danger would be from a spirit of bitterness and division. Hence He prayed:

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” John 17:17-21.

That prayer of Christ embraces all His followers to the close of time. Our Saviour foresaw the trials and dangers of His people; He is not unmindful of the dissensions and divisions that distract and weaken His church. He is looking upon us with deeper interest and more tender compassion than moves an earthly parent’s heart toward a wayward, afflicted child. He bids us learn of Him. He invites our confidence. He bids us open our hearts to receive His love. He has pledged Himself to be our helper.

Steady Spiritual Leadership

When Christ ascended to heaven, He left the work on earth in the hands of His servants, the undershepherds. “And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-13.

In sending forth His ministers our Saviour gave gifts unto men, for through them He communicates to the world the words of eternal life. This is the means which God has [79] ordained for the perfecting of the saints in knowledge and true holiness. The work of Christ’s servants is not merely to preach the truth; they are to watch for souls as they that must render account to God. They are to reprove, rebuke, exhort with long suffering and doctrine.

All who have been benefited by the labors of God's servant should, according to their ability, unite with him in working for the salvation of souls. This is the work of all true believers, ministers and people. They should keep the grand object ever in view, each seeking to fill his proper position in the church, and all working together in order, harmony, and love.

There is nothing selfish or narrow in the religion of Christ. Its principles are diffusive and aggressive. It is represented by Christ as the bright light, as the saving salt, as the transforming leaven. With zeal, earnestness, and devotion the servants of God will seek to spread far and near the knowledge of the truth; yet they will not neglect to labor for the strength and unity of the church. They will watch carefully lest opportunity be given for diversity and division to creep in.

There have of late arisen among us men who profess to be the servants of Christ, but whose work is opposed to that unity which our Lord established in the church. They have original plans and methods of labor. They desire to introduce changes into the church to suit their ideas of progress and imagine that grand results are thus to be secured. These men need to be learners rather than teachers in the school of Christ. They are ever restless, aspiring to accomplish some great work, to do something that will bring honor to themselves. They need to learn that most profitable of all lessons, humility and faith in Jesus. Some are watching their fellow laborers and anxiously endeavoring to point out their errors, when they should rather be earnestly seeking to prepare their own souls for the great conflict before them. The Saviour bids them: "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:29.

[80]

Teachers of the truth, missionaries, officers in the church, can do a good work for the Master if they will but purify their own souls by obeying the truth. Every living Christian will be a disinterested worker for God. The Lord has given us a knowledge of His will that we may become channels of light to others. If Christ is abiding in us, we cannot help working for Him. It is impossible to retain the favor of God and enjoy the blessing of a Saviour's love, and yet be indifferent to the danger of those who are perishing in their sins. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." John 15:8.

Paul Urges Unity and Love

Paul urges the Ephesians to preserve unity and love: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4:1-6.

The apostle exhorts his brethren to manifest in their lives the power of the truth which he had presented to them. By meekness and gentleness, forbearance and love, they were to exemplify the character of Christ and the blessings of His salvation. There is but one body, and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith. As members of the body of Christ all believers are animated by the same spirit and the same hope. Divisions in the church dishonor the religion of Christ before the world and give occasion to the enemies of truth to justify their course. Paul’s instructions were not written alone for the church in his day. God designed that they should be sent down to us. What are we doing to preserve unity in the bonds of peace?

When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the early church, the brethren loved one another. “They ... did eat [81] their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people: and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Acts 2:46, 47. Those primitive Christians were few in numbers, without wealth or honor, yet they exerted a mighty influence. The light of the world shone out from them. They were a terror to evildoers wherever their character and their doctrines were known. For this cause they were hated by the wicked and persecuted even unto death.

God’s Standard Unchanged

The standard of holiness is the same today as in the days of the apostles. Neither the promises nor the requirements of God have lost aught of their

force. But what is the state of the Lord's professed people as compared with the early church? Where is the Spirit and power of God which then attended the preaching of the gospel? Alas, "how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!" Lamentations 4:1.

The Lord planted His church as a vine in a fruitful field. With tenderest care He nourished and cherished it, that it might bring forth the fruits of righteousness. His language is: "What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" But this vine of God's planting has inclined to the earth and entwined its tendrils about human supports. Its branches are extended far and wide, but it bears the fruit of a degenerate vine. The Master of the vineyard declares: "When I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Isaiah 5:4.

The Lord has bestowed great blessings upon His church. Justice demands that she return these talents with usury. As the treasures of truth committed to her keeping have increased, her obligations have increased. But instead of improving upon these gifts and going forward unto perfection, she has fallen away from that which she had attained in her earlier experience. The change in her spiritual state has come [82] gradually and almost imperceptibly. As she began to seek the praise and friendship of the world, her faith diminished, her zeal grew languid, her fervent devotion gave place to dead formality. Every advance step toward the world was a step away from God. As pride and worldly ambition have been cherished, the spirit of Christ has departed, and emulation, dissension, and strife have come in to distract and weaken the church.

Paul writes to his Corinthian brethren: "Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" 1 Corinthians 3:3. It is impossible for minds distracted by envy and strife to comprehend the deep spiritual truths of God's word. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Corinthians 2:14. We cannot rightly understand or appreciate divine revelation without the aid of that Spirit by whom the word was given.

Those who are appointed to guard the spiritual interests of the church should be careful to set a right example, giving no occasion for envy, jealousy, or suspicion, ever manifesting that same spirit of love, respect, and

courtesy which they desire to encourage in their brethren. Diligent heed should be given to the instructions of God's word. Let every manifestation of animosity or unkindness be checked; let every root of bitterness be removed. When trouble arises between brethren, the Saviour's rule should be strictly followed. All possible effort should be made to effect a reconciliation; but if the parties stubbornly persist in remaining at variance, they should be suspended till they can harmonize.

A Time for Heart Examination

Upon the occurrence of trials in the church let every member examine his own heart to see if the cause of trouble does not exist within. By spiritual pride, a desire to dictate, an ambitious [83] longing for honor or position, a lack of self-control, by the indulgence of passion or prejudice, by instability or lack of judgment, the church may be disturbed and her peace sacrificed.

Difficulties are often caused by the vendors of gossip, whose whispered hints and suggestions poison unsuspecting minds and separate the closest friends. Mischief-makers are seconded in their evil work by the many who stand with open ears and evil heart, saying: "Report, ... and we will report it." This sin should not be tolerated among the followers of Christ. No Christian parent should permit gossip to be repeated in the family circle or remarks to be made disparaging the members of the church.

Christians should regard it as a religious duty to repress a spirit of envy or emulation. They should rejoice in the superior reputation or prosperity of their brethren, even when their own character or achievements seem to be cast in the shade. It was the pride and ambition cherished in the heart of Satan that banished him from heaven. These evils are deeply rooted in our fallen nature, and if not removed they will overshadow every good and noble quality and bring forth envy and strife as their baleful fruits.

We should seek for true goodness rather than greatness. Those who possess the mind of Christ will have humble views of themselves. They will labor for the purity and prosperity of the church, and be ready to sacrifice their own interests and desires rather than to cause dissension among their brethren.

Satan is constantly seeking to cause distrust, alienation, and malice among God's people. We shall be often tempted to feel that our rights are invaded, when there is no real cause for such feelings. Those whose love for self is stronger than their love for Christ and His cause will place their own interests first and resort to almost any expedient to guard and maintain them. When they consider themselves injured by their brethren, some will even go to law instead of following the Saviour's rule. [84]

Lawsuits Between Brethren

Even many who appear to be conscientious Christians are hindered by pride and self-esteem from going privately to those they think in error, that they may talk the matter over in the spirit of Christ and pray for one another. Contentions, strife, and lawsuits between brethren are a disgrace to the cause of truth. Those who take such a course expose the church to the ridicule of her enemies and cause the powers of darkness to triumph. They are piercing the wounds of Christ afresh and putting Him to an open shame. By ignoring the authority of the church they show contempt for God, who gave to the church its authority.

Paul writes to the Galatians: "I would they were even cut off which trouble you. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." Galatians 5:12-16.

False teachers had brought to the Galatians doctrines that were opposed to the gospel of Christ. Paul sought to expose and correct these errors. He greatly desired that the false teachers might be separated from the church, but their influence had affected so many of the believers that it seemed hazardous to take action against them. There was danger of causing strife and division which would be ruinous to the spiritual interests of the church. He therefore sought to impress upon his brethren the importance of trying to help one another in love.

He declared that all the requirements of the law setting forth our duty to our fellow men are fulfilled in love to one another. He warned them that if they indulged hatred and strife, dividing into parties, and like the brutes biting and devouring one another, they would bring upon themselves [85] present unhappiness and future ruin. There was but one way to prevent these terrible evils and that was, as the apostle enjoined upon them, to “walk in the Spirit.” They must by constant prayer seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which would lead them to love and unity.

When Satan Takes Control

A house divided against itself cannot stand. When Christians contend, Satan comes in to take control. How often has he succeeded in destroying the peace and harmony of churches. What fierce controversies, what bitterness, what hatred, has a very little matter started! What hopes have been blasted, how many families have been rent asunder by discord and contention!

Paul charged his brethren to beware lest in trying to correct the faults of others they should commit sins equally great themselves. He warns them that hatred, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, and envyings are as truly the works of the flesh as are lasciviousness, adultery, drunkenness, and murder, and will as surely close the gate of heaven against the guilty.

Christ declares: “Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in Me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.” Mark 9:42. Whoever by willful deception or by a wrong example misleads a disciple of Christ is guilty of a great sin. Whoever would make him an object of slander or ridicule is insulting Jesus. Our Saviour marks every wrong done to His followers.

How were those punished who in olden time made light of what God had chosen as sacred to Himself? Belshazzar and his thousand lords profaned the golden vessels of Jehovah and praised the idols of Babylon. But the God whom they defied was a witness of the unholy scene. In the midst of their sacrilegious mirth a bloodless hand was seen tracing mysterious [86] characters upon the palace wall. Filled with terror, king and courtiers heard their doom pronounced by the servant of the Most High.

Let those who delight to trace words of calumny and falsehood against the servants of Christ remember that God is a witness of their deeds. Their slanderous touch is not profaning soulless vessels but the characters of those whom Christ has purchased by His blood. The hand which traced the characters upon the walls of Belshazzar's palace keeps faithful record of every act of injustice or oppression committed against God's people.

Sacred history presents striking examples of the Lord's jealous care for the weakest of His children. During the journeying of Israel in the wilderness the weary and feeble ones who had fallen behind the body of the people were attacked and slain by the cowardly and cruel Amalekites. Afterward Israel made war with the Amalekites and defeated them. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." Exodus 17:14. Again the charge was repeated by Moses just before his death, that it might not be forgotten by his posterity: Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. ... Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it." Deuteronomy 25:17-19.

If God thus punished the cruelty of a heathen nation, how must He regard those who, professing to be His people, will make war upon their own brethren who are worn and wearied laborers in His cause? Satan has great power over those who yield to his control. It was the chief priests and elders—the religious teachers of the people—that urged on the murderous [87] throng from the judgment hall to Calvary. There are hearts today among the professed followers of Christ inspired by the same spirit that clamored for the crucifixion of our Saviour. Let the workers of evil remember that to all their acts there is one witness, a holy, sin-hating God. He will bring all their works into judgment, with every secret thing.

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself." Romans 15:1-3. As Christ has pitied and helped us in our weakness and sinfulness, so should we pity and help others. Many are perplexed with doubt, burdened with

infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ's stead, can be as a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon God. Oh, this is a blessed work! Let not pride and selfishness prevent us from doing the good which we may do if we will work in Christ's name and with a loving, tender spirit.

Restore the Fallen

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:1, 2. Here, again, our duty is plainly set before us. How can the professed followers of Christ so lightly regard these inspired injunctions?

Not long since I received a letter describing a circumstance in which a brother had manifested indiscretion. Although it occurred years ago, and was a very small matter, hardly worthy of a second thought, the writer stated that it had forever destroyed her confidence in that brother. If that sister's life should show upon review no greater errors, it would be indeed a marvel, for human nature is very weak. I [88] have been and am still fellowshiping as brethren and sisters those who have been guilty of grave sins and who even now do not see their sins as God sees them. But the Lord bears with these persons, and why should not I? He will yet cause His Spirit so to impress their hearts that sin will appear to them as it appeared to Paul, exceedingly sinful.

We know but little of our own hearts and have but little sense of our own need of the mercy of God. This is why we cherish so little of that sweet compassion which Jesus manifests toward us and which we should manifest toward one another. We should remember that our brethren are weak, erring mortals like ourselves. Suppose that a brother has through unwatchfulness been overborne by temptation and contrary to his general conduct has committed some error, what course shall be pursued toward him? We learn from the Bible that men whom God had used to do a great and good work committed grave sins. The Lord did not pass these by unrebuked, neither

did He cast off His servants. When they repented, He graciously forgave them and revealed to them His presence and wrought through them.

Let poor, weak mortals consider how great is their own need of pity and forbearance from God and from their brethren. Let them beware how they judge and condemn others. We should give heed to the instruction of the apostle: “Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Galatians 6:1. We may fall under temptation and need all the forbearance which we are called to exercise toward the offender. “With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Matthew 7:2.

The apostle adds a caution to the independent and self-confident: “If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.... Every man shall bear his own burden.” Galatians 6:3-5. He who considers himself [89] superior in judgment and experience to his brethren and despises their counsel and admonition, evinces that he is in a dangerous delusion. The heart is deceitful. He should test his character and life by the Bible standard. God’s word sheds an unerring light upon the pathway of man’s life. Notwithstanding the many influences which arise to divert and distract the mind, those who honestly seek God for wisdom will be guided into the right course. Every man must at last stand or fall for himself, not according to the opinion of the party that sustains or opposes him, not according to the judgment of any man, but according to his real character in the sight of God. The church may warn, counsel, and admonish, but it cannot compel any to take a right course. Whoever persists in disregarding the word of God must bear his own burden, answer to God for himself, and suffer the consequences of his own course.

The Lord has given us in His word definite, unmistakable instructions, by obedience to which we may preserve union and harmony in the church. Brethren and sisters, are you giving heed to these inspired injunctions? Are you Bible readers and doers of the word? Are you striving to fulfill the prayer of Christ that His followers might be one? “The God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God.” Romans 15:5, 6. “Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in

peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” 2 Corinthians 13:11.

God's Building. “Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.” 1 Corinthians 3:9. This figure represents human character, which is to be wrought upon, point by point. Each day God works with His building, stroke upon stroke, to perfect the structure, that it may become a holy temple for [90] Him. Man is to co-operate with God. Each worker is to become just what God designs him to be, building his life with pure, noble deeds, that in the end his character may be a symmetrical structure, a fair temple, honored by God and man. There is to be no flaw in the building, for it is the Lord's. Every stone must be perfectly laid, that it may endure the pressure placed upon it. One stone laid wrong will affect the whole building. To you and to every other worker God gives the warning: “Take heed how you build, that your building may stand the test of storm and tempest, because it is founded on the eternal Rock. Place the stone on the sure foundation, that you may make ready for the day of test and trial, when all will be seen just as they are.”

This warning God presents to me as especially necessary for your welfare. He loves you with a love that is immeasurable. He loves your brethren in the faith, and He works with them to the same end as that to which He works with you. His church on earth is to assume divine proportions before the world, as a temple built of living stones, each one reflecting light. It is to be the light of the world as a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. It is built of stones laid close together, stone fitting to stone, making a firm, solid building. Not all the stones are of the same form or shape. Some are large, some are small, but each has its own place to fill. And the value of each stone is determined by the light that it reflects. This is God's plan. He desires all His workers to fill their appointed places in the work for this time.

We are living amidst the perils of the last days. We are wisely to cultivate every mental and physical power; for all are needed to make the church a building that will represent the wisdom of the great Designer. The talents given us by God are His gifts, and they are to be used in their right relation to one another, so as to make a perfect whole. God gives the talents,

the powers of the mind; man forms the character.—1904, Testimonies for the Church 8:173, 174. [91]

Christ Our Righteousness—*

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9.

God requires that we confess our sins, and humble our hearts before Him; but at the same time we should have confidence in Him as a tender Father, who will not forsake those who put their trust in Him. Many of us walk by sight, and not by faith. We believe the things that are seen, but do not appreciate the precious promises given us in God’s word; and yet we cannot dishonor God more decidedly than by showing that we distrust what He says, and question whether the Lord is in earnest with us or is deceiving us.

God does not give us up because of our sins. We may make mistakes, and grieve His Spirit; but when we repent, and come to Him with contrite hearts, He will not turn us away. There are hindrances to be removed. Wrong feelings have been cherished, and there have been pride, self-sufficiency, impatience, and murmurings. All these separate us from God. Sins must be confessed, there must be a deeper work of grace in the heart. Those who feel weak and discouraged may become strong men of God, and do noble work for the Master. But they must work from a high standpoint; they must be influenced by no selfish motives.

Merits of Christ Our Only Hope

We must learn in the school of Christ. Nothing but His righteousness can entitle us to one of the blessings of the—*

*-A morning talk to the ministers assembled at the General Conference, Battle Creek, Michigan, 1883.

*-1892, Gospel Workers 1892:411-415.

[92]

covenant of grace. We have long desired and tried to obtain these blessings, but have not received them, because we have cherished the idea that we could do something to make ourselves worthy of them. We have not looked away from ourselves, believing that Jesus is a living Saviour. We must not think that our own grace and merits will save us; the grace of Christ is our only hope of salvation. Through His prophet the Lord promises, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:7. We must believe the naked promise, and not accept feeling for faith. When we trust God fully, when we rely upon the merits of Jesus as a sin-pardoning Saviour, we shall receive all the help that we can desire.

We look to self, as though we had power to save ourselves; but Jesus died for us because we are helpless to do this. In Him is our hope, our justification, our righteousness. We should not despond, and fear that we have no Saviour, or that He has no thoughts of mercy toward us. At this very time He is carrying on His work in our behalf, inviting us to come to Him in our helplessness, and be saved. We dishonor Him by our unbelief. It is astonishing how we treat our very best Friend, how little confidence we repose in Him who is able to save to the uttermost, and who has given us every evidence of His great love.

My brethren, are you expecting that your merit will recommend you to the favor of God, thinking that you must be free from sin before you trust His power to save? If this is the struggle going on in your mind, I fear you will gain no strength, and will finally become discouraged.

In the wilderness, when the Lord permitted poisonous serpents to sting the rebellious Israelites, Moses was directed to lift up a brazen serpent, and bid all the wounded look to it and live. But many saw no help in this Heaven-appointed [93] remedy. The dead and dying were all around them, and they knew that without divine help their fate was certain; but they would lament their wounds, their pains, their sure death, until their strength

was gone, and their eyes were glazed, when they might have had instant healing.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,” even so was “the Son of man lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” If you are conscious of your sins, do not devote all your powers to mourning over them, but look and live. Jesus is our only Saviour; and although millions who need to be healed will reject His offered mercy, no one who trusts His merits will be left to perish. While we realize our helpless condition without Christ, we must not be discouraged; we must rely upon a crucified and risen Saviour. Poor, sin-sick, discouraged soul, look and live. Jesus has pledged His word; He will save all who come unto Him.

Come to Jesus, and receive rest and peace. You may have the blessing even now. Satan suggests that you are helpless, and cannot bless yourself. It is true; you are helpless. But lift up Jesus before him: “I have a risen Saviour. In Him I trust, and He will never suffer me to be confounded. In His name I triumph. He is my righteousness, and my crown of rejoicing.” Let no one here feel that his case is hopeless; for it is not. You may see that you are sinful and undone; but it is just on this account that you need a Saviour. If you have sins to confess, lose no time. These moments are golden. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled; for Jesus has promised it. Precious Saviour! His arms are open to receive us, and His great heart of love is waiting to bless us.

Some seem to feel that they must be on probation, and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed, before they [94] can claim His blessing. But these dear souls may claim His blessing even now. They must have His grace, the Spirit of Christ, to help their infirmities, or they cannot form a Christian character. Jesus loves to have us come to Him, just as we are—sinful, helpless, dependent.

Repentance, as well as forgiveness, is the gift of God through Christ. It is through the influence of the Holy Spirit that we are convicted of sin, and feel our need of pardon. None but the contrite are forgiven; but it is the grace of God that makes the heart penitent. He is acquainted with all our weaknesses and infirmities, and He will help us.

Some who come to God by repentance and confession, and even believe that their sins are forgiven, still fail of claiming, as they should, the promises of God. They do not see that Jesus is an ever-present Saviour; and they are not ready to commit the keeping of their souls to Him, relying upon Him to perfect the work of grace begun in their hearts. While they think they are committing themselves to God, there is a great deal of self-dependence. There are conscientious souls that trust partly to God, and partly to themselves. They do not look to God, to be kept by His power, but depend upon watchfulness against temptation, and the performance of certain duties for acceptance with Him. There are no victories in this kind of faith. Such persons toil to no purpose; their souls are in continual bondage, and they find no rest until their burdens are laid at the feet of Jesus.

There is need of constant watchfulness, and of earnest, loving devotion; but these will come naturally when the soul is kept by the power of God through faith. We can do nothing, absolutely nothing, to commend ourselves to divine favor. We must not trust at all to ourselves nor to our good works; but when as erring, sinful beings we come to Christ, we may find rest in His love. God will accept every one that comes to Him trusting wholly in the merits of a crucified Saviour. Love springs up in the heart. There may be no [95] ecstasy of feeling, but there is an abiding, peaceful trust. Every burden is light; for the yoke which Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifices a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness. This is walking in the light as Christ is in the light. [96]

Christian Growth

I have been shown that those who have a knowledge of the truth, and yet allow all their powers to be absorbed in worldly interests, are unfaithful. They are not, by their good works, letting the light of truth shine to others. Nearly all their ability is devoted to becoming sharp, skillful men of the world. They forget that their talents were given them of God to be used in advancing His cause. If they were faithful to their duty, the result would be great gain of souls to the Master; but many are lost through their neglect.

God calls upon those who know His will to be doers of His word. Weakness, halfheartedness, and indecision provoke the assaults of Satan; and those who permit these traits to grow will be borne helplessly down by the surging waves of temptation. Everyone who professes the name of Christ is required to grow up to the full stature of Christ, the Christian's living head.

We all need a guide through the many strait places in life as much as the sailor needs a pilot over the sandy bar or up the rocky river, and where is this guide to be found? We point you, dear brethren, to the Bible. Inspired of God, written by holy men, it points out with great clearness and precision the duties of both old and young. It elevates the mind, softens the heart, and imparts gladness and holy joy to the spirit. The Bible presents a perfect standard of character; it is an infallible guide under all circumstances, even to the end of the journey of life. Take it as the man of your counsel, the rule of your daily life.

Every means of grace should be diligently improved that^{*}

^{*}1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:263-267.

the love of God may abound in the soul more and more, “that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without

offense till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness.” Philippians 1:10, 11. Your Christian life must take on vigorous and stalwart forms. You can attain to the high standard set before you in the Scriptures, and you must if you would be children of God. You cannot stand still; you must either advance or retrograde. You must have spiritual knowledge, that you “may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ,” that you may “be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:18, 19.

Many who have an intelligent knowledge of the truth, and are able to defend it by arguments, are doing nothing for the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom. We meet them from time to time; but they bear no fresh testimonies of personal experience in the Christian life; they relate no new victories gained in the holy warfare. Instead of this you notice the same old routine, the same expressions in prayer and exhortation. Their prayers have no new note; they express no greater intelligence in the things of God, no more earnest, living faith. Such persons are not living plants in the garden of the Lord, sending forth fresh shoots and new foliage, and the grateful fragrance of a holy life. They are not growing Christians. They have limited views and plans, and there is no expansion of mind, no valuable additions to the treasures of Christian knowledge. Their powers have not been taxed in this direction. They have not learned to view men and things as God views them, and in many cases unsanctified sympathy has injured souls and greatly crippled the cause of God. The spiritual stagnation that prevails is terrible. Many lead a formal Christian life and claim that their sins have been forgiven, when they are as destitute of any real knowledge of Christ as is the sinner. [98]

No Limit to Improvement

Brethren, will you have a stunted Christian growth, or will you make healthy progress in the divine life? Where there is spiritual health there is growth. The child of God grows up to the full stature of a man or woman in Christ. There is no limit to his improvement. When the love of God is a living principle in the soul, there are no narrow, confined views; there is

love and faithfulness in warnings and reproofs; there is earnest work and a disposition to bear burdens and take responsibilities.

Some are not willing to do self-denying work. They show real impatience when urged to take some responsibility. "What need is there," say they, "of an increase of knowledge and experience?" This explains it all. They feel that they are "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," while heaven pronounces them poor, miserable, blind, and naked. To these the True Witness says: "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Revelation 3:17, 18. Your very self-complacency shows you to be in need of everything. You are spiritually sick and need Jesus as your physician.

In the Scriptures thousands of gems of truth lie hidden from the surface seeker. The mine of truth is never exhausted. The more you search the Scriptures with humble hearts, the greater will be your interest, and the more you will feel like exclaiming with Paul: "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Romans 11:33.

Every day you should learn something new from the Scriptures. Search them as for hid treasure, for they contain [99] the words of eternal life. Pray for wisdom and understanding to comprehend these holy writings. If you would do this you would find new glories in the word of God; you would feel that you had received new and precious light on subjects connected with the truth, and the Scriptures would be constantly receiving a new value in your estimation.

"The great day of the Lord is near; it is near, and hasteth greatly." Zephaniah 1:14. Jesus says: "Behold, I come quickly." We should keep these words ever in mind, and act as though we do indeed believe that the coming of the Lord is nigh, and that we are pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. The vital energies of the church of God must be brought into active exercise for the great object of self-renovation; every member must be an active agent for God. "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself

being the chief Cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:18-22. This is a particular work, which must be carried forward in all harmony, in unity of spirit, and in the bonds of peace. No place should be given to criticisms, doubts, and unbelief. ...

Sever Earthly Affections

Brethren, your duty, happiness, future usefulness, and final salvation call upon you to sever the tendrils of your affections from everything earthly and corruptible. There is an unsanctified sympathy that partakes of the nature of lovesick sentimentalism and is earthly, sensual. It will require no feeble effort for some of you to overcome this and change the course of your life, for you have not placed yourselves in [100] connection with the Strength of Israel and have become enfeebled in all your faculties. Now you are loudly called upon to be diligent in the use of every means of grace, that you may be transformed in character and may grow to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.

We have great victories to gain, and a heaven to lose if we do not gain them. The carnal heart must be crucified; for its tendency is to moral corruption, and the end thereof is death. Nothing but the life-giving influences of the gospel can help the soul. Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening, recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness. You will thus become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; and in your souls will be reflected the image of Him by whose stripes you are healed.

Says Christ: “Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” John 15:14. This is the condition imposed; this is the test that proves men’s characters. Feelings are often deceiving, emotions are no sure safeguard; for they are variable and subject to external circumstances. Many are deluded

by relying on sensational impressions. The test is: What are you *doing* for Christ? What sacrifices are you making? What victories are you gaining? A selfish spirit overcome, a temptation to neglect duty resisted, passion subdued, and willing, cheerful obedience rendered to the will of Christ are far greater evidences that you are a child of God than spasmodic piety and emotional religion.—1876, Testimonies for the Church 4:188. [101]

Times to Try Men's Souls

Times that will try men's souls are just before us, and those who are weak in the faith will not stand the test of those days of peril. The great truths of revelation are to be carefully studied, for we shall all want an intelligent knowledge of the word of God. By Bible study and daily communion with Jesus we shall gain clear, well-defined views of individual responsibility and strength to stand in the day of trial and temptation. He whose life is united to Christ by hidden links will be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

More thought should be given to the things of God, and less to temporal matters. The world-loving professor, if he will exercise his mind in that direction, may become as familiar with the word of God as he now is with worldly business. "Search the Scriptures," said Christ; "for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." John 5:39. The Christian is required to be diligent in searching the Scriptures, to read over and over again the truths of God's word. Willful ignorance on this subject endangers the Christian life and character. It blinds the understanding and corrupts the noblest powers. It is this that brings confusion into our lives. Our people need to understand the oracles of God; they need to have a systematic knowledge of the principles of revealed truth, which will fit them for what is coming upon the earth and prevent them from being carried about by every wind of doctrine.

Great changes are soon to take place in the world, and everyone will need an experimental knowledge of the things of God. It is the work of Satan to dishearten the people of God and to unsettle their faith. He tries in every way to^{*}

^{*}1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:273, 274 (Faithfulness in the Work of God).

[102]

insinuate doubts and questionings in regard to the position, the faith, the plans, of the men upon whom God has laid the burden of a special work and who are zealously doing that work. Although he may be baffled again and again, yet he renews his attacks, working through those who profess to be humble and God-fearing, and who are apparently interested in, or believers of, present truth. The advocates of truth expect fierce and cruel opposition from their open enemies, but this is far less dangerous than the secret doubts expressed by those who feel at liberty to question and find fault with what God's servants are doing. These may appear to be humble men; but they are self-deceived, and they deceive others. In their hearts are envy and evil surmisings. They unsettle the faith of the people in those in whom they should have confidence, those whom God has chosen to do His work; and when they are reproved for their course they take it as personal abuse. While professing to be doing God's work they are in reality aiding the enemy.

There is nothing more needed in the work than the practical results of communion with God. We should show by our daily lives that we have peace and rest in God. His peace in the heart will shine forth in the countenance. It will give to the voice a persuasive power. Communion with God will impart a moral elevation to the character and to the entire course of action. Men will take knowledge of us, as of the first disciples, that we have been with Jesus. This will impart to the minister's labors a power even greater than that which comes from the influence of his preaching. Of this power he must not allow himself to be deprived. Communion with God through prayer and the study of His word must not be neglected, for here is the source of his strength. No work for the church should take precedence of this.—1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:47. [103]

Beware of Erroneous Teaching

When Satan became disaffected in heaven, he did not lay his complaint before God and Christ; but he went among the angels who thought him perfect and represented that God had done him injustice in preferring Christ to himself. The result of this misrepresentation was that through their sympathy with him one third of the angels lost their innocence, their high estate, and their happy home. Satan is instigating men to continue on earth the same work of jealousy and evil surmising that he commenced in heaven.

...

God has not passed His people by and chosen one solitary man here and another there as the only ones worthy to be entrusted with His truth. He does not give one man new light contrary to the established faith of the body. In every reform men have arisen making this claim. Paul warned the church in his day: "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20:30. The greatest harm to God's people comes through those who go out from among them speaking perverse things. Through them the way of truth is evil spoken of.

Let none be self-confident, as though God had given them special light above their brethren. Christ is represented as dwelling in His people. Believers are represented as "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:20-22. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord," says Paul, "beseech you^{*}

^{*}1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:291-296 (Deceitfulness of Sin).

that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4:1-6.

That which Brother D calls light is apparently harmless; it does not look as though anyone could be injured by it. But, brethren, it is Satan’s device, his entering wedge. This has been tried again and again. One accepts some new and original idea which does not seem to conflict with the truth. He talks of it and dwells upon it until it seems to him to be clothed with beauty and importance, for Satan has power to give this false appearance. At last it becomes the all-absorbing theme, the one great point around which everything centers; and the truth is uprooted from the heart.

No sooner are erratic ideas started in his mind than Brother D begins to lose faith and to question the work of the Spirit which has been manifested among us for so many years. He is not a man who will entertain what he believes to be special light without imparting it to others; therefore it is not safe to give him influence that will enable him to unsettle other minds. It is opening a door through which Satan will rush in many errors to divert the mind from the importance of the truth for this time. Brethren, as an ambassador of Christ I warn you to beware of these side issues, whose tendency is to divert the mind from the truth. Error is never harmless. It never sanctifies, but always brings confusion and dissension. It is always dangerous. The enemy has great power over minds that are not thoroughly fortified by prayer and established in Bible truth.

There are a thousand temptations in disguise prepared for those who have the light of truth; and the only safety for any [105] of us is in receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest prayer; and if they see no light in it, yield to their judgment; for “in the multitude of counselors there is safety.” Proverbs 11:14. ...

Satan’s Subtle Work

Satan is constantly at work, but few have any idea of his activity and subtlety. The people of God must be prepared to withstand the wily foe. It is this resistance that Satan dreads. He knows better than we do the limit of his power and how easily he can be overcome if we resist and face him. Through divine strength the weakest saint is more than a match for him and all his angels, and if brought to the test he would be able to prove his superior power. Therefore Satan's step is noiseless, his movements stealthy, and his batteries masked. He does not venture to show himself openly, lest he arouse the Christian's dormant energies and send him to God in prayer.

The enemy is preparing for his last campaign against the church. He has so concealed himself from view that many can hardly believe that he exists, much less can they be convinced of his amazing activity and power. They have to a great extent forgotten his past record; and when he makes another advance move, they will not recognize him as their enemy, that old serpent, but they will consider him a friend, one who is doing a good work. Boasting of their independence they will, under his specious, bewitching influence, obey the worst impulses of the human heart and yet believe that God is leading them. Could their eyes be opened to distinguish their captain, they would see that they are not serving God, but the enemy of all righteousness. They would see that their boasted independence is one of the heaviest fetters Satan can rivet on unbalanced minds. [106]

Man is Satan's captive and is naturally inclined to follow his suggestions and do his bidding. He has in himself no power to oppose effectual resistance to evil. It is only as Christ abides in him by living faith, influencing his desires and strengthening him with strength from above, that man may venture to face so terrible a foe. Every other means of defense is utterly vain. It is only through Christ that Satan's power is limited. This is a momentous truth that all should understand. Satan is busy every moment, going to and fro, walking up and down in the earth, seeking whom he may devour. But the earnest prayer of faith will baffle his strongest efforts. Then take "the shield of faith," brethren, "wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Ephesians 6:16.

The worst enemies we have are those who are trying to destroy the influence of the watchmen upon the walls of Zion. Satan works through agents. He is making an earnest effort here. He works according to a definite plan, and his agents act in concert. A line of unbelief stretches

across the continent and is in communication with the church of God. Its influence has been exerted to undermine confidence in the work of the Spirit of God. This element is here and is silently working. Be careful lest you be found aiding the enemy of God and man by spreading false reports and by criticisms and decided opposition.

Through deceptive means and unseen channels, Satan is working to strengthen his authority and to place obstacles in the way of God's people, that souls may not be freed from his power and gathered under the banner of Christ. By his deceptions he is seeking to allure souls from Christ, and those who are not established upon the truth will surely be taken in his snare. And those whom he cannot lead into sin he will persecute, as the Jews did Christ.

Satan's object is to dishonor God, and he works with every element that is unsanctified to accomplish this design. The [107] men whom he makes his instruments in doing this work are blinded and do not see what they are doing until they are so deeply involved in guilt that they think it would be useless to try to recover themselves, and they risk all and continue in their course of transgression to the bitter end.

Satan hopes to involve the remnant people of God in the general ruin that is coming upon the earth. As the coming of Christ draws nigh, he will be more determined and decisive in his efforts to overthrow them. Men and women will arise professing to have some new light or some new revelation whose tendency is to unsettle faith in the old landmarks. Their doctrines will not bear the test of God's word, yet souls will be deceived. False reports will be circulated, and some will be taken in this snare. They will believe these rumors and in their turn will repeat them, and thus a link will be formed connecting them with the archdeceiver. This spirit will not always be manifested in an open defiance of the messages that God sends, but a settled unbelief is expressed in many ways. Every false statement that is made feeds and strengthens this unbelief, and through this means many souls will be balanced in the wrong direction.

We cannot be too watchful against every form of error, for Satan is constantly seeking to draw men from the truth. [108]

“Praise Ye the Lord”

“Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.” Have any of us duly considered how much we have to be thankful for? Do we remember that the mercies of the Lord are new every morning and that His faithfulness faileth not? Do we acknowledge our dependence upon Him and express gratitude for all His favors? On the contrary, we too often forget that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.”

How often those who are in health forget the wonderful mercies that are continued to them day by day, year after year. They render no tribute of praise to God for all His benefits. But when sickness comes, God is remembered. The strong desire for recovery leads to earnest prayer, and this is right. God is our refuge in sickness as in health. But many do not leave their cases with Him; they encourage weakness and disease by worrying about themselves. If they would cease repining and rise above depression and gloom, their recovery would be more sure. They should remember with gratitude how long they enjoyed the blessing of health; and should this precious boon be restored to them, they should not forget that they are under renewed obligations to their Creator. When the ten lepers were healed, only one returned to find Jesus and give Him glory. Let us not be like the unthinking nine, whose hearts were untouched by the mercy of God.

God is love. He has a care for the creatures He has formed. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.” Psalm 103:13. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John 3:1. What a precious privilege is this, that we may be sons and daughters of the Most^{*}

^{*}1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:315-319.

High, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Then let us not mourn and grieve because in this life we are not free from disappointments and afflictions.

If in the providence of God we are called upon to endure trials, let us accept the cross and drink the bitter cup, remembering that it is a Father's hand that holds it to our lips. Let us trust Him in the darkness as well as in the day. Can we not believe that He will give us everything that is for our good? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32. Even in the night of affliction how can we refuse to lift heart and voice in grateful praise, when we remember the love to us expressed by the cross of Calvary?

What a theme for meditation is the sacrifice that Jesus made for lost sinners! "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5. How shall we estimate the blessings thus brought within our reach? Could Jesus have suffered more? Could He have purchased for us richer blessings? Should it not melt the hardest heart when we remember that for our sakes He left the happiness and glory of heaven and suffered poverty and shame, cruel affliction and a terrible death? Had He not by His death and resurrection opened for us the door of hope, we should have known nothing but the horrors of darkness and the miseries of despair. In our present state, favored and blessed as we are, we cannot realize from what depths we have been rescued. We cannot measure how much deeper our afflictions would have been, how much greater our woes, had not Jesus encircled us with His human arm of sympathy and love, and lifted us up.

We may rejoice in hope. Our Advocate is in the heavenly sanctuary, pleading in our behalf. Through His merits we have pardon and peace. He died that He might wash away [110] our sins, clothe us with His righteousness, and fit us for the society of heaven, where we may dwell in light forever.

Dear brother, dear sister, when Satan would fill your mind with despondency, gloom, and doubt, resist his suggestions. Tell him of the blood of Jesus, that cleanses from all sin. You cannot save yourself from the

tempter's power, but he trembles and flees when the merits of that precious blood are urged. Then will you not gratefully accept the blessings Jesus bestows? Will you not take the cup of salvation that He presents, and call on the name of the Lord? Do not show distrust of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Do not for a moment pain the heart of the pitying Saviour by your unbelief. He watches with the most intense interest your progress in the heavenly way; He sees your earnest efforts; He notes your declensions and your recoveries, your hopes and your fears, your conflicts and your victories.

Shall all our devotional exercises consist in asking and receiving? Shall we be always thinking of our wants and never of the benefits we receive? Shall we be recipients of His mercies and never express our gratitude to God, never praise Him for what He has done for us? We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. If the loving-kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would have far more power in prayer. We would abound more and more in the love of God and have more bestowed to praise Him for. You who complain that God does not hear your prayers, change your present order and mingle praise with your petitions. When you consider His goodness and mercies you will find that He will consider your wants.

Prayer and Praise

Pray, pray earnestly and without ceasing, but do not forget to praise. It becomes every child of God to vindicate His character. You can magnify the Lord; you can show the power [111] of sustaining grace. There are multitudes who do not appreciate the great love of God nor the divine compassion of Jesus. Thousands even regard with disdain the matchless grace shown in the plan of redemption. All who are partakers of this great salvation are not clear in this matter. They do not cultivate grateful hearts. But the theme of redemption is one that the angels desire to look into; it will be the science and the song of the ransomed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Is it not worthy of careful thought and study now? Should we not praise God with heart and soul and voice "for His wonderful works to the children of men"? Psalm 107:8.

Praise the Lord in the congregation of His people. When the word of the Lord was spoken to the Hebrews anciently, the command was: “And let all the people say, Amen.” When the ark of the covenant was brought into the city of David, and a psalm of joy and triumph was chanted, “all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord.” 1 Chronicles 16:36. This fervent response was an evidence that they understood the word spoken and joined in the worship of God.

There is too much formality in our religious services. The Lord would have His ministers who preach the word energized by His Holy Spirit; and the people who hear should not sit in drowsy indifference, or stare vacantly about, making no responses to what is said. The impression that is thus given to the unbeliever is anything but favorable for the religion of Christ. These dull, careless professed Christians are not destitute of ambition and zeal when engaged in worldly business; but things of eternal importance do not move them deeply. The voice of God through His messengers may be a pleasant song; but its sacred warnings, reproofs, and encouragements are all unheeded. The spirit of the world has paralyzed them. The truths of God’s word are spoken to leaden ears and hard, unimpressible hearts. There should be wide-awake, active churches to encourage and uphold the ministers of Christ and to aid them in the work of saving souls. Where the church [112] is walking in the light, there will ever be cheerful, hearty responses and words of joyful praise.

Our God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, declares: “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.” All heaven unite in praising God. Let us learn the song of the angels now, that we may sing it when we join their shining ranks. Let us say with the psalmist: “While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.” “Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee.” Psalm 146:2; 67:3. [113]

Love Among Brethren

Life is disciplinary. While in the world, the Christian will meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If injuries and insults are meekly borne, if insulting words are responded to by gentle answers, and oppressive acts by kindness, this is evidence that the Spirit of Christ dwells in the heart, that sap from the living Vine is flowing to the branches. We are in the school of Christ in this life, where we are to learn to be meek and lowly of heart; and in the day of final accounts we shall see that all the obstacles we meet, all the hardships and annoyances that we are called to bear, are practical lessons in the application of principles of Christian life. If well endured, they develop the Christlike in the character and distinguish the Christian from the worldling.

There is a high standard to which we are to attain if we would be children of God, noble, pure, holy, and undefiled; and a pruning process is necessary if we would reach this standard. How would this pruning be accomplished if there were no difficulties to meet, no obstacles to surmount, nothing to call out patience and endurance? These trials are not the smallest blessings in our experience. They are designed to nerve us to determination to succeed. We are to use them as God's means to gain decided victories over self instead of allowing them to hinder, oppress, and destroy us.

Christian Growth

Character will be tested. Christ will be revealed in us if we are indeed branches of the living Vine. We shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and—^{*}

*1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:344-348.

[114]

irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without continual help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Each must win his own way through struggles and discouragements. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory.

No one, not even God, can carry us to heaven unless we make the necessary effort on our part. We must put features of beauty into our lives. We must expel the unlovely natural traits that make us unlike Jesus. While God works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure, we must work in harmony with Him. The religion of Christ transforms the heart. It makes the worldly-minded man heavenly-minded. Under its influence the selfish man becomes unselfish because this is the character of Christ. The dishonest, scheming man becomes upright, so that it is second nature to him to do unto others as he would have others do unto him. The profligate is changed from impurity to purity. He forms correct habits, for the gospel of Christ has become to him a savor of life unto life.

Now, while probation lingers, it does not become one to pronounce sentence upon others and look to himself as a model man. Christ is our model; imitate Him, plant your feet in His steps. You may professedly believe every point of present truth, but unless you practice these truths it will avail you nothing.

Dealing with the Erring

We are not to condemn others; this is not our work; but we should love one another and pray for one another. When we see one err from the truth, then we may weep over him as Christ wept over Jerusalem. Let us see what our heavenly Father in His word says about the erring: “If a man be [115] overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Galatians 6:1.

“If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” James 5:19, 20. What a great missionary work is this! how much more Christlike than for poor, fallible mortals to be ever accusing and condemning those who do not exactly meet their minds. Let us remember that Jesus knows us individually and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows the wants of each of His creatures and reads the hidden, unspoken grief of every heart. If one of the little ones for whom He died is injured, He sees it and calls the offender to account. Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He cares for His feeble, sickly, wandering sheep. He knows them all by name. The distress of every sheep and every lamb of His flock touches His heart of sympathizing love, and the cry for aid reaches His ear. One of the greatest sins of the shepherds of Israel is thus pointed out by the prophet: “The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.” Ezekiel 34:4-6.

Jesus cares for each one as though there were not another individual on the face of the earth. As Deity He exerts mighty power in our behalf, while as our Elder Brother He feels for all our woes. The Majesty of heaven held not Himself aloof from degraded, sinful humanity. We have not a [116] high priest who is so high, so lifted up, that He cannot notice us or sympathize with us, but one who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Leave Results with God

How different from this spirit is the feeling of indifference and contempt that has been manifested by some in----toward J and those who have been affected by his influence. If ever the transforming grace of God

was needed, it is needed in this church. In judging and condemning a brother, they have undertaken to do a work that God never put into their hands. A hardness of heart, a censorious, condemnatory spirit that would destroy individuality and independence, has been woven into their Christian experience, and they have lost the love of Jesus out of their hearts. Make haste, brethren, to get these things off your soul before it shall be said in heaven: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11.

You will have many perplexities to meet in your Christian life in connection with the church, but do not try too hard to mold your brethren. If you see that they do not meet the requirements of God's word, do not condemn; if they provoke, do not retaliate. When things are said that would exasperate, quietly keep your soul from fretting. You see many things which appear wrong in others, and you want to correct these wrongs. You commence in your own strength to work for a reform, but you do not go about it in the right way. You must labor for the erring with a heart subdued, softened by the Spirit of God, and let the Lord work through you, the agent.

Roll your burden on Jesus. You feel that the Lord must take up the case where Satan is striving for the mastery over some soul; but you are to do what you can in humility and meekness, and put the tangled work, the complicated matters, [117] into the hands of God. Follow the directions in His word, and leave the outcome of the matter to His wisdom. Having done all you can to save your brother, cease worrying, and go calmly about other pressing duties. It is no longer your matter, but God's.

Do not, through impatience, cut the knot of difficulty, making matters hopeless. Let God untangle the snarled-up threads for you. He is wise enough to manage the complications of our lives. He has skill and tact. We cannot always see His plans; we must wait patiently their unfolding and not mar and destroy them. He will reveal them to us in His own good time. Seek for unity; cultivate love and conformity to Christ in all things. He is the source of unity and strength; but you have not sought for Christian unity that you might knit hearts together in love.

There is work for you to do in the church and out of the church. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." John 15:8. The fruit we bear is the only test of the character of the tree before the world. This is the

proof of our discipleship. If our works are of such a character that as branches of the living Vine we bear rich clusters of precious fruit, then we wear before the world God's own badge as His sons and daughters. We are living epistles, known and read of all men.

Now, I fear that you will fail in doing the work you must do to redeem the past and become living, fruit-bearing branches. If you do as God would have you, His blessing will come into the church. You have not yet been humble enough to make thorough work and meet the mind of the Spirit of God. There has been self-justification, self-pleasing, self-vindication, when there should have been humiliation, contrition, and repentance.

You should remove every stumbling block and make "straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." Hebrews 12:13. It is not too late [118] for wrongs to be righted; but you must not feel that you are whole and have no need of a physician, for you need help. When you come to Jesus with a broken heart, He will help and bless you, and you will go forth in the Master's work with courage and energy. The best evidence that you are in Christ is the fruit you bear. If you are not truly united to Him, your light and privileges will condemn and ruin you.

It is worse, far worse, to give expression to the feelings in a large gathering, firing at anyone and everyone, than to go to the individuals who may have done wrong and personally reprove them. The offensiveness of this severe, overbearing, denunciatory talk in a large gathering is of as much more grave a character in the sight of God than giving personal, individual reproof as the numbers are greater and the censure more general. It is ever easier to give expression to the feelings before a congregation, because there are many present, than to go to the erring and, face to face with them, openly, frankly, plainly state their wrong course. But bringing into the house of God strong feelings against individuals, and making all the innocent as well as the guilty suffer, is a manner of labor which God does not sanction and which does harm rather than good.—1875, Testimonies for the Church 3:507, 508.

You may feel that others have done wrong, and I know as well as you do that a Christlike spirit has not been manifested in the church. But will this avail you in the judgment? Will two wrongs make one right? Though

one, two, or three in the church have done wrong, this will not blot out or excuse your sin. Whatever course others may take, your work is to set your own heart in order. God has claims upon you which no circumstances should lead you to forget or neglect, for every soul is precious in His sight. —1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:349. [119]

Marriage With Unbelievers

Dear Sister L,

I have learned of your contemplated marriage with one who is not united with you in religious faith, and I fear that you have not carefully weighed this important matter. Before taking a step which is to exert an influence upon all your future life, I urge you to give the subject careful and prayerful deliberation. Will this new relationship prove a source of true happiness? Will it be a help to you in the Christian life? Will it be pleasing to God? Will your example be a safe one for others to follow?

Before giving her hand in marriage, every woman should inquire whether he with whom she is about to unite her destiny is worthy. What has been his past record? Is his life pure? Is the love which he expresses of a noble, elevated character, or is it a mere emotional fondness? Has he the traits of character that will make her happy? Can she find true peace and joy in his affection? Will she be allowed to preserve her individuality, or must her judgment and conscience be surrendered to the control of her husband? As a disciple of Christ, she is not her own; she has been bought with a price. Can she honor the Saviour's claims as supreme? Will body and soul, thoughts and purposes, be preserved pure and holy? These questions have a vital bearing upon the well-being of every woman who enters the marriage relation.

Religion is needed in the home. Only this can prevent the grievous wrongs which so often embitter married life. Only where Christ reigns can there be deep, true, unselfish love. Then soul will be knit with soul, and the two lives will blend in harmony. Angels of God will be guests in the home, and their holy vigils will hallow the marriage chamber. Debasing sensuality will be banished. Upward to God will the thoughts be directed; to Him will the heart's devotion ascend.*

*1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:361-368.

[120]

The heart yearns for human love, but this love is not strong enough, or pure enough, or precious enough, to supply the place of the love of Jesus. Only in her Saviour can the wife find wisdom, strength, and grace to meet the cares, responsibilities, and sorrows of life. She should make Him her strength and her guide. Let woman give herself to Christ before giving herself to any earthly friend, and enter into no relation which shall conflict with this. Those who would find true happiness must have the blessing of heaven upon all that they possess and all that they do. It is disobedience to God that fills so many hearts and homes with misery. My sister, unless you would have a home where the shadows are never lifted, do not unite yourself with one who is an enemy of God.

As one who expects to meet these words in the judgment, I entreat you to ponder the step you contemplate taking. Ask yourself: “Will not an unbelieving husband lead my thoughts away from Jesus? He is a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God; will he not lead me to enjoy the things that he enjoys?” The path to eternal life is steep and rugged. Take no additional weights to retard your progress. You have too little spiritual strength, and you need help instead of hindrance.

The Commands of God

The Lord commanded ancient Israel not to intermarry with the idolatrous nations around them: “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.” The reason is given. Infinite Wisdom, foreseeing the result of such unions, declares: “For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.” “For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.” “Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the [121] faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate

Him to their face, to destroy them: He will not be slack to him that hateth Him, He will repay him to his face.” Deuteronomy 7:3, 4, 6, 9, 10.

In the New Testament are similar prohibitions concerning the marriage of Christians with the ungodly. The apostle Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, declares: “The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; *only in the Lord*.” 1 Corinthians 7:39. Again, in his second epistle, he writes: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

My sister, dare you disregard these plain and positive directions? As a child of God, a subject of Christ’s kingdom, the purchase of His blood, how can you connect yourself with one who does not acknowledge His claims, who is not controlled by His Spirit? The commands I have quoted are not the word of man, but of God. Though the companion of your choice were in all other respects worthy (which he is not), yet he has not accepted the truth for this time; he is an unbeliever, and you are forbidden of heaven to unite yourself with him. You cannot, without peril to your soul, disregard this divine injunction. [122]

I would warn you of your danger before it shall be too late. You listen to smooth, pleasant words and are led to believe that all will be well; but you do not read the motives that prompt these fair speeches. You cannot see the depths of wickedness hidden in the heart. You cannot look behind the scenes and discern the snares that Satan is laying for your soul. He would lead you to pursue such a course that he can obtain easy access to aim his shafts of temptation against you. Do not give him the least advantage. While God moves upon the minds of His servants, Satan works through the children of disobedience. There is no concord between Christ and Belial. The two cannot harmonize. To connect with an unbeliever is to place

yourself on Satan's ground. You grieve the Spirit of God and forfeit His protection. Can you afford to have such terrible odds against you in fighting the battle for everlasting life?

You may say: "But I have given my promise, and shall I now retract it?" I answer: If you have made a promise contrary to the Scriptures, by all means retract it without delay, and in humility before God repent of the infatuation that led you to make so rash a pledge. Far better take back such a promise, in the fear of God, than keep it and thereby dishonor your Maker.

Remember, you have a heaven to gain, an open path to perdition to shun. God means what He says. When He prohibited our first parents from eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, their disobedience opened the floodgates of woe to the whole world. If we walk contrary to God, He will walk contrary to us. Our only safe course is to render obedience to all His requirements, at whatever cost. All are founded in infinite love and wisdom.

As the Days of Noah

The spirit of intense worldliness that now exists, the disposition to acknowledge no higher claim than that of self-gratification, constitutes one of the signs of the last days. "As it was [123] in the days of Noah," said Christ, "so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the Flood came, and destroyed them all." Luke 17:26, 27. The people of this generation are marrying and giving in marriage with the same reckless disregard of God's requirements as was manifested in the days of Noah.

There is in the Christian world an astonishing, alarming indifference to the teaching of God's word in regard to the marriage of Christians with unbelievers. Many who profess to love and fear God choose to follow the bent of their own minds rather than take counsel of Infinite Wisdom. In a matter which vitally concerns the happiness and well-being of both parties for this world and the next, reason, judgment, and the fear of God are set aside, and blind impulse, stubborn determination, is allowed to control. Men and women who are otherwise sensible and conscientious close their ears to counsel; they are deaf to the appeals and entreaties of friends and

kindred and of the servants of God. The expression of a caution or warning is regarded as impertinent meddling, and the friend who is faithful enough to utter a remonstrance is treated as an enemy.

All this is as Satan would have it. He weaves his spell about the soul, and it becomes bewitched, infatuated. Reason lets fall the reins of self-control upon the neck of lust, unsanctified passion bears sway, until, too late, the victim awakens to a life of misery and bondage. This is not a picture drawn by the imagination, but a recital of facts. God's sanction is not given to unions which He has expressly forbidden. For years I have been receiving letters from different persons who have formed unhappy marriages, and the revolting histories opened before me are enough to make the heart ache. It is no easy thing to decide what advice can be given to these unfortunate ones, or how their hard lot can be [124] lightened; but their sad experience should be a warning to others.

In this age of the world, as the scenes of earth's history are soon to close and we are about to enter upon the time of trouble such as never was, the fewer the marriages contracted, the better for all, both men and women. Above all, when Satan is working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, let Christians beware of connecting themselves with unbelievers. God has spoken. All who fear Him will submit to His wise injunctions. Our feelings, impulses, and affections must flow heavenward, not earthward, not in the low, base channel of sensual thought and indulgence. It is time now that every soul should stand as in the sight of the heart-searching God.

My dear sister, as a disciple of Jesus you should inquire what will be the influence of the step you are about to take, not only upon yourself, but upon others. The followers of Christ are to be co-workers with their Master; they must be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom," says Paul, "ye shine as lights in the world." Philippians 2:15. We are to receive the bright beams from the Sun of Righteousness, and by our good works let them shine forth to others in clear, steady rays, never fitful, never growing dim. We cannot be sure that we are doing no harm to those about us unless we are exerting a positive influence to lead them heavenward.

"Ye are My witnesses," said Jesus, and in each act of our lives we should inquire: How will our course affect the interests of the Redeemer's

kingdom? If you are indeed Christ's disciple, you will choose to walk in His footsteps, however painful this may be to your natural feelings. Said Paul: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Galatians 6:14. You, Sister L, need to sit at the [125] feet of Jesus and learn of Him, as did Mary of old. God requires of you an entire surrender of your will, your plans and purposes. Jesus is your leader; to Him you must look, in Him you must trust, and you must permit nothing to deter you from the life of consecration which you owe to God. Your conversation must be in heaven, from whence you look for your Saviour. Your piety must be of a character to make itself felt by all within the sphere of your influence. God requires you in every act of life to shun the very appearance of evil. Are you doing this? You are under the most sacred obligation not to belittle or compromise your holy faith by uniting with the Lord's enemies. If you are tempted to disregard the injunctions of His word because others have done so, remember that your example also will exert an influence. Others will do as you do, and thus the evil will be extended. While you profess to be a child of God, a departure on your part from His requirements will result in infinite harm to those who look to you for guidance.

The salvation of souls will be the constant aim of those who are abiding in Christ. But what have you done to show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness? "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Ephesians 5:14. Shake off this fatal infatuation that benumbs your senses and palsies the energies of the soul.

The very strongest incentives to faithfulness are set before us, the highest motives, the most glorious rewards. Christians are to be Christ's representatives, sons and daughters of God. They are His jewels, His peculiar treasures. Of all who will maintain their steadfastness He declares: "They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy." Revelation 3:4. Those who reach portals of eternal bliss will not count that any sacrifice which they have made was too great.

May God help you to stand the test and preserve your integrity. Cling by faith to Jesus. Disappoint not your Redeemer. [126]

The True Missionary Spirit

The true missionary spirit is the spirit of Christ. The world's Redeemer was the great model missionary. Many of His followers have labored earnestly and unselfishly in the cause of human salvation; but no man's labor can bear comparison with the self-denial, the sacrifice, the benevolence, of our Exemplar.

The love which Christ has evinced for us is without a parallel. How earnestly He labored! How often was He alone in fervent prayer, on the mountainside or in the retirement of the garden, pouring out His supplications with strong crying and tears. How perseveringly He urged His petitions in behalf of sinners! Even on the cross He forgot His own sufferings in His deep love for those whom He came to save. How cold our love, how feeble our interest, when compared with the love and interest manifested by our Saviour! Jesus gave Himself to redeem our race; and yet how ready are we to excuse ourselves from giving all that we have for Jesus. Our Saviour submitted to wearing labor, ignominy, and suffering. He was repulsed, mocked, derided, while engaged in the great work which He came to earth to do.

Do you, my brethren and sisters, inquire: What model shall we copy? I do not point you to great and good men, but to the world's Redeemer. If we would have the true missionary spirit we must be imbued with the love of Christ; we must look to the Author and Finisher of our faith, study His character, cultivate His spirit of meekness and humility, and walk in His footsteps.

Many suppose that the missionary spirit, the qualification for missionary work, is a special gift or endowment bestowed^{*}

^{*}1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:385-389.

upon the ministers and a few members of the church and that all others are to be mere spectators. Never was there a greater mistake. Every true Christian will possess a missionary spirit, for to be a Christian is to be Christlike. No man liveth to himself, and “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” Romans 8:9. Everyone who has tasted of the powers of the world to come, whether he be young or old, learned or unlearned, will be stirred with the spirit which actuated Christ. The very first impulse of the renewed heart is to bring others also to the Saviour. Those who do not possess this desire give evidence that they have lost their first love; they should closely examine their own hearts in the light of God’s word, and earnestly seek a fresh baptism of the Spirit of Christ; they should pray for a deeper comprehension of that wondrous love which Jesus manifested for us in leaving the realms of glory and coming to a fallen world to save the perishing.

Living Epistles

There is work for every one of us in the vineyard of the Lord. We are not to seek that position which will yield us the most enjoyment or the greatest gain. True religion is free from selfishness. The missionary spirit is a spirit of personal sacrifice. We are to work anywhere and everywhere, to the utmost of our ability, for the cause of our Master.

Just as soon as a person is really converted to the truth there springs up in his heart an earnest desire to go and tell some friend or neighbor of the precious light shining forth from the sacred pages. In his unselfish labor to save others he is a living epistle, known and read of all men. His life shows that he has been converted to Christ and has become a colaborer with Him.

As a class, Seventh-day Adventists are a generous and warmhearted people. In the proclamation of the truth for this time we can rely upon their strong and ready sympathy. When [128] a proper object for their liberality is presented, appealing to their judgment and conscience, it calls forth a hearty response. Their gifts in support of the cause testify that they believe it to be the cause of truth. There are, indeed, exceptions among us. Not all who profess to accept the faith are earnest and truehearted believers. But the

same was true in the days of Christ. Even among the apostles there was a Judas; but that did not prove all to be of the same character.

We have no reason for discouragement while we know that there are so many who are devoted to the cause of truth, and are ready to make noble sacrifices for its advancement. But there is still a great lack, a great need among us. There is too little of the true missionary spirit. All missionary workers should possess that deep interest for the souls of their fellow men that will unite heart to heart in sympathy and in the love of Jesus. They should plead earnestly for divine aid and should work wisely to win souls to Christ. A cold, spiritless effort will accomplish nothing. There is need that the spirit of Christ fall upon the sons of the prophets. Then will they manifest such love for the souls of men as Jesus exemplified in His life.

The reason why there is no deeper religious fervor and no more earnest love for one another in the church is that the missionary spirit has been dying out. Little is now said concerning Christ's coming, which was once the theme of thought and of conversation. There is an unaccountable reluctance, a growing disrelish for religious conversation; and in its stead, idle, frivolous chitchat is indulged in, even by the professed followers of Christ.

Go to Work

My brethren and sisters, do you desire to break the spell that holds you? Would you arouse from this sluggishness that resembles the torpor of death? Go to work, whether you feel like it or not. Engage in personal effort to bring [129] souls to Jesus and the knowledge of the truth. In such labor you will find both a stimulus and a tonic; it will both arouse and strengthen. By exercise your spiritual powers will become more vigorous, so that you can with better success work out your own salvation. The stupor of death is upon many who profess Christ. Make every effort to arouse them. Warn, entreat, expostulate. Pray that the melting love of God may warm and soften their icebound natures. Though they may refuse to hear, your labor will not be lost. In the effort to bless others your own souls will be blessed.

We have the theory of the truth, and now we need to seek most earnestly for its sanctifying power. I dare not hold my peace in this time of peril. It is

a time of temptation, of despondency. Everyone is beset by the wiles of Satan, and we should press together to resist his power. We should be of one mind, speaking the same things, and with one mouth glorifying God. Then may we successfully enlarge our plans and by vigilant missionary effort take advantage of every talent we can use in the various departments of the work.

To Every Man's Door

The light of truth is shedding its bright beams upon the world through missionary effort. The press is an instrumentality by which many are reached whom it would be impossible to reach by ministerial effort. A great work can be done by presenting to the people the Bible just as it reads. Carry the word of God to every man's door, urge its plain statements upon every man's conscience, repeat to all the Saviour's command: "Search the Scriptures." John 5:39. Admonish them to take the Bible as it is, to implore divine enlightenment, and then, when the light shines, to gladly accept each precious ray and fearlessly abide the consequences.

The downtrodden law of God is to be exalted before the people; as soon as they turn with earnestness and reverence to the Holy Scriptures, light from heaven will reveal to them [130] wondrous things out of God's law. Great truths that have long been obscured by superstition and false doctrine will blaze forth from the illuminated pages of the Sacred Word. The living oracles pour forth their treasures new and old, bringing light and joy to all who will receive them. Many are roused from their slumber. They rise as it were from the dead and receive the light and life which Christ alone can give. Truths which have proved an overmatch for giant intellects are understood by babes in Christ. To these is plainly revealed that which has clouded the spiritual perception of the most learned expositors of the word, because, like the Sadducees of old, they were ignorant of the Scriptures and of the power of God.

Those who study the Bible with a sincere desire to know and do the will of God will become wise unto salvation. The Sabbath school is an important branch of the missionary work, not only because it gives to young and old a knowledge of God's word, but because it awakens in them a love

for its sacred truths and a desire to study it for themselves; above all, it teaches them to regulate their lives by its holy teachings.

Co-workers with Christ

All who take the word of God as their rule of life are brought into close relationship with one another. The Bible is their bond of union. But their companionship will not be sought or desired by those who do not bow to the Sacred Word as the one unerring guide. They will be at variance, both in faith and practice. There can be no harmony between them; they are unreconcilable. As Seventh-day Adventists we appeal from custom and tradition to the plain “Thus saith the Lord;” and for this reason we are not, and cannot be, in harmony with the multitudes who teach and follow the doctrines and commandments of men.

All who are born of God will become co-workers with Christ. Such are the salt of the earth. “But if the salt have [131] lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted?” If the religion we profess fails to renew our hearts and sanctify our lives, how shall it exert a saving power upon unbelievers? “It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden underfoot of men.” That religion which will not exert a regenerating power upon the world is of no value.

We cannot trust it for our own salvation. The sooner we cast it away the better, for it is powerless and spurious. We are to serve under our great Leader, to press against every opposing influence, to be laborers together with God. The work appointed us is to sow the gospel seed beside all waters. In this work everyone must act a part. The manifold grace of Christ imparted to us constitutes us stewards of talents which we must increase by putting them out to the exchangers, that when the Master calls for them, He may receive His own with usury.

God bids you with one hand, faith, take hold of His mighty arm, and with the other hand, love, reach perishing souls. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Follow Him. Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Walk even as He walked. This is the will of God, even your sanctification. The

work you have to perform is to do the will of Him who sustains your life for His glory. If you labor for yourselves, it can profit you nothing. To labor for others' good, to be less self-caring and more in earnest to devote all to God, will be acceptable to Him, and be returned by His rich grace.—1868, Testimonies for the Church 2:170. [132]

Business and Religion

Those employed in our various institutions—our publishing houses, our schools, and our health institutions—should have a living connection with God. Especially is it very important that those who have the management of these great branches of the work be men who make the kingdom of God and His righteousness the first consideration. They are not fit for their positions of trust unless they take counsel of God and bear fruit to His glory. They should pursue a course of life that will honor their Creator, ennoble themselves, and bless their fellow men. All have natural traits which must be cultivated or repressed, as they shall help or hinder in obtaining a growth in grace, a depth of religious experience.

Those engaged in the work of God cannot serve His cause acceptably unless they make the best use possible of the religious privileges they enjoy. We are as trees planted in the garden of the Lord; and He comes to us seeking the fruit He has a right to expect. His eye is upon each of us; He reads our hearts and understands our lives. This is a solemn search, for it has reference to duty and to destiny; and with what interest is it prosecuted.

Let each of those to whom are committed sacred trusts inquire: “How do I meet the inspecting eye of God? Is my heart cleansed from its defilement? or have its temple courts become so desecrated, so occupied with buyers and sellers, that Christ finds no room?” The bustle of business, if continuous, will dry up spirituality and leave the soul Christless. Although they may profess the truth, yet if men pass along day by day with no living connection with God, they will be led to do strange things; decisions will be made not in^{*}

^{*}—1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:422-429.

accordance with the will of God. There is no safety for our leading brethren while they shall go forward according to their own impulses. They will not be yoked up with Christ, and so will not move in harmony with Him. They will be unable to see and realize the wants of the cause, and Satan will move upon them to take positions that will embarrass and hinder.

My brethren, are you cultivating devotion? Is love of religious things prominent? Are you living by faith and overcoming the world? Do you attend the public worship of God? and are your voices heard in the prayer and social meeting? Is the family altar established? Do you gather your children together morning and evening, and present their cases to God? Do you instruct them how to become followers of the Lamb? Your families, if irreligious, testify to your neglect and unfaithfulness. If, while you are connected with the sacred cause of God, your children are careless, irreverent, and have no love for religious meetings or sacred truth, it is a sad thing. Such a family exerts an influence against Christ and against the truth; and “he that is not with Me is against Me,” says Christ.

The neglect of home religion, the neglect to train your children, is most displeasing to God. If one of your children were in the river, battling with the waves and in imminent danger of drowning, what a stir there would be! What efforts would be made, what prayers offered, what enthusiasm manifested, to save the human life! But here are your children out of Christ, their souls unsaved. Perhaps they are even rude and uncourteous, a reproach to the Adventist name. They are perishing without hope and without God in the world, and you are careless and unconcerned.

What example do you give your children? What order do you have at home? Your children should be educated to be kind, thoughtful of others, gentle, easy to be entreated, and, above everything else, to respect religious things and feel the [134] importance of the claims of God. They should be taught to respect the hour of prayer; they should be required to rise in the morning so as to be present at family worship.

The Home Where God Reigns

Fathers and mothers who make God first in their households, who teach their children that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, glorify

God before angels and before men by presenting to the world a well-ordered, well-disciplined family, a family that love and obey God instead of rebelling against Him. Christ is not a stranger in their homes; His name is a household name, revered and glorified. Angels delight in a home where God reigns supreme, and the children are taught to reverence religion, the Bible, and their Creator. Such families can claim the promise: "Them that honor Me I will honor." 1 Samuel 2:30. As from such a home the father goes forth to his daily duties, it is with a spirit softened and subdued by converse with God. He is a Christian, not only in his profession, but in trade, in all his business relations. He does his work with fidelity, knowing that the eye of God is upon him.

In the church his voice is not silent. He has words of gratitude and encouragement to utter; for he is a growing Christian, with a fresh experience every day. He is a helpful, active worker in the church, laboring for the glory of God and the salvation of his fellow men. He would feel condemned and guilty before God were he to neglect to attend public worship, thus failing to improve the privileges that would enable him to do better and more effective service in the cause of truth.

God is not glorified when influential men make themselves mere businessmen, ignoring their eternal interests, that are so much more enduring, so much more noble and elevated, than the temporal. Where should the greatest tact and skill be exercised, if not upon those things that are imperishable, as enduring as eternity? Brethren, develop your talent in the [135] direction of serving the Lord; manifest as much tact and ability in working for the upbuilding of the cause of Christ as you do in worldly enterprises.

There is, I am sorry to say, a great want of earnestness and interest in spiritual things on the part of the heads of many families. There are some who are seldom found in the house of worship. They make one excuse, then another, and still another, for their absence; but the real reason is that their hearts are not religiously inclined. A spirit of devotion is not cultivated in the family. The children are not brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. These men are not what God would have them. They have no living connection with Him; they are purely businessmen. They have not a conciliatory spirit; there is such a lack of meekness, kindness, and courtesy in their deportment that their motives are misconstrued, and the good they

really do possess is evil spoken of. If they could realize how offensive their course is in the sight of God, they would make a change.

Qualifications for God's Workers

The work of God should be carried forward by men who have a daily, living experience in the religion of Christ. "Without Me," says Christ, "ye can do nothing." None of us are beyond the power of temptation. All who are connected with our institutions, our conferences, and our missionary enterprises may ever have the assurance that they have a powerful foe, whose constant aim is to separate them from Christ, their strength. The more responsible the position they occupy, the more fierce will be Satan's attacks; for he knows that if he can move them to take an objectionable course, others will follow their example. But those who are continually learning in the school of Christ will be able to pursue the even tenor of their way, and Satan's efforts to throw them off their balance will be signally defeated. Temptation is not sin. Jesus was holy and pure; yet He was tempted in [136] all points as we are, but with a strength and power that man will never be called upon to endure. In His successful resistance He has left us a bright example, that we should follow His steps. If we are self-confident or self-righteous we shall be left to fall under the power of temptation; but if we look to Jesus and trust in Him we call to our aid a power that has conquered the foe on the field of battle, and with every temptation He will make a way of escape. When Satan comes in like a flood, we must meet his temptations with the sword of the Spirit, and Jesus will be our helper and will lift up for us a standard against him. The father of lies quakes and trembles when the truth of God, in burning power, is thrown in his face.

Satan makes every effort to lead people away from God; and he is successful in his purpose when the religious life is drowned in business cares, when he can so absorb their minds in business that they will not take time to read their Bibles, to pray in secret, and to keep the offering of praise and thanksgiving burning on the altar of sacrifice morning and evening. How few realize the wiles of the archdeceiver! how many are ignorant of his devices!

When our brethren voluntarily absent themselves from religious meetings, when God is not thought of and revered, when He is not chosen as their counselor and their strong tower of defense, how soon secular thoughts and wicked unbelief come in, and vain confidence and philosophy take the place of humble, trusting faith. Often temptations are cherished as the voice of the True Shepherd because men have separated themselves from Jesus. They cannot be safe a moment unless right principles are cherished in the heart and carried into every business transaction.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James 1:5. Such a promise is of more value than gold or silver. If with a humble heart you seek divine [137] guidance in every trouble and perplexity, His word is pledged that a gracious answer will be given you. And His word can never fail. Heaven and earth may pass away, but His word will never pass away. Trust in the Lord, and you will never be confounded or ashamed. “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.” Psalm 118:8, 9.

Constant Need of Help

Whatever position in life we may occupy, whatever our business, we must be humble enough to feel our need of help; we must lean implicitly on the teachings of God’s word, acknowledge His providence in all things, and be faithful in pouring out our souls in prayer. Lean to your own understanding, dear brethren, as you make your way through the world, and you will reap sorrow and disappointment. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and He will guide your steps in wisdom, and your interests will be safe for this world and for the next. You need light and knowledge. You will take counsel either of God or your own heart; you will walk in the sparks of your own kindling, or will gather to yourself divine light from the Sun of Righteousness.

Do not act from motives of policy. The great danger of our businessmen and those in responsible positions is that they will be turned from Christ to secure some help aside from Him. Peter would not have been left to show

such weakness and folly had he not sought by the use of policy to avoid reproach and scorn, persecution and abuse. His highest hopes centered in Christ; but when he saw Him in humiliation, unbelief came in and was entertained. He fell under the power of temptation, and, instead of showing his fidelity in a crisis, he wickedly denied his Lord.

For the sake of making money, many divorce themselves from God and ignore their eternal interests. They pursue the same course as the scheming, worldly man, but God is not in [138] this; it is an offense to Him. He would have them prompt to devise and execute plans; but all business matters should be transacted in harmony with the great moral law of God. The principles of love to God and our neighbor must be carried out in all the acts of the daily life, the least as well as the greatest. There must be a spirit to do more than pay tithes on mint, anise, and cummin; the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and the love of God, must not be neglected; for the personal character of each one connected with the work leaves its impress upon it.

Christian Businessmen

There are men and women who have left all for Christ's sake. Their own temporal interests, their own enjoyment of society and of family and friends, are made of less importance than the interests of the kingdom of God. They have not made houses and lands, and relatives and friends however dear, first in their affections, and God's cause second. And those who do this, who devote their lives to the advancement of the truth, to bringing many sons and daughters to God, have the promise that they shall have a hundredfold in this life and in the world to come life everlasting. Those who work from a noble standpoint and with unselfish motives will be consecrated to God, body, soul, and spirit. They will not exalt self; they will not feel competent to take responsibilities; but they will not refuse to bear burdens, for they will have a desire to do all that they are capable of doing. These will not study their own convenience; the question with them will be: What is duty?

The more responsible the position, the more essential that the influence be right. Every man whom God has chosen to do a special work becomes a

target for Satan. Temptations press thick and fast upon him; for our vigilant foe knows that his course of action has a molding influence upon others. We are amid the perils of the last days, and Satan has come [139] down in great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time. He works with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; but heaven is open to everyone who makes God his trust. The only safety for any of us is in clinging to Jesus and letting nothing separate the soul from the mighty Helper.

Those who have merely a form of godliness, and yet are connected with the cause in business relations, are to be feared. They will surely betray their trust. They will be overcome by the devices of the tempter and will imperil the cause of God. There will be temptations to allow self to control; an overbearing, critical spirit will arise, and in many cases compassion and consideration for those who need to be dealt with in thoughtful tenderness will be wanting.

“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Galatians 6:7. What seed are we scattering? What will be our harvest for time and for eternity? To every man the Master has assigned his work in accordance with his ability. Are we sowing the seed of truth and righteousness, or that of unbelief, disaffection, evil surmising, and love of the world? The one who scatters evil seed may discern the nature of his work, and repent and be forgiven. But the pardon of the Master does not change the character of the seed sown, and make of briars and thistles precious wheat. He himself may be saved so as by fire; but when the time of harvest comes, there will be only poisonous weeds where there should be fields of waving grain. That which was sown in wicked heedlessness will do its work of death. This thought pains my heart and fills me with sadness. If all who profess to believe the truth would sow the precious seeds of kindness, love, faith, and courage, they would make melody to God in their hearts as they travel the upward way, rejoicing in the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and in the great gathering day they would receive an eternal reward. [140]

Worldly-Mindedness a Snare

It will be found in the day of final settlement that God was acquainted with everyone by name. There is an unseen witness to every action of the life. "I know thy works," says He that "walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." Revelation 2:1. It is known what opportunities have been slighted, how untiring have been the efforts of the Good Shepherd to search out those who were wandering in crooked ways, and to bring them back to the path of safety and peace. Again and again God has called after the pleasure lovers; again and again He has flashed the light of His word across their path, that they might see their peril, and escape. But on and on they go, jesting and joking as they travel the broad road, until at length their probation is ended. God's ways are just and equal; and when sentence is pronounced against those who are found wanting, every mouth will be stopped. ...

Without faith it is impossible to please God; "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Romans 14:23. The faith that is required is not a mere assent to doctrines; it is the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Humility, meekness, and obedience are not faith; but they are the effects, or fruit, of faith. These graces you have yet to attain by learning in the school of Christ. You do not know the sentiments and principles of heaven; its language is almost a strange language to you both. The Spirit of God still pleads in your behalf; but I have serious, painful doubts whether you will heed that voice that has been appealing to you for years. I hope you will, and that you will turn and live.

Do you feel that it is too great a sacrifice to give your poor unworthy selves to Jesus? Will you choose the hopeless^{*}

^{*}1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:435-439.

bondage of sin and death rather than to have your life severed from the world and united to Christ by bonds of love? Jesus still lives to intercede for us. This should daily call out the gratitude of our hearts. He that realizes his guilt and helplessness may come just as he is and receive the blessing of God. The promise belongs to him if he will grasp it by faith. But he that in his own eyes is rich, and honorable, and righteous, who sees as the world sees, and calls evil good and good evil, cannot ask and receive, because he feels no need. He feels that he is full; therefore he must go away empty.

Should you become alarmed for your own souls, should you seek God diligently, He will be found of you; but He will accept no halfhearted repentance. If you will forsake your sins, He is ever ready to forgive. Will you just now surrender to Him? Will you look to Calvary and inquire: “Did Jesus make this sacrifice for me? Did He endure humiliation, shame, and reproach, and suffer the cruel death of the cross because He desired to save me from the sufferings of guilt and the horror of despair, and make me unspeakably happy in His kingdom?” Look upon Him whom your sins have pierced, and resolve: “The Lord shall have the service of my life. I will no longer unite with His enemies; I will no longer lend my influence to the rebels against His government. All I have and am is too little to devote to Him who so loved me that He gave His life for me—His whole divine self for one so sinful and erring.” Separate from the world, be wholly on the Lord’s side, press the battle to the gates, and you will win glorious victories.

Blessed is he who heeds the words of eternal life. Guided by “the Spirit of truth,” he will be led into all truth. He will not be loved, honored, and praised by the world; but he will be precious in the sight of heaven. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.” 1 John 3:1. [142]

Responsibilities of the Physician

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Professional men, whatever their calling, need divine wisdom. But the physician is in special need of this wisdom in dealing with all classes of minds and diseases. He occupies a position even more responsible than that of the minister of the gospel. He is called to be a colaborer with Christ, and he needs stanch religious principles and a firm connection with the God of wisdom. If he takes counsel of God he will have the Great Healer to work with his efforts, and he will move with the greatest caution lest by his mismanagement he injure one of God’s creatures. He will be firm as a rock to principle, yet kind and courteous to all. He will feel the responsibility of his position, and his practice will show that he is actuated by pure, unselfish motives and a desire to adorn the doctrine of Christ in all things. Such a physician will possess a heaven-born dignity and will be a powerful agent for good in the world. Although he may not be appreciated by those who have no connection with God, yet he will be honored of heaven. In God’s sight he will be more precious than gold, even the gold of Ophir. ...

There are many ways of practicing the healing art, but there is only one way that Heaven approves. God’s remedies are the simple agencies of nature that will not tax or debilitate the system through their powerful properties. Pure air and water, cleanliness, a proper diet, purity of life, and a firm trust in God are remedies for the want of which thousands are dying; yet these remedies are going out of date because their skillful use requires work that the people do not^{*}

^{*}1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:439-448.

appreciate. Fresh air, exercise, pure water, and clean, sweet premises are within the reach of all with but little expense; but drugs are expensive, both

in the outlay of means and in the effect produced upon the system.

The work of the Christian physician does not end with healing the maladies of the body; his efforts should extend to the diseases of the mind, to the saving of the soul. It may not be his duty, unless asked, to present any theoretical points of truth; but he may point his patients to Christ. The lessons of the divine Teacher are ever appropriate. He should call the attention of the repining to the ever-fresh tokens of the love and care of God, to His wisdom and goodness as manifested in His created works. The mind can then be led through nature up to nature's God and centered on the heaven which He has prepared for those that love Him.

The physician should know how to pray. In many cases he must increase suffering in order to save life; and whether the patient is a Christian or not, he feels greater security if he knows that his physician fears God. Prayer will give the sick an abiding confidence; and many times if their cases are borne to the Great Physician in humble trust, it will do more for them than all the drugs that can be administered.

To Recognize Relation of Sin to Disease

Satan is the originator of disease; and the physician is warring against his work and power. Sickness of the mind prevails everywhere. Nine tenths of the diseases from which men suffer have their foundation here. Perhaps some living home trouble is, like a canker, eating to the very soul and weakening the life forces. Remorse for sin sometimes undermines the constitution and unbalances the mind. There are erroneous doctrines also, as that of an eternally burning hell and the endless torment of the wicked, that, by giving exaggerated and distorted views of the character of God, have produced the same result upon sensitive minds. Infidels have made the [144] most of these unfortunate cases, attributing insanity to religion; but this is a gross libel and one which they will not be pleased to meet by and by. The religion of Christ, so far from being the cause of insanity, is one of its most effectual remedies; for it is a potent soother of the nerves.

The physician needs more than human wisdom and power that he may know how to minister to the many perplexing cases of disease of the mind and heart with which he is called to deal. If he is ignorant of the power of

divine grace he cannot help the afflicted one, but will aggravate the difficulty; but if he has a firm hold upon God he will be able to help the diseased, distracted mind. He will be able to point his patients to Christ and teach them to carry all their cares and perplexities to the great Burden Bearer.

There is a divinely appointed connection between sin and disease. No physician can practice for a month without seeing this illustrated. He may ignore the fact; his mind may be so occupied with other matters that his attention will not be called to it; but if he will be observing and honest he cannot help acknowledging that sin and disease bear to each other the relationship of cause and effect. The physician should be quick to see this and to act accordingly. When he has gained the confidence of the afflicted by relieving their sufferings and bringing them back from the verge of the grave he may teach them that disease is the result of sin and that it is the fallen foe who seeks to allure them to health-and-soul-destroying practices. He may impress their minds with the necessity of denying self and obeying the laws of life and health. In the minds of the young especially he may instill right principles.

God loves His creatures with a love that is both tender and strong. He has established the laws of nature, but His laws are not arbitrary exactions. Every “Thou shalt not,” whether in physical or moral law, contains or implies a promise. If it is obeyed, blessings will attend our steps; if it is disobeyed, the result is danger and unhappiness. The [145] laws of God are designed to bring His people closer to Himself. He will save them from the evil and lead them to the good if they will be led, but force them He never will. We cannot discern God’s plans, but we must trust Him and show our faith by our works. ...

The Strain of Medical Practice

The physician is almost daily brought face to face with death. He is, as it were, treading upon the verge of the grave. In many instances familiarity with scenes of suffering and death results in carelessness and indifference to human woe, and recklessness in the treatment of the sick. Such physicians seem to have no tender sympathy. They are harsh and abrupt, and the sick

dread their approach. Such men, however great their knowledge and skill, can do the suffering little good; but if the love and sympathy that Jesus manifested for the sick is combined with the physician's knowledge, his very presence will be a blessing. He will not look upon his patient as a mere piece of human mechanism, but as a soul to be saved or lost.

The duties of the physician are arduous. Few realize the mental and physical strain to which he is subjected. Every energy and capability must be enlisted with the most intense anxiety in the battle with disease and death. Often he knows that one unskillful movement of the hand, even but a hairbreadth in the wrong direction, may send a soul unprepared into eternity. How much the faithful physician needs the sympathy and prayers of the people of God. His claims in this direction are not inferior to those of the most devoted minister or missionary worker. Deprived, as he often is, of needed rest and sleep, and even of religious privileges on the Sabbath, he needs a double portion of grace, a fresh supply daily, or he will lose his hold on God and will be in danger of sinking deeper in spiritual darkness than men of other callings. And yet often he is made to bear [146] unmerited reproaches and is left to stand alone, the subject of Satan's fiercest temptations, feeling himself misunderstood, betrayed by his friends.

Acquiring a Medical Education

Many, knowing how trying are the duties of the physician and how few opportunities physicians have for release from care, even upon the Sabbath, will not choose this for their lifework. But the great enemy is constantly seeking to destroy the workmanship of God's hands, and men of culture and intelligence are called upon to combat his cruel power. More of the right kind of men are needed to devote themselves to this profession. Painstaking effort should be made to induce suitable men to qualify themselves for this work. They should be men whose characters are based upon the broad principles of the word of God—men who possess a natural energy, force, and perseverance that will enable them to reach a high standard of excellence. It is not everyone who can make a successful physician. Many have entered upon the duties of this profession every way unprepared. They

have not the requisite knowledge; neither have they the skill and tact, the carefulness and intelligence, necessary to ensure success.

A physician can do much better work if he has physical strength. If he is feeble he cannot endure the wearing labor incident to his calling. A man who has a weak constitution, who is a dyspeptic, or who has not perfect self-control, cannot become qualified to deal with all classes of disease. Great care should be taken not to encourage persons who might be useful in some less responsible position, to study medicine at a great outlay of time and means, when there is no reasonable hope that they will succeed.

Some have been singled out as men who might be useful as physicians, and they have been encouraged to take a medical course. But some who commenced their studies in [147] the medical colleges as Christians did not keep the divine law prominent; they sacrificed principle and lost their hold on God. They felt that singlehanded they could not keep the fourth commandment and meet the jeers and ridicule of the ambitious, the world-loving, the superficial, the skeptic, and the infidel. This kind of persecution they were not prepared to meet. They were ambitious to climb higher in the world, and they stumbled on the dark mountains of unbelief and became untrustworthy. Temptations of every kind opened before them, and they had no strength to resist. Some of these have become dishonest, scheming policy men and are guilty of grave sins.

In this age there is danger for everyone who shall enter upon the study of medicine. Often his instructors are worldly-wise men and his fellow students infidels, who have no thought of God, and he is in danger of being influenced by these irreligious associations. Nevertheless, some have gone through the medical course and have remained true to principle. They would not continue their studies on the Sabbath, and they have proved that men may become qualified for the duties of a physician and not disappoint the expectations of those who furnish them means to obtain an education. Like Daniel, they have honored God, and He has kept them. Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not adopt the customs of kingly courts; he would not eat of the king's meat nor drink of his wine. He looked to God for strength and grace, and God gave him wisdom and skill and knowledge above that of the astrologers, the soothsayers, and the magicians of the kingdom. To him the promise was verified: "Them that honor Me I will honor."

The young physician has access to the God of Daniel. Through divine grace and power he may become as efficient in his calling as Daniel was in his exalted position. But it is a mistake to make a scientific preparation the all-important thing, while religious principles, that lie at the very [148] foundation of a successful practice, are neglected. Many are lauded as skillful men in their profession who scorn the thought that they need to rely upon Jesus for wisdom in their work. But if these men who trust in their knowledge of science were illuminated by the light of heaven, to how much greater excellence might they attain! How much stronger would be their powers, with how much greater confidence could they undertake difficult cases! The man who is closely connected with the Great Physician of soul and body has the resources of heaven and earth at his command, and he can work with a wisdom, an unerring precision, that the godless man cannot possess. [149]

The Coming Crisis

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17. In the near future we shall see these words fulfilled as the Protestant churches unite with the world and with the papal power against commandment keepers. The same spirit which actuated papists in ages past will lead Protestants to pursue a similar course toward those who will maintain their loyalty to God.

Church and state are now making preparations for the future conflict. Protestants are working in disguise to bring Sunday to the front, as did the Romanists. Throughout the land the papacy is piling up her lofty and massive structures, in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions are to be repeated. And the way is preparing for the manifestation, on a grand scale, of those lying wonders by which, if it were possible, Satan would deceive even the elect.

The decree which is to go forth against the people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews in the time of Esther. The Persian edict sprang from the malice of Haman toward Mordecai. Not that Mordecai had done him harm, but he had refused to show him reverence which belongs only to God. The king’s decision against the Jews was secured under false pretenses through misrepresentation of that peculiar people. Satan instigated the scheme in order to rid the earth of those who preserved the knowledge of the true God. But his plots were defeated by a counterpower that reigns among the children of men. Angels that excel in strength were commissioned to protect^{*}

^{*}—1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:449-454.

the people of God, and the plots of their adversaries returned upon their own heads. The Protestant world today see in the little company keeping the Sabbath a Mordecai in the gate. His character and conduct, expressing reverence for the law of God, are a constant rebuke to those who have cast off the fear of the Lord and are trampling upon His Sabbath; the unwelcome intruder must by some means be put out of the way.

The same masterful mind that plotted against the faithful in ages past is still seeking to rid the earth of those who fear God and obey His law. Satan will excite indignation against the humble minority who conscientiously refuse to accept popular customs and traditions. Men of position and reputation will join with the lawless and the vile to take counsel against the people of God. Wealth, genius, education, will combine to cover them with contempt. Persecuting rulers, ministers, and church members will conspire against them. With voice and pen, by boasts, threats, and ridicule, they will seek to overthrow their faith. By false representations and angry appeals they will stir up the passions of the people. Not having a “Thus saith the Scriptures” to bring against the advocates of the Bible Sabbath, they will resort to oppressive enactments to supply the lack. To secure popularity and patronage, legislators will yield to the demand for a Sunday law. Those who fear God cannot accept an institution that violates a precept of the Decalogue. On this battlefield comes the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. And we are not left in doubt as to the issue. Now, as in the days of Mordecai, the Lord will vindicate His truth and His people.

An Indication That the End Is Near

By the decree enforcing the institution of the papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation will disconnect herself fully from righteousness. When Protestantism shall [151] stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of

papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near.

As the approach of the Roman armies was a sign to the disciples of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, so may this apostasy be a sign to us that the limit of God's forbearance is reached, that the measure of our nation's iniquity is full, and that the angel of mercy is about to take her flight, never to return. The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress which prophets have described as the time of Jacob's trouble. The cries of the faithful, persecuted ones ascend to heaven. And as the blood of Abel cried from the ground, there are voices also crying to God from martyrs' graves, from the sepulchers of the sea, from mountain caverns, from convent vaults: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

The Lord is doing His work. All heaven is astir. The Judge of all the earth is soon to arise and vindicate His insulted authority. The mark of deliverance will be set upon the men who keep God's commandments, who revere His law, and who refuse the mark of the beast or of his image.

A Work to Be Done

God has revealed what is to take place in the last days, that His people may be prepared to stand against the tempest of opposition and wrath. Those who have been warned of the events before them are not to sit in calm expectation of the coming storm, comforting themselves that the Lord [152] will shelter His faithful ones in the day of trouble. We are to be as men waiting for their Lord, not in idle expectancy, but in earnest work, with unwavering faith. It is no time now to allow our minds to be engrossed with things of minor importance. While men are sleeping, Satan is actively arranging matters so that the Lord's people may not have mercy or justice. The Sunday movement is now making its way in darkness. The leaders are concealing the true issue, and many who unite in the movement do not themselves see whither the undercurrent is tending. Its professions are mild and apparently Christian, but when it shall speak it will reveal the spirit of the dragon.

It is our duty to do all in our power to avert the threatened danger. We should endeavor to disarm prejudice by placing ourselves in a proper light before the people. We should bring before them the real question at issue, thus interposing the most effectual protest against measures to restrict liberty of conscience. We should search the Scriptures and be able to give the reason for our faith. Says the prophet: “The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.” Daniel 12:10.

Those who have access to God through Christ have important work before them. Now is the time to lay hold of the arm of our strength. The prayer of David should be the prayer of pastors and laymen: “It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law.” Psalm 119:126. Let the servants of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar, crying: “Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach.” Joel 2:17. God has always wrought for His people in their greatest extremity, when there seemed the least hope that ruin could be averted. The designs of wicked men, the enemies of the church, are subject to His power and overruling providence. He can move upon the hearts of statesmen; the wrath of the turbulent and [153] disaffected, the haters of God, His truth, and His people can be turned aside, even as the rivers of water are turned, if He orders it thus. Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence. He who marshals the stars in order in the heavens, whose word controls the waves of the great deep, the same infinite Creator will work in behalf of His people if they call upon Him in faith. He will restrain the forces of darkness until the warning is given to the world and all who will heed it are prepared for the conflict.

Persecution Makes Truth Prominent

“The wrath of man shall praise Thee,” says the psalmist; “the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain.” Psalm 76:10. God means that testing truth shall be brought to the front and become a subject of examination and discussion, even if it is through the contempt placed upon it. The minds of the people must be agitated. Every controversy, every reproach, every slander, will be God’s means of provoking inquiry and awakening minds that otherwise would slumber.

Thus it has been in the past history of God's people. For refusing to worship the great golden image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up, the three Hebrews were cast into the fiery furnace. But God preserved His servants in the midst of the flames, and the attempt to enforce idolatry resulted in bringing the knowledge of the true God before the assembled princes and great men of the vast kingdom of Babylon.

So when the decree went forth forbidding prayer to any god save the king. As Daniel, according to his custom, made his supplications three times a day to the God of heaven, the attention of the princes and rulers was called to his case. He had an opportunity to speak for himself, to show who is the true God, and to present the reason why He alone should receive worship, and the duty of rendering Him praise and homage. And the deliverance of Daniel from [154] the den of lions was another evidence that the Being whom he worshiped was the true and living God.

So the imprisonment of Paul brought the gospel before kings, princes, and rulers who otherwise would not have had this light. The efforts made to retard the progress of truth will serve to extend it. The excellence of truth is more clearly seen from every successive point from which it may be viewed. Error requires disguise and concealment. It clothes itself in angel robes, and every manifestation of its real character lessens its chance of success.

The people whom God has made the depositaries of His law are not to permit their light to be hidden. The truth must be proclaimed in the dark places of the earth. Obstacles must be met and surmounted. A great work is to be done, and this work has been entrusted to those who know the truth. They should make mighty intercession with God for help now. The love of Christ must be diffused in their own hearts. The Spirit of Christ must be poured out upon them, and they must be making ready to stand in the judgment. While they are consecrating themselves to God, a convincing power will attend their efforts to present the truth to others, and its light will find access to many hearts.

We must sleep no longer on Satan's enchanted ground, but call into requisition all our resources and avail ourselves of every facility with which Providence has furnished us. The last warning is to be proclaimed "before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings;" and the promise is

given, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”
Revelation 10:11; Matthew 28:20. [155]

The Church the Light of the World

The Lord called out His people Israel and separated them from the world that He might commit to them a sacred trust. He made them the depositaries of His law, and He designed, through them, to preserve among men the knowledge of Himself. Through them the light of heaven was to shine out to the dark places of the earth, and a voice was to be heard appealing to all peoples to turn from their idolatry to serve the living and true God. Had the Hebrews been true to their trust, they would have been a power in the world. God would have been their defense, and He would have exalted them above all other nations. His light and truth would have been revealed through them, and they would have stood forth under His wise and holy rule as an example of the superiority of His government over every form of idolatry.

But they did not keep their covenant with God. They followed after the idolatrous practices of other nations, and instead of making their Creator's name a praise in the earth their course held it up to the contempt of the heathen. Yet the purpose of God must be accomplished. The knowledge of His will must be spread abroad in the earth. God brought the hand of the oppressor upon His people and scattered them as captives among the nations. In affliction many of them repented of their transgressions and sought the Lord. Scattered throughout the countries of the heathen, they spread abroad the knowledge of the true God. The principles of the divine law came in conflict with the customs and practices of the nations. Idolaters endeavored to crush out the true faith. The Lord in His providence brought His servants, Daniel, Nehemiah, Ezra, face to face with kings and rulers, that these^{*}

^{*}1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:454-467.

idolaters might have an opportunity to receive the light. Thus the work which God had given His people to do in prosperity, in their own borders, but which had been neglected through their unfaithfulness, was done by them in captivity, under great trial and embarrassment.

God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositaries of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world. The three angels of (Revelation 14) represent the people who accept the light of God's messages and go forth as His agents to sound the warning throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Christ declares to His followers: "Ye are the light of the world." Matthew 5:14. To every soul that accepts Jesus the cross of Calvary speaks: "Behold the worth of the soul. 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.'" Mark 16:15. Nothing is to be permitted to hinder this work. It is the all-important work for time; it is to be far-reaching as eternity. The love that Jesus manifested for the souls of men in the sacrifice which He made for their redemption, will actuate all His followers.

Shall We Repeat Israel's Experience?

But very few of those who have received the light are doing the work entrusted to their hands. There are a few men of unswerving fidelity who do not study ease, convenience, or life itself, who push their way wherever they can find an opening to press the light of truth and vindicate the holy law of God. But the sins that control the world have come into the churches, and into the hearts of those who claim to be God's [157] peculiar people. Many who have received the light exert an influence to quiet the fears of worldlings and formal professors.

There are lovers of the world even among those who profess to be waiting for the Lord. There is ambition for riches and honor. Christ describes this class when He declares that the day of God is to come as a

snare upon all that dwell upon the earth. This world is their home. They make it their business to secure earthly treasures. They erect costly dwellings and furnish them with every good thing; they find pleasure in dress and the indulgence of appetite. The things of the world are their idols. These interpose between the soul and Christ, and the solemn and awful realities that are crowding upon us are but dimly seen and faintly realized. The same disobedience and failure which were seen in the Jewish church have characterized in a greater degree the people who have had this great light from heaven in the last messages of warning. Shall we, like them, squander our opportunities and privileges until God shall permit oppression and persecution to come upon us? Will the work which might be performed in peace and comparative prosperity be left undone until it must be performed in days of darkness, under the pressure of trial and persecution?

There is a terrible amount of guilt for which the church is responsible. Why are not those who have the light putting forth earnest efforts to give that light to others? They see that the end is near. They see multitudes daily transgressing God's law; and they know that these souls cannot be saved in transgression. Yet they have more interest in their trades, their farms, their houses, their merchandise, their dress, their tables, than in the souls of men and women whom they must meet face to face in the judgment. The people who claim to obey the truth are asleep. They could not be at ease as they are if they were awake. The love of the truth is dying out of their hearts. Their example is not such as to convince the world [158] that they have truth in advance of every other people upon the earth. At the very time when they should be strong in God, having a daily, living experience, they are feeble, hesitating, relying upon the preachers for support, when they should be ministering to others with mind and soul and voice and pen and time and money.

Feeble by Choice

Brethren and sisters, many of you excuse yourselves from labor on the plea of inability to work for others. But did God make you so incapable? Was not this inability produced by your own inactivity and perpetuated by your own deliberate choice? Did not God give you at least one talent to

improve, not for your own convenience and gratification, but for Him? Have you realized your obligation, as His hired servant, to bring a revenue to Him by the wise and skillful use of this entrusted capital? Have you not neglected opportunities to improve your powers to this end? It is too true that few have felt any real sense of their responsibility to God. Love, judgment, memory, foresight, tact, energy, and every other faculty have been devoted to self. You have displayed greater wisdom in the service of evil than in the cause of God. You have perverted, disabled, nay, even besotted your powers, by your intense activity in worldly pursuits to the neglect of God's work.

Still you soothe your conscience by saying that you cannot undo the past, and gain the vigor, the strength, and the skill which you might have had if you had employed your powers as God required. But remember that He holds you responsible for the work negligently done or left undone through your unfaithfulness. The more you exercise your powers for the Master, the more apt and skillful you will become. The more closely you connect yourself with the Source of light and power, the greater light will be shed upon you, and the greater power will be yours to use for God. And for all that you might [159] have had, but failed to obtain through your devotion to the world, you are responsible. When you became a follower of Christ you pledged yourself to serve Him and Him alone, and He promised to be with you and bless you, to refresh you with His light, to grant you His peace, and to make you joyful in His work. Have you failed to experience these blessings? be sure it is the result of your own course.

In order to escape the draft during the war, there were men who induced disease, others maimed themselves that they might be rendered unfit for service. Here is an illustration of the course which many have been pursuing in relation to the cause of God. They have crippled their powers, both physical and mental, so that they are unable to do the work which is so greatly needed.

Am I My Brother's Keeper?

Suppose that a sum of money were placed in your hands to invest for a certain purpose; would you throw it away and declare that you were not

now responsible for its use? would you feel that you had saved yourself a great care? Yet this is what you have been doing with the gifts of God. To excuse yourself from working for others on the plea of inability, while you are all absorbed in worldly pursuits, is mockery of God. Multitudes are going down to ruin; the people who have received light and truth are but as a handful to withstand all the host of evil; and yet this little company are devoting their energies to anything and everything but to learning how they may rescue souls from death. Is it any marvel that the church is weak and inefficient, that God can do but little for His professed people? They place themselves where it is impossible for Him to work with them and for them. Dare you continue thus to disregard His claims? Will you still trifle with heaven's most sacred trusts? Will you say with Cain: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Genesis 4:9.

Remember that your responsibility is measured, not by your [160] present resources and capacities, but by the powers originally bestowed and the possibilities for improvement. The question which each one should ask himself is not whether he is now inexperienced and unfit to labor in God's cause, but how and why he is in this condition, and how it can be remedied. God will not supernaturally endow us with the qualifications which we lack; but while we exert the ability we have, He will work with us to increase and strengthen every faculty; our dormant energies will be aroused, and powers which have long been palsied will receive new life.

So long as we are in the world, we must have to do with the things of the world. There will ever be a necessity for the transaction of temporal, secular business; but this should never become all-absorbing. The apostle Paul has given a safe rule: "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." Romans 12:11. The humble, common duties of life are all to be performed with fidelity; "heartily," says the apostle, "as to the Lord." Whatever our department of labor, be it housework or field work or intellectual pursuits, we may perform it to the glory of God so long as we make Christ first and last and best in everything. But aside from these worldly employments there is given to every follower of Christ a special work for the upbuilding of His kingdom—a work which requires personal effort for the salvation of men. It is not a work to be performed once a week merely, at the place of worship, but at all times and in all places.

The Pledge to the Master's Service

Everyone who connects himself with the church makes in that act a solemn vow to work for the interest of the church and to hold that interest above every worldly consideration. It is his work to preserve a living connection with God, to engage with heart and soul in the great scheme of redemption, and to show, in his life and character, the excellency of God's commandments in contrast with the customs and precepts of [161] the world. Every soul that has made a profession of Christ has pledged himself to be all that it is possible for him to be as a spiritual worker, to be active, zealous, and efficient in his Master's service. Christ expects every man to do his duty; let this be the watchword throughout the ranks of His followers.

We are not to wait to be solicited to give light, to be importuned for counsel or instruction. Everyone who receives the rays of the Sun of Righteousness is to reflect its brightness to all about him. His religion should have a positive and decided influence. His prayers and entreaties should be so imbued with the Holy Spirit that they will melt and subdue the soul. Said Jesus: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:16. It would be better for a worldling never to have seen a professor of religion than to come under the influence of one who is ignorant of the power of godliness. If Christ were our pattern, His life our rule, what zeal would be manifested, what efforts put forth, what liberality exercised, what self-denial practiced! How untiringly should we labor, what fervent petitions for power and wisdom would ascend to God! If all the professed children of God would feel that it is the chief business of life to do the work which He has bidden them to do, if they would labor unselfishly in His cause, what a change would be seen in hearts and homes, in churches, yea, in the world itself!

Vigilance and fidelity have been required of Christ's followers in every age; but now that we are standing upon the very verge of the eternal world, holding the truths we do, having so great light, so important a work, we must double our diligence. Everyone is to do to the very utmost of his ability. My brother, you endanger your own salvation if you hold back now.

God will call you to account if you fail in the work He has assigned you. Have you a knowledge of the truth? give it to others.

What can I say to arouse our churches? what can I say to [162] those who have acted a prominent part in the proclamation of the last message? “The Lord is coming,” should be the testimony borne, not only by the lips, but by the life and character; but many to whom God has given light and knowledge, talents of influence and means, are men who do not love the truth and do not practice it. They have drunk so deeply from the intoxicating cup of selfishness and worldliness that they have become drunken with the cares of this life.

Brethren, if you continue to be as idle, as worldly, as selfish as you have been, God will surely pass you by, and take those who are less self-caring, less ambitious for worldly honor, and who will not hesitate to go, as did their Master, without the camp, bearing the reproach. The work will be given to those who will take it, those who prize it, who weave its principles into their everyday experience. God will choose humble men who are seeking to glorify His name and advance His cause rather than to honor and advance themselves. He will raise up men who have not so much worldly wisdom, but who are connected with Him, and who will seek strength and counsel from above.

In The Power of True Godliness

Some of our leading men are inclined to indulge the spirit manifested by the apostle John when he said: “Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.” Organization and discipline are essential, but there is now very great danger of a departure from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. What we need is less dependence upon mere form and ceremony, and far more of the power of true godliness. If their life and character are exemplary, let all work who will, in any capacity. Although they may not conform exactly to your methods, not a word should be spoken to condemn or discourage them. When the Pharisees desired Jesus to silence the children who sang His praise, the Saviour said: “If these should hold their peace, the [163] stones would immediately cry out.” Luke 19:40. Prophecy must be fulfilled.

So in these days, the work must be done. There are many departments of labor; let everyone act a part as best he can. The man with one talent is not to bury that in the earth. God has given to every man his work according to his ability. Those to whom larger trusts and capabilities have been committed should not endeavor to silence others who are less able or experienced. Men with one talent may reach a class that those with two or five talents cannot approach. Great and small alike are chosen vessels to bear the water of life to thirsting souls. Let not those who preach the word lay their hands upon the humblest worker and say: "You must labor in this channel or not work at all." Hands off, brethren. Let everyone work in his own sphere, with his own armor on, doing whatever he can do in his humble way. Strengthen his hands in the work. This is no time for pharisaism to control. Let God work through whom He will. The message must go.

An Appeal to Laymen

All are to show their fidelity to God by the wise use of His entrusted capital, not in means alone, but in any endowment that will tend to the upbuilding of His kingdom. Satan will employ every possible device to prevent the truth from reaching those who are buried in error; but the voice of warning and entreaty must come to them. And while only a few are engaged in this work, thousands ought to be as much interested as they.

God never designed that the lay members of the church should be excused from labor in His cause. "Go, labor in My vineyard," is the Master's command to each of His followers. As long as there are unconverted souls in the world, there should be the most active, earnest, zealous, determined effort for their salvation. Those who have received the light should seek to enlighten those who have it not. If the church [164] members do not individually take hold of this work, then they show that they have no living connection with God. Their names are registered as slothful servants. Can you not discern the reason why there is no more spirituality in our churches? It is because you are not colaborers with Christ.

God has given to every man his work. Let us each wait on God, and He will teach us how to work and what work we are best adapted to perform.

Yet none are to start out in an independent spirit to promulgate new theories. The workers should be in harmony with the truth and with their brethren. There should be counsel and co-operation. But they are not to feel that at every step they must wait to ask some higher officer if they may do this or that. Look not to man for guidance, but to the God of Israel.

The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity she will have to do in a terrible crisis under most discouraging, forbidding circumstances. The warnings that worldly conformity has silenced or withheld must be given under the fiercest opposition from enemies of the faith. And at that time the superficial, conservative class, whose influence has steadily retarded the progress of the work, will renounce the faith and take their stand with its avowed enemies, toward whom their sympathies have long been tending. These apostates will then manifest the most bitter enmity, doing all in their power to oppress and malign their former brethren and to excite indignation against them. This day is just before us.

The members of the church will individually be tested and proved. They will be placed in circumstances where they will be forced to bear witness for the truth. Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps separately and alone. The experience which would have helped them in this emergency they have neglected to obtain, and their souls are burdened with remorse for wasted opportunities and neglected privileges. [165]

Delay No Longer

My brother, my sister, ponder these things, I beseech you. You have each a work to do. Your unfaithfulness and neglect are registered against you in the Ledger of Heaven. You have diminished your powers and lessened your capabilities. You lack the experience and efficiency which you might have had. But before it is forever too late, I urge you to arouse. Delay no longer. The day is almost spent. The westering sun is about sinking forever from your sight. Yet while the blood of Christ is pleading, you may find pardon. Summon every energy of the soul, employ the few remaining hours in earnest labor for God and for your fellow men.

My heart is stirred to the very depths. Words are inadequate to express my feelings as I plead for perishing souls. Must I plead in vain? As Christ's ambassador I would arouse you to labor as you never labored before. Your duty cannot be shifted upon another. No one but yourself can do your work. If you withhold your light, someone must be left in darkness through your neglect.

Eternity stretches before us. The curtain is about to be lifted. We who occupy this solemn, responsible position, what are we doing, what are we thinking about, that we cling to our selfish love of ease, while souls are perishing around us? Have our hearts become utterly callous? Cannot we feel or understand that we have a work to do for the salvation of others? Brethren, are you of the class who having eyes see not, and having ears hear not? Is it in vain that God has given you a knowledge of His will? Is it in vain that He has sent you warning after warning? Do you believe the declarations of eternal truth concerning what is about to come upon the earth, do you believe that God's judgments are hanging over the people, and can you still sit at ease, indolent, careless, pleasure loving? [166]

Treasure in Heaven

It is no time now for God's people to be fixing their affections or laying up their treasure in the world. The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains. And now, instead of seeking expensive dwellings here, we should be preparing to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Instead of spending our means in self-gratification, we should be studying to economize. Every talent lent of God should be used to His glory in giving the warning to the world. God has a work for His colaborers to do in the cities. Our missions must be sustained; new missions must be opened. To carry forward this work successfully will require no small outlay. Houses of worship are

needed, where the people may be invited to hear the truths for this time. For this very purpose, God has entrusted a capital to His stewards. Let not your property be tied up in worldly enterprises, so that this work shall be hindered. Get your means where you can handle it for the benefit of the cause of God. Send your treasures before you into heaven.

The members of the church should individually hold themselves and all their possessions upon the altar of God. Now, as never before, the Saviour's admonition is applicable: "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Luke 12:33, 34. Those who are fastening their means in large houses, in [167] lands, in worldly enterprises, are saying by their actions: "God cannot have it; I want it for myself." They have bound up their one talent in a napkin and hid it in the earth. There is cause for such to be alarmed. Brethren, God has not entrusted means to you to lie idle nor to be covetously retained or hid away, but to be used to advance His cause, to save the souls of the perishing. It is not the time now to bind up the Lord's money in your expensive buildings and your large enterprises, while His cause is crippled and left to beg its way, the treasury half-supplied. The Lord is not in this way of working. Remember, the day is fast approaching when it will be said: "Give an account of thy stewardship." Can you not discern the signs of the times?

Every day that passes brings us nearer the last great important day. We are one year nearer the judgment, nearer eternity, than we were at the beginning of 1884. Are we also drawing nearer to God? Are we watching unto prayer? Another year of our time to labor has rolled into eternity. Every day we have been associating with men and women who are judgment bound. Each day may have been the dividing line to some soul; someone may have made the decision which shall determine his future destiny. What has been our influence over these fellow travelers? What efforts have we put forth to bring them to Christ?

It Is Solemn to Live

It is a solemn thing to die, but a far more solemn thing to live. Every thought and word and deed of our lives will meet us again. What we make of ourselves in probationary time, that we must remain to all eternity. Death brings dissolution to the body, but makes no change in the character. The coming of Christ does not change our characters; it only fixes them forever beyond all change.

Again I appeal to the members of the church to be Christians, to be Christlike. Jesus was a worker, not for [168] Himself, but for others. He labored to bless and save the lost. If you are Christians you will imitate His example. He has laid the foundation, and we are builders together with Him. But what material are we bringing to lay on this foundation? "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." 1 Corinthians 3:13. If you are devoting all your strength and talent to the things of this world, your lifework is represented by wood, hay, and stubble, to be consumed by the fires of the last day. But unselfish labor for Christ and the future life will be as gold, silver, and precious stones; it is imperishable.

My brethren and sisters, awake, I beseech you, from the sleep of death. It is too late to devote the strength of brain, bone, and muscle to self-serving. Let not the last day find you destitute of heavenly treasure. Seek to push the triumphs of the cross, seek to enlighten souls, labor for the salvation of your fellow beings, and your work will abide the trying test of fire.

"If any man's work abide, ... he shall receive a reward." Glorious will be the reward bestowed when the faithful workers are gathered about the throne of God and the Lamb. When John in his mortal state beheld the glory of God, he fell as one dead; he was not able to endure the sight. But when mortal shall have put on immortality, the ransomed ones are like Jesus, for they see Him as He is. They stand before the throne, signifying that they are accepted. All their sins are blotted out, all their transgressions borne away. Now they can look upon the undimmed glory from the throne of God. They have been partakers with Christ of His sufferings, they have been workers together with Him in the plan of redemption, and they are partakers with Him in the joy of beholding souls saved through their instrumentality to praise God through all eternity. [169]

The third angel, flying in the midst of heaven and heralding the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus, represents our work. The message loses none of its force in the angel's onward flight, for John sees it increasing in strength and power until the whole earth is lightened with its glory. The course of God's commandment-keeping people is onward, ever onward. The message of truth that we bear must go to nations, tongues, and peoples. Soon it will go with a loud voice, and the earth will be lightened with its glory. Are we preparing for this great outpouring of the Spirit of God?—1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:383.

I have seen a device representing a bullock standing between a plow and an altar, with the inscription, "Ready for either"—willing to swelter in the weary furrow or to bleed on the altar of sacrifice. This is the position the child of God should ever be in—willing to go where duty calls, to deny self, and to sacrifice for the cause of truth. The Christian church was founded upon the principle of sacrifice. "If any man will come after Me" (Luke 9:20) says Christ, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." He requires the whole heart, the entire affections. The exhibitions of zeal, earnestness, and unselfish labor which His devoted followers have given to the world should kindle our ardor and lead us to emulate their example. Genuine religion gives an earnestness and fixedness of purpose which molds the character to the divine image and enables us to count all things but loss for the excellency of Christ. This singleness of purpose will prove an element of tremendous power.—1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:307. [170]

Joshua and the Angel

If the veil which separates the visible from the invisible world could be lifted, and the people of God could behold the great controversy that is going on between Christ and holy angels and Satan and his evil hosts concerning the redemption of man; if they could understand the wonderful work of God for the rescue of souls from the bondage of sin, and the constant exercise of His power for their protection from the malice of the evil one, they would be better prepared to withstand the devices of Satan. Their minds would be solemnized in view of the vast extent and importance of the plan of redemption and the greatness of the work before them as colaborers with Christ. They would be humbled, yet encouraged, knowing that all heaven is interested in their salvation.

A most forcible and impressive illustration of the work of Satan and the work of Christ, and the power of our Mediator to vanquish the accuser of His people, is given in the prophecy of Zechariah. In holy vision the prophet beholds Joshua the high priest, “clothed with filthy garments,” standing before the Angel of the Lord, entreating the mercy of God in behalf of his people who are in deep affliction. Satan stands at his right hand to resist him. Because Israel had been chosen to preserve the knowledge of God in the earth, they had been, from their first existence as a nation, the special objects of Satan’s enmity, and he had determined to cause their destruction. He could do them no harm while they were obedient to God; therefore he had bent all his power and cunning to enticing them into sin. Ensnared by his temptations they had transgressed the law of God and thus separated from the Source of their strength, and had been left to become the prey of their heathen enemies. They were carried into captivity to^{*}

^{*}—1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:467-476.

[171]

Babylon, and there remained for many years. Yet they were not forsaken of the Lord. His prophets were sent to them with reproofs and warnings. The people were awakened to see their guilt, they humbled themselves before God, and returned to Him with true repentance. Then the Lord sent them messages of encouragement, declaring that He would deliver them from their captivity and restore them to His favor. It was this that Satan was determined to prevent. A remnant of Israel had already returned to their own land, and Satan was seeking to move upon the heathen nations, who were his agents, to utterly destroy them.

As Joshua humbly pleads for the fulfillment of God's promises, Satan stands up boldly to resist him. He points to the transgressions of Israel as a reason why that people should not be restored to the favor of God. He claims them as his prey and demands that they be given into his hands to be destroyed.

The high priest cannot defend himself or his people from Satan's accusations. He does not claim that Israel are free from fault. In his filthy garments, symbolizing the sins of the people, which he bears as their representative, he stands before the Angel, confessing their guilt, yet pointing to their repentance and humiliation, relying upon the mercy of a sin-pardoning Redeemer and in faith claiming the promises of God.

“the Lord Rebuke Thee”

Then the Angel, who is Christ Himself, the Saviour of sinners, puts to silence the accuser of His people, declaring: “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” Zechariah 3:2. Israel had long remained in the furnace of affliction. Because of their sins they had been well-nigh consumed in the flame kindled by Satan and his agents for their destruction, but God had now set His hand to bring them forth. In their penitence and humiliation the compassionate Saviour will not leave His people to the cruel power [172] of the heathen. “A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.” Isaiah 42:3.

As the intercession of Joshua is accepted, the command is given, “Take away the filthy garments from him,” and to Joshua the Angel declares, “Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” “So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments.” Zechariah 3:4, 5. His own sins and those of his people were pardoned. Israel were clothed with “change of raiment”—the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. The miter placed upon Joshua’s head was such as was worn by the priests and bore the inscription, “Holiness to the Lord,” signifying that, notwithstanding his former transgressions, he was now qualified to minister before God in His sanctuary.

After thus solemnly investing him with the dignity of the priesthood the Angel declared: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.” Verse 7. He would be honored as the judge or ruler over the temple and all its services; he should walk among attending angels, even in this life, and should at last join the glorified throng around the throne of God.

“Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch.” Here is revealed the hope of Israel. It was by faith in the coming Saviour that Joshua and his people received pardon. Through faith in Christ they were restored to God’s favor. By virtue of His merits, if they walked in His ways and kept His statutes, they would be “men wondered at,” honored as the chosen of heaven among the nations of the earth. Christ was their hope, their defense, their justification and redemption, as He is the hope of His church today. [173]

Satan the Accuser

As Satan accused Joshua and his people, so in all ages he accuses those who are seeking the mercy and favor of God. In the Revelation he is declared to be the “accuser of our brethren,” “which accused them before our God day and night.” Revelation 12:10. The controversy is repeated over

every soul that is rescued from the power of evil and whose name is registered in the Lamb's book of life. Never is one received from the family of Satan into the family of God without exciting the determined resistance of the wicked one. Satan's accusations against those who seek the Lord are not prompted by displeasure at their sins. He exults in their defective characters. Only through their transgression of God's law can he obtain power over them. His accusations arise solely from his enmity to Christ. Through the plan of salvation, Jesus is breaking Satan's hold upon the human family and rescuing souls from his power. All the hatred and malignity of the archrebel is stirred as he beholds the evidence of Christ's supremacy, and with fiendish power and cunning he works to wrest from Him the remnant of the children of men who have accepted His salvation.

He leads men into skepticism, causing them to lose confidence in God and to separate from His love; he tempts them to break His law, and then he claims them as his captives and contests the right of Christ to take them from him. He knows that those who seek God earnestly for pardon and grace will obtain it; therefore he presents their sins before them to discourage them. He is constantly seeking occasion against those who are trying to obey God. Even their best and most acceptable services he seeks to make appear corrupt. By countless devices, the most subtle and the most cruel, he endeavors to secure their condemnation.

Man cannot meet these charges himself. In his sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. But [174] Jesus our Advocate presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser by the mighty arguments of Calvary. His perfect obedience to God's law, even unto the death of the cross, has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims of His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. To the accuser of His people He declares: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan." These are the purchase of My blood, brands plucked from the burning." Those who rely upon Him in faith receive the comforting assurance: "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment."

All that have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of Christ. Not one soul that in penitence and faith has claimed

His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. His word is pledged: "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." Isaiah 27:5. The promise given to Joshua is made to all: "If thou wilt keep My charge, ... I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." Zechariah 3:7. Angels of God will walk on either side of them, even in this world, and they will stand at last among the angels that surround the throne of God.

The fact that the acknowledged people of God are represented as standing before the Lord in filthy garments should lead to humility and deep searching of heart on the part of all who profess His name. Those who are indeed purifying their souls by obeying the truth will have a most humble opinion of themselves. The more closely they view the spotless character of Christ, the stronger will be their desire to be conformed to His image, and the less will they see of purity or holiness in themselves. But while we should realize our sinful [175] condition, we are to rely upon Christ as our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own.

Yet we should never be content with a sinful life. It is a thought that should arouse Christians to greater zeal and earnestness in overcoming evil, that every defect in character, every point in which they fail to meet the divine standard, is an open door by which Satan can enter to tempt and destroy them; and, furthermore, that every failure and defect on their part gives occasion to the tempter and his agents to reproach Christ. We are to exert every energy of the soul in the work of overcoming, and to look to Jesus for strength to do what we cannot do of ourselves.

No sin can be tolerated in those who shall walk with Christ in white. The filthy garments are to be removed, and Christ's robe of righteousness is to be placed upon us. By repentance and faith we are enabled to render obedience to all the commandments of God, and are found without blame before Him. Those who shall meet the approval of God are now afflicting their souls, confessing their sins, and earnestly pleading for pardon through Jesus their Advocate. Their attention is fixed upon Him, their hopes, their faith, are centered on Him, and when the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments, and clothe him with change of raiment, and set a fair

miter upon his head,” they are prepared to give Him all the glory of their salvation.

The Remnant Church

Zechariah’s vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God’s people in the closing up of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the [176] commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects, he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. All will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law. Those who will be true to God and to duty will be menaced, denounced, and proscribed. They will “be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends.”

Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer. As Joshua was pleading before the Angel, so the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and earnest faith, will plead for pardon and deliverance through Jesus their Advocate. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives, they see their weakness and unworthiness, and as they look upon themselves they are ready to despair. The tempter stands by to accuse them, as he stood by to resist Joshua. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer. He endeavors to affright the soul with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away. He hopes to so destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations, turn from their allegiance to God, and receive the mark of the beast.

Satan urges before God his accusations against them, declaring that they have by their sins forfeited the divine protection, and claiming the right to destroy them as transgressors. He pronounces them just as deserving as

himself of exclusion from the favor of God. "Are these," he says, "the people who are to take my place in heaven and the place of the angels who united with me? While they profess [177] to obey the law of God, have they kept its precepts? Have they not been lovers of self more than of God? Have they not placed their own interests above His service? Have they not loved the things of the world? Look at the sins which have marked their lives. Behold their selfishness, their malice, their hatred toward one another."

The people of God have been in many respects very faulty. Satan has an accurate knowledge of the sins which he has tempted them to commit, and he presents these in the most exaggerated light, declaring: "Will God banish me and my angels from His presence, and yet reward those who have been guilty of the same sins? Thou canst not do this, O Lord, in justice. Thy throne will not stand in righteousness and judgment. Justice demands that sentence be pronounced against them."

But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves to the control of evil. They have put away their sins, and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition, and the divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. He who has been most abused by their ingratitude, who knows their sin, and also their repentance, declares: "'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.' I gave My life for these souls. They are graven upon the palms of My hands."

The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord's eye is upon His people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but Jesus will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. Their earthliness must be removed that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected; unbelief must be overcome; faith, hope, and patience are to be developed.

The people of God are sighing and crying for the abominations done in the land. With tears they warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they humble themselves before the Lord on account of their own transgressions. The wicked mock their [178] sorrow, ridicule their solemn appeals, and sneer at what they term their weakness. But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to

Christ, and their eyes are fixed upon His perfect purity, that they so clearly discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Their contrition and self-abasement are infinitely more acceptable in the sight of God than is the self-sufficient, haughty spirit of those who see no cause to lament, who scorn the humility of Christ, and who claim perfection while transgressing God's holy law. Meekness and lowliness of heart are the conditions for strength and victory. The crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross. Blessed are these mourners, for they shall be comforted.

The faithful, praying ones are, as it were, shut in with God. They themselves know not how securely they are shielded. Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them; but could their eyes be opened, as were the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan, they would see the angels of God encamped about them, by their brightness and glory holding in check the hosts of darkness.

The Robe of Christ's Righteousness

As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments" from them, and the encouraging words are spoken, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; [179] they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin.

And the remnant are not only pardoned and accepted, but honored. "A fair miter" is set upon their heads. They are to be as kings and priests unto God. While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. They sing

the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:4, 5.

Now is reached the complete fulfillment of those words of the Angel: "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch." Christ is revealed as the Redeemer and Deliverer of His people. Now indeed are the remnant "men wondered at," as the tears and humiliation of their pilgrimage give place to joy and honor in the presence of God and the Lamb. "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem." Isaiah 4:2, 3. [180]

Importance of the Sabbath

Those who stand in responsible positions should be careful that their words and example are such as will lead the people to correct views and practices. They should be sure that in no way they belittle the requirements of God. Because the fourth commandment is so widely disregarded, we should be the more earnest and decided in seeking to honor this precept of God's holy law. The third angel's message is that which we are to present to the world. Here God has a test for us, and if we come up to the standard, we shall be a peculiar people.

Whoever obeys the fourth commandment will find that a separating line is drawn between him and the world. The Sabbath is a test, not a human requirement, but God's test. It is that which will distinguish between those who serve God and those who serve Him not; and upon this point will come the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error.

Among our people generally in these kingdoms, the Sabbath has not stood in the exalted position where God has placed it. The world is the instrument that sifts the church, and tests the genuineness of its members. The world holds out inducements, that, when accepted, place the believer where his life is not in harmony with his profession.

Partnership with Unbelievers

Some of our brethren engaged in business have not kept the Sabbath according to the commandment. Some have^{*}

^{*}1886, Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh Day Adventist, 215-218 (Article written from Christiania, Norway).

been in partnership with unbelievers, and the influence of these Sabbathbreaking associates has had its effect upon them. Some have been so blinded that they could not discern the danger in such connections, but it is only the greater because unperceived. While one partner is professedly observing the Sabbath, the other, with the laborers employed, is carrying on the business of the firm. The Sabbathkeeper, though not outwardly engaged in labor, cannot keep his thoughts from business matters. While he may endeavor to keep the Sabbath, he does not keep it. The Lord looks upon him as a transgressor.

Even in business relations we cannot, without involving principle, connect ourselves with those who are not loyal to God. What the one party feels that conscience forbids, the other allows. And this not merely in regard to religious matters, but in business transactions. The one acts from selfish motives, regardless of God's law or the salvation of the soul; and if the other sincerely loves God and the truth, there must be either a sacrifice of principle or frequent and painful differences.

It will require a continual struggle to resist the worldly influence and example of his ungodly associate. He has great difficulties to meet; for he has placed himself on the enemy's ground. The only safe course is to give heed to the inspired injunction: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." 2 Corinthians 6:14, 17.

Attending School on the Sabbath

Some of our people have sent their children to school on the Sabbath. They were not compelled to do this, but the school authorities objected to receiving the children unless [182] they should attend six days. In some of these schools, pupils are not only instructed in the usual branches of study, but are taught to do various kinds of work; and here the children of professed commandment keepers have been sent upon the Sabbath. Some parents have tried to justify their course by quoting the words of Christ, that

it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. But the same reasoning would prove that men may labor on the Sabbath because they must earn bread for their children; and there is no limit, no boundary line, to show what should and what should not be done.

Had these dear brethren possessed greater spirituality, had they realized the binding claim of God's law as every one of us should, they would have known their duty, and would not have been walking in darkness. It was very hard for them to see how they could take any other course. But God does not consult our convenience in regard to His commandments. He expects us to obey them, and to teach them to our children. We have before us the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful. The God of heaven says, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Genesis 18:19. And this was why such great blessings were pronounced upon him and his posterity.

Our brethren cannot expect the approval of God while they place their children where it is impossible for them to obey the fourth commandment. They should endeavor to make some arrangement with the authorities whereby the children shall be excused from attendance at school upon the seventh day. If this fails, then their duty is plain, to obey God's requirements at whatever cost.

In some places in Central Europe, persons have been fined and imprisoned for not sending their children to school on the Sabbath. In one place, after a brother had plainly stated his faith, an officer of justice came to his door, and compelled the children to go to school. The parents gave them a Bible [183] instead of their usual textbooks, and their time was spent in studying it. But wherever it can be done, our people should establish schools of their own. Where they cannot do this, they should as soon as possible remove to some place where they can be free to keep the commandments of God.

The Proof of Loyalty

Some will urge that the Lord is not so particular in His requirements; that it is not their duty to keep the Sabbath strictly at so great loss, or to place themselves where they will be brought in conflict with the laws of the

land. But here is just where the test is coming, whether we will honor the law of God above the requirements of men. This is what will distinguish between those who honor God and those who dishonor Him. Here is where we are to prove our loyalty. The history of God's dealings with His people in all ages shows that He demands exact obedience.

When the destroying angel was about to pass through the land of Egypt, and smite the first-born of both man and beast, the Israelites were directed to bring their children into the house with them, and to strike the doorpost with blood, and none were to go out of the house; for all that were found among the Egyptians would be destroyed with them. Suppose an Israelite had neglected to place the sign of blood upon his door, saying that the angel of God would be able to distinguish between the Hebrews and the Egyptians; would the heavenly sentinels have stood to guard that dwelling? We should take this lesson to ourselves.

Again the destroying angel is to pass through the land. There is to be a mark placed upon God's people, and that mark is the keeping of His holy Sabbath. We are not to follow our own will and judgment; and flatter ourselves that God will come to our terms. God tests our faith by giving us some part to act in connection with His interposition in our behalf. To those who comply with the conditions, His [184] promises will be fulfilled; but all that venture to depart from His instructions, to follow a way of their own choosing, will perish with the wicked when His judgments are visited upon the earth.

If parents allow their children to receive an education with the world, and make the Sabbath a common day, then the seal of God cannot be placed upon them. They will be destroyed with the world; and will not their blood rest upon the parents? But if we faithfully teach our children God's commandments, bring them into subjection to parental authority, and then by faith and prayer commit them to God, He will work with our efforts; for He has promised it. And when the overflowing scourge shall pass through the land, they with us may be hidden in the secret of the Lord's pavilion.

Scrupulous Sabbath Observance

God brought His people Israel from Egypt that they might keep His Sabbath, and He gave them special directions how to keep it. The ten precepts spoken by His own voice from Sinai, and the instructions given to Moses, were recorded for the benefit of all who should live upon the earth, to the close of time. God has given man six days for labor, but He has reserved the seventh to Himself, and He has pronounced a blessing upon those who keep it holy.

The day before the Sabbath is to be made a day of preparation, that everything may be in readiness for its sacred hours. “Bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe.” “Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord.” Exodus 16:23.

Divine mercy has directed that the sick and suffering should be cared for; the labor required to make them comfortable is a work of necessity, and no violation of the Sabbath. But all unnecessary work should be avoided. Many carelessly put off till the beginning of the Sabbath little [185] things that should have been done on the day of preparation. This should not be. Any work that is neglected until the commencement of holy time should remain undone until the Sabbath is past.

The words and thoughts should be guarded. Those who discuss business matters and lay plans on the Sabbath, are regarded of God as though they engaged in the actual transaction of business. To keep the Sabbath holy, we should not even allow our minds to dwell upon things of a worldly character.

Sunday is generally made a day of feasting and pleasure seeking; but the Lord would have His people give the world a higher, holier example. Upon the Sabbath there should be a solemn dedication of the family to God. The commandment includes all within our gates; all the inmates of the house are to lay aside their worldly business, and employ the sacred hours in devotion. Let all unite to honor God by cheerful service upon His holy day. [186]

Guarding the Interests of Brethren

By his baptismal vows every member of the church has solemnly pledged himself to guard the interests of his brethren. All will be tempted to cling to their own cherished plans and ideas, which appear sound to them; but they should watch and pray, and endeavor, to the utmost of their ability, to build up the kingdom of Jesus in the world. Every Christian is required by God, as far as it is in his power, to ward off from his brethren and sisters every influence which will have the least tendency to divide them or to separate their interests from the work for this present time. He should not only have a regard for his own spiritual interests, but should manifest a burden for the souls of those to whom he stands related; and he should, through Christ, have a constraining power over other members of the church. His words and deportment should have an influence to lead them to follow Christ's example in self-denial, self-sacrifice, and love for others.

If there are any in the church who exert an influence contrary to the love and disinterested benevolence which Jesus manifested for us, if they draw apart from their brethren, faithful men should deal with these cases in wisdom, laboring for their souls, yet being careful that their influence shall not leaven others, and that the church shall not be led astray by their disaffection and false reports. Some are filled with self-sufficiency. There are a few who they think are right, but they question and find fault with every act of others. These persons must not be allowed to imperil the interests of the church. In order to raise the moral tone of the church, each should feel it his duty to seek personal spiritual culture, through the practice of strict Bible principles, as in the sight of a holy God.*

*1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:480-490 (Unity and Love in the Church).

Let each church member feel that he himself must be right with God, that he must be sanctified through the truth. Then he can represent Christian character to others and can set an example of unselfishness. If each will do this, the church will increase in spirituality and in favor with God. ...

We are nearing the end of time. Trials will be abundant from without, but let them not come from within the church. Let God's professed people deny self for the truth's sake, for Christ's sake. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10. Everyone who truly loves God will have the spirit of Christ and a fervent love for his brethren. The more a person's heart is in communion with God, and the more his affections are centered in Christ, the less will he be disturbed by the roughness and hardships he meets in this life. Those who are growing up to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, will become more and more like Christ in character, rising above the disposition to murmur and be discontented. They will despise to be faultfinders. ...

A Time to "Watch and Pray"

We are living in an age when all should especially give heed to the injunction of the Saviour: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Matthew 26:41. Let everyone bear in mind that he should be true and loyal to God, believing the truth, growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Saviour's invitation is: "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:29. The Lord is willing to help us, to strengthen and bless us; but we must pass through the refining process until all the impurities in our character are burned away. Every member of the church will be subjected to the furnace, not to consume, but to purify. [188]

The Lord has wrought among you, but Satan has also intruded himself, to bring in fanaticism. There are other evils also to be avoided. Some are in danger of being satisfied with the glimpses they have had of the light and love of God, and so ceasing to advance. Watchfulness and prayer have not been maintained. At the very time when the acclamation is made, "The

temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these” (Jeremiah 7:4), temptations come in, and darkness gathers about the soul—earthliness, selfishness, and self-glorification. There is a necessity for the Lord Himself to communicate His own ideas to the soul. What a thought!—that instead of our poor, earthly, contracted ideas and plans the Lord will communicate to us His own ideas, His own thought, noble, broad, far-reaching, always leading heavenward!

Here is your danger, in failing to press forward “toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:14. Has the Lord given you light? Then you are responsible for that light; not merely while its rays are shining upon you, but for all which it has revealed to you in the past. You are to surrender your will to God daily; you are to walk in the light, and to expect more; for the light from the dear Saviour is to shine forth in clearer, more distinct rays amid the moral darkness, increasing in brightness more and more unto the perfect day.

Are all the members of your church seeking to gather fresh manna every morning and evening? Are you seeking divine enlightenment? or are you devising means whereby you can glorify yourselves? Are you, with your whole soul, might, mind, and strength, loving and serving God in blessing others around you by leading them to the Light of the world? Are you satisfied with past blessings? or are you walking as Christ walked, working as He worked, revealing Him to the world in your words and actions? Are you, as obedient children, living a pure and holy life? Christ must be brought into [189] your life. He alone can cure you of envy, of evil surmising against your brethren; He alone can take away from you the self-sufficient spirit that some of you cherish to your own spiritual detriment. Jesus alone can make you feel your weakness, your ignorance, your corrupt nature. He alone can make you pure, refine you, fit you for the mansions of the blessed.

“Through God we shall do valiantly.” Psalm 60:12. What an amount of good you can do by being loyal to God and to your brethren, by repressing every unkind thought, every feeling of envy or self-importance! Let your life be filled with the ministry of kindness to others. How soon you may be called to lay off the armor, you know not. Death may claim you suddenly, giving you no time to prepare for your last change, no physical strength or mental power to fix your thoughts on God and make your peace with Him.

Some, ere long, will know by experience how vain is the help of man, how worthless is the self-important, self-sufficient righteousness which has satisfied them.

Our Day of Privilege

I feel urged by the Spirit of the Lord to tell you that now is your day of privilege, of trust, of blessing. Will you improve it? Are you working for the glory of God, or for selfish interests? Are you keeping before your mind's eye brilliant prospects of worldly success, whereby you may obtain self-gratification and financial gain? If so, you will be most bitterly disappointed. But if you seek to live a pure and holy life, to learn daily in the school of Christ the lessons that He has invited you to learn, to be meek and lowly in heart, then you have a peace which no worldly circumstances can change.

A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. Uneasiness, dissatisfaction, and restlessness reveal the absence of the Saviour. If Jesus is brought into the life, that life will be filled with good and noble works for the Master. You will forget to be [190] self-serving, and will live closer and still closer to the dear Saviour; your character will become Christlike, and all around you will take knowledge that you have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Each one possesses in himself the source of his own happiness or wretchedness. If he will, he may rise above the low, sentimental feeling which makes up the experience of many; but so long as he is self-inflated, the Lord can do nothing for him. Satan will present ambitious projects to daze the senses, but we must ever keep before us "the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14. Crowd all the good works you possibly can into this life. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 12:3.

If our lives are filled with holy fragrance, if we honor God by having good thoughts toward others, and doing good deeds to bless others, it matters not whether we live in a cottage or a palace. Circumstances have but little to do with the experiences of the soul. It is the spirit cherished which gives coloring to all our actions. A man at peace with God and his

fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmising will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart in harmony with God is lifted above the annoyances and trials of this life.

But a heart where the peace of Christ is not, is unhappy, full of discontent; the person sees defects in everything, and he would bring discord into the most heavenly music. A life of selfishness is a life of evil. Those whose hearts are filled with love of self will store away evil thoughts of their brethren and will talk against God's instrumentalities. Passions kept warm and fierce by Satan's promptings are a bitter fountain, ever sending forth bitter streams to poison the life of others. ...

Let each one who claims to follow Christ esteem himself less and others more. Press together, press together! In union [191] there is strength and victory; in discord and division there is weakness and defeat. These words have been spoken to me from heaven. As God's ambassador I speak them to you.

Let everyone seek to answer the prayer of Christ: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." Oh, what unity is this! and says Christ: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 17:21; 13:35.

When death claims one of our number, what are our memories of the treatment he has received? Are the pictures upon memory's walls pleasant to reflect upon? Are they memories of kind words spoken, of sympathy given at the right time? Have his brethren turned away the evil surmisings of indiscreet meddlers? Have they vindicated his cause? Have they been faithful to the inspired injunction: "Comfort the feebleminded, support the weak"? 1 Thessalonians 5:14. "Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands." Job 4:3. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not." Isaiah 35:3, 4.

When he with whom we have associated in the church is dead, when we know that his account in the books of heaven is fixed, and that he must meet that record in the judgment, what are the reflections of his brethren as to the course they have pursued toward him? What has been their influence upon him? How clearly now every harsh word, every unadvised act, is called to mind! How differently they would conduct themselves if they had another trial!

The apostle Paul thanked God for the comfort given him in sorrow, saying: "Blessed be ... the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2

Corinthians 1:3, 4. As Paul felt the comfort and warmth of God's love breaking into his soul, he reflected the blessing upon [192] others. Let us so order our conduct that the pictures hung upon the walls of our memory may not be of such a character that we cannot endure to reflect upon them.

After those with whom we associate are dead, there will never be an opportunity to recall any word spoken to them, or to wipe from the memory any painful impression. Then let us take heed to our ways, that we do not offend God with our lips. Let all coldness and variance be put away. Let the heart melt into tenderness before God, as we recall His merciful dealings with us. Let the Spirit of God, like a holy flame, burn away the rubbish that is piled up at the door of the heart, and let Jesus in; then His love will flow out to others through us, in tender words and thoughts and acts. Then if death parts us from our friends, to meet no more till we stand at the bar of God, we shall not be ashamed to have the record of our words appear.

When death closes the eyes, when the hands are folded upon the silent breast, how quickly feelings of variance change! There is no grudging, no bitterness; slights and wrongs are forgiven, forgotten. How many loving words are spoken of the dead! How many good things in their life are brought to mind! Praise and commendation are now freely expressed; but they fall upon ears that hear not, hearts that feel not. Had these words been spoken when the weary spirit needed them so much, when the ear could hear and the heart could feel, what a pleasant picture would have been left in the memory! How many, as they stand awed and silent beside the dead, recall with shame and sorrow the words and acts that brought sadness to the heart now forever still! Let us now bring all the beauty, love, and kindness we can into our life. Let us be thoughtful, grateful, patient, and forbearing in our intercourse with one another. Let the thoughts and feelings which find expression around the dying and the dead be brought into the daily association with our brethren and sisters in life. [193]

Behavior in the House of God

To the humble, believing soul, the house of God on earth is the gate of heaven. The song of praise, the prayer, the words spoken by Christ's representatives, are God's appointed agencies to prepare a people for the church above, for that loftier worship into which there can enter nothing that defileth.

From the sacredness which was attached to the earthly sanctuary, Christians may learn how they should regard the place where the Lord meets with His people. There has been a great change, not for the better, but for the worse, in the habits and customs of the people in reference to religious worship. The precious, the sacred, things which connect us with God are fast losing their hold upon our minds and hearts, and are being brought down to the level of common things. The reverence which the people had anciently for the sanctuary where they met with God in sacred service has largely passed away. Nevertheless, God Himself gave the order of His service, exalting it high above everything of a temporal nature.

The house is the sanctuary for the family, and the closet or the grove the most retired place for individual worship; but the church is the sanctuary for the congregation. There should be rules in regard to the time, the place, and the manner of worshiping. Nothing that is sacred, nothing that pertains to the worship of God, should be treated with carelessness or indifference. In order that men may do their best work in showing forth the praises of God, their associations must be such as will keep the sacred distinct from the common, in their minds. Those who have broad ideas, noble^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:491-500.

thoughts and aspirations, are those who have associations that strengthen all thoughts of divine things. Happy are those who have a sanctuary, be it high

or low, in the city or among the rugged mountain caves, in the lowly cabin or in the wilderness. If it is the best they can secure for the Master, He will hallow the place with His presence, and it will be holy unto the Lord of hosts.

Before the Service

When the worshipers enter the place of meeting, they should do so with decorum, passing quietly to their seats. If there is a stove in the room, it is not proper to crowd about it in an indolent, careless attitude. Common talking, whispering, and laughing should not be permitted in the house of worship, either before or after the service. Ardent, active piety should characterize the worshipers.

If some have to wait a few minutes before the meeting begins, let them maintain a true spirit of devotion by silent meditation, keeping the heart uplifted to God in prayer that the service may be of special benefit to their own hearts and lead to the conviction and conversion of other souls. They should remember that heavenly messengers are in the house. We all lose much sweet communion with God by our restlessness, by not encouraging moments of reflection and prayer. The spiritual condition needs to be often reviewed and the mind and heart drawn toward the Sun of Righteousness.

If when the people come into the house of worship, they have genuine reverence for the Lord and bear in mind that they are in His presence, there will be a sweet eloquence in silence. The whispering and laughing and talking which might be without sin in a common business place should find no sanction in the house where God is worshiped. The mind should be prepared to hear the word of God, that it may have due weight and suitably impress the heart. [195]

During the Service

When the minister enters, it should be with dignified, solemn mien. He should bow down in silent prayer as soon as he steps into the pulpit, and

earnestly ask help of God. What an impression this will make! There will be solemnity and awe upon the people. Their minister is communing with God; he is committing himself to God before he dares to stand before the people. Solemnity rests upon all, and angels of God are brought very near. Every one of the congregation, also, who fears God should with bowed head unite in silent prayer with him that God may grace the meeting with His presence and give power to His truth proclaimed from human lips.

When the meeting is opened by prayer, every knee should bow in the presence of the Holy One, and every heart should ascend to God in silent devotion. The prayers of faithful worshipers will be heard, and the ministry of the word will prove effectual. The lifeless attitude of the worshipers in the house of God is one great reason why the ministry is not more productive of good. The melody of song, poured forth from many hearts in clear, distinct utterance, is one of God's instrumentalities in the work of saving souls. All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies.

When the word is spoken, you should remember, brethren, that you are listening to the voice of God through His delegated servant. Listen attentively. Sleep not for one instant, because by this slumber you may lose the very words that you need most—the very words which, if heeded, would save your feet from straying into wrong paths. Satan and his angels are busy creating a paralyzed condition of the senses so that cautions, warnings, and reproofs shall not be heard; or if heard, that they shall not take effect upon the heart and reform the life. Sometimes a little child may so attract the [196] attention of the hearers that the precious seed does not fall into good ground and bring forth fruit. Sometimes young men and women have so little reverence for the house and worship of God that they keep up a continual communication with each other during the sermon. Could these see the angels of God looking upon them and marking their doings, they would be filled with shame, with abhorrence of themselves. God wants attentive hearers. It was while men slept that Satan sowed his tares.

After the Service

When the benediction is pronounced, all should still be quiet, as if fearful of losing the peace of Christ. Let all pass out without jostling or loud talking, feeling that they are in the presence of God, that His eye is resting upon them, and that they must act as in His visible presence. Let there be no stopping in the aisles to visit or gossip, thus blocking them up so that others cannot pass out. The precincts of the church should be invested with a sacred reverence. It should not be made a place to meet old friends and visit and introduce common thoughts and worldly business transactions. These should be left outside the church. God and angels have been dishonored by the careless, noisy laughing and shuffling of feet heard in some places.

Parents, elevate the standard of Christianity in the minds of your children; help them to weave Jesus into their experience; teach them to have the highest reverence for the house of God and to understand that when they enter the Lord's house it should be with hearts that are softened and subdued by such thoughts as these: "God is here; this is His house. I must have pure thoughts and the holiest motives. I must have no pride, envy, jealousy, evil surmising, hatred, or deception in my heart, for I am coming into the presence of the holy God. This is the place where God meets with and blesses His people. The high and holy One who inhabiteth [197] eternity looks upon me, searches my heart, and reads the most secret thoughts and acts of my life."

Responsibility of Parents

Brethren, will you not devote a little thought to this subject and notice how you conduct yourselves in the house of God and what efforts you are making by precept and example to cultivate reverence in your children? You roll vast responsibilities upon the preacher and hold him accountable for the souls of your children; but you do not sense your own responsibility as parents and as instructors and, like Abraham, command your household after you, that they may keep the statutes of the Lord. Your sons and daughters are corrupted by your own example and lax precepts; and, notwithstanding this lack of domestic training, you expect the minister to counteract your daily work and accomplish the wonderful achievement of training their hearts and lives to virtue and piety. After the minister has

done all he can do for the church by faithful, affectionate admonition, patient discipline, and fervent prayer to reclaim and save the soul, yet is not successful, the fathers and mothers often blame him because their children are not converted, when it may be because of their own neglect.

The burden rests with the parents; and will they take up the work that God has entrusted to them, and with fidelity perform it? Will they move onward and upward, working in a humble, patient, persevering way to reach the exalted standard themselves and to bring their children up with them? No wonder our churches are feeble and do not have that deep, earnest piety in their borders that they should have. Our present habits and customs, which dishonor God and bring the sacred and heavenly down to the level of the common, are against us. We have a sacred, testing, sanctifying truth; and if our habits and practices are not in accordance with the truth, we are sinners against great light, and [198] are proportionately guilty. It will be far more tolerable for the heathen in the day of God's retributive justice than for us.

A much greater work might be done than we are now doing in reflecting the light of truth. God expects us to bear much fruit. He expects greater zeal and faithfulness, more affectionate and earnest efforts, by the individual members of the church for their neighbors and for those who are out of Christ. Parents must begin their work on a high plane of action. All who name the name of Christ must put on the whole armor and entreat, warn, and seek to win souls from sin. Lead all you can to listen to the truth in the house of God. We must do much more than we are doing to snatch souls from the burning.

It is too true that reverence for the house of God has become almost extinct. Sacred things and places are not discerned; the holy and exalted are not appreciated. Is there not a cause for the want of fervent piety in our families? Is it not because the high standard of religion is left to trail in the dust? God gave rules of order, perfect and exact to His ancient people. Has His character changed? Is He not the great and mighty God who rules in the heaven of heavens? Would it not be well for us often to read the directions given by God Himself to the Hebrews, that we who have the light of the glorious truth shining upon us may imitate their reverence for the house of God? We have abundant reason to maintain a fervent, devoted spirit in the worship of God. We have reason even to be more thoughtful and reverential

in our worship than had the Jews. But an enemy has been at work to destroy our faith in the sacredness of Christian worship.

The place dedicated to God should not be a room where worldly business is transacted. If the children assemble to worship God in a room that is used during the week for a school or a storeroom, they will be more than human if, [199] mingled with their devotional thoughts, they do not also have thoughts of their studies or of things that have happened during the week. The education and training of the youth should be of a character that would exalt sacred things and encourage pure devotion for God in His house. Many who profess to be children of the heavenly King have no true appreciation of the sacredness of eternal things. Nearly all need to be taught how to conduct themselves in the house of God. Parents should not only teach, but command, their children to enter the sanctuary with sobriety and reverence.

The moral taste of the worshipers in God's holy sanctuary must be elevated, refined, sanctified. This matter has been sadly neglected. Its importance has been overlooked, and as the result, disorder and irreverence have become prevalent, and God has been dishonored. When the leaders in the church, ministers and people, father and mothers, have not had elevated views of this matter, what could be expected of the inexperienced children? They are too often found in groups, away from the parents, who should have charge of them. Notwithstanding they are in the presence of God, and His eye is looking upon them, they are light and trifling, they whisper and laugh, are careless, irreverent, and inattentive. They are seldom instructed that the minister is God's ambassador, that the message he brings is one of God's appointed agencies in the salvation of souls, and that to all who have the privilege brought within their reach it will be a savor of life unto life or of death unto death.

Criticizing the Sermon

The delicate and susceptible minds of the youth obtain their estimate of the labors of God's servants by the way their parents treat the matter. Many heads of families make the service a subject of criticism at home, approving a few things and condemning others. Thus the message of God to men is

criticized and questioned, and made a subject of levity. What [200] impressions are thus made upon the young by these careless, irreverent remarks the books of heaven alone will reveal. The children see and understand these things very much quicker than parents are apt to think. Their moral senses receive a wrong bias that time will never fully change. The parents mourn over the hardness of heart in their children and the difficulty in arousing their moral sensibility to answer to the claims of God.

But the books of heavenly record trace with unerring pen the true cause. The parents were unconverted. They were not in harmony with heaven or with heaven's work. Their low, common ideas of the sacredness of the ministry and of the sanctuary of God were woven into the education of their children. It is a question whether anyone who has for years been under this blighting influence of home instruction will ever have a sensitive reverence and high regard for God's ministry and the agencies He has appointed for the salvation of souls. These things should be spoken of with reverence, with propriety of language, and with fine susceptibility, that you may reveal to all you associate with that you regard the message from God's servants as a message to you from God Himself.

Parents, be careful what example and what ideas you give your children. Their minds are plastic, and impressions are easily made. In regard to the service of the sanctuary, if the speaker has a blemish, be afraid to mention it. Talk only of the good work he is doing, of the good ideas he presented, which you should heed as coming through God's agent. It may be readily seen why children are so little impressed with the ministry of the word and why they have so little reverence for the house of God. Their education has been defective in this respect. Their parents need daily communion with God. Their own ideas need to be refined and ennobled; their lips need to be touched with a live coal from off the altar; then their habits, their practices at home, will make [201] a good impression on the minds and characters of their children. The standard of religion will be greatly elevated. Such parents will do a great work for God. They will have less earthliness, less sensuality, and more refinement and fidelity at home. Life will be invested with a solemnity of which they have scarcely conceived. Nothing will be made common that pertains to the service and worship of God.

Neatness and Refined Deportment

I am often pained as I enter the house where God is worshiped, to see the untidy dress of both men and women. If the heart and character were indicated by the outward apparel, then certainly nothing could be heavenly about them. They have no true idea of the order, the neatness, and the refined deportment that God requires of all who come into His presence to worship Him. What impressions do these things give to unbelievers and to the youth, who are keen to discern and to draw their conclusions?

In the minds of many there are no more sacred thoughts connected with the house of God than with the most common place. Some will enter the place of worship with their hats on, in soiled, dirty clothes. Such do not realize that they are to meet with God and holy angels. There should be a radical change in this matter all through our churches. Ministers themselves need to elevate their ideas, to have finer susceptibilities in regard to it. It is a feature of the work that has been sadly neglected. Because of the irreverence in attitude, dress, and deportment, and lack of a worshipful frame of mind, God has often turned His face away from those assembled for His worship.

All should be taught to be neat, clean, and orderly in their dress, but not to indulge in that external adorning which is wholly inappropriate for the sanctuary. There should be no display of the apparel; for this encourages irreverence. The attention of the people is often called to this or that fine [202] article of dress, and thus thoughts are intruded that should have no place in the hearts of the worshipers. God is to be the subject of thought, the object of worship; and anything that attracts the mind from the solemn, sacred service is an offense to Him. The parading of bows and ribbons, ruffles and feathers, and gold and silver ornaments is a species of idolatry and is wholly inappropriate for the sacred service of God, where the eye of every worshiper should be single to His glory.

All matters of dress should be strictly guarded, following closely the Bible rule. Fashion has been the goddess who has ruled the outside world, and she often insinuates herself into the church. The church should make the word of God her standard, and parents should think intelligently upon this subject. When they see their children inclined to follow worldly fashions, they should, like Abraham, resolutely command their households after them. Instead of uniting them with the world, connect them with God. Let none dishonor God's sanctuary by their showy apparel. God and angels

are there. The Holy One of Israel has spoken through His apostle: “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” 1 Peter 3:3, 4.

Instructing the New Believers

When a church has been raised up and left uninstructed on these points, the minister has neglected his duty and will have to give an account to God for the impressions he allowed to prevail. Unless correct ideas of true worship and true reverence are impressed upon the people, there will be a growing tendency to place the sacred and eternal on a level with common things, and those professing the truth will be [203] an offense to God and a disgrace to religion. They can never, with their uncultivated ideas, appreciate a pure and holy heaven, and be prepared to join with the worshipers in the heavenly courts above, where all is purity and perfection, where every being has perfect reverence for God and His holiness.

Paul describes the work of God’s ambassadors as that by which every man shall be presented perfect in Christ Jesus. Those who embrace the truth of heavenly origin should be refined, ennobled, sanctified through it. It will require much painstaking effort to reach God’s standard of true manhood. The irregular stones hewed from the quarry must be chiseled, their rough sides must be polished.

This is an age famous for surface work, for easy methods, for boasted holiness aside from the standard of character that God has erected. All short routes, all cutoff tracks, all teaching which fails to exalt the law of God as the standard of religious character, is spurious. Perfection of character is a lifelong work, unattainable by those who are not willing to strive for it in God’s appointed way, by slow and toilsome steps. We cannot afford to make any mistake in this matter, but we want day by day to be growing up into Christ, our living Head. [204]

Practical Godliness

Basel, Switzerland

March 1, 1887

Dear Brethren and Sisters at Oakland,

My mind is drawn out to write to you. Again and again I find myself talking to you in my dreams, and in every case you are in trouble. But whatever comes, let it not enfeeble your moral courage and cause your religion to degenerate into a heartless form. The loving Jesus is ready to bless abundantly; but we need to obtain an experience in faith, in earnest prayer, and in rejoicing in the love of God. Shall any of us be weighed in the balances and be found wanting? We must watch ourselves, watch the least unholy promptings of our nature, lest we become traitors to the high responsibilities God has bestowed upon us as His human agencies.

We must study the warnings and corrections He has given His people in past ages. We do not lack light. We know what works we should avoid and what requirements He has given us to observe; so if we do not seek to know and do that which is right, it is because wrongdoing suits the carnal heart better than rightdoing.

There will always be faithless ones, who wait to be carried forward by the faith of others. They have not an experimental knowledge of the truth and consequently have not felt its sanctifying power on their own souls. It should be the work of every member of the church quietly and diligently to search his own heart and see if his life and character are in harmony with God's great standard of righteousness.

The Lord has done great things for you in California, particularly in Oakland; but there is much more that He would^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:532-541.

be well pleased to do if you would make your works correspond with your faith. God never honors unbelief with rich blessings. Review what God has done, and then know that it is only the beginning of what He is willing to do.

Search the Scriptures

We must place a higher value than we have upon the Scriptures, for therein is the revealed will of God to men. It is not enough merely to assent to the truthfulness of God's word, but we must search the Scriptures to learn what they contain. Do we receive the Bible as "the oracle of God"? It is as really a divine communication as though its words came to us in an audible voice. We do not know its preciousness because we do not obey its instructions.

There are evil angels at work all around us, but because we do not discern their presence with our natural vision we do not consider as we should the reality of their existence as set forth in the word of God. If there was nothing in the Scriptures hard to be understood, man, in searching its pages, would become lifted up in pride and self-sufficiency. It is never best for one to think that he understands every phase of truth, for he does not. Then let no man flatter himself that he has a correct understanding of all portions of Scripture and feel it his duty to make everybody else understand them just as he does. Let intellectual pride be banished. I lift my voice in warning against every species of spiritual pride. There is an abundance of it in the church today.

When the truth we now cherish was first seen to be Bible truth, how very strange it appeared, and how strong was the opposition we had to meet in presenting it to the people for the first time; but how earnest and sincere were the obedient, truth-loving laborers! We were indeed a peculiar people. We were few in numbers, without wealth, without worldly wisdom or worldly honors; and yet we believed God and were strong and successful, a terror to evildoers. Our love for one [206] another was steadfast; it was not easily shaken. Then the power of God was manifested among us, the sick were healed, and there was much calm, sweet, holy joy.

But while the light has continued to increase, the church has not advanced proportionately. The fine gold has gradually become dim, and deadness and formality have come in to cripple the energies of the church. Their abundant privileges and opportunities have not led God's people onward and upward to purity and holiness. A faithful improvement of the talents God has entrusted to them would greatly increase those talents. Where much is given, much will be required. Those only who faithfully accept and appreciate the light God has given us, and who take a high, noble stand in self-denial and self-sacrifice, will be channels of light to the world. Those who do not advance will retrograde, even on the very borders of the heavenly Canaan. It has been revealed to me that our faith and our works in no way correspond to the light of truth bestowed. We must not have a halfhearted faith, but that perfect faith which works by love and purifies the soul. God calls upon you in California to come into close relationship with Him.

Individual Independence

One point will have to be guarded, and that is individual independence. As soldiers in Christ's army, there should be concert of action in the various departments of the work. No one has the right to start out on his own responsibility and advance ideas in our papers on Bible doctrines when it is known that others among us hold different opinions on the subject and that it will create controversy. The first-day Adventists have done this. Each has followed his own independent judgment and sought to present original ideas, until there is no concerted action among them, except, perhaps, in opposing Seventh-day Adventists. We should not follow their example. Each laborer should act with reference to the others. [207] Followers of Jesus Christ will not act independently one of another. Our strength must be in God, and it must be husbanded, to be put forth in noble, concentrated action. It must not be wasted in meaningless movements.

In union there is strength. There should be union between our publishing houses and our other institutions. If this unity existed, they would be a power. No strife or variance should exist among the workers. The work is one, superintended by one Leader. Occasional and spasmodic

efforts have done harm. However energetic they may be, they are of little value; for the reaction will surely come. We must cultivate a steady perseverance, continually searching to know and do God's will.

God Looks upon the Character

We should know what we must do to be saved. We should not, my brethren and sisters, float along with the popular current. Our present work is to come out from the world and be separate. This is the only way we can walk with God, as did Enoch. Divine influences were constantly working with his human efforts. Like him, we are called upon to have a strong, living, working faith, and this is the only way we can be laborers together with God. We must meet the conditions laid down in the word of God or die in our sins. We must know what moral changes are essential to be made in our characters, through the grace of Christ, in order to be fitted for the mansions above. I tell you in the fear of God: We are in danger of living like the Jews—destitute of the love of God and ignorant of His power, while the blazing light of truth is shining all around us.

Ten thousand times ten thousand may profess to obey the law and the gospel, and yet be living in transgression. Men may present in a clear manner the claims of truth upon others and yet their own hearts be carnal. Sin may be loved and practiced in secret. The truth of God may be no truth to them, [208] because their hearts have not been sanctified by it. The love of the Saviour may exercise no constraining power over their base passions. We know by the history of the past that men may stand in sacred positions and yet handle the truth of God deceitfully. They cannot lift up holy hands to God, “without wrath and doubting.” This is because God has no control over their minds. The truth was never stamped upon their hearts. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” Romans 10:10. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” Mark 12:30. Are you doing this? Many are not, and never have done it. Their conversion has been only superficial.

“If ye then,” says the apostle, “be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Colossians 3:1, 2.

The heart is the citadel of the man. From it are the issues of life or death. Until the heart is purified, a person is unfit to have any part in the fellowship of the saints. Does not the Heart Searcher know who are lingering in sin, regardless of their souls? Has there not been a witness to the most secret things in the life of everyone? I was compelled to hear the words spoken by some men to women and girls—words of flattery, words that would deceive and infatuate. Satan uses all these means to destroy souls. Some of you may thus have been his agents; and if so, you will have to meet these things in the judgment. The angel said of this class: “Their hearts have never been given to God. Christ is not in them. Truth is not there. Its place is occupied by sin, deception, and falsehood. The word of God is not believed and acted upon.”

The present activity of Satan in working upon hearts, and upon churches and nations, should startle every student of prophecy. The end is near. Let our churches arise. Let the converting power of God be experienced in the hearts of the [209] individual members, and then we shall see the deep movings of the Spirit of God. The forgiveness of sins is not the sole result of the death of Jesus. He made the infinite sacrifice, not only that sin might be removed, but that human nature might be restored, rebeautified, reconstructed from its ruins, and made fit for the presence of God.

We should show our faith by our works. A greater anxiety should be manifested to have a large measure of the spirit of Christ; for in this will be the strength of the church. It is Satan who is striving to have God’s children draw apart. Love, oh, how little love we have—love for God and for one another! The word and spirit of truth, dwelling in our hearts, will separate us from the world. The immutable principles of truth and love will bind heart to heart, and the strength of the union will be according to the measure of grace and truth enjoyed. Well would it be for us each to hold up the mirror, God’s royal law, and see in it the reflection of His own character. Let us be careful not to neglect the danger signals and the warnings given in His word. Unless heed is given to these warnings, and defects of character are overcome, these defects will overcome those who possess them, and they will fall into error, apostasy, and open sin. The mind that is not elevated to the highest standard will in time lose its power to retain that which it had once gained. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” 1 Corinthians 10:12. “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the

wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 3:17, 18.

Spirituality and Efficiency

God has selected a people in these last days whom He has made the depositaries of His law, and this people will ever have disagreeable tasks to perform. “I know thy works, and [210] thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name’s sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.” Revelation 2:2, 3. It will require much diligence and a continual struggle to keep evil out of our churches. There must be rigid, impartial discipline exercised; for some who have a semblance of religion will seek to undermine the faith of others and will privily work to exalt themselves.

The Lord Jesus, on the Mount of Olives, plainly stated that “because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Matthew 24:12. He speaks of a class who have fallen from a high state of spirituality. Let such utterances as these come home with solemn, searching power to our hearts. Where is the fervor, the devotion to God, that corresponds to the greatness of the truth which we claim to believe? The love of the world, the love of some darling sin, has weaned the heart from the love of prayer and of meditation on sacred things. A formal round of religious services is kept up; but where is the love of Jesus? Spirituality is dying. Is this torpor, this mournful deterioration, to be perpetuated? Is the lamp of truth to flicker and go out in darkness because it is not replenished by the oil of grace?

I wish that every minister and every one of our workers could see this matter as it has been presented to me. Self-esteem and self-sufficiency are killing spiritual life. Self is lifted up; self is talked about. Oh, that self might die! “I die daily” (1 Corinthians 15:31), said the apostle Paul. When this proud, boasting self-sufficiency and this complacent self-righteousness permeate the soul, there is no room for Jesus. He is given an inferior place, while self swells into importance and fills the whole temple of the soul. This is the reason why the Lord can do so little for us. Should He work with our efforts, the instrument would appropriate all the glory to his [211] own

smartness, his wisdom, his ability, and he would congratulate himself, as did the Pharisee: "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." Luke 18:12. When self shall be hidden in Christ, it will not be brought to the surface so frequently. Shall we meet the mind of the Spirit of God? Shall we dwell more upon practical godliness, and far less upon mechanical arrangements?

The servants of Christ should live as in His sight and as in the sight of angels. They should seek to understand the requirements of our time and prepare to meet them. Satan is constantly attacking us in new and untried ways, and why should the officers in God's army be inefficient? Why should they leave any faculty of their nature uncultivated? There is a great work to be done, and if there is any want of harmonious action in doing it, it is because of self-love and self-esteem. It is only when we are careful to carry out the Master's orders without leaving our stamp and identity upon the work that we work efficiently and harmoniously. "Press together," said the angel, "press together."

Dwell on Practical Religion

I urge upon you who minister in sacred things to dwell more upon practical religion. How rarely are seen the tender conscience, and true, heartfelt sorrow of soul and conviction of sin! It is because there are no deep movings of the Spirit of God among us. Our Saviour is the ladder which Jacob saw, whose base rested on the earth and whose topmost rounds reached the highest heavens. This shows the appointed method of salvation. If any of us are finally saved, it will be by clinging to Jesus as to the rounds of a ladder. To the believer, Christ is made wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Let no one imagine that it is an easy thing to overcome the enemy and that he can be borne aloft to an incorruptible inheritance without effort on his part. To look back is to grow dizzy; to let go the hold is to perish. Few [212] appreciate the importance of striving constantly to overcome. They relax their diligence and, as a result, become selfish and self-indulgent. Spiritual vigilance is not thought to be essential. Earnestness in human effort is not brought into the Christian life.

There will be some terrible falls by those who think they stand firm because they have the truth, but they have it not as it is in Jesus. A moment's carelessness may plunge a soul into irretrievable ruin. One sin leads to the second, and the second prepares the way for the third, and so on. We must, as faithful messengers of God, plead with Him constantly to be kept by His power. If we swerve a single inch from duty, we are in danger of following on in a course of sin that will end in perdition. There is hope for every one of us, but only in one way, and that is by binding ourselves to Christ, and exerting every energy to attain to the perfection of His character.

That religion which makes of sin a light matter, dwelling upon the love of God to the sinner regardless of his actions, only encourages the sinner to believe that God will receive him while he continues in that which he knows to be sin. This is what some are doing who profess to believe present truth. The truth is kept apart from the life, and that is the reason it has no power to convict and convert the soul.

God has shown me that the truth as it is in Jesus has never been brought into the lives of some in California. They do not have the religion of the Bible. They have never been converted; and unless their hearts are sanctified through the truth which they have accepted, they will be bound up with the tares; for they bear no clusters of precious fruit to show that they are branches of the living Vine.

“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:6, 7. The lives of [213] many show that they have no living connection with God. They are drifting into the channel of the world. They have, in reality, no part or lot with Christ. They love amusement and are filled with selfish ideas, plans, hopes, and ambitions. They serve the enemy under the pretense of serving God. They are in bondage to a taskmaster, and this bondage they choose, making themselves willing slaves of Satan.

The false idea entertained by many, that the restraining of children is an injury, is ruining thousands upon thousands. Satan will surely take possession of the children if you are not on your guard. Do not encourage

their association with the ungodly. Draw them away. Come out from among such yourselves, and show them that you are on the Lord's side.

Will those who claim to be the children of the Most High elevate the standard, not simply while assembled in your meeting, but as long as time shall last? Will you not be on the Lord's side and serve Him with full purpose of heart? If you do as did the children of Israel in forsaking God's express requirements you will surely receive of His judgments; but if you put away sin and exercise living faith, the richest of heaven's blessings will be yours. [214]

“Your Reasonable Service”

“Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Romans 12:1.

In the time of ancient Israel the priests critically examined every offering that was brought as a sacrifice. If any defect was discovered, the animal was refused; for the Lord had commanded that the offering should be “without blemish.” We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God, and should we not seek to make the offering as perfect as possible? God has given us every instruction necessary for our physical, mental, and moral well-being; and it is the duty of every one of us to bring our habits of life into conformity with the divine standard in every particular. Will the Lord be pleased with anything less than the best we can offer? “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.” Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27. If you do love Him with all your heart you will desire to give Him the best service of your life, and you will seek to bring every power of your being into harmony with the laws that will promote your ability to do His will.

Every faculty of our being was given us that we might render acceptable service to our Maker. When, through sin, we perverted the gifts of God and sold our powers to the prince of darkness, Christ paid a ransom for us, even His own precious blood. “He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them.” You are not to follow the customs of the world. “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”*

*1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:541, 542.

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Should we dress in plain, modest apparel, without reference to the fashions; should our tables at all times be set with simple, healthful food,

avoiding all luxuries, all extravagance; should our houses be built with becoming plainness and furnished in the same manner, it would show the sanctifying power of the truth and would have a telling influence upon unbelievers. But while we conform to the world in these matters, in some cases apparently seeking to excel worldlings in fanciful arrangement, the preaching of the truth will have but little or no effect. Who will believe the solemn truth for this time when those who already profess to believe it contradict their faith by their works? It is not God who has closed the windows of heaven to us, but it is our own conformity to the customs and practices of the world.—1882, Testimonies for the Church 5:206. [216]

An Impressive Dream

Dear Brother M,

I had an impressive dream last night. I thought that you were on a strong vessel, sailing on very rough waters. Sometimes the waves beat over the top, and you were drenched with water. You said: "I shall get off; this vessel is going down." "No," said one who appeared to be the captain, "this vessel sails into the harbor. She will never go down." But you answered: "I shall be washed overboard. As I am neither captain nor mate, who cares? I shall take my chances on that vessel you see yonder." Said the captain: "I shall not let you go there, for I know that vessel will strike the rocks before she reaches the harbor." You straightened yourself up, and said with great positiveness: "This vessel will become a wreck; I can see it just as plain as can be." The captain looked upon you with piercing eye, and said firmly: "I shall not permit you to lose your life by taking that boat. The timbers of her framework are worm-eaten, and she is a deceptive craft. If you had more knowledge you could discern between the spurious and the genuine, the holy and that appointed to utter ruin."

I awoke, but it is this dream that leads me to write to you. I was feeling deeply over some of these things when a letter came, saying that you were "under great temptation and trial." What is it, Brother M? Is Satan tempting you again? Is God permitting you to be brought to the same place where you have failed before? Will you now let unbelief take possession of your soul? Will you fail every time, as did the children of Israel? God help you to resist the devil and to come forth stronger from every trial of your faith!

Be careful how you move. Make straight paths for your^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:571-573.

feet. Close the door to unbelief and make God your strength. If perplexed, hold still; make no move in the dark. I am deeply concerned for your soul. This may be the last trial that God will grant you. Advance not one step in the downward road to perdition. Wait, and God will help you. Be patient, and the clear light will appear. If you yield to impressions you will lose your soul, and the soul is of great value with God.

I have been writing upon the first volume of *Great Controversy*, and it makes me feel very solemn as I review these important subjects—creation and the events from the fall of Satan to the fall of Adam. The Lord seems very near me as I write, and I am deeply moved as I contemplate this controversy from the beginning to the present time. The workings of the powers of darkness are laid clearly before my mind. Most trying times are before us; and Satan, clad in angel robes, will come to souls with his temptations as he came to Christ in the wilderness. He will quote Scripture; and unless our life is hid with Christ in God, he will surely bind our souls in unbelief.

Time is very short, and all that is to be done must be done quickly. The angels are holding the four winds, and Satan is taking advantage of everyone who is not fully established in the truth. Every soul is to be tested. Every defect in the character, unless it is overcome by the help of God's Spirit, will become a sure means of destruction. I feel as never before the necessity for our people to be energized by the spirit of the truth, for Satan's devices will ensnare every soul who has not made God his strength. The Lord has much work to be done; and if we do what He has appointed for us to do, He will work with our efforts. [218]

Elements of Success in God's Work

Those who are called of God to labor in word and doctrine should ever be learners. They should constantly seek to improve, that they may be ensamples to the flock of God and do good to all with whom they are brought in contact. Those who do not feel the importance of advancement and self-improvement will not grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.

All heaven is interested in the work going on in this world, which is to prepare men and women for the future, immortal life. It is God's plan that human agencies shall have the high honor of acting as co-workers with Jesus Christ in the salvation of souls. The word of God plainly reveals that it is the privilege of the instrument in this great work to realize that there is One at his right hand ready to aid him in every sincere endeavor to reach the highest moral and spiritual excellence in the Master's work. This will be the case with all who feel their need of help. They should look upon the work of God as sacred and holy, and should bring to Him, every day, offerings of joy and gratitude, in return for the power of His grace, by which they are enabled to make advancement in the divine life. The worker should ever take humble views of himself, considering his many lost opportunities for want of diligence and appreciation of the work. He should not become discouraged, but should continually renew his efforts to redeem the time.

Men whom God has chosen to be His ministers should prepare themselves for the work by thorough heart searching and by close connection with the world's Redeemer. If they are not successful in winning souls to Christ, it is—^{*}

^{*}—1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:573-580 (Daily Study of the Bible Necessary).

because their own souls are not right with God. There is altogether too much willing ignorance with a large number who are preaching the word. They are not qualified for this work by a thorough understanding of the Scriptures. They do not feel the importance of the truth for this time, and therefore the truth is not to them a living reality. If they would humble their souls before God; if they would walk according to the Scriptures, in all humility of mind, then they would have more distinct views of the Pattern which they should copy; but they fail to keep their eyes fixed upon the Author and Finisher of their faith.

Victory over Temptation

It is not necessary that anyone should yield to the temptations of Satan and thus violate his conscience and grieve the Holy Spirit. Every provision has been made in the word of God whereby all may have divine help in their endeavors to overcome. If they keep Jesus before them they will become changed into His image. All who by faith have Christ abiding in them carry a power into their labor which makes them successful. They will be constantly growing more and more efficient in their work, and the blessing of God, shown in the prosperity of the work, will testify that they are indeed laborers together with Christ. But however much one may advance in spiritual life, he will never come to a point where he will not need diligently to search the Scriptures; for therein are found the evidences of our faith. All points of doctrine, even though they have been accepted as truth, should be brought to the law and to the testimony; if they cannot stand this test, “there is no light in them.”

The great plan of redemption, as revealed in the closing work for these last days, should receive close examination. The scenes connected with the sanctuary above should make such an impression upon the minds and hearts of all that they may be able to impress others. All need to become more [220] intelligent in regard to the work of the atonement, which is going on in the sanctuary above. When this grand truth is seen and understood, those who hold it will work in harmony with Christ to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God, and their efforts will be successful.

By study, contemplation, and prayer God's people will be elevated above common, earthly thoughts and feelings, and will be brought into harmony with Christ and His great work of cleansing the sanctuary above from the sins of the people. Their faith will go with Him into the sanctuary, and the worshipers on earth will be carefully reviewing their lives and comparing their characters with the great standard of righteousness. They will see their own defects; they will also see that they must have the aid of the Spirit of God if they would become qualified for the great and solemn work for this time which is laid upon God's ambassadors.

Christ said: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." John 6:53-57. How many of those who are laboring in word and doctrine are eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood? How many can comprehend this mystery? The Saviour Himself explains this matter: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the *words* that I speak unto you, they are *spirit*, and they are *life*." Verse 63. The word of God must be interwoven with the living character of those who believe it. The only vital faith is that faith which receives and assimilates the truth till it is a part of the being and the motive power of the life and action. Jesus is called the Word of God. He accepted His Father's law, wrought out its principles in [221] His life, manifested its spirit, and showed its beneficent power in the heart. Says John: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14. The followers of Christ must be partakers of His experience. They must assimilate the word of God. They must be changed into its likeness by the power of Christ and reflect the divine attributes. They must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, or there is no life in them. The spirit and work of Christ must become the spirit and work of His disciples.

The Truth in the Life

It is not enough to *preach* the truth; it must be carried out in the life. Christ must be abiding in us, and we in Him, in order to do the work of God. Each must have an individual experience and put forth personal efforts to reach souls. God requires each to put all his powers into the work and, through continual effort, educate himself to do that work acceptably. He expects everyone to bring the grace of Christ into his heart, that he may be a bright and shining light to the world. If God's workers train all their powers thoroughly, then they may work understandingly, in all wisdom, and God will surely respond to their efforts to uplift, refine, and save their fellow men. All the workers must use tact and bring their faculties under the controlling influence of the Spirit of God. They must make it a business to study His word and hear God's voice addressing them from His living oracles in reproof, in instruction, or in encouragement, and His Spirit will strengthen them, that they may, as God's workers, advance in religious experience. Thus they will be led on step by step to greater heights, and their joy will be full.

While engaged in the work that God has given them to do, they will find no time and have no disposition to glorify themselves; neither will they find time to murmur or complain, for [222] their affections are centered on things above, not on earthly things. Heart, soul, and body will then be enlisted in the work of the Master. They will not labor selfishly, but will deny themselves for Christ's sake. They will lift His cross, for they are His true disciples. They will feed day by day upon the precious truths of God's word, and will thus be strengthened for duty and braced for trial. In this way they will become strong, well-developed men and women in Christ. They will then be true sons and daughters of the heavenly King.

The greatness of the truth which they love and contemplate will expand the mind, strengthen the judgment, and elevate the character. They will not be novices in the great work of saving souls, for they are working with the wisdom given them of God. Neither will they be dwarfs in religious life, but will grow up in Christ, their living Head, to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. The conflicts with the enemies of truth will then only strengthen their hopes, and they will have precious victories, because they call to their aid the mighty Helper, who never disappoints the humble seeker. If their efforts are successful, all the glory will be given to God. Heaven will come very near to them in sympathy and co-operation. They are made indeed a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. They are

marked characters because of their purity of heart and life, their strength of purpose, their firmness and usefulness in the cause of God. They are God's noblemen.

Rising Above Perplexities and Trials

In the religious life of every soul who is finally victorious there will be scenes of terrible perplexity and trial; but his knowledge of the Scriptures will enable him to bring to mind the encouraging promises of God, which will comfort his heart and strengthen his faith in the power of the Mighty One. He reads: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward;" "that the trial of your faith, [223] being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Hebrews 10:35; 1 Peter 1:7, 8.

The trial of faith is more precious than gold. All should learn that this is a part of the discipline in the school of Christ, which is essential to purify and refine them from the dross of earthliness. They must endure with fortitude the taunts and attacks of enemies, and overcome all obstacles that Satan may place in their path to hedge up the way. He will try to lead them to neglect prayer and to discourage them in the study of the Scriptures, and he will throw his hateful shadow athwart their path to hide Christ and the heavenly attractions from their view.

None should go along shrinking and trembling, under continual doubt, sowing their path with complainings; but all should look up to God and see His goodness and rejoice in His love. Summon all your powers to look up, not down at your difficulties; then you will never faint by the way. You will soon see Jesus behind the cloud, reaching out His hand to help you; and all you have to do is to give Him your hand in simple faith and let Him lead you. As you become trustful you will, through faith in Jesus, become hopeful. The light shining from the cross of Calvary will reveal to you God's estimate of the soul, and, appreciating that estimate, you will seek to reflect the light to the world.

A great name among men is as letters traced in sand, but a spotless character will endure to all eternity. God gives you intelligence and a reasoning mind, whereby you may grasp His promises; and Jesus is ready to help you in forming a strong, symmetrical character. Those who possess such a character need never become discouraged because they have not success in worldly affairs. They “are the light of the [224] world.” Satan cannot destroy or make of none effect the light that shines forth from them.

God has a work for each to do. It is no part of His plan that souls shall be sustained in the battle of life by human sympathy and praise; but He means that they shall go without the camp, bearing the reproach, fighting the good fight of faith, and standing in His strength under every difficulty. God has opened to us all the treasures of heaven through the precious gift of His Son, who is fully able to uplift, ennoble, and fit us, through His perfection of character, for usefulness in this life and for a holy heaven. He came to our world and lived as He requires His followers to live. His was a life of self-denial and constant self-sacrifice. If we encourage selfishness and ease and the gratification of inclination, and do not put forth our best efforts to co-operate with God in the wonderful work of elevating, ennobling, and purifying us, that we may become sons and daughters of God, then we do not meet His requirements; we sustain a continual loss in this life, and we shall eventually lose the future, immortal life.

God wants you to work, not with self-disparagement nor in discouragement, but with the strongest faith and hope, with cheerfulness and joy, representing Christ to the world. The religion of Jesus is joy, peace, and happiness. As we search the Scriptures, and see the infinite condescension of the Father in giving Jesus to the world that all who believe in Him may have everlasting life, every power of our being should be called into activity, to give praise and honor and glory to Him for His unspeakable love to the children of men. [225]

Education of Workers

We have a work to do which but few realize. It is to carry the truth to all nations. There is a broad field for laborers in foreign lands as well as in America. God calls for men who are devoted, pure, largehearted, broad-minded, and humble to enter these fields. How few have any sense of this great work! We must arouse and work from a higher standpoint than we have hitherto done.

Those who now embrace the truth have every advantage, especially in the accumulation of light and knowledge brought out in our publications. Past experiences, rich and varied, should now be appreciated in their true light. We know how hard the work moved at first, how many obstacles were arrayed against it, how few facilities were at the command of the pioneers in this cause to use in its advancement; but now all is changed, and the clear light is shining. If primitive Christianity could enter the hearts of all who claim to believe the truth, it would bring to them new life and power. The people who are in darkness would then see the contrast between truth and error, between the teachings of God's word and the fables of superstition.

To Reach Higher Classes

Mistakes have been made in not seeking to reach ministers and the higher classes with the truth. People not of our faith have been shunned altogether too much. While we should not associate with them to receive their mold, there are honest ones everywhere for whom we should labor cautiously, wisely, and intelligently, full of love for their souls. A fund should be raised to educate men and women to labor for these higher^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:580-586.

classes, both here and in other countries. We have had altogether too much talk about coming down to the common mind. God wants men of talent and good minds, who can weigh arguments, men who will dig for the truth as for hid treasures. These men will be able to reach, not only the common, but the better classes. Such men will ever be students of the Bible, fully alive to the sacredness of the responsibilities resting upon them. They will give full proof of their ministry.

The Dearth of Trained Workers

We have too little working talent in the different branches of the cause. New enterprises must be set on foot. We need ability to devise plans whereby souls who are in the darkness of error can be reached. We need the intelligence of varied minds, but we should not find fault with them because their ideas do not just fit our own. We should have broader plans for the education of workers to give the message. Those who believe and love the truth have done nobly in giving of their means to sustain its various enterprises, but there is great lack of capable workers.

It is not wise to be constantly expending means to open untried fields while so little is done to prepare workers to occupy them. God's work must not be hindered for want of agents to execute it. He calls for cultivated men, who are Bible students, who love the truth that they open to others, and who bring it into their own lives and characters. We want men who love Jesus and cling to Him, and who appreciate the infinite sacrifice made in behalf of fallen humanity. We want lips touched with holy fire, hearts pure from the defilement of sin. Those whose piety is shallow, and who have great ambition to be considered first and best, are not the men for this time. Those who think more of their own way than of the work are not wanted.

Our churches are not receiving the kind of training that [227] will lead them to walk in all humility of mind, to put away all pride of external display, and to labor for the inward adorning. The efficiency of the church is precisely what the zeal, purity, self-denial, and intelligent labor of the ministers make it. An active missionary spirit should characterize its individual members. They must have deeper piety, stronger faith, and

broader views. They must make more thorough work in personal effort. What we need is a living religion. A single individual of enlarged conceptions of duty, whose soul is in communion with God and who is full of zeal for Christ, will exert a powerful influence for good. He drinks at no low, turbid, polluted stream, but from the pure, high waters at the fountainhead; and he can communicate a new spirit and power to the church.

As the pressure from without increases, God would have His church vitalized by the sacred, solemn truths they believe. The Holy Spirit from heaven, working with the sons and daughters of God, will surmount obstacles and hold the vantage ground against the enemy. God has great victories in reserve for His truth-loving, commandment-keeping people. The fields are already whitening for the harvest. We have light, and rich, glorious endowments from heaven in the truth made ready to our hands; but men and women have not been educated and disciplined to work in the fast-ripening harvest fields.

God knows with what fidelity and spirit of consecration everyone fulfills his mission. There is no place for the slothful in this great work, no place for the self-indulgent or those who are incapable of making life a success in any calling, no place for halfhearted men who are not fervent in spirit, willing to endure hardness, opposition, reproach, or death for Christ's sake. The Christian ministry is no place for drones. There is a class of men attempting to preach who are slipshod, careless, and irreverent. They would better be tilling the soil than teaching the sacred truth of God. [228]

Young men must soon bear the burdens older ones have borne. We have lost time in neglecting to bring young men to the front and give them a higher, more solid education. The work is constantly advancing, and we must obey the command: "Go forward." Much good could be done by youth who are established in the truth and are not easily influenced or swayed from the right by their surroundings, but who walk with God, who pray much, and who put forth most earnest endeavors to gather all the light they can. The worker should be prepared to put forth the highest mental and moral energies with which nature, cultivation, and the grace of God have endowed him; but his success will be proportionate to the degree of consecration and self-sacrifice in which the work is done, rather than to either natural or acquired endowments. The most earnest and continued

efforts to acquire qualifications for usefulness are necessary; but unless God works with the human efforts, nothing can be accomplished. Christ says: “Without Me ye can do nothing.” John 15:5. Divine grace is the great element of saving power; without it all human efforts are unavailing; its co-operation is needed even with the strongest and most earnest human efforts for the inculcation of truth.

Need of Well-qualified Teachers

The cause of God needs teachers who have high moral qualities and can be trusted with the education of others, men who are sound in the faith and have tact and patience, who walk with God and abstain from the very appearance of evil, who stand so closely connected with God that they can be channels of light—in short, Christian gentlemen. The good impressions made by such will never be effaced, and the training thus given will endure throughout eternity. What is neglected in this training process is likely to remain undone. Who will undertake this work?

We would that there were strong young men, rooted and [229] grounded in the faith, who had such a living connection with God that they could, if so counseled by our leading brethren, enter the higher colleges in our land, where they would have a wider field for study and observation. Association with different classes of minds, an acquaintance with the workings and results of popular methods of education, and a knowledge of theology as taught in the leading institutions of learning would be of great value to such workers, preparing them to labor for the educated classes and to meet the prevailing errors of our time. Such was the method pursued by the ancient Waldenses; and, if true to God, our youth, like theirs, might do a good work, even while gaining their education, in sowing the seeds of truth in other minds.

“Be strong, and quit yourselves like men.” Ask of Him who suffered reproach, insult, and mockery for your sakes: “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” None are too highly educated to become humble disciples of Christ. Those who feel it a privilege to give the best of their life and learning to Him from whom they received them, will shun no labor, no sacrifice, to render back to God in highest service His entrusted talents. In

the great battle of life many of the workers lose sight of the solemnity and sacred character of their mission. The deadly curse of sin continues to blight and deface the moral image of God in them because they do not work as Christ worked.

A Better-trained Ministry

We see the need of encouraging higher ideas of education and of employing more trained men in the ministry. Those who do not obtain the right kind of education before they enter upon God's work are not competent to accept this holy trust and to carry forward the work of reformation. Yet all should continue their education after they engage in the work. They must have the word of God abiding in them. We need more cultivation, refinement, and nobility of soul in our [230] laborers. Such an improvement as this would show results in eternity.

"I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." 1 John 2:14. The apostle here links the experience of the fathers with that of the young men; in like manner there is a link between the old disciples in this cause and those who are younger; who have not had an experience in the early events of this message. Those who were young when the message arose will have to be educated by the old standard-bearers. These teachers must realize that too great pains cannot be taken to fit men for their holy trust while the standard-bearers are still able to hold the standard aloft. And yet those who have so long fought in the battles may still win victories. They have been so thoroughly acquainted with the wiles of Satan that they will not be easily moved from the old paths. They remember the days of old. They know Him who is from the beginning. They may ever be light bearers, faithful witnesses for God, living epistles, known and read of all men.

Let us, then, thank God that a few are left, as was John, to relate their experience in the beginning of this message, and the reception of that which we now hold so dear. But one after another they are falling at their post, and

it is only wisdom that we prepare others to take the work where they leave it.

Efforts must be made to fit young men for the work. They must come to the front, to lift burdens and responsibilities. Those who are now young must become strong men. They must be able to plan and give counsel. The word of God abiding in them will make them pure and will fill them with faith, hope, courage, and devotion. The work is now greatly retarded because men are carrying responsibilities for which they are unfitted. Shall this great want continue and increase? Shall these great responsibilities drop from the hands of old, [231] experienced workers into the hands of those unable to manage them? Are we not neglecting a very important work by failing to educate and train our youth to fill positions of trust?

Let the workers be educated, but at the same time let them be meek and lowly of heart. Let us elevate the work to the highest possible standard, ever remembering that if we do our part, God will not fail to do His. [232]

“The Appearance of Evil”

I Feel urged to address those who are engaged in giving the last message of warning to the world. Whether those for whom they labor see and accept the truth depends very much upon the individual workers. The command from God is, “Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord” (Isaiah 52:11); and Paul charges Timothy, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine.” 1 Timothy 4:16. The work must commence with the worker; he must be united to Christ as the branch is united to the vine. “I am the Vine,” said Christ; “ye are the branches.” John 15:5. The closest possible connection is here represented. Engraft the leafless twig upon the flourishing vine stock, and it becomes a living branch, drawing sap and nourishment from the vine. Fiber by fiber, vein by vein, the sapling clings, until it buds and blossoms and bears fruit. The sapless twig represents the sinner. When united to Christ, soul is joined to soul, the feeble and finite to the holy and infinite, and man becomes one with Christ.

“Without Me,” says Christ, “ye can do nothing.” Are we who claim to be workers with Christ, united to Him? Do we abide in Christ? and are we one with Him? The message that we bear is world wide. It must come before all nations, tongues, and peoples. The Lord will not require any one of us to go forth with this message without giving us grace and power to present it to the people in a manner corresponding to its importance. The great question with us today is: Are we carrying to the world this solemn message of truth in a way to show its importance? The Lord will work with the laborers if they will make Christ their only dependence. He never^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:591-603.

designed that His missionaries should work without His grace, destitute of His power.

Christ has chosen us out of the world, that we might be a peculiar and holy people. He “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:14. God’s workers must be men of prayer, diligent students of the Scriptures, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, that they may be a light and strength to others. Our God is a jealous God; and He requires us to worship Him in spirit and truth, in the beauty of holiness. The psalmist says: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” Psalm 66:18. As workers we must take heed to our ways. If the psalmist could not be heard if he regarded iniquity in his heart, how can the prayers of men now be heard while iniquity is regarded by them?

Shun the Least Approach to Evil

After the passing of the time in 1844, fanaticism came into the ranks of Adventists. God gave messages of warning to stay the incoming evil. There was too great familiarity between some men and women. I presented to them the holy standard of truth that we should reach and the purity of deportment that we should maintain in order to meet the approval of God and be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Most solemn denunciations from God were given to men and women whose thoughts were running in an impure channel, while they claimed to be especially favored by God; but the message which God gave was despised and rejected. They turned upon me and said: “Has God spoken only by you, and not by us?” They did not amend their ways, and the Lord suffered them to go on till defilement marked their lives.

We are not out of danger even now. Every soul who engages to give to the world the message of warning will be sorely tempted to pursue such a course in life as will deny his [234] faith. It is Satan’s studied plan to make the workers weak in prayer, weak in power, and weak in influence, because of their defects of character. We, as workers, must be united in frowning down and condemning everything that bears the least approach to evil in our associations with one another. Our faith is holy; our work is to vindicate the honor of God’s law, and is not of a character to bring anyone down to a low level in thought or in deportment.

There is an exalted platform for us to stand upon. We must believe and teach the truth as it is in Jesus. Holiness of heart will never lead to impure actions. When one who claims to be teaching the truth is inclined to be much in the company of young or even married women, when he familiarly lays his hand upon them, or is often conversing with them in a familiar manner, be afraid of him; the pure principles of truth are not inwrought in his soul. Such are not in Christ, and Christ is not abiding in them. They need a thorough conversion before God can accept their labors. The truth of heavenly origin never degrades the receiver, never leads him to the least approach to undue familiarity; on the contrary, it sanctifies the believer, refines his taste, elevates and ennobles him, and brings him into a close connection with Jesus. It leads him to regard the apostle Paul's injunction to abstain from even the appearance of evil, lest his "good be evil spoken of."

This is a subject to which we must give heed. We must guard against the sins of this degenerate age. We must stand aloof from everything that savors of undue familiarity. God condemns it. It is forbidden ground, upon which it is unsafe to set the feet. Every word and action should tend to elevate, refine, and ennoble the character. There is sin in thoughtlessness about such matters. The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to diligence and thoroughness in his ministry, and urged him to meditate upon those things that were pure and excellent, that his profiting might appear unto all. The same counsel [235] is greatly needed by young men of the present age. Thoughtful consideration is essential. If men would only think more, and act less impulsively, they would meet with much greater success in their labors. We are handling subjects of infinite importance, and we cannot afford to weave into our work our own defects of character. We want to represent the character of Christ.

Elevated in Thought and Action

We have a great work to do to elevate men and win them to Christ, to lead them to choose and earnestly seek to be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Every thought, every word, and every action of the workers should be of that elevated character which is in harmony with the sacred truth they advocate.

It may be that men and women will necessarily be united more or less in our important mission fields. If this is the case, they cannot be too circumspect. Let married men be reserved and guarded, that no evil may truthfully be said of them. We are living in an age when iniquity abounds, and an unguarded word or improper action may greatly injure the usefulness of the one who shows this weakness. Let the workers keep up the barriers of reserve; let not one instance occur of which the enemy can make capital. If they begin to place their affections upon one another, giving special attention to favorites and using flattering words, God will withdraw His Spirit.

If married men go into the work, leaving their wives to care for the children at home, the wife and mother is doing fully as great and important a work as the husband and father. Although one is in the missionary field, the other is a home missionary, whose cares and anxieties and burdens frequently far exceed those of the husband and father. Her work is a solemn and important one—to mold the minds and [236] fashion the characters of her children, to train them for usefulness here and fit them for the future, immortal life. The husband in the open missionary field may receive the honors of men, while the home toiler may receive no earthly credit for her labor. But if she works for the best interest of her family, seeking to fashion their characters after the divine Model, the recording angel writes her name as one of the greatest missionaries in the world. God does not see things as man's finite vision views them.

How careful should the husband and father be to maintain his loyalty to his marriage vows. How circumspect should be his character, lest he shall encourage thoughts in young girls, or even in married women, that are not in accordance with the high, holy standard,—the commandments of God. Those commandments Christ shows to be exceedingly broad, reaching even the thoughts, intents and purposes of the heart. Here is where many are delinquent. Their heart imaginings are not of the pure, holy character which God requires; and however high their calling, however talented they may be, God will mark iniquity against them and will count them as far more guilty and deserving of His wrath than those who have less talent, less light, less influence.

Avoid Praise and Flattery

I am pained when I see men praised, flattered, and petted. God has revealed to me the fact that some who receive these attentions are unworthy to take His name upon their lips; yet they are exalted to heaven in the estimation of finite beings, who read only from outward appearance. My sisters, never pet and flatter poor, fallible, erring men, either young or old, married or unmarried. You know not their weaknesses, and you know not but that these very attentions and this profuse praise may prove their ruin. I am alarmed at the shortsightedness, the want of wisdom, that many manifest in this respect. [237]

Men who are doing God's work and who have Christ abiding in their hearts will not lower the standard of morality, but will ever seek to elevate it. They will not find pleasure in the flattery of women or in being petted by them. Let men, both single and married, say: "Hands off! I will never give the least occasion that my good should be evil spoken of. My good name is capital of far more value to me than gold or silver. Let me preserve it untarnished. If men assail that name, it shall not be because I have given them occasion to do so, but for the same reason that they spoke evil of Christ—because they hated the purity and holiness of His character, for it was a constant rebuke to them."

I wish I could impress upon every worker in God's cause the great need of continual, earnest prayer. They cannot be constantly upon their knees, but they can be uplifting their hearts to God. This is the way that Enoch walked with God. Be careful lest self-sufficiency come in and you drop Jesus out and work in your own strength rather than in the spirit and strength of the Master. Do not waste golden moments in frivolous conversation. When you return from doing missionary work, do not praise yourself, but exalt Jesus; lift up the cross of Calvary.

Allow no one to praise or flatter you, or to cling to your hand as if loath to let it go. Be afraid of every such demonstration. When young or even married persons show a disposition to open their family secrets to you, beware. When they express a desire for sympathy, know that it is time to exercise great caution. Those who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ and who are walking with God will have no unholy pining for sympathy. They have a companionship that satisfies every desire of the mind and heart. Married men who accept the attention, the praise and petting, of women

should be assured that the love and sympathy of this class are not worth the obtaining. [238]

Joseph's Steadfastness

Women are too often tempters. On one pretense or another they engage the attention of men, married or unmarried, and lead them on till they transgress the law of God, till their usefulness is ruined, and their souls are in jeopardy. The history of Joseph is left on record for the benefit of all who, like him, are tempted. In principle he was firm as a rock, and he answered the tempter: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Genesis 39:9. Moral power like his is what is needed now.

If women would only elevate their lives and become workers with Christ, there would be less danger through their influence; but with their present feelings of unconcern in regard to home responsibilities and in regard to the claims that God has upon them, their influence is often strong in the wrong direction, their powers are dwarfed, and their work does not bear the divine impress. They are not home missionaries, neither are they missionaries away from home; and frequently home, precious home, is left to desolation.

Let everyone who professes Christ seek to overcome all unmanliness, all weakness and folly. Some men never grow up to the full stature of men in Christ Jesus. They are childish and self-indulgent. Humble piety would correct all this. Pure religion possesses no characteristics of childish self-indulgence. It is honorable in the highest degree. Then let not one of those who have enlisted as soldiers of Christ be ready to faint in the day of trial. All should feel that they have earnest work to do to elevate their fellow men. Not one has a right to rest from the warfare to make virtue desirable and vice hated. There is no rest for the living Christian this side of the eternal world. To obey God's commandments is to do right and only right. This is Christian manliness.

But many need to take frequent lessons from the life of Christ, who is the Author and Finisher of our faith. [239] "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

Hebrews 12:3, 4. You are to show a growth in the Christian graces. By manifesting meekness under provocation and growing away from low earthliness you give evidence that you have an indwelling Saviour, and every thought, word, and deed attracts men to Jesus rather than to self. There is a great amount of work to be done and but little time in which to do it. Let it be your lifework to inspire all with the thought that they have a work to do for Christ. Wherever there are duties to be done which others do not understand because they do not wish to see their lifework, accept them and do them.

Men of Blameless Reputation

The standard of morality is not exalted high enough among God's people. Many who profess to be keeping God's commandments and standing in their defense are breaking them. Temptations present themselves in such a way that the tempted think they see an excuse to transgress. Those who enter the missionary field should be men and women who walk and talk with God. Those who stand as ministers in the sacred desk should be men of blameless reputation; their lives should be spotless, above everything that savors of impurity. Do not place your reputation in jeopardy by going in the way of temptation.

If a woman lingeringly holds your hand, quickly withdraw it and save her from sin. If she manifests undue affection and mourns that her husband does not love her and sympathize with her, do not try to supply this lack. Your only safe and wise course in such a case is to keep your sympathy to yourself. Such cases are numerous.

Point such souls to the Burden Bearer, the true and safe Counselor. If she has chosen Christ as a companion, He will give her grace to bear neglect without repining; meanwhile [240] she should diligently do all in her power to bind her husband to herself by strictest fidelity to him and faithfulness in making his home cheerful and attractive. If all her efforts are unavailing and unappreciated, she will have the sympathy and aid of her blessed Redeemer. He will help her to bear all her burdens and comfort her in her disappointments. She shows distrust of Jesus when she reaches for human objects to supply the place that Christ is ever ready to fill. In her

repining she sins against God. She would do well to examine her own heart critically to see if sin is not lurking in the soul. The heart that thus seeks human sympathy and accepts forbidden attentions from anyone is not pure and faultless before God.

The Bible affords many striking illustrations of the strong influence of evil-minded women. When Baalam was called upon to curse Israel, he was not permitted to do so; for the Lord “hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel.” Numbers 23:21. But Baalam, who had already yielded to temptation, now became fully the agent of Satan; and he determined to accomplish indirectly what God had not permitted him to do directly. He at once laid a snare whereby Israel should be enchanted with the beautiful Moabitish women, who would lead them to transgress God’s law. Thus iniquity would be found in them, and God’s blessing would not rest upon them. Their forces would be greatly weakened, and their enemies would no longer fear their power, because the presence of the Lord of hosts was not with their armies.

This is intended as a warning to the people of God living in the last days. If they follow after righteousness and true holiness, if they keep all the commandments of God, Satan and his agents will not be permitted to overcome them. All the opposition of their bitterest foes will prove powerless to destroy or uproot the vine of God’s own planting. Satan understands what Balaam learned by sad experience, that there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither divination against [241] Israel, while iniquity is not cherished among them; therefore his power and influence will ever be employed to mar their unity and defile the purity of their characters. His snares are laid in a thousand ways to weaken their power for good.

Cultivate Sociability for a Purpose

Again I urge upon you the necessity of purity in every thought, in every word, in every action. We have an individual accountability to God, an individual work, which no one can do for us; it is to make the world better by precept, by personal effort, and by example. While we should cultivate sociability, let it not be merely for amusement, but for a purpose. There are

souls to save. Come near to them by personal effort. Open your doors to young men who are exposed to temptation. Evil invites them on every hand. Seek to interest them. If they are full of faults, seek to correct these errors. Do not hold yourselves aloof from them, but come close to them. Bring them to your firesides; invite them to your family altars. There is work that thousands need to have done for them. Every tree in Satan's garden is hung with tempting, poisonous fruit, and a woe is pronounced upon everyone who plucks and eats. Let us remember the claims of God upon us to make the path to heaven clear and bright and attractive, that we may win souls away from Satan's destructive enchantments.

God has given us reason to be used for a noble purpose. We are here as probationers for the next life. It is too solemn a period for any of us to be careless or to move in uncertainty. Our intercourse with others should be characterized by sobriety and heavenly-mindedness. Our conversation should be upon heavenly things. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And [242] they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Malachi 3:16, 17.

What is more worthy to engross the mind than the plan of redemption? It is a subject that is exhaustless. The love of Jesus, the salvation offered to fallen man through His infinite love, holiness of heart, the precious, saving truth for these last days, the grace of Christ—these are subjects which may animate the soul and cause the pure in heart to feel that joy which the disciples felt when Jesus came and walked with them as they traveled toward Emmaus. He who has centered his affections upon Christ will relish this kind of hallowed association and will gather divine strength by such intercourse; but he who has no relish for this kind of conversation, and who is best pleased to talk sentimental nonsense, has wandered far away from God and is becoming dead to holy and noble aspirations. The sensual, the earthly, is interpreted by such to be heavenly. When the conversation is of a frivolous character and savors of a dissatisfied reaching out after human sympathy and appreciation, it springs from lovesick sentimentalism, and neither the youth nor the men with gray hairs are secure. When the truth of God is an abiding principle in the heart, it will be like a living spring. Attempts may be made to repress it, but it will gush forth in another place;

it is there and cannot be repressed. The truth in the heart is a wellspring of life. It refreshes the weary and restrains vile thought and utterance.

Is there not enough taking place about us to show us the dangers that beset our path? Everywhere are seen wrecks of humanity, neglected family altars, broken-up families. There is a strange abandonment of principle, a lowering of the standard of morality; the sins are fast increasing which caused the judgments of God to be poured upon the earth in the Flood and in the destruction of Sodom by fire. We are nearing the end. God has borne long with the perversity of [243] mankind, but their punishment is no less certain. Let those who profess to be the light of the world depart from all iniquity. We see the very same spirit manifested against the truth that was seen in Christ's day. For want of Bible arguments, those who are making void the law of God will manufacture falsehoods to stain and blacken the workers. They did this to the world's Redeemer; they will do it to His followers. Reports that have not the least foundation will be asserted as truth.

The Secret of Strength

God has blessed His commandment-keeping people and all the opposition and falsehoods that may be brought against them will only strengthen those who stand firm in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints. But if those who profess to be the depositaries of God's law become transgressors of that law, His protecting care will be withdrawn, and many will fall through perverseness and licentiousness. Then we shall indeed be unable to stand before our enemies. But if His people remain separate and distinct from the world, as a nation that do righteousness, God will be their defense, and no weapons formed against them shall prosper.

In view of the dangers of this time shall not we, as God's commandment-keeping people, put away from among us all sin, all iniquity, all perverseness? Shall not the women professing the truth keep strict guard over themselves, lest the least encouragement be given to unwarrantable familiarity? They may close many a door of temptation if they will observe at all times strict reserve and propriety of deportment. Let men find an example in the life of Joseph and stand firm in principle, however strongly

tempted. We want to be strong men and women for the right. There are those around us who are weak in moral power. They need to be in the company of those who are firm, and whose [244] hearts are closely knit with the heart of Christ. Everyone's principles will be put to the test. But there are those who go into temptation like a fool to the correction of stocks. They invite the enemy to tempt them. They unnerve themselves, are weakened in moral power, and shame and confusion are the result.

The Church and the World

How contemptible in the sight of a holy God are those who profess to stand in vindication of His law and yet violate its precepts! They bring reproach upon the precious cause and give the opposers of truth occasion to triumph. Never should the mark of distinction between the followers of Jesus and the followers of Satan be obliterated. There is a distinct line drawn by God Himself between the world and the church, between commandment keepers and commandment breakers. They do not blend together. They are as different as midday and midnight—different in their tastes, their aims, their pursuits, their characters. If we cultivate the love and fear of God we shall loathe the least approach to impurity.

May the Lord attract souls to Himself and impart to them individually a sense of their sacred responsibility to form such characters that Christ will not be ashamed to call them brethren. Elevate the standard, and then the heavenly benediction will be pronounced upon you in that day when every man will receive according to the deeds done in the body. Workers for God must live as in His sight and be constantly developing in character, in true virtue and godliness. Their minds and hearts must be so thoroughly imbued with the Spirit of Christ and so solemnized by the sacred message they have to bear that every thought, every action, every motive, will be above the earthly and sensual. Their happiness will not be in forbidden, selfish gratifications, but in Jesus and His love.

My prayer is: "O Lord, anoint the eyes of Thy people, [245] that they may discern between sin and holiness, between pollution and righteousness, and come off victors at last."

In the battle with inward corruptions and outward temptations, even the wise and powerful Solomon was vanquished. It is not safe to permit the least departure from the strictest integrity. “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” 1 Thessalonians 5:22. When a woman relates her family troubles, or complains of her husband, to another man, she violates her marriage vows; she dishonors her husband and breaks down the wall erected to preserve the sanctity of the marriage relation; she throws wide open the door and invites Satan to enter with his insidious temptations. This is just as Satan would have it. If a woman comes to a Christian brother with a tale of her woes, her disappointments and trials, he should ever advise her, if she must confide her troubles to someone, to select sisters for her confidants, and then there will be no appearance of evil whereby the cause of God may suffer reproach.—1869, Testimonies for the Church 2:306. [246]

Love for the Erring

Christ came to bring salvation within the reach of all. Upon the cross of Calvary He paid the infinite redemption price for a lost world. His self-denial and self-sacrifice, His unselfish labor, His humiliation, above all, the offering up of His life, testifies to the depth of His love for fallen man. It was to seek and to save the lost that He came to earth. His mission was to sinners, sinners of every grade, of every tongue and nation. He paid the price for all, to ransom them and bring them into union and sympathy with Himself. The most erring, the most sinful, were not passed by; His labors were especially for those who most needed the salvation He came to bring. The greater their need of reform, the deeper was His interest, the greater His sympathy, and the more earnest His labors. His great heart of love was stirred to its depths for the ones whose condition was most hopeless and who most needed His transforming grace.

In the parable of the lost sheep is represented the wonderful love of Christ for the erring, wandering ones. He does not choose to remain with those who accept His salvation, bestowing all His efforts upon them and receiving their gratitude and love. The true shepherd leaves the flock that love him, and goes out into the wilderness, enduring hardship and facing danger and death, to seek and save the sheep that has wandered from the fold and that must perish if not brought back. When after diligent search the lost is found, the shepherd, though suffering from weariness, pain, and hunger, does not leave it in its weakness to follow him, he does not drive it along, but oh, wondrous love! he tenderly gathers^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:603-613.

it in his arms and, placing it upon his shoulder, bears it back to the fold. Then he calls upon his neighbors to rejoice with him over the lost that is

found.

The parable of the prodigal son and that of the lost piece of silver teach the same lesson. Every soul that is especially imperiled by falling into temptation causes pain to the heart of Christ and calls forth His tenderest sympathy and most earnest labor. Over one sinner that repenteth, His joy is greater than over the ninety and nine who need no repentance.

These lessons are for our benefit. Christ has enjoined upon His disciples that they co-operate with Him in His work, that they love one another as He has loved them. The agony which He endured upon the cross testifies to the estimate He places upon the human soul. All who accept this great salvation pledge themselves to be co-workers with Him. None are to consider themselves special favorites of heaven and center their interest and attention upon self. All who have enlisted in the service of Christ are to work as He worked, and are to love those who are in ignorance and sin, even as He loved them.

Sympathetic Effort for the Erring

But there has been among us as a people a lack of deep, earnest, soul-touching sympathy and love for the tempted and the erring. Many have manifested great coldness and sinful neglect, represented by Christ as passing by on the other side, keeping as far as possible from those who most need help. The newly converted soul often has fierce conflicts with established habits or with some special form of temptation, and, being overcome by some master passion or tendency, he is guilty of indiscretion or actual wrong. It is then that energy, tact, and wisdom are required of his brethren, that he may be restored to spiritual health. In such cases the instructions of God's word apply: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an [248] one in a spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Galatians 6:1. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Romans 15:1.

But how little of the pitying tenderness of Christ is manifested by His professed followers! When one errs, others too often feel at liberty to make the case appear as bad as possible. Those who perhaps are guilty of fully as

great sins in some other direction, will treat their brother with cruel severity. Errors committed through ignorance, thoughtlessness, or weakness are exaggerated into willful, premeditated sin. As they see souls going astray, some fold their hands and say: "I told you so. I knew there was no dependence to be placed upon them." Thus they place themselves in the attitude of Satan, exulting in spirit that their evil surmisings have proved to be correct.

We must expect to meet and bear with great imperfections in those who are young and inexperienced. Christ has bidden us seek to restore such in the spirit of meekness, and He holds us responsible for pursuing a course which will drive them to discouragement, despair, and ruin. Unless we daily cultivate the precious plant of love we are in danger of becoming narrow, unsympathetic, bigoted, and critical, esteeming ourselves righteous when we are far from being approved of God. Some are uncourteous, abrupt, and harsh. They are like chestnut burs: they prick whenever touched. These do incalculable harm by misrepresenting our loving Saviour.

We must come up to a higher standard, or we are unworthy of the Christian name. We should cultivate the spirit with which Christ labored to save the erring. They are as dear to Him as we are. They are equally capable of being trophies of His grace and heirs of the kingdom. But they are exposed to the snares of a wily foe, exposed to danger and defilement, and without the saving grace of Christ, to certain ruin. Did we view this matter in the right light, how would our zeal be quickened and our earnest, self-sacrificing [249] efforts be multiplied, that we might come close to those who need our help, our prayers, our sympathy, and our love!

Unselfish Labor for Others

Let those who have been remiss in this work consider their duty in the light of the great commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matthew 19:19. This obligation is resting upon all. All are required to labor to diminish the ills and multiply the blessings of their fellow creatures. If we are strong to resist temptation we are under the greater obligation to help those who are weak and yielding. Have we knowledge, we should instruct the ignorant. Has God blessed us with this world's goods, it is our duty to

succor the poor. We must work for others' good. Let all within the sphere of our influence be partakers of whatever of excellence we may possess. None should be content to feed on the bread of life without sharing it with those around them.

Those only live for Christ and honor His name who are true to their Master in seeking to save that which is lost. Genuine piety will surely manifest the deep longing and earnest labor of the crucified Saviour to save those for whom He died. If our hearts are softened and subdued by the grace of Christ, and glowing with a sense of God's goodness and love, there will be a natural outflow of love, sympathy, and tenderness to others. The truth exemplified in the life will exert its power, like the hidden leaven, upon all with whom it is brought in contact.

God has ordained that in order to grow in grace and in a knowledge of Christ, men must follow His example and work as He worked. It will often require a struggle to control our own feelings and to refrain from speaking in a manner to discourage those who are laboring under temptation. A life of daily prayer and praise, a life which will shed light upon the path of others, cannot be maintained without earnest effort. But such effort will yield precious fruit, blessing not only the receiver, but the giver. [250]

The spirit of unselfish labor for others gives depth, stability, and Christlike loveliness to the character and brings peace and happiness to its possessor. The aspirations are elevated. There is no room for sloth or selfishness. Those who exercise the Christian graces will grow. They will have spiritual sinew and muscle, and will be strong to work for God. They will have clear spiritual perceptions, a steady, increasing faith, and prevailing power in prayer. Those who are watching for souls, who devote themselves most fully to the salvation of the erring, are most surely working out their own salvation.

But how has this work been neglected! If the thoughts and affections were wholly given to God, think you that souls in error, under the temptations of Satan, would be dropped as carelessly and unfeelingly as they have been? Would not greater efforts be put forth, in the love and simplicity of Christ, to save these wandering ones? All who are truly consecrated to God will engage with the greatest zeal in the work for which He has done the most, for which He has made an infinite sacrifice—the

work for the salvation of souls. This is the special work to be cherished and sustained, and never allowed to flag.

Breathe the Atmosphere of Heaven

God calls upon His people to arise and come out of the chilling, frosty atmosphere in which they have been living, to shake off the impressions and ideas that have frozen up the impulses of love and held them in selfish inactivity. He bids them come up from their low, earthly level and breathe in the clear, sunny atmosphere of heaven.

Our meetings for worship should be sacred, precious occasions. The prayer meeting is not a place where brethren are to censure and condemn one another, where there are to be unkind feelings and hard speeches. Christ will be driven from the assemblies where this spirit is manifested, and Satan will [251] come in to take the lead. Nothing that savors of an unchristian, unloving spirit should be permitted to enter; for do we not assemble to seek mercy and forgiveness from the Lord? and the Saviour has plainly said: “With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Matthew 7:2. Who can stand before God and plead a faultless character, a blameless life? And how, then, dare any criticize and condemn their brethren? Those who themselves can hope for salvation only through the merits of Christ, who must seek forgiveness by virtue of His blood, are under the strongest obligation to exercise love, pity, and forgiveness toward their fellow sinners.

Brethren, unless you educate yourselves to respect the place of devotion, you will receive no blessing from God. You may worship Him in form, but there will be no spiritual service. “Where two or three are gathered together in My name,” says Jesus, “there am I in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:20. All should feel that they are in the divine presence, and instead of dwelling upon the faults and errors of others they should be diligently searching their own hearts. If you have confessions to make of your own sins, do your duty and leave others to do theirs.

When you indulge your own harshness of character by manifesting a hard, unfeeling spirit you are repulsing the very ones whom you should win. Your harshness destroys their love of assembling together and too

often results in driving them from the truth. You should realize that you yourselves are under the rebuke of God. While you condemn others, the Lord condemns you. You have a duty to do to confess your own unchristian conduct. May the Lord move upon the hearts of the individual members of the church until His transforming grace shall be revealed in the life and the character. Then when you assemble together, it will not be to criticize one another, but to talk of Jesus and His love.

Our meetings should be made intensely interesting. They [252] should be pervaded with the very atmosphere of heaven. Let there be no long, dry speeches and formal prayers merely for the sake of occupying the time. All should be ready to act their part with promptness, and when their duty is done, the meeting should be closed. Thus the interest will be kept up to the last. This is offering to God acceptable worship. His service should be made interesting and attractive and not be allowed to degenerate into a dry form. We must live for Christ minute by minute, hour by hour, and day by day; then Christ will dwell in us, and when we meet together, His love will be in our hearts, welling up like a spring in the desert, refreshing all, and making those who are ready to perish, eager to drink of the waters of life.

We are not to depend upon two or three members to do the work for the whole church. We must individually have a strong, active faith, carrying forward the work God has left us to do. There must be an intense, living interest to inquire of God: “‘What wilt Thou have me to do?’ How shall I do my work for time and for eternity?” We must individually bend all our powers to search for the truth, employing every means within our reach that will aid us in a diligent, prayerful investigation of the Scriptures; and then we must be sanctified through the truth, that we may save souls.

Put Away Evilspeaking

An earnest effort should be made in every church to put away evilspeaking and a censorious spirit as among the sins productive of the greatest evils in the church. Severity and faultfinding must be rebuked as the workings of Satan. Mutual love and confidence must be encouraged and strengthened in the members of the church. Let all, in the fear of God and with love to their brethren, close their ears to gossip and censure. Direct the

talebearer to the teachings of God's word. Bid him obey the Scriptures and carry his complaints directly to those whom he thinks in error. This united action would [253] bring a flood of light into the church and close the door to a flood of evil. Thus God would be glorified, and many souls would be saved.

The admonition of the True Witness to the Sardis church is: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent." Revelation 3:1-3. The sin especially charged against this church is that they have not strengthened the things that remain, that are ready to die. Does this warning apply to us? Let us individually examine our hearts in the light of God's word, and let our first work be to set our hearts in order by the help of Christ.

Church Members Co-workers with God

God has done His part of the work for the salvation of men, and now He calls for the co-operation of the church. There are the blood of Christ, the word of truth, the Holy Spirit, on one hand, and there are the perishing souls on the other. Every follower of Christ has a part to act to bring men to accept the blessings heaven has provided. Let us closely examine ourselves and see if we have done this work. Let us question our motives and every action of our lives. Are there not many unpleasant pictures hanging in memory's halls? Often have you needed the forgiveness of Jesus. You have been constantly dependent upon His compassion and love. Yet have you not failed to manifest toward others the spirit which Christ has exercised toward you? Have you felt a burden for the one whom you saw venturing into forbidden paths? Have you kindly admonished him? Have you wept for him and prayed with him and for him? Have you shown by words of tenderness and kindly acts that you love him and desire to save him? As you have associated with those who were faltering and staggering under the load of their own infirmities of [254] disposition and faulty habits, have you left them to fight the battles alone when you might have given them help? Have you not passed these sorely tempted ones by on the other side while the

world has stood ready to give them sympathy and to allure them into Satan's nets? Have you not, like Cain, been ready to say: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Genesis 4:9. How must the great Head of the church regard the work of your life? How does He to whom every soul is precious, as the purchase of His blood, look upon your indifference to those who stray from the right path? Are you not afraid that He will leave you just as you leave them? Be sure that He who is the true Watchman of the Lord's house has marked every neglect.

Have not Christ and His love been shut out from your life until a mechanical form has taken the place of heart service? Where is the kindling of soul you once felt at the mention of the name of Jesus? In the freshness of your early dedication, how fervent was your love for souls! how earnestly you sought to represent to them the Saviour's love! The absence of that love has made you cold, critical, exacting. Seek to win it back, and then labor to bring souls to Christ. If you refuse to do this, others who have had less light and experience and fewer opportunities will come up and take your place and do that which you have neglected; for the work must be done to save the tempted, the tried, the perishing. Christ offers the service to His church; who will accept it?

God has not been unmindful of the good deeds, the self-denying acts, of the church in the past. All are registered on high. But these are not enough. These will not save the church when she ceases to fulfill her mission. Unless the cruel neglect and indifference manifested in the past shall cease, the church, instead of going from strength to strength, will continue to degenerate into weakness and formality. Shall we let this be? Is the dull torpor, the mournful deterioration in love and spiritual zeal, to be perpetuated? Is this the condition in which Christ is to find His church?

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Brethren, your own lamps will surely flicker and grow dim until they go out in darkness unless you make decided efforts to reform. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works." The opportunity now presented may be short. If this season of grace and repentance passes unimproved, the warning is given: "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place." Revelation 2:5. These words are uttered by the lips of the long-suffering, forbearing One. They are a solemn warning to churches and individuals that the Watcher

who never slumbers is measuring their course of action. It is only by reason of His marvelous patience that they are not cut down as cumberers of the ground. But His Spirit will not always strive. His patience will wait but little longer.

A Revival of the First Love

Your faith must be something more than it has been, or you will be weighed in the balances and found wanting. At the last day the final decision by the Judge of all the earth will turn upon our interest in, and practical labor for, the needy, the oppressed, the tempted. You cannot always pass these by on the other side and yourselves find entrance as redeemed sinners into the city of God. "Inasmuch," says Christ, "as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me." Matthew 25:45.

It is not yet too late to redeem the neglects of the past. Let there be a revival of the first love, the first ardor. Search out the ones you have driven away, bind up by confession the wounds you have made. Come close to the great Heart of pitying love, and let the current of that divine compassion flow into your heart and from you to the hearts of others. Let the tenderness and mercy that Jesus has revealed in His own precious life be an example to us of the manner in which we should treat our fellow beings, especially those who are our brethren in Christ. Many have fainted and become discouraged in the [256] great struggle of life, whom one word of kindly cheer and courage would have strengthened to overcome. Never, never become heartless, cold, unsympathetic, and censorious. Never lose an opportunity to say a word to encourage and inspire hope. We cannot tell how far-reaching may be our tender words of kindness, our Christlike efforts to lighten some burden. The erring can be restored in no other way than in the spirit of meekness, gentleness, and tender love.

God has precious ones in His church; there are also men and women who are as tares among the wheat. But the Lord does not give you or anyone else the office of saying who are tares and who are wheat. We may see and condemn the faults of others, while we have greater faults which we

have never realized, but which are distinctly seen by others.—1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:333, 334.

God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation as well as in that of finite man. But however trifling this or that wrong in their course may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God. The sins which man is disposed to look upon as small may be the very ones which God accounts as great crimes. The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven, while pride, selfishness, and covetousness go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God. He “resisteth the proud,” and Paul tells us that covetousness is idolatry. Those who are familiar with the denunciations against idolatry in the word of God will at once see how grave an offense this sin is.—1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:337. [257]

The Prosperity of the Church

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is meekness, patience, gentleness, and long-suffering. A true disciple of Christ will seek to imitate the Pattern. He will study to do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven. Those whose hearts are still defiled with sin cannot be zealous of good works. They fail to keep the first four precepts of the Decalogue, defining the duty of man to God; neither do they keep the last six, defining the duty of man to his fellow men. Their hearts are filled with selfishness, and they are constantly finding fault with others who are better than themselves. They put their hands to a work which God has not given them, but leave undone the work He has left for them to do, which is to take heed to themselves, lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble the church and defile it. They turn their eyes outward to watch lest the character of others should not be right, when their eyes should be turned inward to scan and criticize their own actions. When they empty the heart of self, envy, evil surmising, malice, they will not be climbing on the judgment seat and pronouncing sentence upon others who are in God's sight better than they.

He who would reform others must first reform himself. He must obtain the spirit of his Master and be willing, like Him, to suffer reproach and to practice self-denial. In comparison with the worth of one soul, the whole world sinks into insignificance. A desire to exercise authority, to lord it over God's heritage, will, if indulged, result in the loss of souls. Those who really love Jesus will seek to conform their own lives to the Pattern and will labor in His spirit for the salvation of others.*

*1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:613-621 (Church Duties).

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In order to secure man to Himself and ensure his eternal salvation, Christ left the royal courts of heaven and came to this earth, endured the

agonies of sin and shame in man's stead, and died to make him free. In view of the infinite price paid for man's redemption, how dare any professing the name of Christ treat with indifference one of His little ones? How carefully should brethren and sisters in the church guard every word and action lest they hurt the oil and the wine! How patiently, kindly, and affectionately should they deal with the purchase of the blood of Christ! How faithfully and earnestly should they labor to lift up the desponding and the discouraged! How tenderly should they treat those who are trying to obey the truth and have no encouragement at home, who have constantly to breathe the atmosphere of unbelief and darkness!

Treatment of the Erring

If a brother is supposed to have erred, his brethren and sisters should not whisper it among themselves and comment upon it, magnifying these supposed errors and faults. Much of this work is done, and the result is that the displeasure of God rests upon those who do it, and Satan exults that he can weaken and annoy those who might be strong in the Lord. The world sees their weakness and judges this class and the truth they profess to love, by the fruits manifested in them.

“Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.” Psalm 15. Here the backbiter [259] is excluded from abiding in the tabernacle of God and dwelling in the holy hill of Zion. He that taketh up a reproach against his neighbor cannot receive the approval of God.

How many ministers, while engaged in a good work in which souls are turning to God and to the truth, are called away to settle some church trial among brethren who were wholly wrong themselves and who had a contentious and overbearing spirit?

This work of withdrawing men from their fields of labor has been repeated again and again in the progress of this cause. It is a device of the great adversary of man to hinder the work of God. When souls that are upon the point of deciding in favor of the truth are thus left to unfavorable influences, they lose their interest, and it is very rare that so powerful an impression can again be made upon them. Satan is ever seeking some device to call the minister from his field of labor at this critical point, that the results of his labors may be lost.

There are in the church unconsecrated, unconverted men and women who think more of maintaining their own dignity and their own opinions than they do of the salvation of their fellow creatures; and Satan works upon these to stir up difficulties that consume the time and labor of the minister, and many souls are lost as the result.

While the members of the church are in a divided state of feeling, their hearts are hard and unimpressible. The efforts of the minister are like blows upon cold iron, and each party becomes more set in his own way than before. The minister is placed in a most unenviable position; for, though he should decide ever so wisely, his decision must displease someone, and thus the party spirit is strengthened.

If the minister makes his home with some one family, others are sure to be jealous lest he shall receive impressions unfavorable to themselves. If he gives counsel, some will say, "Such a one has been talking with him," and his words [260] have no weight with them. Thus their souls are armed with distrust and evil surmising, and the minister is left at the mercy of their prejudices and jealousies. Too often he leaves the matter worse than he found it. Had he utterly refused to listen to the colored, one-sided statements of any, had he given words of advice in accordance with the Bible rule and said, like Nehemiah, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down" (Nehemiah 6:3), that church would have been in a far better condition.

Ministers and lay members of the church displease God when they allow individuals to tell them the errors and faults of their brethren. They should not listen to these reports, but should inquire: "Have you strictly followed the injunctions of your Saviour? Have you gone to the offender and told him his faults between you and him alone? And has he refused to hear you? Have you carefully and prayerfully taken, two or three others,

and labored with him in tenderness, humility, and meekness, your heart throbbing with love for his soul?”

If the Captain’s orders, in the rules given for the erring, have been strictly followed, then an advance step is to be taken—tell it to the church, and let action be taken in the case according to the Scriptures. Then it is that heaven will ratify the decision made by the church in cutting off the offending member if he does not repent. If these steps have not been taken, close the ear to complaints, and thus refuse to take up a reproach against your neighbor. If there were no brethren and sisters to do this, evil tongues would soon cease; for they would not find so favorable a field in which to work in biting and devouring one another.

Selection of Leaders

The apostle Paul writes to Titus: “Set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, [261] having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God.” Titus 1:5-7. It would be well for all our ministers to give heed to these words and not to hurry men into office without due consideration and much prayer that God would designate by His Holy Spirit whom He will accept.

Said the inspired apostle: “Lay hands suddenly on no man.” 1 Timothy 5:22. In some of our churches the work of organizing and of ordaining elders has been premature; the Bible rule has been disregarded, and consequently grievous trouble has been brought upon the church. There should not be so great haste in electing leaders as to ordain men who are in no way fitted for the responsible work—men who need to be converted, elevated, ennobled, and refined before they can serve the cause of God in any capacity.

The gospel net gathers both good and bad. It takes time for character to be developed; there must be time to learn what men really are. The family of the one suggested for office should be considered. Are they in subjection? Can the man rule his own house with honor? What character have his children? Will they do honor to the father’s influence? If he has no

tact, wisdom, or power of godliness at home in managing his own family, it is safe to conclude that the same defects will be carried into the church, and the same unsanctified management will be seen there. It will be far better to criticize the man before he is put into office than afterward, better to pray and counsel before taking the decisive step than to labor to correct the consequences of a wrong move.

In some churches the leader has not the right qualifications to educate the members of the church to be workers. Tact and judgment have not been used to keep up a living interest in the work of God. The leader is slow and tedious, he talks too much and prays too long in public; he has not that living connection with God which would give him a fresh experience.

The leaders of churches in every place should be earnest, [262] full of zeal and unselfish interest, men of God who can give the right mold to the work. They should make their requests to God in faith. They may devote all the time they wish to secret prayer, but in public they should make their prayers and their testimonies short and to the point. Long, dry prayers and long exhortations should be avoided. If the brethren and sisters would have something to say that will refresh and edify others, it must first be in their hearts. They must daily be connected with God, drawing their supplies from His exhaustless storehouse and bringing therefrom things new and old. If their own souls have been vivified by the Spirit of God, they will cheer, strengthen, and encourage others; but if they have not drunk at the living fountain of salvation themselves, they will not know how to lead others there.

The necessity of experimental religion must be urged upon those who accept the theory of the truth. Ministers must keep their own souls in the love of God and then impress upon the people the necessity of an individual consecration, a personal conversion. All must obtain a living experience for themselves; they must have Christ enshrined in the heart, his Spirit controlling the affections, or their profession of faith is of no value, and their condition will be even worse than if they had never heard the truth.

Such arrangements should be made for the little companies accepting the truth as shall secure the prosperity of the church. One man may be appointed to lead for a week or a month, then another for a few weeks; and thus different persons may be enlisted in the work, and after a suitable trial someone should be selected by the voice of the church to be the

acknowledged leader, never, however, to be chosen for more than one year. Then another may be selected, or the same one may be re-elected if his service has proved a blessing to the church. The same principle should be followed in selecting men for other responsible positions, as in the offices [263] of the conference. Untried men should not be elected as presidents of conferences. Many fail to exercise proper discernment in these important matters where eternal interests are involved.

Influence of a United Soul-winning Church

We profess to be the depositaries of God's law; we claim to have greater light and to aim at a higher standard than any other people upon the earth; therefore we should show greater perfection of character and more earnest devotion. A most solemn message has been entrusted to those who have received the light of present truth. Our light should shine forth to brighten the pathway of those who are in darkness. As members of the visible church, and workers in the vineyard of the Lord, all professed Christians should do their utmost to preserve peace, harmony, and love in the church. Mark the prayer of Christ: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." John 17:21. The unity of the church is the convincing evidence that God has sent Jesus into the world as its Redeemer. This is an argument which worldlings cannot controvert. Therefore Satan is constantly working to prevent this union and harmony, that unbelievers, by witnessing backsliding, dissension, and strife among professed Christians, may become disgusted with religion and be confirmed in their impenitence. God is dishonored by those who profess the truth while they are at variance and enmity with one another. Satan is the great accuser of the brethren, and all who engage in this work are enlisted in his service.

We profess to have more truth than other denominations; yet if this does not lead to greater consecration, to purer, holier lives, of what benefit is it to us? It would be better for us never to have seen the light of truth than to profess to accept it and not be sanctified through it. [264]

In order to determine how important are the interests involved in the conversion of the soul from error to truth, we must appreciate the value of

immortality; we must realize how terrible are the pains of the second death; we must comprehend the honor and glory awaiting the ransomed, and understand what it is to live in the presence of Him who died that He might elevate and ennoble man, and give to the overcomer a royal diadem.

The worth of a soul cannot be fully estimated by finite minds. How gratefully will the ransomed and glorified ones remember those who were instrumental in their salvation! No one will then regret his self-denying efforts and persevering labors, his patience, forbearance, and earnest heart yearnings for souls that might have been lost had he neglected his duty or become weary in well-doing.

Now these white-robed ones are gathered into the fold of the Great Shepherd. The faithful worker and the soul saved through his labor are greeted by the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and are led to the tree of life and to the fountain of living waters. With what joy does the servant of Christ behold these redeemed ones, who are made to share the glory of the Redeemer! How much more precious is heaven to those who have been faithful in the work of saving souls! “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.” Daniel 12:3. [265]

The Sin Against the Holy Spirit

Brother P, you ask if you have committed the sin which has no forgiveness in this life or in the life to come. I answer: I do not see the slightest evidence that this is the case. What constitutes the sin against the Holy Ghost? It is willfully attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit. For example, suppose that one is a witness of the special work of the Spirit of God. He has convincing evidence that the work is in harmony with the Scriptures, and the Spirit witnesses with his spirit that it is of God. Afterward, however, he falls under temptation; pride, self-sufficiency, or some other evil trait, controls him; and rejecting all the evidence of its divine character, he declares that that which he had before acknowledged to be the power of the Holy Spirit was the power of Satan. It is through the medium of His Spirit that God works upon the human heart; and when men willfully reject the Spirit and declare it to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. By denying the evidence which God has been pleased to give them, they shut out the light which had been shining in their hearts, and as the result they are left in darkness. Thus the words of Christ are verified: "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Matthew 6:23. For a time, persons who have committed this sin may appear to be children of God; but when circumstances arise to develop character and show what manner of spirit they are of, it will be found that they are on the enemy's ground, standing under his black banner.

My brother, the Spirit invites you today. Come with your whole heart to Jesus. Repent of your sins, make confession^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:634, 635 (God's Love for Sinners).

to God, forsake all iniquity, and you may appropriate to yourself all His promises. “Look unto Me, and be ye saved” (Isaiah 45:22), is His gracious invitation.

The day will come when the awful denunciation of God’s wrath will be uttered against all who have persisted in their disloyalty to Him. This will be when God must speak and do terrible things in righteousness against the transgressors of His law. But you need not be among those who will come under the wrath of God. It is now the day of His salvation. The light from the cross of Calvary is now shining forth in clear, bright rays, revealing Jesus, our Sacrifice for sin. As you read the promises which I have set before you, remember they are the expression of unutterable love and pity. The great heart of infinite Love is drawn toward the sinner with boundless compassion. “We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Ephesians 1:7. Yes, only believe that God is your helper. He wants to restore His moral image in man. As you draw nigh to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw nigh to you with mercy and forgiveness. We owe the Lord everything. He is the author of our salvation. As you work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” [267]

God's Presence a Reality

Dear Brother Q,

I am glad you are today in-----, and if you make good your trust you will be the right man in the right place. Keep self out of sight; let it not come in to mar the work, though this will be natural. Walk humbly with God. Let us work for the Master with disinterested energy, keeping before us a sense of the constant presence of God. Think of Moses, what endurance and patience characterized his life. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, says: "For he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." Hebrews 11:27. The character that Paul thus ascribes to Moses does not mean simply passive resistance of evil, but perseverance in the right. He kept the Lord ever before him, and the Lord was ever at his right hand to help him.

Moses had a deep sense of the personal presence of God. He was not only looking down through the ages for Christ to be made manifest in the flesh, but he saw Christ in a special manner accompanying the children of Israel in all their travels. God was real to him, ever present in his thoughts. When misunderstood, when called upon to face danger and to bear insult for Christ's sake, he endured without retaliation. Moses believed in God as one whom he needed and who would help him because of his need. God was to him a present help.

Much of the faith which we see is merely nominal; the real, trusting, persevering faith is rare. Moses realized in his own experience the promise that God will be a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. He had respect unto the recompense of the reward. Here is another point in regard to faith which we wish to study: God will reward the man of faith and^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:651-653.

obedience. If this faith is brought into the life experience, it will enable everyone who fears and loves God to endure trials. Moses was full of confidence in God because he had appropriating faith. He needed help, and he prayed for it, grasped it by faith, and wove into his experience the belief that God cared for him. He believed that God ruled his life in particular. He saw and acknowledged God in every detail of his life and felt that he was under the eye of the All-seeing One, who weighs motives, who tries the heart. He looked to God and trusted in Him for strength to carry him uncorrupted through every form of temptation. He knew that a special work had been assigned to him, and he desired as far as possible to make that work thoroughly successful. But he knew that he could not do this without divine aid, for he had a perverse people to deal with. The presence of God was sufficient to carry him through the most trying situations in which a man could be placed.

Faith that Endures the Test

Moses did not merely think of God; he saw Him. God was the constant vision before him; he never lost sight of His face. He saw Jesus as his Saviour, and he believed that the Saviour's merits would be imputed to him. This faith was to Moses no guesswork; it was a reality. This is the kind of faith we need, faith that will endure the test. Oh, how often we yield to temptation because we do not keep our eye upon Jesus! Our faith is not continuous because, through self-indulgence, we sin, and then we cannot endure "as seeing Him who is invisible."

My brother, make Christ your daily, hourly companion, and you will not complain that you have no faith. Contemplate Christ. View His character. Talk of Him. The less you exalt self, the more you will see in Jesus to exalt. God has a work for you to do. Keep the Lord ever before you. Brother and Sister Q, reach up higher and still higher for clearer views of the character of Christ. When Moses prayed, "I beseech [269] Thee, show me Thy glory," the Lord did not rebuke him, but He granted his prayer. God declared to His servant: "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee." We keep apart from God, and this is why we do not see the revealings of His power. [270]

The Nature and Influence of the “Testimonies”

As the end draws near and the work of giving the last warning to the world extends, it becomes more important for those who accept present truth to have a clear understanding of the nature and influence of the *Testimonies*, which God in His providence has linked with the work of the third angel’s message from its very rise. In the following pages are given extracts from what I have written during the last forty years, relating to my own early experience in this special work, and also presenting what God has shown me concerning the nature and importance of the *Testimonies*, the manner in which they are given, and how they should be regarded.

It was not long after the passing of the time in 1844 that my first vision was given me. I was visiting a dear sister in Christ, whose heart was knit with mine; five of us, all women, were kneeling quietly at the family altar. While we were praying, the power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before. I seemed to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher from the earth. At this time I had a view of the experience of the advent believers, the coming of Christ, and the reward to be given to the faithful.

In a second vision, which soon followed the first, I was shown the trials through which I must pass, and that it was my duty to go and relate to others what God had revealed to me. It was shown me that my labors would meet with great opposition and that my heart would be rent with anguish, but that the grace of God would be sufficient to sustain me through all. The teaching of this vision troubled me exceedingly, for it^{*}

^{*}—1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:654-683.

pointed out my duty to go out among the people and present the truth.

One great fear that oppressed me was that if I obeyed the call of duty and went out declaring myself to be one favored of the Most High with visions and revelations for the people, I might yield to sinful exaltation and be lifted above the station that was right for me to occupy, bring upon myself the displeasure of God, and lose my own soul. I had before me several cases such as I have here described, and my heart shrank from the trying ordeal.

I now entreated that if I must go and relate what the Lord had shown me, I should be preserved from undue exaltation. Said the angel: "Your prayers are heard and shall be answered. If this evil that you dread threatens you, the hand of God will be stretched out to save you; by affliction He will draw you to Himself and preserve your humility. Deliver the message faithfully. Endure unto the end, and you shall eat the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of life."

At this time there was fanaticism among some of those who had been believers in the first message. Serious errors in doctrine and practice were cherished, and some were ready to condemn all who would not accept their views. God revealed these errors to me in vision and sent me to His erring children to declare them; but in performing this duty I met with bitter opposition and reproach.

It was a great cross for me to relate to the erring what had been shown me concerning them. It caused me great distress to see others troubled or grieved. And when obliged to declare the messages I would often soften them down and make them appear as favorable for the individual as I could and then would go by myself and weep in agony of spirit. I looked upon those who had only their own souls to care for and thought if I were in their condition I would not murmur. It was hard to relate the plain, cutting testimonies given me of God. I anxiously watched the result, and if the persons [272] reprov'd rose up against the reproof, and afterward opposed the truth, these queries would arise in my mind: Did I deliver the message just as I should? Could there not have been some way to save them? And then such distress pressed upon my soul that I often felt that death would be a welcome messenger, and the grave a sweet resting place.

I did not realize the danger and sin of such a course until in vision I was taken into the presence of Jesus. He looked upon me with a frown and

turned His face from me. It is not possible to describe the terror and agony I then felt. I fell upon my face before Him, but had no power to utter a word. Oh, how I longed to be covered and hid from that dreadful frown! Then could I realize, in some degree, what the feelings of the lost will be when they cry: "Mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Revelation 6:16.

Presently an angel bade me rise, and the sight that met my eyes can hardly be described. Before me was a company whose hair and garments were torn, and whose countenances were the very picture of despair and horror. They came close to me and rubbed their garments upon mine. As I looked at my garments I saw that they were stained with blood. Again I fell like one dead at the feet of my accompanying angel. I could not plead one excuse and longed to be away from that holy place. The angel raised me to my feet and said: "This is not your case now, but this scene has passed before you to let you know what your situation must be if you neglect to declare to others what the Lord has revealed to you." With this solemn warning before me I went out to speak to the people the words of reproof and instruction given me of God.

Personal Testimonies

The messages given me for different individuals I often wrote out for them, in many cases doing this at their urgent request. As my work extended, this became an important and [273] taxing part of my labors. Before the publication of *Testimony* 15 [1868], many requests for written testimonies were sent me by those whom I had counseled or reproved; but I was in a state of great exhaustion from wearing labor, and I shrank from the task, especially since I knew that many of these persons were very unworthy, and there seemed little hope that the warnings given would work any decided change in them. At that time I was greatly encouraged by the following dream:

A person brought to me a web of white cloth, and bade me cut it into garments for persons of all sizes and all descriptions of character and circumstances in life. I was told to cut them out and hang them up all ready

to be made when called for. I had the impression that many for whom I was required to cut garments were unworthy. I inquired if that was the last piece of cloth I should have to cut and was told that it was not; that as soon as I had finished this one, there were others for me to take hold of. I felt discouraged at the amount of work before me and stated that I had been engaged in cutting garments for others for more than twenty years, and my labors had not been appreciated, neither did I see that my work had accomplished much good. I spoke to the person who brought the cloth to me, of one woman in particular, for whom he had told me to cut a garment. I stated that she would not prize the garment and that it would be a loss of time and material to present it to her. She was very poor, of inferior intellect, and untidy in her habits, and would soon soil it.

The person replied. "Cut out the garments. That is your duty. The loss is not yours, but mine. God sees not as man sees. He lays out the work that He would have done, and you do not know which will prosper, this or that." ...

I then held up my hands, calloused as they were with long use of the shears, and stated that I could but shrink at the thought of pursuing this kind of labor. The person again repeated:

"Cut out the garments. Your release has not yet come." [274]

With feelings of great weariness I arose to engage in the work. Before me lay new, polished shears, which I commenced using. At once my feelings of weariness and discouragement left me, the shears seemed to cut with hardly an effort on my part, and I cut out garment after garment with comparative ease.

There are many dreams arising from the common things of life with which the Spirit of God has nothing to do. There are also false dreams, as well as false visions, which are inspired by the spirit of Satan. But dreams from the Lord are classed in the word of God with visions and are as truly the fruits of the spirit of prophecy as visions. Such dreams, taking into the account the persons who have them, and the circumstances under which they are given, contain their own proofs of their genuineness.

Since the warning and instruction given in testimony for individual cases applied with equal force to many others who had not been specially pointed out in this manner, it seemed to be my duty to publish the personal testimonies for the benefit of the church. In *Testimony* 15, speaking of the necessity for doing this, I said: "I know of no better way to present my

views of general dangers and errors, and the duty of all who love God and keep His commandments, than by giving these testimonies. Perhaps there is no more direct and forcible way of presenting what the Lord has shown me.”

In a vision given me June 12, 1868, I was shown that which fully justified my course in publishing personal testimonies. When the Lord singles out individual cases and specifies their wrongs, others, who have not been shown in vision, frequently take it for granted that they are right, or nearly so. If one is reproved for a special wrong, brethren and sisters should carefully examine themselves to see wherein they have failed and wherein they have been guilty of the same sin. They should possess the spirit of humble confession. If others think them right, it does not make them so. God looks at the heart. He is [275] proving and testing souls in this manner. In rebuking the wrongs of one, He designs to correct many. But if they fail to take the reproof to themselves, and flatter themselves that God passes over their errors because He does not especially single them out, they deceive their own souls and will be shut up in darkness and be left to their own ways to follow the imagination of their own hearts.

Many are dealing falsely with their own souls and are in a great deception in regard to their true condition before God. He employs ways and means to best serve His purpose and to prove what is in the hearts of His professed followers. He makes plain the wrongs of some that others may thus be warned and fear and shun those errors. By self-examination they may find that they are doing the same things which God condemns in others. If they really desire to serve God, and fear to offend Him, they will not wait for their sins to be specified before they make confession and with humble repentance return unto the Lord. They will forsake the things which have displeased God, according to the light given to others. If, on the contrary, those who are not right see that they are guilty of the very sins that have been reproved in others, yet continue in the same unconsecrated course because they have not been specially named, they endanger their own souls, and will be led captive by Satan at his will.

I was shown that in the wisdom of God the sins and errors of all would not be revealed. All who are guilty are addressed in these individual testimonies, although their names may not be attached to the special testimony borne; and if individuals pass over and cover up their own sins

because their names are not especially called, they will not be prospered of God. They cannot advance in the divine life, but will become darker and darker, until the light of heaven will be entirely withdrawn.

In a view given me about twenty years ago [1871], “I was then directed to bring out general principles, in speaking and [276] in writing, and at the same time specify the dangers, errors, and sins of some individuals, that all might be warned, reproved, and counseled. I saw that all should search their own hearts and lives closely to see if they had not made the same mistakes for which others were corrected and if the warnings given for others did not apply to their own cases. If so, they should feel that the counsel and reproofs were given especially for them and should make as practical an application of them as though they were especially addressed to themselves. God designs to test the faith of all who claim to be followers of Christ. He will test the sincerity of the prayers of all those who claim to earnestly desire to know their duty. He will make duty plain. He will give all an ample opportunity to develop what is in their hearts.”

Object of the “Testimonies”

In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the *Testimonies* of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue.

The Lord has seen fit to give me a view of the needs and errors of His people. Painful though it has been to me, I have faithfully set before the offenders their faults and the means of remedying them. Thus has the Spirit of God pronounced warnings and judgments, withholding not, however, the sweet promise of mercy.

Repentant sinners have no cause to despair because they are reminded of their transgressions and warned of their danger. These very efforts in their behalf show how much God loves them and desires to save them. They have only to follow His counsel and do His will, to inherit eternal life. God sets the sins of His erring people before them, that they may behold them in all their enormity under the light of divine [277] truth. It is then

their duty to renounce them forever. If God's people would recognize His dealings with them and accept His teachings, they would find a straight path for their feet and a light to guide them through darkness and discouragement.

Warnings and reproofs are not given to the erring among Seventh-day Adventists because their lives are more blameworthy than are the lives of professed Christians of the nominal churches, nor because their example or their acts are worse than those of the Adventists who will not yield obedience to the claims of God's law, but because they have great light, and have by their profession taken their position as God's special, chosen people, having the law of God written in their hearts. They signify their loyalty to the God of heaven by yielding obedience to the laws of His government. They are God's representatives upon the earth. Any sin in them separates them from God and, in a special manner, dishonors His name by giving the enemies of His holy law occasion to reproach His cause and His people, whom He has called "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (1 Peter 2:9), that they should show forth the praises of Him that hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The Lord reproves and corrects the people who profess to keep His law. He points out their sins and lays open their iniquity because He wishes to separate all sin and wickedness from them, that they may perfect holiness in His fear. God rebukes, reprove, and corrects them, that they may be refined, sanctified, elevated, and finally exalted to His own throne.

I have been looking over the *Testimonies* given for Sabbathkeepers and I am astonished at the mercy of God and His care for His people in giving them so many warnings, pointing out their dangers, and presenting before them the exalted position which He would have them occupy. If they would keep themselves in His love and separate from the [278] world, He would cause His special blessings to rest upon them and His light to shine round about them. Their influence for good might be felt in every branch of the work and in every part of the gospel field. But if they fail to meet the mind of God, if they continue to have so little sense of the exalted character of the work as they have had in the past, their influence and example will prove a terrible curse. They will do harm and only harm. The blood of precious souls will be found upon their garments.

Testimonies of warnings have been repeated. I inquire: Who have heeded them? Who have been zealous in repenting of their sins and idolatry, and have been earnestly pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? I have waited anxiously, hoping that God would put His Spirit upon some and use them as instruments of righteousness to awaken and set in order His church. I have almost despaired as I have seen, year after year, a greater departure from that simplicity which God has shown me should characterize the life of His followers. There has been less and less interest in, and devotion to, the cause of God. I ask: Wherein have those who profess confidence in the *Testimonies* sought to live according to the light given in them? Wherein have they regarded the warnings given? Wherein have they heeded the instructions they have received?

Not to Take the Place of the Bible

That the *Testimonies* were not given to take the place of the Bible, the following extract from a testimony published in 1876 will show:

“Brother J would confuse the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the *Testimonies* is an addition to the word of God, but in this he presents the matter in a false light. God has seen fit in this manner to bring the minds of His people to His word, to give them a [279] clearer understanding of it”^{*} The word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, bringing them back to the word that they have neglected to follow. The word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles.

April 3, 1871, this matter was presented to me in a dream. I seemed to be attending an important meeting, at which a large company were assembled. Many were bowed before God in earnest prayer, and they

seemed to be burdened. They were importuning the Lord for special light. A few seemed to be in agony of spirit; their feelings were intense; with tears they were crying aloud for help and light. Our most prominent brethren were engaged in this most impressive scene. Brother A was prostrated upon the floor, apparently in deep distress. His wife was sitting among a company of indifferent scorers. She looked as though she desired all to understand that she scorned those who were thus humiliating themselves.

I dreamed that the Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and I arose amid cries and prayers, and said: The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. I feel urged to say to you that you must commence to work individually for yourselves. You are looking to God and desiring Him to do the work for you which He has left for you to do. If you will do the work for yourselves which you know that you ought to do, then God will help you when you need help. You have left undone

*-Testimonies for the Church 4:246.

[280]

the very things which God has left for you to do. You have been calling upon God to do your work. Had you followed the light which He has given you, then He would cause more light to shine upon you; but while you neglect the counsels, warnings, and reproofs that have been given, how can you expect God to give you more light and blessings to neglect and despise? God is not as man; He will not be trifled with.

I took the precious Bible and surrounded it with the several *Testimonies for the Church*, given for the people of God. Here, said I, the cases of nearly all are met. The sins they are to shun are pointed out. The counsel that they desire can be found here, given for other cases situated similarly to themselves. God has been pleased to give you line upon line and precept upon precept. But there are not many of you that really know what is contained in the *Testimonies*. You are not familiar with the Scriptures. If you had made God's word your study, with a desire to reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the *Testimonies*. It is because you have neglected to acquaint yourselves with God's inspired Book that He has sought to reach you by simple, direct testimonies, calling your attention to the words of inspiration which you

had neglected to obey, and urging you to fashion your lives in accordance with its pure and elevated teachings.

Not to Give New Light

The Lord designs to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the importance of the truth of His word. The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man's duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God's word, yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but [281] God has through the *Testimonies* simplified the great truths already given and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse.

Pride, self-love, selfishness, hatred, envy, and jealousy have beclouded the perceptive powers, and the truth, which would make you wise unto salvation, has lost its power to charm and control the mind. The very essential principles of godliness are not understood because there is not a hungering and thirsting for Bible knowledge, purity of heart, and holiness of life. The *Testimonies* are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all.

I said further: As the word of God is walled in with these books and pamphlets, so has God walled you in with reproofs, counsel, warnings, and encouragements. Here you are crying before God, in the anguish of your souls, for more light. I am authorized from God to tell you that not another ray of light through the *Testimonies* will shine upon your pathway until you make a practical use of the light already given. The Lord has walled you about with light; but you have not appreciated the light; you have trampled upon it. While some have despised the light, others have neglected it or followed it but indifferently. A few have set their hearts to obey the light which God has been pleased to give them.

Some that have received special warnings through testimony have forgotten in a few weeks the reproof given. The testimonies to some have been several times repeated, but they have not thought them of sufficient

importance to be carefully heeded. They have been to them like idle tales. Had they regarded the light given they would have avoided losses and trials which they think are hard and severe. They have only themselves to censure. They have placed upon their own necks a yoke which they find grievous to be borne. It is not the yoke which Christ has bound upon them. God's [282] care and love were exercised in their behalf; but their selfish, evil, unbelieving souls could not discern His goodness and mercy. They rush on in their own wisdom, until, overwhelmed with trials and confused with perplexity, they are ensnared by Satan. When you gather up the rays of light which God has given in the past, then will He give an increase of light.

I referred them to ancient Israel. God gave them His law, but they would not obey it. He then gave them ceremonies and ordinances, that, in the performance of these, God might be kept in remembrance. They were so prone to forget Him and His claims upon them that it was necessary to keep their minds stirred up to realize their obligations to obey and honor their Creator. Had they been obedient and loved to keep God's commandments, the multitude of ceremonies and ordinances would not have been required.

If the people who now profess to be God's peculiar treasure would obey His requirements, as specified in His word, special testimonies would not be given to awaken them to their duty and impress upon them their sinfulness and their fearful danger in neglecting to obey the word of God. Consciences have been blunted because light has been set aside, neglected, and despised.

One stood by my side and said: "God has raised you up and has given you words to speak to the people and to reach hearts as He has given to no other one. He has shaped your testimonies to meet cases that are in need of help. You must be unmoved by scorn, derision, reproach, and censure. In order to be God's special instrument you should lean to no one, but hang upon Him alone and, like the clinging vine, let your tendrils entwine about Him. He will make you a means through which to communicate His light to the people. You must daily gather strength from God in order to be fortified, that your surroundings may not dim or eclipse the light that He has permitted to shine upon His people through [283] you. It is Satan's special object to prevent this light from coming to the people of God, who so greatly need it amid the perils of these last days.

“Your success is in your simplicity. As soon as you depart from this and fashion your testimony to meet the minds of any, your power is gone. Almost everything in this age is glossed and unreal. The world abounds in testimonies given to please and charm for the moment and to exalt self. Your testimony is of a different character. It is to come down to the minutiae of life, keeping the feeble faith from dying and pressing home upon believers the necessity of shining as lights in the world.

“God has given you your testimony, to set before the backslider and the sinner his true condition and the immense loss he is sustaining by continuing a life of sin. God has impressed this upon you by opening it before your vision as He has to no other one now living, and according to the light He has given you will He hold you responsible. ‘Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.’ Zechariah 4:6. ‘Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.’” Isaiah 58:1.

Wrong Use of the “Testimonies”

Some who believe the *Testimonies* have erred by urging them unduly upon others. In volume 1, number 8, is a testimony bearing upon this point. “There were some in-----who were God’s children, and yet doubted the visions. Others had no opposition, yet dared not take a decided stand in regard to them. Some were skeptical, and they had sufficient cause to make them so. The false visions and fanatical exercises, and the wretched fruits following, had an influence upon the cause in-----to make minds jealous of everything bearing the name of visions. All these things should have been taken into consideration and wisdom exercised. There [284] should be no trial or labor with those who have never seen the individual having visions, and who have had no personal knowledge of the influence of the visions. Such should not be deprived of the benefits and privileges of the church if their Christian course is otherwise correct. ...

“Some, I was shown, could receive the published visions, judging of the tree by its fruits. Others are like doubting Thomas; they cannot believe the published *Testimonies*, nor receive evidence through the testimony of others, but must see and have the evidence for themselves. Such must not

be set aside, but long patience and brotherly love should be exercised toward them until they find their position and become established for or against. If they fight against the visions, of which they have no knowledge; if they carry their opposition so far as to oppose that in which they have had no experience, ... the church may know that they are not right.”*

Some of our brethren had had long experience in the truth and for years had been acquainted with me and my work. They had proved the truthfulness of the *Testimonies* and had asserted their belief in them. They had felt the powerful influence of the Spirit of God resting upon them to witness to their truthfulness. I was shown that if such, when reproved through the *Testimonies*, should rise up against them and work secretly to lessen their influence, they should be faithfully dealt with; for their course would endanger those who were lacking in experience.

The first number of the *Testimonies* ever published contains a warning against the injudicious use of the light which is thus given to God’s people. I stated that some had taken an unwise course; when they had talked their faith to unbelievers, and the proof had been asked for, they had read from my writings instead of going to the Bible for proof. It was shown me that this course was inconsistent and would prejudice unbelievers against the truth. The *Testimonies* can have no

*-Testimonies for the Church 1:328 (1862).

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weight with those who know nothing of their spirit. They should not be referred to in such cases.

Other warnings concerning the use of the *Testimonies* have been given from time to time, as follows:

“Some of the preachers are far behind. They profess to believe the testimony borne, and some do harm by making them an iron rule for those who have had no experience in reference to them, but they fail to carry them out themselves. They have had repeated testimonies which they have utterly disregarded. The course of such is not consistent.”*

“I saw that many have taken advantage of what God has shown in regard to the sins and wrongs of others. They have taken the extreme meaning of what has been shown in vision, and then have pressed it until it

has a tendency to weaken the faith of many in what God has shown, and also to discourage and dishearten the church.”[&dagger](#);

The enemy will seize upon everything which he can use to destroy souls. Testimonies have been borne in favor of individuals occupying important positions. They commence well to lift the burdens and act their part in connection with the work of God. But Satan pursues them with his temptations, and they are finally overcome. As others look upon their wrong course, Satan suggests to their minds that there must be a mistake in the testimonies given for these persons, else these men would not have proved themselves unworthy to bear a part in the work of God.

Thus doubts arise in regard to the light that God has given. That which can be said of men under certain circumstances cannot be said of them under other circumstances. Men are weak in moral power and so supremely selfish, so self-sufficient, and so easily puffed up with vain conceit, that God cannot work in connection with them, and they are left to move like blind men and to manifest so great weakness and folly that

[*](#)Testimonies for the Church 1:369 (1863).

[&dagger](#);Testimonies for the Church 1:166 (1857).

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many are astonished that such individuals should ever have been accepted and acknowledged as worthy of having any connection with God’s work. This is just what Satan designed. This was his object from the time he first specially tempted them to reproach the cause of God and to cast reflections upon the *Testimonies*. Had they remained where their influence would not have been specially felt upon the cause of God, Satan would not have beset them so fiercely, for he could not have accomplished his purpose by using them as his instruments to do a special work.

To Be Judged by Their Fruits

Let the *Testimonies* be judged by their fruits. What is the spirit of their teaching? What has been the result of their influence? All who desire to do so can acquaint themselves with the fruits of these visions. For seventeen

years^{*} God has seen fit to let them survive and strengthen against the opposition of Satan's forces and the influence of human agencies that have aided Satan in his work.

God is either teaching His church, reproving their wrongs and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work ... bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter. The *Testimonies* are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil.

As the Lord has manifested Himself through the spirit of prophecy, past, present, and future have passed before me. I have been shown faces that I had never seen, and years afterward I knew them when I saw them. I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind; and I have written, at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent and, arriving at a crisis, have saved great disaster to the cause of God. This has been my work for

^{*}Written in 1862.

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many years. A power has impelled me to reprove and rebuke wrongs that I had not thought of. Is this work of the last thirty-six years^{*} from above or from beneath?

Christ warned His disciples: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:15-20. Here is a test, and all can apply it if they will. Those who really desire to know the truth will find sufficient evidence for belief.

Doubting the "Testimonies"

It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the *Testimonies*. Satan knows how to make his attacks. He works upon minds to excite jealousy and dissatisfaction toward those at the head of the work. The gifts are next questioned; then, of course, they have but little weight, and instruction given through vision is disregarded. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the *Testimonies*, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction. By giving place to doubts and unbelief in regard to the work of God, and by cherishing feelings of distrust and cruel jealousies, they are preparing themselves for complete deception. They rise up

*Written in 1882.

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with bitter feelings against the ones who dare to speak of their errors and reprove their sins.

A testimony for certain young men, first published in 1880, speaks of this point as follows: "A prevailing skepticism is continually increasing in reference to the *Testimonies* of the Spirit of God; and these youth encourage questionings and doubts instead of removing them, because they are ignorant of the spirit and power and force of the *Testimonies*."*

I was shown that many had so little spirituality that they did not understand the value of the *Testimonies* or their real object. They talked flippantly of the *Testimonies* given by God for the benefit of His people, and passed judgment upon them, giving their opinion and criticizing this and that, when they would better have placed their hands upon their lips, and prostrated themselves in the dust; for they could not appreciate the spirit of the *Testimonies*, because they knew so little of the Spirit of God. ...

If you lose confidence in the *Testimonies* you will drift away from Bible truth. I have been fearful that many would take a questioning, doubting position, and in my distress for your souls I would warn you. How many will heed the warning? As you now hold the *Testimonies*, should one be given crossing your track, correcting your errors, would you feel at perfect

liberty to accept or reject any part or the whole? That which you will be least inclined to receive is the very part most needed.

My brethren, beware of the evil heart of unbelief. The word of God is plain and close in its restrictions; it interferes with your selfish indulgence; therefore you do not obey it. The *Testimonies* of His Spirit call your attention to the Scriptures, point out your defects of character, and rebuke your sins; therefore you do not heed them. And to justify your carnal, ease-loving course you begin to doubt whether the

*-Testimonies for the Church 4:437.

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Testimonies are from God. If you would obey their teachings you would be assured of their divine origin. Remember, your unbelief does not affect their truthfulness. If they are from God they will stand.

I have been shown that unbelief in the testimonies of warning, encouragement, and reproof is shutting away the light from God's people. Unbelief is closing their eyes so that they are ignorant of their true condition. They think the testimony of the Spirit of God in reproof is uncalled for or that it does not mean them. Such are in the greatest need of the grace of God and spiritual discernment, that they may discover their deficiency in spiritual knowledge.

Many who have backslidden from the truth assign as a reason for their course that they do not have faith in the *Testimonies*. The question now is: Will they yield their idol which God condemns, or will they continue in their wrong course of indulgence and reject the light God has given them reproving the very things in which they delight? The question to be settled with them is: Shall I deny myself and receive as of God the *Testimonies* which reprove my sins, or shall I reject the *Testimonies because* they reprove my sins?

In many cases the *Testimonies* are fully received, the sin and indulgence broken off, and reformation at once commences in harmony with the light God has given. In other instances sinful indulgences are cherished, the *Testimonies* are rejected, and many excuses which are untrue are offered to others as the reason for refusing to receive them. The *true* reason is not given. It is a lack of moral courage—a will, strengthened and controlled by the Spirit of God, to renounce hurtful habits.

Satan has ability to suggest doubts and to devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue, a mark of intelligence in them, to be unbelieving and to question and quibble. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion [290] for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit, and all should decide from the weight of evidence. God gives sufficient evidence for the candid mind to believe; but he who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things which he cannot make plain to his finite understanding will be left in the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and questioning doubts, and will make shipwreck of faith. ...

Neglect of the “Testimonies”

It is not alone those who openly reject the *Testimonies*, or who cherish doubt concerning them, that are on dangerous ground. To disregard light is to reject it.

Some of you in words acknowledge reproof, but you do not in heart accept it. You go on the same as before, only being less susceptible to the influence of the Spirit of God, becoming more and more blinded, having less wisdom, less self-control, less moral power, and less zeal and relish for religious exercises; and, unless converted, you will finally yield your hold upon God entirely. You have not made decided changes in your life when reproof has come, because you have not seen and realized your defects of character and the great contrast between your life and the life of Christ. What do your prayers amount to while you regard iniquity in your hearts? Unless you make a thorough change, you will, not far hence, become weary of reproof, as did the children of Israel; and, like them, you will apostatize from God.

Many are going directly contrary to the light which God has given to His people, because they do not read the books which contain the light and knowledge in cautions, reproofs, and warnings. The cares of the world, the love of fashion, and the lack of religion have turned the attention from the light God has so graciously given, while books and periodicals containing error are traveling all over the country. Skepticism and infidelity are

increasing everywhere. Light so precious, [291] coming from the throne of God, is hid under a bushel. God will make His people responsible for this neglect. An account must be rendered to Him for every ray of light He has let shine upon our pathway, whether it has been improved to our advancement in divine things or rejected because it was more agreeable to follow inclination.

The volumes of *Spirit of Prophecy*,^{*} and also the *Testimonies*, should be introduced into every Sabbathkeeping family, and the brethren should know their value and be urged to read them. It was not the wisest plan to place these books at a low figure and have only one set in a church. They should be in the library of every family and be read again and again. Let them be kept where they can be read by many.

Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth hardens when it does not save. The rejection of light leaves men captives, bound about by chains of darkness and unbelief. The soul that refuses to listen to the invitations of mercy from day to day can soon listen to the most urgent appeals without an emotion stirring his soul. As laborers with God we need more fervent piety and less self-exaltation. The more self is exalted, the more will faith in the *Testimonies* of the Spirit of God be lessened. Those who trust wholly in themselves will see less and less of God in the *Testimonies* of His Spirit.

^{*}Note: While today the term “spirit of prophecy” is used in a general way as embodying all of the Ellen G. White writings, it was used here to specially designate the four-volume set of books published in the seventies and eighties, presenting Mrs. White’s first detailed account of the conflict of the ages. In addition to the general title, *Spirit of Prophecy*, the volumes have the specific title of *The Great Controversy*, volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4. As Mrs. White in later years rewrote the account in greatly amplified form, it was published in the five volumes of the Conflict of the Ages Series, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Prophets and Kings*, *The Desire of Ages*, *The Acts of the Apostles*, and *The Great Controversy*.
[White Trustees.]

How to Receive Reproof

Those who are reproofed by the Spirit of God should not rise up against the humble instrument. It is God, and not an erring mortal, who has spoken to save them from ruin. It is not pleasing to human nature to receive reproof, nor is it possible for the heart of man, unenlightened by the Spirit of God, to realize the necessity of reproof or the blessing it is designed to bring. As man yields to temptation, and indulges in sin, his mind becomes darkened. The moral sense is perverted. The warnings of conscience are disregarded, and its voice is less clearly heard. He gradually loses the power to distinguish between right and wrong, until he has no true sense of his standing before God. He may observe the forms of religion and zealously maintain its doctrines, while destitute of its spirit. His condition is that described by the True Witness: “Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and *knowest not* that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” When the Spirit of God, by message of reproof, declares this to be his condition, he cannot see that the message is true. Is he therefore to reject the warning? No.

God has given sufficient evidence, so that all who desire to do so may satisfy themselves as to the character of the *Testimonies*; and, having acknowledged them to be from God, it is their duty to accept reproof, even though they do not themselves see the sinfulness of their course. If they fully realized their condition, what would be the need of reproof? Because they know it not, God mercifully sets it before them, so that they may repent and reform before it shall be too late. Those who despise the warning will be left in blindness to become self-deceived; but those who heed it, and zealously go about the work of separating their sins from them in order to have the needed graces, will be opening the door of their hearts that the dear Saviour may come in and dwell with [293] them. Those who are most closely connected with God are the ones who know His voice when He speaks to them. Those who are spiritual discern spiritual things. Such will feel grateful that the Lord has pointed out their errors.

David learned wisdom from God’s dealings with him and bowed in humility beneath the chastisement of the Most High. The faithful portrayal of his true state by the prophet Nathan made David acquainted with his own sins and aided him to put them away. He accepted counsel meekly and

humiliated himself before God. “The law of the Lord,” he exclaims, “is perfect, converting the soul.”

“If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye ... not sons.” Hebrews 12:8. Our Lord has said: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” Revelation 3:19. “No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” Hebrews 12:11. Though bitter the discipline, it is appointed by a Father’s tender love, “that we might be *partakers of His holiness.*” [294]

An Unwarranted Distinction

Some have taken the position that the warnings, cautions, and reproofs given by the Lord through His servant, unless they come through special vision for each individual case, should have no more weight than counsels and warnings from other sources. In some cases it has been represented that in giving a testimony for churches or individuals I have been influenced to write as I did by letters received from members of the church. There have been those who claimed that testimonies purporting to be given by the Spirit of God were merely the expression of my own judgment, based upon information gathered from human sources. This statement is utterly false.

If, however, in response to some question, statement, or appeal from churches or individuals, a testimony is written presenting the light which God has given concerning them, the fact that it has been called forth in this manner in nowise detracts from its validity or importance. I quote from *Testimony* 31 a few paragraphs bearing directly upon this point:

“How was it with the apostle Paul? The news he received through the household of Chloe concerning the condition of the church at Corinth was what caused him to write his first epistle to that church. Private letters had come to him stating the facts as they existed, and in his answer he laid down general principles which if heeded would correct the existing evils. With great tenderness and wisdom he exhorts them to all speak the same things, that there be no divisions among them.

“Paul was an inspired apostle, yet the Lord did not reveal to him at all times just the condition of His people. Those who^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:683-691 (The Nature and Influence of the *Testimonies*).

were interested in the prosperity of the church, and saw evils creeping in, presented the matter before him, and from the light which he had previously received he was prepared to judge of the true character of these developments. Because the Lord had not given him a new revelation for that special time, those who were really seeking light did not cast his message aside as only a common letter. No, indeed. The Lord had shown him the difficulties and dangers which would arise in the churches, that when they should develop, he might know just how to treat them.

“He was set for the defense of the church. He was to watch for souls as one that must render account to God, and should he not take notice of the reports concerning their state of anarchy and division? Most assuredly; and the reproof he sent them was written just as much under the inspiration of the Spirit of God as were any of his epistles. But when these reproofs came, some would not be corrected. They took the position that God had not spoken to them through Paul, that he had merely given them his opinion as a man, and they regarded their own judgment as good as that of Paul. So it is with many among our people who have drifted away from the old landmarks and who have followed their own understanding.”*

When this position is taken by our people, then the special warnings and counsels of God through the Spirit of prophecy can have no influence with them to work a reformation in life and character. The Lord does not give a vision to meet each emergency which may arise in the different attitudes of His people in the development of His work. But He has shown me that it has been His way of dealing with His church in past ages, to impress the minds of His chosen servants with the needs and dangers of His cause and of individuals, and to lay upon them the burden of counsel and warning.

*Testimonies for the Church 5:65, 66.

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So in many cases God has given me light in regard to peculiar defects of character in members of the church and the dangers to the individual and the cause if these defects are not removed. Under certain circumstances wrong tendencies are liable to become strongly developed and confirmed, and to work injury to the cause of God and ruin to the individual. Sometimes, when special dangers threaten the cause of God or particular individuals, a communication comes to me from the Lord, either in a dream

or a vision of the night, and these cases are brought vividly to my mind. I hear a voice saying to me: "Arise and write; these souls are in peril." I obey the movings of the Spirit of God, and my pen traces their true condition. As I travel, and stand before the people in different places, the Spirit of the Lord brings before me clearly the cases I have been shown, reviving the matter previously given me.

For the last forty-five years^{*} the Lord has been revealing to me the needs of His cause and the cases of individuals in every phase of experience, showing where and how they have failed to perfect Christian character. The history of hundreds of cases has been presented to me, and that which God approves, and that which He condemns, has been plainly set before me. God has shown me that a certain course, if followed, or certain traits of character, if indulged, would produce certain results. He has thus been training and disciplining me in order that I might see the dangers which threaten souls, and instruct and warn His people, line upon line, precept upon precept, that they might not be ignorant of Satan's devices, and might escape his snares.

The work which the Lord has laid out before me especially is to urge young and old, learned and unlearned, to search the Scriptures for themselves; to impress upon all that the study of God's word will expand the mind and strengthen

^{*}Written in 1889.

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every faculty, fitting the intellect to wrestle with problems of truth, deep and far-reaching; to assure all that the clear knowledge of the Bible outdoes all other knowledge in making man what God designed he should be. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." Psalm 119:130.

With the light communicated through the study of His word, with the special knowledge given of individual cases among His people under all circumstances and in every phase of experience, can I now be in the same ignorance, the same mental uncertainty and spiritual blindness, as at the beginning of this experience? Will my brethren say that Sister White has been so dull a scholar that her judgment in this direction is no better than before she entered Christ's school, to be trained and disciplined for a special

work? Am I no more intelligent in regard to the duties and perils of God's people than are those before whom these things have never been presented? I would not dishonor my Maker by admitting that all this light, all the display of His mighty power in my work and experience, has been valueless, that it has not educated my judgment or better fitted me for His work.

When I see men and women taking the very course, or cherishing the very traits, which have imperiled other souls and wounded the cause of God, and which the Lord has reproved again and again, how can I but be alarmed? When I see timid souls, burdened with a sense of their imperfections, yet conscientiously striving to do what God has said is right, and know that the Lord looks down and smiles on their faithful efforts, shall I not speak a word of encouragement to these poor trembling hearts? Shall I hold my peace because each individual case has not been pointed out to me in direct vision?

“But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken [298] away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.” Ezekiel 33:6-9.

In a recent dream I was brought before an assembly of people, some of whom were making efforts to remove the impression of a most solemn testimony of warning that I had given them. They said: “We believe Sister White's testimonies; but when she tells us things that she has not directly seen in vision in the particular case under consideration, her words are of no more account to us than the words of any other person.” The Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and I arose and rebuked them in the name of the Lord. I repeated in substance that which I have presented above in regard to the watchman. This, I said, is appropriate to your case and to mine.

Now if those to whom these solemn warnings are addressed say, “It is only Sister White’s individual opinion, I shall still follow my own judgment,” and if they continue to do the very things they were warned not to do, they show that they despise the counsel of God, and the result is just what the Spirit of God has shown me it would be—injury to the cause of God and ruin to themselves. Some who wish to strengthen their own position will bring forward from the *Testimonies* statements which they think will support their views, and will put the strongest possible construction upon them; but that which questions their course of action, or which does not coincide with their views, they [299] pronounce Sister White’s opinion, denying its heavenly origin and placing it on a level with their own judgment.

If you, my brethren, who have been acquainted with me and my work for many years, take the position that my counsel is of no more value than the counsel of those who have not been specially educated for this work, then do not ask me to unite with you in labor; for while you occupy this position, you will inevitably counteract the influence of my work. If you feel just as safe in following your own impulses as in following the light given by God’s delegated servant, the peril is your own; you will be condemned because you rejected the light which heaven had sent you.

God’s Means of Reaching Hearts

While at-----, the Lord came to me in the night season and spoke precious words of encouragement concerning my work, repeating the same message that had been given me several times before. With regard to those who have turned from the light sent them, He said: “In slighting and rejecting the testimony that I have given you to bear, it is not you, but Me, your Lord, that they have slighted.”

If those who are headstrong and full of self-esteem go on unchecked in their course, what will be the condition of things in the church? How are the wrongs to be corrected which exist in these strong-willed, ambitious ones? By what means will God reach them? How will He set His church in order? Differences of opinion are constantly arising, and apostasies often afflict the church. When controversy or division comes in, all parties claim to be right

and to have a conscience void of offense; and they will not be instructed by those who have long borne the burden of the work and who, they have reason to know, have been guided by the Lord. Light has been sent to dispel their darkness, but they are too proud of heart to accept it, and they choose the darkness. They despise the counsel of God because it does not coincide [300] with their views and plans, and favor their wrong traits of character. The work of the Spirit of God, which would bring them into the right position if they would accept it, has not come in a way to please them, and to flatter their self-righteousness. The light which God has given is no light to them, and they wander in darkness. They claim that no more confidence is to be placed in the judgment of one who has had such a long experience, and whom the Lord has taught and used to do a special work, than in that of any other person. Is it God's plan that they should do thus, or is it the special working of the enemy of all righteousness to hold souls in error, to bind them in strong delusions that cannot be broken, because they have placed themselves beyond the reach of means that God has ordained to deal with His church?

The reproofs, the cautions, the corrections of the Lord, have been given to His church in all ages of the world. These warnings were despised and rejected in Christ's day by the self-righteous Pharisees, who claimed that they needed no such reproof and were unjustly dealt with. They would not receive the word of the Lord through His servants because it did not please their inclinations. Should the Lord give a vision right before this class of people in our day, pointing out their mistakes, rebuking their self-righteousness and condemning their sins, they would rise up in rebellion, like the inhabitants of Nazareth when Christ showed them their true condition.

If these persons do not humble their hearts before God, if they harbor the suggestions of Satan, doubt and infidelity will take possession of the soul, and they will see everything in a false light. Let the seeds of doubt once be sown in their hearts and they will have an abundant harvest to reap. They will come to mistrust and disbelieve truths which are plain and full of beauty to others who have not educated themselves in unbelief.

Those who train the mind to seize upon everything which [301] they can use as a peg to hang a doubt upon, and suggest these thoughts to other minds, will always find occasion to doubt. They will question and criticize

everything that arises in the unfolding of truth, criticize the work and position of others, criticize every branch of the work in which they have not themselves a part. They will feed upon the errors and mistakes and faults of others, “until,” said the angel, “the Lord Jesus shall rise up from His mediatorial work in the heavenly sanctuary and shall clothe Himself with the garments of vengeance and surprise them at their unholy feast, and they will find themselves unprepared for the marriage supper of the Lamb.” Their taste has been so perverted that they would be inclined to criticize even the table of the Lord in His kingdom.

Has God ever revealed to these self-deceived ones that no reproofs or corrections from Him are to have any weight with them unless they come through direct vision? I dwell upon this point because the position that many are now taking upon it is a delusion of Satan to ruin souls. When he has ensnared and weakened them through his sophistry, so that when they are reproved they persist in making of none effect the workings of God’s Spirit, his triumph over them will be complete. Some who profess righteousness will, like Judas, betray their Lord into the hands of His bitterest enemies. These self-confident ones, determined to have their own way and to advocate their own ideas, will go on from bad to worse, until they will pursue any course rather than to give up their own will. They will go on blindly in the way of evil, but, like the deluded Pharisees, so self-deceived that they think they are doing God’s service. Christ portrayed the course which a certain class will take when they have a chance to develop their true character: “And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.” Luke 21:16.

God has given me a marked, solemn experience in connection with His work; and you may be assured that so long [302] as my life is spared, I shall not cease to lift a warning voice as I am impressed by the Spirit of God, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. I have no special wisdom in myself; I am only an instrument in the Lord’s hands to do the work He has set for me to do. The instructions that I have given by pen or voice have been an expression of the light that God has given me. I have tried to place before you the principles that the Spirit of God has for years been impressing upon my mind and writing on my heart.

And now, brethren, I entreat you not to interpose between me and the people, and turn away the light which God would have come to them. Do not by your criticisms take out all the force, all the point and power, from the *Testimonies*. Do not feel that you can dissect them to suit your own ideas, claiming that God has given you ability to discern what is light from heaven and what is the expression of mere human wisdom. If the *Testimonies* speak not according to the word of God, reject them. Christ and Belial cannot be united. For Christ's sake do not confuse the minds of the people with human sophistry and skepticism, and make of none effect the work that the Lord would do. Do not, by your lack of spiritual discernment, make of this agency of God a rock of offense whereby many shall be caused to stumble and fall, "and be snared, and be taken." [303]

The Mysteries of the Bible a Proof of Its Inspiration

Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" Job 11:7, 8. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8, 9. "I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." Isaiah 46:9, 10. It is impossible for the finite minds of men to fully comprehend the character or the works of the Infinite One. To the keenest intellect, to the most powerful and highly educated mind, that holy Being must ever remain clothed in mystery.

The apostle Paul exclaims: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Romans 11:33. But though "clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne." Psalm 97:2, R.V. We can so far comprehend His dealing with us, and the motives by which He is actuated, that we may discern boundless love and mercy united to infinite power. We can understand as much of His purpose as it is for our good to know; and beyond this we must still trust the might of the Omnipotent, the love and wisdom of the Father and Sovereign of all.

The word of God, like the character of its divine Author,^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:698-711.

presents mysteries which can never be fully comprehended by finite beings. It directs our minds to the Creator, who dwelleth “in the light which no man can approach unto.” 1 Timothy 6:16. It presents to us His purposes, which embrace all the ages of human history, and which will reach their fulfillment only in the endless cycles of eternity. It calls our attention to subjects of infinite depth and importance relating to the government of God and the destiny of man.

The entrance of sin into the world, the incarnation of Christ, regeneration, the resurrection, and many other subjects presented in the Bible, are mysteries too deep for the human mind to explain or even to fully comprehend. But 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.

The portions of Holy Writ presenting these great themes are not to be passed by as of no use to man. All that God has seen fit to make known we are to accept upon the authority of His word. Only a bare statement of facts may be given, with no explanation as to why or how; but though we cannot comprehend it we should rest content that it is true, because God has said it. All the difficulty lies in the weakness and narrowness of the human mind.

Simplicity and Majesty of Divine Revelations

The apostle Peter says that there are in Scripture “things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest ... unto their own destruction.” 2 Peter 3:16. The difficulties of Scripture have been urged by skeptics as an argument against the Bible; but so far from this, they constitute a strong evidence of its divine inspiration. If it contained no account of God but that which we could easily comprehend; if His greatness and majesty could be grasped by finite minds, then the Bible would not bear the unmistakable credentials of divine authority. The very grandeur and mystery [305] of the themes presented should inspire faith in it as the word of God.

The Bible unfolds truth with a simplicity and a perfect adaptation to the needs and longings of the human heart, that has astonished and charmed the most highly cultivated minds, while it enables the humble and uncultured to

discern the way of salvation. And yet these simply stated truths lay hold upon subjects so elevated, so far-reaching, so infinitely beyond the power of human comprehension, that we can accept them only because God has declared them. Thus the plan of redemption is laid open to us so that every soul may see the steps he is to take in repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to be saved in God's appointed way; yet beneath these truths, so easily understood, lie mysteries which are the hiding of His glory—mysteries which overpower the mind in its research, yet inspire the sincere seeker for truth with reverence and faith. The more he searches the Bible, the deeper is his conviction that it is the word of the living God, and human reason bows before the majesty of divine revelation.

Those are blessed with clearest light who are willing thus to accept the living oracles upon the authority of God. If asked to explain certain statements, they can only answer: "It is so presented in the Scriptures." They are obliged to acknowledge that they cannot explain the operation of divine power or the manifestation of divine wisdom. It is as the Lord intended it should be, that we find ourselves compelled to accept some things solely by faith. To acknowledge this, is only to admit that the finite mind is inadequate to grasp the infinite; that man, with his limited, human knowledge, cannot understand the purposes of Omniscience.

Because they cannot fathom all its mysteries, the skeptic and the infidel reject God's word; and not all who profess to believe the Bible are secure from temptation on this point. Says the apostle: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any [306] of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Hebrews 3:12. Minds that have been educated to criticize, to doubt and cavil because they cannot search into the purposes of God, will "fall after the same example of unbelief." Hebrews 4:11. It is right to study closely the teaching of the Bible, and to search into "the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10), so far as they are revealed in Scripture. While "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God," "those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children." Deuteronomy 29:29.

But it is Satan's work to pervert the investigative powers of the mind. A certain pride is mingled with the consideration of Bible truth, so that men feel defeated and impatient if they cannot explain every portion of Scripture to their satisfaction. It is too humiliating to them to acknowledge that they do not understand the inspired words. They are unwilling to wait patiently

until God shall see fit to reveal the truth to them. They feel that their unaided human wisdom is sufficient to enable them to comprehend the Scripture; and failing to do this, they virtually deny its authority.

It is true that many theories and doctrines popularly supposed to be the teaching of the Bible have no foundation in Scripture and, indeed, are contrary to the whole tenor of inspiration. These things have been a cause of doubt and perplexity to many minds. They are not, however, chargeable to God's word, but to man's perversion of it. But the difficulties in the Bible do not reflect upon the wisdom of God; they will not cause the ruin of any who would not have been destroyed if no such difficulties had existed. Had there been no mysteries in the Bible for them to question, the same minds would, through their own lack of spiritual discernment, have found cause of stumbling in the plainest utterances of God.

Men who imagine themselves endowed with mental powers of so high an order that they can find an explanation of all the ways and works of God, are seeking to exalt human [307] wisdom to an equality with the divine and to glorify man as God. They are only repeating that which Satan declared to Eve in Eden: "Ye shall be as gods." Genesis 3:5. Satan fell because of his ambition to be equal with God. He desired to enter into the divine counsels and purposes, from which he was excluded by his own inability, as a created being, to comprehend the wisdom of the Infinite One. It was this ambitious pride that led to his rebellion, and by the same means he seeks to cause the ruin of man.

Unfathomed Depths of Truth

There are mysteries in the plan of redemption—the humiliation of the Son of God, that He might be found in fashion as a man, the wonderful love and condescension of the Father in yielding up His Son—that are to the heavenly angels subjects of continual amazement. The apostle Peter, speaking of the revelations given to the prophets of "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow," says that these are things which "the angels desire to look into." And these will be the study of the redeemed through eternal ages. As they contemplate the work of God in creation and redemption, new truth will continually unfold to the wondering and

delighted mind. As they learn more and more of the wisdom, the love, and the power of God, their minds will be constantly expanding, and their joy will continually increase.

If it were possible for created beings to attain to a full understanding of God and His works, then, having reached this point, there would be for them no further discovery of truth, no growth in knowledge, no further development of mind or heart. God would no longer be supreme; and men, having reached the limit of knowledge and attainment, would cease to advance. Let us thank God that it is not so. God is infinite; in Him are “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” And to all eternity men may be ever searching, ever [308] learning, and yet they can never exhaust the treasures of His wisdom, His goodness, and His power.

God intends that, even in this life, truth shall be ever unfolding to His people. There is only one way in which this knowledge can be obtained. We can attain to an understanding of God’s word only through the illumination of that Spirit by which the word was given. “The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God;” “for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:11, 10. And the Saviour’s promise to His followers was: “When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. ... For He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.” John 16:13, 14.

God desires man to exercise his reasoning powers; and the study of the Bible will strengthen and elevate the mind as no other study can do. It is the best mental as well as spiritual exercise for the human mind. Yet we are to beware of deifying reason, which is subject to the weakness and infirmity of humanity. If we would not have the Scriptures clouded to our understanding, so that the plainest truths shall not be comprehended, we must have the simplicity and faith of a little child, ready to learn, and beseeching the aid of the Holy Spirit. A sense of the power and wisdom of God, and of our inability to comprehend His greatness, should inspire us with humility, and we should open His word, as we would enter His presence, with holy awe. When we come to the Bible, reason must acknowledge an authority superior to itself, and heart and intellect must bow to the great I AM.

Divine Enlightenment Promised

We shall advance in true spiritual knowledge only as we realize our own littleness and our entire dependence upon God; but all who come to the Bible with a teachable and prayerful spirit, to study its utterances as the word of God, will receive divine enlightenment. There are many things [309] apparently difficult or obscure which God will make plain and simple to those who thus seek an understanding of them.

It is sometimes the case that men of intellectual ability, improved by education and culture, fail to comprehend certain passages of Scripture, while others who are uneducated, whose understanding seems weak and whose minds are undisciplined, will grasp the meaning, finding strength and comfort in that which the former declare to be mysterious or pass by as unimportant. Why is this? It has been explained to me that the latter class do not rely upon their own understanding. They go to the Source of light, the One who has inspired the Scriptures, and with humility of heart ask God for wisdom, and they receive it. There are mines of truth yet to be discovered by the earnest seeker. Christ represented the truth as treasure hid in a field. It does not lie right upon the surface; we must dig for it. But our success in finding it does not depend so much on our intellectual ability as on our humility of heart and the faith which will lay hold upon divine aid.

Without the guidance of the Holy Spirit we shall be continually liable to wrest the Scriptures or to misinterpret them. There is much reading of the Bible that is without profit and in many cases is a positive injury. When the word of God is opened without reverence and without prayer; when the thoughts and affections are not fixed upon God or in harmony with His will, the mind is clouded with doubt; and in the very study of the Bible, skepticism strengthens. The enemy takes control of the thoughts, and he suggests interpretations that are not correct.

Whenever men are not seeking, in word and deed, to be in harmony with God, then, however learned they may be, they are liable to err in their understanding of Scripture, and it is not safe to trust to their explanations. When we are truly seeking to do God's will, the Holy Spirit takes the precepts of [310] His word and makes them the principles of the life, writing them on the tablets of the soul. And it is only those who are

following the light already given that can hope to receive the further illumination of the Spirit. This is plainly stated in the words of Christ: "If any man will *do* His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7:17.

Those who look to the Scriptures to find discrepancies have not spiritual insight. With distorted vision they will see many causes for doubt and unbelief in things that are really plain and simple. But to those who take God's word with reverence, seeking to learn His will that they may obey it, all is changed. They are filled with awe and wonder as they contemplate the purity and exalted excellence of the truths revealed. Like attracts like. Like appreciates like. Holiness allies itself with holiness, faith with faith. To the humble heart and the sincere, inquiring mind the Bible is full of light and knowledge. Those who come to the Scriptures in this spirit are brought into fellowship with prophets and apostles. Their spirit assimilates to that of Christ, and they long to become one with Him.

Many feel that a responsibility rests upon them to explain every seeming difficulty in the Bible in order to meet the cavils of skeptics and infidels. But in trying to explain that which they but imperfectly understand, they are in danger of confusing the minds of others in reference to points that are clear and easy to be understood. This is not our work. Nor should we lament that these difficulties exist, but accept them as permitted by the wisdom of God. It is our duty to receive His word, which is plain on every point essential to the salvation of the soul, and practice its principles in our life, teaching them to others both by precept and example. Thus it will be evident to the world that we have a connection with God and implicit confidence in His word. A life of godliness, a daily example of integrity, meekness, and unselfish love, will be a living exemplification of the teaching of God's word, [311] and it will be an argument in favor of the Bible which few will be able to resist. This will prove the most effectual check to the prevailing tendency to skepticism and infidelity.

By faith we should look to the hereafter and grasp the pledge of God of a growth of intellect, the human faculties uniting with the divine, and every power of the soul being brought into direct contact with the Source of light. We may rejoice that all that has perplexed us in the providences of God will then be made plain; things hard to be understood will find an explanation; and where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken purposes, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. Says the apostle Paul:

“Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” 1 Corinthians 13:12.

Peter exhorts his brethren to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Peter 3:18. Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God’s word and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative and seek to avoid discussion.

A Call to Diligent Study

The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God’s people should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion [312] arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition and worship they know not what.

I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth know not what they believe. They do not understand the evidences of their faith. They have no just appreciation of the work for the present time. When the time of trial shall come, there are men now preaching to others who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason. Until thus tested they knew not their great ignorance. And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth. Certain it is that there has been

among us a departure from the living God and a turning to men, putting human in place of divine wisdom.

God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat. The Lord calls upon all who believe His word to awake out of sleep. Precious light has come, appropriate for this time. It is Bible truth, showing the perils that are right upon us. This light should lead us to a diligent study of the Scriptures and a most critical examination of the positions which we hold. God would have all the bearings and positions of truth thoroughly and perseveringly searched, with prayer and fasting. Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the word of God so that when the testing time shall come and they are brought before councils to answer for their faith they may be able to [313] give a reason for the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear.

Agitate, agitate, agitate. The subjects which we present to the world must be to us a living reality. It is important that in defending the doctrines which we consider fundamental articles of faith we should never allow ourselves to employ arguments that are not wholly sound. These may avail to silence an opposer, but they do not honor the truth. We should present sound arguments, that will not only silence our opponents, but will bear the closest and most searching scrutiny. With those who have educated themselves as debaters there is great danger that they will not handle the word of God with fairness. In meeting an opponent it should be our earnest effort to present subjects in such a manner as to awaken conviction in his mind, instead of seeking merely to give confidence to the believer.

Whatever may be man's intellectual advancement, let him not for a moment think that there is no need of thorough and continuous searching of the Scriptures for greater light. As a people we are called individually to be students of prophecy. We must watch with earnestness that we may discern any ray of light which God shall present to us. We are to catch the first gleamings of truth; and through prayerful study clearer light may be obtained, which can be brought before others.

When God's people are at ease and satisfied with their present enlightenment, we may be sure that He will not favor them. It is His will that they should be ever moving forward to receive the increased and ever-

increasing light which is shining for them. The present attitude of the church is not pleasing to God. There has come in a self-confidence that has led them to feel no necessity for more truth and greater light. We are living at a time when Satan is at work on the right hand and on the left, before and behind us; and yet as a people we are asleep. God wills that a voice shall be heard arousing His people to action. [314]

Results of Criticizing the Bible

Instead of opening the soul to receive rays of light from heaven, some have been working in an opposite direction. Both through the press and from the pulpit have been presented views in regard to the inspiration of the Bible which have not the sanction of the Spirit or the word of God. Certain it is that no man or set of men should undertake to advance theories upon a subject of so great importance, without a plain “Thus saith the Lord” to sustain them. And when men, compassed with human infirmities, affected in a greater or less degree by surrounding influences, and having hereditary and cultivated tendencies which are far from making them wise or heavenly-minded, undertake to arraign the word of God, and to pass judgment upon what is divine and what is human, they are working without the counsel of God. The Lord will not prosper such a work. The effect will be disastrous, both upon the one engaged in it and upon those who accept it as a work from God. Skepticism has been aroused in many minds by the theories presented as to the nature of inspiration. Finite beings, with their narrow, shortsighted views, feel themselves competent to criticize the Scriptures, saying: “This passage is needful, and that passage is not needful, and is not inspired.”

Christ gave no such instruction in regard to the Old Testament Scriptures, the only part of the Bible which the people of His time possessed. His teachings were designed to direct their minds to the Old Testament and to bring into clearer light the great themes there presented. For ages the people of Israel had been separating themselves from God, and they had lost sight of precious truths which He had committed to them. These truths were covered up with superstitious forms and ceremonies that concealed their true significance.

Christ came to remove the rubbish which had obscured their luster. He placed them, as precious gems, in a new [315] setting. He showed that so far from disdaining the repetition of old, familiar truths, He came to make them appear in their true force and beauty, the glory of which had never been discerned by the men of His time. Himself the Author of these revealed truths, He could open to the people their true meaning, freeing them from the misinterpretations and false theories adopted by the leaders to suit their own unconsecrated condition, their destitution of spirituality and the love of God. He cast aside that which had robbed these truths of life and vital power, and gave them back to the world in all their original freshness and force.

If we have the Spirit of Christ and are laborers together with Him, it is ours to carry forward the work which He came to do. The truths of the Bible have again become obscured by custom, tradition, and false doctrine. The erroneous teachings of popular theology have made thousands upon thousands of skeptics and infidels. There are errors and inconsistencies which many denounce as the teaching of the Bible that are really false interpretations of Scripture, adopted during the ages of papal darkness. Multitudes have been led to cherish an erroneous conception of God, as the Jews, misled by the errors and traditions of their time, had a false conception of Christ. “Had they *known* it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” 1 Corinthians 2:8. It is ours to reveal to the world the true character of God. Instead of criticizing the Bible, let us seek, by precept and example, to present to the world its sacred, life-giving truths, that we may “show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

The evils that have been gradually creeping in among us have imperceptibly led individuals and churches away from reverence for God, and have shut away the power which He desires to give them.

My brethren, let the word of God stand just as it is. Let not human wisdom presume to lessen the force of one [316] statement of the Scriptures. The solemn denunciation in the Revelation should warn us against taking such ground. In the name of my Master I bid you: “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

The Bible with its precious gems of truth was not written for the scholar alone. On the contrary, it was designed for the common people; and the interpretation given by the common people, when aided by the Holy Spirit, accords best with the truth as it is in Jesus. The great truths necessary for salvation are made clear as the noonday, and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God.—1885, Testimonies for the Church 5:331.

I saw that those who wish can have plenty of room to doubt the inspiration and truth of God's word. God compels none to believe. They can choose to rely upon the evidences which He has been pleased to give, or doubt and perish.—1864, Testimonies for the Church 1:427.

The Jews were looking for the Messiah; but He did not come as they had predicted that He would, and if He were accepted as the Promised One, their learned teachers would be forced to acknowledge that they had erred. These leaders had separated themselves from God, and Satan worked upon their minds to lead them to reject the Saviour. Rather than yield their pride of opinion, they closed their eyes to all the evidences of His Messiahship, and they not only rejected the message of salvation themselves, but they steeled the hearts of the people against Jesus. Their history should be a solemn warning to us.

We need never expect that when the Lord has light for [317] His people, Satan will stand calmly by and make no effort to prevent them from receiving it. He will work upon minds to excite distrust and jealousy and unbelief. Let us beware that we do not refuse the light God sends, because it does not come in a way to please us. Let not God's blessing be turned away from us because we know not the time of our visitation. If there are any who do not see and accept the light themselves, let them not stand in the way of others. Let it not be said of this highly favored people, as of the Jews when the good news of the kingdom was preached to them: "Ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." Luke 11:52.—1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:728. [318]

The Impending Conflict

A great crisis awaits the people of God. A crisis awaits the world. The most momentous struggle of all the ages is just before us. Events which for more than forty years we have upon the authority of the prophetic word declared to be impending are now taking place before our eyes. Already the question of an amendment to the Constitution restricting liberty of conscience has been urged upon the legislators of the nation. The question of enforcing Sunday observance has become one of national interest and importance. We well know what the result of this movement will be. But are we ready for the issue? Have we faithfully discharged the duty which God has committed to us of giving the people warning of the danger before them?

There are many, even of those engaged in this movement for Sunday enforcement, who are blinded to the results which will follow this action. They do not see that they are striking directly against religious liberty. There are many who have never understood the claims of the Bible Sabbath and the false foundation upon which the Sunday institution rests. Any movement in favor of religious legislation is really an act of concession to the papacy, which for so many ages has steadily warred against liberty of conscience. Sunday observance owes its existence as a so-called Christian institution to “the mystery of iniquity;” and its enforcement will be a virtual recognition of the principles which are the very cornerstone of Romanism. When our nation shall so abjure the principles of its government as to enact a Sunday law, Protestantism will in this act join hands with popery; it will be nothing else than giving life to the tyranny which has long^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:711-718.

been eagerly watching its opportunity to spring again into active despotism.

Evils of Religious Legislation

The National Reform movement, exercising the power of religious legislation, will, when fully developed, manifest the same intolerance and oppression that have prevailed in past ages. Human councils then assumed the prerogatives of Deity, crushing under their despotic power liberty of conscience; and imprisonment, exile, and death followed for those who opposed their dictates. If popery or its principles shall again be legislated into power, the fires of persecution will be rekindled against those who will not sacrifice conscience and the truth in deference to popular errors. This evil is on the point of realization.

When God has given us light showing the dangers before us, how can we stand clear in His sight if we neglect to put forth every effort in our power to bring it before the people? Can we be content to leave them to meet this momentous issue unwarned?

There is a prospect before us of a continued struggle, at the risk of imprisonment, loss of property, and even of life itself, to defend the law of God, which is made void by the laws of men. In this situation worldly policy will urge an outward compliance with the laws of the land, for the sake of peace and harmony. And there are some who will even urge such a course from the scripture: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. ... The powers that be are ordained of God." Romans 13:1.

But what has been the course of God's servants in ages past? When the disciples preached Christ and Him crucified, after His resurrection, the authorities commanded them not to speak any more nor to teach in the name of Jesus. "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto [320] God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Acts 4:19, 20. They continued to preach the good news of salvation though Christ, and the power of God witnessed to the message. The sick were healed, and thousands were added to the church. "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison." Acts 5:17, 18.

But the God of heaven, the mighty Ruler of the universe, took this matter into His own hands; for men were warring against His work. He showed them plainly that there is a ruler above man, whose authority must be respected. The Lord sent His angel by night to open the prison doors, and he brought forth these men whom God had commissioned to do His work. The rulers said, Speak not “at all nor teach in the name of Jesus;” but the heavenly messenger sent by God said, “Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.” Acts 4:18; 5:20.

Those who seek to compel men to observe an institution of the papacy, and trample upon God’s authority, are doing a work similar to that of the Jewish leaders in the days of the apostles. When the laws of earthly rulers are brought into opposition to the laws of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, then those who are God’s loyal subjects will be true to Him.

Signs of Approaching Peril

We as a people have not accomplished the work which God has committed to us. We are not ready for the issue to which the enforcement of the Sunday law will bring us. It is our duty, as we see the signs of approaching peril, to arouse to action. Let none sit in calm expectation of the evil, comforting themselves with the belief that this work must go on because prophecy has foretold it, and that the Lord will shelter His people. We are not doing the will of God if we [321] sit in quietude, doing nothing to preserve liberty of conscience. Fervent, effectual prayer should be ascending to heaven that this calamity may be deferred until we can accomplish the work which has so long been neglected. Let there be most earnest prayer, and then let us work in harmony with our prayers. It may appear that Satan is triumphant and that truth is overborne with falsehood and error; the people over whom God has spread His shield, and the country which has been an asylum for the conscience-oppressed servants of God and defenders of His truth, may be placed in jeopardy. But God would have us recall His dealings with His people in the past to save them from their enemies. He has always chosen extremities, when there seemed no possible chance for deliverance from Satan’s workings, for the manifestation of His power. Man’s necessity is God’s opportunity. It may be that a respite may

yet be granted for God's people to awake and let their light shine. If the presence of ten righteous persons would have saved the wicked cities of the plain, is it not possible that God will yet, in answer to the prayers of His people, hold in check the workings of those who are making void His law? Shall we not humble our hearts greatly before God, flee to the mercy seat, and plead with Him to reveal His mighty power?

If our people continue in the listless attitude in which they have been, God cannot pour upon them His Spirit. They are unprepared to co-operate with Him. They are not awake to the situation and do not realize the threatened danger. They should feel now, as never before, their need of vigilance and concerted action.

The peculiar work of the third angel has not been seen in its importance. God meant that His people should be far in advance of the position which they occupy today. But now, when the time has come for them to spring into action, they have the preparation to make. When the National Reformers began to urge measures to restrict religious liberty, our [322] leading men should have been alive to the situation and should have labored earnestly to counteract these efforts. It is not in the order of God that light has been kept from our people—the very present truth which they needed for this time. Not all our ministers who are giving the third angel's message really understand what constitutes that message. The National Reform movement has been regarded by some as of so little importance that they have not thought it necessary to give much attention to it and have even felt that in so doing they would be giving time to questions distinct from the third angel's message. May the Lord forgive our brethren for thus interpreting the very message for this time.

Arouse to Action

The people need to be aroused in regard to the dangers of the present time. The watchmen are asleep. We are years behind. Let the chief watchmen feel the urgent necessity of taking heed to themselves, lest they lose the opportunities given them to see the dangers.

If the leading men in our conferences do not now accept the message sent them by God, and fall into line for action, the churches will suffer great

loss. When the watchman, seeing the sword coming, gives the trumpet a certain sound, the people along the line will echo the warning, and all will have opportunity to make ready for the conflict. But too often the leader has stood hesitating, seeming to say: "Let us not be in too great haste. There may be a mistake. We must be careful not to raise a false alarm." The very hesitancy and uncertainty on his part is crying: "'Peace and safety.' Do not get excited. Be not alarmed. There is a great deal more made of this religious amendment question than is demanded. This agitation will all die down." Thus he virtually denies the message sent from God, and the warning which was designed to stir the churches fails to do its work. The trumpet of the watchman gives no certain sound, and the people do not [323] prepare for the battle. Let the watchman beware lest, through his hesitancy and delay, souls shall be left to perish, and their blood shall be required at his hand.

We have been looking many years for a Sunday law to be enacted in our land; and, now that the movement is right upon us, we ask: Will our people do their duty in the matter? Can we not assist in lifting the standard and in calling to the front those who have a regard for their religious rights and privileges? The time is fast approaching when those who choose to obey God rather than man will be made to feel the hand of oppression. Shall we then dishonor God by keeping silent while His holy commandments are trodden underfoot?

While the Protestant world is by her attitude making concessions to Rome, let us arouse to comprehend the situation and view the contest before us in its true bearings. Let the watchmen now lift up their voice and give the message which is present truth for this time. Let us show the people where we are in prophetic history and seek to arouse the spirit of true Protestantism, awaking the world to a sense of the value of the privileges of religious liberty so long enjoyed.

God calls upon us to awake, for the end is near. Every passing hour is one of activity in the heavenly courts to make ready a people upon the earth to act a part in the great scenes that are soon to open upon us. These passing moments, that seem of so little value to us, are weighty with eternal interests. They are molding the destiny of souls for everlasting life or eternal death. The words we utter today in the ears of the people, the works

we are doing, the spirit of the message we are bearing, will be a savor of life unto life or of death unto death.

Preparation for the Crisis

My brethren, do you realize that your own salvation, as well as the destiny of other souls, depends upon the [324] preparation you now make for the trial before us? Have you that intensity of zeal, that piety and devotion, which will enable you to stand when opposition shall be brought against you? If God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when you will be brought before councils, and every position of truth which you hold will be severely criticized. The time that so many are now allowing to go to waste should be devoted to the charge that God has given us of preparing for the approaching crisis.

The law of God should be loved and honored by His true people now more than ever before. There is the most imperative necessity of urging the injunction of Christ upon the minds and hearts of all believers, men and women, youth and children: "Search the Scriptures." John 5:39. Study your Bible as you have never studied it before. Unless you arise to a higher, holier state in your religious life, you will not be ready for the appearing of our Lord. As great light has been given, God expects corresponding zeal, faithfulness, and devotion on the part of His people. There must be more spirituality, a deeper consecration to God, and a zeal in His work that has never yet been reached. Much time should be spent in prayer, that our garments of character may be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Especially should we, with unwavering faith, seek God for grace and power to be given to His people now. We do not believe that the time has fully come when He would have our liberties restricted. The prophet saw "four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." Another angel, ascending from the east, cried to them, saying: "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Revelation 7:1, 3. This points out the work we have now to do. A vast responsibility is devolving upon

men and women of prayer throughout the land to [325] petition that God will sweep back the cloud of evil and give a few more years of grace in which to work for the Master. Let us cry to God that the angels may hold the four winds until missionaries shall be sent to all parts of the world and shall proclaim the warning against disobeying the law of Jehovah. [326]

The Inestimable Gift

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him, ... that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, ... to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” Ephesians 1:3-7.

“God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, ... and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the *exceeding riches* of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:4-7.

Such are the words in which “Paul the aged,” “a prisoner of Jesus Christ,” writing from his prison house at Rome, endeavored to set before his brethren that which he found language inadequate to express in its fullness—“the unsearchable riches of Christ,” the treasure of grace freely offered to the fallen sons of men. The plan of redemption was laid by a sacrifice, a gift. Says the apostle: “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.” 2 Corinthians 8:9. “God so loved the world, that He *gave* His only-begotten Son.” John 3:16. Christ “*gave Himself* for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity.”*

*1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:729-737.

Titus 2:14. And as the crowning blessing of redemption, “*the gift of God* is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23.

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9. Surely there are none that, beholding the riches of His grace, can forbear to exclaim with the apostle: “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” 2 Corinthians 9:15.

Reflecting God’s Glory

As the plan of redemption begins and ends with a gift so it is to be carried forward. The same spirit of sacrifice which purchased salvation for us will dwell in the hearts of all who become partakers of the heavenly gift. Says the apostle Peter: “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” 1 Peter 4:10. Said Jesus to His disciples as He sent them forth: “Freely ye have received, freely give.” Matthew 10:8. In him who is fully in sympathy with Christ there can be nothing selfish or exclusive. He who drinks of the living water will find that it is “in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:14. The Spirit of Christ within him is like a spring welling up in the desert, flowing to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish, eager to drink of the water of life. It was the same spirit of love and self-sacrifice which dwelt in Christ that impelled the apostle Paul to his manifold labors. “I am debtor,” he says, “both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.” Romans 1:14. “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Ephesians 3:8.

Our Lord designed that His church should reflect to the world the fullness and sufficiency that we find in Him. We [328] are constantly receiving of God’s bounty, and by imparting of the same we are to represent to the world the love and beneficence of Christ. While all heaven is astir, dispatching messengers to every part of the earth to carry forward the work of redemption, the church of the living God are also to be colaborers with Christ. We are members of His mystical body. He is the head, controlling all

the members of the body. Jesus Himself, in His infinite mercy, is working on human hearts, effecting spiritual transformations so amazing that angels look on with astonishment and joy. The same unselfish love that characterizes the Master is seen in the character and life of His true followers. Christ expects that men will become partakers of His divine nature while in this world, thus not only reflecting His glory to the praise of God, but illumining the darkness of the world with the radiance of heaven. Thus will be fulfilled the words of Christ: “Ye are the light of the world.” Matthew 5:14.

“We are laborers together with God,” “stewards of the manifold grace of God.” 1 Corinthians 3:9; 1 Peter 4:10. The knowledge of God’s grace, the truths of His word, and temporal gifts as well,—time and means, talents and influence,—are all a trust from God to be employed to His glory and the salvation of men. Nothing can be more offensive to God, who is constantly bestowing His gifts upon man, than to see him selfishly grasping these gifts and making no returns to the Giver. Jesus is today in heaven preparing mansions for those who love Him; yes, more than mansions, a kingdom which is to be ours. But all who shall inherit these blessings must be partakers of the self-denial and self-sacrifice of Christ for the good of others.

Answering the Macedonian Cry

Never was there greater need of earnest, self-sacrificing labor in the cause of Christ than now, when the hours of probation are fast closing and the last message of mercy is to [329] be given to the world. My soul is stirred within me as the Macedonian cry comes from every direction, from the cities and villages of our own land, from across the Atlantic and the broad Pacific, and from the islands of the sea: “Come over, ... and help us.” Acts 16:9. Brethren and sisters, will you answer the cry? saying: “We will do our best, both in sending you missionaries and money. We will deny ourselves in the embellishment of our houses, in the adornment of our persons, and in the gratification of appetite. We will give the means entrusted to us into the cause of God, and we will devote ourselves also unreservedly to His work.” The wants of the cause are laid before us; the

empty treasuries appeal to us most pathetically for help. One dollar now is of more value to the work than ten dollars will be at some future period.

Work, brethren, work while you have the opportunity, while the day lasts. Work, for “the night cometh, when no man can work.” How soon that night may come, it is impossible for you to tell. Now is your opportunity; improve it. If there are some who cannot give personal effort in missionary work, let them live economically and give of their earnings. Thus they can contribute money to send papers and books to those who have not the light of truth; they can help pay the expenses of students who are fitting for missionary work. Let every dollar that you can spare be invested in the bank of heaven.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:19-21.

These are the words of Jesus, who loved you so much that He gave His own life, that you might have a home with Him in His kingdom. Do not dishonor your Lord by disregarding His positive command. [330]

God calls upon those who have possessions in lands and houses, to sell and to invest the money where it will be supplying the great want in the missionary field. When once they have experienced the real satisfaction that comes from thus doing they will keep the channel open, and the means the Lord entrusts to them will be constantly flowing into the treasury, that souls may be converted. These souls will, in their turn, practice the same self-denial, economy, and simplicity for Christ’s sake, that they, too, may bring their offerings to God. Through these talents, wisely invested, still other souls may be converted; and thus the work goes on, showing that the gifts of God are appreciated. The Giver is acknowledged, and glory redounds to Him through the faithfulness of His stewards.

When we make these earnest appeals in behalf of the cause of God and present the financial wants of our missions, conscientious souls who believe the truth are deeply stirred. Like the poor widow, whom Christ commended, who gave her two mites into the treasury, they give, in their poverty, to the utmost of their ability. Such often deprive themselves even of the apparent necessities of life; while there are men and women who, possessing houses

and lands, cling to their earthly treasure with selfish tenacity and do not have faith enough in the message and in God to put their means into His work. To these last are especially applicable the words of Christ. “Sell that ye have, and give alms.” Luke 12:33.

There are poor men and women who are writing to me for advice as to whether they shall sell their homes and give the proceeds to the cause. They say the appeals for means stir their souls, and they want to do something for the Master who has done everything for them. I would say to such: “It may not be your duty to sell your little homes just now; but go to God for yourselves; the Lord will certainly hear your earnest prayers for wisdom to understand your duty.” If there was more seeking God for heavenly wisdom and less [331] seeking wisdom from men, there would be far greater light from heaven, and God would bless the humble seeker.

But I can say to those to whom God has entrusted goods, who have lands and houses: “Commence your selling, and giving alms. Make no delay. God expects more of you than you have been willing to do.” We call upon you who have means, to inquire with earnest prayer: What is the extent of the divine claim upon me and my property? There is work to be done now to make ready a people to stand in the day of the Lord. Means must be invested in the work of saving men, who, in turn, shall work for others. Be prompt in rendering to God His own. One reason why there is so great a dearth of the Spirit of God is that so many are robbing God.

There is a lesson for us in the experience of the churches of Macedonia, as described by Paul. He says that they “first gave their own selves to the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 8:5. Then they were eager to give their means for Christ. “In a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift.” 2 Corinthians 8:2-4.

The Rule for Giving

Paul lays down a rule for giving to God’s cause, and tells us what the result will be both in regard to ourselves and to God. “Every man according

as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” “This I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” “God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, *always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:* (... Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the [332] fruits of your righteousness;) being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.” 2 Corinthians 9:6-11.

We are not to feel that we can do or give anything that will entitle us to the favor of God. Says the apostle: “What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” When David and the people of Israel had gathered together the material they had prepared for the building of the temple, the king, as he committed the treasure to the princes of the congregation, rejoiced and gave thanks to God in words that should ever dwell in the hearts of God’s people. “David blessed the Lord before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be Thou Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine. ... And in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee. For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thine holy name cometh of Thine hand, and is all Thine own. I know also, my God, that Thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy Thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto Thee.” 1 Chronicles 29:10-17.

It was God who had provided the people with the riches of earth, and His Spirit had made them willing to bring their precious things for the temple. It was all of the Lord; if His [333] divine power had not moved upon the hearts of the people, the king’s efforts would have been in vain, and the temple would never have been erected.

All that men receive of God's bounty still belongs to God. Whatever He has bestowed in the valuable and beautiful things of earth is placed in our hands to test us, to sound the depths of our love for Him and our appreciation of His favors. Whether it be the treasures of wealth or of intellect, they are to be laid, a willing offering, at the feet of Jesus.

None of us can do without the blessing of God, but God can do His work without the aid of man if He so choose. But he has given to every man his work, and He trusts men with treasures of wealth or of intellect, as His stewards. Whatever we render to God is, through His mercy and generosity, placed to our account as faithful stewards. But we should ever realize that this is not a work of merit on man's part. However great the ability of man, he possesses nothing which God did not give him, and which He cannot withdraw if these precious tokens of His favor are not appreciated and rightly applied. Angels of God, whose perceptions are unclouded by sin, recognize the endowments of heaven as bestowed with the intention that they be returned in such a way as to add to the glory of the great Giver. With the sovereignty of God is bound up the well-being of man. The glory of God is the joy and the blessing of all created beings. When we seek to promote His glory we are seeking for ourselves the highest good which it is possible for us to receive. Brethren and sisters in Christ, God calls for the consecration to His service of every faculty, of every gift, you have received from Him. He wants you to say, with David: "All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee." [334]

The Character of God Revealed in Christ

Said the Saviour: “This is life eternal, that they might *know Thee* the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” John 17:3. And God declared by the prophet: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that *he understandeth and knoweth Me*, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 9:23, 24.

No man, without divine aid, can attain to this knowledge of God. The apostle says that “the world by wisdom knew not God.” 1 Corinthians 1:21. Christ “was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.” John 1:10. Jesus declared to His disciples: “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” Matthew 11:27. In that last prayer for His followers, before entering the shadows of Gethsemane, the Saviour lifted His eyes to heaven, and in pity for the ignorance of fallen men He said: “O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee.” “I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world.” John 17:25, 6.

From the beginning it has been Satan’s studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:737-746.

Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself,—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will.

It was by falsifying the character of God and exciting distrust of Him that Satan tempted Eve to transgress. By sin the minds of our first parents were darkened, their natures were degraded, and their conceptions of God were molded by their own narrowness and selfishness. And as men became bolder in sin, the knowledge and the love of God faded from their minds and hearts. “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God,” they “became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” Romans 1:21.

At times Satan’s contest for the control of the human family appeared to be crowned with success. During the ages preceding the first advent of Christ the world seemed almost wholly under the sway of the prince of darkness, and he ruled with a terrible power as though through the sin of our first parents the kingdoms of the world had become his by right. Even the covenant people, whom God had chosen to preserve in the world the knowledge of Himself, had so far departed from Him that they had lost all true conception of His character.

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world’s Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life.

When Philip came to Jesus with the request, “Show us [336] the Father, and it sufficeth us,” the Saviour answered him: “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” John 14:8, 9. Christ declares Himself to be sent into the world as a representative of the Father. In His nobility of character, in His mercy and tender pity, in His love and goodness, He stands before us as the embodiment of divine perfection, the image of the invisible God.

Seen in Redemption's Plan

Says the apostle: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Corinthians 5:19. Only as we contemplate the great plan of redemption can we have a just appreciation of the character of God. The work of creation was a manifestation of His love; but the gift of God to save the guilty and ruined race, alone reveals the infinite depths of divine tenderness and compassion. "God *so loved* the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. While the law of God is maintained, and its justice vindicated, the sinner can be pardoned. The dearest gift that heaven itself had to bestow has been poured out that God "might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Romans 3:26. By that gift men are uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin to become children of God. Says Paul: "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Romans 8:15.

Brethren, with the beloved John I call upon you to "behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John 3:1. What love, what matchless love, that, sinners and aliens as we are, we may be brought back to God and adopted into His family! We may address Him by the endearing name, "Our Father," which is a sign of our affection for Him and a pledge of His [337] tender regard and relationship to us. And the Son of God, beholding the heirs of grace, "is not ashamed to call them brethren." They have even a more sacred relationship to God than have the angels who have never fallen.

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. You may meditate upon it every day of your life; you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it; you may summon every power and capability that God has given you, in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly Father; and yet there is an infinity beyond. You may study that love for ages; yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth, the depth and the height, of the love of God in giving His Son to

die for the world. Eternity itself can never fully reveal it. Yet as we study the Bible and meditate upon the life of Christ and the plan of redemption, these great themes will open to our understanding more and more. And it will be ours to realize the blessing which Paul desired for the Ephesian church when he prayed “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him*; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what *the riches of the glory* of His inheritance in the saints, and what is *the exceeding greatness of His power* to usward who believe.” Ephesians 1:17-19.

It is Satan’s constant study to keep the minds of men occupied with those things which will prevent them from obtaining the knowledge of God. He seeks to keep them dwelling upon what will darken the understanding and discourage the soul. We are in a world of sin and corruption, [338] surrounded by influences that tend to allure or dishearten the followers of Christ. The Saviour said: “Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Matthew 24:12.

Think of God’s Love and Power

Many fix their eyes upon the terrible wickedness existing around them, the apostasy and weakness on every side, and they talk of these things until their hearts are filled with sadness and doubt. They keep uppermost before the mind the masterly working of the archdeceiver and dwell upon the discouraging features of their experience, while they seem to lose sight of the heavenly Father’s power and His matchless love. All this is as Satan would have it. It is a mistake to think of the enemy of righteousness as clothed with so great power, when we dwell so little upon the love of God and His might. We must talk of the mightiness of Christ. We are utterly powerless to rescue ourselves from the grasp of Satan; but God has appointed a way of escape. The Son of the Highest has strength to fight the battle for us, and “through Him that loved us” we may come off “more than conquerors.”

There is no spiritual strength for us in constantly brooding over our weakness and backslidings, and bemoaning the power of Satan. This great

truth must be established as a living principle in our minds and hearts—the efficacy of the offering made for us; that God can and does save to the uttermost all who come unto Him complying with the conditions specified in His word. Our work is to place our will on the side of God’s will. Then, through the blood of the atonement, we become partakers of the divine nature; through Christ we are children of God, and we have the assurance that God loves us even as He loved His Son. We are one with Jesus. We walk where Christ leads the way; He has power to dispel the dark shadows which Satan casts across our path; and, in place of darkness and [339] discouragement, the sunlight of His glory shines into our hearts.

Our hope is to be constantly strengthened by the knowledge that Christ is our righteousness. Let our faith rest upon this foundation, for it will stand fast forever. Instead of dwelling upon the darkness of Satan and fearing his power, we should open our hearts to receive light from Christ and to let it shine forth to the world, declaring that He is above all the power of Satan, that His sustaining arm will support all who trust in Him.

Said Jesus: “The Father Himself loveth you.” If our faith is fixed upon God, through Christ, it will prove “as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered.” It is true that disappointments will come; tribulation we must expect; but we are to commit everything, great and small, to God. He does not become perplexed by the multiplicity of our grievances nor overpowered by the weight of our burdens. His watchcare extends to every household and encircles every individual; He is concerned in all our business and our sorrows. He marks every tear; He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. All the afflictions and trials that befall us here are permitted, to work out His purposes of love toward us, “that we might be partakers of His holiness” and thus become participants in that fullness of joy which is found in His presence.

Behold, and Be Changed

“The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” 2 Corinthians 4:4. But the Bible in strongest terms

sets before us the importance of obtaining a knowledge of God. Says Peter: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the *knowledge of God*, and of Jesus our Lord." "His divine power hath given unto us *all things* that pertain unto life [340] and godliness, *through the knowledge of Him* that hath called us to glory and virtue." 2 Peter 1:2, 3. And the Scripture bids us: "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace." Job 22:21.

God has commanded us, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16); and an inspired apostle declares that without holiness "no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14. Holiness is agreement with God. By sin the image of God in man has been marred and well-nigh obliterated; it is the work of the gospel to restore that which has been lost; and we are to co-operate with the divine agency in this work. And how can we come into harmony with God, how shall we receive His likeness, unless we obtain a knowledge of Him? It is this knowledge that Christ came into the world to reveal unto us.

The meager views which so many have had of the exalted character and office of Christ have narrowed their religious experience and have greatly hindered their progress in the divine life. Personal religion among us as a people is at a low ebb. There is much form, much machinery, much tongue religion; but something deeper and more solid must be brought into our religious experience. With all our facilities, our publishing houses, our schools, our sanitariums, and many, many other advantages, we ought to be far in advance of our present position.

It is the work of the Christian in this life to represent Christ to the world, in life and character unfolding the blessed Jesus. If God has given us light, it is that we may reveal it to others. But in comparison with the light we have received, and the opportunities and privileges granted us to reach the hearts of the people, the results of our work thus far have been far too small. God designs that the truth which He has brought to our understanding shall produce more fruit than has yet been revealed. But when our minds are filled with gloom and sadness, dwelling upon the darkness and evil around us, how can we represent Christ to the world? [341] How can our testimony have power to win souls? What we need is to know God and the power of His love, as revealed in Christ, by an experimental knowledge. We must search the Scriptures diligently, prayerfully; our understanding must be quickened by the Holy Spirit, and our hearts must be uplifted to God in faith and hope and continual praise.

Through the merits of Christ, through His righteousness, which by faith is imputed unto us, we are to attain to the perfection of Christian character. Our daily and hourly work is set forth in the words of the apostle: “Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.” Hebrews 12:2. While doing this our minds become clearer and our faith stronger, and our hope is confirmed; we are so engrossed with the view of His purity and loveliness, and the sacrifice He has made to bring us into agreement with God, that we have no disposition to speak of doubts and discouragements.

The manifestation of God’s love, His mercy and His goodness, and the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart to enlighten and renew it, place us, through faith, in so close connection with Christ that, having a clear conception of His character, we are able to discern the masterly deceptions of Satan. Looking unto Jesus and trusting in His merits we appropriate the blessings of light, of peace, of joy in the Holy Ghost. And in view of the great things which Christ has done for us, we are ready to exclaim: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John 3:1.

Brethren and sisters, it is by beholding that we become changed. By dwelling upon the love of God and our Saviour, by contemplating the perfection of the divine character and claiming the righteousness of Christ as ours by faith, we are to be transformed into the same image. Then let us not gather together all the unpleasant pictures—the iniquities and corruptions and disappointments, the evidences of Satan’s power—to hang in the halls of our memory, to talk over [342] and mourn over until our souls are filled with discouragement. A discouraged soul is a body of darkness, not only failing himself to receive the light of God, but shutting it away from others. Satan loves to see the effect of the pictures of his triumphs, making human beings faithless and disheartened.

Pictures that Gladden the Soul

There are, thank God, brighter and more cheering pictures which the Lord has presented to us. Let us group together the blessed assurances of His love as precious treasures, that we may look upon them continually. The Son of God leaving His Father’s throne, clothing His divinity with

humanity, that He might rescue man from the power of Satan; His triumph in our behalf, opening heaven to man, revealing to human vision the presence chamber where Deity unveils His glory; the fallen race uplifted from the pit of ruin into which sin had plunged them, and brought again into connection with the infinite God, and, having endured the divine test through faith in our Redeemer, clothed in the righteousness of Christ and exalted to His throne—these are the pictures with which God bids us gladden the chambers of the soul. And “while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen,” we shall prove it true that “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” 2 Corinthians 4:18, 17.

In heaven God is all in all. There holiness reigns supreme; there is nothing to mar the perfect harmony with God. If we are indeed journeying thither, the spirit of heaven will dwell in our hearts here. But if we find no pleasure now in the contemplation of heavenly things; if we have no interest in seeking the knowledge of God, no delight in beholding the character of Christ; if holiness has no attractions for us—then we may be sure that our hope of heaven is vain. Perfect [343] conformity to the will of God is the high aim to be constantly before the Christian. He will love to talk of God, of Jesus, of the home of bliss and purity which Christ has prepared for them that love Him. The contemplation of these themes, when the soul feasts upon the blessed assurances of God, the apostle represents as tasting “the powers of the world to come.”

Just before us is the closing struggle of the great controversy when, with “all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness,” Satan is to work to misrepresent the character of God, that he may “seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.” If there was ever a people in need of constantly increasing light from heaven, it is the people that, in this time of peril, God has called to be the depositaries of His holy law and to vindicate His character before the world. Those to whom has been committed a trust so sacred must be spiritualized, elevated, vitalized, by the truths they profess to believe.

Never did the church more sorely need, and never was God more solicitous that she should enjoy, the experience described in Paul’s letter to the Colossians when he wrote: We “do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be *filled with the knowledge of His will* in all wisdom

and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.” [344]

The Word Made Flesh

The union of the divine with the human nature is one of the most precious and most mysterious truths of the plan of redemption. It is this of which Paul speaks when he says: “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.”

This truth has been to many a cause of doubt and unbelief. When Christ came into the world,—the Son of God and the Son of man,—He was not understood by the people of His time. Christ stooped to take upon Himself human nature, that He might reach the fallen race and lift them up. But the minds of men had become darkened by sin, their faculties were benumbed and their perceptions dulled, so that they could not discern His divine character beneath the garb of humanity. This lack of appreciation on their part was an obstacle to the work which He desired to accomplish for them; and in order to give force to His teaching he was often under the necessity of defining and defending His position. By referring to His mysterious and divine character, He sought to lead their minds into a train of thought which would be favorable to the transforming power of truth.

Again, He used the things of nature with which they were familiar, to illustrate divine truth. The soil of the heart was thus prepared to receive the good seed. He made His hearers feel that His interests were identified with theirs, that His heart beat in sympathy with them in their joys and griefs. At the same time they saw in Him the manifestation of power and excellence far above that possessed by their most-honored rabbis. The teachings of Christ were marked with a simplicity, dignity, and power heretofore unknown to them, and^{*}

^{*}—1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:746-749.

their involuntary exclamation was: “Never man spake like this Man.” The people listened to Him gladly; but the priests and rulers—themselves false to their trust as guardians of the truth—hated Christ for the very grace revealed, which had drawn the multitudes away from them to follow the Light of life. Through their influence the Jewish nation, failing to discern His divine character, rejected the Redeemer.

Union of the Divine and the Human

The union of the divine and the human, manifest in Christ, exists also in the Bible. The truths revealed are all “given by inspiration of God;” yet they are expressed in the words of men and are adapted to human needs. Thus it may be said of the Book of God, as it was of Christ, that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” John 1:14. And this fact, so far from being an argument against the Bible, should strengthen faith in it as the word of God. Those who pronounce upon the inspiration of the Scriptures, accepting some portions as divine while they reject other parts as human, overlook the fact that Christ, the divine, partook of our human nature, that He might reach humanity. In the work of God for man’s redemption, divinity and humanity are combined.

There are many passages of Scripture which skeptical critics have declared to be uninspired, but which, in their tender adaptation to the needs of men, are God’s own messages of comfort to His trusting children. A beautiful illustration of this occurs in the history of the apostle Peter. Peter was in prison, expecting to be brought forth next day to death; he was sleeping at night “between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.” Acts 12:6, 7. Peter, [346] suddenly awaking, was amazed at the brightness that flooded his dungeon, and the celestial beauty of the heavenly messenger. He understood not the scene, but he knew that he was free, and in his bewilderment and joy he would have gone forth from the prison unprotected from the cold night air. The angel of God, noting all the circumstances, said, with tender care for the apostle’s need: “Gird thyself,

and bind on thy sandals.” Verse 8. Peter mechanically obeyed; but so entranced was he with the revelation of the glory of heaven that he did not think to take his cloak. Then the angel bade him: “Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.” Verses 8-10. The apostle found himself in the streets of Jerusalem alone. “And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety,”—it was not a dream or a vision, but an actual occurrence,—“that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.” Verse 11.

Skeptics may sneer at the thought that a glorious angel from heaven should give attention to a matter so commonplace as caring for these simple human needs, and may question the inspiration of the narrative. But in the wisdom of God these things are recorded in sacred history for the benefit, not of angels, but of men, that as they should be brought into trying positions they might find comfort in the thought that heaven knows it all.

Jesus declared to His disciples that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the notice of the heavenly Father, and that if God can keep in mind the wants of all the little birds [347] of the air, He will much more care for those who may become the subjects of His kingdom and through faith in Him may be the heirs of immortality. Oh, if the human mind were only to comprehend—in such measure as the plan of redemption *can* be comprehended by finite minds—the work of Jesus in taking upon Himself human nature, and what is to be accomplished for us by this marvelous condescension, the hearts of men would be melted with gratitude for God’s great love, and in humility they would adore the divine wisdom that devised the mystery of grace! [348]

God's Care for His Work

It was under circumstances of difficulty and discouragement that Isaiah, while yet a young man, was called to the prophetic mission. Disaster was threatening his country. By their transgression of God's law the people of Judah had forfeited His protection, and the Assyrian forces were about to come against the kingdom of Judah. But the danger from their enemies was not the greatest trouble. It was the perversity of the people that brought upon the Lord's servant the deepest depression. By their apostasy and rebellion they were inviting the judgments of God. The youthful prophet had been called to bear to them a message of warning, and he knew that he would meet with obstinate resistance. He trembled as he viewed himself and thought of the stubbornness and unbelief of the people for whom he was to labor. His task seemed to him almost hopeless. Should he in despair relinquish his mission and leave Israel undisturbed to their idolatry? Were the gods of Nineveh to rule the earth in defiance of the God of heaven?

Such thoughts as these were crowding upon his mind as he stood under the portico of the holy temple. Suddenly the gate and the inner veil of the temple seemed to be uplifted or withdrawn, and he was permitted to gaze within, upon the holy of holies, where even the prophet's feet might not enter. There rose up before him a vision of Jehovah sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, while His train filled the temple. On each side the throne hovered the seraphim, two wings bearing them up, two veiling their faces in adoration, and two covering their feet. These angel ministers lifted up their voices in solemn invocation, "Holy, holy, holy, is the^{*}

^{*}1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:749-754.

Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory," until post and pillar and cedar gate seemed to tremble at the sound, and the house was filled with

their praise.

Never before had Isaiah realized so fully the greatness of Jehovah or His perfect holiness; and he felt that in his human frailty and unworthiness he must perish in that divine presence. “Woe is me!” he cried; “for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” Isaiah 6:3, 5. But a seraph came to him to fit him for his great mission. A living coal from the altar was laid upon his lips with the words: “Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.” And when the voice of God was heard saying, “Whom shall I send and who will go for us?” Isaiah with holy confidence responded, “Here am I; send me.” Verses 7, 8.

What though earthly powers should be arrayed against Judah? What though Isaiah should meet with opposition and resistance in his mission? He had seen the King, the Lord of hosts; he had heard the song of the seraphim, “The whole earth is full of His glory;” and the prophet was nerved for the work before him. The memory of this vision was carried with him throughout his long and arduous mission.

Ezekiel's Vision

Ezekiel, the mourning exile prophet, in the land of the Chaldeans, was given a vision teaching the same lesson of faith in the mighty God of Israel. As he was upon the banks of the river Chebar, a whirlwind seemed to come from the north, “a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber.” A number of wheels of strange appearance, in tersecting one another, were moved by four living creatures. High above all these was “the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the [350] throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.” “As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.” “And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man's hand under their wings.”

There were wheels within wheels in an arrangement so complicated that at first sight they appeared to Ezekiel to be all in confusion. But when they moved, it was with beautiful exactness and in perfect harmony. Heavenly beings were impelling these wheels, and, above all, upon the glorious sapphire throne, was the Eternal One; while round about the throne was the encircling rainbow, emblem of grace and love. Overpowered by the terrible glory of the scene, Ezekiel fell upon his face, when a voice bade him arise and hear the word of the Lord. Then there was given him a message of warning for Israel.

This vision was given to Ezekiel at a time when his mind was filled with gloomy forebodings. He saw the land of his fathers lying desolate. The city that was once full of people was no longer inhabited. The voice of mirth and the song of praise were no more heard within her walls. The prophet himself was a stranger in a strange land, where boundless ambition and savage cruelty reigned supreme. That which he saw and heard of human tyranny and wrong distressed his soul, and he mourned bitterly day and night. But the wonderful symbols presented before him beside the river Chebar revealed an overruling power mightier than that of earthly rulers. Above the proud and cruel monarchs of Assyria and Babylon the God of mercy and truth was enthroned.

The wheellike complications that appeared to the prophet to be involved in such confusion were under the guidance of an infinite hand. The Spirit of God, revealed to him as moving and directing these wheels, brought harmony out of [351] confusion; so the whole world was under His control. Myriads of glorified beings were ready at His word to overrule the power and policy of evil men, and bring good to His faithful ones.

Same Assurance to the Remnant Church

In like manner, when God was about to open to the beloved John the history of the church for future ages, He gave him an assurance of the Saviour's interest and care for His people by revealing to him "One like unto the Son of man," walking among the candlesticks, which symbolized the seven churches. While John was shown the last great struggles of the church with earthly powers, he was also permitted to behold the final

victory and deliverance of the faithful. He saw the church brought into deadly conflict with the beast and his image, and the worship of that beast enforced on pain of death. But looking beyond the smoke and din of the battle, he beheld a company upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having, instead of the mark of the beast, the “Father’s name written in their foreheads.” Revelation 14:1. And again he saw “them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God” and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

These lessons are for our benefit. We need to stay our faith upon God, for there is just before us a time that will try men’s souls. Christ, upon the Mount of Olives, rehearsed the fearful judgments that were to precede His second coming: “Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars.” “Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” Matthew 24:6, 7. While these prophecies received a partial fulfillment at the destruction of Jerusalem, they have a more direct application to the last days. [352]

On the Threshold of Solemn Events

We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. The Lord is at the door. There is soon to open before us a period of overwhelming interest to all living. The controversies of the past are to be revived; new controversies will arise. The scenes to be enacted in our world are not yet even dreamed of. Satan is at work through human agencies. Those who are making an effort to change the Constitution and secure a law enforcing Sunday observance little realize what will be the result. A crisis is just upon us.

But God’s servants are not to trust to themselves in this great emergency. In the visions given to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, and to John we see how closely heaven is connected with the events taking place upon the earth and how great is the care of God for those who are loyal to Him. The world is not without a ruler. The program of coming events is in the hands of the

Lord. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge.

We permit ourselves to feel altogether too much care, trouble, and perplexity in the Lord's work. Finite men are not left to carry the burden of responsibility. We need to trust in God, believe in Him, and go forward. The tireless vigilance of the heavenly messengers, and their unceasing employment in their ministry in connection with the beings of earth, show us how God's hand is guiding the wheel within a wheel. The divine Instructor is saying to every actor in His work, as He said to Cyrus of old: "I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me." Isaiah 45:5.

In Ezekiel's vision God had His hand beneath the wings of the cherubim. This is to teach His servants that it is divine power that gives them success. He will work with them if they will put away iniquity and become pure in heart and life. [353]

The bright light going among the living creatures with the swiftness of lightning represents the speed with which this work will finally go forward to completion. He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, can carry forward His great work harmoniously. That which appears to finite minds entangled and complicated, the Lord's hand can keep in perfect order. He can devise ways and means to thwart the purposes of wicked men, and He will bring to confusion the counsels of them that plot mischief against His people.

Brethren, it is no time now for mourning and despair, no time to yield to doubt and unbelief. Christ is not now a Saviour in Joseph's new tomb, closed with a great stone and sealed with the Roman seal; we have a risen Saviour. He is the King, the Lord of hosts; He sitteth between the cherubim; and amid the strife and tumult of nations He guards His people still. He who ruleth in the heavens is our Saviour. He measures every trial. He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of God's wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands.

Under God's Supervision. Because of unconsecrated workers, things will sometimes go wrong. You may weep over the result of the wrong course of others, but do not worry. The work is under the supervision of the blessed Master. All He asks is that the workers shall come to Him for their

orders, and obey His directions. All parts of the work—our churches, missions, Sabbath schools, institutions—are carried upon His heart. Why worry? The intense longing to see the church imbued with life must be tempered with entire trust in God; for “without Me,” said the great Burden Bearer, “ye can do nothing.” John 15:5. “Follow Me.” He leads the way; we are to follow. [354]

Let no one overtax his God-given powers in an effort to advance the Lord’s work more rapidly. The power of man cannot hasten the work; with this must be united the power of heavenly intelligences. Only thus can the work of God be brought to perfection. Man cannot do God’s part of the work. A Paul may plant, and an Apollos water, but God gives the increase. In simplicity and meekness man is to co-operate with divine agencies, at all times doing his best, yet ever realizing that God is the great Master Workman. He is not to feel self-confident, for thus he will exhaust his reserve force and destroy his mental and physical powers. Though all the workmen now bearing the heaviest burdens should be laid aside, God’s work would be carried forward. Then let our zeal in labor be tempered with reason; let us cease our efforts to do that which the Lord alone can accomplish.—1902, Testimonies for the Church 7:298. [355]

The Remnant Church Not Babylon

For years I have borne my testimony to the effect that when any arise claiming to have great light, and yet advocating the tearing down of that which the Lord through His human agents has been building up, they are greatly deceived, and are not working along the lines where Christ is working. Those who assert that the Seventh-day Adventist churches constitute Babylon, or any part of Babylon, might better stay at home. Let them stop and consider what is the message to be proclaimed at this time. In place of working with divine agencies to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord, they have taken their stand with him who is an accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God day and night. ...

Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproved, warned, and counseled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard. The world is a workshop in which, through the co-operation of human and divine agencies, Jesus is making experiments by His grace and divine mercy upon human hearts.

Angels are amazed as they behold the transformation of character brought about in those who yield themselves to God, and they express their joy in songs of rapturous praise to God and to the Lamb. They see those who are by nature the children of wrath, converted and becoming laborers together with Christ in drawing souls to God. They see those who were in darkness becoming lights to shine amid the moral night of this wicked and perverse generation. They^{*}

^{*}1893 (first published), Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 36-62.

[356]

see them becoming prepared by a Christlike experience to suffer with their Lord, and afterward to be partakers with Him in His glory in heaven above.

God has a church on earth who are lifting up the downtrodden law, and presenting to the world the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. The church is the depositary of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lighted with its glory. The prayer of Christ that His church may be one as He was one with His Father will finally be answered. The rich dowry of the Holy Spirit will be given, and through its constant supply to the people of God, they will become witnesses in the world of the power of God unto salvation.

There is but one church in the world who are at the present time standing in the breach, and making up the hedge, building up the old waste places; and for any man to call the attention of the world and other churches to this church, denouncing her as Babylon, is to do a work in harmony with him who is the accuser of the brethren. Is it possible that men will arise from among us, who speak perverse things, and give voice to the very sentiments that Satan would have disseminated in the world in regard to those who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus? Is there not work enough to satisfy your zeal in presenting the truth to those who are in the darkness of error?

As those who have been made stewards of means and ability, you have been misapplying your Lord's goods in disseminating error. The whole world is filled with hatred of those who proclaim the binding claims of the law of God, and the church who are loyal to Jehovah must engage in no ordinary conflict. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [357] places." Ephesians 6:12. Those who have any realization of what this warfare means will not turn their weapons against the church militant, but with all their powers will wrestle with the people of God against the confederacy of evil.

Those who start up to proclaim a message on their own individual responsibility, who, while claiming to be taught and led of God, still make it their special work to tear down that which God has been for years building up, are not doing the will of God. Be it known that these men are on the

side of the great deceiver. Believe them not. They are allying themselves with the enemies of God and the truth. They will deride the order of the ministry as a system of priestcraft. From such turn away, have no fellowship with their message, however much they may quote the *Testimonies* and seek to entrench themselves behind them. Receive them not, for God has not given them this work to do. The result of such work will be unbelief in the *Testimonies*, and, as far as possible, they will make of none effect the work that I have for years been doing.

Almost my whole lifetime has been devoted to this work, but my burden has often been made heavier by the arising of men who went forth to proclaim a message that God had not given them. This class of evil workers have selected portions of the *Testimonies*, and have placed them in the framework of error, in order by this setting to give influence to their false testimonies. When it is made manifest that their message is error, then the *Testimonies* brought into the companionship of error share the same condemnation; and people of the world, who do not know that the *Testimonies* quoted are extracts from private letters used without my consent, present these matters as evidence that my work is not of God or of truth, but falsehood. Those who thus bring the work of God into disrepute will have to answer before God for the work they are doing.

God has a church, and she has a divinely appointed ministry. “And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and [358] some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-15.

The Lord has His appointed agencies, and a church that has lived through persecution, conflict, and darkness. Jesus loved the church, and gave Himself for it, and He will replenish, refine, ennoble, and elevate it, so that it shall stand fast amid the corrupting influences of this world. Men appointed of God have been chosen to watch with jealous care, with

vigilant perseverance, that the church may not be overthrown by the evil devices of Satan, but that she shall stand in the world to promote the glory of God among men. There will ever be fierce conflict between the church and the world. Mind will come into contact with mind, principle with principle, truth with error; but in the crisis soon to culminate, which has already begun, the men of experience are to do their God-appointed work, and watch for souls as they that must give an account. ...

Let all understand the words that I now write. Those who are laborers together with God are but His instruments, and they in themselves possess no essential grace or holiness. It is only when they are co-operating with heavenly intelligences that they are successful. They are but earthen vessels, the depositaries in which God places the treasure of His truth. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God alone that gives the increase.

God speaks through His appointed agencies, and let no [359] man, or confederacy of men, insult the Spirit of God by refusing to hear the message of God's word from the lips of His chosen messengers. By refusing to hear the message of God, men close themselves in a chamber of darkness. They shut their own souls away from vast blessings and rob Christ of the glory that should come to Him, by showing disrespect to His appointed agencies.

God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. But Satan is a vigilant, unsleeping foe, ever at work upon human minds, seeking a soil in which he can sow his tares. If he finds any whom he can press into his service, he will suggest ideas and false theories, and make them zealous in advocating error. The truth not only converts, but works the purification of its receiver. Jesus has warned us to beware of false teachers.

From the beginning of our work, men have arisen from time to time, advocating theories that were new and startling. But if those who claim to believe the truth would go to those who have had experience, would go to the word of God in a teachable, humble spirit, and examine their theories in the light of truth and with the aid of the brethren who have been diligent Bible students, and at the same time make supplication unto God, asking, Is this the way of the Lord, or is it a false path in which Satan would lead me? they would receive light, and would escape out of the net of the fowler.

Let all our brethren and sisters beware of anyone who would set a time for the Lord to fulfill His word in regard to His coming, or in regard to any

other promise He has made of special significance. “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.” Acts 1:7. False teachers may appear to be very zealous for the work of God, and may expend means to bring their theories before the world and the church; but as they mingle error with truth, their message is one of deception, and will lead souls into false paths. They are to be met and opposed, not because they are bad men, but because they are teachers of [360] falsehood and are endeavoring to put upon falsehood the stamp of truth.

What a pity it is that men will go to such pains to discover some theory of error when there is a whole storehouse of precious gems of truth by which the people might be enriched in the most holy faith. Instead of teaching truth they let their imagination dwell upon that which is new and strange, and throw themselves out of harmony with those whom God is using to bring the people up upon the platform of truth. They cast aside all that has been said in regard to unity of sentiment and feeling, and trample upon the prayer of Christ as though the unity for which He prayed were unessential, and there were no necessity for His followers to be one, even as He is one with the Father. They go off on a tangent, and Jehulike, call to their brethren to follow their example of zeal for the Lord.

If their zeal led them to work in the same lines in which their brethren who have carried the heat and burden of the day are working, if they were as persevering to overcome discouragements and obstacles as their brethren have been, they might well be imitated, and God would accept them. But men are to be condemned who start out with a proclamation of wonderful light, and yet draw away from the agents whom God is leading. This was the way in which Korah, Dathan, and Abiram did, and their action is recorded as a warning to all others. We are not to do as they have done—accuse and condemn those upon whom God has laid the burden of the work.

Those who have proclaimed the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Babylon, have made use of the *Testimonies* in giving their position a seeming support; but why is it that they did not present that which for years has been the burden of my message—the unity of the church? Why did they not quote the words of the angel, “Press together, press together, press

together”? Why did they not repeat the admonition [361] and state the principle, that “in union there is strength, in division there is weakness”?

It is such messages as these men have borne that divide the church, and put us to shame before the enemies of truth; and in such messages is plainly revealed the specious working of the great deceiver, who would hinder the church from attaining unto perfection in unity. These teachers follow the sparks of their own kindling, move according to their own independent judgment, and cumber the truth with false notions and theories. They refuse the counsel of their brethren, and press on in their own way until they become just what Satan would desire to have them—unbalanced in mind.

I warn my brethren to guard against the working of Satan in every form. The great adversary of God and man is exulting today that he has succeeded in deceiving souls, and in diverting their means and ability into harmful channels. Their money might have been used to advance present truth, but instead of this it has been expended in presenting notions that have no foundation in truth. ...

I urge those who claim to believe the truth, to walk in unity with their brethren. Do not seek to give to the world occasion to say that we are extremists, that we are disunited, that one teaches one thing, and one another. Avoid dissension. Let everyone be on guard, and be careful to be found standing in the gap to make up the breach, in place of standing at the wall seeking to make a breach. Let all be careful not to make an outcry against the only people who are fulfilling the description given of the remnant people who keep the commandments of God and have faith in Jesus, who are exalting the standard of righteousness in these last days.

God has a distinct people, a church on earth, second to none, but superior to all in their facilities to teach the truth, to vindicate the law of God. God has divinely appointed agencies—men whom He is leading, who have borne the heat and burden of the day, who are co-operating with heavenly [362] instrumentalities to advance the kingdom of Christ in our world. Let all unite with these chosen agents, and be found at last among those who have the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus. ...

God has a church upon the earth who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people. The truth is a sanctifying power; but the church militant

is not the church triumphant. There are tares among the wheat. “Wilt thou then that we ... gather them up?” was the question of the servant; but the master answered, “Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.” Matthew 13:28, 29. The gospel net draws not only good fish but bad ones as well, and the Lord only knows who are His.

It is our individual duty to walk humbly with God. We are not to seek any strange, new message. We are not to think that the chosen ones of God who are trying to walk in the light compose Babylon.

The fallen denominational churches are Babylon. Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God’s holy and sanctified day. These and kindred errors are presented to the world by the various churches, and thus the Scriptures are fulfilled that say, “For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

Enfeebled and defective, needing constantly to be warned and counseled, the church is nevertheless the object of Christ’s supreme regard. He is making experiments of grace on human hearts and is affecting such transformations of character that angels are amazed, and express their joy in [363] songs of praise. They rejoice to think that sinful, erring human beings can be so transformed.—1902, Testimonies for the Church 7:16.

God has a people in which all heaven is interested, and they are the one object on earth dear to the heart of God. Let everyone who reads these words give them thorough consideration, for in the name of Jesus I would press them home upon every soul. When anyone arises, either among us or outside of us, who is burdened with a message which declares that the people of God are numbered with Babylon, and claims that the loud cry is a call to come out of her, you may know that he is not bearing the message of truth. Receive him not, nor bid him Godspeed; for God has not spoken by him, neither has He given a message to him, but he has run before he was sent.—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 41.

The Lord has declared that the history of the past shall be rehearsed as we enter upon the closing work. Every truth that He has given for these last days is to be proclaimed to the world. Every pillar that He has established is to be strengthened. We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established. We cannot now enter into any new organization; for this would mean apostasy from the truth.—1905, *Notebook Leaflets*, “The Church,” No. 1.

There is no need to doubt, to be fearful that the work will not succeed. God is at the head of the work, and He will set everything in order. If matters need adjusting at the head of the work, God will attend to that, and work to right every wrong. Let us have faith that God is going to carry the noble ship which bears the people of God safely into port.—The Review and Herald, September 20, 1892. [364]

God's Purpose in the Church

It is God's purpose to manifest through His people the principles of His kingdom. That in life and character they may reveal these principles, He desires to separate them from the customs, habits, and practices of the world. He seeks to bring them near to Himself, that He may make known to them His will.

This was His purpose in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. At the burning bush Moses received from God the message for the king of Egypt: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." Exodus 7:16. With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm God brought out the Hebrew host from the land of bondage. Wonderful was the deliverance He wrought for them, punishing their enemies, who refused to listen to His word, with total destruction.

God desired to take His people apart from the world and prepare them to receive His word. From Egypt He led them to Mount Sinai, where He revealed to them His glory. Here was nothing to attract their senses or divert their minds from God; and as the vast multitude looked at the lofty mountains towering above them, they could realize their own nothingness in the sight of God. Beside these rocks, immovable except by the power of the divine will, God communicated with men. And that His word might ever be clear and distinct in their minds, He proclaimed amid thunder and lightning and with terrible majesty the law which He had given in Eden and which was the transcript of His character. And the words were written on tables of stone by the finger of God. Thus the will of the infinite God was revealed to a people who were called to make known to every nation, kindred,^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:9-13.

and tongue the principles of His government in heaven and in earth.

To the same work He has called His people in this generation. To them He has revealed His will, and of them He requires obedience. In the last days of this earth's history the voice that spoke from Sinai is still saying to men: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Exodus 20:3. Man has set his will against the will of God, but he cannot silence this word of command. The human mind can never fully comprehend its obligation to the higher power, but it cannot evade the obligation. Profound theories and speculations may abound, men may try to set science in opposition to revelation, and thus do away with the law of God; but stronger and still stronger will the Holy Spirit bring before them the command: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Matthew 4:10.

How is the world treating the law of God? Everywhere men are working against the divine precepts. In their desire to evade the cross bearing attendant on obedience, even the churches are taking sides with the great apostate in claiming that the law of God has been changed or abrogated. Men in their blindness boast of wonderful progress and enlightenment; but the heavenly watchers see the earth filled with corruption and violence. Because of sin the atmosphere of our world has become as the atmosphere of a pesthouse.

A great work is to be accomplished in setting before men the saving truths of the gospel. This is the means ordained by God to stem the tide of moral corruption. This is His means of restoring His moral image in man. It is His remedy for universal disorganization. It is the power that draws men together in unity. To present these truths is the work of the third angel's message. The Lord designs that the presentation of this message shall be the highest, greatest work carried on in the world at this time.

Satan is constantly urging men to accept his principles. [366] Thus he seeks to counterwork the work of God. He is constantly representing the chosen people of God as a deluded people. He is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power he is constantly using against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the result of obedience to right principles.

To Represent God's Character

All the light of the past, all the light which shines in the present and reaches forth into the future, as revealed in the word of God, is for every soul who will receive it. The glory of this light, which is the very glory of the character of Christ, is to be manifested in the individual Christian, in the family, in the church, in the ministry of the word, and in every institution established by God's people. All these the Lord designs shall be symbols of what can be done for the world. They are to be types of the saving power of the truths of the gospel. They are agencies in the fulfillment of God's great purpose for the human race.

God's people are to be channels for the outworking of the highest influence in the universe. In Zechariah's vision the two olive trees which stand before God are represented as emptying the golden oil out of themselves through golden tubes into the bowl of the sanctuary. From this the lamps of the sanctuary are fed, that they may give a continuous bright and shining light. So from the anointed ones that stand in God's presence the fullness of divine light and love and power is imparted to His people, that they may impart to others light and joy and refreshing. They are to become channels through which divine instrumentalities communicate to the world the tide of God's love.

The purpose which God seeks to accomplish through His people today is the same that He desired to accomplish through Israel when He brought them forth out of Egypt. [367] By beholding the goodness, the mercy, the justice, and the love of God revealed in the church, the world is to have a representation of His character. And when the law of God is thus exemplified in the life, even the world will recognize the superiority of those who love and fear and serve God above every other people on the earth.

The Lord has His eye upon every one of His people; He has His plans concerning each. It is His purpose that those who practice His holy precepts shall be a distinguished people. To the people of God today as well as to ancient Israel belong the words written by Moses through the Spirit of Inspiration: "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." Deuteronomy 7:6. "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep

therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” Deuteronomy 4:5-8.

Even these words fail of expressing the greatness and the glory of God’s purpose to be accomplished through His people. Not to this world only but to the universe are we to make manifest the principles of His kingdom. The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says: “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been [368] hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be [made] known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” Ephesians 3:8-10.

Brethren, “we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to the angels, and to men.” “What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God?” 1 Corinthians 4:9; 2 Peter 3:11, 12, margin.

In order to manifest the character of God, in order that we may not deceive ourselves, the church, and the world by a counterfeit Christianity, we must become personally acquainted with God. If we have fellowship with God, we are His ministers, though we may never preach to a congregation. We are workers together with God in presenting the perfection of His character in humanity. [369]

The Work for This Time

We are standing upon the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecies are fulfilling. Strange, eventful history is being recorded in the books of heaven. Everything in our world is in agitation. There are wars and rumors of wars. The nations are angry, and the time of the dead has come, that they should be judged. Events are changing to bring about the day of God, which hasteth greatly. Only a moment of time, as it were, yet remains. But while already nation is rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, there is not now a general engagement. As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle.

Satan is busily laying his plans for the last mighty conflict, when all will take sides. After the gospel has been proclaimed in the world for nearly two thousand years, Satan still presents to men and women the same scene that he presented to Christ. In a wonderful manner he causes the kingdoms of the world in their glory to pass before them. These he promises to all who will fall down and worship him. Thus he seeks to bring men under his dominion.

Satan is working to the utmost to make himself as God and to destroy all who oppose his power. And today the world is bowing before him. His power is received as the power of God. The prophecy of the Revelation is being fulfilled, that “all the world wondered after the beast.” Revelation 13:3.

Men in their blindness boast of wonderful progress and enlightenment; but to the eye of Omniscience are revealed the^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:14-22.

inward guilt and depravity. The heavenly watchers see the earth filled with violence and crime. Wealth is obtained by every species of robbery, not robbery of men only, but of God. Men are using His means to gratify their selfishness. Everything they can grasp is made to minister to their greed. Avarice and sensuality prevail. Men cherish the attributes of the first great deceiver. They have accepted him as God, and have become imbued with his spirit.

But the cloud of judicial wrath hangs over them, containing the elements that destroyed Sodom. In his visions of things to come the prophet John beheld this scene. This demon worship was revealed to him, and it seemed to him as if the whole world were standing on the brink of perdition. But as he looked with intense interest he beheld the company of God's commandment-keeping people. They had upon their foreheads the seal of the living God, and he said: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud One sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine [371] of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God." Revelation 14:12-19.

Before It Is Too Late

When the storm of God's wrath breaks upon the world, it will be a terrible revelation for souls to find that their house is being swept away because it is built upon the sand. Let the warning be given them before it is too late. We should now feel the responsibility of laboring with intense earnestness to impart to others the truths that God has given for this time. We cannot be too much in earnest.

The heart of God is moved. Souls are very precious in His sight. It was for this world that Christ wept in agony; for this world He was crucified. God gave His only-begotten Son to save sinners, and He desires us to love others as He has loved us. He desires to see those who have a knowledge of the truth imparting this knowledge to their fellow men.

Now is the time for the last warning to be given. There is a special power in the presentation of the truth at the present time; but how long will it continue? Only a little while. If there was ever a crisis, it is now.

All are now deciding their eternal destiny. Men need to be aroused to realize the solemnity of the time, the nearness of the day when human probation shall be ended. Decided efforts should be made to bring the message for this time prominently before the people. The third angel is to go forth with great power. Let none ignore this work or treat it as of little importance.

The light we have received upon the third angel's message is the true light. The mark of the beast is exactly what it has been proclaimed to be. Not all in regard to this matter is yet understood, nor will it be understood until the unrolling of the scroll; but a most solemn work is to be accomplished in our world. The Lord's command to His servants is: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show [372] My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1.

There is to be no change in the general features of our work. It is to stand as clear and distinct as prophecy has made it. We are to enter into no confederacy with the world, supposing that by so doing we could accomplish more. If any stand in the way, to hinder the advancement of the work in the lines that God has appointed, they will displease God. No line of truth that has made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they are is to be weakened. We have the old landmarks of truth, experience, and duty, and we are to stand firmly in defense of our principles, in full view of the world.

It is essential that men be raised up to open the living oracles of God to all peoples. Men of all ranks and capacities, with their various gifts, are to co-operate harmoniously for a common result. They are to unite in the work of bringing the truth to the people, each worker fulfilling his own special appointment.

The Three Angels' Messages

The three angels of (Revelation 14) are represented as flying in the midst of heaven, symbolizing the work of those who proclaim the first, second, and third angels' messages. All are linked together. The evidences of the abiding, everliving truth of these grand messages, that mean so much to the church, that have awakened such intense opposition from the religious world, are not extinct. Satan is constantly seeking to cast a shadow about these messages, so that the people of God shall not clearly discern their import, their time and place; but they live and are to exert their power upon our religious experience while time shall last.

The influence of these messages has been deepening and widening, setting in motion the springs of action in thousands of hearts, bringing into existence institutions of learning, publishing houses, and health institutions. All these are [373] instrumentalities of God to co-operate in the grand work represented by the first, second, and third angels, the work of warning the inhabitants of the world that Christ is coming the second time with power and great glory.

Brethren and sisters, would that I might say something to awaken you to the importance of this time, the significance of the events that are now taking place. I point you to the aggressive movements now being made for the restriction of religious liberty. God's sanctified memorial has been torn down, and in its place a false sabbath, bearing no sanctity, stands before the world. And while the powers of darkness are stirring up the elements from beneath, the Lord God of heaven is sending power from above to meet the emergency by arousing His living agencies to exalt the law of heaven. Now, just now, is our time to work in foreign countries. As America, the land of religious liberty, shall unite with the papacy in forcing the conscience and compelling men to honor the false sabbath, the people of every country on

the globe will be led to follow her example. Our people are not half awake to do all in their power, with the facilities within their reach, to extend the message of warning.

The Last Message of Mercy

The Lord God of heaven will not send upon the world His judgments for disobedience and transgression, until He has sent His watchmen to give the warning. He will not close up the period of probation until the message shall be more distinctly proclaimed. The law of God is to be magnified; its claims must be presented in their true, sacred character, that the people may be brought to decide for or against the truth. Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness. The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel.

There is no work in our world so great, so sacred, and so [374] glorious, no work that God honors so much, as this gospel work. The message presented at this time is the last message of mercy for a fallen world. Those who have the privilege of hearing this message, and who persist in refusing to heed the warning, cast away their last hope of salvation. There will be no second probation.

The word of truth, "It is written," is the gospel we are to preach. No flaming sword is placed before this tree of life. All who will may partake of it. There is no power that can prohibit any soul from taking of its fruit. All may eat, and live forever.

Mysteries into which angels desire to look, which prophets and kings and righteous men desired to understand, the remnant church will carry in messages from God to the world. The prophets prophesied of these things, and they longed to understand that which they foretold; but to them this privilege was not given. They longed to see what we see, and to hear what we hear; but they could not. They will know all when Christ shall come the second time; when, surrounded by a multitude which no man can number, He explains the deliverance wrought out by the great sacrifice He made. ...

Let None Be Unwarned

While the angels hold the four winds, we are to work with all our capabilities. We must bear our message without any delay. We must give evidence to the heavenly universe, and to men in this degenerate age, that our religion is a faith and a power of which Christ is the Author and His word the divine oracle. Human souls are hanging in the balance. They will either be subjects for the kingdom of God or slaves to the despotism of Satan. All are to have the privilege of laying hold of the hope set before them in the gospel, and how can they hear without a preacher? The human family is in need of a moral renovation, a preparation of character, that they may stand in God's presence. There are souls ready to perish [375] because of the theoretical errors which are prevailing, and which are calculated to counterwork the gospel message. Who will now fully consecrate themselves to become laborers together with God?

As you see the peril and misery of the world under the working of Satan, do not exhaust your God-given energies in idle lamentations, but go to work for yourselves and for others. Awake, and feel a burden for those who are perishing. If they are not won to Christ they will lose an eternity of bliss. Think of what it is possible for them to gain. The soul that God has created and Christ has redeemed is of great value because of the possibilities before it, the spiritual advantages that have been granted it, the capabilities it may possess if vitalized by the word of God, and the immortality which through the Life-giver it may obtain if obedient. One soul is of more value to heaven than a whole world of property, houses, lands, money. For the conversion of one soul we should tax our resources to the utmost. One soul won to Christ will flash heaven's light all around him, penetrating the moral darkness and saving other souls.

If Christ left the ninety and nine, that He might seek and save the one lost sheep, can we be justified in doing less? Is not a neglect to work even as Christ worked, to sacrifice as He sacrificed, a betrayal of sacred trusts, an insult to God?

Sound an alarm throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Tell the people that the day of the Lord is near and hasteth greatly. Let none be left unwarned. We might have been in the place of the poor souls that are in

error. We might have been placed among barbarians. According to the truth we have received above others, we are debtors to impart the same to them.

We have no time to lose. The end is near. The passage from place to place to spread the truth will soon be hedged with dangers on the right hand and on the left. Everything will be placed to obstruct the way of the Lord's messengers, [376] so that they will not be able to do that which it is possible for them to do now. We must look our work fairly in the face and advance as fast as possible in aggressive warfare. From the light given me of God I know that the powers of darkness are working with intense energy from beneath, and with stealthy tread Satan is advancing to take those who are now asleep, as a wolf taking his prey. We have warnings now which we may give, a work now which we may do; but soon it will be more difficult than we can imagine. God help us to keep in the channel of light, to work with our eyes fastened on Jesus our Leader, and patiently, perseveringly press on to gain the victory.

God's people have a mighty work before them, a work that must continually rise to greater prominence. Our efforts in missionary lines must become far more extensive. A more decided work than has been done must be done prior to the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. God's people are not to cease their labors until they shall encircle the world.—1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:23, 24.

We must live a twofold life—a life of thought and action, of silent prayer and earnest work. All who have received the light of truth should feel it their duty to shed rays of light upon the pathway of the impenitent. They should be witnesses for Christ in our offices as verily as in the church. God requires us to be living epistles, known and read of all men. The soul that turns to God for its strength, its support, its power, by daily, earnest prayer, will have noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth and duty, lofty purposes of action, and a continual hungering and thirsting after righteousness. By maintaining a connection with God we shall be enabled to diffuse to others, through our association with them, the light, the peace, the serenity, that rules in our hearts, and set before [377] them an example of unwavering fidelity to the interests of the work in which we are engaged.—1880, Testimonies for the Church 4:459, 460.

It is to the thirsting soul that the fountain of living waters is open. God declares: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." Isaiah 44:3. To souls that are earnestly seeking for light and that accept with gladness every ray of divine illumination from His holy word, to such alone light will be given. It is through these souls that God will reveal that light and power which will lighten the whole earth with His glory.—1889, Testimonies for the Church 5:729. [378]

The Camp Meeting

It is important that the members of our churches should attend our camp meetings. The enemies of truth are many; and because our numbers are few, we should present as strong a front as possible. Individually you need the benefits of the meeting, and God calls upon you to number one in the ranks of truth.

Some will say: "It is expensive to travel, and it would be better for us to save the money and give it for the advancement of the work where it is so much needed." Do not reason in this way; God calls upon you to take your place among the rank and file of His people. Strengthen the meeting all you possibly can by being present with your families. Put forth extra exertion to attend the gathering of God's people.

Brethren and sisters, it would be far better for you to let your business suffer than to neglect the opportunity of hearing the message God has for you. Make no excuse that will keep you from gaining every spiritual advantage possible. You need every ray of light. You need to become qualified to give a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. You cannot afford to lose one such privilege.

Anciently the Lord instructed His people to assemble three times a year for His worship. To these holy convocations the children of Israel came, bringing to the house of God their tithes, their sin offerings, and their offerings of gratitude. They met to recount God's mercies, to make known His wonderful works, and to offer praise and thanksgiving to His name. And they were to unite in the sacrificial service which pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Thus they were to be preserved from the corrupting power of worldliness and idolatry. Faith and love and^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:38-46.

gratitude were to be kept alive in their hearts, and through their association together in this sacred service they were to be bound closer to God and to one another.

In the days of Christ these feasts were attended by vast multitudes of people from all lands; and had they been kept as God intended, in the spirit of true worship, the light of truth might through them have been given to all the nations of the world.

With those who lived at a distance from the tabernacle, more than a month of every year must have been occupied in attendance upon these holy convocations. The Lord saw that these gatherings were necessary for the spiritual life of His people. They needed to turn away from their worldly cares, to commune with God, and to contemplate unseen realities.

If the children of Israel needed the benefit of these holy convocations in their time, how much more do we need them in these last days of peril and conflict! And if the people of the world then needed the light which God had committed to His church, how much more do they need it now!

This is a time for everyone to come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. The forces of the enemy are strengthening, and as a people we are misrepresented. We desire the people to become acquainted with our doctrines and work. We want them to know what we are, and what we believe. We must find our way to their hearts. Let the army of the Lord be on the ground to represent the work and cause of God. Do not plead an excuse. The Lord has need of you. He does not do His work without the co-operation of the human agent. Go to the camp meeting, even though you have to make a sacrifice to do so. Go with a will to work. And make every effort to induce your friends to go, not in your place, but to go with you, to stand on the Lord's side and obey His commandments. Help those who are interested to attend, if necessary providing them with food and lodging. Angels who are commissioned to minister to those [380] who are heirs of salvation will accompany you. God will do great things for His people. He will bless every effort to honor His cause and advance His work.

Preparation of Heart

At these gatherings we must ever remember that two forces are at work. A battle unseen by human eyes is being waged. The army of the Lord is on the ground, seeking to save souls. Satan and his host are also at work, trying in every possible way to deceive and destroy. The Lord bids us: "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:11, 12. Day by day the battle goes on. If our eyes could be opened to see the good and evil agencies at work, there would be no trifling, no vanity, no jesting or joking. If all would put on the whole armor of God and fight manfully the battles of the Lord, victories would be gained that would cause the kingdom of darkness to tremble.

None of us should go to the camp meeting depending on the ministers or the Bible workers to make the meeting a blessing to us. God does not want His people to hang their weight on the minister. He does not want them to be weakened by depending on human beings for help. They are not to lean, like helpless children, upon someone else as a prop. As a steward of the grace of God, every church member should feel personal responsibility to have life and root in himself. Each one should feel that in a measure the success of the meeting depends upon him. Do not say: "I am not responsible. I shall have nothing to do in this meeting." If you feel thus, you are giving Satan opportunity to work through you. He will crowd your mind with his thoughts, giving you something to do in his lines. Instead of gathering with Christ, you will scatter abroad. [381]

The success of the meeting depends on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. For the outpouring of the Spirit every lover of the cause of truth should pray. And as far as lies in our power, we are to remove every hindrance to His working. The Spirit can never be poured out while variance and bitterness toward one another are cherished by the members of the church. Envy, jealousy, evil surmising, and evilspeaking are of Satan, and they effectually bar the way against the Holy Spirit's working. Nothing else in this world is so dear to God as His church. Nothing is guarded by Him with such jealous care. Nothing so offends God as an act that injures the influence of those who are doing His service. He will call to account all who aid Satan in his work of criticizing and discouraging.

Those who are destitute of sympathy, tenderness, and love cannot do Christ's work. Before the prophecy can be fulfilled, The weak shall be "as David," and the house of David "as the angel of the Lord" (Zechariah 12:8), the children of God must put away every thought of suspicion in regard to their brethren. Heart must beat in unison with heart. Christian benevolence and brotherly love must be far more abundantly shown. The words are ringing in my ears: "Draw together, draw together." The solemn, sacred truth for this time is to unify the people of God. The desire for pre-eminence must die. One subject of emulation must swallow up all others,—who will most nearly resemble Christ in character? who will most entirely hide self in Jesus?

"Herein is My Father glorified," Christ says, "that ye bear much fruit." John 15:8. If there was ever a place where the believers should bear much fruit, it is at our camp meetings. At these meetings our acts, our words, our spirit, are marked, and our influence is as far-reaching as eternity.

Transformation of character is to be the testimony to the world of the indwelling love of Christ. The Lord expects His people to show that the redeeming power of grace can work [382] upon the faulty character and cause it to develop in symmetry and abundant fruitfulness.

But in order for us to fulfill God's purpose, there is a preparatory work to be done. The Lord bids us empty our hearts of the selfishness which is the root of alienation. He longs to pour upon us His Holy Spirit in rich measure, and He bids us clear the way by self-renunciation. When self is surrendered to God, our eyes will be opened to see the stumbling stones which our un-Christlikeness has placed in the way of others. All these God bids us remove. He says: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16. Then we may have the assurance that David had when, after confession of his sin, he prayed: "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." Psalm 51:12, 13.

When the grace of God reigns within, the soul will be surrounded with an atmosphere of faith and courage and Christlike love, an atmosphere invigorating to the spiritual life of all who inhale it. Then we can go to the camp meeting, not merely to receive, but to impart. Everyone who is a partaker of Christ's pardoning love, everyone who has been enlightened by

the Spirit of God and converted to the truth, will feel that for these precious blessings he owes a debt to every soul with whom he comes in contact. Those who are humble in heart the Lord will use to reach souls whom the ordained ministers cannot approach. They will be moved to speak words which reveal the saving grace of Christ.

And in blessing others they will themselves be blessed. God gives us opportunity to impart grace, that He may refill us with increased grace. Hope and faith will strengthen as the agent for God works with the talents and facilities that God has provided. He will have a divine agency to work with him. ... [383]

Work of Ministers

The presidents of conferences and the ministers should give themselves to the spiritual interests of the people and should therefore be excused from the mechanical labor attendant upon the meeting. The ministers should be ready to act as teachers and leaders in the work of the camp when occasion requires, but they should not be wearied out. They should feel refreshed and be in a cheerful frame of mind, for this is essential for the best good of the meeting. They should be able to speak words of cheer and courage, and to drop seeds of spiritual truth into the soil of honest hearts, to spring up and bear precious fruit.

The ministers should teach the people how to come to the Lord and how to lead others to Him. Methods must be adopted, plans must be carried out, whereby the standard shall be uplifted, and the people shall be taught how they may be purified from iniquity and elevated by adherence to pure and holy principles.

There must be time for heart searching, for soul culture. When the mind is occupied with matters of business, there must necessarily be a dearth of spiritual power. Personal piety, true faith, and heart holiness must be kept before the mind until the people realize their importance.

We must have the power of God in our camp meetings, or we shall not be able to prevail against the enemy of souls. Christ says: "Without Me ye can do nothing."

Those who gather at camp meetings must be impressed with the fact that the object of the meetings is to attain to a higher Christian experience, to advance in the knowledge of God, to become strengthened with spiritual vigor; and unless we realize this, the meetings will to us be fruitless.

There can be no influence so detrimental to a camp meeting, or any other gathering for religious worship, as much visiting [384] and careless conversation. Frequently men and women assemble in companies, and engage in conversation upon common subjects which do not relate to the meeting. Some have brought their farms with them, others have brought their houses, and are laying their plans for building. Some are dissecting the characters of others and have no time or disposition to search their own hearts, to discover the defects in their own characters, that they may correct their wrongs and perfect holiness in the fear of God.

If all who profess to be followers of Christ would improve the time out of meeting in conversing upon the truth, in dwelling upon the Christian's hope, in searching their own hearts, and in earnest prayer before God, pleading for His blessing, a much greater work would be accomplished than we have yet seen. Unbelievers, who falsely accuse those who believe the truth, would be convinced because of their "good conversation in Christ." Our words and actions are the fruit we bear; "wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."—1871, Testimonies for the Church 2:597, 598.

The object of a camp meeting is to lead all to separate from business cares and burdens, and devote a few days exclusively to seeking the Lord. We should occupy the time in self-examination, close searching of heart, penitential confession of sins, and renewing our vows to the Most High. If any come to these meetings for less worthy objects, we hope the character of the meeting will be such as to bring their minds to its proper objects.—1871, Testimonies for the Church 2:601.

The faith of most Christians will waver if they constantly neglect to meet together for conference and prayer. If it were impossible for them to enjoy such religious privileges, then God would send light direct from heaven by His angels, to [385] animate, cheer, and bless His scattered people. But He does not propose to work a miracle to sustain the faith of

His saints. They are required to love the truth enough to take some little pains to secure the privileges and blessings vouchsafed them of God. The least they can do is to devote a few days in the year to a united effort to advance the cause of Christ and to exchange friendly counsel and sympathy. —1876, Testimonies for the Church 4:106, 107. [386]

Working for the Higher Classes

We have a work to do for the ministers of other churches. God wants them to be saved. They, like ourselves, can have immortality only through faith and obedience. We must labor for them earnestly that they may obtain it. God wants them to have a part in His special work for this time. He wants them to be among the number who are giving to His household meat in due season. Why should they not be engaged in this work?

Our ministers should seek to come near to the ministers of other denominations. Pray for and with these men, for whom Christ is interceding. A solemn responsibility is theirs. As Christ's messengers we should manifest a deep, earnest interest in these shepherds of the flock.

The call to be given in "the highways," is to be proclaimed to all who have an active part in the world's work, to the teachers and leaders of the people. Those who bear heavy responsibilities in public life—physicians and teachers, lawyers and judges, public officers and businessmen—should be given a clear, distinct message. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36, 37.

We talk and write much of the neglected poor; should not some attention be given also to the neglected rich? Many look upon this class as hopeless, and they do little to open the eyes of those who, blinded and dazed by the power of Satan, have lost eternity out of their reckoning. Thousands of wealthy men have gone to their graves unwarned because—*

*—1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:77-81 (After the Camp Meeting).

they have been judged by appearance and passed by as hopeless subjects. But, indifferent as they may appear, I have been shown that most of this class are soul-burdened. There are thousands of rich men who are starving

for spiritual food. Many in official life feel their need of something which they have not. Few among them go to church, for they feel that they receive no benefit. The teaching they hear does not touch the soul. Shall we make no personal effort in their behalf?

Some will ask: Can we not reach them with publications? There are many who cannot be reached in this way. It is personal effort that they need. Are they to perish without a special warning? It was not so in ancient times. God's servants were sent to tell those in high places that they could find peace and rest only in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Majesty of heaven came to our world to save lost, fallen humanity. His efforts included not merely the outcasts but those in places of high honor. Ingeniously He worked to obtain access to souls in the higher classes who knew not God and did not keep His commandments.

The same work was continued after Christ's ascension. My heart is made very tender as I read of the interest manifested by the Lord in Cornelius. Cornelius was a man in high position, an officer in the Roman army, but he was walking in strict accordance with all the light he had received. The Lord sent a special message from heaven to him, and by another message directed Peter to visit him and give him light. It ought to be a great encouragement to us in our work to think of the compassion and tender love of God for those who are seeking and praying for light.

There are many who are represented to me as being like Cornelius, men whom God desires to connect with His church. Their sympathies are with the Lord's commandmentkeeping people. But the threads that bind them to the world hold them firmly. They have not the moral courage to take [388] their position with the lowly ones. We are to make special efforts for these souls, who are in need of special labor because of their responsibilities and temptations.

From the light given me I know that a plain "Thus saith the Lord" should now be spoken to men who have influence and authority in the world. They are stewards to whom God has committed important trusts. If they will accept His call, God will use them in His cause. ...

There are some who are especially fitted to work for the higher classes. These should seek the Lord daily, making it a study how to reach these persons, not to have merely a casual acquaintance with them, but to lay hold of them by personal effort and living faith, manifesting a deep love for their

souls, a real concern that they shall have a knowledge of the truth as it is in the word of God. [389]

Baptism

The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are two monumental pillars, one without and one within the church. Upon these ordinances Christ has inscribed the name of the true God.

Christ has made baptism the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He has made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Before man can find a home in the church, before passing the threshold of God's spiritual kingdom, he is to receive the impress of the divine name, "*The Lord our Righteousness.*" Jeremiah 23:6.

Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. They have obeyed the command: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, ... and touch not the unclean thing." And to them is fulfilled the promise: "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18.

Preparation for Baptism

There is need of a more thorough preparation on the part of candidates for baptism. They are in need of more faithful instruction than has usually been given them. The principles of the Christian life should be made plain to those who have^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:91-99.

newly come to the truth. None can depend upon their profession of faith as proof that they have a saving connection with Christ. We are not only to say, "I believe," but to practice the truth. It is by conformity to the will of God in our words, our deportment, our character, that we prove our connection with Him. Whenever one renounces sin, which is the transgression of the law, his life will be brought into conformity to the law, into perfect obedience. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The light of the word carefully studied, the voice of conscience, the strivings of the Spirit, produce in the heart genuine love for Christ, who gave Himself a whole sacrifice to redeem the whole person, body, soul, and spirit. And love is manifested in obedience. The line of demarcation will be plain and distinct between those who love God and keep His commandments, and those who love Him not and disregard His precepts.

Faithful Christian men and women should have an intense interest to bring the convicted soul to a correct knowledge of righteousness in Christ Jesus. If any have allowed the desire for selfish indulgence to become supreme in their life, the faithful believers should watch for these souls as they that must give an account. They must not neglect the faithful, tender, loving instruction so essential to the young converts, that there may be no halfhearted work. The very first experience should be right.

Satan does not want anyone to see the necessity of an entire surrender to God. When the soul fails to make this surrender, sin is not forsaken; the appetites and passions are striving for the mastery; temptations confuse the conscience, so that true conversion does not take place. If all had a sense of the conflict which each soul must wage with Satanic agencies that are seeking to ensnare, entice, and deceive, there would be much more diligent labor for those who are young in the faith.

These souls, left to themselves, are often tempted and do [391] not discern the evil of the temptation. Let them feel that it is their privilege to solicit counsel. Let them seek the society of those who can help them. Through association with those who love and fear God they will receive strength.

Our conversation with these souls should be of a spiritual, encouraging character. The Lord marks the conflicts of every weak, doubting, struggling one, and He will help all who call upon Him. They will see heaven open

before them, and angels of God descending and ascending the ladder of shining brightness which they are trying to climb.

The Parents' Work

Parents whose children desire to be baptized have a work to do, both in self-examination and in giving faithful instruction to their children. Baptism is a most sacred and important ordinance, and there should be a thorough understanding as to its meaning. It means repentance for sin, and the entrance upon a new life in Christ Jesus. There should be no undue haste to receive the ordinance. Let both parents and children count the cost. In consenting to the baptism of their children, parents sacredly pledge themselves to be faithful stewards over these children, to guide them in their character-building. They pledge themselves to guard with special interest these lambs of the flock, that they may not dishonor the faith they profess.

Religious instruction should be given to children from their earliest years. It should be given, not in a condemnatory spirit, but in a cheerful, happy spirit. Mothers need to be on the watch constantly, lest temptation shall come to the children in such a form as not to be recognized by them. The parents are to guard their children with wise, pleasant instruction. As the very best friends of these inexperienced ones, they should help them in the work of overcoming, for it means everything to them to be victorious. They should consider that their own dear children who are seeking to do [392] right are younger members of the Lord's family, and they should feel an intense interest in helping them to make straight paths in the King's highway of obedience. With loving interest they should teach them day by day what it means to be children of God and to yield the will in obedience to Him. Teach them that obedience to God involves obedience to their parents. This must be a daily, hourly work. Parents, watch, watch and pray, and make your children your companions.

When the happiest period of their life has come, and they in their hearts love Jesus and wish to be baptized, then deal faithfully with them. Before they receive the ordinance, ask them if it is to be their first purpose in life to work for God. Then tell them how to begin. It is the first lessons that mean

so much. In simplicity teach them how to do their first service for God. Make the work as easy to be understood as possible. Explain what it means to give up self to the Lord, to do just as His word directs, under the counsel of Christian parents.

After faithful labor, if you are satisfied that your children understand the meaning of conversion and baptism, and are truly converted, let them be baptized. But, I repeat, first of all prepare yourselves to act as faithful shepherds in guiding their inexperienced feet in the narrow way of obedience. God must work in the parents that they may give to their children a right example, in love, courtesy, and Christian humility, and in an entire giving up of self to Christ. If you consent to the baptism of your children and then leave them to do as they choose, feeling no special duty to keep their feet in the straight path, you yourselves are responsible if they lose faith and courage and interest in the truth.

The Pastor's Work

Candidates who have grown to manhood and womanhood should understand their duty better than do the younger ones; [393] but the pastor of the church has a duty to do for these souls. Have they wrong habits and practices? It is the duty of the pastor to have special meeting with them. Give them Bible readings, converse and pray with them, and plainly show the claims of the Lord upon them. Read to them the teaching of the Bible in regard to conversion. Show what is the fruit of conversion, the evidence that they love God. Show that true conversion is a change of heart, of thoughts and purposes. Evil habits are to be given up. The sins of evilspeaking, of jealousy, of disobedience, are to be put away. A warfare must be waged against every evil trait of character. Then the believing one can understandingly take to himself the promise: "Ask, and it shall be given you." Matthew 7:7.

Examination of Candidates

The test of discipleship is not brought to bear as closely as it should be upon those who present themselves for baptism. It should be understood whether they are simply taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists, or whether they are taking their stand on the Lord's side, to come out from the world and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing. Before baptism there should be a thorough inquiry as to the experience of the candidates. Let this inquiry be made, not in a cold and distant way, but kindly, tenderly, pointing the new converts to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Bring the requirements of the gospel to bear upon the candidates for baptism.

One of the points upon which those newly come to the faith will need instruction is the subject of dress. Let the new converts be faithfully dealt with. Are they vain in dress? Do they cherish pride of heart? The idolatry of dress is a moral disease. It must not be taken over into the new life. In most cases, submission to the gospel requirements will demand a decided change in the dress. [394]

There should be no carelessness in dress. For Christ's sake, whose witnesses we are, we should seek to make the best of our appearance. In the tabernacle service, God specified every detail concerning the garments of those who ministered before Him. Thus we are taught that He has a preference in regard to the dress of those who serve Him. Very specific were the directions given in regard to Aaron's robes, for his dress was symbolic. So the dress of Christ's followers should be symbolic. In all things we are to be representatives of Him. Our appearance in every respect should be characterized by neatness, modesty, and purity. But the word of God gives no sanction to the making of changes in apparel merely for the sake of fashion, that we may appear like the world. Christians are not to decorate the person with costly array or expensive ornaments.

The words of Scripture in regard to dress should be carefully considered. We need to understand that which the Lord of heaven appreciates in even the dressing of the body. All who are in earnest in seeking for the grace of Christ will heed the precious words of instruction inspired by God. Even the style of the apparel will express the truth of the gospel.

All who study the life of Christ and practice His teachings will become like Christ. Their influence will be like His. They will reveal soundness of

character. As they walk in the humble path of obedience, doing the will of God, they exert an influence that tells for the advancement of the cause of God and the healthful purity of His work. In these thoroughly converted souls the world is to have a witness to the sanctifying power of truth upon the human character.

The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, expressed in character, is an exaltation above everything that is esteemed in earth or in heaven. It is the very highest education. It is the key that opens the portals of the heavenly city. This knowledge it is God's purpose that all who put on Christ by [395] baptism shall possess. And it is the duty of God's servants to set before these souls the privilege of their high calling in Christ Jesus.

Administration of the Ordinance

Whenever possible, let baptism be administered in a clear lake or running stream. And give to the occasion all the importance and solemnity that can be brought into it. At such a service angels of God are always present.

The one who administers the ordinance of baptism should seek to make it an occasion of solemn, sacred influence upon all spectators. Every ordinance of the church should be so conducted as to be uplifting in its influence. Nothing is to be made common or cheap, or placed on a level with common things. Our churches need to be educated to greater respect and reverence for the sacred service of God. As ministers conduct the services connected with God's worship, so they are educating and training the people. Little acts that educate and train and discipline the soul for eternity are of vast consequence in the uplifting and sanctifying of the church.

In every church, baptismal robes should be provided for the candidates. This should not be regarded as a needless outlay of means. It is one of the things required in obedience to the injunction: "Let all things be done decently and in order." 1 Corinthians 14:40.

It is not well for one church to depend upon borrowing robes from another. Often when the robes are needed, they are not to be found; some

borrower has neglected to return them. Every church should provide for its own necessities in this line. Let a fund be raised for this purpose. If the whole church unite in this, it will not be a heavy burden.

The robes should be made of substantial material, of some dark color that water will not injure, and they should be weighted at the bottom. Let them be neat, well-shaped garments, made after an approved pattern. There should be no [396] attempt at ornamentation, no ruffling or trimming. All display, whether of trimming or ornaments, is wholly out of place. When the candidates have a sense of the meaning of the ordinance, they will have no desire for personal adornment. Yet there should be nothing shabby or unseemly, for this is an offense to God. Everything connected with this holy ordinance should reveal as perfect a preparation as possible.

After Baptism

The vows which we take upon ourselves in baptism embrace much. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit we are buried in the likeness of Christ's death and raised in the likeness of His resurrection, and we are to live a new life. Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ. Henceforth the believer is to bear in mind that he is dedicated to God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. He is to make all worldly considerations secondary to this new relation. Publicly he has declared that he will no longer live in pride and self-indulgence. He is no longer to live a careless, indifferent life. He has made a covenant with God. He has died to the world. He is to live to the Lord, to use for Him all his entrusted capabilities, never losing the realization that he bears God's signature, that he is a subject of Christ's kingdom, a partaker of the divine nature. He is to surrender to God all that he is and all that he has, employing all his gifts to His name's glory.

The obligations in the spiritual agreement entered into at baptism are mutual. As human beings act their part with wholehearted obedience, they have a right to pray: "Let it be known, Lord, that Thou art God in Israel." The fact that you have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is an assurance that, if you will claim Their help, these powers will help you in every emergency. The Lord will hear and answer

the prayers of His sincere [397] followers who wear Christ's yoke and learn in His school His meekness and lowliness.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:1-3.

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. ... And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” Verses 12-17. [398]

The Temperance Work

In our work more attention should be given to the temperance reform. Every duty that calls for reform involves repentance, faith, and obedience. It means the uplifting of the soul to a new and nobler life. Thus every true reform has its place in the work of the third angel's message. Especially does the temperance reform demand our attention and support. At our camp meetings we should call attention to this work and make it a living issue. We should present to the people the principles of true temperance and call for signers to the temperance pledge. Careful attention should be given to those who are enslaved by evil habits. We must lead them to the cross of Christ.

Our camp meetings should have the labors of medical men. These should be men of wisdom and sound judgment, men who respect the ministry of the word and who are not victims of unbelief. These men are the guardians of the health of the people, and they are to be recognized and respected. They should give instruction to the people in regard to the dangers of intemperance. This evil must be more boldly met in the future than it has been in the past. Ministers and doctors should set forth the evils of intemperance. Both should work in the gospel with power to condemn sin and exalt righteousness. Those ministers or doctors who do not make personal appeals to the people are remiss in their duty. They fail of doing the work which God has appointed them.

In other churches there are Christians who are standing in defense of the principles of temperance. We should seek^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:110, 111.

to come near to these workers and make a way for them to stand shoulder to shoulder with us. We should call upon great and good men to second our

efforts to save that which is lost.

If the work of temperance were carried forward by us as it was begun thirty years ago; if at our camp meetings we presented before the people the evils of intemperance in eating and drinking, and especially the evil of liquor drinking; if these things were presented in connection with the evidences of Christ's soon coming, there would be a shaking among the people. If we showed a zeal in proportion to the importance of the truths we are handling, we might be instrumental in rescuing hundreds, yea thousands, from ruin.

Only eternity will reveal what has been accomplished by this kind of ministry—how many souls, sick with doubt, and tired of worldliness and unrest, have been brought to the Great Physician, who longs to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him. Christ is a risen Saviour, and there is healing in His wings.

As we see men going where the liquid poison is dealt out to destroy their reason, as we see their souls imperiled, what are we doing to rescue them? Our work for the tempted and fallen will achieve real success only as the grace of Christ reshapes the character and the man is brought into living connection with the infinite God. This is the purpose of all true temperance effort. We are called upon to work with more than human energy, to labor with the power that is in Jesus Christ. The One who stooped to take human nature is the One who will show us how to conduct the battle. Christ has left His work in our hands, and we are to wrestle with God, supplicating day and night for the power that is unseen. It is laying right hold of God through Jesus Christ that will gain the victory. [400]

As we near the close of time we must rise higher and still higher upon the question of health reform and Christian temperance, presenting it in a more positive and decided manner. We must strive continually to educate the people, not only by our words, but by our practice. Precept and practice combined have a telling influence.—1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:112. [401]

Women to Be Gospel Workers

The work that has been begun in helping our sisters feel their individual accountability to God is a good and necessary work. Long has it been neglected. The Lord would have us ever urge the worth of the human soul upon those who do not understand its value. And when this work is laid out in clear, simple, definite lines, we may expect that the home duties, instead of being neglected, will be done much more intelligently.

If we can arrange to have regular, organized companies instructed intelligently in regard to the part they should act as servants of the Master, our churches will have a vitality that they have long needed. The excellence of the soul that Christ died to save will be appreciated. Our sisters generally have a hard time with their increasing families and their unappreciated trials. I have so longed for women who could be educated to help our sisters rise from their discouragement and feel that they could do a work for the Lord. This will bring rays of sunshine into their own lives, which will be reflected into the lives of others. God will bless all who unite in this grand work.

Many youth as well as older sisters appear shy of religious conversation. They do not appreciate their opportunities. They close the windows of the soul that should be opened heavenward, and open their windows wide earthward. But when they see the excellence of the human soul they will close the windows earthward, which depend on worldly amusements and associations in folly and sin, and will open the windows heavenward to behold spiritual things. The^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:114-118.

word of God must be their assurance, their hope, their peace. Then they can say: "I will receive the light of the Sun of Righteousness, that it may shine

forth to others.”

The most successful toilers are those who cheerfully take up the work of serving God in little things. Every human being is to work with his life thread, weaving it into the fabric to help complete the pattern.

The work of Christ was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience. From that one soul the intelligence received was carried to thousands.

Training in Helping Others

We should educate the youth to help the youth; and as they seek to do this work they will gain an experience that will qualify them to become consecrated workers in a larger sphere. Thousands of hearts can be reached in the most simple, humble way. The most intellectual, those who are looked upon and praised as the world’s most gifted men and women, are often refreshed by the simple words that flow from the heart of one who loves God and who can speak of that love as naturally as the worldling speaks of the things which his mind contemplates and feeds upon. Often the words well prepared and studied have little influence. But the true, honest words of a son or daughter of God, spoken in natural simplicity, will open the door to hearts that have long been locked.

The wails of a world’s sorrow are heard all around us. Sin is pressing its shadow upon us, and our minds must be ready for every good word and work. We know that we have the presence of Jesus. The sweet influence of His Holy Spirit is teaching and guiding our thoughts, leading us to speak words that will cheer and brighten the pathway of others. If we can speak to our sisters often, and instead of saying, “Go,” lead them ourselves to do as we would do, to feel as we [403] would feel, there will be a growing appreciation of the value of the human soul. We are learners, that we may be teachers. This thought must be impressed on the mind of every church member.

We fully believe in church organization; but this is not to prescribe the exact way in which we should work, for not all minds are to be reached by the same methods. Nothing is to be allowed to keep the servant of God from

his fellow men. The individual believer is to labor for the individual sinner. Each person has his own light to keep burning; and if the heavenly oil is emptied into these lamps through the golden pipes; if the vessels are emptied of self, and prepared to receive the holy oil, light will be shed on the sinner's path to some purpose. More light will be shed on the pathway of the wanderer by one such lamp than by a whole procession of torchlights gotten up for show. Personal consecration and sanctification to God will bring better results than the most imposing display.

Teach our sisters that their question should be each day: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do this day?" Each consecrated vessel will daily have the holy oil emptied into it to be emptied out into other vessels.

A Large Work Accomplished

If the life we live in this world is wholly for Christ, it is a life of daily surrender. He has the freewill service, and each soul is His own jewel. If we can impress upon our sisters the good which it is in their power to do through Christ, we shall see a large work accomplished. If we can arouse the mind and heart to co-operate with the divine Worker, we shall, through the work they may accomplish, gain great victories. But self must be hidden; Christ must appear as the worker.

There must be an interchange of taking in and giving out, receiving and imparting. This links us up as laborers [404] together with God. This is the lifework of the Christian. He that will lose his life shall find it.

The capacity for receiving the holy oil from the two olive trees is increased as the receiver empties that holy oil out of himself in word and action to supply the necessities of other souls. Work, precious, satisfying work—to be constantly receiving and constantly imparting.

We need and must have fresh supplies every day. And how many souls we may help by communicating to them! All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil, to be a joy and a blessing to others. I have no fear that any will make blundering work if they will only become one with Christ. If He is abiding with us, we shall work

continuously and solidly, so that our work will abide. The divine fullness will flow through the consecrated human agent to be given forth to others.

The Lord has a work for women as well as men to do. They may accomplish a good work for God if they will first learn in the school of Christ the precious, all-important lesson of meekness. They must not only bear the name of Christ, but possess His Spirit. They must walk even as He walked, purifying their souls from everything that defiles. Then they will be able to benefit others by presenting the all-sufficiency of Jesus.

Women may take their places in the work at this crisis, and the Lord will work through them. If they are imbued with a sense of their duty, and labor under the influence of the Spirit of God, they will have just the self-possession required for this time. The Saviour will reflect upon these selfsacrificing women the light of His countenance, and this will give them a power which will exceed that of men. They can [405] do in families a work that men cannot do, a work that reaches the inner life. They can come close to the hearts of those whom men cannot reach. Their labor is needed.

A direct necessity is being met by the work of women who have given themselves to the Lord and are reaching out to help a needy, sin-stricken people. Personal evangelistic work is to be done. The women who take up this work carry the gospel to the homes of the people in the highways and the byways. They read and explain the word to families, praying with them, caring for the sick, relieving their temporal necessities. They present before families and individuals the purifying, transforming influence of the truth. They show that the way to find peace and joy is to follow Jesus.

All who work for God should have the Martha and the Mary attributes blended—a willingness to minister and a sincere love of the truth. Self and selfishness must be put out of sight. God calls for earnest women workers, workers who are prudent, warmhearted, tender, and true to principle. He calls for persevering women who will take their minds from self and their personal convenience, and will center them on Christ, speaking words of

truth, praying with the persons to whom they can obtain access, laboring for the conversion of souls.

Oh, what is our excuse, my sisters, that we do not devote all the time possible to searching the Scriptures, making the mind a storehouse of precious things, that we may present them to those who are not interested in the truth? Will our sisters arise to the emergency? Will they work for the Master? [406]

Teaching Home Religion

Those who bear the last message of mercy to the world should feel it their duty to instruct parents in regard to home religion. The great reformatory movement must begin in presenting to fathers and mothers and children the principles of the law of God. As the claims of the law are presented, and men and women are convicted of their duty to render obedience, show them the responsibility of their decision, not only for themselves but for their children. Show that obedience to God's word is our only safeguard against the evils that are sweeping the world to destruction. Parents are giving to their children an example either of obedience or of transgression. By their example and teaching, the eternal destiny of their households will in most cases be decided. In the future life the children will be what their parents have made them.

If parents could be led to trace the results of their action, and could see how by their example and teaching they perpetuate and increase the power of sin or the power of righteousness, a change would certainly be made. Many would break the spell of tradition and custom.

Let ministers urge this matter upon their congregations. Press home upon the consciences of parents the conviction of their solemn duties, so long neglected. This will break up the spirit of pharisaism and resistance to the truth as nothing else can. Religion in the home is our great hope and makes the prospect bright for the conversion of the whole family to the truth of God.*

*1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:119.

Parable of the Straying Sheep

The parable of the straying sheep should be treasured as a motto in every household. The divine Shepherd leaves the ninety and nine, and goes out into the wilderness to seek the one that is lost. There are thickets, quagmires, and dangerous crevices in the rocks, and the Shepherd knows that if the sheep is in any of these places, a friendly hand must help it out. As He hears its bleating afar off, He encounters any and every difficulty that He may save His sheep that is lost. When He discovers the lost one, He does not greet it with reproaches. He is only glad that He has found it alive. With firm yet gentle hand He parts the briers or takes it from the mire; tenderly He lifts it to His shoulders and bears it back to the fold. The pure, sinless Redeemer bears the sinful, the unclean.

The Sin Bearer carries the befouled sheep, yet so precious is His burden that He rejoices, singing: “I have found My sheep which was lost.” Luke 15:6. Let every one of you consider that your individual self has thus been borne upon Christ’s shoulders. Let none entertain a masterly spirit, a self-righteous, criticizing spirit; for not one sheep would ever have entered the fold if the Shepherd had not undertaken the painful search in the desert. The fact that one sheep was lost was enough to awaken the sympathy of the Shepherd and start Him on His quest.

This speck of a world was the scene of the incarnation and suffering of the Son of God. Christ did not go to worlds unfallen, but He came to this world, all seared and marred with the curse. The outlook was not favorable, but most discouraging. Yet “He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:124, 125.

have set judgment in the earth.” Isaiah 42:4. We must bear in mind the great joy manifested by the Shepherd at the recovery of the lost. He calls upon

His neighbors: “Rejoice with Me; for I have found My sheep which was lost.” And all heaven echoes the note of joy. The Father Himself joys over the rescued one with singing. What a holy ecstasy of joy is expressed in this parable! That joy it is your privilege to share.

Are you, who have this example before you, co-operating with Him who is seeking to save the lost? Are you colaborers with Christ? Can you not for His sake endure suffering, sacrifice, and trial? There is opportunity for doing good to the souls of the youth and the erring. If you see one whose words or attitude shows that he is separated from God, do not blame him. It is not your work to condemn him, but come close to his side to give him help. Consider the humility of Christ, and His meekness and lowliness, and work as He worked, with a heart full of sanctified tenderness. “At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people. Thus saith the Lord, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” Jeremiah 31:1-3.

In order for us to work as Christ worked, self must be crucified. It is a painful death; but it is life, life to the soul. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” Isaiah 57:15. [409]

The Need of Educational Reform

“And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.” “And thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.” Isaiah 61:4; 58:12. These words of Inspiration present before believers in present truth the work that should now be done in the education of our children and youth. When the truth for these last days came to the world in the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages, we were shown that in the education of our children a different order of things must be brought in; but it has taken much time to understand what changes should be made.

Our work is reformatory; and it is the purpose of God that through the excellence of the work done in our educational institutions the attention of the people shall be called to the last great effort to save the perishing. In our schools the standard of education must not be lowered. It must be lifted higher and still higher, far above where it now stands; but the education given must not be confined to a knowledge of textbooks merely. The study of textbooks alone cannot afford students the discipline they need, nor can it impart true wisdom. The object of our schools is to provide places where the younger members of the Lord’s family may be trained according to His plan of growth and development.

Satan has used the most ingenious methods to weave his plans and principles into the systems of education, and thus gain a strong hold on the minds of the children and youth. It is the work of the true educator to thwart his devices. We are under solemn, sacred covenant to God to bring up our^{*}

^{*}—1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:126-137.

children for Him and not for the world; to teach them not to put their hands into the hand of the world, but to love and fear God, and to keep His commandments. They should be impressed with the thought that they are formed in the image of their Creator and that Christ is the pattern after which they are to be fashioned. Most earnest attention must be given to the education which will impart a knowledge of salvation, and will conform the life and character to the divine similitude. It is the love of God, the purity of soul woven into the life like threads of gold, that is of true worth. The height man may thus reach has not been fully realized.

For the accomplishment of this work a broad foundation must be laid. A new purpose must be brought in and find place, and students must be aided in applying Bible principles in all they do. Whatever is crooked, whatever is twisted out of the right line, is to be plainly pointed out and avoided; for it is iniquity not to be perpetuated. It is important that every teacher should love and cherish sound principles and doctrines, for this is the light to be reflected upon the pathway of all students.

The Third Angel's Message in Our Schools

In the book of Revelation we read of a special work that God desires to have His people do in these last days. He has revealed His law and shown us the truth for this time. This truth is constantly unfolding, and God designs that we shall be intelligent in regard to it, that we may be able to distinguish between right and wrong, between righteousness and unrighteousness.

The third angel's message, the great testing truth for this time, is to be taught in all our institutions. God designs that through them this special warning shall be given, and bright beams of light shall shine to the world. Time is short. The perils of the last days are upon us, and we should watch and [411] pray, and study and heed the lessons that are given us in the books of Daniel and the Revelation. ...

We shall have to stand before magistrates to answer for our allegiance to the law of God, to make known the reasons of our faith. And the youth should understand these things. They should know the things that will come to pass before the closing up of the world's history. These things concern

our eternal welfare, and teachers and students should give more attention to them. By pen and voice, knowledge should be imparted which will be meat in due season, not only to the young, but to those of mature years also. ...

The great, grand work of bringing out a people who will have Christlike characters, and who will be able to stand in the day of the Lord, is to be accomplished. As long as we sail with the current of the world we need neither canvas nor oar. It is when we turn squarely about to stem the current that our labors begin. Satan will bring in every kind of theory to pervert the truth. The work will go hard, for since the fall of Adam it has been the fashion of the world to sin. ...

Then let no more time be lost in dwelling on the many things which are not essential and which have no bearing upon the present necessities of God's people. Let no more time be lost in exalting men who know not the truth, "for the time is at hand." There is no time now to fill the mind with theories of what is popularly called "higher education." The time devoted to that which does not tend to assimilate the soul to the likeness of Christ is so much time lost for eternity. This we cannot afford, for every moment is freighted with eternal interests. Now, when the great work of judging the living is about to begin, shall we allow unsanctified ambition to take possession of the heart and lead us to neglect the education required to meet the needs in this day of peril? ...

We know that there are many schools which afford [412] opportunities for education in the sciences, but we desire something more than this. The science of true education is the truth, which is to be so deeply impressed on the soul that it cannot be obliterated by the error that everywhere abounds. The third angel's message is truth, and light, and power, and to present it so that right impressions will be made upon hearts should be the work of our schools as well as of our churches, of the teacher as well as of the minister. Those who accept positions as educators should prize more and more the revealed will of God so plainly and strikingly presented in Daniel and the Revelation.

Bible Study

The urgent necessities that are making themselves felt in this time demand a constant education in the word of God. This is present truth. Throughout the world there should be a reform in Bible study, for it is needed now as never before. As this reform progresses, a mighty work will be wrought; for when God declared that His word should not return unto Him void, He meant all that He said. A knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ “whom He has sent” is the highest education, and it will cover the earth with its wonderful enlightenment as the waters cover the sea.

Bible study is especially needed in the schools. Students should be rooted and grounded in divine truth. Their attention should be called, not to the assertions of men, but to the word of God. Above all other books, the word of God must be our study, the great textbook, the basis of all education; and our children are to be educated in the truths found therein, irrespective of previous habits and customs. In doing this, teachers and students will find the hidden treasure, the higher education.

Bible rules are to be the guide of the daily life. The cross of Christ is to be the theme, revealing the lessons we must learn and practice. Christ must be brought into all the [413] studies, that students may drink in the knowledge of God and may represent Him in character. His excellence is to be our study in time as well as in eternity. The word of God, spoken by Christ in the Old and New Testaments, is the bread from heaven; but much that is called science is as dishes of human invention, adulterated food; it is not the true manna.

In God’s word is found wisdom unquestionable, inexhaustible—wisdom that originated, not in the finite, but in the infinite mind. But much of that which God has revealed in His word is dark to men, because the jewels of truth are buried beneath the rubbish of human wisdom and tradition. To many the treasures of the word remain hidden, because they have not been searched for with earnest perseverance until the golden precepts were understood. The word must be searched in order to purify and prepare those who receive it to become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King.

The study of God’s word should take the place of the study of those books that have led minds into mysticism and away from the truth. Its living principles, woven into our lives, will be our safeguard in trials and temptations; its divine instruction is the only way to success. As the test

comes to every soul, there will be apostasies. Some will prove to be traitors, heady, high-minded, and self-sufficient, and will turn away from the truth, making shipwreck of faith. Why? Because they did not live “by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” They did not dig deep and make their foundation sure. When the words of the Lord through His chosen messengers are brought to them, they murmur and think the way is made too strait. In the sixth chapter of John we read of some who were thought to be disciples of Christ, but who, when the plain truth was presented to them, were displeased and walked no more with Him. In like manner these superficial students also will turn away from Christ. [414]

Everyone who has been converted to God is called upon to grow in capability by using his talents; every branch of the living Vine that does not grow is pruned off and cast away as rubbish. What, then, shall be the character of the education given in our schools? Shall it be according to the wisdom of this world or according to that wisdom that is from above? Will not teachers awake to their responsibility in this matter and see that the word of God has a larger place in the instruction given in our schools?

The Training of Workers

One great object of our schools is the training of youth to engage in service in our institutions and in different lines of gospel work. The people everywhere are to have the Bible opened to them. The time has come, the important time when through God’s messengers the scroll is being unrolled to the world. The truth comprised in the first, second, and third angels’ messages must go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; it must lighten the darkness of every continent and extend to the islands of the sea. Nothing of human invention must be allowed to retard this work. That this may be accomplished, there is need of cultivated and consecrated talent; there is need of persons who can do excellent work in the meekness of Christ because self is hid in Christ. Novices cannot acceptably do the work of unfolding the hidden treasure to enrich souls in spiritual things. “Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.” “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:7, 15. This

charge to Timothy is to be an educating power in every family and in every school.

Earnest efforts are called for on the part of all connected with our institutions, not only our schools, but our sanitariums and publishing houses also, to qualify men, women, and [415] youth to become colaborers with God. Students are to be instructed to work intelligently in Christ's lines, to present a noble, elevated, Christian character to those with whom they associate. Those who have charge of training the youth connected with any line of our work should be men who have a deep sense of the value of souls. Unless they drink deeply of the Holy Spirit, there is an evil watcher who will create annoying circumstances. The educator should be wise to discern that while faithfulness and kindness will win souls, harshness never will. Arbitrary words and actions stir up the worst passions of the human heart. If men and women professing to be Christians have not learned to put away their own evil and childish tempers, how can they expect to be honored and respected?

Then what carefulness should be exercised in selecting proper persons as instructors, that they may not only be faithful in their work, but may manifest a right temper. If they are not trustworthy, they should be discharged. God will hold every institution responsible for any neglect to see that kindness and love are encouraged. It should never be forgotten that Christ Himself has charge of our institutions.

The best ministerial talent should be employed in teaching the Bible in our schools. Those selected for this work need to be thorough Bible students and to have a deep Christian experience, and their salary should be paid from the tithe. God designs that all our institutions shall become instrumentalities for educating and developing workers of whom He will not be ashamed, workers who can be sent out as well-qualified missionaries to do service for the Master; but this object has not been kept in view. In many respects we are far behind in this work, and the Lord requires that a zeal be shown in it infinitely greater than has hitherto been manifested. He has called us out from the world that we may be witnesses for His truth, and all through our ranks young [416] men and women should be trained for positions of usefulness and influence.

There is an urgent demand for laborers in the gospel field. Young men are needed for this work; God calls for them. Their education is of primary

importance in our colleges, and in no case should it be ignored or regarded as a secondary matter. It is entirely wrong for teachers, by suggesting other occupations, to discourage young men who might be qualified to do acceptable work in the ministry. Those who present hindrances to prevent young men from fitting themselves for this work are counterworking the plans of God, and they will have to give an account of their course. There is among us more than an average of men of ability. If their capabilities were brought into use, we should have twenty ministers where we now have one.

Young men who design to enter the ministry should not spend a number of years solely in obtaining an education. Teachers should be able to comprehend the situation and to adapt their instruction to the wants of this class, and special advantages should be given them for a brief yet comprehensive study of the branches most needed to fit them for their work. But this plan has not been followed. Too little attention has been given to the education of young men for the ministry. We have not many years to work, and teachers should be imbued with the Spirit of God and work in harmony with His revealed will, instead of carrying out their own plans. We are losing much every year because we do not heed the counsel of the Lord on these points.

In our schools missionary nurses should receive lessons from well-qualified physicians, and as a part of their education should learn how to battle with disease and to show the value of nature's remedies. This work is greatly needed. Cities and towns are steeped in sin and moral corruption, yet there are Lots in every Sodom. The poison of sin is at work at the heart of society, and God calls for reformers to stand [417] in defense of the law which He has established to govern the physical system. They should at the same time maintain an elevated standard in the training of the mind and the culture of the heart, that the Great Physician may co-operate with the human helping hand in doing a work of mercy and necessity in the relief of suffering.

It is also the Lord's design that our schools shall give young people a training which will prepare them to teach in any department of the Sabbath school or to discharge the duties in any of its offices. We should see a different state of affairs if a number of consecrated young persons would devote themselves to the Sabbath school work, taking pains to educate themselves and then to instruct others as to the best methods to be

employed in leading souls to Christ. This is a line of work that brings returns.

Missionary Teachers

Teachers should be educated for missionary work. Everywhere there are openings for the missionary, and it will not be possible to supply laborers from any two or three countries to answer all the appeals for help. Besides the education of those who are to be sent out from our older conferences as missionaries, persons in various parts of the world should be trained to work for their own countrymen and their own neighbors; and as far as possible it is better and safer for them to receive their education in the field where they are to labor. It is seldom best, either for the worker or for the advancement of the work, that he should go to distant lands for his education. The Lord would have every possible provision made to meet these necessities; and if churches are awake to their responsibilities, they will know how to act in any emergency.

To supply the need of laborers, God desires that educational centers be established in different countries where students of promise may be educated in the practical branches [418] of knowledge and in Bible truth. As these persons engage in labor, they will give character to the work of present truth in the new fields. They will awaken an interest among unbelievers and aid in rescuing souls from the bondage of sin. The very best teachers should be sent to the various countries where schools are to be established, to carry on the educational work. [419]

Hindrances to Reform

To some extent the Bible has been introduced into our schools, and some efforts have been made in the direction of reform; but it is most difficult to adopt right principles after having been so long accustomed to popular methods. The first attempts to change the old customs brought severe trials upon those who would walk in the way which God has pointed out. Mistakes have been made, and great loss has resulted. There have been hindrances which have tended to keep us in common, worldly lines, and to prevent us from grasping true educational principles. To the unconverted, who view matters from the lowlands of human selfishness, unbelief, and indifference, right principles and methods have appeared wrong.

Some teachers and managers who are only half converted are stumbling blocks to others. They concede some things and make half reforms; but when greater knowledge comes, they refuse to advance, preferring to work according to their own ideas. In doing this they pluck and eat of that tree of knowledge which places the human above the divine. “Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the Flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve.” “If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.” Joshua 24:14, 15; 1 Kings 18:21. We should have been far in advance of our present spiritual condition had we moved forward as the light came to us.

When new methods have been advocated, so many^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:141-151.

doubtful questions have been introduced, so many councils held that every difficulty might be discerned, that reformers have been handicapped, and

some have ceased to urge reforms. They seem unable to stem the current of doubt and criticism. Comparatively few received the gospel in Athens because the people cherished pride of intellect and worldly wisdom, and counted the gospel of Christ foolishness. But “the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” Therefore “we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:25, 23, 24.

We need now to begin over again. Reforms must be entered into with heart and soul and will. Errors may be hoary with age; but age does not make error truth, nor truth error. Altogether too long have the old customs and habits been followed. The Lord would now have every idea that is false put away from teachers and students. We are not at liberty to teach that which shall meet the world’s standard or the standard of the church, simply because it is the custom to do so. The lessons which Christ taught are to be the standard. That which the Lord has spoken concerning the instruction to be given in our schools is to be strictly regarded; for if there is not in some respects an education of an altogether different character from that which has been carried on in some of our schools, we need not have gone to the expense of purchasing lands and erecting school buildings.

Popularity Through Lowered Standards

Some will urge that if religious teaching is to be made prominent our schools will become unpopular; that those who are not of our faith will not patronize them. Very well; then let them go to other schools, where they will find a system of education that suits their taste. It is Satan’s purpose [421] by these considerations to prevent the attainment of the object for which our schools were established. Hindered by his devices, the managers reason after the manner of the world and copy its plans and imitate its customs. Many have so far shown their lack of wisdom from above as to join with the enemies of God and the truth in providing worldly entertainments for the students. In doing this they bring upon themselves

the frown of God, for they mislead the youth and do a work for Satan. This work, with all its results, they must meet at the bar of God.

Those who pursue such a course show that they cannot be trusted. After the evil has been done, they may confess their error; but can they undo the influence they have exerted? Will the “well done” be spoken to those who have been false to their trust? These unfaithful workmen have not built upon the eternal Rock, and their foundation will prove to be sliding sand. When the Lord requires us to be distinct and peculiar, how can we crave popularity or seek to imitate the customs and practices of the world? “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” James 4:4.

To lower the standard in order to secure popularity and an increase of numbers, and then to make this increase a cause of rejoicing, shows great blindness. If numbers were an evidence of success, Satan might claim the pre-eminence; for in this world his followers are largely in the majority. It is the degree of moral power pervading a school that is a test of its prosperity. It is the virtue, intelligence, and piety of the people composing our schools, not their numbers, that should be a source of joy and thankfulness. Then shall our schools become converted to the world and follow its customs and fashions? “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye ... be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, [422] that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:1, 2.

Men will employ every means to make less prominent the difference between Seventh-day Adventists and observers of the first day of the week. A company was presented before me under the name of Seventh-day Adventists, who were advising that the banner, or sign, which makes us a distinct people should not be held out so strikingly; for they claimed that this was not the best policy in order to secure success to our institutions. But this is not a time to haul down our colors, to be ashamed of our faith. This distinctive banner, described in the words, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,” is to be borne through the world to the close of probation. While efforts should be increased to advance in different localities, there must be no cloaking of our faith to secure patronage. Truth must come to souls

ready to perish; and if it is in any way hidden, God is dishonored, and the blood of souls will be upon our garments.

Just as long as those in connection with our institutions walk humbly with God, heavenly intelligences will co-operate with them; but let all bear in mind the fact that God has said: "Them that honor Me I will honor." 1 Samuel 2:30. Never for one moment should the impression be given to anyone that it would be for his profit to hide his faith and doctrines from the unbelieving people of the world, fearing that he may not be so highly esteemed if his principles are known. Christ requires from all His followers open, manly confession of faith. Each must take his position and be what God designed he should be, a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. The whole universe is looking with inexpressible interest to see the closing work of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Every Christian is to be a light, not hid under a bushel or under a bed, but put on a candlestick, that light may be given to all who are in the [423] house. Never, from cowardice or worldly policy, let the truth of God be placed in the background. ...

The education given to the young molds the whole social fabric. Throughout the world society is in disorder, and a thorough transformation is needed. Many suppose that better educational facilities, greater skill, and more recent methods will set things right. They profess to believe and receive the living oracles, and yet they give the word of God an inferior position in the great framework of education. That which should stand first is made subordinate to human inventions.

It is so easy to drift into worldly plans, methods, and customs and have no more thought of the time in which we live, or of the great work to be accomplished, than had the people in Noah's day. There is constant danger that our educators will travel over the same ground as did the Jews, conforming to customs, practices, and traditions which God has not given. With tenacity and firmness some cling to old habits and a love of various studies which are not essential, as if their salvation depended upon these things. In doing this they turn away from the special work of God and give to the students a deficient, a wrong education. Minds are directed from a plain "Thus saith the Lord," which involves eternal interests, to human theories and teachings. Infinite, eternal truth, the revelation of God, is

explained in the light of human interpretations, when only the Holy Spirit's power can unfold spiritual things. Human wisdom is foolishness; for it misses the whole of God's providences, which look into eternity.

Reformers are not destroyers. They will never seek to ruin those who do not harmonize with their plans and [424] assimilate to them. Reformers must advance, not retreat. They must be decided, firm, resolute, unflinching; but firmness must not degenerate into a domineering spirit. God desires to have all who serve Him firm as a rock where principle is concerned, but meek and lowly of heart, as was Christ. Then, abiding in Christ, they can do the work He would do were He in their place. A rude, condemnatory spirit is not essential to heroism in the reforms for this time. All selfish methods in the service of God are an abomination in His sight. [425]

Character and Work of Teachers

The work done in our schools is not to be like that done in the colleges and seminaries of the world. In the grand work of education, instruction in the sciences is not to be of an inferior character, but that knowledge must be considered of first importance which will fit a people to stand in the great day of God's preparation. Our schools must be more like the schools of the prophets. They should be training schools, where the students may be brought under the discipline of Christ and learn of the Great Teacher. They should be family schools, where every student will receive special help from his teachers as the members of the family should receive help in the home. Tenderness, sympathy, unity, and love are to be cherished. There should be unselfish, devoted, faithful teachers, teachers who are constrained by the love of God and who, with hearts full of tenderness, will have a care for the health and happiness of the students. It should be their aim to advance the students in every essential branch of knowledge.

Wise teachers should be chosen for our schools, those who will feel responsible to God to impress upon minds the necessity of knowing Christ as a personal Saviour. From the highest to the lowest grade they should show special care for the salvation of the students and through personal effort seek to lead their feet into straight paths. They should look with pity upon those who have been badly trained in childhood, and seek to remedy defects, which, if retained, will greatly mar the character. No one can do this work who has not first learned in the school of Christ how to teach.

All who teach in our schools should have a close connection with God and a thorough understanding of His word,*

*1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:152-156.

that they may be able to bring divine wisdom and knowledge into the work of educating the youth for usefulness in this life and for the future, immortal life. They should be men and women who not only have a knowledge of the truth, but who are doers of the word of God. "It is written" should be expressed in their words and by their lives. By their own practice they should teach simplicity and correct habits in everything. No man or woman should be connected with our schools as an educator who has not had an experience in obeying the word of the Lord.

Principal and teachers need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. The earnest prayer of contrite souls will be lodged by the throne, and God will answer these prayers in His own time if we cling to His arm by faith. Let self be merged in Christ, and Christ in God, and there will be such a display of His power as will melt and subdue hearts. Christ taught in a way altogether different from ordinary methods, and we are to be laborers together with Him.

Teaching means much more than many suppose. It requires great skill to make the truth understood. For this reason every teacher should strive to have an increased knowledge of spiritual truth, but he cannot gain this knowledge while divorcing himself from the word of God. If he would have his powers and capabilities daily improved he must study; he must eat and digest the word, and work in Christ's lines. The soul that is nourished by the bread of life will have every faculty vitalized by the Spirit of God. This is the meat which endureth unto everlasting life.

Teachers who will learn from the Great Teacher will realize the help of God as did Daniel and his fellows. They need to climb heavenward instead of remaining on the plain. Christian experience should be combined with all true education. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2:5. Teachers and students [427] should study this representation and see if they are of that class who, through the abundant grace given, are obtaining the experience that every child of God must have before he can enter the higher grade. In all their instruction teachers should impart light from the throne of God; for education is a work the effect of which will be seen throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

Teachers should lead students to think, and clearly to understand the truth for themselves. It is not enough for the teacher to explain or for the

student to believe; inquiry must be awakened, and the student must be drawn out to state the truth in his own language, thus making it evident that he sees its force and makes the application. By painstaking effort the vital truths should thus be impressed upon the mind. This may be a slow process; but it is of more value than rushing over important subjects without due consideration. God expects His institutions to excel those of the world; for they are His representatives. Men truly connected with God will show to the world that a more than human agent is standing at the helm.

Our teachers need to be constant learners. The reformers need to be themselves reformed, not only in their methods of labor, but in their own hearts. They need to be transformed by the grace of God. When Nicodemus, a great teacher in Israel, came to Jesus, the Master laid before him the conditions of divine life, teaching him the very alphabet of conversion. Nicodemus asked: “How can these things be?” “Art thou a master of Israel,” Christ answered, “and knowest not these things?” This question might be addressed to many who are now holding positions as teachers, but who have neglected the preparation essential to qualify them for this work. If Christ’s words were received into the soul, there would be a much higher intelligence and a much deeper spiritual knowledge of what constitutes a disciple, a sincere follower of Christ, and an educator whom He can approve. [428]

Deficiencies of Teachers

Many of our teachers have much to unlearn and much of a different character to learn. Unless they are willing to do this,—unless they become thoroughly familiar with the word of God and their minds are absorbed in studying the glorious truths concerning the life of the Great Teacher,—they will encourage the very errors the Lord is seeking to correct. Plans and opinions that should not be entertained will imprint themselves on the mind, and in all honesty they will come to wrong and dangerous conclusions. Thus seed will be sown that is not true grain. Many customs and practices common in school work, and which may be regarded as little things, cannot now be brought into our schools. It may be difficult for teachers to give up long-cherished ideas and methods; but if they will honestly and humbly

inquire at every step, “Is this the way of the Lord?” and will yield to His guidance, He will lead them in safe paths, and their views will change by experience.

The teachers in our schools need to search the Scriptures until they understand them for their individual selves, opening their hearts to the precious rays of light which God has given, and walking therein. They will then be taught of God and will labor in entirely different lines, bringing into their instruction less of the theories and sentiments of men who have never had a connection with God. They will honor finite wisdom far less, and will feel a deep soul hunger for that wisdom which comes from God.

To the question Christ put to the twelve, “Will ye also go away?” Peter answered: “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” John 6:67-69. When teachers bring these words into the work of their classrooms, the Holy Spirit will be present to do its work upon minds and hearts. [429]

Words From a Heavenly Instructor

In the night season I was in a large company where the subject of education was agitating the minds of all present. Many were bringing up objections to changing the character of the education which has long been in vogue. One who has long been our instructor was speaking to the people. He said: “The subject of education should interest the whole Seventh-day Adventist body. The decisions regarding the character of our schoolwork should not be left wholly to principals and teachers.”

Some were strenuously urging the study of infidel authors and were recommending the very books which the Lord has condemned and which, therefore, should not in any way be sanctioned. After much earnest conversation and discussion our instructor stepped forward, and, taking in his hand books that had been earnestly advocated as essential to a higher education, he said: “Do you find in these authors sentiments and principles that make it altogether safe to place them in the hands of students? Human minds are easily charmed by Satan’s lies; and these works produce a distaste for the contemplation of the word of God, which, if received and appreciated, will ensure eternal life to the receiver. You are creatures of habit and should remember that right habits are blessings both in their effect on your own character and in their influence for good over others; but wrong habits, when once established, exercise a despotic power and bring minds into bondage. If you had never read one word in these books you would today be far better able to comprehend that Book, which, above all other books, is worthy to be studied, and which gives the only correct ideas regarding higher education.”*

*1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:162-167.

“The fact that it has been customary to include these authors among your lessonbooks, and that this custom is hoary with age, is no argument in its favor. Long use does not necessarily recommend these books as safe or essential. They have led thousands where Satan led Adam and Eve—to the tree of knowledge of which God has forbidden us to eat. They have led students to forsake the study of the Scriptures for a line of study that is not essential. If students thus educated are ever fitted to work for souls, they will have to unlearn much that they have learned. They will find the unlearning a difficult work; for objectionable ideas have taken root in their minds like weeds in a garden, and as a result some will never be able to distinguish between right and wrong. The good and the evil have been mingled in their education. The faces of men have been uplifted for them to behold, and the theories of men have been exalted; so that as they attempt to teach others, the little truth which they are able to repeat is interwoven with the opinions and sayings and doings of men. The words of men who give evidence that they have not a practical knowledge of Christ should find no place in our schools. They will be hindrances to proper education.

“You have the word of the living God, and for the asking you may have the gift of the Holy Spirit to make that word a power to those who believe and obey. The Holy Spirit’s work is to guide into all truth. When you depend on the word of the living God with heart and mind and soul, the channel of communication will be unobstructed. Deep, earnest study of the word under the guidance of the Holy Spirit will give you fresh manna, and the same Spirit will make its use effectual. The exertion made by the youth to discipline the mind for high and holy aspirations will be rewarded. Those who make persevering efforts in this direction, putting the mind to the task of comprehending God’s word, are prepared to be laborers together with God.

“The world acknowledges as teachers some whom God [431] cannot endorse as safe instructors. By these the Bible is discarded, and the productions of infidel authors are recommended as if they contained those sentiments which should be woven into the character. What can you expect from the sowing of this kind of seed? In the study of these objectionable books the minds of teachers as well as of students become corrupted, and the enemy sows his tares. It cannot be otherwise. By drinking of an impure fountain, poison is introduced into the system. Inexperienced youth taken over this line of study receive impressions which lead their thoughts into

channels that are fatal to piety. Youth who have been sent to our schools have learned from books which were thought to be safe because they were used and encouraged in the schools of the world. But from the worldly schools thus followed many students have gone forth infidels because of the study of these very books.

“Why have you not extolled the word of God above every human production? Is it not enough to keep close to the Author of all truth? Are you not satisfied to draw water fresh from the streams of Lebanon? God has living fountains from which to refresh the thirsty soul, and stores of precious food with which to strengthen the spirituality. Learn of Him, and He will enable you to give to those who ask a reason of the hope that is within you. Have you thought that a better knowledge of what the Lord has said would have a deleterious effect upon teachers and students?”

There was a hush in the assembly, and conviction came upon each heart. Men who had thought themselves wise and strong saw that they were weak and lacking in the knowledge of that Book which concerns the eternal destiny of the human soul.

The messenger of God then took from the hands of several teachers those books which they had been making their study, some of which had been written by infidel authors and contained infidel sentiments, and laid them aside, saying: “There [432] never has been a time in your lives when the study of these books was for your present good and advancement, or for your future, eternal good. Why will you fill your shelves with books that divert the mind from Christ? Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? Christ calls you: ‘Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.’ You need to eat of the Bread of life which came down from heaven. You need to be more diligent students of the Holy Scriptures, and to drink from the living Fountain. Draw, draw from Christ in earnest prayer. Obtain a daily experience in eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God. Human authors can never supply your great need for this time; but by beholding Christ, the Author and Finisher of your faith, you will be changed into His likeness.”

Placing the Bible in their hands, he continued: “You have little knowledge of this book. You know not the Scriptures nor the power of God, nor do you understand the deep importance of the message to be borne to a perishing world. The time past has shown that both teachers and students

know very little in regard to the awful truths which are living issues for this time. Should the third angel's message be proclaimed in all lines to many who stand as educators, it would not be understood by them. Had you the knowledge which comes from God, your whole being would proclaim the truth of the living God to a world dead in trespasses and sins. But books and papers that contain little of present truth are exalted, and men are becoming too wise to follow a 'Thus saith the Lord.'

"By every teacher in our schools the only true God is to be uplifted, but many of the watchmen are asleep. They are as the blind leading the blind. Yet the day of the Lord is right upon us. As a thief it is coming with stealthy tread, and it will take unawares all who are not watching. Who among our teachers are awake and as faithful stewards of the grace of God are giving the trumpet a certain sound? Who are proclaiming the message of the third angel, calling the world to make ready [433] for the great day of God? The message we bear has the seal of the living God."

Pointing to the Bible he said: "The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are to be combined in the work of fitting a people to stand in the day of the Lord. Earnestly improve your present opportunities. Make the word of the living God your lessonbook. If this had always been done, students lost to the cause of God would now be missionaries. Jehovah is the only true God, and He is to be revered and worshiped. Those who respect the words of infidel authors and lead students to look upon these books as essential in their education lessen their faith in God. The tone, the spirit, the influence of these books is deleterious to those who depend on them for knowledge. Influences have been brought to bear upon the students that have led them to look away from Christ, the Light of the world, and evil angels rejoice that those who profess to know God deny Him as He has been thus denied in our schools. The Sun of Righteousness has been shining upon the church to dispel the darkness and to call the attention of God's people to the preparation essential for those who would shine as lights in the world. Those who receive this light will comprehend it; those who do not receive it will walk in darkness, knowing not at what they stumble. The soul is never safe unless it is under the divine guidance. Then it will be led into all truth. The word of Christ will fall with living power upon obedient hearts; and through the application of divine truth the perfect image of God will be reproduced, and in heaven it will be said: 'Ye are complete in Him.'" Colossians 2:10.

In no case should students be allowed to take so many studies that they will be prevented from attending religious exercises. [434]

School Homes

In attending our colleges many of the youth are separated from the softening, subduing influences of the home circle. At the very time of life when they need vigilant supervision they are withdrawn from the restraints of parental influence and authority, and are thrown into the society of a large number of their own age, of varied characters and habits of life. Some of these have in childhood received too little discipline and are superficial and frivolous; others have been governed too much and have felt, when away from the hands that held the reins of control perhaps too tightly, that they were free to do as they pleased. They despise the very thought of restraint. By these associations the dangers of the young are greatly increased.

Our school homes have been established that our youth may not be left to drift hither and thither, and be exposed to the evil influences which everywhere abound; but that, as far as possible, a home atmosphere may be provided that they may be preserved from temptations to immorality and be led to Jesus. The family of heaven represents that which the family on earth should be; and our school homes, where are gathered youth who are seeking a preparation for the service of God, should approach as nearly as possible to the divine model.

Teachers who are placed in charge of these homes bear grave responsibilities; for they are to act as fathers and mothers, showing an interest in the students, one and all, such as parents show in their children. The varying elements in the characters of the youth with whom they are called to deal bring upon them care and many heavy burdens, and great*

*1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:168-175.

tact as well as much patience is required to balance in the right direction minds that have been warped by bad management. The teachers need great managing ability; they must be true to principle and yet wise and tender, linking love and Christlike sympathy with discipline. They should be men and women of faith, of wisdom, and of prayer. They should not manifest stern, unbending dignity, but should mingle with the youth, becoming one with them in their joys and sorrows as well as in their daily routine of work. Cheerful, loving obedience will generally be the fruit of such effort.

Domestic Duties

The education which the young men and women who attend our colleges should receive in the home life is deserving of special attention. It is of great importance in the work of character building that students who attend our colleges be taught to take up the work that is appointed them, throwing off all inclination to sloth. They need to become familiar with the duties of daily life. They should be taught to do their domestic duties thoroughly and well, with as little noise and confusion as possible. Everything should be done decently and in order. The kitchen and all other parts of the building should be kept sweet and clean. Books should be laid aside till their proper season, and no more study should be taken than can be attended to without neglecting the household duties. The study of books is not to engross the mind to the neglect of home duties upon which the comfort of the family depends.

In the performance of these duties careless, neglectful, disorderly habits should be overcome; for unless corrected, these habits will be carried into every phase of life, and the life will be spoiled for usefulness, spoiled for true missionary work. Unless corrected with perseverance and resolution they will overcome the student for time and for eternity. The young should be encouraged to form correct habits in dress, that their appearance may be neat and attractive; they should be taught [436] to keep their garments clean and neatly mended. All their habits should be such as to make them a help and a comfort to others.

Special directions were given to the armies of the children of Israel that in and around their tents everything should be clean and orderly lest the

angel of God should pass through their encampment and see their uncleanness. Would the Lord be particular to notice these things? He would; for the fact is stated, lest in viewing their uncleanness He could not go forth with their armies to battle against their enemies. In like manner all our actions are noticed by God. That God who was so particular that the children of Israel should grow up with habits of cleanliness will not sanction any impurity in the home today.

God has given to parents and teachers the work of educating the children and youth in these lines, and from every act of their lives they may be taught spiritual lessons. While training them in habits of physical cleanliness we should teach them that God desires them to be clean in heart as well as in body. While sweeping a room they may learn how the Lord purifies the heart. They would not close the doors and windows and leave in the room some purifying substance, but would open the doors and throw wide the windows, and with diligent effort expel all the dust. So the windows of impulse and feeling must be opened toward heaven, and the dust of selfishness and earthliness must be expelled. The grace of God must sweep through the chambers of the mind, and every element of the nature must be purified and vitalized by the Spirit of God. Disorder and untidiness in daily duties will lead to forgetfulness of God and to keeping the form of godliness in a profession of faith, having lost the reality. We are to watch and pray, else we shall grasp the shadow and lose the substance.

A living faith like threads of gold should run through the daily experience in the performance of little duties. Then [437] students will be led to understand the pure principles which God designs shall prompt every act of their lives. Then all the daily work will be of such a character as to promote Christian growth. Then the vital principles of faith, trust, and love for Jesus will penetrate into the most minute details of daily life. There will be a looking unto Jesus, and love for Him will be the continual motive, giving vital force to every duty that is undertaken. There will be a striving after righteousness, a hope that “maketh not ashamed.” Whatever is done will be done to the glory of God.

To each student in the home I would say, Be true to home duties. Be faithful in the discharge of little responsibilities. Be a real living Christian in the home. Let Christian principles rule your heart and control your conduct. Heed every suggestion made by the teacher, but do not make it a

necessity always to be told what to do. Discern for yourself. Notice for yourself if all things in your own room are spotless and in order, that nothing there may be an offense to God, but that when holy angels shall pass through your room, they may be led to linger because attracted by the prevailing order and cleanliness. In doing your duties promptly, neatly, faithfully, you are missionaries. You are bearing witness for Christ. You are showing that the religion of Christ does not, in principle or in practice, make you untidy, coarse, disrespectful to your teachers, giving little heed to their counsel and instruction. Bible religion, practiced, will make you kind, thoughtful, faithful. You will not neglect the little things that should be done. Adopt as your motto the words of Christ: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."

Christian Sociability and Courtesy

Christian sociability is altogether too little cultivated by God's people. This branch of education should not be neglected or lost sight of in our schools.

Students should be taught that they are not independent [438] atoms, but that each one is a thread which is to unite with other threads in composing a fabric. In no department can this instruction be more effectually given than in the school home. Here students are daily surrounded by opportunities which, if improved, will greatly aid in developing the social traits of their characters. It lies in their own power so to improve their time and opportunities as to develop a character that will make them happy and useful. Those who shut themselves up within themselves, who are unwilling to be drawn upon to bless others by friendly associations, lose many blessings; for by mutual contact minds receive polish and refinement; by social intercourse, acquaintances are formed and friendships contracted which result in a unity of heart and an atmosphere of love which is pleasing in the sight of heaven.

Especially should those who have tasted the love of Christ develop their social powers, for in this way they may win souls to the Saviour. Christ should not be hid away in their hearts, shut in as a coveted treasure, sacred and sweet, to be enjoyed solely by themselves; nor should the love of Christ

be manifested toward those only who please their fancy. Students are to be taught the Christlikeness of exhibiting a kindly interest, a social disposition, toward those who are in the greatest need, even though these may not be their own chosen companions. At all times and in all places Jesus manifested a loving interest in the human family and shed about Him the light of a cheerful piety. Students should be taught to follow in His steps. They should be taught to manifest Christian interest, sympathy, and love for their youthful companions, and endeavor to draw them to Jesus; Christ should be in their hearts as a well of water springing up into everlasting life, refreshing all with whom they come in contact.

It is this willing, loving ministry for others in times of necessity that is accounted precious with God. Thus even while attending school, students may, if true to their profession, be living missionaries for God. All this will take time; but the [439] time thus employed is profitably spent, for in this way the student is learning how to present Christianity to the world.

Christ did not refuse to mingle with others in friendly intercourse. When invited to a feast by Pharisee or publican, He accepted the invitation. On such occasions every word that He uttered was a savor of life unto life to His hearers; for He made the dinner hour an occasion of imparting many precious lessons adapted to their needs. Christ thus taught His disciples how to conduct themselves when in the company of those who were not religious as well as of those who were. By His own example He taught them that, when attending any public gathering, their conversation need not be of the same character as that usually indulged in on such occasions.

When students sit at the table, if Christ is abiding in the soul there will come forth from the treasure house of the heart words which are pure and uplifting; if Christ is not abiding there, a satisfaction will be found in frivolity, in jesting and joking, which is a hindrance to spiritual growth and a cause of grief to the angels of God. The tongue is an unruly member, but it should not be so. It should be converted; for the talent of speech is a very precious talent. Christ is ever ready to impart of His riches, and we should gather the jewels that come from Him, that, when we speak, these jewels may drop from our lips.

The temper, the personal peculiarities, the habits from which character is developed—everything practiced in the home will reveal itself in all the associations of life. The inclinations followed will work out in thoughts, in

words, in acts of the same character. If every student composing the school family would make an effort to restrain all unkind and uncourteous words, and speak with respect to all; if he would bear in mind that he is preparing to become a member of the heavenly family; if he would guard his influence by sacred sentinels, that it should not scatter away from Christ; if he would endeavor to have every act of his life show forth the [440] praises of Him who has called him out of darkness into His marvelous light, what a reformatory influence would go forth from every school home!

Religious Exercises

Of all the features of an education to be given in our school homes, the religious exercises are the most important. They should be treated with the greatest solemnity and reverence, yet all the pleasantness possible should be brought into them. They should not be prolonged till they become wearisome, for the impression thus made upon the minds of the youth will cause them to associate religion with all that is dry and uninteresting; and many will be led to cast their influence on the side of the enemy, who, if properly taught, would become a blessing to the world and to the church. The Sabbath meetings, the morning and evening service in the home and in the chapel, unless wisely planned and vitalized by the Spirit of God, may become the most formal, unpleasant, unattractive, and to the youth the most burdensome, of all the school exercises. The social meetings and all other religious exercises should be so planned and managed that they will be not only profitable, but so pleasant as to be positively attractive. Praying together will bind hearts to God in bonds that will endure; confessing Christ openly and bravely, exhibiting in our characters His meekness, humility, and love, will charm others with the beauty of holiness.

On all these occasions Christ should be set forth as “the chiefest among ten thousand,” the One “altogether lovely.” Song of Solomon 5:10, 16. He should be presented as the Source of all true pleasure and satisfaction, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, the Author of every blessing, the One in whom all our hopes of eternal life are centered. In every religious exercise let the love of God and the joy of the Christian

experience appear in their true beauty. Present the Saviour as the restorer from every effect of sin. [441]

To accomplish this result all narrowness must be avoided. Sincere, earnest, heartfelt devotion will be needed. Ardent, active piety in the teachers will be essential. But there is power for us if we will have it. There is grace for us if we will appreciate it. The Holy Spirit is waiting our demand if we will only demand it with that intensity of purpose which is proportionate to the value of the object we seek. Angels of heaven are taking notice of all our work and are watching to see how they can so minister to each one that he will reflect the likeness of Christ in character and become conformed to the divine image. When those in charge of our school homes appreciate the privileges and opportunities placed within their reach, they will do a work for God of which heaven will approve. [442]

Industrial Reform

Because difficulties arise, we are not to drop the industries that have been taken hold of as branches of education. While attending school the youth should have an opportunity for learning the use of tools. Under the guidance of experienced workmen, carpenters who are apt to teach, patient, and kind, the students themselves should erect buildings on the school grounds and make needed improvements, thus by practical lessons learning how to build economically. The students should also be trained to manage all the different kinds of work connected with printing, such as typesetting, presswork, and bookbinding, together with tentmaking and other useful lines of work. Small fruits should be planted, and vegetables and flowers cultivated, and this work the lady students may be called out of doors to do. Thus, while exercising brain, bone, and muscle, they will also be gaining a knowledge of practical life.

Culture on all these points will make our youth useful in carrying the truth to foreign countries. They will not then have to depend upon the people among whom they are living to cook and sew and build for them, nor will it be necessary to spend money to transport men thousands of miles to plan schoolhouses, meetinghouses, and cottages. Missionaries will be much more influential among the people if they are able to teach the inexperienced how to labor according to the best methods and to produce the best results. They will thus be able to demonstrate that missionaries can become industrial educators, and this kind of instruction will be appreciated especially where means are limited. A much smaller fund will^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:176-180.

be required to sustain such missionaries, because, combined with their studies, they have put to the very best use their physical powers in practical

labor; and wherever they may go all they have gained in this line will give them vantage ground. Students in the industrial departments, whether they are employed in domestic work, in cultivating the ground, or in other ways, should have time and opportunity given them to tell the practical, spiritual lessons they have learned in connection with the work. In all the practical duties of life, comparisons should be made with the teachings of nature and of the Bible.

Advantages of Country Location

The reasons that have led us in a few places to turn away from cities and locate our schools in the country, hold good with the schools in other places. To expend money in additional buildings when a school is already deeply in debt is not in accordance with God's plan. Had the money which our larger schools have used in expensive buildings been invested in procuring land where students could receive a proper education, so large a number of students would not now be struggling under the weight of increasing debt, and the work of these institutions would be in a more prosperous condition. Had this course been followed, there would have been some grumbling from students, and many objections would have been raised by parents; but the students would have secured an all-round education, which would have prepared them, not only for practical work in various trades, but for a place on the Lord's farm in the earth made new.

Had all our schools encouraged work in agricultural lines, they would now have an altogether different showing. There would not be so great discouragements. Opposing influences would have been overcome; financial conditions would have changed. With the students, labor would have been equalized; and as all the human machinery was proportionately taxed, greater physical and mental strength would have [444] been developed. But the instruction which the Lord has been pleased to give has been taken hold of so feebly that obstacles have not been overcome.

It reveals cowardice to move so slowly and uncertainly in the labor line—that line which will give the very best kind of education. Look at nature. There is room within her vast boundaries for schools to be established where grounds can be cleared and land cultivated. This work is essential to

the education most favorable to spiritual advancement; for nature's voice is the voice of Christ, teaching us innumerable lessons of love and power and submission and perseverance. Some do not appreciate the value of agricultural work. These should not plan for our schools, for they will hold everything from advancing in right lines. In the past their influence has been a hindrance.

If the land is cultivated, it will, with the blessing of God, supply our necessities. We are not to be discouraged about temporal things because of apparent failures, nor should we be disheartened by delay. We should work the soil cheerfully, hopefully, gratefully, believing that the earth holds in her bosom rich stores for the faithful worker to garner, stores richer than gold or silver. The niggardliness laid to her charge is false witness. With proper, intelligent cultivation the earth will yield its treasures for the benefit of man. The mountains and hills are changing; the earth is waxing old like a garment; but the blessing of God, which spreads a table for His people in the wilderness, will never cease.

Serious times are before us, and there is great need for families to get out of the cities into the country, that the truth may be carried into the byways as well as the highways of the earth. Much depends upon laying our plans according to the word of the Lord and with persevering energy carrying them out. More depends upon consecrated activity and perseverance than upon genius and book learning. All the talents and ability given to human agents, if unused, are of little value. [445]

A return to simpler methods will be appreciated by the children and youth. Work in the garden and field will be an agreeable change from the wearisome routine of abstract lessons, to which their young minds should never be confined. To the nervous child, who finds lessons from books exhausting and hard to remember, it will be especially valuable. There is health and happiness for him in the study of nature; and the impressions made will not fade out of his mind, for they will be associated with objects that are continually before his eyes.

The A B C of Education

Working the soil is one of the best kinds of employment, calling the muscles into action and resting the mind. Study in agricultural lines should be the A, B, and C of the education given in our schools. This is the very first work that should be entered upon. Our schools should not depend upon imported produce, for grain and vegetables, and the fruits so essential to health. Our youth need an education in felling trees and tilling the soil as well as in literary lines. Different teachers should be appointed to oversee a number of students in their work and should work with them. Thus the teachers themselves will learn to carry responsibilities as burden bearers. Proper students also should in this way be educated to bear responsibilities and to be laborers together with the teachers. All should counsel together as to the very best methods of carrying on the work. ...

The exercise that teaches the hand to be useful and trains the young to bear their share of life's burdens, gives physical strength and develops every faculty. All should find something to do that will be beneficial to themselves and helpful to others. God appointed work as a blessing, and only the diligent worker finds the true glory and joy of life. [446]

Brain and muscle must be taxed proportionately if health and vigor are to be maintained. The youth can then bring to the study of the word of God healthy perception and well-balanced nerves. They will have wholesome thoughts and can retain the precious things that are brought from the word. They will digest its truths and as a result will have brain power to discern what is truth. Then, as occasion demands, they can give to every man that asks a reason of the hope that is in them with meekness and fear. [447]

The Avondale School Farm

There are some things regarding the disposition and use of the lands near our school and church which have been opened before me and which I am instructed to present to you. Until recently I have not felt at liberty to speak of them, and even now I do not feel free to reveal all things because our people are not yet prepared to understand all that in the providence of God will be developed at Avondale.

In the visions of the night some things were clearly presented before me. Persons were selecting allotments of land near the school, on which they proposed to build houses and establish homes. But One stood in our midst who said: “You are making a great mistake which you will have cause to regret. This land is not to be occupied with buildings except to provide the facilities essential for the teachers and students of the school. This land about the school is to be reserved as the school farm. It is to become a living parable to the students. The students are not to regard the school land as a common thing, but are to look upon it as a lessonbook open before them which the Lord would have them study. Its lessons will impart knowledge in the culture of the soul.

“If you should allow the land near the school to be occupied with private houses and then be driven to select for cultivation other land at a distance from the school, it would be a great mistake and one always to be regretted. All the land near the building is to be regarded as the school farm, where the youth can be educated under well-qualified superintendents. The youth who shall attend our schools need all the land near by. They are to plant it with ornamental and fruit trees, and to cultivate garden produce.*-

*-1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:181-185.

“The school farm is to be regarded as a lessonbook in nature from which the teachers may draw their object lessons. Our students are to be taught that Christ, who created the world and all things that are therein, is the life and light of every living thing. The life of every child and youth who is willing to grasp the opportunities of receiving a proper education will be made thankful and happy while at school by the things upon which his eyes shall rest.”

The Work Before Us

We need more teachers and more talent to educate the students in various lines, that many persons may go from this place willing and able to carry to others the knowledge which they have received. Orphan boys and girls are to find a home here. Buildings should be erected for a hospital, and boats should be provided to accommodate the school. A competent farm manager should be employed, also wise, energetic men to act as superintendents of the several industrial enterprises, men who will use their undivided talents in teaching the students how to work.

Many young people will come to school who desire a training in industrial lines. The industrial instruction should include the keeping of accounts, carpentry, and everything that is comprehended in farming. Preparation should also be made for teaching blacksmithing, painting, shoemaking, cooking, baking, laundering, mending, typewriting, and printing. Every power at our command is to be brought into this training work, that students may go out equipped for the duties of practical life.

Cottages and buildings essential to the schoolwork are to be erected by the students themselves. These should not be crowded close together, nor located near the school buildings proper. In the management of this work small companies should be formed who, under competent leaders, should be taught to carry a full sense of their responsibility. All these [449] things cannot be accomplished at once, but we are to begin to work in faith.

The Land to Be Reserved

The Lord would have the grounds about the school dedicated to Him as His own schoolroom. We are located where there is plenty of land, and the grounds near the school and the church should not be occupied with private dwellings. Those who believe the truth for this time are not all transformed in character. They are not all proper object lessons, for they do not represent the character of Christ. There are many who would be pleased to get close to the church and the school who would not be helps, but hindrances. They feel that they should be helped and favored. They do not appreciate either the character or the situation of the work in which we are engaged. They do not understand that all that has been done at Avondale has been accomplished with the hardest labor and through the use of money given with sacrifice or which must be paid back to those from whom it was borrowed.

Among those who will desire to settle near our schools, there will be some who are filled with self-importance and anxiety about their own reputation. They are sensitive and factious. These need to be converted, for they are far from standing where they can receive the blessing of the Lord. Satan tempts them to ask favors which, if granted, will only injure them, and thus they bring anxiety to their brethren. The living principles of the word of God need to be brought into the lives of many who now find no room for these principles. Those who are learning in the school of Christ will count every favor from God as too good for them. They will realize that they do not deserve all the good things they receive, and they will count themselves happy. Their faces will express peace and rest in the Lord, for they have the word of God that He cares for them.

“Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the [450] earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest? For all those things hath Mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.” Isaiah 66:1, 2. During the closing days of 1898 we had many experiences to teach us what these words mean. My heart was greatly burdened, and matters were then opened before me in regard to the evils that would arise from disposing of the land near the school to be occupied with dwelling houses. We seemed to be in a meeting for counsel, and there stood among us One who was expected to help us out of our difficulties. The words He spoke were plain and decided:

“This land, by the appointment of God, is for the benefit of the school. You have had evidences of the working of human nature and what it will reveal under temptation. The greater the number of families that settle around the school buildings, the more difficulties there will be in the way of teachers and students. The natural selfishness of the children of men is ready to spring into life if everything is not convenient for them. This land about the school is to be the school farm, and this farm is to occupy much more space than you have thought it would. Work in connection with study is to be done here according to the counsels given. Avondale is to be a philanthropic center. God’s people in Australasia are to be moved upon by the Spirit of the Lord to give sympathy and means for the support and encouragement of many charitable and benevolent enterprises, which shall be the means of teaching the poor, the helpless, and the ignorant how to help themselves.”

A Panorama

On several occasions the light has come to me that the land around our school is to be used as the Lord’s farm. In a special sense portions of this farm should be highly cultivated. Spread [451] out before me I saw land planted with every kind of fruit tree that will bear fruit in this locality; there were also vegetable gardens, where seeds were sown and cultivated.

If the managers of this farm and the teachers in the school will receive the Holy Spirit to work with them, they will have wisdom in their management, and God will bless their labors. The care of the trees, the planting and the sowing, and the gathering of the harvest are to be wonderful lessons for all the students. The invisible links which connect the sowing and the reaping are to be studied, and the goodness of God is to be pointed out and appreciated. It is the Lord that gives the virtue and the power to the soil and to the seed. Were it not for the divine agency, combined with human tact and ability, the seed sown would be useless. There is an unseen power constantly at work in man’s behalf to feed and to clothe him. The parable of the seed as studied in the daily experience of teacher and student is to reveal that God is at work in nature, and it is to make plain the things of the kingdom of heaven. [452]

Church Schools

The church has a special work to do in educating and training its children that they may not, in attending school, or in any other association, be influenced by those of corrupt habits. The world is full of iniquity and disregard of the requirements of God. The cities have become as Sodom, and our children are daily being exposed to many evils. Those who attend the public schools often associate with others more neglected than they, those who, aside from the time spent in the schoolroom, are left to obtain a street education. The hearts of the young are easily impressed; and unless their surroundings are of the right character, Satan will use these neglected children to influence those who are more carefully trained. Thus before Sabbathkeeping parents know what evil is being done, the lessons of depravity are learned, and the souls of their little ones are corrupted.

The Protestant churches have accepted the spurious sabbath, the child of the papacy, and have exalted it above God's holy, sanctified day. It is our work to make plain to our children that the first day of the week is not the true Sabbath, and that its observance, after light has come to us as to what is the true Sabbath, is a plain contradiction of the law of God. Do our children receive from the teachers in the public schools ideas that are in harmony with the word of God? Is sin presented as an offense against God? Is obedience to all the commandments of God taught as the beginning of all wisdom? We send our children to the Sabbath school that they may be instructed in regard to the truth, and then as they go to the day school, lessons containing falsehood are given them to learn. These things confuse the mind, and should^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:193-205.

not be; for if the young receive ideas that pervert the truth, how will the influence of this education be counteracted?

Can we wonder that under such circumstances some of the youth among us do not appreciate religious advantages? Can we wonder that they drift into temptation? Can we wonder that, neglected as they have been, their energies are devoted to amusements which do them no good, that their religious aspirations are weakened and their spiritual life darkened? The mind will be of the same character as that upon which it feeds, the harvest of the same nature as the seed sown. Do not these facts sufficiently show the necessity of guarding from the earliest years the education of the youth? Would it not be better for the youth to grow up in a degree of ignorance as to what is commonly accepted as education than for them to become careless in regard to the truth of God?

When the children of Israel were gathered out from among the Egyptians, the Lord said: "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord." "And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever." Exodus 12:12, 22-24. The blood upon the lintel of the door symbolized the blood of Christ, who alone saved the first-born of the Hebrews from the curse. Any one of the children of the Hebrews who was found in an Egyptian habitation was destroyed.

This experience of the Israelites was written for the [454] instruction of those who should live in the last days. Before the overflowing scourge shall come upon the dwellers of the earth, the Lord calls upon all who are Israelites indeed to prepare for that event. To parents He sends the warning cry: Gather your children into your own houses; gather them away from those who are disregarding the commandments of God, who are teaching and practicing evil. Get out of the large cities as fast as possible. Establish church schools. Give your children the word of God as the foundation of all

their education. This is full of beautiful lessons, and if pupils make it their study in the primary grade below, they will be prepared for the higher grade above.

The word of God comes to us at this time: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. Where are your children? Are you educating them to discern and to escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust? Are you seeking to save their souls, or are you by your neglect aiding in their destruction?

The Children Neglected

Altogether too little attention has been given our children and youth. The older members of the church have not looked upon them with tenderness and sympathy, desiring that they might be advanced in the divine life, and the children have [455] therefore failed to develop in the Christian life as they should have done. Some church members who have loved and feared God in the past are allowing their business to be all-absorbing, and are hiding their light under a bushel. They have forgotten to serve God and are making their business the grave of their religion.

Shall the youth be left to drift hither and thither, to become discouraged and to fall into temptations that are everywhere lurking to catch their unwary feet? The work that lies nearest to our church members is to become interested in our youth, with kindness, patience, and tenderness giving them line upon line, precept upon precept. Oh, where are the fathers and mothers in Israel? There ought to be a large number who, as stewards of the grace of Christ, would feel not merely a casual interest but a special

interest in the young. There ought to be many whose hearts are touched by the pitiable situation in which our youth are placed, who realize that Satan is working by every conceivable device to draw them into his net. God requires the church to arouse from its lethargy and see what manner of service is demanded in this time of peril.

The eyes of our brethren and sisters should be anointed with the heavenly eyesalve, that they may discern the necessities of this time. The lambs of the flock must be fed, and the Lord of heaven is looking on to see who is doing the work He desires to have done for the children and youth. The church is asleep and does not realize the magnitude of this matter. “Why,” says one, “what is the need of being so particular thoroughly to educate our youth? It seems to me that if a few who have decided to follow some literary calling, or some other calling that requires a certain discipline, receive special attention, this is all that is necessary. It is not necessary that all our young people should be so well trained. Will not the thorough education of a few answer every essential requirement?” [456]

No, I answer, most decidedly not. What selection would we be able to make from our youth? How could we tell who would be the most promising, who would render the best service to God? In our human judgment we might do as did Samuel, who, when sent to find the anointed of the Lord, looked upon the outward appearance.

But the Lord said to Samuel: “Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7. Not one of the noble-looking sons of Jesse would the Lord accept; but when David, the youngest son, a mere youth and the shepherd of the sheep, was called from the field and passed before Samuel, the Lord said: “Arise, anoint him: for this is he.” Verse 12. Who can determine which one of a family will prove to be efficient in the work of God? All the youth should be permitted to have the blessings and privileges of an education at our schools, that they may be inspired to become laborers together with God.

Church Schools Needed

Many families who, for the purpose of educating their children, move to places where our large schools are established, would do better service for the Master by remaining where they are. They should encourage the church of which they are members to establish a church school where the children within their borders could receive an all-round, practical Christian education. It would be vastly better for their children, for themselves, and for the cause of God if they would remain in the smaller churches, where their help is needed, instead of going to the larger churches, where, because they are not needed, there is a constant temptation to fall into spiritual inactivity.

Wherever there are a few Sabbathkeepers, the parents [457] should unite in providing a place for a day school where their children and youth can be instructed. They should employ a Christian teacher who, as a consecrated missionary, shall educate the children in such a way as to lead them to become missionaries. Let teachers be employed who will give a thorough education in the common branches, the Bible being made the foundation and the life of all study. Parents should gird on the armor and by their own example teach their children to be missionaries. They should work while it is day, for “the night cometh, when no man can work.” John 9:4. If they will put forth unselfish efforts, perseveringly teaching their children to bear responsibilities, the Lord will work with them.

Some families of Sabbathkeepers live alone or far separated from others of like faith. These have sometimes sent their children to our boarding schools, where they have received help and have returned to be a blessing in their own home. But some cannot send their children away from home to be educated. In such cases parents should endeavor to employ an exemplary religious teacher who will feel it a pleasure to work for the Master in any capacity and be willing to cultivate any part of the Lord’s vineyard.

Fathers and mothers should co-operate with the teacher, laboring earnestly for the conversion of their children. Let them strive to keep the spiritual interest fresh and wholesome in the home and to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Let them devote a portion of each day to study and become learners with their children. Thus they may make the educational hour one of pleasure and profit, and their confidence will increase in this method of seeking for the salvation of their children. Parents will find that their own growth will be more rapid as they

learn to work for their children. As they thus work in a humble way, unbelief will disappear. Faith and activity will impart assurance and satisfaction that will increase day by day as [458] they follow on to know the Lord and to make Him known. Their prayers will become earnest, for they will have some definite object for which to pray.

In some countries parents are compelled by law to send their children to school. In these countries, in localities where there is a church, schools should be established if there are no more than six children to attend. Work as if you were working for your life to save the children from being drowned in the polluting, corrupting influences of the world.

We are far behind our duty in this important matter. In many places schools should have been in operation years ago. Many localities would thus have had representatives of the truth who would have given character to the work of the Lord. Instead of centering so many large buildings in a few places, schools should have been established in many localities.

Let these schools now be started under wise direction, that the children and youth may be educated in their own churches. It is a grievous offense to God that there has been so great neglect in this line when Providence has so abundantly supplied us with facilities with which to work. But though in the past we have come short of doing what we might have done for the youth and children, let us now repent and redeem the time. The Lord says: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." Isaiah 1:18, 19.

The Character of Church Schools and of Their Teachers

The character of the work done in our church schools should be of the very highest order. Jesus Christ, the Restorer, is the only remedy for a wrong education, and the lessons taught in His word should ever be kept before the [459] youth in the most attractive form. The school discipline should supplement the home training, and both at home and at school simplicity and godliness should be maintained. Men and women will be

found who have talent to work in these small schools, but who cannot work to advantage in the larger ones. As they practice the Bible lessons they will themselves receive an education of the highest value.

In selecting teachers we should use every precaution, knowing that this is as solemn a matter as the selecting of persons for the ministry. Wise men who can discern character should make the selection, for the very best talent that can be secured is needed to educate and mold the minds of the young and to carry on successfully the many lines of work that will need to be done by the teacher in our church schools. No person of an inferior or narrow cast of mind should be placed in charge of one of these schools. Do not place over the children young and inexperienced teachers who have no managing ability, for their efforts will tend to disorganization. Order is heaven's first law, and every school should in this respect be a model of heaven.

To place over young children teachers who are proud and unloving is wicked. A teacher of this stamp will do great harm to those who are rapidly developing character. If teachers are not submissive to God, if they have no love for the children over whom they preside, or if they show partiality for those who please their fancy and manifest indifference to those who are less attractive or to those who are restless and nervous, they should not be employed; for the result of their work will be a loss of souls for Christ.

Teachers are needed, especially for the children, who are calm and kind, manifesting forbearance and love for the very ones who most need it. Jesus loved the children; He regarded them as younger members of the Lord's family. He always treated them with kindness and respect, and teachers are to follow His example. They should have the true [460] missionary spirit, for the children are to be trained to become missionaries. They should feel that the Lord has committed to them as a solemn trust the souls of the children and youth.

Our church schools need teachers who have high moral qualities, those who can be trusted, those who are sound in the faith and who have tact and patience, those who walk with God and abstain from the very appearance of evil. In their work they will find clouds. There will be clouds and darkness, storms and tempests, prejudice to meet from parents who have incorrect ideas of the characters which their children should form; for there are many who claim to believe the Bible, while they fail to bring its principles into

the home life. But if the teachers are constant learners in the school of Christ, these circumstances will never conquer them.

Let parents seek the Lord with intense earnestness, that they may not be stumbling blocks in the way of their children. Let envy and jealousy be banished from the heart, and let the peace of Christ come in to unite the members of the church in true Christian fellowship. Let the windows of the soul be closed against the poisonous malaria of earth, and let them be opened heavenward to receive the healing rays of the sunshine of Christ's righteousness.

Until the spirit of criticism and suspicion is banished from the heart, the Lord cannot do for the church that which He longs to do in opening the way for the establishment of schools; until there is unity, He will not move upon those to whom He has entrusted means and ability for the carrying forward of this work. Parents must reach a higher standard, keeping the way of the Lord and practicing righteousness, that they may be light bearers. There must be an entire transformation of mind and character. A spirit of disunion cherished in the hearts of a few will communicate itself to others and undo the influence for good that would be exerted by the [461] school. Unless parents are ready and anxious to co-operate with the teacher for the salvation of their children, they are not prepared to have a school established among them.

Results of Church School Work

When properly conducted, church schools will be the means of lifting the standard of truth in the places where they are established; for children who are receiving a Christian education will be witnesses for Christ. As Jesus in the temple solved the mysteries which priests and rulers had not discerned, so in the closing work of this earth children who have been rightly educated will in their simplicity speak words which will be an astonishment to men who now talk of "higher education." As the children sang in the temple courts, "Hosanna; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," so in these last days children's voices will be raised to give the last message of warning to a perishing world. When heavenly intelligences see that men are no longer permitted to present the truth, the Spirit of God

will come upon the children, and they will do a work in the proclamation of the truth which the older workers cannot do, because their way will be hedged up.

Our church schools are ordained by God to prepare the children for this great work. Here children are to be instructed in the special truths for this time and in practical missionary work. They are to enlist in the army of workers to help the sick and the suffering. Children can take part in the medical missionary work and by their jots and tittles can help to carry it forward. Their investments may be small, but every little helps, and by their efforts many souls will be won to the truth. By them God's message will be made known and His saving health to all nations. Then let the church carry a burden for the lambs of the flock. Let the children be educated and trained to do service for God, for they are the Lord's heritage. [462]

Years ago school buildings suitable for church schools should have been erected in which the children and youth could receive a true education.

The lessonbooks used in our church schools should be of a character to bring the law of God to the attention. Thus the light and strength and power of the truth will be magnified. Youth from the world, some even whose minds have been depraved, will connect with these schools, and there they will be converted. Their witness for the truth may be stopped for a while by the false theories entertained by the parents, but in the end, truth will triumph. I am instructed to say that this kind of missionary work will have a telling influence in diffusing light and knowledge.

How important that families who settle where a school is located should be good representatives of our holy faith!

Churches where schools are established may well tremble as they see themselves entrusted with moral responsibilities too great for words to express. Shall this work that has been nobly begun fail or languish for want of consecrated workers? Shall selfish projects and ambitions find room in this enterprise? Will the workers permit the love of gain, the love of ease, the lack of piety, to banish Christ from their hearts and exclude Him from the school? God forbid! The work is already far advanced. In educational

lines everything is arranged for an earnest reform, for a truer, more effective education. Will our people accept this holy trust? Will they humble themselves at the cross of Calvary, ready for every sacrifice and every service? [463]

Parents and teachers should seek most earnestly for that wisdom which Jesus is ever ready to give; for they are dealing with human minds at the most interesting and impressible period of their development. They should aim so to cultivate the tendencies of the youth that at each stage of their life they may represent the natural beauty appropriate to that period, unfolding gradually, as do the plants and flowers in the garden.

The management and instruction of children is the noblest missionary work that any man or woman can undertake. By the proper use of objects the lessons should be made very plain, that their minds may be led from nature up to nature's God. We must have in our schools those who possess the tact and skill to carry forward this line of work, thus sowing seeds of truth. The great day of God alone can reveal the good this work will do.

Special talent should be given to the education of the little ones. Many can put the crib high and give food to the sheep, but it is a more difficult matter to put the crib low and feed the lambs. This is a lesson which primary teachers need to learn.

The eye of the mind needs to be educated, or the child will find pleasure in beholding evil.

Teachers should sometimes enter into the sports and plays of the little children and teach them how to play. In this way they may be able to check unkind feelings and actions without seeming to criticize or find fault. This companionship will bind together the hearts of teachers and pupils, and school will be a delight to all. [464]

Teachers must love the children because they are the younger members of the Lord's family. The Lord will inquire of them as of the parents: "Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?" Jeremiah 13:20.

In localities where believers are few, let two or three churches unite in erecting a humble building for a church school. Let all share the expense. It is high time for Sabbathkeepers to separate their children from worldly associations and place them under the very best teachers, who will make the Bible the foundation of all study.—1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:109.
[465]

School Management and Finance

I wish that I could command language to express clearly the importance of the proper management of our schools. All should feel that our schools are the Lord's instrumentalities, through which He would make Himself known to man. Everywhere men and women are needed to act as channels of light. The truth of God is to be carried to all lands, that men may be enlightened by it.

As a people having advanced light, we should devise means by which to develop an army of educated missionaries to enter the various departments of the work of God. We need well-disciplined, cultivated young men and women in our schools, in our sanitariums, in the medical missionary work, in the offices of publication, in the conferences of different states, and in the field at large. We need young men and women, who, having high intellectual culture, are fitted to do the best work for the Lord. We have done something toward reaching this standard, but still we are far behind that which the Lord has designed. As a church, as individuals, if we would stand clear in the judgment we must make more liberal efforts for the training of our young people, that they may be better fitted for the various branches of the great work committed to our hands. As a people who have great light, we should lay wise plans in order that the ingenious minds of those who have talent may be strengthened and disciplined and polished, that the work of Christ may not be hindered by lack of skillful laborers, who will do their work with earnestness and fidelity.

Some would be content with the thorough education of a few of the most promising of our youth; but they all need an^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:206-218.

education that they may be fitted for usefulness in this life, qualified for places of responsibility in both private and public life. There is great necessity for making plans that there may be a large number of competent workers, and many should fit themselves as teachers, that others may be trained and disciplined for the great work of the future. The church should take in the situation and by their influence and means seek to bring about this much-desired end.

Freedom from Debt

That our schools may nobly accomplish the purpose for which they are established, they should be free from debt. They should not be left to bear the burden of paying interest. In the establishment of training schools for workers, and especially in new fields where the brethren are few and their means limited, rather than delay the work it may be better to hire some money from the friends of the enterprise; but whenever it is possible, let our institutions be dedicated free from debt.

The Lord has means for His work in the hands of His stewards; and as long as our schools have debts which were incurred in their establishment, in the erection of necessary buildings, and in providing necessary facilities, it is our duty to present the case to our brethren and ask them to lessen these debts. Our ministers should feel a burden for this work. They should encourage all to labor harmoniously and to lift in proportion to their ability. If this work had been taken hold of with fidelity and diligence in past years, the debts on our older schools could have been lifted long ago.

Economy

In the erection of school buildings, in their furnishing, and in every feature of their management the strictest economy must be practiced. Our schools are not to be conducted on any narrow or selfish plans. They should be as homelike [467] as possible, and in every feature they are to teach correct lessons of simplicity, usefulness, thrift, and economy.

The students are in our schools for a special training to become acquainted with all lines of work that should they go out as missionaries they could be self-reliant and able, through their educated ability, to furnish themselves with necessary conveniences and facilities. Whether men or women, they should learn to mend, wash, and keep their own clothes in order. They should be able to cook their own meals. They should be familiar with agriculture and with mechanical pursuits. Thus they can lighten their own expenses, and, by their example, inculcate principles of thrift and economy. These lessons can best be taught where economy in all things is conscientiously practiced.

Not only for the financial welfare of the schools, but also as an education to the students, economy should be faithfully studied and conscientiously and diligently practiced. The managers must guard carefully every point, that there may be no needless expense, to bring a burden of debt upon the school. Every student who loves God supremely will help to bear the responsibility in this matter. Those who have been educated to do this can demonstrate by precept and example to those with whom they come in contact the principles taught by our self-denying Redeemer. Self-indulgence is a great evil and must be overcome.

Some have felt reluctant to let the students know of the financial embarrassment of the schools; but it will be far better for the students to see and understand our lack of means, for they will thus be able to help in the practice of economy. Many who come to our schools leave homes that are unadorned and where they have been accustomed to eat simple food without a number of courses. What influence will our example have on these? Let us teach them that while we have so many ways in which to use our means; while thousands are starving, dying of the plague, of famine, [468] of bloodshed, and of fire, it becomes every one of us to consider carefully, to get nothing that is needless, simply to gratify appetite or to make an appearance.

If our schools are conducted on right lines, debts will not be piling up, and still the students will be made comfortable, and the table will be supplied with plenty of good, substantial food. Our economy must never be of that kind which would lead to providing meager meals. Students should have an abundance of wholesome food. But let those in charge of the cooking gather up the fragments that nothing be lost.

Students should be taught to guard carefully their own property and that of the school. They should be made to understand the duty to bind about every needless expense at the school and while traveling to and from their homes. Self-denial is essential. We must heed the instruction given, for we are nearing the end of time. More and more shall we be obliged to plan, and devise, and economize. We cannot manage as if we had a bank on which to draw in case of emergency; therefore we must not get into straitened places. As individuals and as managers of the Lord's institutions we shall necessarily have to cut away everything intended for display and bring our expenses within the narrow compass of our income.

Good Management

The financial management in some of our schools can be greatly improved. More wisdom, more brain power, must be brought to bear upon the work. More practical methods must be brought in to stop the increase of expenditure, which would result in indebtedness. In Battle Creek and College View altogether too much money has been invested in buildings, and more than was necessary has been spent in furnishing the school homes.

When the managers of a school find that it is not meeting running expenses, and debts are heaping up, they should act [469] like levelheaded businessmen and change their methods and plans. When one year has proved that the financial management has been wrong, let wisdom's voice be heard. Let there be a decided reformation. Teachers may manifest a Christlike excellence in serious, solid thinking and planning to improve the state of things. They should enter heartily into the plans of the managers and share their burdens.

Low Tuitions

In some of our schools the price of tuitions has been too low. This has in many ways been detrimental to the educational work. It has brought

discouraging debt; it has thrown upon the management a continual suspicion of miscalculation, want of economy, and wrong planning; it has been very discouraging to the teachers; and it leads the people to demand correspondingly low prices in other schools. Whatever may have been the object in placing the tuition at less than a living rate, the fact that a school has been running behind heavily is sufficient reason for reconsidering the plans and arranging its charges so that in the future its showing may be different. The amount charged for tuition, board, and residence should be sufficient to pay the salaries of the faculty, to supply the table with an abundance of healthful, nourishing food, to maintain the furnishing of the rooms, to keep the buildings in repair, and to meet other necessary running expenses. This is an important matter and calls for no narrow calculation, but for a thorough investigation. The counsel of the Lord is needed. The school should have a sufficient income not only to pay the necessary running expenses, but to be able to furnish the students during the school term with some things essential for their work.

Debts must not be allowed to accumulate term after term. The very highest kind of education that could be given is to shun the incurring of debt as you would shun disease. When one year after another passes, and there is no sign of [470] diminishing the debt, but it is rather increased, a halt should be called. Let the managers say: "We refuse to run the school any longer unless some sure system is devised." It would be better, far better, to close the school until the managers learn the science of conducting it on a paying basis. For Christ's sake, as the chosen people of God, call yourselves to task and inaugurate a sound financial system in our schools.

Whenever it becomes necessary to raise the prices at any school, let the matter first be laid before the patrons of the institution, showing them that the fees have been placed at too low a figure and that, as a result, debts are accumulating upon the school, thus crippling and hindering its work. Properly increasing the tuitions may cause a decrease in the attendance, but a large attendance should not be so much a matter of rejoicing as freedom from debt.

One of the results of low tuition at Battle Creek has been the gathering together in one place of a larger number of students and a larger number of families than was wise. If two thirds of the people in Battle Creek were plants of the Lord in other localities, they would have room to grow.

Greater results would have appeared if a portion of the time and energy bestowed on the large school in Battle Creek to keep it in a healthy condition had been used for schools in other localities where there is room for agricultural pursuits to be carried on as a part of the education. Had there been a willingness to follow the Lord's ways and His plans, many plants would now be growing in other places.

Over and over again the word of the Lord has come to us that plants both of churches and of schools should be made in other localities, that there were too many weighty responsibilities in one place. Get the people out of the large centers and establish interests in other places, is the instruction given. Had this instruction been heeded, had there been a distribution of means and facilities, the money expended on the extra college buildings at Battle Creek would have [471] abundantly provided for two new plants in other localities, and the tree would have grown and borne such fruit as has not been seen, because men choose to follow their own wisdom.

Our brethren say the plea comes from ministers and parents that there are scores of young people in our ranks who need the advantages of our training schools, who cannot attend unless tuitions are less. But those who plead for low tuitions should carefully weigh matters on all sides. If students cannot of themselves command sufficient means to pay the actual expense of good and faithful work in their education, is it not better that their parents, their friends, the churches to which they belong, or largehearted, benevolent brethren in their conference, should assist them than that a burden of debt should be brought upon the school? It would be far better to let the many patrons of the institution share the expense than for the school to run in debt.

Methods must be devised to prevent the accumulation of debt upon our institutions. The whole cause must not be made to suffer because of debt which will never be lifted unless there is an entire change and the work is carried forward on some different basis. Let all who have acted a part in allowing this cloud of debt to cover them now feel it their duty to do what they can to remove it.

Assisting Worthy Students

The churches in different localities should feel that a solemn responsibility rests upon them to train youth and educate talent to engage in missionary work. When they see those in the church who give promise of making useful workers, but who are not able to support themselves in the school, they should assume the responsibility of sending them to one of our training schools. There is excellent ability in the churches that needs to be brought into service. There are persons who would do good service in the Lord's vineyard, but many are too poor to obtain without assistance the education that they [472] require. The churches should feel it a privilege to take a part in defraying the expenses of such.

Those who have the truth in their hearts are always openhearted, helping where it is necessary. They lead out, and others imitate their example. If there are some who should have the benefit of the school, but who cannot pay full price for their tuition, let the churches show their liberality by helping them.

Besides this, in each conference a fund should be raised to lend to worthy poor students who desire to give themselves to the missionary work; and in some cases they should even receive donations. When the Battle Creek College was first started, there was a fund placed in the Review and Herald Office for the benefit of those who wished to obtain an education but had not the means. This was used by several students until they could get a good start; then from their earnings they would replace what they had drawn, so that others might be benefited by the fund. The youth should have it plainly set before them that they must work their own way as far as possible and thus partly defray their expenses. That which costs little will be appreciated little. But that which costs a price somewhere near its real value will be estimated accordingly.

Teaching Self-Reliance

By precept and example, teach self-denial, economy, largeheartedness, and self-reliance. Everyone who has a true character will be qualified to cope with difficulties and will be prompt in following a "Thus saith the Lord." Men are not prepared to understand their obligation to God until they have learned in Christ's school to wear His yoke of restraint and

obedience. Sacrifice is the very beginning of our work in advancing the truth and in establishing institutions. It is an essential part of education. Sacrifice must become habitual in all our character building in this life if we would have [473] a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Through erroneous ideas regarding the use of money, the youth are exposed to many dangers. They are not to be carried along and supplied with money as if there were an inexhaustible supply from which they could draw to gratify every supposed need. Money is to be regarded as a gift entrusted to us of God to do His work, to build up His kingdom, and the youth should learn to restrict their desires. Teach that none may prostitute their powers in self-pleasing and self-gratification. Those whom God has endowed with ability to acquire means are under obligation to Him to use that means, through heaven's imparted wisdom, to His name's glory. Every shilling wasted on self-indulgence, or given to special friends who will spend it to indulge pride and selfishness, is robbing God's treasury. The money expended for garments to make a pleasing show is so much that might have been used to advance the cause of God in new places. Oh, that God would give all a true sense of what it means to be a Christian! It is to be Christlike, and Christ lived not to please Himself.

Duty of Our Conferences

Our conferences look to the schools for educated and well-trained laborers, and they should give the schools a most hearty and intelligent support. Light has been plainly given that those who minister in our schools, teaching the word of God, explaining the Scriptures, educating the students in the things of God, should be supported by the tithe money. This instruction was given long ago, and more recently it has been repeated again and again.

Wherever schools are established, wise managers must be provided, "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness," men who will do their very best in the various responsibilities of their positions. Business ability they should have, but it is of still greater importance that [474] they walk humbly with God and are guided by the Holy Spirit. Such

men will be taught of God, and they will seek counsel of their brethren who are men of prayer.

The managers of our schools must labor with pure motives. In their unselfishness they will remember that other parts of the great harvest field will require the same facilities that are provided for the school under their care. In every plan they will remember that equality and unity are to be preserved. They will carefully estimate the expense of every undertaking and will endeavor not to absorb so large an amount of money as to deprive other fields of necessary facilities.

Too often ministers have been brought in to carry responsibilities which they were in no way fitted to bear. Lay these responsibilities upon men who have business tact, men who can give themselves to business, who can visit the schools and keep an account of the financial condition, and who can also give instruction regarding the keeping of the accounts. The work of the school should be inspected several times each year. Let the ministers act as counselors, but lay not on them the financial responsibilities.

Inspection by General Conference Auditor

The light given me by the Lord is that wise men, men of financial ability, should visit our schools in every country and keep an account of their financial standing. This matter should not be left to ministers or committee men, who have no time to take this burden. The teachers are not to be left with this responsibility. These matters of school business call for talent which has not been provided.

If the leaders had exercised clear-sighted judgment in past years, the discouraging financial conditions that have so hindered the cause in recent years would never have been permitted to exist.

If our educational work had been carried on in accordance [475] with the instruction given for our guidance, the dark shadow of heavy debt would not today be hanging over our institutions.

Church School Finance

The same principles which, if followed, will bring success and blessing to our training schools and colleges, should govern our plans and work for the church schools. Let all share the expense. Let the church see that those who ought to receive its benefits are attending the school. Poor families should be assisted. We cannot call ourselves true missionaries if we neglect those at our very doors who are at the most critical age and who need our aid to secure knowledge and experience that will fit them for the service of God.

The Lord would have painstaking efforts made in the education of our children. True missionary work done by teachers who are daily taught of God would bring many souls to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and children thus educated will impart to others the light and knowledge received. Shall the members of the church give means to advance the cause of Christ among others and leave their own children to carry on the work and service of Satan?

As church schools are established, the people of God will find it a valuable education for themselves to learn how to conduct the school on a basis of financial success. If this cannot be done, close the school until, with the help of God, plans can be devised to carry it on without the blot of debt upon it. Men of financial ability should look over the accounts once, twice, or thrice a year, to ascertain the true standing of the school and see that enormous expenses, which will result in the accumulation of indebtedness, do not exist. We should shun debt as we should shun the leprosy.

Many of our youth who desire to obtain an education feel too unconcerned in regard to becoming involved in debt. [476] They look upon a study of books as the principal means of an education. They do not realize the value of a practical business education and are content to be carried through years of study on the means of others rather than to work their own way. They do not look critically at the outcome of this. They do not study from cause to effect.

Often the result of such a course is a disproportionate development of the faculties. The student does not understand the weak points of his character; he does not realize his own deficiencies. By depending on others he loses an experience of practical life that it will be difficult for him to recover. He does not learn self-reliance. He does not learn how to exercise

faith. True faith will enable the soul to rise out of an imperfect, undeveloped state and understand what true wisdom is. If students will develop brain, bone, and muscle harmoniously, they will be better able to study and better qualified to cope with the realities of life. But if they follow their own erroneous ideas as to what constitutes education, they will not become self-made, all-round men and women. [477]

God's Design in Our Sanitariums

Every institution established by Seventh-day Adventists is to be to the world what Joseph was in Egypt and what Daniel and his fellows were in Babylon. As in the providence of God these chosen ones were taken captive, it was to carry to heathen nations the blessings that come to humanity through a knowledge of God. They were to be representatives of Jehovah. They were never to compromise with idolaters; their religious faith and their name as worshipers of the living God they were to bear as a special honor.

And this they did. In prosperity and adversity they honored God, and God honored them.

Called from a dungeon, a servant of captives, a prey of ingratitude and malice, Joseph proved true to his allegiance to the God of heaven. And all Egypt marveled at the wisdom of the man whom God instructed. Pharaoh “made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: to bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.” Psalm 105:21, 22. Not to the people of Egypt alone, but to all the nations connected with that powerful kingdom, God manifested Himself through Joseph. He desired to make him a light bearer to all peoples, and He placed him next the throne of the world’s greatest empire, that the heavenly illumination might extend far and near. By his wisdom and justice, by the purity and benevolence of his daily life, by his devotion to the interests of the people,—and that people a nation of idolaters,—Joseph was a representative of Christ. In their benefactor, to whom all Egypt turned with gratitude and praise, that heathen people, and through them all the nations with which they were connected, were to behold the love of their Creator and Redeemer.*

*1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:219-228.

So in Daniel God placed a light beside the throne of the world's greatest kingdom, that all who would might learn of the true and living God. At the court of Babylon were gathered representatives from all lands, men of the choicest talents, men the most richly endowed with natural gifts and possessed of the highest culture this world could bestow; yet amid them all the Hebrew captives were without a peer. In physical strength and beauty, in mental vigor and literary attainments, and in spiritual power and insight they stood unrivaled. "In all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm." Daniel 1:20. While faithful to his duties in the king's court, Daniel so faithfully maintained his loyalty to God that God could honor him as His messenger to the Babylonian monarch. Through him the mysteries of the future were unfolded, and Nebuchadnezzar himself was constrained to acknowledge the God of Daniel as "a God of gods and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets." Daniel 2:47.

So the institutions established by God's people today are to glorify His name. The only way in which we can fulfill His expectation is by being representatives of the truth for this time. God is to be recognized in the institutions established by Seventh-day Adventists. By them the truth for this time is to be represented before the world with convincing power.

To Represent the Character of God

We are called to represent to the world the character of God as it was revealed to Moses. In answer to the prayer of Moses, "Show me Thy glory," the Lord promised, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee." "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving [479] iniquity and transgression and sin." Exodus 33:18, 19; 34:6, 7. This is the fruit that God desires from His people. In the purity of their characters, in the holiness of their lives, in their mercy and loving-kindness and compassion, they are to demonstrate that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Psalm 19:7.

God's purpose for His institutions today may also be read in the purpose which He sought to accomplish through the Jewish nation. Through Israel it was His design to impart rich blessings to all peoples. Through them the way was to be prepared for the diffusion of His light to the whole world. The nations of the world, through following corrupt practices, had lost a knowledge of God. Yet in His mercy God did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through His church. He designed that the principles revealed through His people should be the means of restoring in man the moral image of God.

Christ was their instructor. As He was with them in the wilderness, so after their establishment in the Promised Land He was still their Teacher and Guide. In the tabernacle and the temple His glory dwelt in the holy Shekinah above the mercy seat. In their behalf He constantly manifested the riches of His love and patience.

God desired to make of His people Israel a praise and a glory. Every spiritual advantage was given them. God withheld from them nothing favorable to the formation of character that would make them representatives of Himself.

Their obedience to the laws of God would make them marvels of prosperity before the nations of the world. He who could give them wisdom and skill in all cunning work would continue to be their teacher and would ennoble and elevate them through obedience to His laws. If obedient, they would be preserved from the diseases that afflicted other nations and would be blessed with vigor of intellect. The [480] glory of God, His majesty and power, were to be revealed in all their prosperity. They were to be a kingdom of priests and princes. God furnished them with every facility for becoming the greatest nation on the earth.

In the most definite manner, God through Moses set before them His purpose and made plain the terms of their prosperity. "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God," He said; "the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. ... Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations. ... It shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord

thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which He sware unto thy fathers: and He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee. ... Thou shalt be blessed above all people.” Deuteronomy 7:6-14.

“Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in His ways, and to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and to hearken unto His voice: and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people, as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all His commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as He hath spoken.” Deuteronomy 26:17-19.

In these words are set forth the conditions of all true prosperity, conditions with which, if they fulfill the purpose of their establishment, all our institutions must comply.

Founded on Bible Principles

The Lord years ago gave me special light in regard to the establishment of a health institution where the sick could be [481] treated on altogether different lines from those followed in any other institution in our world. It was to be founded and conducted upon Bible principles, as the Lord’s instrumentality, and it was to be in His hands one of the most effective agencies for giving light to the world. It was God’s purpose that it should stand forth with scientific ability, with moral and spiritual power, and as a faithful sentinel of reform in all its bearings. All who should act a part in it were to be reformers, having respect to its principles, and heeding the light of health reform shining upon us as a people.

God designed that the institution which He should establish should stand forth as a beacon of light, of warning and reproof. He would prove to the world that an institution conducted on religious principles, as an asylum for the sick, could be sustained without sacrificing its peculiar, holy character; that it could be kept free from the objectionable features found in other health institutions. It was to be an instrumentality for bringing about great reforms.

The Lord revealed that the prosperity of the Sanitarium was not to be dependent alone upon the knowledge and skill of its physicians, but upon the favor of God. It was to be known as an institution where God was acknowledged as the Monarch of the universe, an institution that was under His special supervision. Its managers were to make God first and last and best in everything. And in this was to be its strength. If conducted in a manner that God could approve, it would be highly successful, and would stand in advance of all other institutions of the kind in the world. Great light, great knowledge, and superior privileges were given. And in accordance with the light received would be the responsibility of those to whom the carrying forward of the institution was entrusted.

As our work has extended and institutions have multiplied, God's purpose in their establishment remains the same. The conditions of prosperity are unchanged. [482]

To Promulgate Health Principles

The human family is suffering because of transgression of the laws of God. The Lord desires that men shall be led to understand the cause of their suffering and the only way to find relief. He desires them to see that their well-being—physical, mental, and moral—depends upon their obedience to His law. It is His purpose that our institutions shall be as object lessons showing the results of obedience to right principles.

In the preparation of a people for the Lord's second coming a great work is to be accomplished through the promulgation of health principles. The people are to be instructed in regard to the needs of the physical organism and the value of healthful living as taught in the Scriptures, that the bodies which God has created may be presented to Him a living sacrifice, fitted to render Him acceptable service. There is a great work to be done for suffering humanity in relieving their sufferings by the use of the natural agencies that God has provided and in teaching them how to prevent sickness by the regulation of the appetites and passions. The people should be taught that transgression of the laws of nature is transgression of the laws of God. They should be taught the truth in physical as well as in spiritual lines that "the fear of the Lord tendeth to life." Proverbs 19:23. "If thou wilt

enter into life,” Christ says, “keep the commandments.” Matthew 19:17. Live out “My law as the apple of thine eye.” Proverbs 7:2. God’s commandments, obeyed, are “life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.” Proverbs 4:22.

Our sanitariums are an educating power to teach the people in these lines. Those who are taught can in turn impart to others a knowledge of health-restoring and health-preserving principles. Thus our sanitariums are to be an instrumentality for reaching the people, an agency for showing them the evil of disregarding the laws of life and health, and [483] for teaching them how to preserve the body in the best condition. Sanitariums are to be established in different countries that are entered by our missionaries and are to be centers from which a work of healing, restoring, and educating shall be carried on.

A Soul-saving Agency

We are to labor both for the health of the body and for the saving of the soul. Our mission is the same as that of our Master, of whom it is written that He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by Satan. Acts 10:38. Of His own work He says: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek.” “He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.” Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18. As we follow Christ’s example of labor for the good of others we shall awaken their interest in the God whom we love and serve.

Our sanitariums in all their departments should be memorials for God, His instrumentalities for sowing the seeds of truth in human hearts. This they will be if rightly conducted.

The living truth of God is to be made known in our medical institutions. Many persons who come to them are hungering and thirsting for truth, and when it is rightly presented they will receive it with gladness. Our sanitariums have been the means of elevating the truth for this time and bringing it before thousands. The religious influence that pervades these institutions inspires the guests with confidence. The assurance that the Lord

presides there, and the many prayers offered for the sick, make an impression upon their hearts. Many who have never before thought of the value of the soul are convicted by the Spirit of God, and not a few are led to change their whole course of life. Impressions that will [484] never be effaced are made upon many who have been self-satisfied, who have thought their own standard of character to be sufficient, and who have felt no need of the righteousness of Christ. When the future test comes, when enlightenment comes to them, not a few of these will take their stand with God's remnant people.

God is honored by institutions conducted in this way. In His mercy He has made the sanitariums such a power in the relief of physical suffering that thousands have been drawn to them to be cured of their maladies. And with many, physical healing is accompanied by the healing of the soul. From the Saviour they receive the forgiveness of their sins. They receive the grace of Christ and identify themselves with Him, with His interests, His honor. Many go away from our sanitariums with new hearts. The change is decided. These, returning to their homes, are as lights in the world. The Lord makes them His witnesses. Their testimony is: "I have seen His greatness, I have tasted His goodness. 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul.'" Psalm 66:16.

Thus through the prospering hand of our God upon them our sanitariums have been the means of accomplishing great good. And they are to rise still higher. God will work with the people who will honor Him.

Wonderful is the work which God designs to accomplish through His servants, that His name may be glorified. God made Joseph a fountain of life to the Egyptian nation. Through Joseph the life of that whole people was preserved. Through Daniel God saved the life of all the wise men of Babylon. And these deliverances were as object lessons; they illustrated to the people the spiritual blessings offered them through connection with the God whom Joseph and Daniel worshiped. So through His people today God desires to bring blessings to the world.

Every worker in whose heart Christ abides, everyone who [485] will show forth His love to the world, is a worker together with God for the blessing of humanity. As he receives from the Saviour grace to impart to others, from his whole being flows forth the tide of spiritual life. Christ came as the Great Physician to heal the wounds that sin has made in the

human family; and His Spirit, working through His servants, imparts to sin-sick, suffering human beings a mighty healing power that is efficacious for the body and the soul. “In that day,” says the Scriptures, “there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.” Zechariah 13:1. The waters of this fountain contain medicinal properties that will heal both physical and spiritual infirmities.

From this fountain flows the mighty river seen in Ezekiel’s vision. “These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live. ... And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.” Ezekiel 47:8-12.

Such a river of life and healing God designs that, by His power working through them, our sanitariums shall be.

Our sanitariums are to show forth to the world the benevolence of heaven; and though Christ’s visible presence is not discerned in the building, yet the workers may claim the promise: “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20. [486]

The Physician's Work for Souls

Every medical practitioner may through faith in Christ have in his possession a cure of the highest value, a remedy for the sin-sick soul. The physician who is converted and sanctified through the truth is registered in heaven as a laborer together with God, a follower of Jesus Christ. Through the sanctification of the truth, God gives to physicians and nurses wisdom and skill in treating the sick, and this work is opening the fast-closed door to many hearts. Men and women are led to understand the truth which is needed to save the soul as well as the body.

This is an element that gives character to the work for this time. The medical missionary work is as the right arm to the third angel's message which must be proclaimed to a fallen world; and physicians, managers, and workers in any line, in acting faithfully their part, are doing the work of the message. Thus the sound of the truth will go forth to every nation and kindred and tongue and people. In this work the heavenly angels bear a part. They awaken spiritual joy and melody in the hearts of those who have been freed from suffering, and thanksgiving to God arises from the lips of many who have received the precious truth.

Every physician in our ranks should be a Christian. Only those physicians who are genuine Bible Christians can discharge aright the high duties of their profession.

The physician who understands the responsibility and accountability of his position will feel the necessity of Christ's presence with him in his work for those for whom such a sacrifice has been made. He will subordinate everything to the higher interests which concern the life that may be saved unto^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:229-234.

life eternal. He will do all in his power to save both the body and the soul. He will try to do the very work that Christ would do were He in his place. The physician who loves Christ and the souls for whom Christ died will seek earnestly to bring into the sickroom a leaf from the tree of life. He will try to break the bread of life to the sufferer. Notwithstanding the obstacles and difficulties to be met, this is the solemn, sacred work of the medical profession.

True missionary work is that in which the Saviour's work is best represented, His methods most closely copied, His glory best promoted. Missionary work that falls short of this standard is recorded in heaven as defective. It is weighed in the balances of the sanctuary and found wanting.

Direct the Patients to Christ

Physicians should seek to direct the minds of their patients to Christ, the Physician of soul and body. That which physicians can only attempt to do, Christ accomplishes. The human agent strives to prolong life. Christ is life itself. He who passed through death to destroy him that had the power of death is the Source of all vitality. There is balm in Gilead, and a Physician there. Christ endured an agonizing death under the most humiliating circumstances that we might have life. He gave up His precious life that He might vanquish death. But He rose from the tomb, and the myriads of angels who came to behold Him take up the life He had laid down heard His words of triumphant joy as He stood above Joseph's rent sepulcher proclaiming: "I am the resurrection, and the life."

The question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" has been answered. By bearing the penalty of sin, by going down into the grave, Christ has brightened the tomb for all who die in faith. God in human form has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. In dying, Christ secured eternal life for all who believe in Him. In dying, He condemned the [488] originator of sin and disloyalty to suffer the penalty of sin—eternal death.

The possessor and giver of eternal life, Christ was the only one who could conquer death. He is our Redeemer; and blessed is every physician who is in a true sense of the word a missionary, a savior of souls for whom

Christ gave His life. Such a physician learns day by day from the Great Physician how to watch and work for the saving of the souls and bodies of men and women. The Saviour is present in the sickroom, in the operating room; and His power for His name's glory accomplishes great things.

The physician can do a noble work if he is connected with the Great Physician. To the relatives of the sick, whose hearts are full of sympathy for the sufferer, he may find opportunity to speak the words of life; and he can soothe and uplift the mind of the sufferer by leading him to look to the One who can save to the uttermost all who come to Him for salvation.

Angels Will Impress Mind

When the Spirit of God works on the mind of the afflicted one, leading him to inquire for truth, let the physician work for the precious soul as Christ would work for it. Do not urge upon him any special doctrine, but point him to Jesus as the sin-pardoning Saviour. Angels of God will impress the mind. Some will refuse to be illuminated by the light which God would let shine into the chambers of the mind and into the soul-temple; but many will respond to the light, and from these minds deception and error in its various forms will be swept away.

Every opportunity of working as Christ worked should be carefully improved. The physician should talk of the works of healing wrought by Christ, of His tenderness and love. He should believe that Jesus is his companion, close by his side. "We are laborers together with God." 1 Corinthians 3:9. Never should the physician neglect to direct the minds of his [489] patients to Christ, the Chief Physician. If he has the Saviour abiding in his own heart, his thoughts will ever be directed to the Healer of soul and body. He will lead the minds of sufferers to Him who can restore, who when on earth restored the sick to health and healed the soul as well as the body, saying: "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Mark 2:5.

Never should familiarity with suffering cause the physician to become careless or unsympathetic. In cases of dangerous illness the afflicted one feels that he is at the mercy of the physician. He looks to that physician as his only earthly hope, and the physician should ever point the trembling soul to One who is greater than himself, even the Son of God, who gave His

life to save him from death, who pities the sufferer, and who by His divine power will give skill and wisdom to all who ask Him.

When the patient knows not how his case will turn, is the time for the physician to impress the mind. He should not do this with a desire to distinguish himself, but that he may point the soul to Christ as a personal Saviour. If the life is spared, there is a soul for that physician to watch for. The patient feels that the physician is the very life of his life. And to what purpose should this great confidence be employed? Always to win a soul to Christ and magnify the power of God.

When the crisis has passed and success is apparent, be the patient a believer or an unbeliever, let a few moments be spent with him in prayer. Give expression to your thankfulness for the life that has been spared. The physician who follows such a course carries his patient to the One upon whom he is dependent for life. Words of gratitude may flow from the patient to the physician, for through God he has bound this life up with his own; but let the praise and thanksgiving be given to God as to One who is present though invisible.

On the sickbed Christ is often accepted and confessed; and this will be done oftener in the future than it has been in the past, for a quick work will the Lord do in our world. Words [490] of wisdom are to be on the lips of the physician, and Christ will water the seed sown, causing it to bring forth fruit unto eternal life.

To Watch for Souls

We lose the most precious opportunities by neglecting to speak a word in season. Too often a precious talent that ought to produce a thousandfold is left unused. If the golden privilege is not watched for, it will pass. Something was allowed to prevent the physician from doing his appointed work as a minister of righteousness.

There are none too many godly physicians to minister in their profession. There is much work to be done, and ministers and doctors are to work in perfect union. Luke, the writer of the Gospel that bears his name, is

called “the beloved physician,” and those who do a work similar to that which he did are living out the gospel.

Countless are the opportunities of the physician for warning the impenitent, cheering the disconsolate and hopeless, and prescribing for the health of mind and body. As he thus instructs the people in the principles of true temperance, and as a guardian of souls gives advice to those who are mentally and physically diseased, the physician is acting his part in the great work of making ready a people prepared for the Lord. This is what medical missionary work is to accomplish in its relation to the third angel’s message.

Ministers and physicians are to work harmoniously with earnestness to save souls that are becoming entangled in Satan’s snares. They are to point men and women to Jesus, their righteousness, their strength, and the health of their countenance. Continually they are to watch for souls. There are those who are struggling with strong temptations, in danger of being overcome in the fight with satanic agencies. Will you pass these by without offering them assistance? If you see a soul in need of help, engage in conversation with him even [491] though you do not know him. Pray with him. Point him to Jesus.

This work belongs just as surely to the doctor as to the minister. By public and private effort the physician should seek to win souls to Christ.

In all our enterprises and in all our institutions God is to be acknowledged as the Master Worker. The physicians are to stand as His representatives. The medical fraternity have made many reforms, and they are still to advance. Those who hold the lives of human beings in their hands should be educated, refined, sanctified. Then will the Lord work through them in mighty power to glorify His name.

Christ’s work for the paralytic is an illustration of the way we are to work. Through his friends this man had heard of Jesus and requested to be brought into the presence of the Mighty Healer. The Saviour knew that the paralytic had been tortured by the suggestions of the priests that because of his sins God had cast him off. Therefore His first work was to give him peace of mind. “Son,” He said, “thy sins be forgiven thee.” This assurance filled his heart with peace and joy. But some who were present began to murmur, saying in their hearts, “Who can forgive sins but God only?” Then

that they might know that the Son of man had power to forgive sins, Christ said to the sick man: “Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.” This shows how the Saviour bound together the work of preaching the truth and healing the sick. [492]

The World's Need

When Christ saw the multitudes that gathered about Him, “He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.” Christ saw the sickness, the sorrow, the want and degradation of the multitudes that thronged His steps. To Him were presented the needs and woes of humanity throughout the world. Among the high and the low, the most honored and the most degraded, He beheld souls who were longing for the very blessings He had come to bring, souls who needed only a knowledge of His grace to become subjects of His kingdom. “Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.” Matthew 9:36-38.

Today the same needs exist. The world is in need of workers who will labor as Christ did for the suffering and the sinful. There is indeed a multitude to be reached. The world is full of sickness, suffering, distress, and sin. It is full of those who need to be ministered unto—the weak, the helpless, the ignorant, the degraded.

Many of the youth of this generation, in the midst of churches, religious institutions, and professedly Christian homes, are choosing the path to destruction. Through intemperate habits they bring upon themselves disease, and through greed to obtain money for sinful indulgences they fall into dishonest practices. Health and character are ruined. Aliens from God and outcasts from society, these poor souls feel that they are without hope either for this life or for the life to come. The hearts of parents are broken. Men speak of^{*}

^{*}—1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:254-260.

these erring ones as hopeless, but God looks upon them with pitying tenderness. He understands all the circumstances that have led them to fall under temptation. This is a class that demands labor.

Nigh and afar off are souls, not only the youth but those of all ages, who are in poverty and distress, sunken in sin, and weighed down with a sense of guilt. It is the work of God's servants to seek for these souls, to pray with them and for them, and lead them step by step to the Saviour.

But those who do not recognize the claims of God are not the only ones who are in distress and in need of help. In the world today, where selfishness, greed, and oppression rule, many of the Lord's true children are in need and affliction. In lowly, miserable places, surrounded with poverty, disease, and guilt, many are patiently bearing their own burden of suffering, and trying to comfort the hopeless and sin-stricken about them. Many of them are almost unknown to the churches or to the ministers; but they are the Lord's lights, shining amid the darkness. For these the Lord has a special care, and He calls upon His people to be His helping hand in relieving their wants. Wherever there is a church, special attention should be given to searching out this class and ministering to them.

Reaching the Higher Classes

And while working for the poor, we should give attention also to the rich, whose souls are equally precious in the sight of God. Christ worked for all who would hear His word. He sought not only the publican and the outcast, but the rich and cultured Pharisee, the Jewish nobleman, and the Roman ruler. The wealthy man needs to be labored for in the love and fear of God. Too often he trusts in his riches and feels not his danger. The worldly possessions which the Lord has entrusted to men are often a source of great temptation. Thousands are thus led into sinful indulgences that confirm them in habits of intemperance and vice. Among the wretched victims of [494] want and sin are found many who were once in possession of wealth. Men of different vocations and different stations in life have been overcome by the pollutions of the world, by the use of strong drink, by indulgence in the lusts of the flesh, and have fallen under temptation. While these fallen ones excite our pity and demand our help, should not some

attention be given also to those who have not yet descended to these depths, but who are setting their feet in the same path? There are thousands occupying positions of honor and usefulness who are indulging habits that mean ruin to soul and body. Should not the most earnest effort be made to enlighten them?

Ministers of the gospel, statesmen, authors, men of wealth and talent, men of vast business capacity and power for usefulness, are in deadly peril because they do not see the necessity of strict temperance in all things. They need to have their attention called to the principles of temperance, not in a narrow or arbitrary way, but in the light of God's great purpose for humanity. Could the principles of true temperance be thus brought before them, there are very many of the higher classes who would recognize their value and give them a hearty acceptance.

Turning to Enduring Riches

There is another danger to which the wealthy classes are especially exposed, and here also is a field for the work of the medical missionary. Multitudes who are prosperous in the world and who never stoop to the common forms of vice, are yet brought to destruction through the love of riches. Absorbed in their worldly treasures, they are insensible to the claims of God and the needs of their fellow men. Instead of regarding their wealth as a talent to be used for the glory of God and the uplifting of humanity, they look upon it as a means of indulging and glorifying themselves. They add house to house and land to land, they fill their homes with luxuries, while want stalks the streets, and all about them [495] are human beings in misery and crime, in disease and death. Those who thus give their lives to self-serving are developing in themselves, not the attributes of God, but the attributes of Satan.

These men are in need of the gospel. They need to have their eyes turned from the vanity of material things to behold the preciousness of the enduring riches. They need to learn the joy of giving, the blessedness of being co-workers with God.

Persons of this class are often the most difficult of access, but Christ will open ways whereby they may be reached. Let the wisest, the most

trustful, the most hopeful, laborers seek for these souls. With the wisdom and tact born of divine love, with the refinement and courtesy that result alone from the presence of Christ in the soul, let them work for those who, dazzled by the glitter of earthly riches, see not the glory of the heavenly treasure.

Let the workers study the Bible with them, pressing sacred truth home to their hearts. Read to them the words of God: "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." 1 Corinthians 1:30; Jeremiah 9:23, 24; Ephesians 1:7; Philippians 4:19.

Such an appeal, made in the spirit of Christ, will not be thought impertinent. It will impress the minds of many in the higher classes. [496]

By efforts put forth in wisdom and love, many a rich man may be awakened to a sense of his responsibility and his accountability to God. When it is made plain that the Lord expects them as His representatives to relieve suffering humanity, many will respond and will give of their means and their sympathy for the benefit of the poor. When their minds are thus drawn away from their own selfish interests, many will be led to surrender themselves to Christ. With their talents of influence and means they will gladly unite in the work of beneficence with the humble missionary who was God's agent in their conversion. By a right use of their earthly treasure they will lay up "a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth." They will secure for themselves the treasure that wisdom offers, even "durable riches and righteousness."

Through observing our lives, the people of the world form their opinion of God and of the religion of Christ. All who do not know Christ need to have the high, noble principles of His character kept constantly before them

in the lives of those who do know Him. To meet this need, to carry the light of Christ's love into the homes of the great and the lowly, the rich and the poor, is the high duty and precious privilege of the medical missionary.

"Ye are the salt of the earth," Christ said to His disciples; and in these words He was speaking to His workers of today. If you are salt, saving properties are in you, and the virtue of your character will have a saving influence.

Restoring the Fallen

Although a man may have sunk to the very depths of sin, there is a possibility of saving him. Many have lost the sense of eternal realities, lost the similitude of God, and they hardly know whether they have souls to be saved or not. They have [497] neither faith in God nor confidence in man. But they can understand and appreciate acts of practical sympathy and helpfulness. As they see one with no inducement of earthly praise or compensation come into their wretched homes, ministering to the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and tenderly pointing all to Him of whose love and pity the human worker is but the messenger—as they see this, their hearts are touched. Gratitude springs up. Faith is kindled. They see that God cares for them, and they are prepared to listen as His word is opened.

In this work of restoration much painstaking effort will be required. No startling communications of strange doctrines should be made to these souls; but as they are helped physically, the truth for this time should be presented. Men and women and youth need to see the law of God with its far-reaching requirements. It is not hardship, toil, or poverty that degrades humanity; it is sin, the transgression of God's law. The efforts put forth to rescue the outcast and degraded will be of no avail unless the claims of the law of God and the need of loyalty to Him are impressed on mind and heart. God has enjoined nothing that is not necessary to bind up humanity with Him. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. ... The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." "By the word of Thy lips," says the psalmist, "I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Psalm 19:7, 8; 17:4.

Angels are helping in this work to restore the fallen and bring them back to the One who has given His life to redeem them, and the Holy Spirit is co-operating with the ministry of human agencies to arouse the moral powers by working on the heart, reproof of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

As God's children devote themselves to this work, many will lay hold of the hand stretched out to save them. They are constrained to turn from their evil ways. Some of the rescued ones may, through faith in Christ, rise to high places of service [498] and be entrusted with responsibilities in the work of saving souls. They know by experience the necessities of those for whom they labor, and they know how to help them; they know what means can best be used to recover the perishing. They are filled with gratitude to God for the blessings they have received; their hearts are quickened by love, and their energies are strengthened to lift up others who can never rise without help. Taking the Bible as their guide and the Holy Spirit as their helper and comforter, they find a new career opening before them. Every one of these souls that is added to the force of workers, provided with facilities and instruction as to how to save souls for Christ, becomes a colaborer with those who brought him the light of truth. Thus God is honored and His truth advanced.

The world will be convinced not so much by what the pulpit teaches as by what the church lives. The preacher announces the theory of the gospel, but the practical piety of the church demonstrates its power. [499]

The Church's Need

While the world needs sympathy, while it needs the prayers and assistance of God's people, while it needs to see Christ in the lives of His followers, the people of God are equally in need of opportunities that draw out their sympathies, give efficiency to their prayers, and develop in them a character like that of the divine pattern.

It is to provide these opportunities that God has placed among us the poor, the unfortunate, the sick, and the suffering. They are Christ's legacy to His church, and they are to be cared for as He would care for them. In this way God takes away the dross and purifies the gold, giving us that culture of heart and character which we need.

The Lord could carry forward His work without our co-operation. He is not dependent on us for our money, our time, or our labor. But the church is very precious in His sight. It is the case which contains His jewels, the fold which encloses His flock, and He longs to see it without spot or blemish or any such thing. He yearns after it with unspeakable love. This is why He has given us opportunities to work for Him, and He accepts our labors as tokens of our love and loyalty.

In placing among us the poor and the suffering, the Lord is testing us to reveal to us what is in our hearts. We cannot with safety swerve from principle, we cannot violate justice, we cannot neglect mercy. When we see a brother falling into decay we are not to pass him by on the other side, but are to make decided and immediate efforts to fulfill the word of God by helping him. We cannot work contrary to God's special directions without having the result of our work reflected upon us. It should be firmly settled, rooted, and grounded in the^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:261-268.

conscience, that whatever dishonors God in our course of action cannot benefit us.

It should be written upon the conscience as with a pen of iron upon a rock, that he who disregards mercy, compassion, and righteousness, he who neglects the poor, who ignores the needs of suffering humanity, who is not kind and courteous, is so conducting himself that God cannot co-operate with him in the development of character. The culture of the mind and heart is more easily accomplished when we feel such tender sympathy for others that we bestow our benefits and privileges to relieve their necessities. Getting and holding all that we can for ourselves tends to poverty of soul. But all the attributes of Christ await the reception of those who will do the very work that God has appointed them to do, working in Christ's lines.

Our Redeemer sends His messengers to bear a testimony to His people. He says: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3:20. But many refuse to receive Him. The Holy Spirit waits to soften and subdue hearts; but they are not willing to open the door and let the Saviour in, for fear that He will require something of them. And so Jesus of Nazareth passes by. He longs to bestow on them the rich blessings of His grace, but they refuse to accept them. What a terrible thing it is to exclude Christ from His own temple! What a loss to the church!

Representing Christ

Good works cost us a sacrifice, but it is in this very sacrifice that they provide discipline. These obligations bring us into conflict with natural feelings and propensities, and in fulfilling them we gain victory after victory over the objectionable traits of our characters. The warfare goes on, and thus we [501] grow in grace. Thus we reflect the likeness of Christ and are prepared for a place among the blessed in the kingdom of God.

Blessings, both temporal and spiritual, will accompany those who impart to the needy that which they receive from the Master. Jesus worked a

miracle to feed the five thousand, a tired, hungry multitude. He chose a pleasant place in which to accommodate the people and commanded them to sit down. Then He took the five loaves and the two small fishes. No doubt many remarks were made as to the impossibility of satisfying five thousand hungry men, besides women and children, from that scanty store. But Jesus gave thanks and placed the food in the hands of the disciples to be distributed. They gave to the multitude, the food increasing in their hands. And when the multitude had been fed, the disciples themselves sat down and ate with Christ of the heaven-imparted store. This is a precious lesson for every one of Christ's followers.

Pure and undefiled religion is "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." James 1:27. Our church members are greatly in need of a knowledge of practical godliness. They need to practice self-denial and self-sacrifice. They need to give evidence to the world that they are Christlike. Therefore the work that Christ requires of them is not to be done by proxy, placing on some committee or some institution the burden that they themselves should bear. They are to become Christlike in character by giving of their means and time, their sympathy, their personal effort, to help the sick, to comfort the sorrowing, to relieve the poor, to encourage the desponding, to enlighten souls in darkness, to point sinners to Christ, to bring home to hearts the obligation of God's law.

People are watching and weighing those who claim to [502] believe the special truths for this time. They are watching to see wherein their life and conduct represent Christ. By humbly and earnestly engaging in the work of doing good to all, God's people will exert an influence that will tell in every town and city where the truth has entered. If all who know the truth will take hold of this work as opportunities are presented, day by day doing little acts of love in the neighborhood where they live, Christ will be manifest to their neighbors. The gospel will be revealed as a living power and not as cunningly devised fables or idle speculations. It will be revealed as a reality, not the result of imagination or enthusiasm. This will be of more consequence than sermons or professions or creeds.

Satan is playing the game of life for every soul. He knows that practical sympathy is a test of the purity and unselfishness of the heart, and he will make every possible effort to close our hearts to the needs of others, that we may finally be unmoved by the sight of suffering. He will bring in many things to prevent the expression of love and sympathy. It is thus that he ruined Judas. Judas was constantly planning to benefit self. In this he represents a large class of professed Christians of today. Therefore we need to study his case. We are as near to Christ as he was. Yet if, as with Judas, association with Christ does not make us one with Him, if it does not cultivate within our hearts a sincere sympathy for those for whom Christ gave His life, we are in the same danger as was Judas of being outside of Christ, the sport of Satan's temptations.

We need to guard against the first deviation from righteousness; for one transgression, one neglect to manifest the spirit of Christ, opens the way for another and still another, until the mind is overmastered by the principles of the enemy. If cultivated, the spirit of selfishness becomes a devouring passion which nothing but the power of Christ can subdue. [503]

The Message of Isaiah Fifty-Eight

I cannot too strongly urge all our church members, all who are true missionaries, all who believe the third angel's message, all who turn away their feet from the Sabbath, to consider the message of the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. The work of beneficence enjoined in this chapter is the work that God requires His people to do at this time. It is a work of His own appointment. We are not left in doubt as to where the message applies, and the time of its marked fulfillment, for we read: "They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." Verse 12. God's memorial, the seventh-day Sabbath, the sign of His work in creating the world, has been displaced by the man of sin. God's people have a special work to do in repairing the breach that has been made in His law; and the nearer we approach the end, the more urgent this work becomes. All who love God will show that they bear His sign by keeping His commandments. They are the restorers of

paths to dwell in. The Lord says: “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, ... then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth.” Verses 13, 14. Thus genuine medical missionary work is bound up inseparably with the keeping of God’s commandments, of which the Sabbath is especially mentioned, since it is the great memorial of God’s creative work. Its observance is bound up with the work of restoring the moral image of God in man. This is the ministry which God’s people are to carry forward at this time. This ministry, rightly performed, will bring rich blessings to the church.

As believers in Christ we need greater faith. We need to be more fervent in prayer. Many wonder why their prayers [504] are so lifeless, their faith so feeble and wavering, their Christian experience so dark and uncertain. Have we not fasted, they say, and “walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?” In the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah Christ has shown how this condition of things may be changed. He says: “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” Verses 6, 7. This is the recipe that Christ has prescribed for the fainthearted, doubting, trembling soul. Let the sorrowful ones, who walk mournfully before the Lord, arise and help someone who needs help.

Co-operating with God

Every church is in need of the controlling power of the Holy Spirit, and now is the time to pray for it. But in all God’s work for man He plans that man shall co-operate with Him. To this end the Lord calls upon the church to have a higher piety, a more just sense of duty, a clearer realization of their obligations to their Creator. He calls upon them to be a pure, sanctified, working people. And the Christian help work is one means of bringing this about, for the Holy Spirit communicates with all who are doing God’s service.

To those who have been engaged in this work I would say: Continue to work with tact and ability. Arouse your associates to work under some name whereby they may be organized to co-operate in harmonious action. Get the young men and women in the churches to work. Combine medical missionary work with the proclamation of the third angel's message. Make regular, organized efforts to lift the church members out of the dead level in which they have been for years. Send out into the churches workers who will live the principles of health [505] reform. Let those be sent who can see the necessity of self-denial in appetite, or they will be a snare to the church. See if the breath of life will not then come into our churches. A new element needs to be brought into the work. God's people must realize their great need and peril, and take up the work that lies nearest them.

With those who engage in this work, speaking words in season and out of season, helping the needy, telling them of the wonderful love of Christ for them, the Saviour is always present, impressing the hearts of the poor and miserable and wretched. When the church accepts its God-given work, the promise is: "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward." Christ is our righteousness; He goes before us in this work, and the glory of the Lord follows.

All that heaven contains is awaiting the draft of every soul who will labor in Christ's lines. As the members of our churches individually take up their appointed work, they will be surrounded with an entirely different atmosphere. A blessing and a power will attend their labors. They will experience a higher culture of mind and heart. The selfishness that has bound up their souls will be overcome. Their faith will be a living principle. Their prayers will be more fervent. The quickening, sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon them, and they will be brought nearer to the kingdom of heaven.

The Saviour ignores both rank and caste, worldly honor and riches. It is character and devotedness of purpose that are of high value with Him. He does not take sides with the strong and worldly favored. He, the Son of the living God, stoops to uplift the fallen. By pledges and words of assurance He seeks to win to Himself the lost, perishing soul. Angels [506] of God are

watching to see who of His followers will exercise tender pity and sympathy. They are watching to see who of God's people will manifest the love of Jesus.

Those who realize the wretchedness of sin, and the divine compassion of Christ in His infinite sacrifice for fallen man, will have communion with Christ. Their hearts will be full of tenderness; the expression of the countenance and the tone of the voice will show forth sympathy; their efforts will be characterized by earnest solicitude, love, and energy, and they will be a power through God to win souls to Christ.

We all need to sow a crop of patience, compassion, and love. We shall reap the harvest we are sowing. Our characters are now forming for eternity. Here on earth we are training for heaven. We owe everything to grace, free grace, sovereign grace. Grace in the covenant ordained our adoption. Grace in the Saviour effected our redemption, our regeneration, and our adoption to heirship with Christ. Let this grace be revealed to others. [507]

Our Duty to the Household of Faith

There are two classes of poor whom we have always within our borders—those who ruin themselves by their own independent course of action and continue in their transgression, and those who for the truth's sake have been brought into straitened circumstances. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves, and then toward both these classes we shall do the right thing under the guidance and counsel of sound wisdom.

There is no question in regard to the Lord's poor. They are to be helped in every case where it will be for their benefit.

God wants His people to reveal to a sinful world that He has not left them to perish. Special pains should be taken to help those who for the truth's sake are cast out from their homes and are obliged to suffer. More and more there will be need of large, open, generous hearts, those who will deny self and will take hold of the cases of these very ones whom the Lord loves. The poor among God's people must not be left without provision for their wants. Some way must be found whereby they may obtain a livelihood. Some will need to be taught to work. Others who work hard and are taxed to the utmost of their ability to support their families will need special assistance. We should take an interest in these cases and help them to secure employment. There should be a fund to aid such worthy poor families who love God and keep His commandments.

Care must be taken that the means needed for this work shall not be diverted into other channels. It makes a difference whether we help the poor who through keeping God's^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:269-272.

commandments are reduced to want and suffering, or whether we neglect these in order to help blasphemers who tread underfoot the commandments

of God. And God regards the difference. Sabbathkeepers should not pass by the Lord's suffering, needy ones to take upon themselves the burden of supporting those who continue in transgression of God's law, those who are educated to look for help to anyone who will sustain them. This is not the right kind of missionary work. It is not in harmony with the Lord's plan.

Wherever a church is established, its members are to do a faithful work for the needy believers. But they are not to stop here. They are also to aid others, irrespective of their faith. As the result of such effort, some of these will receive the special truths for this time.

The Poor, the Sick, And the Aged

“If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land.” Deuteronomy 15:7-11.

Through circumstances some who love and obey God become poor. Some are not careful; they do not know how to [509] manage. Others are poor through sickness and misfortune. Whatever the cause, they are in need, and to help them is an important line of missionary work.

All our churches should have a care for their own poor. Our love for God is to be expressed in doing good to the needy and suffering of the household of faith whose necessities come to our knowledge and require our care. Every soul is under special obligation to God to notice His worthy

poor with particular compassion. Under no consideration are these to be passed by.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian church: “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.”

There had been a famine at Jerusalem, and Paul knew that many of the Christians had been scattered abroad, and that those who remained would be likely to be deprived of human sympathy and exposed to religious enmity. Therefore he exhorted the churches to send pecuniary assistance to their brethren in Jerusalem. The amount raised by the churches exceeded the expectation of the apostles. Constrained by the love of Christ, the believers gave liberally, and they were filled with joy because they should thus express their gratitude to the Redeemer and their love for the brethren. This is the true basis of charity according to God’s word.

The matter of caring for our aged brethren and sisters who [510] have no homes is constantly being urged. What can be done for them? The light which the Lord has given me has been repeated: It is not best to establish institutions for the care of the aged, that they may be in a company together. Nor should they be sent away from home to receive care. Let the members of every family minister to their own relatives. When this is not possible, the work belongs to the church, and it should be accepted both as a duty and as a privilege. All who have Christ’s spirit will regard the feeble and aged with special respect and tenderness.

God suffers His poor to be in the borders of every church. They are always to be among us, and the Lord places upon the members of every church a personal responsibility to care for them. We are not to lay our responsibility upon others. Toward those within our own borders we are to manifest the same love and sympathy that Christ would manifest were He

in our place. Thus we are to be disciplined, that we may be prepared to work in Christ's lines.

The minister should educate the various families and strengthen the church to care for its own sick and poor. He should set at work the God-given faculties of the people, and if one church is overtaxed in this line, other churches should come to its assistance. Let the church members exercise tact and ingenuity in caring for these, the Lord's people. Let them deny themselves luxuries and needless ornaments, that they may make the suffering needy ones comfortable. In doing this they practice the instruction given in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, and the blessing there pronounced will be theirs. [511]

Our Duty to the World

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” He “sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:16, 17. The love of God embraces all mankind. Christ, in giving the commission to the disciples, said: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15.

Christ intended that a greater work should be done in behalf of men than we have yet seen. He did not intend that such large numbers should choose to stand under the banner of Satan and be enrolled as rebels against the government of God. The world’s Redeemer did not design that His purchased inheritance should live and die in their sins. Why, then, are so few reached and saved? It is because so many of those who profess to be Christians are working in the same lines as the great apostate. Thousands who know not God might today be rejoicing in His love if those who claim to serve Him would work as Christ worked.

The blessings of salvation, temporal as well as spiritual, are for all mankind. There are many who complain of God because the world is so full of want and suffering; but God never meant that this misery should exist. He never meant that one man should have an abundance of the luxuries of life, while the children of others cry for bread. The Lord is a God of benevolence. He has made ample provision for the wants of all, and through His representatives, to whom He has entrusted His goods, He designs that the needs of all His creatures shall be supplied.*

*1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:273-280.

Let those who believe the word of the Lord read the instruction contained in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. There they will learn what kind of education was given to the families of Israel. While God’s chosen people

were to stand forth distinct and holy, separate from the nations that knew Him not, they were to treat the stranger kindly. He was not to be looked down upon because he was not of Israel. The Israelites were to love the stranger because Christ died as verily to save him as He did to save Israel. At their feasts of thanksgiving, when they recounted the mercies of God, the stranger was to be made welcome. At the time of harvest they were to leave in the field a portion for the stranger and the poor. So the strangers were to share also in God's spiritual blessings. The Lord God of Israel commanded that they should be received if they chose the society of those who knew and acknowledged Him. In this way they would learn the law of Jehovah and glorify Him by their obedience.

So today God desires His children, both in spiritual and in temporal things, to impart blessings to the world. For every disciple of Christ in every age were spoken those precious words of the Saviour: Out of him "shall flow rivers of living water."

But instead of imparting the gifts of God, many who profess to be Christians are wrapped up in their own narrow interests, and they selfishly withhold God's blessings from their fellow men.

While God in His providence has laden the earth with His bounties and filled its storehouses with the comforts of life, want and misery are on every hand. A liberal Providence has placed in the hands of His human agents an abundance to supply the necessities of all, but the stewards of God are unfaithful. In the professed Christian world there is enough expended in extravagant display to supply the wants of all the hungry and to clothe the naked. Many who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ are spending His money [513] for selfish pleasure, for the gratification of appetite, for strong drink and rich dainties, for extravagant houses and furniture and dress, while to suffering human beings they give scarcely a look of pity or a word of sympathy.

The Great Home Mission Field

What misery exists in the very heart of our so-called Christian countries! Think of the condition of the poor in our large cities. In these cities there are multitudes of human beings who do not receive as much

care and consideration as are given to the brutes. There are thousands of wretched children, ragged and half starved, with vice and depravity written on their faces. Families are herded together in miserable tenements, many of them dark cellars reeking with dampness and filth. Children are born in these terrible places. Infancy and youth behold nothing attractive, nothing of the beauty of natural things that God has created to delight the senses. These children are left to grow up molded and fashioned in character by the low precepts, the wretchedness, and the wicked example around them. They hear the name of God only in profanity. Impure words, the fumes of liquor and tobacco, moral degradation of every kind, meets the eye and perverts the senses. And from these abodes of wretchedness piteous cries for food and clothing are sent out by many who know nothing about prayer.

By our churches there is a work to be done of which many have little idea, a work as yet almost untouched. "I was anhungered," Christ says, "and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me." Matthew 25:35, 36. Some think that if they give money to this work, it is all they are required to do; but this is an error. Donations of money cannot take the place of personal ministry. It is right to give our means, and many more should do this; but according to [514] their strength and opportunities, personal service is required of all.

The work of gathering in the needy, the oppressed, the suffering, the destitute, is the very work which every church that believes the truth for this time should long since have been doing. We are to show the tender sympathy of the Samaritan in supplying physical necessities, feeding the hungry, bringing the poor that are cast out to our homes, gathering from God every day grace and strength that will enable us to reach to the very depths of human misery and help those who cannot possibly help themselves. In doing this work we have a favorable opportunity to set forth Christ the crucified One.

Every church member should feel it his special duty to labor for those living in his neighborhood. Study how you can best help those who take no interest in religious things. As you visit your friends and neighbors, show an interest in their spiritual as well as in their temporal welfare. Present Christ as a sin-pardoning Saviour. Invite your neighbors to your home, and

read with them from the precious Bible and from books that explain its truths. This, united with simple songs and fervent prayers, will touch their hearts. Let church members educate themselves to do this work. This is just as essential as to save the benighted souls in foreign countries. While some feel the burden of souls afar off, let the many who are at home feel the burden of precious souls around them and work just as diligently for their salvation.

The hours so often spent in amusement that refreshes neither body nor soul should be spent in visiting the poor, the sick, and the suffering, or in seeking to help someone who is in need.

How to Work for the Needy

In trying to help the poor, the despised, the forsaken, do not work for them mounted on the stilts of your dignity and [515] superiority, for in this way you will accomplish nothing. Become truly converted, and learn of Him who is meek and lowly in heart. We must set the Lord always before us. As servants of Christ, keep saying, lest you forget it: "I am bought with a price."

God calls not only for your benevolence, but for your cheerful countenance, your hopeful words, the grasp of your hand. As you visit the Lord's afflicted ones, you will find some from whom hope has departed; bring back the sunshine to them. There are those who need the bread of life; read to them from the word of God. Upon others there is a soul sickness that no earthly balm can reach or physician heal; pray for these, and bring them to Jesus.

On special occasions some indulge in sentimental feelings which lead to impulsive movements. They may think that in this way they are doing great service for Christ, but they are not. Their zeal soon dies, and then Christ's service is neglected. It is not fitful service that God accepts; it is not by emotional spasms of activity that we can do good to our fellow men. Spasmodic efforts to do good often result in more injury than benefit.

Methods of helping the needy should be carefully and prayerfully considered. We are to seek God for wisdom, for He knows better than

shortsighted mortals how to care for the creatures He has made. There are some who give indiscriminately to everyone who solicits their aid. In this they err. In trying to help the needy, we should be careful to give them the right kind of help. There are those who when helped will continue to make themselves special objects of need. They will be dependent as long as they see anything on which to depend. By giving undue time and attention to these, we may encourage idleness, helplessness, extravagance, and intemperance.

When we give to the poor we should consider: “Am I encouraging prodigality? Am I helping, or injuring them?” [516] No man who can earn his own livelihood has a right to depend on others.

The proverb, “The world owes me a living,” has in it the essence of falsehood, fraud, and robbery. The world owes no man a living who is able to work and gain a living for himself. But if one comes to our door and asks for food, we should not turn him away hungry. His poverty may be the result of misfortune.

We should help those who with large families to support have constantly to battle with feebleness and poverty. Many a widowed mother with her fatherless children is working far beyond her strength in order to keep her little ones with her, and provide them with food and clothing. Many such mothers have died from overexertion. Every widow needs the comfort of hopeful, encouraging words, and there are very many who should have substantial aid.

Men and women of God, persons of discernment and wisdom, should be appointed to look after the poor and needy, the household of faith first. These should report to the church and counsel as to what should be done.

Instead of encouraging the poor to think that they can have their eating and drinking provided free or nearly so, we should place them where they can help themselves. We should endeavor to provide them with work, and if necessary teach them how to work. Let the members of poor households be taught how to cook, how to make and mend their own clothing, how to care properly for the home. Let boys and girls be thoroughly taught some useful trade or occupation. We are to educate the poor to become self-reliant. This will be true help, for it will not only make them self-sustaining, but will enable them to help others.

All Within Reach of God's Love

It is God's purpose that the rich and the poor shall be closely bound together by the ties of sympathy and [517] helpfulness. He bids us interest ourselves in every case of suffering and need that shall come to our knowledge.

Think it not lowering to your dignity to minister to suffering humanity. Look not with indifference and contempt upon those who have laid the temple of the soul in ruins. These are objects of divine compassion. He who created all, cares for all. Even those who have fallen the lowest are not beyond the reach of His love and pity. If we are truly His disciples, we shall manifest the same spirit. The love that is inspired by our love for Jesus will see in every soul, rich or poor, a value that cannot be measured by human estimate. Let your life reveal a love that is higher than you can possibly express in words.

Often the hearts of men will harden under rebuke, but they cannot withstand the love expressed toward them in Christ. We should bid the sinner not to feel himself an outcast from God. Bid the sinner look to Christ, who alone can heal the soul leprous with sin. Reveal to the desperate, discouraged sufferer that he is a prisoner of hope. Let your message be: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

I have been instructed that the medical missionary work will discover, in the very depths of degradation, men who, though they have given themselves up to intemperate, dissolute habits, will respond to the right kind of labor. But they need to be recognized and encouraged. Firm, patient, earnest effort will be required in order to lift them up. They cannot restore themselves. They may hear Christ's call, but their ears are too dull to take in its meaning; their eyes are too blind to see anything good in store for them. They are dead in trespasses and sins. Yet even these are not to be excluded from the gospel feast. They are to receive the invitation: "Come." Though they may feel unworthy, the Lord says: "Compel them to come in." Listen to no excuse. By love and kindness lay right hold of them. [518]

"Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy

of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.” Jude 1:20-23. Press home upon the conscience the terrible results of the transgression of God’s law. Show that it is not God who causes pain and suffering, but that man through his own ignorance and sin has brought this condition upon himself.

This work, properly conducted, will save many a poor sinner who has been neglected by the churches. Many not of our faith are longing for the very help that Christians are in duty bound to give. If God’s people would show a genuine interest in their neighbors, many would be reached by the special truths for this time. Nothing will or ever can give character to the work like helping the people just where they are. Thousands might today be rejoicing in the message if those who claim to love God and keep His commandments would work as Christ worked.

When the medical missionary work thus wins men and women to a saving knowledge of Christ and His truth, money and earnest labor may safely be invested in it, for it is a work that will endure.

God has made amazing sacrifices for human beings. He has expended mighty energy to reclaim man from transgression and sin to loyalty and obedience, but I have been shown that He does nothing without the co-operation of human agencies. Every endowment of grace and power and efficiency has been liberally provided. The strongest motives have been presented to arouse and keep alive in the human heart the missionary spirit, that efforts of divine and human agencies may be combined.—1904, Testimonies for the Church 8:54. [519]

The Care of Orphans

Among all whose needs demand our interest, the widow and the fatherless have the strongest claims upon our tender sympathy. They are the objects of the Lord's special care. They are lent to Christians in trust for God. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." James 1:27.

Many a father who has died in the faith, resting upon the eternal promise of God, has left his loved ones in full trust that the Lord would care for them. And how does the Lord provide for these bereaved ones? He does not work a miracle in sending manna from heaven; He does not send ravens to bring them food; but He works a miracle upon human hearts, expelling selfishness from the soul and unsealing the fountains of benevolence. He tests the love of His professed followers by committing to their tender mercies the afflicted and bereaved ones.

To Be Cared for in Families

Let those who have the love of God open their hearts and homes to take in these children. It is not the best plan to care for the orphans in large institutions. If they have no relatives able to provide for them, the members of our churches should either adopt these little ones into their families or find suitable homes for them in other households.

These children are in a special sense the ones whom Christ looks upon, whom it is an offense to Him to neglect. Every kind act done to them in the name of Jesus is accepted by Him as done to Himself.

Those who in any way rob them of the means they should^{*}

*1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:281-287.

[520]

have, those who regard their wants with indifference, will be dealt with by the Judge of all the earth. “Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.” “He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy.” Luke 18:7, 8; James 2:13. The Lord bids us: “Bring the poor that are cast out to thy house.” Isaiah 58:7. Christianity must supply fathers and mothers and homes for these destitute ones. Compassion for the widow and orphan, manifested in prayers and corresponding deeds, will come up in remembrance before God, to be rewarded by and by.

There is a wide field of usefulness before all who will work for the Master in caring for these children and youth who have been deprived of the watchful guidance of parents and the subduing influence of a Christian home. Many of them have inherited evil traits of character; and if left to grow up in ignorance, they will drift into associations that lead to vice and crime. These unpromising children need to be placed in a position favorable for the formation of a right character, that they may become children of God.

Are you who profess to be children of God acting your part in teaching these, who so much need to be patiently taught how to come to the Saviour? Are you acting your part as faithful servants of Christ? Are these unformed, perhaps ill-balanced, minds cared for with that love which Christ has manifested for us? The souls of children and youth are in deadly peril if left to themselves. They need patient instruction, love, and tender Christian care.

Were there no revelation to point out our duty, the very sight of our eyes, and what we know of the inevitable working of cause and effect, should arouse us to rescue these unfortunate ones. If the members of the church would bring into this work the same energy and tact and skill that they employ in the common business relations of life, if they [521] would seek wisdom from God and earnestly study how to mold these undisciplined minds, many souls that are ready to perish might be rescued.

If parents would feel the solicitude for the salvation of their own children that they should feel, if they would bear them in their prayers to the

throne of grace and live out their prayers, knowing that God would co-operate with them, they might become successful workers for children outside of their own family, and especially for those who do not have parental counsel and guidance. The Lord calls upon every member of the church to do his duty to these orphans.

A Christlike Work

In caring for the children we should not work from the standpoint of duty merely, but from love, because Christ died for their salvation. Christ has purchased these souls who need our care, and He expects us to love them as He has loved us in our sins and waywardness. Love is the agency through which God works to draw the heart to Him, for “God is love.” In every enterprise of mercy this principle alone can give efficiency; the finite must unite with the Infinite.

This work for others will require effort, self-denial, and self-sacrifice. But what is the little sacrifice that we can make in comparison with the sacrifice which God has made for us in the gift of His only-begotten Son?

God imparts His blessing to us that we may impart to others. When we ask Him for our daily bread, He looks into our hearts to see if we will share the same with those more needy than ourselves. When we pray, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” He watches to see if we will manifest compassion toward those with whom we associate. This is the evidence of our connection with God, that we are merciful even as our Father in heaven is merciful.

God is always giving; and upon whom are His gifts bestowed? Upon those who are faultless in character? “He [522] maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Matthew 5:45. Notwithstanding the sinfulness of humanity, notwithstanding that we so often grieve the heart of Christ and prove ourselves most undeserving, yet when we ask His forgiveness, He does not turn us away. His love is freely extended to us, and He bids us: Love one another as I have loved you. John 13:34.

Brethren and sisters, I ask you to consider this matter carefully. Think of the wants of the fatherless and motherless. Are not your hearts stirred as you witness their sufferings? See if something cannot be done for the care of these helpless ones. As far as lies in your power, make a home for the homeless. Let everyone stand ready to act a part in helping forward this work. The Lord said to Peter: "Feed My lambs." This command is to us, and by opening our homes for the orphans we aid in its fulfillment. Let not Jesus be disappointed in you.

Take these children and present them to God as a fragrant offering. Ask His blessing upon them, and then mold and fashion them according to Christ's order. Will our people accept this holy trust? Because of our shallow piety and worldly ambition, shall those for whom Christ has died be left to suffer, to go in wrong paths?

The word of God abounds with instruction as to how we should treat the widow, the fatherless, and the needy, suffering poor. If all would obey this instruction, the widow's heart would sing for joy; hungry little children would be fed; the destitute would be clothed; and those ready to perish would be revived. Heavenly intelligences are looking on, and when, imbued with zeal for Christ's honor, we place ourselves in the channel of God's providence, these heavenly messengers will impart to us a new spiritual power so that we shall be able to combat difficulties and triumph over obstacles.

And what a blessing would reward the workers! To many [523] who are now indolent, selfish, and self-centered, it would be as life from the dead. There would be among us a revival of heavenly charity and wisdom and zeal.

Ministers' Wives Adopting Orphans

The question has been asked whether a minister's wife should adopt infant children. I answer: If she has no inclination or fitness to engage in missionary work outside her home, and feels it her duty to take orphan children and care for them, she may do a good work. But let the choice of children be first made from among those who have been left orphans by Sabbathkeeping parents. God will bless men and women as they with

willing hearts share their homes with these homeless ones. But if the minister's wife can herself act a part in the work of educating others, she should consecrate her powers to God as a Christian worker. She should be a true helper to her husband, assisting him in his work, improving her intellect, and helping to give the message. The way is open for humble, consecrated women, dignified by the grace of Christ, to visit those in need of help, and shed light into discouraged souls. They can lift up the bowed down by praying with them and pointing them to Christ. Such should not devote their time and strength to one helpless little mortal that requires constant care and attention. They should not thus voluntarily tie their hands.

Orphans' Homes

When all is done that can be done in providing for orphans in our own homes, there will still be many needy ones in the world who should be cared for. They may be ragged, uncouth, and seemingly in every way unattractive; but they are bought with a price, and are just as precious in the sight of God as are our own little ones. They are God's property, for whom Christians are responsible. Their souls, God says, "will I require at thine hand." [524]

To care for these needy ones is a good work; yet in this age of the world the Lord does not give us as a people directions to establish large and expensive institutions for this purpose. If, however, there are among us individuals who feel called of God to establish institutions for the care of orphan children, let them follow out their convictions of duty. But in caring for the world's poor, they should appeal to the world for support. They are not to draw upon the people to whom the Lord has given the most important work ever given to men, the work of bringing the last message of mercy before all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples. The Lord's treasury must have a surplus to sustain the work of the gospel in "regions beyond."

Let those who feel the burden of establishing these institutions have wise solicitors to present their necessities and raise funds. Let the people of the world be aroused, let the denominational churches be canvassed by men who feel the necessity that something be done in behalf of the poor and

orphans. In every church there are those who fear God. Let these be appealed to, for to them God has given this work.

The institutions that have been established by our people to care for orphans and the infirm and aged among us, should be sustained. Let not these be left to languish and bring a reproach upon the cause of God. To aid in the support of these institutions should be looked upon not merely as a duty, but as a precious privilege. Instead of making needless gifts to one another, let us bestow our gifts upon the poor and helpless. When the Lord sees that we are doing our best for the relief of these needy ones, He will move upon others to aid in this good work.

The design of an orphans' home should be not merely to provide the children with food and clothing, but to place them under the care of Christian teachers who will educate them in the knowledge of God and His Son. Those who work in this line should be men and women who are [525] largehearted and inspired with enthusiasm at the cross of Calvary. They should be men and women who are cultured and self-sacrificing, who will work as Christ worked, for the cause of God and the cause of humanity.

As these homeless ones are placed where they can obtain knowledge and happiness and virtue, and become sons and daughters of the heavenly King, they will be prepared to act a Christlike part in society. They are to be so educated that they in their turn will help others. Thus the good work will be extended and perpetuated.

What mother ever loved her child as Jesus loves His children? He looks upon the marred character with grief deeper, keener than any mother's. He sees the future retribution of an evil course of action. Then let everything be done that can be done for the neglected soul.

If those who have no children, and whom God has made stewards of means, would expand their hearts to care for children who need love, care, and affection, and assistance with this world's goods, they would be far happier than they are today. So long as youth who have not a father's pitying care nor a mother's tender love are exposed to the corrupting influences of these last days, it is somebody's duty to supply the place of father and mother to some of them. Learn to give them love, affection, and sympathy. All who profess to have a Father in heaven, who they hope will

care for them and finally take them to the home He has prepared for them, ought to feel a solemn obligation resting upon them to be friends to the friendless and fathers to the orphans, to aid the widows, and be of some practical use in this world by benefiting humanity. Many have not viewed these things in a right light. If they live merely for themselves they will have no greater strength than this calls for.—1869, Testimonies for the Church 2:329. [526]

The Medical Missionary Work and the Third Angel's Message

Again and again I have been instructed that the medical missionary work is to bear the same relation to the work of the third angel's message that the arm and hand bear to the body. Under the direction of the divine Head they are to work unitedly in preparing the way for the coming of Christ. The right arm of the body of truth is to be constantly active, constantly at work, and God will strengthen it. But it is not to be made the body. At the same time the body is not to say to the arm: "I have no need of thee." The body has need of the arm in order to do active, aggressive work. Both have their appointed work, and each will suffer great loss if worked independently of the other.

The work of preaching the third angel's message has not been regarded by some as God designs it should be. It has been treated as an inferior work, while it should occupy an important place among the human agencies in the salvation of man. The minds of men must be called to the Scriptures as the most effective agency in the salvation of souls, and the ministry of the word is the great educational force to produce this result. Those who disparage the ministry and try to conduct the medical missionary work independently are trying to separate the arm from the body. What would be the result should they succeed? We should see hands and arms flying about, dispensing means without the direction of the head. The work would become disproportionate and unbalanced. That which God designed should be the hand and arm would take the place of the whole body, and the ministry would be belittled or altogether ignored. This would unsettle minds and bring^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:288-293.

in confusion, and many portions of the Lord's vineyard would be left unworked.

In Every Church

The medical missionary work should be a part of the work of every church in our land. Disconnected from the church it would soon become a strange medley of disorganized atoms. It would consume, but not produce. Instead of acting as God's helping hand to forward His truth, it would sap the life and force from the church and weaken the message. Conducted independently, it would not only consume talent and means needed in other lines, but in the very work of helping the helpless apart from the ministry of the word, it would place men where they would scoff at Bible truth.

The gospel ministry is needed to give permanence and stability to the medical missionary work; and the ministry needs the medical missionary work to demonstrate the practical working of the gospel. Neither part of the work is complete without the other.

The message of the soon coming of the Saviour must be given in all parts of the world, and a solemn dignity should characterize it in every branch. A large vineyard is to be worked, and the wise husbandman will work it so that every part will produce fruit. If in the medical missionary work the living principles of truth are kept pure, uncontaminated by anything that would dim their luster, the Lord will preside over the work. If those who bear the heavy burdens will stand true and steadfast to the principles of truth, the Lord will uphold and sustain them.

The union that should exist between the medical missionary work and the ministry is clearly set forth in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. There is wisdom and blessing for those who will engage in the work as here presented. This chapter is explicit, and there is in it enough to enlighten anyone who wishes to do the will of God. It presents abundant [528] opportunity to minister to suffering humanity, and at the same time to be an instrument in God's hands of bringing the light of truth before a perishing world. If the work of the third angel's message is carried on in right lines, the ministry will not be given an inferior place, nor will the poor and sick

be neglected. In His word God has united these two lines of work, and no man should divorce them.

There may be and there is danger of losing sight of the great principles of truth when doing the work for the poor that it is right to do, but we are ever to bear in mind that in carrying forward this work the spiritual necessities of the soul are to be kept prominent. In our efforts to relieve temporal necessities we are in danger of separating from the last gospel message its leading and most urgent features. As it has been carried on in some places, the medical missionary work has absorbed talent and means that belong to other lines of the work, and the effort in lines more directly spiritual has been neglected.

Because of the ever-increasing opportunities for ministering to the temporal needs of all classes, there is danger that this work will eclipse the message that God has given us to bear in every city—the proclamation of the soon coming of Christ, the necessity of obedience to the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus. This message is the burden of our work. It is to be proclaimed with a loud cry and is to go to the whole world. In both home and foreign fields the presentation of health principles must be united with it, but not be independent of it or in any way take its place; neither should this work absorb so much attention as to belittle other branches. The Lord has instructed us to consider the work in all its bearings, that it may have a proportionate, symmetrical, well-balanced development.

The truth for this time embraces the whole gospel. Rightly presented it will work in man the very changes that will make evident the power of God's grace upon the heart. It will do a [529] complete work and develop a complete man. Then let no line be drawn between the genuine medical missionary work and the gospel ministry. Let these two blend in giving the invitation: "Come; for all things are now ready." Let them be joined in an inseparable union, even as the arm is joined to the body.

Medical Missionary Workers

The Lord has need of all kinds of skillful workmen. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the

edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-13.

Every child of God should have sanctified judgment to consider the cause as a whole and the relation of each part to every other part, that none may lack. The field is large, and there is a great work of reform to be carried forward, not in one or two lines, but in every line. The medical missionary work is a part of this work of reform, but it should never become the means of separating the workers in the ministry from their field of labor. The education of students in medical missionary lines is not complete unless they are trained to work in connection with the church and the ministry, and the usefulness of those who are preparing for the ministry would be greatly increased if they would become intelligent on the great and important subject of health. The influence of the Holy Spirit is needed that the work may be properly balanced and that it may move forward solidly in every line.

“Press Together”

The Lord’s work is one, and His people are to be one. He has not directed that any one feature of the message should be [530] carried on independently or become all-absorbing. In all His labors He united the medical missionary work with the ministry of the word. He sent out the twelve apostles, and afterward the seventy, to preach the gospel to the people, and He gave them power also to heal the sick and to cast out devils in His name. Thus should the Lord’s messengers enter His work today. Today the message comes to us: “As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” John 20:21, 22.

Satan will invent every possible scheme to separate those whom God is seeking to make one. But we must not be misled by his devices. If the medical missionary work is carried on as a part of the gospel, worldlings will see the good that is being done; they will be convicted of its genuineness and will give it their support.

We are nearing the end of this earth's history, and God calls upon all to lift the standard bearing the inscription: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." He calls upon His people to work in perfect harmony. He calls upon those engaged in our medical work to unite with the ministry; He calls upon the ministry to co-operate with the medical missionary workers; and He calls upon the church to take up their appointed duty, holding up the standard of true reform in their own territory, leaving the trained and experienced workers to press on into new fields. No word is to be spoken to discourage any, for this grieves the heart of Christ and greatly pleases the adversary. All need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit; all should refrain from censuring and disparaging remarks, and draw near to Christ, that they may appreciate the heavy responsibilities which the co-workers with Him are carrying. "Press together; press together," are the words of our divine Instructor. Unity is strength; disunion is weakness and defeat.

In our work for the poor and unfortunate, we shall need to [531] be guarded, lest we gather responsibilities which we shall not be able to carry. Before adopting plans and methods that require a large outlay of means, we are to consider whether they bear the divine signature. God does not sanction the pushing forward of one line of work without regard to other lines. He designs that the medical missionary work shall prepare the way for the presentation of the saving truth for this time, the proclamation of the third angel's message. If this design is met, the message will not be eclipsed nor its progress hindered.

It is not numerous institutions, large buildings, or great display that God requires, but the harmonious action of a peculiar people, a people chosen by God and precious. Every man is to stand in his lot and place, thinking, speaking, and acting in harmony with the Spirit of God. Then, and not till then, will the work be a complete, symmetrical whole.

The medical missionary work is to be to the work of the church as the right arm to the body. The third angel goes forth proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. The medical missionary work is the gospel in practice. All lines of work are to be harmoniously blended

in giving the invitation: “Come; for all things are now ready.”—1904,
Testimonies for the Church 8:77. [532]

Importance of the Colporteur Work

The canvassing work, properly conducted, is missionary work of the highest order, and it is as good and successful a method as can be employed for placing before the people the important truths for this time. The importance of the work of the ministry is unmistakable; but many who are hungry for the bread of life have not the privilege of hearing the word from God's delegated preachers. For this reason it is essential that our publications be widely circulated. Thus the message will go where the living preacher cannot go, and the attention of many will be called to the important events connected with the closing scenes of this world's history.

God has ordained the canvassing work as a means of presenting before the people the light contained in our books, and canvassers should be impressed with the importance of bringing before the world as fast as possible the books necessary for their spiritual education and enlightenment. This is the very work the Lord would have His people do at this time. All who consecrate themselves to God to work as canvassers are assisting to give the last message of warning to the world. We cannot too highly estimate this work; for were it not for the efforts of the canvasser, many would never hear the warning.

It is true that some who buy the books will lay them on the shelf or place them on the parlor table and seldom look at them. Still God has a care for His truth, and the time will come when these books will be sought for and read. Sickness or misfortune may enter the home, and through the truth contained in the books God sends to troubled hearts peace and hope and rest. His love is revealed to them, and they understand the preciousness of the forgiveness of their sins. Thus the Lord co-operates with His self-denying workers.*

*1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:313-316.

[533]

There are many, who, because of prejudice, will never know the truth unless it is brought to their homes. The canvasser may find these souls and minister to them. There is a line of work in house-to-house labor which he can accomplish more successfully than others. He can become acquainted with the people and understand their true necessities; he can pray with them and can point them to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Thus the way will be opened for the special message for this time to find access to their hearts.

The Colporteur a Soul Winner

Much responsibility rests upon the canvasser. He should go to his work prepared to explain the Scriptures. If he puts his trust in the Lord as he travels from place to place, angels of God will be round about him, giving him words to speak that will bring light and hope and courage to many souls.

Let the canvasser remember that he has an opportunity to sow beside all waters. Let him remember, as he sells the books which give a knowledge of the truth, that he is doing the work of God and that every talent is to be used to the glory of His name. God will be with everyone who seeks to understand the truth that he may set it before others in clear lines. God has spoken plainly and clearly. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.” Revelation 22:17. We are to make no delay in giving instruction to those who need it, that they may be brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

The lost sheep of God’s fold are scattered in every place, and the work that should be done for them is being neglected. From the light given me I know that where there is one canvasser in the field, there should be one hundred. Canvassers should be encouraged to take hold of this work, not to canvass for storybooks, but to bring before the world the books containing truth essential for this time. [534]

Let canvassers go forth with the word of the Lord, remembering that those who obey the commandments and teach others to obey them will be rewarded by seeing souls converted, and one soul truly converted will bring others to Christ. Thus the work will advance into new territory.

The time has come when a large work should be done by the canvassers. The world is asleep, and as watchmen they are to ring the warning bell to awake the sleepers to their danger. The churches know not the time of their visitation. Often they can best learn the truth through the efforts of the canvasser. Those who go forth in the name of the Lord are His messengers to give to the multitudes who are in darkness and error the glad tidings of salvation through Christ in obeying the law of God.

Co-worker with Ministers

I have been instructed that even where the people hear the message from the living preacher, the canvasser should carry on his work in co-operation with the minister; for though the minister may faithfully present the message, the people are not able to retain it all. The printed page is therefore essential, not only in awakening them to the importance of the truth for this time, but in rooting and grounding them in the truth and establishing them against deceptive error. Papers and books are the Lord's means of keeping the message for this time continually before the people. In enlightening and confirming souls in the truth the publications will do a far greater work than can be accomplished by the ministry of the word alone. The silent messengers that are placed in the homes of the people through the work of the canvasser will strengthen the gospel ministry in every way; for the Holy Spirit will impress minds as they read the books, just as He impresses the minds of those who listen to the preaching of the word. The same ministry of angels attends the books that contain the truth as attends the work of the minister. [535]

The tidings of every successful effort on our part to dispel the darkness and to diffuse the light and knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, whom He has sent, are borne upward. The act is presented before the heavenly intelligences and thrills through all the principalities and powers, enlisting the sympathy of all heavenly beings.

As long as probation continues, there will be opportunity for the canvasser to work.—1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:478. [536]

Qualifications of the Colporteur

Since canvassing for our literature is a missionary work, it should be conducted from a missionary standpoint. Those selected as canvassers should be men and women who feel the burden of service, whose object is not to get gain, but to give light to the people. All our service is to be done to the glory of God, to give the light of truth to those who are in darkness. Selfish principles, love of gain, dignity, or position, should not be once named among us.

Canvassers need to be daily converted to God, that their words and deeds may be a savor of life unto life, that they may exert a saving influence. The reason why many have failed in the canvassing work is that they were not genuine Christians; they did not know the spirit of conversion. They had a theory as to how the work should be done, but they did not feel their dependence upon God.

Canvassers, remember that in the books you handle you are presenting, not the cup containing the wine of Babylon, doctrines of error dealt to the kings of the earth, but the cup full of the preciousness of the truths of redemption. Will you yourselves drink of it? Your minds can be brought into captivity to the will of Christ, and He can put upon you His own superscription. By beholding, you will become changed from glory to glory, from character to character. God wants you to come to the front, speaking the words He will give you. He wants you to show that you place a high estimate upon humanity, humanity that has been purchased by the precious blood of the Saviour. When you fall upon the Rock and are broken, you will experience the power of Christ, and others will recognize the power of the truth upon your hearts.*

*1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:317-320.

To those who are attending school that they may learn how to do the work of God more perfectly, I would say: Remember that it is only by a daily consecration to God that you can become soul winners. There have been those who were unable to go to school because they were too poor to pay their way. But when they became sons and daughters of God they took hold of the work where they were, laboring for those around them. Though destitute of the knowledge obtained in school, they consecrated themselves to God, and God worked through them. Like the disciples when called from their nets to follow Christ, they learned precious lessons from the Saviour. They linked themselves with the Great Teacher, and the knowledge they gained from the Scriptures qualified them to speak to others of Christ. Thus they became truly wise, because they were not too wise in their own estimation to receive instruction from above. The renewing power of the Holy Spirit gave them practical, saving energy.

The knowledge of the most learned man, if he has not learned in Christ's school, is foolishness so far as leading souls to Christ is concerned. God can work with those only who will accept the invitation: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30.

The Holy Spirit's Aid

By many of our canvassers there has been a departure from right principles. Through a desire to reap worldly advantage their minds have been drawn away from the real purpose and spirit of the work. Let none think that display will make a right impression upon the people. This will not secure the best or most permanent results. Our work is to direct minds to the solemn truths for this time. It is only when our own hearts are imbued with the spirit of the truths contained in the [538] book we are selling, and when in humility we call the attention of the people to these truths, that real success will attend our efforts; for it is only then that the Holy Spirit, who convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, will be present to impress hearts.

Our books should be handled by consecrated workers, whom the Holy Spirit can use as His instrumentalities. Christ is our sufficiency, and we are to present the truth in humble simplicity, letting it bear its own savor of life unto life.

Humble, fervent prayer would do more in behalf of the circulation of our books than all the expensive embellishments in the world. If the workers will turn their attention to that which is true and living and real; if they will pray for, believe for, and trust in the Holy Spirit, His power will be poured upon them in strong, heavenly currents, and right and lasting impressions will be made upon the human heart. Then pray and work, and work and pray, and the Lord will work with you.

Every canvasser has positive and constant need of the angelic ministration; for he has an important work to do, a work that he cannot do in his own strength. Those who are born again, who are willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit, doing in Christ's way that which they can do, those who will work as if they could see the heavenly universe watching them, will be accompanied and instructed by holy angels, who will go before them to the dwellings of the people, preparing the way for them. Such help is far above all the advantages which expensive embellishments are supposed to give.

When men realize the times in which we are living, they will work as in the sight of heaven. The canvasser will handle those books that bring light and strength to the soul. He will drink in the spirit of those books and will put his whole soul into the work of presenting them to the people. His strength, his courage, his success, will depend on how fully [539] the truth presented in the books is woven into his own experience and developed in his character. When his own life is thus molded, he can go forward, representing to others the sacred truth he is handling. Imbued with the Spirit of God he will gain a deep, rich experience, and heavenly angels will give him success in the work.

To our canvassers, to all whom God has entrusted with talents that they may co-operate with Him, I would say: Pray, oh, pray for a deeper experience. Go forth with your hearts softened and subdued by a study of the precious truths that God has given us for this time. Drink deeply of the water of salvation, that it may be in your hearts as a living spring, flowing forth to refresh souls ready to perish. God will then give wisdom to enable you to impart aright. He will make you channels for communicating His

blessings. He will help you to reveal His attributes by imparting to others the wisdom and understanding that He has imparted to you.

I pray the Lord that you may understand this subject in its length and breadth and depth, and that you may feel your responsibility to represent the character of Christ by patience, by courage, and by steadfast integrity. “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:7, R. V. [540]

The Colporteur a Gospel Worker

The intelligent, God-fearing, truth-loving canvasser should be respected; for he occupies a position equal to that of the gospel minister. Many of our young ministers and those who are fitting for the ministry would, if truly converted, do much good by working in the canvassing field. And by meeting the people and presenting to them our publications they would gain an experience which they cannot gain by simply preaching. As they went from house to house they could converse with the people, carrying with them the fragrance of Christ's life. In thus endeavoring to bless others they would themselves be blessed; they would obtain an experience in faith; their knowledge of the Scriptures would greatly increase; and they would be constantly learning how to win souls for Christ.

All our ministers should feel free to carry with them books to dispose of wherever they go. Wherever a minister goes, he can leave a book in the family where he stays, either selling it or giving it to them. Much of this work was done in the early history of the message. Ministers acted as colporteurs, using the means obtained from the sale of the books to help in the advancement of the work in places where help was needed. These can speak intelligently in regard to this method of work; for they have had an experience in this line.

Let none think that it belittles a minister of the gospel to engage in canvassing as a means of carrying truth to the people. In doing this work he is laboring in the same manner as did the apostle Paul, who says: "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind,"^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:321-325.

and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Acts 20:18-21. The eloquent Paul, to whom God manifested Himself in a wonderful manner, went from house to house in all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations.

Colporteur Work True Ministry

All who desire an opportunity for true ministry, and who will give themselves unreservedly to God, will find in the canvassing work opportunities to speak upon many things pertaining to the future, immortal life. The experience thus gained will be of the greatest value to those who are fitting themselves for the ministry. It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God. As they cherish the thought that Christ is their Companion, a holy awe, a sacred joy, will be felt by them amid all their trying experiences and all their tests. They will learn how to pray as they work. They will be educated in patience, kindness, affability, and helpfulness. They will practice true Christian courtesy, bearing in mind that Christ, their Companion, cannot approve of harsh, unkind words or feelings. Their words will be purified. The power of speech will be regarded as a precious talent, lent them to do a high and holy work. The human agent will learn how to represent the divine Companion with whom he is associated. To that unseen Holy One he will show respect and reverence because he is wearing His yoke and is learning His pure, holy ways. Those who have faith in this divine Attendant will develop. They will be gifted with power to clothe the message of truth with a sacred beauty.

[542]

There are some who are adapted to the work of the colporteur and who can accomplish more in this line than by preaching. If the Spirit of Christ dwells in their hearts, they will find opportunity to present His word to others and to direct minds to the special truths for this time. Men suited to this work undertake it; but some injudicious minister flatters them that their

gifts should be employed in preaching instead of in the work of the colporteur. Thus they are influenced to get a license to preach, and the very ones who might have been trained to make good missionaries to visit families at their homes, to talk and pray with them, are turned away from a work for which they are fitted, to make poor ministers, and the field where so much labor is needed and where so much good might be accomplished is neglected.

In the Homes of the People

The preaching of the word is a means by which the Lord has ordained that His warning message shall be given to the world. In the Scriptures the faithful teacher is represented as a shepherd of the flock of God. He is to be respected and his work appreciated. Genuine medical missionary work is bound up with the ministry, and the canvassing work is to be a part both of the medical missionary work and of the ministry. To those who are engaged in this work I would say: As you visit the people, tell them that you are a gospel worker and that you love the Lord.

Do not seek a home in a hotel, but stay at a private house and become acquainted with the family. Christ was sowing the seeds of truth wherever He was, and as His followers you can witness for the Master, doing a most precious work in fireside labor. In thus coming close to the people you will often find those who are sick and discouraged. If you are pressing close to the side of Christ, wearing His yoke, you will daily learn of Him how to carry messages of peace and comfort to the sorrowing and disappointed, the sad and [543] brokenhearted. You can point the discouraged ones to the word of God and take the sick to the Lord in prayer. As you pray, speak to Christ as you would to a trusted, much-loved friend. Maintain a sweet, free, pleasant dignity, as a child of God. This will be recognized.

Canvassers should be able to give instruction in regard to the treatment of the sick. They should learn the simple methods of hygienic treatment. Thus they may work as medical missionaries, ministering to the souls and the bodies of the suffering. This work should now be going forward in all parts of the world. Thus multitudes might be blessed by the prayers and instruction of God's servants.

Tactful Soul Winners

We need to realize the importance of the canvassing work as one great means of finding out those who are in peril and bringing them to Christ. Canvassers should never be prohibited from speaking of the love of Christ, from telling their experience in their service for the Master. They should be free to speak or to pray with those who are awakened. The simple story of Christ's love for man will open doors for them, even to the homes of unbelievers.

As the canvasser visits the people at their homes, he will often have opportunity to read to them from the Bible or from books that teach the truth. When he discovers those who are searching for truth he can hold Bible readings with them. These Bible readings are just what the people need. God will use in His service those who thus show a deep interest in perishing souls. Through them He will impart light to those who are ready to receive instruction.

Some who labor in the canvassing field have a zeal that is not according to knowledge. Because of their lack of wisdom, because they have been so much inclined to act the minister and theologian, it has been almost a necessity to place restrictions upon our canvassers. When the Lord's [544] voice calls, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" the Divine Spirit puts it into hearts to respond: "Here am I; send me." Isaiah 6:8. But bear in mind that the live coal from the altar must first touch your lips. Then the words you speak will be wise and holy words. Then you will have wisdom to know what to say and what to leave unsaid. You will not try to reveal your smartness as theologians. You will be careful not to arouse a combative spirit or excite prejudice by introducing controverted points of doctrine. You will find enough to talk about that will not excite opposition, but that will open the heart to desire a deeper knowledge of God's word.

The Lord desires you to be soul winners; therefore, while you should not force doctrinal points upon the people, you should "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." 1 Peter 3:15. Why fear? Fear lest your words should savor of self-importance, lest unadvised words be spoken, lest the words and manner should not be after Christ's likeness. Connect firmly

with Christ, and present the truth as it is in Him. Hearts cannot fail to be touched by the story of the atonement. As you learn the meekness and lowliness of Christ, you will know what you should say to the people; for the Holy Spirit will tell you what words to speak. Those who realize the necessity of keeping the heart under the control of the Holy Spirit will be enabled to sow seed that will spring up unto eternal life. This is the work of the evangelistic canvasser. [545]

Revival of the Colporteur Work

The importance of the canvassing work is kept ever before me. This work has not of late had the life infused into it which was once given by the agents who made it their specialty. Canvassers have been called from their evangelistic work to engage in other labor. This is not as it should be. Many of our canvassers, if truly converted and consecrated, can accomplish more in this line than in any other in bringing the truth for this time before the people.

We have the word of God to show that the end is near. The world is to be warned, and as never before we are to be laborers with Christ. The work of warning has been entrusted to us. We are to be channels of light to the world, imparting to others the light we receive from the great Light Bearer. The words and works of all men are to be tried. Let us not be backward now. That which is to be done in warning the world must be done without delay. Let not the canvassing work be left to languish. Let the books containing the light on present truth be placed before as many as possible.

Training Colporteurs

The presidents of our conferences and others in responsible positions have a duty to do in this matter, that the different branches of our work may receive equal attention. Canvassers are to be educated and trained to do the work required in selling the books upon present truth which the people need. There is need of men of deep Christian experience, men of well-balanced minds, strong, well-educated men^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:329-340.

to engage in this work. The Lord desires those to take hold of the canvassing work who are capable of educating others, who can awaken in promising young men and women an interest in this line, leading them to take up the bookwork and handle it successfully. Some have the talent, education, and experience which would enable them to educate the youth for the canvassing work in such a way that much more would be accomplished than is now being done.

Those who have gained an experience in this work have a special duty to perform in teaching others. Educate, educate, educate young men and women to sell the books which the Lord by His Holy Spirit has stirred His servants to write. God desires us to be faithful in educating those who accept the truth, that they may believe to a purpose and work intelligently in the Lord's way. Let inexperienced persons be connected with experienced workers, that they may learn how to work. Let them seek God most earnestly. These may do a good work in canvassing if they will obey the words: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine." 1 Timothy 4:16. Those who give evidence that they are truly converted, and who take up the canvassing work, will see that it is the best preparation for other lines of missionary labor.

If those who know the truth would practice it, methods would be devised for meeting the people where they are. It was the providence of God which in the beginning of the Christian church scattered the saints abroad, sending them out of Jerusalem into many parts of the world. The disciples of Christ did not stay in Jerusalem or in the cities near by, but they went beyond the limits of their own country into the great thoroughfares of travel, seeking for the lost that they might bring them to God. Today the Lord desires to see His work carried forward in many places. We must not confine our labors to a few localities.

We must not discourage our brethren, weakening their hands so that the work which God desires to accomplish [547] through them shall not be done. Let not too much time be occupied in fitting up men to do missionary work. Instruction is necessary, but let all remember that Christ is the Great Teacher and the Source of all true wisdom.

Let young and old consecrate themselves to God, take up the work, and go forward, laboring in humility under the control of the Holy Spirit. Let those who have been in school go out into the field and put to a practical

use the knowledge they have gained. If canvassers will do this, using the ability which God has given them, seeking counsel from Him, and combining the work of selling books with personal labor for the people, their talents will increase by exercise, and they will learn many practical lessons which they could not possibly learn in school. The education obtained in this practical way may properly be termed higher education.

No Higher Work

There is no higher work than evangelistic canvassing, for it involves the performance of the highest moral duties. Those who engage in this work need always to be under the control of the Spirit of God. There must be no exalting of self. What have any of us that we did not receive from Christ? We must love as brethren, revealing our love by helping one another. We must be pitiful and courteous. We must press together, drawing in even cords. Only those who live the prayer of Christ, working it out in practical life, will stand the test that is to come upon all the world. Those who exalt self place themselves in Satan's power, preparing to receive his deceptions. The word of the Lord to His people is that we lift the standard higher and still higher. If we obey His voice, He will work with us, and our efforts will be crowned with success. In our work we shall receive rich blessings from on high and shall lay up treasure beside the throne of God.

If we only knew what is before us we would not be so dilatory in the work of the Lord. We are in the shaking time, [548] the time when everything that can be shaken will be shaken. The Lord will not excuse those who know the truth if they do not in word and deed obey His commands. If we make no effort to win souls to Christ we shall be held responsible for the work we might have done, but did not do because of our spiritual indolence. Those who belong to the Lord's kingdom must work earnestly for the saving of souls. They must do their part to bind up the law and seal it among the disciples.

The Lord designs that the light which He has given on the Scriptures shall shine forth in clear, bright rays; and it is the duty of our canvassers to put forth a strong, united effort that God's design may be accomplished. A great and important work is before us. The enemy of souls realizes this, and

he is using every means in his power to lead the canvasser to take up some other line of work. This order of things should be changed.

God calls the canvassers back to their work. He calls for volunteers who will put all their energies and enlightenment into the work, helping wherever there is opportunity. The master calls for everyone to do the part given him according to his ability. Who will respond to the call? Who will go forth to labor in wisdom and grace and the love of Christ for those nigh and afar off? Who will sacrifice ease and pleasure, and enter the places of error, superstition, and darkness, working earnestly and perseveringly, speaking the truth in simplicity, praying in faith, doing house-to-house labor? Who at this time will go forth without the camp, imbued with the power of the Holy Spirit, bearing reproach for Christ's sake, opening the Scriptures to the people, and calling them to repentance?

God has His workmen in every age. The call of the hour is answered by the coming of the man. Thus when the divine voice cries, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" the response will come, "Here am I; send me." Isaiah 6:8. [549] Let all who labor effectually in the canvassing field feel in their hearts that they are doing the work of the Lord in ministering to souls who know not the truth for this time. They are sounding the note of warning in the highways and byways to prepare a people for the great day of the Lord, which is so soon to break upon the world.

We have no time to lose. We must encourage this work. Who will go forth now with our publications? The Lord imparts a fitness for the work to every man and woman who will co-operate with divine power. All the requisite talent, courage, perseverance, faith, and tact will come as they put the armor on. A great work is to be done in our world, and human agencies will surely respond to the demand. The world must hear the warning. When the call comes, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" send back the answer clear and distinct, "Here am I; send me."

Selection of Canvassers

Some are better adapted than others for doing a certain work; therefore it is not correct to think that everyone can be a canvasser. Some have no special adaptability for this work; but they are not, because of this, to be

regarded as faithless or unwilling. The Lord is not unreasonable in His requirements. The church is as a garden in which is a variety of flowers, each with its own peculiarities. Though in many respects all may differ, yet each has a value of its own.

God does not expect that with their different temperaments His people will each be prepared for any and every place. Let all remember that there are varied trusts. It is not the work of any man to prescribe the work of any other man contrary to his own convictions of duty. It is right to give counsel and suggest plans; but every man should be left free to seek direction from God, whose he is and whom he serves. [550]

A Preparation for the Ministry

Some men whom God was calling to the work of the ministry have entered the field as canvassers. I have been instructed that this is an excellent preparation if their object is to disseminate light, to bring the truths of God's word directly to the home circle. In conversation the way will often be opened for them to speak of the religion of the Bible. If the work is entered upon as it should be, families will be visited, the workers will manifest Christian tenderness and love for souls, and great good will be the result. This will be an excellent experience for any who have the ministry in view.

Those who are fitting for the ministry can engage in no other occupation that will give them so large an experience as will the canvassing work.

Enduring Hardness

He who in his work meets with trials and temptations should profit by these experiences, learning to lean more decidedly upon God. He should feel his dependence every moment.

No complaint should be cherished in his heart or be uttered by his lips. When successful, he should take no glory to himself, for his success is due

to the working of God's angels upon the heart. And let him remember that both in the time of encouragement and the time of discouragement the heavenly messengers are always beside him. He should acknowledge the goodness of the Lord, praising Him with cheerfulness.

Christ laid aside His glory and came to this earth to suffer for sinners. If we meet with hardships in our work, let us look to Him who is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Then we shall not fail nor be discouraged. We shall endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Remember what He says of all true believers: "We are laborers together with [551] God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." 1 Corinthians 3:9.

A Precious Experience

He who takes up the work of canvassing as he should must be both an educator and a student. While he tries to teach others he himself must learn to do the work of an evangelist. As canvassers go forth into the field with humble hearts, full of earnest activity, they will find many opportunities to speak a word in season to souls ready to die in discouragement. After laboring for these needy ones they will be able to say: "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." Ephesians 5:8. As they see the sinful course of others they can say: "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6:11.

Those who work for God will meet with discouragement, but the promise is always theirs: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20. God will give a most wonderful experience to those who will say: "I believe Thy promise; I will not fail nor become discouraged."

Reporting

Let those who gain such an experience in working for the Lord write an account of it for our papers, that others may be encouraged. Let the

canvasser tell of the joy and blessing he has received in his ministry as an evangelist. These reports should find a place in our papers, for they are far-reaching in their influence. They will be as sweet fragrance in the church, a savor of life unto life. Thus it is seen that God works with those who co-operate with Him.

Example in Health Reform

In your association with unbelievers do not allow yourselves to be swerved from right principles. If you sit at their [552] table, eat temperately and only of food that will not confuse the mind. Keep clear of intemperance. You cannot afford to weaken your mental or physical powers, lest you become unable to discern spiritual things. Keep your mind in such a condition that God can impress it with the precious truths of His word.

Thus you will have an influence upon others. Many try to correct the lives of others by attacking what they regard as wrong habits. They go to those whom they think in error, and point out defects, but do not put forth earnest, tactful effort in directing the mind to true principles. Such a course often fails of securing the desired results. In trying to correct others we too often arouse their combativeness, and thus do more harm than good. Do not watch others in order to point out their faults or errors. Teach by example. Let your self-denial and your victory over appetite be an illustration of obedience to right principles. Let your life bear witness to the sanctifying, ennobling influence of truth.

Of all the gifts that God has bestowed upon men, none is more precious than the gift of speech. If sanctified by the Holy Spirit, it is a power for good. It is with the tongue that we convince and persuade; with it we offer prayer and praise to God; and with it we convey rich thoughts of the Redeemer's love. By a right use of the gift of speech the canvasser can sow the precious seeds of truth in many hearts.

Integrity in Business

The work is halting because gospel principles are not obeyed by those who claim to be following Christ. The loose way in which some canvassers, both old and young, have performed their work shows that they have important lessons to learn. Much haphazard work has been presented before me. Some have trained themselves in deficient habits, and this deficiency has been brought into the work of God. The tract and missionary societies have been deeply involved in [553] debt through the failure of canvassers to meet their indebtedness. Canvassers have felt that they were ill-treated if required to pay promptly for the books received from the publishing houses. Yet to require prompt remittal is the only way to carry on business.

Matters should be so arranged that canvassers shall have enough to live on without overdrawing. This door of temptation must be closed and barred. However honest a canvasser may be, circumstances will arise in his work which will be to him a sore temptation.

Laziness and indolence are not the fruit borne upon the Christian tree. No soul can practice prevarication or dishonesty in handling the Lord's goods and stand guiltless before God. All who do this are in action denying Christ. While they profess to keep and teach God's law, they fail to maintain its principles.

The Lord's goods should be handled with faithfulness. The Lord has entrusted men with life and health and reasoning powers, He has given them physical and mental strength to be exercised; and should not these gifts be faithfully and diligently employed to His name's glory? Have our brethren considered that they must give an account for all the talents placed in their possession? Have they traded wisely with their Lord's goods, or have they spent His substance recklessly, and are they written in heaven as unfaithful servants? Many are spending their Lord's money in riotous enjoyment, so called; they are not gaining an experience in self-denial, but spending money on vanities, and are failing to bear the cross after Jesus. Many who were privileged with precious, God-given opportunities have wasted their lives and are now found in suffering and want.

God calls for decided improvement to be made in the [554] various branches of the work. The business done in connection with the cause of

God must be marked with greater precision and exactness. There has not been firm, decided effort to bring about essential reform.

Diligence

Canvassers should thoroughly acquaint themselves with the book they are handling and be able readily to call attention to the important chapters.

The canvasser should carry with him tracts, pamphlets, and small books to give to those who cannot buy. In this way the truth can be introduced into many homes.

When the canvasser enters upon his work, he should not allow himself to be diverted, but should intelligently keep to the point with all diligence. And yet, while he is doing his canvassing, he should not be heedless of opportunities to help souls who are seeking for light and who need the consolation of the Scriptures. If the canvasser walks with God, if he prays for heavenly wisdom that he may do good and only good in his labor, he will be quick to discern his opportunities and the needs of the souls with whom he comes in contact. He will make the most of every opportunity for drawing souls to Christ. In the spirit of Christ he will be ready to speak a word to him that is weary.

By diligence in canvassing, by faithfully presenting to the people the cross of Calvary, the canvasser doubles his powers of usefulness. But while we present methods of work we cannot lay out an undeviating line in which everyone shall move, for circumstances alter cases. God will impress those [555] whose hearts are open to truth and who are longing for guidance. He will say to His human agent: "Speak to this one or to that one of the love of Jesus." No sooner is the name of Jesus mentioned in love and tenderness than angels of God draw near to soften and subdue the heart.

Let canvassers be faithful students, learning how to make their work successful; and while thus employed, let them keep their eyes and ears and understanding open to receive wisdom from God, that they may know how

to help those who are perishing for lack of a knowledge of Christ. Let every worker concentrate his energies and use his powers for the highest of all service, to recover men from the snare of Satan and bind them to God, making the chain of dependence through Jesus Christ fast to the throne encircled with the rainbow of promise.

Assurance of Success

A great and good work may be done by evangelistic canvassing. The Lord has given men tact and capabilities. Those who use there entrusted talents to His glory, weaving Bible principles into the web, will be given success. We are to work and pray, putting our trust in Him who will never fail.

Let canvassing evangelists give themselves up to be worked by the Holy Spirit. Let them by persevering prayer take hold of the power which comes from God, trusting in Him in living faith. His great and effectual influence will be with every true, faithful worker.

As God blesses the minister and the evangelist in their earnest efforts to place the truth before the people, so He will bless the faithful canvasser.

The humble, efficient worker who obediently responds to the call of God may be sure of receiving divine assistance. To [556] feel so great and holy a responsibility is of itself elevating to the character. It calls into action the highest mental qualities, and their continued exercise strengthens and purifies mind and heart. The influence upon one's own life, as well as upon the life of others, is incalculable.

Careless spectators may not appreciate your work or see its importance. They may think it a losing business, a life of thankless labor and self-sacrifice. But the servant of Jesus sees it in the light shining from the cross. His sacrifices appear small in comparison with those of the blessed Master, and he is glad to follow in His steps. The success of his labor affords him the purest joy and is the richest recompense for a life of patient toil. [557]

The Sabbath School^{*}

The Highest Objective

The object of Sabbath school work should be the ingathering of souls. The order of working may be faultless, the facilities all that could be desired; but if the children and youth are not brought to Christ, the school is a failure; for unless souls are drawn to Christ, they become more and more unimpressionable under the influence of a formal religion. The teacher should co-operate, as he knocks at the door of the heart of those who need help. If pupils respond to the pleading of the Spirit, and open the door of the heart, that Jesus may come in, He will open their understanding, that they may comprehend the things of God. The teacher's work is simple work, but if it is done in the Spirit of Jesus, depth and efficiency will be added to it by the operation of the Spirit of God.

There should be much personal work done in the Sabbath school. The necessity of this kind of work is not recognized and appreciated as it should be. From a heart filled with gratitude for the love of God, which has been imparted to the soul, the teacher should labor tenderly and earnestly for the conversion of his scholars.

What evidence can we give to the world that the Sabbath school work is not a mere pretense? It will be judged by its fruits. It will be estimated by the character and work of the pupils. In our Sabbath schools the Christian youth should

^{*}Note: The statements forming this chapter were written in the years 1889, 1890, 1891, and 1892, and were first published in the *Sabbath School Worker* and other journals. They have been drawn from the compilation

Counsels on Sabbath School Work (1938), to which page reference is given. [White Trustees.]

[558]

be entrusted with responsibilities that they may develop their abilities and gain spiritual power. Let the youth first give themselves to God, and then let them in their early experience be taught to help others. This work will bring their faculties into exercise and enable them to learn how to plan and how to execute their plans for the good of their associates. Let them seek the company of those who need help, not to engage in foolish conversation, but to represent Christian character, to be laborers together with God, winning those who have not given themselves to God. ...

We must educate the youth, that they may learn how to work for the salvation of souls; and in educating the youth for this work, we shall also learn how to labor more successfully, becoming efficient agents in the hands of God for the conversion of our scholars. We must become imbued with the spirit of earnest labor, and lay hold upon Christ, claiming Him as our only efficiency. Our minds must be enlarged, that we may have a proper realization of the things pertaining to eternal life. Our hearts must be softened and subdued by the grace of Christ, that we may become true educators.

Let superintendents and teachers inquire, Do I believe the word of God? Am I giving myself to Him who hath given Himself for me, suffering a cruel death upon the cross, that I might not perish, but have everlasting life? Do we believe that Jesus is drawing the souls of those around us, even those who are living in impenitence and do not respond to His drawing power? Then, in contrition of soul, say: "Master, I will draw with all my powers of influence, I will draw unto Thee. I trust in Thee and in Thee alone to touch and subdue the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit."—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, 61-63.

Lesson Preparation

The Sabbath school affords to parents and children a precious opportunity for the study of God's word. But in order [559] to gain that

benefit which they should gain in the Sabbath school, both parents and children should devote time to the study of the lessons, seeking to obtain a thorough knowledge of the facts presented, and also of the spiritual truths which these facts are designed to teach. We should especially impress upon the minds of the young the importance of seeking the full significance of the scripture under consideration. ...

Parents, set apart a little time each day for the study of the Sabbath school lesson with your children. Give up the social visit if need be, rather than sacrifice the hour devoted to the precious lessons of sacred history. Parents, as well as children, will receive benefit from this study. Let the more important passages of Scripture connected with the lesson be committed to memory, not as a task, but as a privilege. Though at first the memory may be defective, it will gain strength by exercise, so that after a time you will delight thus to treasure up the precious words of truth. And the habit will prove a most valuable aid to religious growth. ...

Observe system in the study of the Scriptures in your families. Neglect anything of a temporal nature; dispense with all unnecessary sewing and with needless provision for the table, but be sure that the soul is fed with the bread of life. It is impossible to estimate the good results of one hour or even half an hour each day devoted in a cheerful, social manner to the word of God. Make the Bible its own expositor, bringing together all that is said concerning a given subject at different times and under varied circumstances. Do not break up your home class for callers or visitors. If they come in during the exercise, invite them to take part in it. Let it be seen that you consider it more important to obtain a knowledge of God's word than to secure the gains or pleasures of the world.—Ibid., 41-43.

The student of the Sabbath school should be in earnest, should dig deep and search with the greatest care for the [560] precious gems of truth contained in the weekly lessons. The privileges and opportunities which they now have of becoming intelligent in regard to the Scriptures should not be neglected. God would have those who profess to be His followers thoroughly furnished with proof of the doctrines of His word. When and where can this be better obtained than in youth at the Sabbath school? Parents should in no case treat this matter indifferently.—Ibid., 22.

The Sabbath School Hour

The Sabbath school should be a place where the jewels of truth are searched for and rescued from their environment of error, and placed in their true setting in the framework of the gospel. Precious gems of truth, long lost sight of, are now to be restored to the children of God. The themes of justification by faith, the righteousness of Christ, should be presented in our schools, that the youth and children may understand these important subjects, and teachers and scholars may know the way of salvation. Sacred and eternal principles connected with the plan of salvation have long been lost from sight, but they must be restored to their proper place in the plan of salvation, and made to appear in their heavenly light, and penetrate the moral darkness in which the world is enshrouded.—Ibid., 12, 13.

In order to do the will of God, we must search His word, that we may know His doctrine, and put to the task all our entrusted ability. We must be diligent in prayer, and fervent in simple, wholehearted service to God. Those who are engaged as teachers in the Sabbath school should hunger and thirst for divine truth, that they may impart this Spirit to those under their care, and lead their pupils to seek for truth as for hidden treasure. We do not want our Sabbath schools conducted in such a way as to make hypocrites of the pupils; for such cannot advance the interests of true religion. Then let there be more attention given to seeking God, that the [561] Spirit of the Lord may be in your school, than that you may have every mechanical arrangement you desire. High pretensions of any kind are out of place in the Sabbath school work, and the mechanical working of the school is of little value if the Spirit of God does not soften and mold the hearts of teachers and pupils.—Ibid., 73.

In some schools, I am sorry to say, the custom prevails of reading the lesson from the lesson sheet. This should not be. It need not be, if the time that is often needlessly and even sinfully employed, were given to the study of the Scriptures. There is no reason why Sabbath school lessons should be less perfectly learned by teachers or pupils than are the lessons of the day school. They should be better learned, as they treat of subjects infinitely more important. A neglect here is displeasing to God.—Ibid., 117, 118.

The object of the Sabbath school should not be lost sight of in mechanical arrangements, thus occupying time which should be given to other important matters. We should ever be guarded against forms and ceremonies which will eclipse the real object for which we are laboring. There is danger of carrying system to such an extreme that the Sabbath school will become weariness, when, on the contrary, it should be a rest, a refreshment, and a blessing.

The purity and simplicity of the Sabbath school must not be swallowed up in such an endless variety of forms that sufficient time cannot be devoted to religious interests. The beauty and success of the school are in its simplicity and earnestness in serving God. Nothing can be done without order and regulation, but these may be arranged so as to shut out greater and more important duties. Less should be said to the scholars about the external preliminaries and system, and much more should be said in regard to the salvation of their souls. This must be made the ruling principle of the school.—Ibid., 151.

The great want in the Sabbath school is not the want of [562] machinery, but the want of knowledge in spiritual things. How greatly do the workers need a baptism of the Holy Spirit, that they may become true missionaries for God.—Ibid., 155.

Gathering Weekly Mission Offerings

We thank God that our Sabbath schools have contributed enough to advance many a precious enterprise. Children and youth have given their pennies, that, like little rivulets, have supplied a stream of beneficence. Children should be educated in such a way that they may perform unselfish acts which heaven will rejoice to see. When the dew of youth is upon them, children should be trained how to do service for Christ. They should be taught self-denial.

This matter of giving is not left to impulse. God has given us definite instruction in regard to it. He has specified tithes and offerings as the measure of our obligation. And He desires us to give regularly and systematically. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, “Concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia,

even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.” 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2. Let each regularly examine his income, which is all a blessing from God, and set apart the tithe as a separate fund, to be sacredly the Lord’s. This fund should not in any case be devoted to any other use; it is to be devoted solely to support the ministry of the gospel. After the tithe is set apart, let gifts and offerings be apportioned, “as God hath prospered” you.—Ibid., 129, 130.

Under the Jewish economy, on the birth of children an offering was made to God, by His own appointment. ...

On birthday occasions the children should be taught that they have reason for gratitude to God for His loving-kindness in preserving their lives for another year. Precious lessons might thus be given. For life, health, food, and clothing, no [563] less than for the hope of eternal life, we are indebted to the Giver of all mercies; and it is due to God to recognize His gifts, and to present our offerings of gratitude to our greatest benefactor. These birthday gifts are recognized of Heaven.—Ibid., 143.

Soul-winning Objectives

As workers for God we want more of Jesus and less of self. We should have more of a burden for souls, and should pray daily that strength and wisdom may be given us for the Sabbath. Teachers, meet with your classes. Pray with them, and teach them how to pray. Let the heart be softened, and the petitions short and simple, but earnest. Let your words be few and well chosen; and let them learn from your lips and your example that the truth of God must be rooted in their hearts or they cannot stand the test of temptation. We want to see whole classes of young people being converted to God, and growing up useful members of the church.

Do not allow all your strength and energy to be given to worldly, temporal things during the week, and so have no energy and moral strength to give to the service of Christ on the Sabbath. There is earnest work to be done just now. We have not a moment’s time to use selfishly. Let all we do be done with an eye single to the glory of God. Never rest till every child in your class is brought to the saving knowledge of Christ.—Ibid., 125.

The Sabbath school teachers have need of walking carefully and prayerfully before God. They must labor as those who must give an account. They are given an opportunity to win souls for Christ, and the longer the youth remain in impenitence, the more confirmed they become in their resistance of the Spirit of God. With increase of years it is probable that there will be a decrease of sensibility to divine things, a diminished susceptibility to the influences of religion. Every day Satan works to fasten them in their habits [564] of disobedience, their spirit of impenitence, and there is less probability that they will become Christians. And what shall be the account finally to be rendered by indifferent teachers? Why does moral diffidence bind the soul of the teacher, and make him reluctant to put forth proper efforts for the conversion of precious souls of youth and children? Why not let the Holy Spirit create an atmosphere about the soul that will drive away moral darkness and bring heavenly light to others?—Ibid., 80.

Our Sabbath school workers need to be especially imbued with the Spirit of Christ. They cannot be co-workers with Christ unless they have Him abiding in their hearts by faith. ... The children need a more decided effort in regard to religious culture. The leading workers and the teachers should labor for perfect harmony. There should be co-operation on the part of parents, children, and teachers. Let every worker labor for wisdom and tact, that he may be put forth that well-directed effort which God requires. We are to cultivate tact and sharp discernment, to be quick to see opportunities to do good, and to seize these opportunities and make the most of them.—Ibid., 159, 160.

The officers and teachers in the Sabbath school need the guidance and instruction of the Holy Spirit, that they may be true educators, able to inspire thought, and to bring to remembrance the things that they have taught their pupils. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to bring to mind in clear, distinct lines the words and works of Christ, that those who teach concerning the Redeemer of the world may have power to lift up Christ before the minds of their classes. In all the arrangements of the Sabbath school there is need of the help of the Holy Spirit, in order that men and women may be chosen to fill the responsible positions of superintendents, officers, and teachers, who are men and women of God.—Ibid., 160. [565]

The Officers and Teachers

In selecting officers from time to time, be sure that personal preferences do not rule, but place in positions of trust those whom you are convinced love and fear God, and who will make God their counselor. Without the love and fear of God, however brilliant the intellect may be, there will be failure. Jesus says, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” This matter of choosing officers should not be left to the control of the Sabbath school scholars. To change the officers frequently will be an advantage to the school; for one man’s mind is not to mold all other minds. He may have some excellent qualifications, and yet in some things be deficient. Another chosen may be efficient where the other was lacking. Different minds and qualities will bring in fresh ideas, fresh lines of thought; and this is essential. But, above everything else, select those who, in the simplicity of their souls, are walking in the truth, who love and fear God, and take their lessons in His school. Such will carry the scholars forward and upward. Under wise teachers the scholars will gain increased interest for the word of God, and have deeper insight into the Scriptures.—Ibid., 165.

The Lord calls for young men and women to gird themselves for lifelong, earnest labor in the Sabbath school work. Spasmodic efforts will not avail to accomplish much good, or to make you successful laborers in the work of God. By patient continuance in well-doing, you are to become laborers together with God. You are to reckon yourselves the servants of God by the day. Be diligent in your work for one day, and see that you make no crooked paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned out of the path of rectitude by your misdoings.—Ibid., 13.

Every teacher in the Sabbath school should be a follower of Christ, and those who have not identified themselves as the disciples of Christ, showing by a consistent life that they [566] are Christians, should not be invited to become teachers in the Sabbath school, for they have need that someone first teach them the foundation principles of the love and fear of God. “Without Me,” Christ says, “ye can do nothing.” John 15:5. Then of what value would be the teaching of one who knew nothing by personal experience of the power of Christ? It would be a great inconsistency to urge such a one to take a class in the Sabbath school, but it is even worse to permit a class to be under the influence of a teacher whose dress and deportment deny the Saviour, whom he professes to serve.

Those who teach in Sabbath school must have their hearts warmed and invigorated by the truth of God, being not hearers only, but also doers of the word. They should be nourished in Christ as the branches are nourished in the vine. The dews of heavenly grace should fall upon them, that their hearts may be like precious plants, whose buds open and expand and give forth a grateful fragrance, as flowers in the garden of God. Teachers should be diligent students of the word of God, and ever reveal the fact that they are learning daily lessons in the school of Christ, and are able to communicate to others the light they have received from Him who is the Great Teacher, the Light of the world.

Teachers should feel their responsibility, and make use of every opportunity to improve, that they may render the best kind of service in a manner that will result in the salvation of souls.—Ibid., 93, 94.

God has given the gift of reason and intellect to one worker the same as He has to another; and according to your ability you are to put your talents out to the exchangers. The Lord would not have any worker the mere shadow of another whom he admires. The teacher must grow up into the measure of the stature of Christ, not to the measure of some finite erring mortal. You are to “grow in grace,” and where is grace to be found? Only in Christ, the divine Pattern.

Then let everyone look to Christ and copy the divine [567] Model. Let every worker tax his powers to the utmost to work in harmony with the plan of God. Let him learn in the school of Christ, that he may be wise in instructing others. Those who are committed to the care of the teacher in the Sabbath school will need the wisdom and experience that God can give to the follower of Christ. Let the teacher learn of Christ’s meekness and lowliness of heart, that he may be a true teacher, and win his pupils to Christ, that they, in turn, may become faithful missionaries in the great harvest field.—Ibid., 106.

There is a dearth of educated ability among us, and we have not men who are sufficiently trained to do justice to the work of managing our Sabbath schools and churches. Many who know the truth, still do not understand it in such a way that they could hold their own in its presentation. They are not prepared to present it in such a way that its sacred, majestic character will be clear to the people. Instead of less discipline, they need more thorough training. It is impossible for anyone to

foresee to what he may be called. He may be placed in situations where he will need quick discernment and well-balanced arguments, and therefore it is for the honor of Christ that well-educated workers should be multiplied among us; they will be better able to communicate the truth in a clear, intelligent way, and the truth should be presented in a way that will be as free as possible from defects.—Ibid., 156.

God's Instrumentalities

I feel a deep interest in our Sabbath schools throughout the land, because I believe them to be instrumentalities of God for the education of our youth in the truths of the Bible. Constant efforts should be made by both parents and teachers to interest the youth in matters of eternal importance. The Sabbath school is a missionary field, and very much more of the missionary spirit should be manifested in this important work than has been manifested in the past.—Ibid., 10. [568]

Showing Hospitality

The Bible lays much stress upon the practice of hospitality. Not only does it enjoin hospitality as a duty, but it presents many beautiful pictures of the exercise of this grace and the blessings which it brings. Foremost among these is the experience of Abraham.

In the records of Genesis we see the patriarch at the hot summer noontide resting in his tent door under the shadow of the oaks of Mamre. Three travelers are passing near. They make no appeal for hospitality, solicit no favor; but Abraham does not permit them to go on their way unrefreshed. He is a man full of years, a man of dignity and wealth, one highly honored, and accustomed to command; yet on seeing these strangers he “ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground.” Addressing the leader he said: “My Lord, if now I have found favor in Thy sight, pass not away, I pray Thee, from Thy servant.” Genesis 18:2, 3. With his own hands he brought water that they might wash the dust of travel from their feet. He himself selected their food; while they were at rest under the cooling shade, Sarah his wife made ready for their entertainment, and Abraham stood respectfully beside them while they partook of his hospitality. This kindness he showed them simply as wayfarers, passing strangers, who might never come his way again. But, the entertainment over, his guests stood revealed. He had ministered not only to heavenly angels, but to their glorious Commander, his Creator, Redeemer, and King. And to Abraham the counsels of heaven were opened, and he was called “the friend of God.”

Lot, Abraham’s nephew, though he had made his home in Sodom, was imbued with the patriarch’s spirit of kindness^{*}

^{*}1900, Testimonies for the Church 6:341-348.

and hospitality. Seeing at nightfall two strangers at the city gate, and knowing the dangers sure to beset them in that wicked city, Lot insisted on bringing them to his home. To the peril that might result to himself and his household he gave no thought. It was a part of his lifework to protect the imperiled and to care for the homeless, and the deed performed in kindness to two unknown travelers brought angels to his home. Those whom he sought to protect, protected him. At nightfall he had led them for safety to his door; at the dawn they led him and his household forth in safety from the gate of the doomed city.

These acts of courtesy God thought of sufficient importance to record in His word; and more than a thousand years later they were referred to by an inspired apostle: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Hebrews 13:2.

The privilege granted Abraham and Lot is not denied to us. By showing hospitality to God's children we, too, may receive His angels into our dwellings. Even in our day, angels in human form enter the homes of men and are entertained by them. And Christians who live in the light of God's countenance are always accompanied by unseen angels, and these holy beings leave behind them a blessing in our homes.

"A lover of hospitality" is among the specifications given by the Holy Spirit as marking one who is to bear responsibility in the church. And to the whole church is given the injunction: "Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." 1 Peter 4:9, 10.

Principles of Hospitality

These admonitions have been strangely neglected. Even among those who profess to be Christians, true hospitality is [570] little exercised. Among our own people the opportunity of showing hospitality is not regarded as it should be, as a privilege and blessing. There is altogether too little sociability, too little of a disposition to make room for two or three more at the family board, without embarrassment or parade. Some plead that "it is too much trouble." It would not be if you would say: "We have

made no special preparation, but you are welcome to what we have.” By the unexpected guest a welcome is appreciated far more than is the most elaborate preparation.

It is a denial of Christ to make preparation for visitors which requires time that rightly belongs to the Lord. In this we commit robbery of God. And we wrong others as well. In preparing an elaborate entertainment, many deprive their own families of needed attention, and their example leads others to follow the same course.

Needless worries and burdens are created by the desire to make a display in entertaining visitors. In order to prepare a great variety for the table, the housewife overworks; because of the many dishes prepared, the guests overeat; and disease and suffering, from overwork on the one hand and overeating on the other, are the result. These elaborate feasts are a burden and an injury.

But the Lord designs that we shall care for the interests of our brethren and sisters. The apostle Paul has given an illustration of this. To the church at Rome he says: “I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also.” Romans 16:1, 2. Phebe entertained the apostle, and she was in a marked manner an entertainer of strangers who needed care. Her example should be followed by the churches of today.

God is displeased with the selfish interest so often [571] manifested for “me and my family.” Every family that cherishes this spirit needs to be converted by the pure principles exemplified in the life of Christ. Those who shut themselves up within themselves, who are unwilling to be drawn upon to entertain visitors, lose many blessings.

Some of our workers occupy positions where it is necessary for them often to entertain visitors, either their own brethren or strangers. It is urged by some that the conference should make an account of this, and that in addition to their regular wages they should be allowed a sufficient amount to cover this extra expense. But the Lord has given the work of entertaining to all His people. It is not in God’s order for one or two to do the entertaining for a conference or a church, or for workers to be paid for

entertaining their brethren. This is an invention born of selfishness, and angels of God make account of these things.

Those who travel from place to place as evangelists or missionaries in any line should receive hospitality from the members of the churches among whom they may labor. Brethren and sisters, make a home for these workers, even if it be at considerable personal sacrifice.

Christ keeps an account of every expense incurred in entertaining for His sake. He supplies all that is necessary for this work. Those who for Christ's sake entertain their brethren, doing their best to make the visit profitable both to their guests and to themselves, are recorded in heaven as worthy of special blessings.

Christ's Lesson of Hospitality

Christ has given in His own life a lesson of hospitality. When surrounded by the hungry multitude beside the sea, He did not send them unrefreshed to their homes. He said to His disciples: "Give ye them to eat." Matthew 14:16. And by an act of creative power He supplied food sufficient to satisfy their need. Yet how simple was the food provided! [572] There were no luxuries. He who had all the resources of heaven at His command could have spread for the people a rich repast. But He supplied only that which would suffice for their need, that which was the daily food of the fisherfolk about the sea.

If men were today simple in their habits, living in harmony with nature's laws, there would be an abundant supply for all the needs of the human family. There would be fewer imaginary wants and more opportunity to work in God's ways.

Christ did not seek to attract men to Him by gratifying the desire for luxury. The simple fare He provided was an assurance not only of His power but of His love, of His tender care for them in the common needs of life. And while He fed them with the barley loaves, He gave them also to eat of the bread of life. Here is our example. Our fare may be plain and even scanty. Our lot may be shut in with poverty. Our resources may be no greater than were those of the disciples with the five loaves and the two

fishes. Yet as we come in contact with those in need, Christ bids us: "Give ye them to eat." We are to impart of that which we have; and as we give, Christ will see that our lack is supplied.

In this connection read the story of the widow of Sarepta. To this woman in a heathen land God sent His servant in time of famine to ask for food. "And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah." 1 Kings 17:12-15. [573]

Wonderful was the hospitality shown to God's prophet by this Phoenician woman, and wonderfully were her faith and generosity rewarded. "She, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which He spake by Elijah. And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. ... And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord. ... And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." Verses 15-24.

God has not changed. His power is no less now than in the days of Elijah. And no less sure now than when spoken by our Saviour is the promise that Christ has given: "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward." Matthew 10:41.

“I Will Repay”

To His faithful servants today as well as to His first disciples Christ's words apply: “He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me.” Verse 40. No act of kindness shown in His name will fail to be recognized and rewarded. And in the same tender recognition Christ includes even the feeblest and lowliest of the [574] family of God. “Whosoever shall give to drink,” He says, “unto one of these little ones”—those who are as children in their faith and their knowledge of Christ—“a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.” Verse 42.

Poverty need not shut us out from showing hospitality. We are to impart what we have. There are those who struggle for a livelihood and who have great difficulty in making their income meet their necessities; but they love Jesus in the person of His saints and are ready to show hospitality to believers and unbelievers, trying to make their visits profitable. At the family board and the family altar the guests are made welcome. The season of prayer makes its impression on those who receive entertainment, and even one visit may mean the saving of a soul from death. For this work the Lord makes a reckoning, saying: “I will repay.”

Brethren and sisters, invite to your homes those who are in need of entertainment and kindly attention. Make no parade; but, as you see their necessities, take them in and show them genuine Christian hospitality. There are precious privileges in social intercourse.

“Man doth not live by bread only,” and as we impart to others our temporal food, so we are to impart hope and courage and Christlike love. We are “to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” 2 Corinthians 1:4. And the assurance is ours: “God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”

We are in a world of sin and temptation; all around us are souls perishing out of Christ, and God wants us to labor for them in every way possible. If you have a pleasant home, invite to it the youth who have no home, those who are in need of help, who long for sympathy and kind

words, for respect and courtesy. If you desire to bring them to Christ, [575] you must show your love and respect for them as the purchase of His blood.

In the providence of God we are associated with those who are inexperienced, with many who need pity and compassion. They need succor, for they are weak. Young men need help. In the strength of Him whose loving-kindness is exercised toward the helpless, the ignorant, and those counted as the least of His little ones, we must labor for their future welfare, for the shaping of Christian character. The very ones who need help the most will at times try our patience sorely. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones," Christ says, "for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." Matthew 18:10. And to those who minister to these souls, the Saviour declares: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matthew 25:40.

The brows of those who do this work will wear the crown of sacrifice. But they will receive their reward. In heaven we shall see the youth whom we helped, those whom we invited to our homes, whom we led from temptation. We shall see their faces reflecting the radiance of the glory of God. "They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." Revelation 22:4.