

A close-up photograph of a person's hands, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, skillfully shaping a piece of light-colored clay on a pottery wheel. The person's hands are positioned to guide the clay as it rotates, creating a cylindrical form with horizontal ridges. The background is softly blurred, focusing attention on the hands and the pottery.

ELLEN G. WHITE

*Restoring
the Image of
God*

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Compiled from the writings of
Ellen G. White

“The Lord gave His only begotten Son in order that the most sinful, the most degraded, need not perish, but, by believing on Jesus Christ, may be reclaimed, regenerated, and restored to the image of God, and thus have eternal life.”

—*The Signs of the Times*, November 20, 1893.



REFORMATION HERALD PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION
ROANOKE, VA 24019

Restoring the Image of God

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Reformation Herald Cataloging Service

White, Ellen Gould Harmon, 1827–1915.

Restoring the Image of God

1. Daily Devotionals—Adventists. 2. Christian Prayers and Meditations for Daily Use. 3. Devotional Literature—Christian I. Reformation Herald Publishing. II. title.

242.3

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

ISBN 1-934308-03-X

ISBN 13: 978-1-934308-03-5

FOREWORD

These days, nearly everywhere one can see blatant evidence of the painful, fallen condition of the human race. Yet, thousands of years ago, when the Creator formed the first man and woman, all that He made “was very good” (Genesis 1:31).

Isn't it time to see the beautiful image of God restored? This requires an entire process involving the body, mind, and spirit. It is certainly a worthwhile goal and will contribute greatly to our happiness.

“What can impart true nobility to the fallen men and women like the restoration to the image of God? The religion of Christ elevates the receiver, refines his taste, sanctifies his judgment, strengthens his intellect, and prepares him for the society of the pure and holy angels. Is it position and honor that you desire? To be acknowledged members of the Lord's family is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon man. Is it gold that you are seeking? You will find it in the city of God. Its streets are paved with gold. It is not the worldly wealthy who bear the heavenly credentials. Not many great men, not many mighty, are chosen. But God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom.

“The followers of Christ have a cross to lift in separating themselves from the world. Their names do not stand among the great ones of earth, but they are written in the Lamb's book of life. They confessed Christ and stood in defense of the truth through conflict, through trial, through evil as well as through good report; ‘and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels’ (Malachi 3:17). Truly, we have every reason to love and serve God; for the love that He has manifested for us is without a parallel.”
—*The Review and Herald*, October 27, 1885.

In view of such great love, this devotional book, *Restoring the Image of God*, has been carefully compiled from the Holy Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White. Since most of the readings are extracted from sources not frequently read by most people, this book provides a fresh perspective on a very timely topic. That these inspired readings may bring a rich blessing to your spiritual life is the earnest prayer of

The Publishers



*If God withheld not
His only begotten Son,
but gave Him up to death,
that we might be restored to
the image of the Creator,
how much more will He, with Him,
freely give us all things?*

—*The Review and Herald*, March 22, 1898.

Monthly Topics

JANUARY

Our Creator and Saviour

FEBRUARY

Worship in Spirit and Truth

MARCH

Seeking a Clean, New Heart

APRIL

God's Liberating Law

MAY

Marriage: Designed for Our Good

JUNE

The Family Circle

JULY

The Delightful Day of Rest

AUGUST

Matters of Mind and Money

SEPTEMBER

Our Live Machinery

OCTOBER

Walking in the Light

NOVEMBER

Humble Vessels Emptied of Self

DECEMBER

Spread the Word!

*The heavenly host are
filled with an intense desire to work
through human agencies to restore in man
the image of God.
They are ready and waiting to do this work.
The combined power of the Father,
the Son, and the Holy Ghost is
pledged to uplift man
from his fallen state.*

—*The Workers' Bulletin*, September 9, 1902.

Christ and Creation

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:1–3).

All things were created by the Son of God.¹

When this earth was created by Christ, it was holy and beautiful. God pronounced it “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Every flower, every shrub every tree, answered the purpose of its Creator.²

The Lord Jesus was the maker of the things in heaven and earth, and the expositor of His own truth, and He called upon nature to reflect the light of the glory of God. The birds of the heaven, the flowers of the field, the trees of the forest, the fruitful fields, the barren land, the grain ripe for the sickle, the fruitless tree, the goings forth of the morning, the setting of the sun, the sowing of the seed, the gathering in of the harvest—all were employed as emblems of divine truth. He connected the visible works of the Creator with the words of life, and led the mind up from nature to nature's God. Every humble shrub and delicate flower bears testimony to the heart of the love of God. If the eye is not closed, if the ear is not heavy, if the heart is open to receive the impressions of the divine Spirit, nature will speak of the harmony of the natural with the spiritual. Through illustrations drawn from the natural world, Christ has taught lessons of vast importance to the soul; and in thinking of His words while contemplating the object with which He associated His lessons, the divine significance becomes clearer to the mind.³

Through Jesus Christ, God—not a perfume, not something intangible, but a personal God—created man, and endowed him with intelligence and power.⁴

The heart that has not become hardened through error, and has not been perverted through false theories—the heart that honestly desires to know what is truth, will joyfully accept the message which Christ brings to the soul.⁵

Made in the Image of God

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27).

The earth came forth from the hand of the Creator exceedingly beautiful. There were mountains, and hills, and plains; and interspersed among them were rivers and bodies of water. The earth was not one extensive plain, but the monotony of the scenery was broken by hills and mountains, not high and ragged as they now are, but regular and beautiful in shape. The bare, high rocks were never seen upon them, but lay beneath the surface, answering as bones to the earth. The waters were regularly dispersed. The hills, mountains, and very beautiful plains, were adorned with plants and flowers, and tall, majestic trees of every description, which were many times larger, and much more beautiful, than trees now are. The air was pure and healthful, and the earth seemed like a noble palace. Angels beheld and rejoiced at the wonderful and beautiful works of God.

After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God says to His Son, “Let us make man in our image” (Genesis 1:26). As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of noble height, and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned. His features were perfect and beautiful. His complexion was neither white, nor sallow, but ruddy, glowing with the rich tint of health. Eve was not quite as tall as Adam. Her head reached a little above his shoulders. She, too, was noble—perfect in symmetry, and very beautiful.

This sinless pair wore no artificial garments. They were clothed with a covering of light and glory, such as the angels wear.⁶

The Beautiful Garden Home

“The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed” (Genesis 2:8).

Although everything God had made was in the perfection of beauty, and there seemed nothing wanting upon the earth which God had created to make Adam and Eve happy, yet He manifested His great love to them by planting a garden especially for them. A portion of their time was to be occupied in the happy employment of dressing the garden, and a portion in receiving the visits of angels, listening to their instruction, and in happy meditation. Their labor was not wearisome, but pleasant and invigorating. This beautiful garden was to be their home, their special residence.

In this garden the Lord placed trees of every variety for usefulness and beauty. There were trees laden with luxuriant fruit, of rich fragrance, beautiful to the eye, and pleasant to the taste, designed of God to be food for the holy pair. There were the lovely vines which grew upright, laden with their burden of fruit, unlike anything man had seen since the Fall. The fruit was very large, and of different colors; some nearly black, some purple, red, pink and light green. This beautiful and luxuriant growth of fruit upon the branches of the vine was called grapes. They did not trail upon the ground, although not supported by trellises, but the weight of the fruit bowed them down. It was the happy labor of Adam and Eve to form beautiful bowers from the branches of the vine, and train them, forming dwellings of nature's beautiful, living trees and foliage, laden with fragrant fruit.

The earth was clothed with beautiful verdure, while myriads of fragrant flowers of every variety and hue sprang up in rich profusion around them. Everything was tastefully and gloriously arranged. In the midst of the garden stood the tree of life, the glory of which surpassed all other trees. Its fruit looked like apples of gold and silver, and was to perpetuate immortality.⁷

A Delightful Life

“Thou hast made [man] a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet” (Psalm 8:5, 6).

Very happy were the holy pair in Eden. Unlimited control was given them over every living thing. The lion and the lamb sported together peacefully and harmlessly around them, or slumbered at their feet. Birds of every variety of color and plumage flitted among the trees and flowers, and about Adam and Eve, while their mellow-toned music echoed among the trees in sweet accord to the praises of their Creator.

Adam and Eve were charmed with the beauties of their Eden home. They were delighted with the little songsters around them, wearing their bright yet graceful plumage, and warbling forth their happy, cheerful music. The holy pair united with them and raised their voices in harmonious songs of love, praise and adoration, to the Father and His dear Son, for the tokens of love which surrounded them. They recognized the order and harmony of creation, which spoke of wisdom and knowledge that were infinite. Some new beauty and additional glory of their Eden home they were continually discovering, which filled their hearts with deeper love, and brought from their lips expressions of gratitude and reverence to their Creator.⁸

Adam had themes for contemplation in the works of God in Eden, which was heaven in miniature. God did not form man merely to contemplate His glorious works; therefore, He gave him hands for labor as well as a mind and heart for contemplation. If the happiness of man consisted in doing nothing, the Creator would not have given Adam his appointed work. Man was to find happiness in labor as well as in meditation.⁹

God, who made the Eden home of our first parents so surpassingly lovely, has also given the noble trees, the beautiful flowers, and everything lovely in nature, for our happiness.¹⁰

Rejoicing in Nature's Mysteries

"Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?" (Job 37:16).

The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. They were full of the vigor imparted by the tree of life, and their intellectual power was but little less than that of the angels. The mysteries of the visible universe—"the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)—afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. The laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men's study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life. With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that playeth among the waters to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, "the balancings of the clouds" (Job 37:16), the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night—all were open to the study of our first parents. On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God's name was written. The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power. They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude.

So long as they remained loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would continually increase. They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unfailing love of God.¹¹

The Original, Organic Classroom

“[Adam and Eve] heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day” (Genesis 3:8).

The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all aftertime. As an illustration of its principles a model school was established in Eden, the home of our first parents. The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students.

Created to be “the image and glory of God” (1 Corinthians 11:7), Adam and Eve had received endowments not unworthy of their high destiny. Graceful and symmetrical in form, regular and beautiful in feature, their countenances glowing with the tint of health and the light of joy and hope, they bore in outward resemblance the likeness of their Maker. Nor was this likeness manifest in the physical nature only. Every faculty of mind and soul reflected the Creator's glory. Endowed with high mental and spiritual gifts, Adam and Eve were made but “little lower than the angels” (Hebrews 2:7), that they might not only discern the wonders of the visible universe, but comprehend moral responsibilities and obligations. . . .

In His interest for His children, our heavenly Father personally directed their education. Often they were visited by His messengers, the holy angels, and from them received counsel and instruction. Often as they walked in the garden in the cool of the day they heard the voice of God, and face to face held communion with the Eternal. His thoughts toward them were “thoughts of peace, and not of evil” (Jeremiah 29:11). His every purpose was their highest good. . . .

The laws and operations of nature, and the great principles of truth that govern the spiritual universe, were opened to their minds by the infinite Author of all. . . . They realized the highest pleasures of their holy existence.¹²

The Model School for All Time

“Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:7–10).

“God created man in His own image” (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase. Vast was the scope offered for their exercise, glorious the field opened to their research. The mysteries of the visible universe—the “wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge” (Job 37:16)—invited man’s study. Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was his high privilege. Had he remained loyal to God, all this would have been his forever. Throughout eternal ages he would have continued to gain new treasures of knowledge, to discover fresh springs of happiness, and to obtain clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the wisdom, the power, and the love of God.¹³

The Garden of Eden was a representation of what God desired the whole earth to become, and it was His purpose that, as the human family increased in numbers, they should establish other homes and schools like the one He had given. Thus in course of time the whole earth might be occupied with homes and schools where the words and the works of God should be studied, and where the students should thus be fitted more and more fully to reflect, throughout endless ages, the light of the knowledge of His glory.¹⁴

The system of education established in Eden centered in the family. Adam was “the son of God” (Luke 3:38), and it was from their Father that the children of the Highest received instruction. Theirs, in the truest sense, was a family school.¹⁵

The Favorite Day in Eden

“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Genesis 2:3).

The Sabbath institution, which originated in Eden, is as old as the world itself.¹⁶

The fourth commandment places its origin at creation. The Creator's rest-day was hallowed by Adam in holy Eden.¹⁷

If man had always observed the Sabbath, there would never have been an unbeliever, and infidel, or an atheist in the world. If Adam and Eve had contemplated the works of God in creating the world, if they had considered the reason that God had in giving them the Sabbath, if they had looked upon the beautiful tokens He had given them in withholding nothing that would add to their happiness, they would have been safe, they would have adored Him for His goodness and love toward them, and in place of listening to the sophistries of Satan in casting blame upon God, in ascribing to Him motives of selfishness, they would have considered the works of His hands, and songs of melody and thanksgiving and praise would have burst forth from their lips in adoration of Him who had bountifully supplied them with every good thing. If they had considered how He had made them the object of His overflowing love, they would not have fallen; but they forgot the presence of God. They forgot that angels surrounded them to guard them from every danger, and they looked away from their great Benefactor.

The Sabbath is a test to this generation. In obeying the fourth commandment in spirit and truth, men will obey all the precepts of the Decalogue. To fulfill this commandment one must love God supremely, and exercise love toward all the creatures that He has made. The Lord exhorts us to “remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:11); and since this is His exhortation, will anyone charge us with wearying them in bringing this commandment to their remembrance?¹⁸

The Test of Moral Character

“The Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:16, 17).

Though created innocent and holy, our first parents were not placed beyond the possibility of wrongdoing. God might have created them without the power to transgress His requirements, but in that case there could have been no development of character; their service would not have been voluntary, but forced. Therefore He gave them the power of choice—the power to yield or to withhold obedience. And before they could receive in fullness the blessings He desired to impart, their love and loyalty must be tested.

It was the will of God that Adam and Eve should not know evil. The knowledge of evil—of sin and its results, of wearing toil, of anxious care, of disappointment and grief, of pain and death—this was in love withheld.¹⁹

The Lord placed man upon probation, that he might form a character of steadfast integrity for his own happiness and for the glory of his Creator. He had endowed Adam with powers of mind superior to any other creature that He had made. His mental powers were but little lower than those of the angels. . . .

The first moral lesson given to Adam was that of self-denial. The reins of self-government were placed in his hands. Judgment, reason, and conscience were to bear sway. . . .

Adam and Eve were permitted to partake of every tree in the garden save one. There was a single prohibition. The forbidden tree was as attractive and lovely as any of the trees in the garden. It was called the tree of knowledge because in partaking of that tree of which God had said, “Thou shalt not eat of it” (Genesis 2:17), they would have a knowledge of sin, an experience in disobedience.²⁰

The Sinister Plot Begins

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Genesis 3:1).

Eve went from the side of her husband, viewing the beautiful things of nature, delighting her senses with the colors and fragrance of the flowers, and admiring the beauty of the trees and shrubs. She was thinking of the restrictions which God had laid upon them in regard to the tree of knowledge. She was pleased with the beauties and bounties which the Lord had furnished for the gratification of every want. All these, said she, God has given us to enjoy. They are all ours; for God has said, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it” (Genesis 2:16, 17).

Eve had wandered near the forbidden tree, and her curiosity was aroused to know how death could be concealed in the fruit of this fair tree. She was surprised to hear her queries taken up and repeated by a strange voice. “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Genesis 3:1). Eve was not aware that she had revealed her thoughts in audibly conversing with herself; therefore, she was greatly astonished to hear her queries repeated by a serpent. She really thought that the serpent had a knowledge of her thoughts, and that he must be very wise.²¹

We cannot always hinder the thoughts that come as temptations but we can resist the enemy so that we shall not utter them. The adversary of souls is not permitted to read the thoughts of men; but he is a keen observer, and he marks the words and actions, and skillfully adapts his temptations accordingly. . . .

Oh that the veil could be parted for a moment, and you could see the interest that all heaven takes in the human race! God and heavenly angels are anxiously waiting to see if we will not cleanse ourselves from all sin.²²

A Step-by-Step Strategy

"Wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matthew 14:31).

When Satan became fully conscious that there was no possibility of his being brought again into favor with God, then his malice and hatred began to be manifest. He consulted with his angels, and a plan was laid to still work against God's government. When Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful garden, Satan was laying plans to destroy them. A consultation was held with his evil angels. In no way could this happy couple be deprived of their happiness if they obeyed God. Satan could not exercise his power upon them unless they should first disobey God and forfeit His favor. They must devise some plan to lead them to disobedience that they might incur God's frown and be brought under the more direct influence of Satan and his angels. It was decided that Satan should assume another form and manifest an interest for man. He must insinuate against God's truthfulness, create doubt whether God did mean as He said, next excite their curiosity, and lead them to pry into the unsearchable plans of God, which Satan had been guilty of, and reason as to the cause of His restrictions in regard to the tree of knowledge.²³

With soft and pleasant words, and with musical voice, [Satan] addressed the wondering Eve. She was startled to hear a serpent speak. He extolled her beauty and exceeding loveliness, which was not displeasing to Eve. But she was amazed, for she knew that to the serpent God had not given the power of speech.

Eve's curiosity was aroused. Instead of fleeing from the spot, she listened to hear a serpent talk. It did not occur to her mind that it might be that fallen foe, using the serpent as a medium. It was Satan that spoke, not the serpent. Eve was beguiled, flattered, infatuated. Had she met a commanding personage, possessing a form like the angels, and resembling them, she would have been upon her guard. But that strange voice should have driven her to her husband's side to inquire of him why another should thus freely address her. But she enters into a controversy with the serpent. She answers his question.²⁴

Shunning Deceitful Tactics

“Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil” (Proverbs 12:20).

Had Eve refrained from entering into argument with the tempter, she would have been safe; but she ventured to parley with him and fell a victim to his wiles. It is thus that many are still overcome. They doubt and argue concerning the requirements of God; and instead of obeying the divine commands, they accept human theories, which but disguise the devices of Satan.²⁵

Satan is the arch deceiver. The results to us of accepting his temptations are worse than any earthly loss that can be realized, yes, worse than death itself. Those who purchase success at the fearful cost of submission to the will and plans of Satan will find that they have made a hard bargain. Everything in Satan's trade is secured at a high price. The advantages he presents are a mirage. The high hopes he holds out are secured at the loss of things that are good and holy and pure. Let Satan be always confounded by the word, “It is written.” “Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee” (Matthew 4:4; Psalm 128:1, 2).

He who stands prepared to do the works of righteousness will not be deceived by the allurements of the enemy. His actions will be guided by an exalted sense of right, and he will be enabled to distinguish between right and wrong, between truth, exalted truth, and error. Those who enter the kingdom of heaven will be those who have reached the highest standard of moral obligation, those who have not sought to hide the truth or to deceive, those by whom God has been exalted and His word defended, those in whom principle has not been misapplied to vindicate the wiles of Satan.

The path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord is far above all worldly schemes and practices. Those who walk in it are to show by their works the purity of their principles.²⁶

Stay Within What God Has Said

“The woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” (Genesis 3:2, 3).

Eve had overstated the words of God's command. He had said to Adam and Eve, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). In Eve's controversy with the serpent, she added “*Neither shall ye touch it.*” Here the subtlety of the serpent appeared. This statement of Eve gave him advantage; he plucked the fruit and placed it in her hand, using her own words, He hath said, If ye touch it, ye shall die. You see no harm comes to you from touching the fruit, neither will you receive any harm by eating it.²⁷

Let none of our zealous brethren . . . be in danger of getting before the Lord and making tests for others which the Lord has not bidden them to make.²⁸

We are to be careful not to make laws like the laws of the Pharisees, or to teach for doctrines the commandments of men.²⁹

God, in His great love for man, gave him that law by which to order his conduct, that he should be restricted to doing those things which would tend to increase his real happiness and that of his fellow creatures even in this life. The principles of the commandments, carried out in the daily life, ennoble and sanctify the heart and mind and give one a moral fitness through Jesus Christ for the society of holy angels. Our all wise heavenly Father knew what rules were required to guard man from sin and to regulate his life, leading him to practice such virtues as would make him a fit subject for heaven.³⁰

The Lord, in His great mercy, has revealed to us in the Scriptures His rules of holy living, His commandments, and His laws. He tells us therein the sins to shun; He explains to us the plan of salvation and points out the way to heaven.³¹

The World's Oldest Lie

"The serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4, 5).

[Genesis 3:4, 5 quoted.] Here the father of lies made his assertion in direct contradiction to the expressed word of God. Satan assured Eve that she was created immortal, and that there was no possibility of her dying. He told her that God knew that if she and her husband should eat of the tree of knowledge, their understanding would be enlightened, expanded, and ennobled, making them equal with Himself. And the serpent answered Eve that the command of God, forbidding them to eat of the tree of knowledge, was given to keep them in such a state of subordination that they should not obtain knowledge, which was power. He assured her that the fruit of this tree was desirable above every other tree in the garden to make them wise, and to exalt them equal with God. He has, said the serpent, refused you the fruit of that tree which, of all the trees, is the most desirable for its delicious flavor and exhilarating influence.

Eve thought that the serpent's discourse was very wise, and that the prohibition of God was unjust. She looked with longing desire upon the tree laden with fruit which appeared very delicious. The serpent was eating it with apparent delight. She longed for this fruit above every other variety which God had given her a perfect right to use.³²

When the claims of the law are presented, men begin to frame excuses for continuing in disobedience, stating that God will not punish them for the breaking of His precepts. Let us think of it soberly. Will God change His holy law to suit my convenience? Will He sanction sin, and countenance disobedience? If God had a character of this kind, we could not reverence Him. His authority could not be respected. Every transgression of God's law will be visited with its penalty upon the transgressor. The wages of sin is death. God is jealous for the honor of His law; it is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth.³³

Tragedy in Eden

“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Genesis 3:6).

The angels warned [Adam and Eve] of Satan and cautioned them not to separate from each other in their employment, for they might be brought in contact with this fallen foe. The angels also enjoined upon them to follow closely the directions God had given them, for in perfect obedience only were they safe. . . .

[Eve] first erred in wandering from her husband, next in lingering around the forbidden tree, and next in listening to the voice of the tempter, and even daring to doubt what God had said—“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). She thought that perhaps the Lord did not mean just what He said, and venturing, she put forth her hand, took of the fruit and ate. It was pleasing to the eye and pleasant to the taste. Then she was jealous that God had withheld from them what was really for their good, and she offered the fruit to her husband, thereby tempting him. She related to Adam all that the serpent had said and expressed her astonishment that he had the power of speech. . . .

[Adam] felt sure that this was the foe against whom they had been warned, and that his wife must die. They must be separated. His love for Eve was strong and in utter discouragement he resolved to share her fate. He seized the fruit and quickly ate it. Then Satan exulted. He had rebelled in heaven, and had gained sympathizers who loved him and followed him in his rebellion. He had fallen and caused others to fall with him. And he had now tempted the woman to distrust God, to inquire into His wisdom, and to seek to penetrate His all-wise plans. Satan knew that the woman would not fall alone. Adam, through his love for Eve, disobeyed the command of God, and fell with her.

The news of man's fall spread through heaven. Every harp was hushed. The angels cast their crowns from their heads in sorrow.³⁴

A Warning From Eden

“Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away” (Proverbs 4:14, 15).

Satan desired to make it appear that . . . knowledge of good mingled with evil would be a blessing, and that in forbidding [Adam and Eve] to take of the fruit of the tree, God was withholding great good. He urged that it was because of its wonderful properties for imparting wisdom and power that God had forbidden them to taste it, that He was thus seeking to prevent them from reaching a nobler development and finding greater happiness. He declared that he himself had eaten of the forbidden fruit, and as a result had acquired the power of speech; and that if they also would eat of it, they would attain to a more exalted sphere of existence and enter a broader field of knowledge.

While Satan claimed to have received great good by eating of the forbidden tree, he did not let it appear that by transgression he had become an outcast from heaven. Here was falsehood, so concealed under a covering of apparent truth that Eve, infatuated, flattered, beguiled, did not discern the deception. She coveted what God had forbidden; she distrusted His wisdom. She cast away faith, the key of knowledge. . . .

“Your eyes shall be opened,” the enemy had said; “ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5). Their eyes were indeed opened; but how sad the opening! The knowledge of evil, the curse of sin, was all that the transgressors gained. There was nothing poisonous in the fruit itself, and the sin was not merely in yielding to appetite. It was distrust of God's goodness, disbelief of His word, and rejection of His authority, that made our first parents transgressors, and that brought into the world a knowledge of evil. It was this that opened the door to every species of falsehood and error. Man lost all because he chose to listen to the deceiver rather than to Him who is Truth.³⁵

Skimpy, Inadequate Clothes

“The eyes of [Adam and Eve] both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Genesis 3:7).

Adam and Eve both ate of the fruit, and obtained a knowledge which, had they obeyed God, they would never have had—an experience in disobedience and disloyalty to God—the knowledge that they were naked. The garment of innocence, a covering from God, which surrounded them, departed; and they supplied the place of this heavenly garment by sewing together fig leaves for aprons.

This is the covering that the transgressors of the law of God have used since the days of Adam and Eve's disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover their nakedness, caused by transgression. The fig leaves represent the arguments used to cover disobedience. When the Lord calls the attention of men and women to the truth, the making of fig leaves into aprons will be begun, to hide the nakedness of the soul. But the nakedness of the sinner is not covered. All the arguments pieced together by all who have interested themselves in this flimsy work will come to naught.

The Lord Jesus Christ has prepared a covering, the robe of His own righteousness, that He will put on every repenting, believing soul who by faith will receive it. . . . Sin is the transgression of the law; but Christ died to make it possible for every man to have his sins taken away. A fig-leaf apron will never cover our nakedness. Sin must be taken away, the garment of Christ's righteousness must cover the transgressor of God's law. Then when the Lord looks upon the believing sinner, He sees, not the fig leaves covering him, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.³⁶

Take warning. Do not devote your precious probationary time to sewing together fig leaves to cover the nakedness which is the result of sin.³⁷

It's No Use to Hide

“Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8).

The Lord beheld Adam and Eve as they took of the forbidden tree. In their guilt they fled from His presence and “hid themselves,” but God saw them; they could not cover their shame from His eyes.³⁸

Adam and Eve persuaded themselves that in so small a matter as eating of the forbidden fruit, there could not result such terrible consequences as God had declared. But this small matter was sin, the transgression of God's immutable and holy law, and it opened the floodgates of death and untold woe upon our world. Age after age there has gone up from our earth a continual cry of mourning, and the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain as a consequence of man's disobedience. Heaven itself has felt the effects of his rebellion against God. Calvary stands as a memorial of the amazing sacrifice required as a propitiation for the transgression of the divine law. Let us not esteem sin as a trivial thing. Are not the hands and feet and side of the Son of the infinite God to bear an eternal testimony before the universe of its untold malignity and curse?

Oh, that a right impression might be made upon the minds of young and old in regard to the exceeding sinfulness of sin! Oh, that all might have a just realization of its offensiveness to God, and its injury to mankind! The word of truth declares, “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). The real character of every act of your life will be made known. It may be even in this life that through the providence of God, some unexpected circumstance will uncover your secret deeds of evil; but should you succeed in hiding your real character from the eyes of men, there is an inevitable day of exposure reserved for every soul who does not repent of his sins and forsake all evil through the strength of Christ, who has died that we might live. . . . “God shall bring every work into judgment” (Ecclesiastes 12:14).³⁹

Ashamed and Ensnared

"The Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:9, 10).

After Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, they were filled with a sense of shame and terror. At first their only thought was how to excuse their sin before God and escape the dreaded sentence of death.⁴⁰

In their innocence and holiness [Adam and Eve] had joyfully welcomed the approach of their Creator; but now they fled in terror, and sought to hide in the deepest recesses of the garden.⁴¹

Satan accomplished the fall of our first parents; and from that time to the present the gratification of human ambition and the indulgence of selfish hopes and desires have proved the ruin of mankind.

Under God, Adam was to stand at the head of the earthly family, to maintain the principles of the heavenly family. This would have brought peace and happiness. But the law that none "liveth to himself" (Romans 14:7), Satan was determined to oppose. He desired to live for self. He sought to make himself a center of influence. It was this that had incited rebellion in heaven, and it was man's acceptance of this principle that brought sin on earth. When Adam sinned, man broke away from the heaven-ordained center. A demon became the central power in the world. Where God's throne should have been, Satan had placed his throne. The world laid its homage, as a willing offering, at the feet of the enemy.

The transgression of God's law brought woe and death in its train. Through disobedience man's powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened that it was impossible for him to resist the power of evil; and the tempter saw being fulfilled his purpose to thwart the divine plan of man's creation. . . . Men had chosen a ruler who chained them to his car as captives.⁴²

Blaming Everybody Else

“[God] said [to Adam], Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (Genesis 3:11, 12).

Adam could neither deny nor excuse his sin; but instead of manifesting penitence, he endeavored to cast the blame upon his wife, and thus upon God Himself: [Genesis 3:12 quoted.] He who, from love to Eve, had deliberately chosen to forfeit the approval of God, his home in Paradise, and an eternal life of joy, could now, after his fall, endeavor to make his companion, and even the Creator Himself, responsible for the transgression. So terrible is the power of sin.

When the woman was asked, “What is this that thou hast done?” she answered, “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat” (Genesis 3:13). “Why didst Thou create the serpent? Why didst Thou suffer him to enter Eden?”—these were the questions implied in her excuse for her sin. Thus, like Adam, she charged God with the responsibility of their fall. The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies; it was indulged by our first parents as soon as they yielded to the influence of Satan, and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Instead of humbly confessing their sins, they try to shield themselves by casting the blame upon others.⁴³

When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrongdoer does not discern the defects of his character nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin. His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgment of his guilt he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that if it had not been for certain circumstances he would not have done this or that for which he is reproved. . . . [But] true repentance will lead a man to bear his guilt himself and acknowledge it without deception or hypocrisy.⁴⁴

A Ransom Needed—and Found!

“If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom” (Job 33:23, 24).

Sorrow filled heaven, as it was realized that man was lost, and that world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die. I saw the lovely Jesus and beheld an expression of sympathy and sorrow upon His countenance. Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. Said my accompanying angel, He is in close converse with His Father. The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father. Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came from the Father, His person could be seen. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and doubt, and shone with benevolence and loveliness, such as words cannot express. He then made known to the angelic host that a way of escape had been made for lost man. He told them that He had been pleading with His Father, and had offered to give His life a ransom, to take the sentence of death upon Himself, that through Him man might find pardon; that through the merits of His blood, and obedience to the law of God, they could have the favor of God, and be brought into the beautiful garden, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life.

At first the angels could not rejoice; for their Commander concealed nothing from them, but opened before them the plan of salvation. Jesus told them that He would stand between the wrath of His Father and guilty man, that He would bear iniquity and scorn, and but few would receive Him as the Son of God.⁴⁵

[Said the angel,] “It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His beloved Son to die for him.”⁴⁶

At What Great Cost!

“Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:18–20).

[In advance, Jesus told the angels that] He would leave all His glory in heaven, appear upon earth as a man, humble Himself as a man, become acquainted by His own experience with the various temptations with which man would be beset, that He might know how to succor those who should be tempted; and that finally, after His mission as a teacher would be accomplished, He would be delivered into the hands of men, and endure almost every cruelty and suffering that Satan and his angels could inspire wicked men to inflict; that He would die the cruelest of deaths, hung up between the heavens and the earth as a guilty sinner; that He would suffer dreadful hours of agony, which even angels could not look upon, but would veil their faces from the sight. Not merely agony of body would He suffer, but mental agony, that with which bodily suffering could in no wise be compared. The weight of the sins of the whole world would be upon Him. He told them He would die and rise again the third day, and would ascend to His Father to intercede for wayward, guilty man.

The angels prostrated themselves before Him. They offered their lives. Jesus said to them that He would by His death save many, that the life of an angel could not pay the debt. His life alone could be accepted of His Father as a ransom for man.⁴⁷

How should we, the objects of such love and condescension, appreciate the mystery of redemption. The splendors of the world, presented in their most attractive form, should sink into insignificance before this great condescension. Those who are true followers of Christ will be willing to suffer for his sake. As they contemplate this mystery, the heart will be filled with tender love, a lively devotion. They will feel that they must follow the example of him who went about doing good, and who cheerfully gave his life to ransom us from the degradation of sin.⁴⁸

Suffering to Save

“The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day” (Luke 9:22).

Jesus . . . told [the angels] that they would have a part to act, to be with Him and at different times strengthen Him; that He would take man's fallen nature, and His strength would not be even equal with theirs; that they would be witnesses of His humiliation and great sufferings; and that as they would witness His sufferings, and the hatred of men toward Him, they would be stirred with the deepest emotion, and through their love for Him would wish to rescue and deliver Him from His murderers; but that they must not interfere to prevent anything they should behold; and that they should act a part in His resurrection. . . .

With a holy sadness Jesus comforted and cheered the angels and informed them that hereafter those whom He should redeem would be with Him, and that by His death He should ransom many and destroy him who had the power of death. And His Father would give Him the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, and He would possess it forever and ever. Satan and sinners would be destroyed, nevermore to disturb heaven or the purified new earth. Jesus bade the heavenly host be reconciled to the plan that His Father had accepted and rejoice that through His death fallen man could again be exalted to obtain favor with God and enjoy heaven.

Then joy, inexpressible joy, filled heaven. And the heavenly host sang a song of praise and adoration. They touched their harps and sang a note higher than they had done before, for the great mercy and condescension of God in yielding up His dearly Beloved to die for a race of rebels. Praise and adoration were poured forth for the self-denial and sacrifice of Jesus; that He would consent to leave the bosom of His Father, and choose a life of suffering and anguish, and die an ignominious death to give life to others.⁴⁹

The Promise in Symbols

"The Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:14, 15).

The sentence pronounced on Satan, [Genesis 3:15 quoted], was to our first parents a promise of the redemption to be wrought out through Christ.⁵⁰

Who could bring in the principles ordained by God in His rule and government to counterwork the plans of Satan and bring the world back to its loyalty? God said: I will send My Son. [John 3:16 quoted.] This is the remedy for sin. Christ says: "Where Satan has set his throne, there shall stand My cross. Satan shall be cast out, and I will be lifted up to draw all men unto Me. I will become the center of the redeemed world. The Lord God shall be exalted. Those who are now controlled by human ambition, human passions, shall become workers for Me. Evil influences have conspired to counterwork all good. They have confederated to make men think it righteous to oppose the law of Jehovah. But My army shall meet in conflict with the satanic force. My Spirit shall combine with every heavenly agency to oppose them. I will engage every sanctified human agency in the universe. None of My agencies are to be absent. I have work for all who love Me, employment for every soul who will work under My direction. The activity of Satan's army, the danger that surrounds the human soul, calls for the energies of every worker. But no compulsion shall be exercised. Man's depravity is to be met by the love, the patience, the long-suffering of God. My work shall be to save those who are under Satan's rule."

Through Christ, God works to bring man back to his first relation to his Creator and to correct the disorganizing influences brought in by Satan.⁵¹

Beguiled into Bondage

“I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3).

Eve was beguiled by the serpent, and made to believe that God would not do as He had said. . . . The serpent had said that she should not die, and she felt no ill effects from eating the fruit, nothing which could be interpreted to mean death, but, instead, a pleasurable sensation, which she imagined was as the angels felt. Her experience stood arrayed against the positive command of Jehovah, yet Adam permitted himself to be seduced by it.

Thus we often find it, even in the religious world. God's express commands are transgressed; and “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). In the face of the most positive commands of God, men and women will follow their own inclinations, and then dare to pray over the matter, to prevail upon God to allow them to go contrary to His expressed will. Satan comes to the side of such persons, as he did to Eve in Eden, and impresses them. They have an exercise of mind, and this they relate as a most wonderful experience which the Lord has given them. But true experience will be in harmony with natural and divine law; false experience arrays itself against the laws of life and the precepts of Jehovah.⁵²

[Satan] tried to flatter Eve into believing that they should be raised above the sphere of humanity. But Christ, by the example He has set before us, encourages the human family to be men, obeying the Word of God within the sphere of their humanity. He Himself became a man, not a bondsman to Satan to work out his attributes, but a man in moral power, obedient to the law of God, which is the transcript of His character.⁵³

Christ alone stood unpolluted in a world of selfishness, where men would destroy a friend or a brother in order to accomplish a scheme put into their hands by Satan. . . . Amid the din of selfishness He could say to men: Return to your center—God.⁵⁴

Abased by Ambition

“Unto the woman [God] said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Genesis 3:16).

In the creation God had made [Eve] the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God—in harmony with His great law of love—they would ever have been in harmony with each other; but sin had brought discord, and now their union could be maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the one or the other. Eve had been the first in transgression; and she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to the divine direction. It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was now placed in subjection to her husband. Had the principles enjoined in the law of God been cherished by the fallen race, this sentence, though growing out of the results of sin, would have proved a blessing to them; but man's abuse of the supremacy thus given him has too often rendered the lot of woman very bitter and made her life a burden.

Eve had been perfectly happy by her husband's side in her Eden home; but, like restless modern Eves, she was flattered with the hope of entering a higher sphere than that which God had assigned her. In attempting to rise above her original position, she fell far below it. A similar result will be reached by all who are unwilling to take up cheerfully their life duties in accordance with God's plan. In their efforts to reach positions for which He has not fitted them, many are leaving vacant the place where they might be a blessing. In their desire for a higher sphere, many have sacrificed true womanly dignity and nobility of character, and have left undone the very work that Heaven appointed them.⁵⁵

Daughters of the heavenly King, members of the royal family, will feel a burden of responsibility to attain to a higher life, that they may be brought into close connection with heaven. . . . [They] will not be satisfied with the fashions and follies which absorb the mind and affections of women in these last days.⁵⁶

Hope Despite the Cursed Ground

“Unto Adam [God] said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life” (Genesis 3:17).

Where once was written only the character of God, the knowledge of good, was now written also the character of Satan, the knowledge of evil. From nature, which now revealed the knowledge of good and evil, man was continually to receive warning as to the results of sin.

In drooping flower and falling leaf Adam and his companion witnessed the first signs of decay. Vividly was brought to their minds the stern fact that every living thing must die. Even the air, upon which their life depended, bore the seeds of death.

Continually they were reminded also of their lost dominion. Among the lower creatures Adam had stood as king, and so long as he remained loyal to God, all nature acknowledged his rule; but when he transgressed, this dominion was forfeited. The spirit of rebellion, to which he himself had given entrance, extended throughout the animal creation. . . .

[Yet] before they heard of the thorn and the thistle, of the toil and sorrow that must be their portion, or of the dust to which they must return, they listened to words that could not fail of giving them hope. All that had been lost by yielding to Satan could be regained through Christ.

This intimation also nature repeats to us. Though marred by sin, it speaks not only of creation but of redemption. Though the earth bears testimony to the curse in the evident signs of decay, it is still rich and beautiful in the tokens of life-giving power. The trees cast off their leaves, only to be robed with fresher verdure; the flowers die, to spring forth in new beauty; and in every manifestation of creative power is held out the assurance that we may be created anew in “righteousness and holiness of truth” (Ephesians 4:24), margin.⁵⁷

Evicted From Eden

“The Lord God sent [Adam] forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (Genesis 3:23, 24).

Adam and Eve should have been perfectly satisfied with their knowledge of God derived from His created works and received by the instruction of the holy angels. But their curiosity was aroused to become acquainted with that of which God designed they should have no knowledge. It was for their happiness to be ignorant of sin. The high state of knowledge to which they thought to attain by eating of the forbidden fruit, plunged them into the degradation of sin and guilt.⁵⁸

The news of man's fall spread through heaven. Every harp was hushed. The angels cast their crowns from their heads in sorrow. All heaven was in agitation. A council was held to decide what must be done with the guilty pair. The angels feared that they would put forth the hand, and eat of the tree of life, and become immortal sinners. But God said that He would drive the transgressors from the garden. Angels were immediately commissioned to guard the way of the tree of life. It had been Satan's studied plan that Adam and Eve should disobey God, receive His frown, and then partake of the tree of life, that they might live forever in sin and disobedience, and thus sin be immortalized. But holy angels were sent to drive them out of the garden, and to bar their way to the tree of life. Each of these mighty angels had in his right hand something which had the appearance of a glittering sword.

Then Satan triumphed. He had made others suffer by his fall. He had been shut out of heaven, they out of Paradise.⁵⁹

Adam and Eve had chosen the knowledge of evil, and if they ever regained the position they had lost they must regain it under the unfavorable conditions they had brought upon themselves.⁶⁰

Tokens of God's Great Mercy

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21).

In humility and inexpressible sadness Adam and Eve left the lovely garden wherein they had been so happy until they disobeyed the command of God. The atmosphere was changed. It was no longer unvarying as before the transgression. God clothed them with coats of skins to protect them from the sense of chilliness and then of heat to which they were exposed.

Angels of God were commissioned to visit the fallen pair and inform them that although they could no longer retain possession of their holy estate, their Eden home, because of their transgression of the law of God, yet their case was not altogether hopeless. The Son of God had been moved with pity as He viewed their hopeless condition, and had volunteered to take upon Himself the punishment due to them, and die for them that they might yet live, through faith in the atonement which Christ proposed to make. A door of hope was opened, that man, notwithstanding his great sin, might not be under the absolute control of Satan. Probation would be granted him in which, through a life of repentance and faith in the atonement of the Son of God, he might be redeemed from his transgression of the Father's law, and thus be elevated to a position where His efforts to keep that law could be accepted.

The angels related to them the grief that was felt in Heaven, as it was announced that they had transgressed the law of God, which had made it expedient for Christ to make the great sacrifice of His own precious life.

When Adam and Eve realized how exalted and sacred was the law of God, the transgression of which made so costly a sacrifice necessary to save them from utter ruin, they pleaded that they and their posterity might endure the penalty of their transgression, rather than that the beloved Son of God should make this great sacrifice.⁶¹

What Marvelous Condescension!

“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 condescension of Christ in behalf of men was a marvel to the angels. Redemption through Christ was to them a mystery of love and wisdom, and it absorbed their interest even more than had the work of creation. Such love amazed and enraptured them. It was so ardent, so matchless, so devoid of selfishness, they could not comprehend it. The creation of man in the beginning, the formation of the heavens and the earth, the beauty and glory with which the Creator had clothed all nature, had called forth the wonder and admiration of the universe of heaven, their reverence and love. But this condescension of their Commander in exchanging a throne for a manger in Bethlehem, and subjecting Himself in mockery and insult, poverty and a felon's death, called forth from the shining hosts of heaven the highest adoration and the deepest joy. Their joy and praise burst forth, at the announcement to the shepherds on the hills of Bethlehem. . . .

Man alone, he for whom this great sacrifice was made, manifested indifference. He who should above all others have been interested, charmed, captivated, and filled with the deepest gratitude, was unmoved, untouched. This indifference is apparent today not only in those who are in open rebellion to God, but in those who profess to be the followers of Christ. These will receive the greater condemnation; for Christ is more greatly dishonored by those who profess His name, yet in works deny Him, than by those who stand in open rebellion to His will. Christ is not put to shame by the sinful lives of sinners as He is by professed Christians whose lives are not circumspect and sanctified by the truth they profess.⁶²

The reason why the great and grand truths which have been presented to us do not accomplish more is that we do not live these truths; therefore they are powerless to influence us. We need a deeper appreciation of truth.⁶³

A Ray of Light in Darkness

"[Jesus] shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

After the transgression of Adam in Eden it was Christ whom God gave to us, not that we might be saved in our sins, but that we might be saved from our sins, that we should return to our loyalty to God and become obedient children. As we yield our minds, our souls, our bodies, and our all to the controlling Spirit of God, it is then that the Spirit of truth is with us. . . .

It is true that God gave His only-begotten Son to die for us, to suffer the penalty of the [broken] law of God. We are to consider this and dwell upon it. And when our minds are constantly dwelling upon the matchless love of God to the fallen race, we begin to know God, to become acquainted with Him, to have a knowledge of God, and of how Jesus Christ, when He came to our world, laid aside His royal robes and His kingly crown and clothed His divinity with humanity. For our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. The Father sent His Son here, and right here on this little atom of a world were enacted the grandest scenes that were ever known to humanity. . . .

How was God to be rightly represented to the world? How was it to be known that He was a God of love, full of mercy, kindness, and pity? How was the world to know this? God sent His Son, and He was to represent to the world the character of God.

Satan has come right in and placed himself between God and man. It is his work to divert the human mind, and he throws his dark shadow right athwart our pathways, so that we cannot discern between God and the moral darkness and corruption and the mass of iniquity that is in our world. Then what are we going to do about the matter? Shall we let that darkness remain? No. There is a power here for us that will bring in the light of heaven to our dark world. Christ has been in heaven and He will bring the light of heaven, drive back the darkness, and let the sunlight of His glory in. Then we shall see, amid the corruption and pollution and defilement, the light of heaven.⁶⁴

Casting out Rebellion and Pride

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

Self-love and selfish ambition cannot pass the strait gate and walk the narrow, upward way. 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 2:2, 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. . . .

When you place a right estimate on eternal things, the friendship and esteem of the rich and the learned will have no influence over you. Pride, in whatever form it may manifest itself, will no longer live in your heart.¹

There is a great work to be done. The heart must be faithfully sentineled, else pride and rebellion will bear rule within. Evils without will awaken evils within, and the soul will wander in its own home-made fog, all the time charging upon someone else the result of its own unchristian course of action.

The living Word must dwell in us richly, else we can never sanctify the Lord God in our hearts. We must live by the Word, and take self in hand, closely examining ourselves to see whether we love God, or are bound up in our own conceit. Every heart that is not subdued by grace is treacherous, and will lead to ruin.²

The Attitude in the Offering

“Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect” (Genesis 4:2–5).

[At the sacrificial offering] were the representatives of the two great classes. Abel as priest offered in solemn faith his sacrifice. Cain was willing to offer the fruit of his ground, but refused to connect with his offering the blood of beasts. His heart refused to show his repentance for sin and his faith in a Saviour by offering the blood of beasts. He refused to acknowledge his need of a Redeemer. This to his proud heart was dependence and humiliation.

But Abel by faith in a future Redeemer offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. His offering the blood of beasts signified that he was a sinner and had sins to wash away, and that he was penitent and believed in the efficacy of the blood of the future great offering. Satan is the parent of unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion. He filled Cain with doubt and with madness against his innocent brother and against God, because his sacrifice was refused and Abel’s accepted. . . .

The sacrificial offerings were instituted to be a standing pledge to man of God’s pardon through the great offering to be made, typified by the blood of beasts. Through this ceremony man signified repentance, obedience, and faith in a Redeemer to come. That which made Cain’s offering offensive to God was his lack of submission and obedience to the ordinance of His appointment. He thought his own plans in offering to God merely the fruit of the ground was nobler, and not as humiliating as the offering of the blood of beasts which showed a dependence upon another, thus expressing his own weakness and sinfulness. Cain slighted the blood of the atonement.³

Avoid the Spirit of Cain

“Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him” (Genesis 4:8).

Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. There are many who have outgrown their advent faith. They are living for the world, and while saying in their hearts, as they desire it shall be, “My Lord delayeth His coming,” they are beating their fellow servants. They do this for the same reason that Cain killed Abel. Abel was determined to worship God according to the directions God had given. This displeased Cain. He thought that his own plans were best, and that the Lord would come to his terms. Cain in his offering did not acknowledge his dependence upon Christ. He thought that his father Adam had been treated harshly in being expelled from Eden. The idea of keeping that sin ever before the mind, and offering the blood of the slain lamb as a confession of entire dependence upon a power outside of himself, was torture to the high spirit of Cain. Being the eldest, he thought that Abel should follow his example. When Abel’s offering was accepted of God, the holy fire consuming the sacrifice, Cain’s anger was exceedingly great. The Lord condescended to explain matters to him; but he would not be reconciled to God, and he hated Abel because God showed him favor. He became so angry that he slew his brother.

The Lord has a controversy with all men who by their unbelief and doubt have been saying that He delays His coming, and who have been smiting their fellow servants, and eating and drinking with (working from the very same principle as) the drunken; they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. . . .

Just as soon as a man separates from God so that his heart is not under the subduing power of the Holy Spirit, the attributes of Satan will be revealed, and he will begin to oppress his fellowmen.⁴

Who Is My Brother's Keeper?

"The Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9).

With many, a worldly spirit, with covetousness and selfishness, predominates. Those who possess it are looking out for their own special interest. The selfish rich man does not interest himself in the things of his neighbors, unless it be to study how he can advantage himself at their disadvantage. The noble and godlike in man is parted with, sacrificed for selfish interests. The love of money is the root of all evil. It blinds the vision and prevents people from discerning their obligations to God or to their neighbors.

Some flatter themselves that they are liberal because they at times donate freely to ministers and for the advancement of the truth. Yet these so-called liberal men are close in their deal and ready to overreach. They have abundance of this world, and this binds upon them great responsibilities as God's stewards. Yet, when dealing with a poor, hard-laboring brother, they are exacting to the last farthing. The poor side to a bargain is the poor man's legacy. Instead of favoring his poor brother, the sharp, exacting rich man takes all the advantage and adds to his already accumulated wealth by the misfortune of the other. He prides himself because of his shrewdness, but with his wealth he is heaping up to himself a heavy curse and laying a stumbling block in the way of his brother. . . .

True, noble, disinterested benevolence is too rarely found among the wealthy. In their ambition for wealth they overlook the claims of humanity. They cannot see and feel the cramped, disagreeable position of their brethren in poverty, who perhaps have labored as hard as themselves. Like Cain they say: "Am I my brother's keeper?" "I have worked hard for what I have; I must hold on to it." Instead of praying, "Help me to feel my brother's woe," their constant study is to forget that he has any woes, any claims upon their sympathy or liberalities.⁵

Choosing Christ's Way Over Cain's

"This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John 3:11, 12).

The Cain-spirit, which leads men to accuse, condemn, imprison, and put to death their fellowmen, has waxed strong in our world. The transgressors of God's plain commands are inspired by the spirit of Satan to harm their fellowmen, because they differ from them in religious belief. They disregard God's law, enacting man-made laws, and trying, by their cruel inventions, to compel men to blaspheme God, as they themselves are doing. But they have been given no right to do this. Those who pass sentence of pain and death upon their fellowmen because of a difference of religion will have just such sentence passed upon them if they continue to transgress. By their works they bear testimony that should Christ come the second time as He came the first time, they would reject Him and put Him to death. . . .

Sin is Satan's attribute, and it is always leagued against good. The spirit of Cain is manifest in all false religions. Satan's work is to condemn and destroy, to take away man's liberty and destroy his life. Transgression always leads men to act as Satan's agents, to carry out his purposes against God and righteousness.

In Nazareth Christ announced that His work was to restore and uplift, to bring peace and happiness. He came to this world to represent the Father, and He revealed His divine power by giving life to the dead, by restoring the sick and suffering to soundness and health. He was in this world as the tree of life.⁶

Faith is genuine only when it works by love and purifies the soul. Self must be crucified, else sin will remain to defile the whole being. The Cain-spirit must not be allowed to enter the heart; for the hatred it brings is next of kin to murder.⁷

A Contrite Sacrifice

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous” (Hebrews 11:4).

Many who have made but little advancement are puffed up, eager for flattery, jealous if not regarded first and most important, and they cherish a feeling of superiority over others. But it will be those who work in the greatest humility, who are full of gratitude to God, who have a principle woven into everything they do that makes their works fragrant as was Abel’s offering, that heaven will accept as precious. . . .

Laborers in the vineyard, it is not the length of time in which you are engaged in the work that makes it acceptable to God, but the willingness, fidelity, and sincerity with which you labor. The Jews were first called into the vineyard; but they were proud and self-righteous, and were displeased that the Gentiles, whom they thoroughly despised, were admitted to equal privileges with themselves in the things of the kingdom of God. Nothing was more exasperating to the Jews than to have the apostles intimate that the Gentiles were to be sought after, and brought into, the gospel light. The parable of the laborers showed how sinful it was to cherish such a spirit as did the Jews against the Gentiles. Jesus warned those whom He first called into the church, lest the spirit of emulation should be found among them. . . .

Among the disciples there was a spirit of complacency, of self-exaltation, and they made comparisons among themselves. If any one of them signally failed, others felt themselves superior. Jesus saw a spirit coming in that must be checked. He could read the hearts of men, and he saw their tendencies to selfishness in the question, “What shall we have?” He must correct this evil before it assumed gigantic proportions. The disciples were in danger of losing sight of the true principles of the gospel. . . . The reward is not of works, lest any man should boast, but it is all of grace.⁸

A Holy Man of God

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him” (Hebrews 11:5).

Enoch was a holy man. He served God with singleness of heart. He realized the corruptions of the human family and separated himself from the descendants of Cain and reprovved them for their great wickedness. There were those upon the earth who acknowledged God, who feared and worshipped Him. Yet righteous Enoch was so distressed with the increasing wickedness of the ungodly that he would not daily associate with them, fearing that he should be affected by their infidelity and that he might not ever regard God with that holy reverence which was due His exalted character. His soul was vexed as he daily beheld them trampling upon the authority of God. He chose to be separate from them, and spent much of his time in solitude, giving himself to reflection and prayer. He waited before God and prayed to know His will more perfectly, that he might perform it. . . .

Enoch, separating himself from the world, and spending much of his time in prayer and in communion with God, represents God’s loyal people in the last days who will be separate from the world. Unrighteousness will prevail to a dreadful extent upon the earth. Men will give themselves up to follow every imagination of their corrupt hearts and carry out their deceptive philosophy and rebel against the authority of high heaven. . . . Like Enoch, they will be fitting for translation to heaven. While they endeavor to instruct and warn the world, they will not conform to the spirit and customs of unbelievers but will condemn them by their holy conversation and godly example. Enoch’s translation to heaven just before the destruction of the world by a flood represents the translation of all the living righteous from the earth previous to its destruction by fire. The saints will be glorified in the presence of those who have hated them for their loyal obedience to God’s righteous commandments.⁹

Privacy Sought for a Purpose

“Before [Enoch’s] translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Hebrews 11:5).

Enoch faithfully rehearsed to the people all that God had revealed to him by the Spirit of prophecy. Some believed his words and turned from their wickedness to fear and worship God. Such often sought Enoch in his places of retreat, and he instructed them and prayed for them that God would give them a knowledge of His will. He finally chose certain periods for retirement and would not suffer the people to find him, for they interrupted his holy meditations and communion with God. He did not exclude himself at all times from the society of those who loved him and listened to his words of wisdom; neither did he separate himself wholly from the corrupt. He met with the righteous and the wicked at stated times, and labored to turn the ungodly from their evil course and instruct them in the fear of God, while he taught those who had the knowledge of God to serve Him more perfectly. He would remain with them as long as he could benefit them by his godly conversation and holy example, and then would withdraw himself for a season from all society—from the just, the scoffing and idolatrous, to remain in solitude, hungering and thirsting for communion with God and that divine knowledge which He alone could give him.

Enoch continued to grow more heavenly while communing with God. His face was radiant with a holy light which would remain upon his countenance while instructing those who would hear his words of wisdom. His heavenly and dignified appearance struck the people with awe. The Lord loved Enoch because he steadfastly followed Him and abhorred iniquity and earnestly sought a more perfect knowledge of His will, that he might perform it. He yearned to unite himself still more closely to God, whom he feared, revered, and adored. The Lord would not permit Enoch to die like other men, but sent his angels to take him to heaven without seeing death.¹⁰

Faith That Is Pleasing to God

“Without faith it is impossible to please [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

There are many in the Christian world who claim that all that is necessary to salvation is to have faith; works are nothing, faith is the only essential. But God’s Word tells us that faith without works is dead, being alone. Many refuse to obey God’s commandments, yet they make a great deal of faith. But faith must have a foundation.

God’s promises are all made upon conditions. If we do His will, if we walk in truth, then we may ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us. While we earnestly endeavor to be obedient, God will hear our petitions; but He will not bless us in disobedience. If we choose to disobey His commandments, we may cry, “Faith, faith, only have faith,” and the response will come back from the sure word of God, “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:20). Such faith will only be as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal. In order to have the benefits of God’s grace we must do our part; we must faithfully work and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

We are workers together with God. You are not to sit in indolence, waiting for some great occasion, in order to do a great work for the Master. You are not to neglect the duty that lies directly in your pathway; but you are to improve the little opportunities that open around you.¹¹

You must go on doing your very best in the smaller works of life, taking up heartily and faithfully the work God’s providence has assigned you. However small, you should do it with all the thoroughness with which you would do a larger work. Your fidelity will be approved in the records of heaven. You need not wait for your way to be made smooth before you; go to work to improve your intrusted talents. You have nothing to do with what the world will think of you. Let your words, your spirit, your actions, be a living testimony to Jesus, and the Lord will take care that the testimony for His glory, furnished in a well-ordered life and a godly conversation, shall deepen and intensify in power.¹²

Noah's Faith Shown by Works

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

The people in Noah's day possessed sharp intellects, and they sought to show, on scientific grounds, that it was impossible for his prophecy to be fulfilled. Noah was laughed to scorn because of his warnings; he was regarded as a fanatic. Noah's implicit trust in God annoyed while it condemned them; but they could not move this faithful reprover from his position. The Lord had given the warning, and that was enough for Noah. The arguments of the philosophers were nothing to him, when the message of God was sounding in his ears. . . .

Noah, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. He had that fear which should characterize the life of every Christian. The perfect faith of Noah intensified his fear. The threatened wrath of God, which was to fall upon man and beast, and upon the earth, led him to prepare the ark. His faith, and his fear of God's anger, produced obedience. Noah did not hesitate to obey God. He urged no excuse, that the labor of building that ark was great and expensive. He believed God, and invested in the ark all that he possessed, while the wicked world scoffed and made themselves merry at the deluded old man.

They had more opportunity for their unbelief and mockery, because God did not at once carry out His purpose. But the lapse of time did not cause the faith of Noah to waver; his trust in God was unflinching, and he accepted without a murmur the hardships and sacrifice involved. Noah's faith, combined with action, condemned the world; for he was a faithful preacher of righteousness, rebuking, warning, and exhorting the wicked. Their reproach and abuse was sometimes almost unendurable; yet the patriarch stayed his soul on God, and called upon Him for help in his great need. Through derision, insult, and mockery, he went to and fro as a man with a great mission to fulfill.¹³

Strength as Noah Had

“As it was in the days of Noe, 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 Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:26, 27).

[Noah] knew that he was the object of popular contempt and scorn with that corrupt generation. He met with unbelief and mockery everywhere. But the greater the iniquity surrounding him, the more earnest and firm and persevering was he in his obedience, showing that there was one man in the world who would be true to God. He was a faithful and unbending witness for God, kind and courteous to all, resenting no insult. He was as one who heard not the reviling and blasphemy that greeted him on every side. . . .

Noah was a man of prayer; and in this close connection with God he found all his courage and firmness. He preached, and warned, and entreated the people; but they would not change their course. They bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, they married and were given in marriage, they indulged in feasting and gluttony, and debased their souls, showing contempt for the message of Noah. Their speeches and actions became more vile and corrupt as the period of their probation was closing.¹⁴

The same spirit of selfishness, of conformity to the practices of the world, exists in our day as in Noah’s. Many who profess to be children of God follow their worldly pursuits with an intensity that gives the lie to their profession. They will be planting and building, buying and selling, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the last moment of their probation. This is the condition of a large number of our own people.¹⁵

Thank God, all will not be rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security. There will be faithful ones who will discern the signs of the times. While a large number professing present truth will deny their faith by their works, there will be some who will endure unto the end.¹⁶

Abraham Sought a Heavenly Land

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. . . . For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:8, 10).

Before God can use him, Abraham must be separated from his former associations, that he may not be controlled by human influence or rely upon human aid. Now that he has become connected with God, this man must henceforth dwell among strangers. His character must be peculiar, differing from all the world. He could not even explain his course of action so as to be understood by his friends, for they were idolaters. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned; therefore his motives and his actions were beyond the comprehension of his kindred and friends. . . .

Just such faith and confidence as Abraham had the messengers of God need today. But many whom the Lord could use will not move onward, hearing and obeying the one Voice above all others. The connection with kindred and friends, the former habits and associations, too often have so great an influence upon God’s servants that He can give them but little instruction, can communicate to them but little knowledge of His purposes; and often after a time He sets them aside and calls others in their place, whom He proves and tests in the same manner. The Lord would do much more for His servants if they were wholly consecrated to Him, esteeming His service above the ties of kindred and all other earthly associations.¹⁷

When [Abraham] buried Sarah, he did not have so much as a piece of land in which to put his dead. He had to buy it. But when the Lord opened before him the view of immortal life, of this earth purified, which was to be his home, he was satisfied. So with every one of us. We are only pilgrims and strangers in this world. We are seeking the city which Abraham looked for, whose builder and maker is God.¹⁸

Abraham's Faith Worked

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son" (Hebrews 11:17).

As evidence of God's approval of the faith of Abraham, He gave him the name of "Father of the faithful." The example of Abraham is recorded in sacred history for the benefit of his believing children. This great act of faith teaches the lesson of implicit confidence in God, perfect obedience to His requirements, and a complete surrender to the divine will. In the example of Abraham we are taught that nothing we possess is too precious to give to God. . . .

Human judgment may look upon the command given to Abraham as severe, too great for human strength to bear. Abraham's strength was from God. He looked not at the things which are seen with mortal vision, but at the things which are eternal. God required no more of Abraham than He had, in divine compassion and infinite love, given to man.¹⁹

How many now who profess to believe God, and pass for Christians, will not obey His voice when He calls upon them to deny self, and yield to Him their darling treasures. They will hesitate and cling to earthly things. Their affections are upon the world and the things of the world, and some of these very ones will have the most to say about how much they have sacrificed to obey the truth. . . .

There are many who profess the truth, who do not love God half so well as they love the world. God is testing and proving them. Their love of the world and of riches darkens their minds, perverts their judgment, and hardens their hearts. God has, to some of them at least, revealed His will, and called for a surrender of their Isaac to Him. But they refuse to obey and let golden opportunities pass. Precious time is bearing into eternity a record of duties unfulfilled and of positive neglect. Nothing we have is of true value until it is surrendered to God.²⁰

The Faith of Moses

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” (Hebrews 11:24–26).

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.

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” (Hebrews 11:27).

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.²¹

No Unequal Yoking

“Thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods” (Exodus 34:14–16).

Unless you would have a home where the shadows are never lifted, do not unite yourself with one who is an enemy 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.” . . . “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” (Deuteronomy 7:3, 4). . . .

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? . . . 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?²²

A Common Snare

“Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them” (Deuteronomy 11:16).

The danger of God’s people for a few years past has been the love of the world. Out of this have sprung the sins of selfishness and covetousness. The more they get of this world, the more they set their affections on it; and still they reach out for more. Said the angel: “It is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:25). Yet many who profess to believe that we are having the last note of warning to the world, are striving with all their energies to place themselves in a position where it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye than for them to enter the kingdom. . . .

Satan watches the peculiar, selfish, covetous temperament of some who profess the truth, and he will tempt them by throwing prosperity in their path, offering them the riches of earth. He knows that if they do not overcome their natural temperament, they will stumble and fall by loving mammon, worshipping their idol. Satan’s object is often accomplished. The strong love of the world overcomes, or swallows up, the love of the truth. The kingdoms of the world are offered them, and they eagerly grasp their treasure and think they are wonderfully prospered. Satan triumphs because his plan has succeeded. They have given up the love of God for the love of the world.

I saw that those who are thus prospered can thwart the design of Satan if they will overcome their selfish covetousness by laying all their possessions upon the altar of God. And when they see where means are needed to advance the cause of truth and to help the widow, the fatherless, and afflicted, they should give cheerfully and thus lay up treasure in heaven.

Heed the counsel of the True Witness. Buy gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and eyesalve that thou mayest see. Make some effort.²³

Learning From the Past

“Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; there shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god” (Psalm 81:8, 9).

We are living in a most solemn time. In the last vision given me, I was shown the startling fact that but a small portion of those who now profess the truth will be sanctified by it and be saved. Many will get above the simplicity of the work. They will conform to the world, cherish idols, and become spiritually dead. The humble, self-sacrificing followers of Jesus will pass on to perfection, leaving behind the indifferent and lovers of the world.

I was pointed back to ancient Israel. But two of the adults of the vast army that left Egypt entered the land of Canaan. Their dead bodies were strewn in the wilderness because of their transgressions. Modern Israel are in greater danger of forgetting God and being led into idolatry than were His ancient people. Many idols are worshipped, even by professed Sabbathkeepers. God especially charged His ancient people to guard against idolatry, for if they should be led away from serving the living God, His curse would rest upon them, while if they would love Him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their might, He would abundantly bless them in basket and in store, and would remove sickness from the midst of them.

A blessing or a curse is now before the people of God—a blessing if they come out from the world and are separate, and walk in the path of humble obedience; and a curse if they unite with the idolatrous, who trample upon the high claims of heaven. The sins and iniquities of rebellious Israel are recorded and the picture presented before us as a warning that if we imitate their example of transgression and depart from God we shall fall as surely as did they. “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).²⁴

Power to Move the World

“The Lord, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods” (2 Kings 17:36, 37).

We are [God’s] creatures, the work of His hands, and He is justly entitled to reverence, honor, and love. Only by obedience to Him can we prove our love. If He is our fear, we shall seek to honor and glorify Him, and shall find our highest happiness in doing His will. Any failure to render willing obedience to Him will show that our love for Him is false. . . .

Too often professed Christians forget their duty to their Maker. Dreading the cross, they neglect to honor Him by rendering obedience to His commandments; and religion is misinterpreted and despised by unbelievers, because so many who profess to follow Christ, do not reveal His character in their lives. Christianity loses its power because Christians constantly transgress the law of God, because selfishness is seen, and idolatry and covetousness manifest themselves. . . .

Those who truly follow Christ will keep God’s commandments as He kept them. If they sincerely accept Him as their personal Saviour, they will be actuated by an earnest desire to fulfil their duty to God, and to represent Him in character. And if the law were perfectly obeyed, the earth would not now be corrupted under the inhabitants thereof. Oppression and injustice would not exist. Love, harmony, and joy would be seen. The power of Christianity would be revealed in the churches, and the world would have no cause to charge the followers of Christ with inconsistency. The converting power of the Holy Spirit would be felt, and thousands would be added to the church of such as should be saved.²⁵

Not a Moment to Lose

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

We are living in the most solemn period of this world’s history. The destiny of earth’s teeming multitudes is about to be decided. Our own future well-being and also the salvation of other souls depend upon the course which we now pursue. We need to be guided by the Spirit of truth. Every follower of Christ should earnestly inquire: “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). We need to humble ourselves before the Lord, with fasting and prayer, and to meditate much upon His word, especially upon the scenes of the judgment. We should now seek a deep and living experience in the things of God. We have not a moment to lose. Events of vital importance are taking place around us; we are on Satan’s enchanted ground. Sleep not, sentinels of God; the foe is lurking near, ready at any moment, should you become lax and drowsy, to spring upon you and make you his prey.

Many are deceived as to their true condition before God. They congratulate themselves upon the wrong acts which they do not commit, and forget to enumerate the good and noble deeds which God requires of them, but which they have neglected to perform. It is not enough that they are trees in the garden of God. They are to answer His expectation by bearing fruit. He holds them accountable for their failure to accomplish all the good which they could have done, through His grace strengthening them. In the books of heaven they are registered as cumberers of the ground. Yet the case of even this class is not utterly hopeless. With those who have slighted God’s mercy and abused His grace, the heart of long-suffering love yet pleads. “Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, . . . redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:14–16).²⁶

The Beauty of Holiness

“Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (Psalm 29:1, 2).

It is our duty to be very jealous for the glory of God and to bring no evil report, even by the sadness of the countenance or by ill-advised words, as if the requirements of God were a restriction upon our liberty. Even in this world of sorrow, disappointment, and sin the Lord desires us to be cheerful, and strong in His strength. The whole person is privileged to bear a decided testimony in every line. In features, in temper, in words, in character, we are to witness that the service of God is good. Thus we proclaim that “the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul” (Psalm 19:7).

The bright and cheerful side of our religion will be represented by all who are daily consecrated to God. We should not dishonor God by the mournful relation of trials that appear grievous. All trials that are received as educators will produce joy. The whole religious life will be uplifting, elevating, ennobling, fragrant with good words and works. The enemy is well pleased to have souls depressed, downcast, mourning and groaning; he wants just such impressions made as to the effect of our faith. But God designs that the mind shall take no low level. He desires every soul to triumph in the keeping power of the Redeemer.²⁷

Faith and works go hand in hand; they act harmoniously in the work of overcoming. Works without faith are dead, and faith without works is dead. Works will never save us; it is the merit of Christ that will avail in our behalf. Through faith in Him, Christ will make all our imperfect efforts acceptable to God. The faith we are required to have is not a do-nothing faith; saving faith is that which works by love, and purifies the soul. He who will lift up holy hands to God without wrath and doubting will walk intelligently in the way of God’s commandments.²⁸

Glory to the Lord

“Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength” (1 Chronicles 16:28).

Nothing is gained by cowardice or by fearing to let it be known that we are God’s commandment-keeping people. Hiding our light, as if ashamed of our faith, will result only in disaster. God will leave us to our own weakness. May the Lord forbid that we should refuse to let our light shine forth in any place to which He may call us. If we venture to go forth of ourselves, following our own ideas, our own plans, and leave Jesus behind, we need not expect to gain fortitude, courage, or spiritual strength. God has had moral heroes, and He has them now—those who are not ashamed of being His peculiar people. Their wills and plans are all subordinate to the law of God. The love of Jesus has led them not to count their lives dear unto themselves. Their work has been to catch the light from the word of God and to let it shine forth in clear, steady rays to the world. “Fidelity to God” is their motto.²⁹

Those whose affections are set on God will succeed. They will lose sight of self in Christ, and worldly attractions will have no power to allure them from their allegiance. They will realize that outward display does not give strength. It is not ostentation, outward show, that gives a correct representation of the work that we, as God’s chosen people, are to do. . . .

Let all who are connected with the service of God be guarded, lest by desire for display they lead others into indulgence and self-glorification. . . . So long as those who claim to believe the truth for this time walk in the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, they may expect that the Lord will give them prosperity. But when they choose to wander from the narrow way, they bring ruin upon themselves and upon those who look to them for guidance.³⁰

You are not to take one atom of the glory; but you are to glorify God, and try to help everyone engaged in his work to understand that the secret of success is in Christ Jesus.³¹

Surrendering to God's Will

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart" (Psalm 95:6-8).

It is not enough for us to have a knowledge of the truth. We are to walk and work in love, conforming our will to the will of God. . . .

When we allow God to work His will in us, we shall harbor no sin. In the refining furnace all dross will be consumed.

When the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost, it was like a rushing, mighty wind. It was given in no stinted measure; for it filled all the place where the disciples were sitting. So will it be given to us when our hearts are prepared to receive it.

Let every church member kneel before God, and pray earnestly for the impartation of the Spirit. Cry, "Lord, increase my faith. Make me to understand Thy word; for the entrance of Thy word giveth light. Refresh me by Thy presence. Fill my heart with Thy Spirit that I may love my brethren as Christ loves me."

God will bless those who thus prepare themselves for His service. They will understand what it means to have the assurance of the Spirit, because they have received Christ by faith. The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means that sin is taken away, and that the vacuum is filled with the Spirit. It means that the mind is divinely illumined, that the heart is emptied of self, and filled with the presence of Christ. When this work is done for church members, the church will be a living, working church.

We are to seek most earnestly to be of one mind, of one purpose. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, and nothing less can bring us to this place. Let us by self-renunciation prepare our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit that a great work may be done for us, so that we can say, not, "See what I am doing," but, "Behold the goodness and love of God!"³²

The Holy Land of the Heart

“Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy” (Psalm 99:9).

Do we want to walk in the footsteps of Jesus? We need not seek out the paths in Nazareth, Bethany, and Jerusalem. We shall find the footprints of Jesus by the sick-bed, by the side of suffering humanity, in the hovels of the poverty-stricken and distressed. We may walk in these footsteps, comforting the suffering, speaking words of hope and comfort to the despondent. Doing as Jesus did when He was upon earth, we shall walk in His blessed steps. Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). When the sin-cursed earth is purified from every stain of sin; when the Mount of Olives is rent asunder, and becomes an immense plain; when the holy city of God descends upon it—the land that is now called the Holy Land will indeed become holy. But God’s cause and work will not be advanced by making pilgrimages to Jerusalem.³³

Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while willfully violating one of God’s requirements. The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God. “Sin is the transgression of the law.” And “whosoever sinneth [transgresseth the law] hath not seen him, neither known him” (1 John 3:4, 6). Though John in his epistles dwells so fully upon love, yet he does not hesitate to reveal the true character of that class who claim to be sanctified while living in transgression of the law of God. “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him” (1 John 2:4, 5). Here is the test of every man’s profession. We cannot accord holiness to any man without bringing him to the measurement of God’s only standard of holiness in heaven and in earth.³⁴

Cultivating Lowliness

“Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off” (Psalm 138:6).

Let not a semblance of pride or self-importance be cherished, for it will crowd Jesus out of the heart, and the vacuum will be filled with the attributes of Satan.³⁵

To know ourselves is to be humble. Self-knowledge will take away all disposition to entertain the Most High with a recital of our own excellent qualities. Realizing our sins and imperfections, we shall come to the feet of Jesus with earnest supplication, and our petitions will not be passed by unheard.³⁶

The difficulties we have to encounter may be very much lessened by that meekness which hides itself in Christ. If we possess the humility of our Master, we shall rise above the slights, the rebuffs, the annoyances, to which we are daily exposed, and they will cease to cast a gloom over the spirit. . . .

Those who reveal the meek and lowly spirit of Christ are tenderly regarded by God. They may be looked upon with scorn by the world, but they are of great value in His sight. Not only the wise, the great, the beneficent, will gain a passport to the heavenly courts; not only the busy worker, full of zeal and restless activity. No; the poor in spirit, who crave the presence of an abiding Christ, the humble in heart, whose highest ambition is to do God’s will—these will gain an abundant entrance.³⁷

All who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb will have severe trials to meet. In trial we are to stand firm, seeking to honor the One who gave His precious life to redeem us. In our work we shall have to encounter a strong undercurrent of resistance. Genuine conversion, a renewed heart, will keep us sweet under trial, and will teach us to reveal divine grace in our lives. Those who in the day of final reckoning receive from the lips of Christ the words of welcome to the city of God, will be those who have stayed converted under trying circumstances.³⁸

The Key to Revival

“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).

The Lord calls for a revival among His people, an acknowledgment of the peculiar obligations He places upon them. He calls upon every soul who has the fear of God before him to walk and to work with an eye single to the glory of God. There is a great work to be done, and none can properly represent that work unless they humble their hearts before God day by day, and walk in all the light He sends.

A great work will be accomplished by God’s people if they will work in unity and unselfishness and with humility of heart. All self-exaltation must be seen and put away. Truth and righteousness alone will stand the test for this time. We need to have the Spirit of God daily with us, that we may be kept from all evil thoughts and unwise actions. We should fear lest our eyes become blinded to our individual spiritual needs in these perilous times. Many professed Christians have been allowing themselves to become absorbed in the upbuilding of selfish interests. We are now to awake from our spiritual sleep. . . .

When church members are fully decided to be Christians, which means to be Christlike, to be humble, pure, honest, the Lord will manifest Himself by His Holy Spirit. Now is the time to do the work that needs to be done. It is self-esteem that leads men and women away from God and away from those who need their help and tender sympathy. . . .

Let humility of soul be cherished, and entire surrender to God be made. Let our churches put away selfishness and pride, and cease to lift up the soul unto vanity. The end is near, and we are to give the message of warning and mercy to the world. And not only are our lips to proclaim this message, but by lives of simplicity and meekness and rightdoing we are to reveal that we believe the truths of the Word of God.³⁹

Only One Went Home Justified

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 18:10–14).

In the story of the Pharisee and the publican, Christ teaches one of the most important lessons that we have to learn—the danger of self-flattery. Two classes of worshippers are here brought to view. The class represented by the Pharisee is regarded as eminent for piety, possessing great excellence of character. The other class, represented by the publican, is much less respectable in the eyes of the world. But is this estimate a correct one? No; it is the exact opposite of truth—the exact opposite of the estimation in which they are held in Heaven. Both the Pharisee and the publican are under the eye of the heart-searching God, who is no respecter of persons. Wealth and titles, talent and reputation, are no recommendation to His favor.⁴⁰

O that we might have the same spirit of self-distrust, the same realization of our utter unworthiness. Shall we not let the grace of Christ come into our souls, that we may go down to our house justified? . . .

The reason there is so little real rest and settled peace of heart is because there is such supreme love of self. Self is mingled with all that we do. We must have less of self and more of Jesus.⁴¹

Every individual in the church should examine himself, to see whether or not he is in the truth. This close heart-searching is essential. Prayers of faith must be continually ascending to God.⁴²

Bear No Grudge in the Judgment Hour!

“Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door” (James 5:9).

Christ is deeply grieved when His professed followers, His disciples, neglect to cultivate Christian love, when they act in a way that causes pain to the hearts of their brethren in the faith. They injure their religious experience, laying stumbling blocks in their own way and in the way of others. They dishonor the truth they claim to believe. By their passionate words and overbearing actions in dealing with their brethren, they show that they are controlled by the spirit of the enemy of all righteousness. They use common fire in the place of the sacred.

The most powerful evidence a man can give that he has been born again and is a new man in Christ Jesus, is the manifestation of love for his brethren, the doing of Christlike deeds. This is the most wonderful witness that can be borne.⁴³

If we could stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and hear what is said of us, what a different estimate would we hear of our characters than we give ourselves. We must fall on the Rock and be broken, that it may be none of self, and all of Jesus.

There is need of good home religion, that a saving influence may be exerted in our families. Let us learn to be missionaries within the walls of our own homes, by being tender, compassionate, gentle, and obliging toward the dear ones around the fireside. In many homes there is great need of the spirit of love. The words that are spoken are too often like the pitiless hail, that beats down the tender plant, whereas they should be like the dew and the showers, that fall to refresh and revive. Work in your own vineyard, and cultivate the spirit of love. Do not be so very zealous about the outside work, until there is seen in your hearts and homes a teachable, Christ-like spirit. . . .

If Jesus were abiding in every home, the church would feel the refreshing of the presence of the Lord.⁴⁴

A Broken and Contrite Heart

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psalm 51:17).

You are to die to self, to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts. You need not devise ways and methods of bringing about your own crucifixion; self-inflicted penances are of no avail, and will be found worthless when the test comes upon you. We are to surrender the heart to God, that He may renew and sanctify us, and fit us for His heavenly courts. We are not to wait for some special time, but today we are to give ourselves to Him, refusing to be the servants of sin. Do you imagine that you can leave off sin by your own human power a little at a time? You cannot do this; Jesus was treated as a sinner when He assumed the likeness of sinful flesh, that the sinner might be treated as righteous. The Father loves us who believe in Christ as He loves His only-begotten Son. Thus by faith we can grasp the righteousness of Christ, and our Saviour saves us from all sin. The converted soul will hate the thing that Christ hates, and love the thing that Christ loves. Has He not by His death and suffering made provision for your cleansing from sin? You must take the blood of Jesus and apply it to your heart by faith; for that alone can make you whiter than snow. But you say, “The surrender of all my idols will break my heart.” This is what is needed. In giving up all for God, you fall upon the rock and are broken. Give up all for Him without delay, for unless you are broken, you are worthless.

Why wait any longer? Why not take God at His word and say, “I give myself to thee; it is all that I can do.” . . .

Jesus wants all there is of you. He has paid an infinite price for your soul; all that you have and are belongs to Him. May God help you to look and live. Christ is coming in a little while. He has been our brother in suffering, and what joy it brings to hope that we shall soon see Him as He is! We shall suffer here but a few days longer, and then enter into an eternity of happiness.⁴⁵

Enlisting God's Help

"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23).

[Jesus'] scathing rebukes and denunciation of formalism have the same force today as they had in the days of the scribes and Pharisees, and apply to those who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. The God of infinite holiness cannot accept external service as spiritual worship. Those who worship God must worship Him in spirit and truth, or their service is vain. There must be reality in the religious ceremonies, or they are simply pretensions, hollow abominations. But though Jesus rebuked the priests and religious teachers for their formalism and hypocrisy, yet how forbearing and tender were His lessons to the poor, the oppressed, the afflicted, and discouraged. The priests and rulers, the scribes and Pharisees, destroyed the living pastures, and defiled the wellsprings of the water of life. By their false precepts they confused the understanding, and clouded that which was clear. They misrepresented God by their hardness of heart, by their impurity, pride, and selfishness. They made God altogether such a one as themselves.⁴⁶

Christ understands the needs of the world, and through Him alone can the Father supply them. He is thirsting to give the needy souls the water of life freely. Christ is thirsting for the recognition of those for whom He left the courts of heaven, His honor, His glory, His royal throne, His high command. He is thirsting for the love, the cooperation that must be given Him as their personal Saviour.⁴⁷

Take hold of Christ by living, active faith. Come to Him just as you are, helpless and dependent, and say, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Help me to study Thy life, Thy self-denial and self-sacrifice; help me to become a Christian in every sense of the word.⁴⁸

How Deep Is My Devotion?

“Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Every man, of whatever trade or profession, should make the cause of God his first interest; he should not only exercise his talents to advance the Lord’s work, but should cultivate his ability to this end. . . .

One who seeks to advance the truth for the glory of God and the good of souls, without respect of persons and regardless of his own ease, interest, or honor—such a man should be highly esteemed, though he may not possess learning or eloquence. He is God’s nobleman. . . .

When the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, there will be many astonishing disclosures. Men will not then appear as they appear to the human eyes and finite judgments. Secret sins will then be laid open to the view of all. Motives and intentions which have been hidden in the dark chambers of the heart will be revealed. Designing ambitions, selfish purposes, will be seen where the outward appearance told only of a desire to honor God and to do good to men. What revelations will then be made. Men of pure motives and true and noble purpose may now be slighted, neglected, slandered, and despised; but they will then appear as they are, and will be honored with the commendation of God. Hypocritical, ambitious teachers may now be admired and exalted by men; but God, who knows the secrets of the heart will strip off the deceptive covering, and reveal them as they are. Every hypocrite will be unmasked, every slandered believer will be justified. . . .

Not all are Christ’s who adopt His name and wear His badge. Jesus says, “Follow me.” Are those who indulge sinful habits and enjoy the frivolities of the world, Christ’s children? Can we see the footprints of the Saviour in the path they tread? . . .

Are we following in the steps of Him who sought not His own will but the will of His Father? If we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of His. We cannot serve two masters.¹

The Symptoms of Our Day

“God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5).

One marked feature of Noah’s day was the intense worldliness of the inhabitants. They were eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage, not that these things were of themselves sins, but they were, although lawful in themselves, carried to a high degree of intemperance. The appetite was indulged at the expense of health and reason. This constant indulgence of their sinful desires corrupted them and defiled the earth under them. The same evils intensified exist in our world today.²

Noah was given a message to give to the antediluvians. But they scorned his warning. So today the message that God has sent to be given to the world will be rejected. But this message must be given. The people of God are to make every other interest secondary to its proclamation. . . .

Christ died to save a selfish world from the sure consequences of selfishness. He has opened His heart in love and pity and sympathy for the whole world. He invites fallen beings to come to Him and receive full and free forgiveness. His character stands before the heavenly universe free from every taint of selfishness. He has made a complete sacrifice to bring to men and women that benevolence which dwells in His own heart. He has sent His Holy Spirit to impress the mind and heart, to lead men to love their fellow men as Christ has loved them. . . .

I appeal to all who claim to believe the truth, to realize the importance of the message God has given us to bear to the world. In city after city self-sacrificing work must be done. Province after province must be enlightened. The truth is to go forth as a lamp that burneth. Those who profess to know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, must not fall into the cold, selfish practices of the world. Their zeal must not die.³

Deliverance From Self-Deception

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Jeremiah 17:9, 10).

The prevailing spirit of our time is that of infidelity and apostasy—a spirit of pretended illumination because of a knowledge of the truth, but in reality of the blindest presumption. There is a spirit of opposition to the plain word of God and to the testimony of His Spirit. There is a spirit of idolatrous exaltation of mere human reason above the revealed wisdom of God.⁴

We may hear and believe the truth; but if we are not doers of the words of Christ, putting them into daily practice, we shall be like the foolish man who built his house upon the sand.⁵

The more clearly fallen man comprehends the character of Christ, the more distrustful will he be of himself, and the more imperfect will his works appear to him, in contrast with those which marked the life of the spotless Redeemer.⁶

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.⁷

If we are Christ’s representatives, we shall work the works of Christ. Let none of us deceive ourselves with the idea that we can carry into our religious life the crookedness of character, the unchristian traits, which have been transmitted to us as a birthright and strengthened by education. Through the plan of redemption, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong. . . .

The reason why we accomplish no more in the work of God is that we need more spirit and life from Jesus in appealing to the conscience. Our own hard hearts must be melted by His love; this alone can break the spell of indifference, alarm the soul, and cause men to consider where they stand.⁸

The Peril of Unbelief

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12).

True moral worth does not seek to make a place for itself by thinking and speaking evil, by depreciating others. All envy, all jealousy, all evil-speaking, with all unbelief, must be put away from God’s children.⁹

We are in just as much danger in our day as were the people in the days of Christ. The Lord is speaking through His delegated messengers; but the same unbelief is exhibited.¹⁰

Let all beware how they weave self-serving and self-pleasing into the work. If they do this, they dishonor God, and He cannot use them to His name’s glory. When trial comes to prove us; when we can not see an increase of prosperity and comfort before us, but a probable lessening of these things; when there is a pressure necessitating a sacrifice on the part of all, how shall we receive Satan’s insinuations that we are going to have a hard time, that everything is going to pieces, and that there is sore trouble ahead of us? If we listen to these suggestions, unbelief in God will spring up, bringing blindness to the soul.¹¹

Our natures must be pure and holy; we must have the mind of Christ, that He may behold with pleasure His image reflected upon our souls. We are none of us what God would have us, and what we may be, and what His word requires us to be. It is our unbelief that shuts us away from God. . . . Enoch, Joseph, and Daniel depended upon a strength that was infinite. This is the only course of safety for Christians to pursue in our day. . . .

The lives of these marked men were hid with Christ in God. They were loyal to God amidst infidelity, pure amidst depravity, devout and fervent when brought in contact with atheism and idolatry. By faith they gathered to themselves only those properties which are favorable to the development of pure and holy characters. Thus may it be with us; whatever our position, however repulsive or fascinating our surroundings, faith can reach above it all and find the Holy Spirit.¹²

Defiled From Within

“That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:20–23).

You are ever finding fault and talking of your brethren, and while you have been questioning the course of others, a rank growth of poisonous weeds has flourished and taken deep root in your own heart. These roots of bitterness springing up have defiled many and will defile many more unless you see them and root them out. . . .

Before [Brother B] embraced the truth, his hand seemed to be against everyone; his combative spirit would strengthen at any provocation, and his self-esteem would be injured; he was a hard man, getting into and making trouble. The truth of God wrought a reformation in him. God accepted him, and His hand held him up. But since Brother B has lost the spirit of consecration, his old, turbulent spirit, at variance with others, has been strengthening and seeking to gain the mastery. When he dies to self and humbles his proud heart before God he will find how weak is his strength; he will feel the need of heavenly succor and will cry: “Unclean, unclean, before Thee, O God.” All his proud boasting in self will have an end.

Life in this stormy world, where moral darkness triumphs over truth and virtue, will be to the Christian a continual conflict. He will find that he must keep the armor on, for he will have to fight against forces that never tire and foes that never sleep. We shall find ourselves beset with countless temptations, and we must find strength in Christ to overcome them or be overcome by them.¹³

An entire transformation is needed. Some have lost sight of our pattern, the suffering Man of Calvary. In His service we need not expect ease, honor, and greatness in this life; for He, the Majesty of heaven, did not receive it.¹⁴

Who Hardens the Heart?

"The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go" (Exodus 10:20).

We are told that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. The repeated refusals of the king to hear the word of the Lord, called forth more direct, more urgent and forcible messages. At each rejection of light, the Lord manifested a more marked display of His power; but the king's obstinacy increased with every new evidence of the power and majesty of the God of heaven, until the last arrow of mercy was exhausted from the divine quiver. Then the man was utterly hardened by his own persistent resistance. Pharaoh sowed obstinacy, and he reaped a harvest of the same in his character. The Lord could do nothing more to convince him, for he was barricaded in obstinacy and prejudice, where the Holy Spirit could not find access to his heart. Pharaoh was given up to his own unbelief and hardness of heart. Infidelity produced infidelity. When Pharaoh hardened his heart on the first exhibition of God's power, he made himself more capable of a second rejection of God's power. Pride and stubbornness held him in bondage, and hindered him from acknowledging the warnings of God. It was contrary to the nature of Pharaoh to change after once having given expression to his purpose not to believe.

What Pharaoh has done will be done again and again by men until the close of probation. God destroys no man; but when a man stifles conviction, when he turns from evidence, he is sowing unbelief and will reap as he has sown. As it was with Pharaoh, so it will be with him; when clearer light shines upon the truth, he will meet it with increased resistance, and the work of hardening the heart will go on with each rejection of the increasing light of heaven. In simplicity and truth we would speak to the impenitent in regard to the way in which men destroy their own souls.¹⁵

We need keen, sanctified perception. This perception is not to be used in criticizing and condemning one another, but discerning the signs of the times. We are to keep our hearts with all diligence, that we may not make shipwreck of faith.¹⁶

Reaping What Is Sown

“Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go (Exodus 8:32).

The Lord sends us warning, counsel, and reproof that we may have opportunity to correct our errors before they become second nature. But if we refuse to be corrected, God does not interfere to counteract the tendencies of our own course of action. He works no miracle that the seed sown may not spring up and bear fruit. That man who manifests an infidel hardihood or a stolid indifference to divine truth is but reaping the harvest which he has himself sown. Such has been the experience of many. They listen with stoical indifference to the truths which once stirred their very souls. They sowed neglect, indifference, and resistance to the truth; and such is the harvest which they reap. The coldness of ice, the hardness of iron, the impenetrable, unimpressible nature of rock—all these find a counterpart in the character of many a professed Christian. It was thus that the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh. God spoke to the Egyptian king by the mouth of Moses, giving him the most striking evidences of divine power; but the monarch stubbornly refused the light which would have brought him to repentance. God did not send a supernatural power to harden the heart of the rebellious king, but as Pharaoh resisted the truth the Holy Spirit was withdrawn, and he was left to the darkness and unbelief which he had chosen.

By persistent rejection of the Spirit’s influence, men cut themselves off from God. He has in reserve no more potent agency to enlighten their minds. No revelation of His will can reach them in their unbelief. . . .

We are all sowing either to the flesh or to the Spirit, and we reap the harvest from the seed we sow.¹⁷

As you regard your eternal interest, arouse yourselves, and begin to sow good seed. That which you sow, you shall also reap. The harvest is coming—the great reaping time, when we shall reap what we have sown. There will be no failure in the crop; the harvest is sure.¹⁸

Keep Only Pure Thoughts

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:27, 28).

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 passions. . . .

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.

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.¹⁹

Guard Against Temptation

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

[God's law] extends to the deep secrets of man's moral nature, and throws a flood of light upon that which has been concealed from the sight and knowledge of men. What the hands may do or the tongue may utter—what the outer life can exhibit—but imperfectly reveals man's moral character.²⁰

A holy Watcher notes every work and action of our lives, and weighs every motive that prompts to action. The hand that traced the characters on the wall of Belshazzar's palace is everywhere writing, "God is here." God is in every place. All our words, all our plans, all our secret motives, are weighed in the balances of infinite justice and truth. . . .

There is not a motive in the heart that the Lord does not read. He reads every purpose, every thought.²¹

The heart must be renewed by divine grace, or it will be in vain to seek for purity of life. He who attempts to build up a noble, virtuous character independent of the grace of Christ is building his house upon the shifting sand. In the fierce storms of temptation it will surely be overthrown. David's prayer should be the petition of every soul: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). . . .

Yet we have a work to do to resist temptation. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts.²²

It takes special watchfulness to keep the affections alive and our hearts in a condition where we shall be sensible of the good that exists in the hearts of others. If we do not watch on this point, Satan will put his jealousy into our souls; he will put his glasses before our eyes, that we may see the actions of our brethren in a distorted light. Instead of looking critically upon our brethren we should turn our eyes within, and be ready to discover the objectionable traits of our own character.²³

Where's Your Treasure?

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21).

Because of selfishness and love of the world, God is forgotten, and many have barrenness of soul, and cry: "My leanness, my leanness." The Lord has lent means to His people to prove them, to test the depth of their professed love for Him. Some would let go of Him and give up their heavenly treasure rather than to decrease their earthly possessions and make a covenant with Him by sacrifice. He calls for them to sacrifice; but the love of the world closes their ears, and they will not hear. . . .

Those who are acquiring means, and adding to their possessions, are far behind. They do comparatively nothing to what they might. They are withholding, and robbing God, for they are fearful they shall come to want. They dare not trust God. This is one of the reasons that, as a people, we are so sickly and so many are falling into their graves. The covetous are among us. Lovers of the world, also those who have stinted the laborer in his hire, are among us. Men who had none of this world, who were poor and dependent on their labor, have been dealt with closely and unjustly. The lover of the world, with a hard face and harder heart, has grudgingly paid over the small sum earned by hard toil. Just so they are dealing with their Master, whose servants they profess to be. Just in this grudging manner do they put into the treasury of God. The man in the parable had not where to bestow his goods, and the Lord cut short his unprofitable life. So will He deal with many. How difficult, in this corrupt age, to keep from growing worldly and selfish. How easy to become ungrateful to the Giver of all our mercies. Great watchfulness is needed, and much prayer, to keep the soul with all diligence. "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13:33).²⁴

Very many who are seeking for happiness will be disappointed in their hopes, because they seek it amiss. True happiness is not to be found in selfish gratification, but in the path of duty.²⁵

Bringing Forth Better Words

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things” (Matthew 12:34, 35).

Do not talk of your lack of faith and your sorrows and sufferings. The tempter delights to hear such words. When talking on gloomy subjects, you are glorifying him. We are not to dwell on the great power of Satan to overcome us. Often we give ourselves into his hands by talking of his power. Let us talk instead of the great power of God to bind up all our interests with His own.²⁶

Persons are sometimes so reserved, timid, and sensitive upon religious subjects, even after they have given their hearts to God, that they do not receive the strength which they might have. We talk without reserve of our temporal affairs, and why should we be so reluctant to speak of our eternal interests? Would that all hearts might be inspired with holy boldness. Would that we all might lift up Jesus before the people with courage, and fortitude, and faith.²⁷

When your brethren and neighbors come in to see you, talk of the wonderful love of Jesus. Rejoice in His intercession for lost man. Tell your friends of the love that you have for their souls, because they are the purchase of the blood of Christ. . . . Let the beams of the Sun of Righteousness shine upon your fellow pilgrims, that they may rejoice in the Lord. This you can do in your home missionary work, in your neighborhood missionary work, and in your church missionary work. Let your light shine forth in such clear, steady rays, that no man may stand up in the judgment, and say, “Why did not you tell me about this truth? Why did you not care for my soul? Why did you love the world and its amusements so much, that you impressed me with the thought that they could not be wrong?”²⁸

Less talk about things of no profit, with much more talk of Jesus, and of the Word of Life, would give spiritual enlightenment and great joy in the soul.²⁹

Pure Water From a Pure Fountain

“Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh” (James 3:11, 12).

[The] spirit of jesting and joking, of lightness and trifling, is a stumbling block to sinners and a worse stumbling block to those who give way to the inclination of the unsanctified heart. . . . When anyone can point to one trifling word spoken by our Lord, or to any lightness seen in His character, he may feel that lightness and jesting are excusable in himself. This spirit is unchristian; for to be a Christian is to be Christlike. Jesus is a perfect pattern, and we must imitate His example. . . .

Some who are given to jesting, and to light and trifling remarks, may appear in the sacred desk with becoming dignity. They may be able to pass at once to the contemplation of serious subjects, and present to their hearers the most important, testing truths ever committed to mortals; but perhaps their fellow laborers, whom they have influenced, and who have joined with them in the careless jest, cannot change the current of their thoughts so readily. They feel condemned, their minds are confused; and they are unfitted to enter upon the contemplation of heavenly themes, and preach Christ and Him crucified.

The disposition to say witty things that will create a laugh, when the wants of the cause are under consideration, whether in a committee meeting, a board meeting, or any other meeting for business, is not of Christ. This untimely mirth has a demoralizing tendency. . . . [God] is pleased when His people manifest solidity, strength, and firmness of character, and when they have cheerful, happy, hopeful dispositions.³⁰

If you have wronged anyone, you should go right to him, and take him by the hand, and say, “I am sorry I have injured you, by thought, or word, or act.” Heaven would look with approval upon such a scene. We want all this dry, cold Phariseeism broken down.³¹

Confession Brings Purer Faith

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Psalm 66:18).

We are undeserving of [God’s] mercy, but as we give ourselves to Him, He receives us. He will work for and through those who follow Him. But only as we live in obedience to His word can we claim the fulfillment of His promises.³²

The people of God must move understandingly. They should not be satisfied until every known sin is confessed; then it is their privilege and duty to believe that Jesus accepts them. They must not wait for others to press through the darkness and obtain the victory for them to enjoy. Such enjoyment will last only till the meeting closes. But God must be served from principle instead of from feeling. Morning and night obtain the victory for yourselves in your own family. Let not your daily labor keep you from this. Take time to pray, and as you pray, believe that God hears you. Have faith mixed with your prayers. You may not at all times feel the immediate answer; but then it is that faith is tried. You are proved to see whether you will trust in God, whether you have living, abiding faith. “Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:24). Walk the narrow plank of faith. Trust all on the promises of the Lord. Trust God in darkness. That is the time to have faith. But you often let feeling govern you. You look for worthiness in yourselves when you do not feel comforted by the Spirit of God, and despair because you cannot find it. You do not trust enough in Jesus, precious Jesus. You do not make His worthiness to be all, all. The very best you can do will not merit the favor of God. It is Jesus’ worthiness that will save you, His blood that will cleanse you. But you have efforts to make. You must do what you can on your part. Be zealous and repent, then believe.

Confound not faith and feeling together. They are distinct. Faith is ours to exercise. This faith we must keep in exercise. Believe, believe. Let your faith take hold of the blessing, and it is yours. Your feelings have nothing to do with this faith.³³

Tested by Smooth Prophecy

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 13:1–3).

God’s people will be tested and proved. The plain and pointed testimony must act a prominent part in this work. In these days of darkness and peril, who is able to stand and speak the whole truth? Multitudes of teachers prophesy smooth things. They see no special cause of alarm in the present condition of the professed people of God. The people are asleep, and the teachers are asleep. They cry, Peace, peace, and the multitude that hear believe their report and are at ease. This makes the necessity greater for faithful teachers to bear the pointed, faithful testimony. The present is a time of scouring and purifying, a time of warfare and trial. The house of Israel is being sifted, even as corn is sifted in a sieve.³⁴

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.³⁵

Those who seek to cloak sin and make it appear less aggravating to the mind of the offender are doing the work of the false prophets and may expect the retributive wrath of God to follow such a course. The Lord will never accommodate His ways to the wishes of corrupt men.³⁶

The time has come when we must know who is on the Lord’s side. The cause of God calls for immediate action. And those who cannot endure the smallest test of their fidelity now, what will they do when the dragon host is at war with those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus?³⁷

Everything Closely Watched

“The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Will not those to whom have been committed the treasures of truth, consider the superior advantages of light and privilege that have been purchased for us by the sacrifice of the Son of God on Calvary’s cross? We are to be judged by the light that has been given us, and we can find no excuse by which to extenuate our course. The Way, the Truth, and the Life has been set before us. Many seek to excuse themselves by saying, “You must not judge me by some weak trait of character, but consider my character as a whole.” We always feel deep pain at heart when the sinner seeks to apologize for his sin, to smooth it over, and fails to realize the danger of cherishing one un-Christlike attribute of character. We are to place our will on the side of the Lord’s will, and firmly determine that by His grace we will be free from sin. Sin is the transgression of the law, and it is not the magnitude of the action in iniquity that stamps it as sin. Adam and Eve were prohibited from eating of the tree of good and evil. The test was a slight one, but the act of disobedience to God was the transgression of His law.³⁸

The great heavenly Artist is taking cognizance of every act, every word, . . . and even the thoughts and intents of the heart, stand faithfully delineated. Every defect in [the] moral character stands revealed to the gaze of angels. . . . Deceptive acts, whose motives were concealed from human eyes, but discerned by the all-seeing eye of Jehovah, are all written in living characters. Every selfish act is exposed.³⁹

Every word and act is photographed in the books of heaven. No human hand can erase one disgraceful blot.

Life, with its marvelous privileges and opportunities, will soon be ended. The time for improvement in character will be past.⁴⁰

Our Great Need of Help

"[God] knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Psalm 44:21).

God's law reaches the feelings and motives, as well as the outward acts. It reveals the secrets of the heart, flashing light upon things before buried in darkness. God knows every thought, every purpose, every plan, every motive. The books of heaven record the sins that would have been committed had there been opportunity. God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing. By His law He measures the character of every man. As the artist transfers to the canvas the features of the face, so the features of each individual character are transferred to the books of heaven. God has a perfect photograph of every man's character, and this photograph He compares with His law. He reveals to man the defects that mar his life, and calls upon him to repent and turn from sin.⁴¹

Turn to Jesus, and tell Him all your trouble; Christ sees all your circumstances, knows all your temptations and sorrows. The enemy will suggest that you stay away from Christ until you have made yourself better, until you are good enough to come to God; but do not listen to his suggestions; for if you wait till you are good enough to come to God, you will never come. You might wait until the Judgment, but you would not be fit to come to Christ. "Now is the accepted time; . . . now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). You are to yield to the drawing power of Christ's love today, and come to Him as you are. As you come, He will continue to draw you, until every thought shall be brought into captivity to Jesus. When the enemy would keep you from your Saviour, accusing you of being a sinner, tell him that you are entitled to go to the Lord, since He has said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32). . . . The coming of the sinner is not unwelcome to Christ. . . . Heaven is all ready to receive those who receive Jesus. Then let us come to Him, asking for the very things that we need, believing that we shall receive them.⁴²

Uniting My Divided Heart

“Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name” (Psalm 86:11).

The great sin of God’s people at the present time is that we do not appreciate the value of the blessings God has bestowed upon us. We serve Him with a divided heart. There are many who are cherishing some idol.⁴³

We are living amid the perils of the last days, where there is everything to divert the mind and allure the affections from God.⁴⁴

God will not share a divided heart. If the world absorbs our attention, He cannot reign supreme.⁴⁵

You occasionally engage in the outward performance of religious duties, but your heart is not in the exercise. You occasionally drop a word of warning to sinners, or a word in favor of the truth; but it is a reluctant service, as though rendered to a taskmaster, instead of the cheerful service of filial affection. If your heart is aglow with Christian zeal, the most arduous duties will be pleasant and easy.

Why the Christian life is so difficult to many is that they have a divided heart. They are double-minded, which makes them unstable in all their ways. Were they richly imbued with Christian zeal, which is ever the result of consecration to God, instead of the mournful cry, “My leanness, my leanness,” the language of the soul would be: “Hear what the Lord has done for me.”⁴⁶

Those who really desire to glorify God will be thankful for the exposure of every idol and every sin, that they may see these evils and put them away.⁴⁷

To be Christ’s is to be consecrated to His work, to employ every power of the mind and every member of the body to do His will and to advance His glory. It is to open the heart to His word, to reveal the testimonials of His love. It is to have Christ formed within, the hope of glory; to contemplate His matchless charms until the overflowing tribute of the soul shall be, “Hear what the Lord has done for me.”⁴⁸

Becoming Large-Hearted

“I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart” (Psalm 119:32).

Christ identified Himself with the lowly, the needy, and the afflicted. He took little children in His arms and descended to the level of the young. His large heart of love could comprehend their trials and necessities, and He enjoyed their happiness.⁴⁹

The whole person is privileged to bear a decided testimony in every line—in features, in temper, in words, in character—that the service of the Lord is good. . . .

When farmers seek to recommend their products, they do not exhibit the poorest specimens. The women bring in their best lumps of golden butter. The men bring the best fruit and vegetables of every kind, and their appearance does the skilful workers credit. No dwarfed specimens, but the very choicest that the land can produce are brought. And why should not Christians reveal the most attractive fruit in unselfish actions? Why should not the fruit of the commandment-keeping people of God appear in good works? Their words, their deportment, their dress, should be as fruit of the very best quality. . . .

God loves His commandment-keeping people. Through their obedience they give honor to His holy name, testifying of their love for Him. But are they doing this? The men of the world who hear the sacred truths of the Word of God are surprised that the people professing to believe these high and holy truths have not a more intense and earnest zeal to work for the salvation of their fellow beings. Our faith and intensity of zeal should be proportionate to the great light which shines upon our pathway. Faith, humble, trusting faith in God, will reveal itself in the home, in the neighborhood, in the church. The Holy Spirit’s working will not, cannot, be hindered. God delights to manifest Himself to His people as a Father, as a God in whom they can trust implicitly. Let the church members have the precious traits of the character of Christ, and there will be much more said in praise and thanksgiving to God for the treasure of His grace.⁵⁰

Fervent Love for One Another

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Peter 1:22).

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 every one 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.

The church at this time should have the faith once delivered to the saints, which will enable them to say boldly: “God is mine helper” (Psalm 54:4). . . . The Lord bids us arise and go forward. Whenever the church at any period have forsaken their sins, and believed and walked in the truth, they have been honored of God. There is in faith and humble obedience a power that the world cannot withstand. The order of God’s providence in relation to His people is progression—continual advancement in the perfection of Christian character, in the way of holiness, rising higher and higher in the clear light and knowledge and love of God, to the very close of time. Oh! why are we ever learning only the first principles of the doctrine of Christ? The Lord has rich blessings for the church if its members will seek earnestly to arouse from this perilous lukewarmness.⁵¹

Obedience to the word produces fruit of the required quality—“unfeigned love of the brethren” (1 Peter 1:22). This love is heaven-born and leads to high motives and unselfish actions.⁵²

A Pure Church—a Pure Me

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10).

[The] labor of purifying the church is a painful work, but one that must not be neglected if the church would have the commendation of God. But repent, because thou hast left thy first love. Here is plainly presented before us our work as members of the church of Christ. If we are faithless, we shall lose the crown of life and another will take it; for in the dropping out of the faithless the places are supplied by the faithful. If we refuse to let our light shine for the Master, if we do not do the works of God, others will do that very work which we might have done and could have done, but refused to do. When we cease to fulfill our mission, when the candlestick refuses to reflect light, and the great truths committed to us individually in trust for the world are not given to them, then the candlestick will be removed.⁵³

The world will soil the soul every day unless the cleansing blood is our reliance. Every thought is to be brought into captivity to Christ; every angry word is to be left unspoken. There must be no deception; selfishness or carelessness is a deviation from right.⁵⁴

The eye of the Lord is in every place, beholding the evil and the good. He knows all our temptations, and He expects us to resist them as Christ resisted them. Jesus died for us that we might live His life of purity. . . . The heart must be purified; for out of it are the issues of life. The will must yield its helm to the command of Christ. Paul describes this as putting on the new man, “which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24).

No compromise with sin can ever be accepted by a pure and holy God. No conversion is genuine that does not radically change the heart, the character, every line of conduct. . . . This present life is only our training school. Here we are to be purified that at Christ’s coming we may be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing—prepared to receive the inheritance of the saints in light.⁵⁵

Listening to the Holy Spirit

“Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn [yourselves], and live ye.” (Ezekiel 18:31, 32).

True religion is simply to follow Christ. A religion expressing selfishness is worthless; for the sinful heart is the real citadel. Until the heart is surrendered unconditionally, the blessing of God cannot flow into the soul . . . and a new life does not begin.⁵⁶

The change of heart represented by the new birth can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. He alone can cleanse us from all impurity. If He is allowed to mold and fashion our hearts, we shall be able to discern the character of the kingdom of God, and realize the necessity of the change which must be made before we can obtain entrance to this kingdom. Pride and self-love resist the Spirit of God; every natural inclination of the soul opposes the change from self-importance and pride to the meekness and lowliness of Christ. But if we would travel in the pathway to eternal life, we must not listen to the whispering of self.⁵⁷

Overcoming means much more than we realize. It means resisting the enemy and drawing nigh to God. It means taking up the cross and following Christ, doing cheerfully those things that are contrary to natural inclination. Christ came from heaven to show us how to live a life of self-sacrifice. In His strength we are to gain perfection. He has made it possible for us to do this, and when He comes the second time, He will ask us why we have not fulfilled His purpose for us. Day by day, hour by hour, we are preparing for the judgment, deciding our eternal destiny. . . . Everything is accurately weighed in the golden scales of the sanctuary.

Christianity means perfect conformity to the Christ-life.⁵⁸

Purity Is Absolutely Necessary

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

In every congregation in the land there are souls unsatisfied, hungering and thirsting for salvation. By day and by night, the burden of their hearts is, What shall I do to be saved? They listen eagerly to popular discourses, hoping to learn how they may be justified before God. But too often they hear only a pleasing speech, an eloquent declamation. There are sad and disappointed hearts in every religious gathering. The minister tells his hearers that they cannot keep the law of God. "It is not binding upon man in our day," he says. "You must believe in Christ; he will save you; only believe." Thus he teaches them to make feeling their criterion and gives them no intelligent faith. That minister may profess to be very sincere; but he is seeking to quiet the troubled conscience with a false hope.

Many are led to think that they are on the road to heaven because they profess to believe in Christ, while they reject the law of God. But they will find at last that they were on the way to perdition instead of heaven. Spiritual poison is sugarcoated with the doctrine of sanctification, and administered to the people. Thousands eagerly swallow it.⁵⁹

In almost every case where persons become unsettled in regard to the inspiration of the word of God, it is on account of their unsanctified lives, which that word condemns. They will not receive its reproofs and threatenings because these reflect upon their wrong course of action.⁶⁰

If the feelings of the natural heart are not restrained and brought into subjection by the sanctifying influence of the grace of God received through the channel of faith, the thoughts of the heart are not pure and holy. The conditions of salvation brought to view in the word of God are reasonable, plain, and positive, being nothing less than perfect conformity to the will of God and purity of heart and life. We must crucify self with the lusts thereof.⁶¹

Pleasing God From the Inside Out

*“Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart”
(Psalm 26:2).*

Purity of life imparts refinement, which will lead those possessing it to shrink more and more from coarseness and indulgence in sin.⁶²

To dwell upon the beauty, goodness, mercy, and love of Jesus is strengthening to the mental and moral powers, and while the mind is kept trained to do the works of Christ, to be obedient children, you will habitually inquire, Is this the way of the Lord? Will Jesus be pleased to have me do this? Will this course be to please myself or to please Jesus?

Then will every soul remember the words of the Lord: Thou hast my secret sins in the light of thy countenance. Many need to make a decided change in the tenor of their thoughts and actions, if they would please Jesus. We can seldom see our sins in the grievous light that God can. Many have habituated themselves to pursue a course of sin, and their hearts harden, under the influence of the power of Satan. And their thoughts are brought into captivity to his evil influences; but when in the strength and grace of God they place their minds against the temptations of Satan, their minds are made clear, their hearts and consciences by being influenced by the Spirit of God are made sensitive, and then sin appears as it is— exceedingly sinful. Then is the time when the secret sins are set in the light of their countenance. They confess their sins to God, and repent of them and become ashamed of sin.⁶³

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.⁶⁴

Pure Words and Thoughts

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).

We sustain a most solemn relation one to another. Our influence is always either for or against the salvation of souls. We are either gathering with Christ or scattering abroad. We should walk humbly and make straight paths, lest we turn others out of the right way. We should preserve the strictest chastity in thought and word and deportment. Let us remember that God sets our secret sins in the light of his countenance. There are thoughts and feelings suggested and aroused by Satan that annoy even the best of men; but if they are not cherished, if they are repulsed as hateful, the soul is not contaminated with guilt, and no other is defiled by their influence. Oh, that we each might become a savor of life unto life to those around us!

There is great need of a deeper appreciation of the holy truth of God. If all had a realization of the solemnity and weight of the message, many sins that are now carelessly committed would cease from among us. Is there not too often the common thought and communication mingled with the sacred themes of truth? Wherever this is done, the standard is lowered. Your example leads others to regard the truth lightly, and this is one of the greatest sins in the sight of God.

It is the privilege of everyone to so live that God will approve and bless him. You may be hourly in communion with heaven; it is not the will of your heavenly Father that you should ever be under condemnation and darkness. It is not pleasing to God that you should demerit yourself. You should cultivate self-respect by living so that you will be approved by your own conscience, and before men and angels. It is not an evidence of true humility that you go with your head bowed down and your heart filled with thoughts of self. It is your privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame and remorse.⁶⁵

Overcoming Covetousness

“Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness” (Psalm 119:34–36).

Pride, self-love, selfishness, avarice, covetousness, love of the world, hatred, suspicion, jealousy, evil surmisings, must all be subdued and sacrificed forever. When Christ shall appear, it will not be to correct these evils and then give a moral fitness for His coming. This preparation must all be made before He comes. It should be a subject of thought, of study, and earnest inquiry, What shall we do to be saved? What shall be our conduct that we may show ourselves approved unto God?

When tempted to murmur, censure, and indulge in fretfulness, wounding those around you, and in so doing wounding your own soul, oh! let the deep, earnest, anxious inquiry come from your soul, Shall I stand without fault before the throne of God? Only the faultless will be there. None will be translated to heaven while their hearts are filled with the rubbish of earth. Every defect in the moral character must first be remedied, every stain removed by the cleansing blood of Christ, and all the unlovely, unlovable traits of character overcome.⁶⁶

The way for the advancement and upbuilding of the cause of God is blocked by selfishness, pride, covetousness, extravagance, and love of display. The whole church is charged with a solemn responsibility to lift in every branch of the work. If its members follow Christ, they will deny the inclination for display, the love of dress, the love of elegant houses and costly furniture. There must be far greater humility, a much greater distinction from the world, . . . else God will not accept us, whatever our position or the character of the work in which we are engaged. . . . It is the duty of all to learn of Christ, to walk humbly in the self-denying path in which the Majesty of heaven trod.⁶⁷

Delivered by God's Word

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

We can overcome only by believing in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. We must know what is written in order that we may not be defeated by the sophistry and enchantments of Satan. The wily foe will work upon our minds in such a way that he will lead us to follow in the way he has gone, and cause us to dream of greatness, worldly honor, and distinction. If we have been ensnared by his enchanting power, let us in the name of Jesus rebuke his power, and break with Satan without delay. Whatever may be the character of the draught you have taken, in whatever way Satan may have led you to exalt self at the expense of Jesus, through the power of divine grace escape from the delusion, away with the infatuation. We inquire, "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" (Galatians 3:1).

Those who cry unto God for deliverance from the terrible spell that Satan would weave about them, will set a high estimate upon the Scriptures. Our only safety is in receiving the whole Bible, not taking merely detached portions, but believing the whole truth. Your feet are upon sliding sand if you depreciate one word that is written. The Bible is a divine communication, and is as verily a message to the soul as though a voice from heaven were heard speaking to us. With what awe and reverence and humiliation should we come to the searching of the Scriptures, that we may learn of eternal realities. When the spell of Satan is broken, and the Bible becomes to us the living word of God, we shall be safe in following our convictions of duty; for if we watch unto prayer, they will be inspired by the Spirit of God. Let everyone study the Bible, knowing that the word of God is as enduring as the eternal throne. If you come to the study of the Scriptures in humility, with earnest prayer for guidance, angels of God will open to you its living realities; and if you cherish the precepts of truth, they will be to you as a wall of fire against the temptations, delusions, and enchantments of Satan.⁶⁸

Honest Rightdoing

“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” (Psalm 15:1, 2).

We have the instructions and admonitions, the invitations and promises, of the word of God, and shall we imperil our souls by departing one jot or tittle from the divine law? God says to each one of us, “I know thy works” (Revelation 3:15).⁶⁹

[Revelation 3:5 quoted.] If we would be overcomers, we must search our hearts to be sure that we are not cherishing anything that is offensive to God. If we are, we cannot wear the white raiment that is here promised. If we would stand before God in the white linen, which is the righteousness of the saints, we must now do the work of overcoming. . . .

Angels of God are weighing moral worth. They are watching the development of character in those now living, to see if their names can be retained in the book of life. A probation is granted us in which to wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Who is doing this work? Who is separating from himself sin and selfishness? . . .

There is a great work to be done for many of us. Our minds and characters must become as the mind and character of Christ. Selfishness is inwrought in our very being. It has come to us as an inheritance, and has been cherished by many as a precious treasure. No special work for God can be accomplished until self and selfishness are overcome. To many everything connected with themselves is of great importance. Self is a center, around which everything seems to revolve. Were Christ on the earth now, He would say to such, “Launch out into the deep” (Luke 5:4). Be not so self-caring. There are thousands whose lives are just as precious as yours. Then why do you wrap your coat about you, and hug the shore? Awake to duty and to usefulness! If you will launch out into the deep and let down your nets, the Master will gather in the fishes, and you will see of the mighty working of God.⁷⁰

God's Law to Be in Our Heart

*"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart"
(Psalm 40:8).*

We are to walk and work in love, conforming our will to the will of God. Of those who do this the Lord declares, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts" (Hebrews 8:10). God is the mighty, all-powerful agency in this work of transformation. By His Holy Spirit He writes His law in the heart.⁷¹

When the law of God is written in the heart, it will be exhibited in a pure and holy life. The commandments of God are no dead letter. They are spirit and life, bringing the imaginations and even the thoughts into subjection to the will of Christ. The heart in which they are written will be kept with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. All who love Jesus and keep the commandments will seek to avoid the very appearance of evil; not because they are constrained thus to do, but because they are copying a pure model, and feel averse to everything contrary to the law written in their hearts. They will not feel self-sufficient, but their trust will be in God, who alone is able to keep them from sin and impurity. The atmosphere surrounding them is pure. . . .

The danger that lies before those living in these last days is the absence of pure religion, the absence of heart holiness. The converting power of God has not wrought in transforming their characters. They profess to believe sacred truths, as did the Jewish nation; but in their failing to practice the truth, they are ignorant both of the Scriptures and the power of God. The power and influence of God's law are around about, but not within the soul, renewing it in true holiness.⁷²

He who has God's law written in the heart will obey God rather than men, and will sooner disobey all men than deviate in the least from the commandment of God. God's people, taught by the inspiration of truth, and led by a good conscience to live by every word of God, will take His law, written in their hearts, as the only authority which they can acknowledge or consent to obey. The wisdom and authority of the divine law are supreme.⁷³

Wholehearted Dedication

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deuteronomy 6:5).

God is in earnest with us. If the heart is pure, there will be purity of action and nobility of purpose in all the work done. Every mind is to be cleansed, every heart purified. All are to understand that sin is not to be tolerated by the people who have received the most precious light ever given to mortals. Only a little while, and He who shall come will come, and will not tarry. Those who choose to cleave to their sins must perish. But God will have compassion on all who will make thorough work for eternity.⁷⁴

If the heart is pure, we can come with boldness to the throne of grace. Believing that God hears us, we shall act just as though we knew that He heard. This is faith. If we wait for a special feeling, we may be disappointed. Feeling has nothing to do with faith. The conditions of acceptance are, that we come out from the world and be separate, that we put away secret sins, and that we cease to transgress knowingly any of God’s requirements.

What a heaven we would have if each were to go there with his peculiar temperament, his desire to have his own way! How unhappy would such persons be, even in heaven, if they could not always do as they pleased! The love of right must be inwrought in us while on the earth. The light of heaven will then come in, our hearts will open to Jesus, and we shall have perfect submission to the will of God.

Jesus gave us a perfect pattern. Let us study it carefully, and as we study and pray, we shall come into close connection with Heaven. Shall we not try harder to be like Jesus? Shall we not pray more? Shall we not make more earnest efforts for others? There is no time to be idled away. Everyone who enters heaven will have, as the result of his labor, some soul to present to Jesus. The “well done” will never be said to those who have not done well. We must be faithful, we must be active, if we would receive the reward promised to the faithful.⁷⁵

Wholehearted Soul Winning

“I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works” (Psalm 9:1).

There is a lesson for us in the experience of Gideon’s army. Those whose hearts were in the work were so earnest that they would not stop to kneel by the brook to drink, but dipped up the water in their hands, as they hurried on to the battle, and these are the ones whom God used. Those who made deliberate preparations to drink, and took their time for it, were sent back to their homes. The Lord God of Israel is watching every worker, to see whether he is in earnest, whether he carries upon his heart the burden of souls. God sees whether His servants touch these living interests with the ends of their fingers, or whether they grasp them with all their might. If all had the interest that Knox felt when he cried, “Give me Scotland, or I die!”—a wrestling with God that will not be denied—the Lord would work with their efforts, and would give them souls for their hire. They would not be lifted up because of their success, nor would they for a moment fear that some one else would receive the credit due to them. But they would be so grateful to God for the souls saved that His praise would be in their hearts and on their lips day and night. It is such workers that God will make mighty in His cause.

We are altogether too faithless, and too narrow in our views. Gideon’s army prevailed, not because of their numbers, but because in living faith they followed the special directions of God. If we make narrow plans, we shall see very little accomplished. . . . God would have us realize constantly that those around us are the purchase of the blood of Christ, and that it depends very much upon our deportment and manner of labor whether these souls are saved or lost. It should ever be manifest that we are reformers, but not bigots.⁷⁶

We must never forget that it is our duty to express at all times and in all places our appreciation of the goodness of God. . . . In all that we do or say, we are to honor our Lord. We are to be the Lord’s messengers, winning souls to Christ.⁷⁷

Living Love Letters

“Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart” (2 Corinthians 3:3).

When Christ abides with you, and you abide with Him, you will have something more to say than you have said in the years that are past. You will have a message that will cut through the fleshly tables of the heart, a message that will divide between the joints and marrow, and discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. If we would have wisdom and knowledge to enable us to go through the time of trouble that is before us, we must be gathering it now by daily exercise of faith. We do not desire that you should be anxious about the time of trouble, but we want you to take up your work right where it is, and do it faithfully day by day. There are souls in your own church and neighborhood that need help. . . .

Go forth bearing precious seed. All lightness and trifling must be put aside in this solemn work. Go forth weeping, with your heart subdued and contrite, and doubtless you will come again with rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you. You may have glorious success. You may be a coworker with Christ. Do not be exclusive. Do not seek out a few with whom you delight to associate, and leave all others to take care of themselves. Suppose you do see weakness in one, and folly in another, do not stand aloof from them, and only associate with those who, you think, are about perfect. The very souls you despise, need your love and sympathy. Do not leave a weak soul to struggle alone, to wrestle with the passions of his own heart without your help and prayers, but consider yourself, lest you also be tempted. If you do this, God will not leave you to your own weakness. You may have sins greater in His sight than the sins of those you condemn. Do not stand off, and say, “I am holier than thou” (Isaiah 65:5). Christ has thrown His divine arm around the human race.⁷⁸

A Blessing of Love

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart" (Psalm 119:1, 2).

The Ten Commandments come forth from the God of heaven, whose heart is full of love, who is infinite in wisdom, who never makes a mistake. He is too wise to err, too good to harm anyone who will obey His requirements.¹

Many religious teachers assert that Christ by His death abolished the law, and men are henceforth free from its requirements. There are some who represent it as a grievous yoke, and in contrast to the bondage of the law they present the liberty to be enjoyed under the gospel.

But not so did prophets and apostles regard the holy law of God. Said David: "I will walk at liberty: for I seek Thy precepts" (Psalm 119:45). The apostle James, who wrote after the death of Christ, refers to the Decalogue as "the royal law" and "the perfect law of liberty" (James 2:8; 1:25). And the revelator, half a century after the crucifixion, pronounces a blessing upon them "that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

The claim that Christ by His death abolished His Father's law is without foundation. Had it been possible for the law to be changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died to save man from the penalty of sin. The death of Christ, so far from abolishing the law, proves that it is immutable. The Son of God came to "magnify the law, and make it honorable" (Isaiah 42:21). He said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law;" "till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law" (Matthew 5:17, 18). And concerning Himself He declares: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Psalm 40:8).

The law of God, from its very nature, is unchangeable. It is a revelation of the will and the character of its Author. God is love, and His law is love.²

The Law Converts the Soul

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalm 19:7).

Says the psalmist, "The law of the Lord is perfect" (Psalm 19:7). How wonderful in its simplicity, its comprehensiveness and perfection is the law of Jehovah! It is so brief that we can easily commit every precept to memory, and yet so far-reaching as to express the whole will of God, and to take cognizance, not only of the outward actions, but of the thoughts and intents, the desires and emotions, of the heart. Human laws cannot do this. They can deal with the outward actions only. A man may be a transgressor, and yet conceal his misdeeds from human eyes; he may be a criminal—a thief, a murderer, or an adulterer—but so long as he is not discovered, the law cannot condemn him as guilty. The law of God takes note of the jealousy, envy, hatred, malignity, revenge, lust, and ambition that surge through the soul, but have not found expression in outward action, because the opportunity, not the will, has been wanting. And these sinful emotions will be brought into the account in the day when "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14).³

Without the law, men have no just conception of the purity and holiness of God or of their own guilt and uncleanness. They have no true conviction of sin and feel no need of repentance. Not seeing their lost condition as violators of God's law, they do not realize their need of the atoning blood of Christ. The hope of salvation is accepted without a radical change of heart or reformation of life.⁴

God is as powerful to save from sin today as He was in the times of the patriarchs, of David, and of the prophets and apostles. The multitude of cases recorded in sacred history where God has delivered His people from their own iniquities should make the Christian of this time eager to receive divine instruction and zealous to perfect a character that will bear the close inspection of the judgment.⁵

Enlightening Our Eyes

"The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psalm 19:8).

You are invited to look into the law of God. Take the ten commandments, that grow out of the principles of love to God and love to man, and see if you are in harmony with their requirements. If you are not breaking any one of them, you may ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you; for you are in the favor of God. The only way that you can determine whether you are righteous or not is by examining your heart with the light of the law and the Spirit of God. As the looking glass reveals the defects in your appearance, so the moral mirror of the law will make plain the imperfections of your character, and the true condition of your heart. Those who are looking into the perfect law of liberty, and seeking a fitness for heaven, will realize their need of divine help and will often be found before God in prayer.

Only those who are sanctified through the truth will be accepted as heirs of eternal life. The sanctification that God intends His children should have is not of that character which leads men to boast of their holiness and reject the law of God, which is "holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12). Bible sanctification is implicit obedience to the requirements of God. Christ did not die to save anyone in the pollution of sin. He came to "save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21), that "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled" (Romans 8:4) in His followers. The death of the Son of God on the cross demonstrates the immutable character of the precepts of Jehovah. Then how grieved should we be for every transgression and disobedience. The precious Saviour was bruised for our iniquity. There is enmity against the commandments of God in the hearts of those who claim sanctification and refuse to acknowledge the binding obligation of the law. Hatred arises in their hearts as soon as the law is mentioned. They profess to believe that the law is abolished. But if the law is abolished, what is the standard by which we shall be judged before the judgment seat of Christ?⁶

The First Step

“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:2–4).

Repentance toward God for our failure to keep His law is the first step in the Christian life, while faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ claims the merits of His blood for the remission of sins that are past, and makes us partakers of the divine nature. The carnal heart, that “is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,” is made spiritual, and exclaims with Christ, “I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart” (Romans 8:7; Psalm 40:8).

There are many who say they believe in Christ; but do they? Have they the spiritual mind, the mind of Christ, that delights in the law of God? They claim to be the children of God, but they do not the works of God. We cannot afford to make any mistakes in this matter, for our eternal interests are at stake. A correct faith will be made manifest in godly works, and will bring the whole life into harmony with the law of God. . . . Ought we not to bestir ourselves to search the chart and prove to our souls that we are in the highway cast up for the righteous, and walking in the path of humble obedience? We are warned to “make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way” (Hebrews 12:13). We are examples to others, and if we pursue a wrong course, and lead others away from the path of right, we shall be held accountable.

We can see the importance, then, of having true faith, for it is the motive power of the Christian's life and action; but feeling is not faith, emotion is not faith. We must bring our works and thoughts and emotions to the test of the word, and true faith will be profoundly impressed by the voice of God, and will act accordingly.⁷

Chastened and Taught by God's Word

"Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity" (Psalm 94:12, 13).

In this, the great day of atonement, it is our duty to confess our sins and acknowledge God's mercy and love in pardoning our transgressions. Let us thank the Lord for the warnings He has given to save us from our perverse ways. Let us witness to His goodness by revealing a change in our lives. If those to whom the Lord has sent reproof, warning them that they are not walking in His way, will repent, and with humility and contrition of heart make confession, the Lord will surely receive them again into favor. If they will honor God by obeying His commandments, they will be exalted by Him. He will teach them what constitutes true honor and strength and victory. Those who despise the word of the Lord, who, although they have the oracles of God to reprove wrong and encourage righteousness, continue to walk in their own way, indulging their desire for self-exaltation, and leading those who have confidence in them into wrong paths, will, unless utterly forsaken by God, become weary of themselves.

God chastens His people, with the hope of saving their souls. . . . Let there be a close examination of self. Do not seek to hide yourself under your citizen's dress, saying that you are doing as others do, and therefore you cannot be far out of the way. Yes, you may do as many apostates who live today have done. Some are even now traveling over this ground. But is the picture a pleasant one? If, with the experience of others before us, we walk contrary to the way of the Lord, and are punished, whom have we to blame but ourselves?

O that a deep realization of the importance of these things may come to the people of God! O that all departure from the narrow path of obedience and holiness may be seen as it is! O that men and women may seek the Lord as they have never done before!⁸

The Key to True Prosperity

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psalm 1:1–3).

Those who teach the people to regard lightly the commandments of God sow disobedience to reap disobedience. Let the restraint imposed by the divine law be wholly cast aside, and human laws would soon be disregarded. Because God forbids dishonest practices, coveting, lying, and defrauding, men are ready to trample upon His statutes as a hindrance to their worldly prosperity; but the results of banishing these precepts would be such as they do not anticipate. If the law were not binding, why should any fear to transgress? Property would no longer be safe. Men would obtain their neighbor's possessions by violence, and the strongest would become richest. Life itself would not be respected. The marriage vow would no longer stand as a sacred bulwark to protect the family. He who had the power, would, if he desired, take his neighbor's wife by violence. The fifth commandment would be set aside with the fourth. Children would not shrink from taking the life of their parents if by so doing they could obtain the desire of their corrupt hearts. The civilized world would become a horde of robbers and assassins; and peace, rest, and happiness would be banished from the earth.⁹

The prosperity of all depends upon their obedience to God's requirements.¹⁰

The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not, are ten promises assured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the universe.

There is not a moral precept enjoined in any part of the Bible which is not engraved with the finger of God in His holy law on the two tables of stone. . . . Our heavenly Father is to be ever cherished as the first, the joy and prosperity, the light and sufficiency of our life, and our portion forever.¹¹

Peace in Submitting to God's Law

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165).

Those who will be easily offended, because of the straightness of the truth and the plain testimony, will mar the truth of God and pass along half-hearted, neither cold nor hot, weighing down the church until God spews them out of His mouth.¹²

Obedience to the law is essential, not only to our salvation, but to our own happiness and the happiness of all with whom we are connected. . . . Yet finite man will present to the people this holy, just, and good law, this law of liberty, which the Creator Himself has adapted to the wants of man, as a yoke of bondage, a yoke which no man can bear. But it is the sinner who regards the law as a grievous yoke; it is the transgressor that can see no beauty in its precepts. For the carnal mind "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

"By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20); for "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). It is through the law that men are convicted of sin; and they must feel themselves sinners, exposed to the wrath of God, before they will realize their need of a Saviour. Satan is continually at work to lessen man's estimate of the grievous character of sin. And those who trample the law of God under their feet are doing the work of the great deceiver; for they are rejecting the only rule by which they can define sin, and bring it home to the conscience of the transgressor.

The Law of God reaches to those secret purposes, which, though they may be sinful, are often passed over lightly, but which are in reality the basis and the test of character. It is the mirror into which the sinner is to look if he would have a correct knowledge of his moral character. And when he sees himself condemned by that great standard of righteousness, his next move must be to repent of his sins, and seek forgiveness through Christ. Failing to do this, many try to break the mirror which reveals their defects, to make void the law which points out the blemishes in their life and character.¹³

Peace as a River

"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:18).

Will you wear Christ's yoke? Doing this, your peace will be as a river and your righteousness as the waves of the sea.¹⁴

Come, you who are seeking your own pleasure in forbidden joys and sinful indulgences, you who are scattering from Christ, look upon the cross of Calvary; behold the royal victim suffering on your account, and while you have opportunity be wise, and seek the fountain of life and true happiness. Come, you who complain and murmur at the little inconveniences and the few trials you must meet in this life, look on Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. He turned from His royal throne, His high command, and, laying aside His divinity, clothed Himself with humanity. For our sakes He was rejected and despised; He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. Can you, beholding by the eye of faith the sufferings of Christ, tell your trials, your tale of woe? Can you nurse revenge in your heart while you remember the prayer that came from the pale and quivering lips of Christ for His revilers, His murderers: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"? (Luke 23:34).

There is a work before us to subdue the pride and vanity that seek a place in our hearts, and through penitence and faith to bring ourselves into familiar and holy converse with Christ. We must not shrink from the depths of humiliation to which the Son of God submitted in order to raise us from the degradation and bondage of sin to a seat at His right hand. We must deny self, and fight continually against pride. We must hide self in Jesus, and let him appear in our character and conversation. While we look constantly to Him whom our sins have pierced and our sorrows have burdened, we shall acquire strength to be like Him. Our lives, our deportment, will testify how highly we prize our Redeemer, and the salvation He has wrought out for us at such a cost to Himself. And our peace will be as a river while we bind ourselves in willing, happy captivity to Jesus.¹⁵

Meditating on Christ and His Law

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

There was never a time when we needed to walk more carefully in the path of righteousness, nor to pray more earnestly, than at the present time. The same spirit of prejudice exists now against the commandments of God that existed when Christ was upon the earth; and if we think that we can keep the commandments without exciting the malice of Satan, we mistake; but we shall never have to suffer one-hundredth part of what our Redeemer suffered.

We should meditate on the sacrifice that Christ has made in our behalf. He left His honor and glory and majesty to come to our earth, to be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. It seems astonishing that the world did not accept and believe on Him whom the Father had sent from heaven. He said to those He came to save, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). How grieved He must have felt when He entered the cities and found so few who manifested any interest in His mission. Every soul was precious in His sight; but the things of time and sense claimed the attention of men, and blinded their eyes to the Redeemer's merit. When I think of the many disappointments our Saviour met, I do not wonder that He was a man of sorrows. How sad it makes us feel when we make earnest efforts to bring the truth to those we love, and they will not hear us. Christ felt this sorrow as much more keenly than we can, as His nature was higher and holier than ours. When we think of what the Saviour endured, can we become discouraged in our work? We have a precious truth to bring before the people, and just as long as we have breath, we should lift up our voices and proclaim that the transgression of God's law is sin.¹⁶

From Bondage to Hope

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1).

There are many whose hearts are aching under a load of care because they seek to reach the world's standard. They have chosen its service, accepted its perplexities, adopted its customs. Thus their character is marred and their life made a weariness. The continual worry is wearing out the life forces. Our Lord desires them to lay aside this yoke of bondage. He invites them to accept His yoke; He says, “My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:30).¹⁷

When the divine law is set aside, the greatest misery will result, both to families and to society. Our only hope of better things is to be found in a faithful adherence to the precepts of Jehovah. Infidel France once tried the experiment of rejecting the authority of God. What scenes of horror followed! Men cast aside the divine law as a yoke of bondage, and in their boasted liberty they placed themselves under the rule of the veriest tyrant. Anarchy and bloodshed ruled that terrible day. It was then demonstrated to the world that the surest way to undermine the foundation of order and government is to set at naught the law of God.¹⁸

Everyone who will follow Christ will keep the commandments of God. The question will arise, Is this convenient for me? But if you flatter yourself that God does not require you to keep His commandments because it interferes with your convenience, you make a sad mistake. Another leader is commanding you, instead of the Captain of your salvation. Jesus suffered and withstood the severest temptations, and finally yielded His life on Calvary's cross to demonstrate to every member of the human family that the law of God is immutable, and that not one jot or tittle can be put aside. The cross is a monument of its immutability; and thus it is demonstrated before all worlds, and before the angels, and before all men, that the law cannot cease to exert eternal jurisdiction. It sustains the throne of God, and is the rule of His government.¹⁹

Finding Genuine Freedom

"The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21).

The presentation of the love of God has a convincing power above that of argument, debate, or eloquence. The love of Christ, as expressed in self-denial, self-sacrifice, and death, as He bowed low under the sins of humanity, touches the sympathies and melts the stubborn heart. The fact that the Son of God, innocent and pure, suffered for sin; that the guiltless bore the punishment of the guilty, the just endured the penalty for the unjust, breaks the heart; and as Jesus is lifted up, conviction strikes to the soul, and the love that prompted the bestowal of the infinite gift of Christ, constrains the repenting one to surrender all to God. . . .

Those who receive Christ are melted and subdued by the manifestation of His love in His humiliation, suffering, and death in their behalf. They behold Him as their substitute and surety, as pledging Himself to accomplish their full salvation through a plan that is consistent with the justice of God, and which vindicates the honor of His law. But there are some who are stirred with strong emotion as they view the humiliation of Jesus, who shrink from following in His footsteps when they understand that they must be sharers in His humiliation and suffering. When Jesus asks the surrender of self without reserve, when He asks compliance with His government, and that they shall walk in humble obedience and implicit trust, their nature rebels. "No," says the proud heart; "we want to keep our independence." But this is the very thing that Jesus wants you to have. It was that you might be freed from the slavery of sin that He died on Calvary's cross. He died that through faith in Him, you might be free indeed, and stand fast in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Contemplate the sufferings of your Redeemer, and you will find that a check will be put upon sin. Every sin that is committed is a re-enacting of Christ's humiliation, a reopening of His wounds.²⁰

What Is True Independence?

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17).

Independence is not obstinacy, although obstinacy is often confounded with independence. When Brother G has formed an opinion, and expressed it in his family or in the church with considerable confidence and with some publicity, he is then inclined to make it appear that he is right by every argument he can produce. He is in danger, great danger, of closing his eyes and violating his conscience by his persistency; for the temptation of the enemy is strong upon him. His pride of opinion is hard to yield, even in the face of light and evidence sufficient to convince him if he would be convinced. He thinks that if he should admit that he was wrong, it would be a reflection on his judgment and discernment.

Brother G, you are in great danger of losing your soul. You want to have the preeminence. At times you feel deeply if you think you are slighted. You are not a happy man. You will not be happy if you leave the people of God, taking offense at plain words and facts, as did many of the followers of Christ, because the truth spoken was too close. You will not be a happy man, for you will take yourself with you. You are not right; you make trouble for yourself. Your temperament is your enemy, and go where you will you will take yourself with your burden of unhappiness. It is an honor to confess a wrong as soon as it is discerned.

There are many matters in connection with the work of God with which you find fault, because it is natural for you to do so. And since you have turned your face against the light God revealed to you in regard to yourself, you are fast losing your discernment and are more than ever ready to find fault with everything. You give your opinion with dictatorial confidence and treat the queries of others in regard to your opinion as personal abuse. True, refined independence never disdains to seek counsel of the experienced and of the wise, and it treats the counsel of others with respect.²¹

The Essence of Real Freedom

"We are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free" (Galatians 4:31).

Self-righteousness is the danger of this age; it separates the soul from Christ. Those who trust to their own righteousness cannot understand how salvation comes through Christ. They call sin righteousness, and righteousness sin. They have no appreciation of the evil of transgression, no understanding of the terror of the law; for they do not respect God's moral standard. The reason there are so many spurious conversions in these days is that there is so low an appreciation of the law of God. Instead of God's standard of righteousness, men have erected a standard of their own by which to measure character. They see through a glass darkly and present false ideas of sanctification to the people, thus encouraging egotism, pride, and self-righteousness. The doctrine of sanctification advocated by many is full of deception, because it is flattering to the natural heart; but the kindest thing that can be preached to the sinner is the truth of the binding claims of the law of God. Faith and works must go hand in hand; for faith without works is dead, being alone.²²

No one who believes in Jesus Christ is under bondage to the law of God; for His law is a law of life, not of death, to those who obey its precepts. All who comprehend the spirituality of the law, all who realize its power as a detector of sin, are in just as helpless a condition as is Satan himself, unless they accept the atonement provided for them in the remedial sacrifice of Jesus Christ. . . . Through faith in Christ obedience to every principle of the law is made possible.²³

We may walk in the enjoyment of the truth. It need not be to us a yoke of bondage, but a consolation, a message to us of glad tidings of great joy, animating our hearts and causing us to make melody in our hearts unto God. . . .

Truth must reach down to the deepest recesses of the soul, and cleanse away everything unlike the spirit of Christ, and the vacuum be supplied by the attributes of His character.²⁴

Learning to Obey From the Heart

“God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you” (Romans 6:17).

You are accountable to God for all your privileges and for all the means which pass through your hands. You have sought your own pleasure and selfish gratification at the expense of conscience and the approval of God. You do not act like servants of Christ, who are responsible to the Saviour who has bought you with His own precious blood. . . .

You are professedly the servants of Christ. Do you then yield to Him ready and willing obedience? Do you earnestly inquire how you shall best please Him who has called you to be soldiers of the cross of Christ? Do you . . . lift the cross and glory in it? Answer these questions to God. All your acts, however secret you may think they have been, are open to your heavenly Father. Nothing is hidden, nothing covered. All your acts and the motives which prompt them are open to His sight. He has full knowledge of all your words and thoughts. It is your duty to control your thoughts. You will have to war against a vain imagination. You may think that there can be no sin in permitting your thoughts to run as they naturally would without restraint. But this is not so. You are responsible to God for the indulgence of vain thoughts; for from vain imaginations arises the committal of sins, the actual doing of those things upon which the mind has dwelt. Govern your thoughts, and it will then be much easier to govern your actions. Your thoughts need to be sanctified. Paul writes to the Corinthians: “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (1 Corinthians 13:5). When you come into this position, the work of consecration will be better understood by you. . . . Your thoughts will be pure, chaste, and elevated; your actions pure and sinless. Your bodies will be preserved in sanctification and honor. . . . You are required to deny self in little as well as in greater things.”²⁵

Who Walks at Liberty?

"I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts" (Psalm 119:45).

What is it that puts the shackles on men's wrists? Is it obedience to law? No, indeed. Those who keep the laws walk at liberty. It is the transgressor that is in bondage.²⁶

Some time ago, when we were passing through Oswego, N. Y., we saw two stern officers, and with them two men were coupled, carrying in their hands large leaden balls. We did not come to the conclusion that they had been keeping the law of the State of New York, but that they had been breaking it, and that they could not walk at liberty because they were transgressors of the law. We were trying to live in harmony with all the laws of the State of New York, and with the law of God; and we were walking at liberty—we were not under the bondage of the law. If we live in harmony with the life of Christ, with the law of God, that law does not condemn us—we are not under the bondage of the law.

There are two courses of action which we may pursue. One leads us away from God, and shuts us out of His kingdom; and in this path are envyings, strife, murder, and all evil deeds. The other course of action we are to follow, and in its pursuance will be found joy, peace, harmony, and love. Love—that is what we are to cherish; and what we need most is the love of Christ in our hearts. We are more destitute of this precious boon than of anything else. It is the love that glowed in the bosom of Jesus which we most need; and when it is in the heart, it will reveal itself. Can we have the love of Jesus Christ in the heart, and that love not go out to others? It cannot be there without testifying that it is there. It will reveal itself in the words, in the very expression of the countenance.²⁷

The commandments of God are not a yoke of bondage, and in obedience to them we have nothing of which to be ashamed. We should not feel that we are severely restricted in being required to keep God's law. The Lord withholds from us nothing which is for our good. We should be ashamed of disobedience to His precepts.²⁸

Delighting in God's Way

"Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction" (Psalm 119:92).

There are some who talk in a regretful way concerning the restraints that the religion of the Bible imposes upon those who would follow its teachings. They seem to think that restraint is a great disadvantage, but we have reason to thank God with all our heart that He has raised a heavenly barrier between us and the ground of the enemy. There are certain tendencies of the natural heart that many think must be followed in order that the best development of the individual may result, but that which man thinks essential God sees would not be the blessing to humanity which men imagine; for the development of these very traits of character would unfit them for the mansions above. The Lord places men under test and trial that the dross may be separated from the gold; but He forces none. He does not bind with fetters and cords and barriers; for they increase disaffection rather than decrease it. . . .

Religion is an active, working principle, and furnishes a stamina sufficient for the stern realities of life. . . . Religion ever imparts power to its possessor to restrain, control, and balance the character and intellect and emotions. It has a power to persuade, entreat, and command with divine authority all the ability and affections. Religion—oh, I wish we all understood its workings! It lays us under the weightiest obligations. As we connect ourselves with Christ we solemnly pledge ourselves to walk as Christ walked.

It is our privilege to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. . . . The Lord's way must be kept, and His way is exalted in righteousness. Christians, in their manner and words and character, are to reveal their heavenly extraction. We are never to apologize to the world for being Christians and daring to be right.

Pure religion brings peace, happiness, contentment; godliness is profitable to this life and the life to come.²⁹

Getting Our Priorities Straight

"Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart" (Psalm 119:33, 34).

It may seem that we are to study our own hearts, and square our own actions by some standard of our own; but this is not the case. This would but work deform instead of reform. The work must begin in the heart and then the spirit, the words, the expression of the countenance, and the actions of the life will make manifest that a change has taken place. In knowing Christ through the grace that He has shed forth abundantly, we become changed, and the character is sanctified through belief of the truth. The inward life grows strong, and the entire conduct will be in conformity to the will of God. Humility will be cultivated because we shall feel our nothingness and realize our dependence upon God.³⁰

Obedience must come from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. As we endeavor to honor God, discouragements will come to us; the enemy will try with all his power to make us swerve from the right; but we need not, because of this, give up the warfare against evil. Our duty is to guard carefully the weak points in our characters, seeking by divine grace to make them strong. There is no one living that has any power which he has not received from God, and the source whence it came is open to the weakest human being. If we draw near to God, the unfailing source of strength, we shall realize the fulfilment of the promise, "Ask, and ye shall receive" (John 16:24). If we lift the cross, leaving the results with God, who has given us the law which we are trying to keep, we shall find that "all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies" (Psalm 25:10).

As Christ lived the law in humanity, so we may do if we will take hold of the strong for strength. As we realize that we can do nothing of ourselves, we shall receive wisdom from on high to honor and glorify God.³¹

Obeying and Loving

"Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight" (Psalm 119:77).

Do not, by your attitude of unbelief, charge God with partiality or unfaithfulness. Your doubt casts reflections upon the verity of His promises. When in living faith you come to Jesus, and become doers of His Word, you will taste and see that the Lord is good. You will say to all, "By His stripes we are healed." You will think of Jesus, you will talk of Jesus, as One who is willing and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. If you believe in Christ as your Saviour, His perfect obedience is set to your account. . . .

If you fail to come to Jesus because you are sinful, you will always remain sinful, and will die in your sins. You cannot feel His cleansing power unless you rely upon Him with implicit faith. You can do nothing yourself to remove one stain of sin. Jesus alone is able to make you clean. Will you come to Christ and be made whole, or will you remain away in unbelief, and still mourn over your wretched state? Look and live. By beholding, we become changed into His image.³²

It is faith in Jesus that works in your life obedience to all the commandments of God. Will you not accept Christ as your captain, and enlist in His army? Will you not leave the black banner of the prince of darkness, and march under the blood-stained banner of the Prince Emmanuel? Will you not take a solemn vow that you will obey the commands of your Captain, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life? Will you not come from a state of transgression to a state of obedience and love? Those who believe in Jesus have no enmity toward the law of God. They delight in His law, and count self-denial as of small consequence, if they may only honor their Master, and win souls for His kingdom. We must lift the cross daily, and follow in the steps of our dear Redeemer.³³

A Promise That Brings Hope

"This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them" (Jeremiah 31:33, 34).

[Prior to Christ's first coming,] the whole world was becoming a sink of corruption. There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new leaven; that there might be brought to mankind the power of a new life; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world. Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness.

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society.

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man's well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever.³⁴

Righteousness can be defined only by God's great moral standard, the Ten Commandments. There is no other rule by which to measure character.³⁵

A New, Obedient Heart

"This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Hebrews 8:10).

If it were not possible for us to be commandment-keepers, then why does [God] make the obedience to His commandments the proof that we love Him?³⁶

A way has been opened through Jesus Christ by which wisdom and grace and power may be obtained. He is an example in all things. The very first lesson for those who embrace the message of truth to learn is to be in union with Christ and to have the power of His grace in the soul, melting away all dross of character, bringing into subjection even the thoughts. This must be done through the subduing of the heart, that Christ may impress and write His law upon it. This is the work to be accomplished for every soul, that all who love the truth will reveal its sanctifying, refining, ennobling power upon the character, in the spirit, in the words, and in the actions.³⁷

The necessity of the Holy Spirit's working should be realized by all. Unless this Spirit is accepted and cherished as the representative of Christ, whose work it is to renew and sanctify the entire being, the momentous truths that have been entrusted to human beings will lose their power on the mind. It is not enough for us to have a knowledge of the truth. We are to walk and work in love, conforming our will to the will of God. Of those who do this the Lord declares, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts" (Hebrews 8:10). God is the mighty, all-powerful agency in this work of transformation. By His Holy Spirit He writes His law in the heart.

Thus divine relationship is renewed between God and man. [Hebrews 8:10 quoted.] "There is no attribute of My nature that I will not freely give in order that man may reveal My image." When we allow God to work His will in us, we shall harbor no sin. In the refining furnace all dross will be consumed.³⁸

Learning to Bear Fruit Unto Holiness

“When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Romans 6:20–22).

What can the universe of heaven think of those who profess to believe that Jesus Christ is the world's only hope of salvation, when they do so little to make Him known to those who are in the darkness of error? In the great day when every case is decided for eternity, how enormous will seem the guilt of those who have failed to warn their associates in probationary time of the doom that awaits those who neglect so great salvation. What a revelation will then be made of what professed Christians might have done, and did not do! How many souls will they see that might have been saved through their instrumentality had they been laborers together with God! Many who profess to love God seem to be enclosed in an icy atmosphere, and the love of Christ has never melted their souls.³⁹

Whatever divides the affections, and takes away from the soul supreme love to God, assumes the form of an idol. Our carnal hearts would cling to our idols and seek to carry them along; but we cannot advance until we put them away, for they separate us from God. The great Head of the church has chosen His people out of the world and requires them to be separate. He designs that the spirit of His commandments shall draw them to Himself and separate them from the elements of the world. To love God and keep His commandments is far from loving the world's pleasures and friendship.⁴⁰

We need to awaken, and to understand the truth as it is in Jesus. We need to consult the Word of God, in order that we shall not seek to evade disagreeable work. When we realize that we are workers together with God, the promises will not be spoken with half indifference, but will burn in our hearts, and kindle on our lips.⁴¹

Stony Hearts Melted

"I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God" (Ezekiel 11:19, 20).

Be not discouraged because your heart seems hard. Every obstacle, every internal foe, only increases your need of Christ. He came to take away the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh. Look to Him for special grace to overcome your peculiar faults. When assailed by temptation, steadfastly resist the evil promptings; say to your soul, "How can I dishonor my Redeemer? I have given myself to Christ; I cannot do the works of Satan." Cry to the dear Saviour for help to sacrifice every idol and to put away every darling sin. Let the eye of faith see Jesus standing before the Father's throne, presenting His wounded hands as He pleads for you. Believe that strength comes to you through your precious Saviour. . . .

If we would permit our minds to dwell more upon Christ and the heavenly world, we should find a powerful stimulus and support in fighting the battles of the Lord. Pride and love of the world will lose their power as we contemplate the glories of that better land so soon to be our home. Beside the loveliness of Christ, all earthly attractions will seem of little worth.⁴²

The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not, are ten promises, assured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the universe. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). . . .

The ten holy precepts spoken by Christ upon Sinai's mount were the revelation of the character of God, and made known to the world the fact that He had jurisdiction over the whole human heritage. That law of ten precepts of the greatest love that can be presented to man is the voice of God from heaven speaking to the soul in promise, "This do, and you will not come under the dominion and control of Satan." There is not a negative in that law, although it may appear thus. It is DO, and Live.⁴³

A New Heart Equals a Changed Life

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26, 27).

One of the most earnest prayers recorded in the Word of God is that of David when he pleaded, "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Psalm 51:10). God's response to such a prayer is, A new heart will I give you. This is a work that no finite man can do. Men and women are to begin at the beginning, seeking God most earnestly for a true Christian experience. They are to feel the creative power of the Holy Spirit. They are to receive the new heart, that is kept soft and tender by the grace of heaven. The selfish spirit is to be cleansed from the soul. They are to labor earnestly and with humility of heart, each one looking to Jesus for guidance and encouragement. Then the building, fitly framed together, will grow into a holy temple in the Lord.

The youth especially stumble over this phrase, "a new heart." They do not know what it means. They look for a special change to take place in their feelings. This they term conversion. Over this error thousands have stumbled to ruin, not understanding the expression, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

Satan leads people to think that because they have felt a rapture of feeling, they are converted. But their experience does not change. Their actions are the same as before. Their lives show no good fruit. They pray often and long, and are constantly referring to the feelings they had at such and such a time. But they do not live the new life. They are deceived. Their experience goes no deeper than feeling. They build upon the sand, and when adverse winds come, their house is swept away. . . .

When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—A changed life.⁴⁴

Being Made Free: An Illustration

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

The truth makes free those who love and are sanctified through it.⁴⁵

I call upon you, my brother, to be a free man. . . .

Men and women are being held . . . who are needed in the world, to proclaim the message that the Lord is soon to come with power and great glory. This warning must be proclaimed. Those who know the truth for this time are to go forth to take it to those who know it not. They are to cooperate with Christ, the great Missionary, whose work it was to draw men to God. He was content to conceal Himself, to hide His divinity under the garb of humanity.

I call upon those who are . . . losing their faith and losing their first love, to come away, and take hold of the work of God in neglected fields, as soon as they have recovered from the influence of the seducing theories that have threatened to spoil them for the ministry of the word and for the precious missionary work in which they might engage were they fully established in the faith. Actions speak louder than words. . . .

The faith of many will be revived when they will humble their hearts before God, and go forth to fulfill the commission of Christ, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).⁴⁶

Oh, that our brethren and sisters might value aright the truth! Oh, that they might become sanctified by it! Oh, that they might realize that upon them rests the responsibility of communicating this truth to others! But they do not feel the importance of living the truth, of being doers of the words of Christ. Many are self-sufficient. They are not filled with the missionary spirit that should animate the disciples of Christ. If they knew what it means to have travail of soul for others, angels of God would work through them to communicate a knowledge of the truth. They would know the truth, and the truth would make them free. Money . . . would be used in opening new fields.⁴⁷

Free Indeed

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

The condemning power of the law of God extends, not only to the things we do, but to the things we do not do. We are not to justify ourselves in omitting to do the things that God requires. We must not only cease to do evil, but we must learn to do well.⁴⁸

The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part—the brain, the heart, the nerves—it touches with healing. By it the highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces. With it come serenity and composure. It implants in the soul, joy that nothing earthly can destroy—joy in the Holy Spirit—health-giving, life-giving joy.⁴⁹

Men of stamina are wanted, men who will not wait to have their way smoothed and every obstacle removed, men who will inspire with fresh zeal the flagging efforts of dispirited workers, men whose hearts are warm with Christian love and whose hands are strong to do their Master's work.

Some who engage in missionary service are weak, nerveless, spiritless, easily discouraged. They lack push. They have not those positive traits of character that give power to do something—the spirit and energy that kindle enthusiasm. Those who would win success must be courageous and hopeful. They should cultivate not only the passive but the active virtues. While they are to give the soft answer that turns away wrath, they must possess the courage of a hero to resist evil. With the charity that endures all things, they need the force of character that will make their influence a positive power. . . .

Weakness, indecision, and inefficiency should be overcome. There is in true Christian character an indomitableness that cannot be molded or subdued by adverse circumstances. We must have moral backbone, an integrity that cannot be flattered, bribed, or terrified.⁵⁰

The Service of Right-Doing

“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:18).

When I first felt the burden for souls, I was a little past fourteen years of age; but, oh! how I pleaded with God to know what I could say to my young associates that they might be led in the right way! I felt that I must have success; that I must do the work for the Master, and God would give me wisdom. When I was sixteen years old I commenced active labor in public. I felt that I must meet my work in the Judgment, and that the manner in which I did this work would be registered in the books of heaven. I wrestled and agonized with God that He would give me wisdom, that His work might not be marred in my hands, but be acceptable. For more than forty years I have been engaged in active work for my Master, and today I feel in just as much need to seek God for wisdom to present the truth to others as I did when I was sixteen years old. And every time I attempt to speak to the people, I feel deeply that I have not done the work as perfectly as it should have been done. I am deeply humbled because I do not reflect more light, and I plead with God that He will give me more grace, more wisdom, that I may do His work with greater completeness. . . .

The very work that is essential for everyone who receives the present truth is to aim at perfection of character, and thoroughness in winning souls to Christ. Be determined that you will advance and improve in your work, and then you will be continually progressing; for those who have received this light feel that they must bring more of the Spirit of Christ into their own life and character as they advance, else they cannot bring it into the lives of others. And you can make the most of every opportunity while in conversation with your friends, to make your words a blessing to them. Set your mind to task, that you may present the truth in a manner to interest them. Seize the most interesting portions of Scripture that you can bring before them, come right to the point, and seek to fasten their attention, and instruct them in the ways of the Lord.⁵¹

Dealing With Distractions

"Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13).

We are living in a most solemn period. Satan and evil angels are arrayed against us with mighty power. The world is on their side to help them, and the most lamentable fact is that professed Sabbathkeepers, claiming to believe important, solemn truth, unite their forces with the combined influences of the powers of darkness to distract and hinder or tear down that which [Christ] has required His chosen instruments to build up. Some do not work *directly* to tear down, but *indirectly*. They look on with indifference, express doubts, suspicion, fears, and need greater evidence than a *doubting Thomas*. They will not, or do not, put their hand to the work with zeal and exert their energies to build up. Their influence is recorded as one which retards the work of advance and reform among God's people.

Said the angel, "Those who do not gather with Christ scatter abroad." There is no such thing as a neutral position. Everyone has influence and his influence tells for or against.⁵²

Now, we want to understand what sin is—that it is the transgression of God's law. This is the only definition given in the Scriptures. Therefore we see that those who claim to be led of God, and go right away from Him and His law, do not search the Scriptures. But the Lord will lead His people. . . .

The time is coming when Satan will work miracles right in your sight, claiming that he is Christ; and if your feet are not firmly established upon the truth of God, then you will be led away from your foundation. . . .

You are not to be discouraged or faint-hearted. The word was given to Joshua, "Be strong, and of a good courage" (Joshua 1:9); for there is a great work before you. And his success depended upon his obedience to God. When the tempter comes in to distract you, if your mind is filled with the Scriptures, you will say, I cannot do this evil and sin against the Lord.⁵³

Into Which Mirror Are We Gazing?

“Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:25).

At Duesseldorf [Germany] we changed [railway] cars, and were obliged to wait two hours in the depot. Here we had an opportunity to study human nature. The ladies came in, changed their outer wraps, and then surveyed themselves on every side, to see that their dress was faultless. Then extra touches of powder must be put upon their faces. Long they lingered before the mirror, in order to arrange their outward apparel to their satisfaction, for the purpose of appearing their best when looked upon by human eyes. I thought of the law of God, the great moral looking glass into which the sinner is to look to discover the defects of his character. If all would study the law of God—the moral standard of character—as diligently and critically as many do their outward appearance by means of the looking glass, with a purpose to correct and reform every defect of character, what transformations would most assuredly take place in them: “For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was” (James 1:23, 24). . . .

There are many who view themselves as defective in character when they look into God’s moral mirror, His law; but they have heard so much of “All you have to do is to believe, only believe that Jesus has done it all, and you have nothing to do in the matter,” that after venturing to look into the mirror they straightway go from it retaining all their defects, with the words on their lips, “Jesus has done it all.” These are represented by the figure that James has marked out—the man beholding himself and going away and forgetting what manner of man he was. . . . Faith and works are the two oars that must be used . . . against the current of worldliness, pride, and vanity; and if these are not used, the boat will drift with the current downward. . . . God help us to take care of the inward adorning; to set the heart in order as carefully as we arrange the outward apparel.⁵⁴

Focused on the Pattern

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law” (Psalm 119:18).

We must keep the Pattern continually before us and contemplate the infinite sacrifice which has been made to redeem us from the thralldom of sin. If we find ourselves condemned as we look into the mirror, let us not venture further in transgression, but face rightabout and wash our robes of character in the blood of the Lamb, that they may be spotless. Let us cry, as did David: “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law” (Psalm 119:18). Those to whom God has entrusted time and means that they might be a blessing to humanity, but who have squandered these gifts needlessly upon themselves and their children, will have a fearful account to meet at the bar of God. . . .

Those among Sabbathkeepers who have yielded to the influence of the world are to be tested. The perils of the last days are upon us, and a trial is before the professed people of God which many have not anticipated. The genuineness of their faith will be proved. Many have united with worldlings in pride, vanity, and pleasure seeking, flattering themselves that they could do this and still be Christians. But it is such indulgences that separate them from God and make them children of the world. Christ has given us no such example. Those only who deny self, and live a life of sobriety, humility, and holiness, are true followers of Jesus; and such cannot enjoy the society of the lovers of the world.

Many dress like the world in order to have an influence over unbelievers, but here they make a sad mistake. If they would have a true and saving influence, let them live out their profession, show their faith by their righteous works, and make the distinction plain between the Christian and the worldling. The words, the dress, the actions, should tell for God. Then a holy influence will be shed upon all around them, and even unbelievers will take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. . . . Let them live out their profession and thus imitate the humble Pattern.⁵⁵

Judged by the Law of Liberty

"So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty" (James 2:12).

The way to heaven is through Jesus Christ. He is the light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. He has given us most precious truths. But there are many who have not a right appreciation of what is essential for them to know and practice. Let not the people of God spend precious time on side issues which are of no importance. Let them instead strive to reveal that love for Christ and the truth has knit their hearts together in unity and love, and that this leads them to obey God's commandments.

The Lord has made every provision for our happiness in the future life, but He has made no revelations regarding these plans, and we are not to speculate concerning them. . . .

Matters of vital importance have been plainly revealed in the Word of God. These subjects are worthy of our deepest thought. But we are not to search into matters concerning which God has been silent. May God help His people to think rationally. When questions arise upon which we are uncertain, we should ask, "What saith the Scriptures?"

Christ withheld no truths essential to our salvation. Those things that are revealed are for us and our children, but we are not to allow our imagination to frame doctrines concerning things not revealed. Again and again these non-essential subjects have been agitated, but their discussion has never done a particle of good. We are not to allow our attention to be diverted from the proclamation of the message given us. . . . We are not bidden to enter into discussion regarding unimportant subjects. Our work is to lead minds to the great principles of the law of God.

The only question asked in the judgment will be, "Are they obedient to My commandments?" The petty strife and contention over questions of no importance is an education which our people do not need. Let them seek instead to answer the prayer, "That they all may be one. . . . that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (John 17:21).⁵⁶

A Suitable Helper

“Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.” “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:20, 18).

The Lord was pleased with this last and noblest of all His creatures, and designed that he should be the perfect inhabitant of a perfect world. But it was not His purpose that man should live in solitude.¹

After the creation of Adam every living creature was brought before him to receive its name; he saw that to each had been given a companion, but among them “there was not found an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:20). Among all the creatures that God had made on the earth, there was not one equal to man. And God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18). Man was not made to dwell in solitude; he was to be a social being. Without companionship the beautiful scenes and delightful employments of Eden would have failed to yield perfect happiness. Even communion with angels could not have satisfied his desire for sympathy and companionship. There was none of the same nature to love and to be loved.

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided “an help meet for him”—a helper corresponding to him—one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy.²

God made from the man a woman, to be a companion and helpmeet for him, to be one with him, to cheer, encourage, and bless him, he in his turn to be her strong helper. . . .

The divine love emanating from Christ never destroys human love, but includes it. By it human love is refined and purified, elevated and ennobled. Human love can never bear its precious fruit until it is united with the divine nature and trained to grow heavenward. Jesus wants to see happy marriages, happy firesides.”³

Woman as a Helpmeet

“The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man” (Genesis 2:21, 22).

Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. . . .

God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. “Marriage is honorable” (Hebrews 13:4); it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the Fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise. When the divine principles are recognized and obeyed in this relation, marriage is a blessing; it guards the purity and happiness of the race, it provides for man’s social needs, it elevates the physical, the intellectual, and the moral nature.⁴

In the beginning, when the Sabbath law was given to man, the marriage law was also given. Then God bestowed on man His two great gifts—woman as a helpmeet, and the Sabbath as a day of rest.

Marriage has received Christ’s blessing, and is to be regarded as a sacred institution. True religion does not counterwork the Lord’s plans. God ordained that woman should be united with man in holy wedlock, to raise up families that would be crowned with honor, who would be symbols of the family in heaven.⁵

Your companionship in the marriage relation should be close and tender, holy and elevated, breathing a spiritual power into your lives, that you may be everything to each other that God’s word requires.⁶

Cleaving to One Another

“Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:23, 24).

God Himself united the holy pair; and this first marriage is an example of what all marriages should be.⁷

He who made the first holy pair and who created for them a paradise, has put His seal upon the marriage institution, first celebrated in Eden, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.⁸

As the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in wedlock, saying, A man shall “leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one,” He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time (Genesis 2:24). That which the eternal Father Himself had pronounced good was the law of highest blessing and development for man.⁹

If the hearts were kept tender in our families, if there were a noble, generous deference to each other’s tastes and opinions, if the wife were seeking opportunities to express her love by actions in her courtesies to her husband, and the husband were manifesting the same consideration and kindly regard for the wife, the children would partake of the same spirit. The influence would pervade the household, and what a tide of misery would be saved in the families! . . .

In the marriage contract men and women have made a trade, an investment for life, and they should do their utmost to control their words of impatience and fretfulness, even more carefully than they did before their marriage, for now their destinies are united for life as husband and wife, and each is valued in exact proportion to the amount of painstaking effort put forth to retain and keep fresh the love so eagerly sought for and prized before marriage.¹⁰

The sweetest type of heaven is a home where the Spirit of the Lord presides.¹¹

When Is One Ready for Marriage?

“Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house” (Proverbs 24:27).

You should not be eager to enter the marriage relation and assume the care of a family before you have thoroughly established your own character.¹²

I warn . . . young men not to marry, and the young ladies not to be given in marriage, until they have gained knowledge, experience, and success in their efforts to reach the high standard for which they have thought to aim.¹³

In early times custom required the bridegroom, before the ratification of a marriage engagement, to pay a sum of money or its equivalent in other property, according to his circumstances, to the father of his wife. This was regarded as a safeguard to the marriage relation. Fathers did not think it safe to trust the happiness of their daughters to men who had not made provision for the support of a family. If they had not sufficient thrift and energy to manage business and acquire cattle or lands, it was feared that their life would prove worthless. But provision was made to test those who had nothing to pay for a wife. They were permitted to labor for the father whose daughter they loved. . . .

The ancient custom, though sometimes abused, as by Laban, was productive of good results. When the suitor was required to render service to secure his bride, a hasty marriage was prevented, and there was opportunity to test the depth of his affections, as well as his ability to provide for a family. In our time many evils result from pursuing an opposite course.

No man is excusable for being without financial ability. Of many a man it may be said, He is kind, amiable, generous, a good man, a Christian; but he is not qualified to manage his own business. As far as the outlay of means is concerned, he is a mere child. He has not been brought up by his parents to understand and to practice the principles of self-support.¹⁴

A great responsibility rests upon the husband—house-band—to bind the household together by the ties of kindness, love, and harmony.¹⁵

True Feminine Beauty

“A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones” (Proverbs 12:4).

The happiness of the family depends much upon the wife and mother.

Let a young man seek one to stand by his side who is fitted to bear her share of life’s burdens, one whose influence will ennoble and refine him, and who will make him happy in her love. Married life is not all romance; it has its real difficulties and its homely details. The wife must not consider herself a doll, to be tended, but a woman; one to put her shoulder under real, not imaginary, burdens, and live an understanding, thoughtful life, considering that there are other things to be thought of than herself.¹⁶

As a fashionably dressed young lady was passing several gentlemen on the street, one of them made some inquiries in regard to her. The answer was: “She makes a pretty ornament in her father’s house, but otherwise she is of no use.”¹⁷

In my travels I have seen that those women who entered upon the married life wholly unprepared for domestic duties were not happy. They did not receive the training and the education in their youth that fitted them for the responsible position they had by most solemn covenant agreed to fill. The parents had made a great mistake. When children, they were excused from exertion in order “to enrich the mind.” They could play an instrument of music, but were not educated to take responsibility. They enjoyed burying their minds in novels, but had no love to keep their houses in order. . . . The characters of youth should not be spoiled by over-fond mothers. Parents should consider that as they neglect to thoroughly educate their daughters in domestic labor and economy, they are giving characters to them which will make their future married lives miserable.¹⁸

I feel impelled by the Spirit of the Lord to urge my sisters who profess godliness to cherish modesty of deportment and a becoming reserve, with shamefacedness and sobriety.¹⁹

Would Marriage Enhance My Service?

“Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you” (1 Corinthians 7:27, 28).

Parents, children, wife, husband, houses, lands, or any other earthly treasure, whether of friends or property, are not to be loved selfishly, and thus become an idol to divert the mind, the time, the service, from God. He that loves and serves mammon, cannot love and serve God supremely. When friends and relations are loved with inordinate affection, they are taking the place in the heart where God should be. . . .

Everyone who has received the truth must go to God for his individual self, and decide to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Those who have embraced the third angel’s message must not make man their trust.²⁰

Real life has its shadows and its sorrows. To every soul troubles must come. Satan is constantly working to unsettle the faith and destroy the courage and hope of everyone. Your husband has had a horrible awakening as he has seen what is the nature of her whom he has vowed to love and cherish till death do you part. He sees himself fastened to one who cares for no one but herself. Your imaginary trials, your manufactured physical disabilities, make the outlook most discouraging.²¹

I see in Elder Butler a man of usefulness, a man of intelligence and Bible study. His ministry would be much more valuable were he united with a woman who could help him in his work. Think of how much more he could accomplish with the help of a discreet, intelligent woman. He should not be left to live alone and to travel alone. The sooner he can find a good wife, the better it will be for his work. A wife could do for him those things that no male companion could do—look after his clothes, see that they are free from dust, and that he is always prepared to appear before large congregations.²²

Focused on Christ's Commission

"He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction" (1 Corinthians 7:32–35).

We claim to believe that the commission which Christ gave to His disciples just before His ascension is given also to us. Are we fulfilling it?²³

Both of you should encourage greater devotion to God. The only way to watch humbly is to watch prayerfully. Do not for a moment think that you may sit down and enjoy yourselves, and study your own pleasure and convenience. The life of Christ is our example. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; He was wounded, He was bruised. You are too well satisfied with your position. You have need of constant watchfulness, lest Satan beguile you through his subtlety, corrupt your minds, and lead you into inconsistencies and gross darkness. Your watchfulness should be characterized by a spirit of humble dependence upon God. It should not be carried on with a proud, self-reliant spirit, but with a deep sense of your personal weakness and a childlike trust in the promises of God.

It is now an easy and pleasant task to preach the truth of the third angel's message, in comparison with what it was when the message first started, when the numbers were few and we were looked upon as fanatics. Those who bore the responsibility of the work in the rise and early progress of the message knew what conflict, distress, and soul anguish were. Night and day the burden was heavy upon them. They thought not of rest or convenience even when they were pressed with suffering.²⁴

Present Truth to Govern Our Choice

“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?” (2 Corinthians 6:14, 15).

The world is full of misery and sin today in consequence of ill-assorted marriages. In many cases it takes only a few months for husband and wife to realize that their dispositions can never blend; and the result is that discord prevails in the home, where only the love and harmony of heaven should exist. . . .

It is a dangerous thing to form a worldly alliance. Satan well knows that the hour which witnesses the marriage of many young men and women closes the history of their religious experience and usefulness. For a time they may make an effort to live a Christian life, but all their strivings are made against a steady influence in the opposite direction. Once they felt it a privilege to speak of their joy and hope; but soon they become unwilling to make this a subject of conversation, knowing that the one with whom they have linked their destiny takes no interest in these things. Thus Satan insidiously weaves about them a web of skepticism, and faith in the precious truth dies out of the heart.²⁵

The truth of God is to be held as more precious than anything else, and the man who will sacrifice truth to obtain a wife reveals that his appreciation of the law of God is of a very low grade, and that self-gratification rises superior to a “Thus saith the Lord.” Of a man who will put his own impulses before the Word of God a woman may well be afraid, for he has no just appreciation of what marriage means. He who obtains his wife by disloyalty to God cannot expect the blessing of God to rest upon his marriage. He practices a lie in order that he may avoid detection, violates the law of God that he may gratify an unholy passion or indulge his fancy, and he cannot be happy. He who is not true to his God cannot be true to his wife.²⁶

Whose Companionship Do We Cherish?

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

We are living in the last days, when the mania upon the subject of marriage constitutes one of the signs of the near coming of Christ. God is not consulted in these matters. Religion, duty, and principle are sacrificed to carry out the promptings of the unconsecrated heart. There should be no great display and rejoicing over the union of the parties. There is not one marriage in one hundred that results happily, that bears the sanction of God, and places the parties in a position better to glorify Him. The evil consequences of poor marriages are numberless. They are contracted from impulse. A candid review of the matter is scarcely thought of, and consultation with those of experience is considered old-fashioned.

Impulse and unsanctified passion exist in the place of pure love. Many imperil their own souls, and bring the curse of God upon them, by entering into the marriage relation merely to please the fancy. . . . Some who profess to believe the truth . . . have made a great mistake by marrying unbelievers. The hope was cherished by them that the unbelieving party would embrace the truth; but after his object is gained, he is further from the truth than before. And then begin the subtle workings, the continued efforts, of the enemy to draw away the believing one from the faith. . . .

The plea is sometimes made that the unbeliever is favorable to religion and is all that could be desired in a companion except in one thing—he is not a Christian. Although the better judgment of the believer may suggest the impropriety of a union for life with an unbeliever, yet, in nine cases out of ten, inclination triumphs. Spiritual declension commences the moment the vow is made at the altar; religious fervor is dampened, and one stronghold after another is broken down, until both stand side by side under the black banner of Satan.²⁷

Hundreds have sacrificed Christ and heaven in consequence of marrying unconverted persons. Can it be that the love and fellowship of Christ are of so little value to them that they prefer the companionship of poor mortals?²⁸

The Unbeliever Leads Astray

“Neither shalt thou make marriages with [those outside Israel]; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 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” (Deuteronomy 7:3, 4).

The danger of giving the affections to unbelievers is not realized. In the youthful mind, marriage is clothed with romance, and it is difficult to divest it of this feature, with which imagination covers it, and to impress the mind with a sense of the weighty responsibilities involved in the marriage vow. This vow links the destinies of the two individuals with bonds which nought but the hand of death should sever. . . .

The happiness and prosperity of the married life depend upon the unity of the parties. How can the carnal mind harmonize with the mind that is assimilated to the mind of Christ? One is sowing to the flesh, thinking and acting in accordance with the promptings of his own heart; the other is sowing to the Spirit, seeking to repress selfishness, to overcome inclination, and to live in obedience to the Master, whose servant he professes to be. Thus there is a perpetual difference of taste, of inclination, and of purpose. Unless the believer shall, through his steadfast adherence to principle, win the impenitent, he will, as is much more common, become discouraged and sell his religious principles for the poor companionship of one who has no connection with heaven.

God strictly forbade the intermarrying of His ancient people with other nations. The plea is now offered that this prohibition was made in order to prevent the Hebrews from marrying idolaters and forming connections with heathen families. But the heathen were in a more favorable condition than are the impenitent in this age, who, having the light of truth, yet persistently refuse to accept it. The sinner of today is far more guilty than the heathen, because the light of the gospel shines clearly all around him. He violates conscience and is a deliberate enemy of God.²⁹

Respecting Parental Wisdom

“My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother” (Proverbs 1:8).

Isaac was highly honored by God in being made inheritor of the promises through which the world was to be blessed; yet when he was forty years of age, he submitted to his father’s judgment in appointing his experienced, God-fearing servant to choose a wife for him.³⁰

A youth not out of his teens is a poor judge of the fitness of a person as young as himself to be his companion for life.³¹

Immature marriages are productive of a vast amount of the evils that exist today. Neither physical health nor mental vigor is promoted by a marriage that is entered on too early in life. Upon this subject altogether too little reason is exercised. Many youth act from impulse. This step, which affects them seriously for good or ill, to be a lifelong blessing or curse, is too often taken hastily, under the impulse of sentiment. Many will not listen to reason or instruction in the matter. They are unwilling to consider this subject from a Christian point of view.

The marriages formed by students at school are not right nor proper. Young boys and girls, unfitted in every way to bear life’s responsibilities, do not guard their affections; and many who are too young to take care of themselves, too young to know their own minds, who have never been tested as to whether they can make home happy, and support themselves, assume the responsibilities of married life.

Many mothers have gone into the grave because the son or daughter, who heretofore had been respectful and obedient, would not be advised with reference to this important relation. The youth take this step regardless of the counsel of parents and friends, and heedless of the approval of God. His command, “Honor thy father and thy mother” (Exodus 20:12), is disregarded, and so His promise cannot be fulfilled. His blessing cannot rest upon those who pursue this course of reckless wilfulness.³²

Letting God Choose for Me

“House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the Lord” (Proverbs 19:14).

It is only in Christ that a marriage alliance can be safely formed. Human love should draw its closest bonds from divine love. Only where Christ reigns can there be deep, true, unselfish affection.

Love is a precious gift, which we receive from Jesus. Pure and holy affection is not a feeling, but a principle. Those who are actuated by true love are neither unreasonable nor blind. Taught by the Holy Spirit, they love God supremely, and their neighbor as themselves.

Let those who are contemplating marriage weigh every sentiment and watch every development of character in the one with whom they think to unite their life destiny. Let every step toward a marriage alliance be characterized by modesty, simplicity, sincerity, and an earnest purpose to please and honor God. Marriage affects the after-life both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will make no plans that God cannot approve.

If you are blessed with God-fearing parents, seek counsel of them. Open to them your hopes and plans, learn the lessons which their life experiences have taught, and you will be saved many a heartache. Above all, make Christ your counselor. . . .

Under such guidance let a young woman accept as a life companion only one who possesses pure, manly traits of character, one who is diligent, aspiring, and honest, one who loves and fears God. Let a young man seek one to stand by his side who is fitted to bear her share of life's burdens, one whose influence will ennoble and refine him, and who will make him happy in her love.³³

If men and women are in the habit of praying twice a day before they contemplate marriage, they should pray four times a day when such a step is anticipated. Marriage is something that will influence and affect your life, both in this world and in the world to come.³⁴

A Foundation of Christlike Love

*“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it”
(Psalm 127:1).*

If we are doers of the Word, we shall take heed to the voice of God and bear our cross after Jesus, hourly subduing self. The law of God must be written in the heart, or we will never practice its holy precepts. We must have the Spirit of God, or we can never have harmony in the home. The wife, if she has the Spirit of Christ, will be careful of her words; she will control her spirit, she will be submissive, and yet will not feel that she is a bonds slave, but a companion to her husband. If the husband is a servant of God, he will not lord it over his wife; he will not be arbitrary and exacting. We cannot cherish home affection with too much care; for the home, if the Spirit of the Lord dwells there, is a type of heaven.

If the will of the Lord is carried out, the husband and wife will respect and love each other, and everything that would tend to mar the peace and unity of the family circle will be repressed. Kindness and love, the spirit of tenderness and forbearance, will be cherished. The love we give to others will be reflected back upon us. That which we sow we shall also reap. If Christ is formed within, the hope of glory, the husband and wife will not talk of their unsuitability to each other. If Christ abides in the heart of the wife, she will be at agreement with the husband, if Christ abides in his heart. If one errs, the other will exercise Christlike forbearance, and not draw coldly away.

If the Word of God is obeyed, the home will be the center of the highest kind of missionary work, but those who are at a disagreement in the home life, do not practice the words of the Lord, and will never be fit to enter the heavenly mansions, unless they are transformed by the grace of Christ. If the Lord should permit them to enter heaven, they would not be happy, for they would find something that would not please them. Someone would be in heaven whom they had never loved on earth, and they would want them banished from the place of bliss.³⁵

Elevating One Another

“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord” (Proverbs 18:22).

In your married life seek to elevate one another. Do not come down to common, cheap talk and actions. Show the high and elevating principles of your holy faith in your everyday conversations and in the most private walks of life. Be ever careful and tender of the feelings of one another. Do not, either of you, for even the first time, allow a playful, bantering, joking censuring of one another. These things are dangerous. They wound. The wound may be concealed, nevertheless the wound exists and peace is being sacrificed and happiness endangered. . . .

Ever speak kindly; do not throw into the tones of your voice that which will be taken by others as irritability. Modulate even the tones of your voice. Let only love, gentleness, and mildness be expressed in your countenance and in your voice. Make it a business to shed rays of sunlight, but never leave a cloud. . . .

Do not be persistent, even if your course appears just right to yourself. You must be yielding, forbearing, kind, tenderhearted, pitiful, courteous, ever keeping fresh the little courtesies of life, the tender acts, the tender, cheerful, encouraging words.³⁶

How much trouble and what a tide of woe and unhappiness would be saved if men, and women also, would continue to cultivate the regard, attention, and kind words of appreciation and little courtesies of life which kept love alive and which they felt were necessary in gaining the companions of their choice. If the husband and wife would only continue to cultivate these attentions which nourish love, they would be happy in each other’s society and would have a sanctifying influence upon their families. They would have in themselves a little world of happiness and would not desire to go outside this world for new attractions and new objects of love.³⁷

Linking their interests with Jesus Christ, leaning upon His arm and His assurance, husband and wife may share a happiness in this union that angels of God commend. Marriage does not lessen their usefulness, but strengthens it.³⁸

Beautifying Our Home

“Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house” (Psalm 128:1–3).

Many are unhappy in their home life because they are trying so hard to keep up appearances. They expend largely of means and labor unremittingly to gain the praise of their associates—those who really care nothing for them or their prosperity. One article after another is considered indispensable to the household appointments, until many expensive additions are made that, while giving a momentary satisfaction to the eye, do not increase the comfort of the family one whit. At the same time, all these things have taxed the strength and patience, and consumed valuable time which might be expended in the service of the Lord.

The precious grace of God is made secondary to matters of no real importance, and while collecting material for enjoyment, they lose the capacity for happiness. They find that their possessions fail to give the satisfaction they had hoped to derive from them. . . .

Decorations of dress and of houses do not make happy people; but the lowliest dwelling may be beautified, and the poorest family be made rich, by the possession of meekness, kindness, and love. Pleasant voices, gentle manners, and sincere affection that finds expression in all the actions, make even a hovel the happiest of homes, upon which the Creator looks with approbation, unto which angels are attracted.³⁹

Affection may be as clear as crystal and beauteous in its purity, yet it may be shallow because it has not been tested and tried. Make Christ first and last and best in everything. Constantly behold Him, and your love for Him will daily become deeper and stronger as it is submitted to the test of trial. And as your love for Him increases, your love for each other will grow deeper and stronger.⁴⁰

Remember Christ's Attitude

"A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike" (Proverbs 27:15).

Some [wives] . . . are no help to their husbands, yet they profess the third angel's message. They think more of studying their own wishes and pleasure than the will of God, or how they can hold up the hands of their husbands by their faithful prayers and careful walk. I saw that some of them take so willful and selfish a course that Satan makes them his instruments and works through them to destroy the influence and usefulness of their husbands. They feel at liberty to complain and murmur if they are brought through any strait places. They forget the sufferings of the ancient Christians for the truth's sake and think that they must have their wishes and way, and follow their own will. They forget the suffering of Jesus, their Master. They forget the Man of Sorrows, who was acquainted with grief—He who had not where to lay His head. They do not care to remember that holy brow, pierced with a crown of thorns. They forget Him, who, bearing His own cross to Calvary, fainted beneath its burden. Not merely the burden of the wooden cross, but the heavy burden of the sins of the world, was upon Him. They forget the cruel nails driven through His tender hands and feet, and His expiring, agonizing cries: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mark 15:34). After all this suffering endured for them, they feel a strong unwillingness to suffer for Christ's sake.

These persons, I saw, are deceiving themselves. They have no part nor lot in the matter. They have hold of the truth; but the truth has not hold of them. When the truth, the solemn, important truth, gets hold of them, self will die; then the language will not be, "I will go there, I will not stay here;" but the earnest inquiry will be, "Where does God want me to be? Where can I best glorify Him, and where can our united labors do the most good?" Their will should be swallowed up in the will of God.⁴¹

The homes of God's people on this earth should be a symbol, so far as possible, of the heavenly home, where God has His throne.⁴²

Joy in Nature's Simplicity

"Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established" (Proverbs 24:3).

In God's plan for Israel every family had a home on the land, with sufficient ground for tilling. Thus were provided both the means and the incentive for a useful, industrious, and self-supporting life. And no devising of men has ever improved upon that plan.

The earth has blessings hidden in her depths for those who have courage and will and perseverance to gather her treasures. Fathers and mothers who possess a piece of land and a comfortable home are kings and queens.

An expensive dwelling, elaborate furnishings, display, luxury, and ease, do not furnish the conditions essential to a happy, useful life. Jesus came to this earth to accomplish the greatest work ever accomplished among men. He came as God's ambassador, to show us how to live so as to secure life's best results. What were the conditions chosen by the infinite Father for His Son? A secluded home in the Galilean hills; a household sustained by honest, self-respecting labor; a life of simplicity; daily conflict with difficulty and hardship; self-sacrifice, economy, and patient, gladsome service; the hour of study at His mother's side, with the open scroll of Scripture; the quiet of dawn or twilight in the green valley; the holy ministries of nature; the study of creation and providence; and the soul's communion with God—these were the conditions and opportunities of the early life of Jesus.⁴³

By exercising taste, you can make a very simple home attractive and inviting, if love and contentment are there. . . .

Nearly all dwellers in the country, however poor, could have about their homes a bit of grassy lawn, a few shade trees, flowering shrubbery, or fragrant blossoms. And far more than any artificial adorning will they minister to the happiness of the household. They will bring into the home life a softening, refining influence, . . . drawing the members of the household nearer to one another and nearer to God.⁴⁴

Appreciating My Spouse

*“Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth”
(Proverbs 5:18).*

There are many in our world who are starving for the love and sympathy which should be given them. Many men love their wives, but are too selfish to manifest it. They have a false dignity and pride, and will not show their love by words and deeds. There are many men who never know how starved is the heart of the wife for words of tender appreciation and affection. They bury their loved ones from their sight and murmur at the providence of God that has deprived them of their companions, when, could they look into the inner life of those companions, they would see that their own course was the cause of their premature death. The religion of Christ will lead us to be kind and courteous and not so tenacious of our opinions.⁴⁵

Daily annoyances beset the path of young and old. Those who would live patient, loving, cheerful lives must pray. Only by receiving constant help from God can we gain the victory over self.

Home should be a place where cheerfulness, courtesy, and love abide; and where these graces dwell, there will abide happiness and peace. Troubles may invade, but these are the lot of humanity. Let patience, gratitude, and love keep sunshine in the heart, though the day may be ever so cloudy. In such homes angels of God abide.

Let the husband and wife study each other's happiness, never failing in the small courtesies and little kindly acts that cheer and brighten the life. Perfect confidence should exist between husband and wife. Together they should consider their responsibilities. Together they should work for the highest good of their children. Never should they in the presence of the children criticize each other's plans or question each other's judgment. Let the wife be careful not to make the husband's work for the children more difficult. Let the husband hold up the hands of his wife, giving her wise counsel and loving encouragement.⁴⁶

Living Joyfully at Home

“Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 9:9).

Husbands should study the Pattern, and seek to know what is meant by the symbol presented in Ephesians, the relation Christ sustains to the church. The husband is to be as a Saviour in his family. Will he stand in his noble, God-given manhood, ever seeking to uplift his wife and children? Will he breathe about him a pure, sweet atmosphere? Will he not as assiduously cultivate the love of Jesus, making it an abiding principle in his home, as he will assert his claims to authority? Let every husband and father study to understand the words of Christ, not in a one-sided manner, merely dwelling upon the subjection of the wife to her husband, but in the light of the cross of Calvary study as to his own position in the family circle. . . .

Jesus gave Himself up to die upon the cross in order that He might cleanse and keep us from all sin and pollution by the influence of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷

God’s word is our standard, but how far have His professed people departed from it! Our religious faith must be not only theoretical, but practical. Pure and undefiled religion will not allow us to trample upon the rights of the least of God’s creatures, much less of the members of His body and the members of our own family. God is love, and whoso dwelleth in Him dwelleth in love. The influence of worldly selfishness, which is carried about by some like a cloud, chilling the very atmosphere that others breathe, causes sickness of soul and frequently chills to death.

It will be a great cross for you to cultivate pure, unselfish love and disinterested benevolence. To yield your opinions and ideas, to give up your judgment, and to follow the counsel of others will be a great cross to you. . . . You need to bring Jesus near to you, to have Him in your homes and in your hearts. . . . The righteousness of Christ consists in right actions and good works from pure, unselfish motives.⁴⁸

A Union for Life

“He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:4–6).

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.⁴⁹

There are few couples who are completely united when the marriage ceremony is performed. The form of words spoken over the two who take the marriage vow does not make them a unit. In their future life is to be the blending of the two in wedlock. It may be made a really happy union, if each will give to the other true heart affection.

But time strips marriage of the romance with which imagination had clothed it, and then the thought finds entrance into the mind through Satan’s suggestions, “We do not love each other as we supposed.” Expel it from the mind. Do not linger over it. Let each, forgetful of self, refuse to entertain the ideas that Satan would be glad to have you cherish. He will work to make you suspicious, jealous of every little thing that shall furnish the least occasion, in order to alienate your affections from each other. . . . When the romance is gone, let each think, not after a sentimental order, how he or she can make the married life what God would be pleased to have it.

Life is a precious gift of God and is not to be wasted in selfish regrets or more open indifference and dislike. Let the husband and wife talk things all over together. Renew the early attentions to each other, acknowledge your faults to each other, but in this work be very careful that the husband does not take it upon himself to confess his wife’s faults or the wife her husband’s. Be determined that you will be all that it is possible for you to be to each other, and the bonds of wedlock will be the most desirable of ties. Your home may be a symbol of heaven.⁵⁰

Actively Preventing Divorce

“Let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. For the Lord God of Israel says That He hates divorce” (Malachi 2:15, 16, NKJV).

Many marriages can only be productive of misery; and yet the minds of the youth run in this channel because Satan leads them there, making them believe that they must be married in order to be happy, when they have not the ability to control themselves or support a family. Those who are not willing to adapt themselves to each other’s disposition, so as to avoid unpleasant differences and contentions, should not take the step.⁵¹

It is the duty of every married couple to studiously avoid marring the feelings of each other. They should control every look of fretfulness and passion. They should study each other’s happiness, in small matters, as well as in large, manifesting a tender thoughtfulness, in acknowledging kind acts, and little courtesies. These small things should not be neglected, for they are just as important to the happiness of man and wife, as food is to sustain physical strength. The father should encourage the wife and mother to lean upon his large affection. Kind, cheerful, encouraging words from him to whom she has entrusted her life-happiness will be more beneficial to her than any medicine; and the cheerful rays of light that such sympathizing words will bring to the heart of the wife and mother, will reflect their own cheering beams upon the heart of the father.⁵²

Where the Spirit of God reigns, there will be no talk of unsuitability in the marriage relation.

Though difficulties, perplexities, and discouragements may arise, let neither husband nor wife harbor the thought that their union is a mistake or a disappointment. Determine to be all that it is possible to be to each other. Continue the early attentions. In every way encourage each other in fighting the battles of life. Study to advance the happiness of each other. Let there be mutual love, mutual forbearance. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be as it were the very beginning of love.⁵³

Shun the Popular Adultery of Today

“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery” (Luke 16:18).

In His warning message our Saviour has told us how it will be in the end of the world. “As the days of Noah were,” He says, “so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37–39).

Very plainly Christ saw that the condition of society would be in the future. He saw that self-indulgence would control men and women. What of the marriage relation today? Is it not perverted and defiled, made even as it was in Noah’s day? Divorce after divorce is recorded in the daily papers. This is the marriage of which Christ speaks when He says that before the flood they were “marrying and giving in marriage.”⁵⁴

God gave the man one wife. Had he deemed it best for man to have more than one wife, He could as easily have given him two; but He sanctioned no such thing.⁵⁵

If your wife has obtained a divorce from you, that does not leave you free to marry again, as I read my Bible.⁵⁶

In the youthful mind marriage is clothed with romance, and it is difficult to divest it of this feature, with which imagination covers it, and to impress the mind with a sense of the weighty responsibilities involved in the marriage vow. This vow links the destinies of the two individuals with bonds which naught but the hand of death should sever.

Every marriage engagement should be carefully considered, for marriage is a step taken for life. Both the man and the woman should carefully consider whether they can cleave to each other through the vicissitudes of life as long as they both shall live.⁵⁷

Looking Beyond Ourselves

“It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife” (1 Corinthians 7:1–4).

Husbands and wives should feel it their privilege and their duty to reserve for the privacy of each other’s society the interchange of love tokens between themselves. For while the manifestation of love for each other is right in its place, it may be made productive of harm to both the married and the unmarried. There are persons of an entirely different cast of mind and character, and of different education and training, who love each other just as devotedly and healthfully as do those who have educated themselves to manifest their affection freely; and there is danger that by contrast these persons who are more reserved will be misjudged, and placed at a disadvantage. While the wife should lean on her husband with respect and deference, she can, in a wholesome, healthful way, manifest her strong affection for and confidence in the man she has chosen as her life companion. . . .

It is the high privilege and the solemn duty of Christians to make each other happy in their married life; but there is positive danger in making self all absorbing, pouring out all the wealth of affection upon each other, and being too well satisfied with such a life. All this savors of selfishness.

Instead of shutting up their love and sympathy to themselves, they should seize every opportunity of contributing to the good of others, distributing the abundance of affection in a chaste and sanctified love for souls that in the sight of God are just as precious as themselves, being purchased by the infinite sacrifice of His only-begotten Son. Kind words, looks of sympathy, expressions of appreciation, would be to many a struggling and lonely one as the cup of cold water to a thirsty soul.⁵⁸

Christlike Love for an Unbelieving Spouse

“If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him” (1 Corinthians 7:12, 13).

One mother says her husband is an unbeliever. She has children but they are taught by the father to disrespect the mother. She is deeply burdened for her children. . . .

The trials you may have may be of a very trying character. You may be often pained to the heart because disrespect is shown you; but I am sure that it must be your duty to care for your own children. This is your field where you have your appointed work. It may be rocky and discouraging soil to work, but you have a Companion in all your efforts to do your duty unflinchingly, conscientiously, notwithstanding all the discouraging circumstances. Jesus is your helper. Jesus came into our world to save lost and perishing souls and you are to consider that in this work you are a laborer together with God. . . .

Treat your husband with kindness at all times and on all occasions, and bind your children to your heart with the cords of love. This is your work; this is the burden you have to bear. Talk not your home trials to anyone but Jesus; pour them into His ear.⁵⁹

Educate yourself in Bible ways and means that you may be a successful worker in your own home. . . . Do not forsake your post of duty because of the unpleasantness of it. There are many living martyrs today who suffer in silence, who trust in God when they are abused with the tongue and who are tantalized, who are hurt and wounded by coarse, harsh denunciations, whose lot seems to be to live and to suffer, receiving comfort only from Jesus, who is the source of their strength. Such souls are missionaries. They are Christ’s noble ones, and their names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Remember, Jesus knows it all—every sorrow, every grief—He will not leave you to sink, for His arms are beneath you.⁶⁰

The Mission Field Within Marriage

“What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?” (1 Corinthians 7:16).

Only one life lease is granted us, and with care, painstaking, and self-control it can be made enduring, pleasant, and even happy.

Every couple who unite their life interest should seek to make the life of each as happy as possible. That which we prize we seek to preserve and make more valuable, if we can. In the marriage contract men and women have made a trade, an investment for life, and they should do their utmost to control their words of impatience and fretfulness, even more carefully than they did before their marriage, for now their destinies are united for life as husband and wife, and each is valued in exact proportion to the amount of painstaking and effort put forth to retain and keep fresh the love so eagerly sought for and prized before marriage.⁶¹

When discouraging words are spoken to you, do not reply unless you can return a pleasant answer. When you are tried and tempted by unkind words, do not retaliate. Say to yourself, “I will not disappoint my Saviour.” Every man who is a Christian is a gentleman; and every woman who is a Christian is a gentlewoman. The law of kindness is ever on the lips of the Christian woman. She utters no hasty words. To speak gentle words when you feel irritated will bring sunshine into your heart, and will make your path more smooth. A school girl, in answer to a question, said, “meek people are those who give soft answers to rough questions.” Christ says, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). They will be fit subjects for the kingdom of heaven; because they are willing to be taught.

You say that your husband is not yet converted to the truth. Show him in your life the advantage of taking Christ at His word. By patience, forbearance, and kindness you may win your husband to the Saviour.

In the power of God’s grace you may obtain most precious victories. You are not to treat your life as a romance, but as a reality.⁶²

Submission and Love

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them” (Colossians 3:18, 19).

A true woman in the home is a treasure, and she should be respected and appreciated. The question is often asked, “Shall a wife have no will of her own?” The Bible plainly states that the husband is the head of the family. “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands.” If this injunction ended here, we might say that the position of the wife is not an enviable one; it is a very hard and trying position in very many cases, and it would be better were there fewer marriages. Many husbands stop at the words, “Wives, submit yourselves,” but we will read the conclusion of the same injunction, which is, “As it is fit in the Lord” (Colossians 3:18).

God requires that the wife shall keep the fear and glory of God ever before her. Entire submission is to be made only to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has purchased her as His own child by the infinite price of His life. God has given her a conscience, which she cannot violate with impunity. Her individuality cannot be merged in that of her husband, for she is the purchase of Christ. It is a mistake to imagine that with blind devotion she is to do exactly as her husband says in all things, when she knows that in so doing injury would be worked for her body and her spirit, which have been ransomed from the slavery of Satan. There is One who stands higher than the husband to the wife; it is her Redeemer, and her submission to her husband is to be rendered as God has directed—“as it is fit in the Lord.”

When husbands require the complete subjection of their wives, declaring that women have no voice or will in the family, but must render entire submission, they place their wives in a position contrary to the Scripture. . . . We read on, “Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them” (Verse 19). Why should the husband be bitter against his wife? If the husband has found her erring and full of faults, bitterness of spirit will not remedy the evil.⁶³

Adapting to My Husband

“The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing” (Ephesians 5:23, 24).

Dear Sister T: I have been shown that there has been a fault in your religious life. You have possessed too much of a combative spirit. While it is your privilege to think and act for yourself, you have carried the matter too far. You have had more independence than humility. You have pursued a course to irritate rather than to pacify. It has been necessary for you to possess firmness in order to stand in defense of the truth; yet you have frequently erred in not possessing that meek and quiet spirit which God esteems of great price. In your family you have met with opposition and a manifest disrelish of the truth, but you have failed to meet these trials in the best manner. You have talked too much and been too positive. You have mingled too little love and tenderness with your efforts for your family, especially for your husband. You are in danger of carrying points to extremes, overdoing the matter, and hurting instead of healing. Wherever you can yield your judgment and not sacrifice the principles of truth, it is best for you to do so, even if you think you are right. You have a responsibility, an identity, which cannot be merged in your husband. Yet there is a bond which makes you one, and in many things, if you were more yielding, it would be far better for your husband, your children, and yourself. You are too exacting. You do not seek to win those who differ with you. You are quick to discern when you have the advantage, and you make the most of it. If you possessed more forbearance mingled with sweet love, and if you should for Christ’s sake pass over many things without taking them up and pressing them home, thus creating uncomfortable feelings, the influence would be better, more saving.⁶⁴

[Sister R,] you should bring yourself to deny your desires and wishes, and not lead him to feel that [your husband] must accommodate himself to you. . . . Be a woman, not a capricious child.⁶⁵

Tenderly Caring for My Wife

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. . . . So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church” (Ephesians 5:25, 28, 29).

My brother, your words that are harsh and unsympathizing cut and wound. It is very easy for you to censure and find fault, but this is only productive of unhappiness. You would quickly resent the words you address to others, were they spoken to you. You have looked upon it as a weakness to be kind, tender, and sympathetic, and have thought it beneath your dignity to speak tenderly, gently, and lovingly to your wife. Here you mistake in what true manliness and dignity consist. The disposition to leave deeds of kindness undone is a manifest weakness and defect in your character. That which you would look upon as weakness, God regards as true Christian courtesy, that should be exercised by every Christian; for this was the spirit which Christ manifested.⁶⁶

There are families where the husband and father has not preserved that reserve, that dignified, godlike manhood which a follower of Jesus Christ should. He has failed to manifest kind, tender, courteous acts due to his wife, whom he has promised before God and angels to love and respect and honor while they both shall live. The girl employed to do the work may be free and somewhat forward in her attentions to dress his hair and be affectionately attentive, and he is pleased, foolishly pleased. And he is not as demonstrative in his attention and love as he once was to his wife. Be sure Satan is at work here. Respect your hired help, treat them kindly, considerately, but go no farther. Let your deportment be such that there will be no advances to familiarity from your help. If you have words of kindness and acts of courtesy to give, it is always safe to give them to your wife. It will be a great blessing to her, and will bring happiness to her heart which will be reflected back upon you again.⁶⁷

Reverence for My Husband

“Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Ephesians 5:33).

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.⁶⁸

The wife may let her sympathies and interest and affection go out to another man beside her husband. He may be a member of the family, whom she makes a confidant, and to whom she relates her troubles, and, perhaps, her private family matters. She shows a preference for his society.

Satan is at the bottom of this; and unless she can be alarmed, and stopped just where she is, he will lead her to ruin. My sisters, you cannot observe too great caution in this matter. If you have tender, loving words and kindly attentions to bestow, let them be given him you have promised before God and angels to love, honor and respect, while you both shall live. Oh! how many lives are made bitter by the walls being broken down which enclose the privacies of every family, calculated to preserve purity and sanctity. A third person is taken into the confidence of the wife, and her private family matters are laid open before the special friend. This is the device of Satan to estrange the hearts of the husband and wife. Oh! that this would cease. What a world of trouble would be saved! Lock the faults of one another within your own hearts. Tell your troubles alone to God. He can give you right counsel and sure consolation, which will be pure, having no bitterness in it.⁶⁹

Influence by Example

“Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear” (1 Peter 3:1, 2).

You are zealous for the truth. You love it and wish to invest something in it. This is all right, but be careful that the precepts you give to others are backed up with example. You must seek for peace. You can do this and not sacrifice one principle of truth. You have stormed and fought your way through, and now you need to soften your influence, to sweeten, to soothe. . . . Imitate the harmless life of Him whom peace everywhere followed.

You, my sister, will prove a trial to God’s people unless you are willing to learn, willing to be counseled. You must not continue to feel that you know it all. You have much yet to learn before you can be perfect before God. The sweetest and best lesson to be learned will be that of humility. “Learn of Me,” says the humble Nazarene; “for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matthew 11:29). This lesson of meekness, forbearance, patience, and love you have yet to learn and practice. You can be a blessing. You can help such as need help; but you must lay down your measuring tape, for that is not for you to use. One who is unerring in judgment, who understands the weakness of our fallen, corrupt natures, holds the standard Himself. He weighs in the balances of the sanctuary, and His just measure we shall all accept.

You err in your course toward your husband. You need to cultivate more gentleness and deference toward him. You are exacting. You carry matters to extremes and do harm to your own soul and to the truth. You make the truth repulsive and cause souls to be afraid of it. Let love soften your words and give tone to your actions, and you will find a change in those with whom you associate. There will be peace, union, and harmony, instead of strife, jealousy, and discord. Let love and tenderness be exercised, especially in your family, and you will receive a blessing.⁷⁰

Husbands' Prayers Too Often Hindered

"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).

Our prayers are hindered by our pride of heart, by our refusal to confess faults and to remove wrong impressions.⁷¹

L needs to cultivate love for his wife, love that will find expression in words and deeds. He should cultivate tender affection. His wife has a sensitive, clinging nature and needs to be cherished. Every word of tenderness, every word of appreciation and affectionate encouragement will be remembered by her and will reflect back in blessings upon her husband. His unsympathizing nature needs to be brought into close contact with Christ, that that stiffness and cold reserve may be subdued and softened by divine love. It will not be weakness or a sacrifice of manhood and dignity to give his wife expressions of tenderness and sympathy in words and acts.⁷²

We are to make every effort in our power to remove every stumbling block. . . . Make every concession that it is possible for you to make. Do not leave on a suffering mind a misconception that an advance in humiliation and tenderhearted interest would remove. Satan will be sure to come to that mind with the temptation to misconstrue and to make a mountain out of a molehill. A mind that easily stumbles over hurt feelings will conjure up mistaken ideas of all kinds.⁷³

You must remember that the natural independence of others should be respected. If your wife does her work in a way convenient to herself, you have no right to interfere with her affairs and fret and burden her with your many suggestions and reflections upon her management. . . .

Do not endeavor to make your wife a slave to your will, but by kindness and an unselfish desire to promote her comfort and happiness draw her into close sympathy with yourself. Give her an opportunity to exercise her faculties.⁷⁴

God's Plan for Families

"God setteth the solitary in families" (Psalm 68:6).

God Himself established the family relations. His word is the only safe guide in the management of children. Human philosophy has not discovered more than God knows or devised a wiser plan of dealing with children than that given by our Lord.¹

Too many parents let slip from their shoulders the responsibility of family government. It requires earnest heart-work to repress evil tendencies, strengthen weak principles, develop good and lovely traits of character, and direct all the powers of mind and body in the right channel. Fathers and mothers, will you not lay hold of your work with energy, perseverance, and love? Sow the precious seed daily, with earnest prayer that God will water it with the dews of grace, and grant you an abundant harvest. The Son of God died to redeem a sinful, rebellious race. Shall we shrink from any toil or sacrifice to save our own dear children?

By precept and example, let the young be taught reverence for God and for His word. Many of our youth are becoming infidels at heart, because of the lack of devotion in their parents. The law of God should be the law of the household. Let fathers and mothers kindly and patiently instruct their children, both from the inspired word and from the book of nature, leading them to understand the character of God. Let them show in their own lives that they are continually seeking to know and to do His will. To secure the approval of their heavenly Father is the great motive to be ever kept before the minds of children. The service of God should be presented, not as an irksome task, but as a precious privilege, by which they may enjoy an honored, useful, and happy life here, and infinitely greater honor, usefulness, and joy in the life hereafter.

God has permitted light from His throne to shine all along the path of life. A pillar of cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night, is moving before us as before ancient Israel. It is the privilege of Christian parents today, as it was the privilege of God's people of old, to bring their children with them to the Promised Land.²

A Blessed Home Environment

"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 swore unto thy fathers: and he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb" (Deuteronomy 7:12, 13).

An expensive dwelling, elaborate furnishings, display, luxury, and ease, do not furnish the conditions essential to a happy, useful life. Jesus came to this earth to accomplish the greatest work ever accomplished among men. He came as God's ambassador, to show us how to live so as to secure life's best results. What were the conditions chosen by the infinite Father for His Son? A secluded home in the Galilean hills; a household sustained by honest, self-respecting labor; a life of simplicity; daily conflict with difficulty and hardship; self-sacrifice, economy, and patient, gladsome service; the hour of study at His mother's side, with the open scroll of Scripture. . . .

So with the great majority of the best and noblest men of all ages. Read the history of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, of Moses, David, and Elisha. Study the lives of men of later times who have most worthily filled positions of trust and responsibility, the men whose influence has been most effective for the world's uplifting.

How many of these were reared in country homes. They knew little of luxury. They did not spend their youth in amusement. Many were forced to struggle with poverty and hardship. They early learned to work. . . . Sheltered in a great degree from evil associations, they were satisfied with natural pleasures and wholesome companionships. . . .

Better than any other inheritance of wealth you can give to your children will be the gift of a healthy body, a sound mind, and a noble character. . . .

Go where, apart from the distractions and dissipations of city life, you can give your children your companionship, where you can teach them to learn of God through His works, and train them for lives of integrity and usefulness.³

Privileges of Parents

“Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth! . . . He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children” (Psalm 113:5, 6, 9).

Teach your children by example as well as by precept to use a simple diet. Teach them to be industrious, not merely busy, but engaged in useful labor. Seek to arouse the moral sensibilities. Teach them that God has claims upon them, even from the early years of their childhood. Tell them that there are moral corruptions to be met on every hand, that they need to come to Jesus and give themselves to Him, body and spirit, and that in Him they will find strength to resist every temptation. Keep before their minds that they were not created merely to please themselves, but to be the Lord’s agents for noble purposes. Teach them, when temptations urge into paths of selfish indulgence, when Satan is seeking to shut out God from their sight, to look to Jesus, pleading, “Save, Lord, that I be not overcome.” Angels will gather about them in answer to their prayers, and lead them into safe paths.

Christ prayed for His disciples, not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from evil—that they might be kept from yielding to the temptations they would meet on every hand. This is a prayer that should be offered up by every father and mother. But should they thus plead with God in behalf of their children, and then leave them to do as they please? Should they pamper the appetite until it gets the mastery, and then expect to restrain the children? No; temperance and self-control should be taught from the very cradle up. Upon the mother must rest largely the responsibility of this work. The tenderest earthly tie is that between the mother and her child. The child is more readily impressed by the life and example of the mother than by that of the father, because of this stronger and more tender bond of union. Yet the mother’s responsibility is a heavy one, and should have the constant aid of the father.⁴

How Do We Treat the Lord's Heritage?

"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalm 127:3).

The apostle [Paul] recognizes the importance of the family relations, and the powerful influence of the home. In his epistles he enjoins certain rules upon families. He says of the children, "Let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God" (1 Timothy 5:4).⁵

Love breaks down all barriers. Let there be no scolding, no loud-voiced, angry commands. Obey the injunction, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). The Lord will give rich blessings to those parents who make diligent efforts to rule the spirit. The grace of Christ softens harsh traits of character and smooths out the rugged disposition.

Those who govern by force have far less influence than those who govern by love. Harshness hardens the heart and braces the will to resistance. Gentleness softens the heart and subdues the most stubborn will.

To every parent God says, "Take heed unto thyself"—*thyself*, father; *thyself*, mother. Before you can do your children justice, you must surrender yourselves to God's training. You must be filled with high motives and noble aspirations. Each day you must endeavor to make yourself more worthy of your trust. Then God will cooperate with you.

The family firm should be well organized. Together the father and mother should consider their responsibilities. Together they should work for the highest good of their children. There is to be no variance between them. Never should they in the presence of their children criticize each other's plans or question each other's judgment. If the wife is inexperienced, she should try to find out where her work makes the work of her husband more difficult, as he labors for the salvation of the children. And the husband should hold up the hands of his wife, giving her wise counsel and loving encouragement.⁶

Seeking Better Discernment

*"How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?"
(Judges 13:12).*

In their self-confidence [many] think they know a better way of training their children than that which God has given us in His word. The earnest, anxious prayer does not ascend from their hearts, "Teach us, how shall we order the child, and what shall we do unto him?" With all their learning and intelligence, the results of their training show the vaunted wisdom of these persons to be but folly. Fond, indulgent parents, they allow their children to grow up from babyhood without restraint; and thus their forward, selfish, disagreeable ways become confirmed habits, rendering them unloving and unlovable. . . .

It is very natural for parents to be partial to their own children. Especially if these parents feel that they themselves possess superior ability, they will regard their children as superior to other children. Hence much that would be severely censured in others is passed over in their own children as smart and witty. While this partiality is natural, it is unjust and unchristian. A great wrong is done our children when we permit their faults to go uncorrected. Many foster wrong traits of character in their children, urging as an excuse, "They are too young to be punished. Wait until they become older, and can be reasoned with. They will outgrow many of these evil tendencies." Thus their wrong habits are left to grow and strengthen until they become second nature. . . . The sad results of such a course can be fully seen only in eternity.⁷

Are we preparing our children for the great crisis? Are we preparing ourselves and our households to understand the position of our adversaries and their modes of warfare? Are our children forming habits of decision, that they may be firm and unyielding in every matter of principle and duty? I pray that we all may understand the signs of the times, and that we may so prepare ourselves and our children that in the time of conflict God may be our refuge and defense.⁸

Do I Have Upside-Down Government?

"I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable. . . . As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them" (Isaiah 3:4, 5, 12).

Parents generally have not taken a proper course with their children. They have not restrained them as they should, but have left them to indulge in pride, and follow their own inclinations. Anciently, parental authority was regarded; children were then in subjection to their parents, and feared and revered them; but in these last days the order is reversed. Some parents are in subjection to their children. They fear to cross the will of their children, and therefore yield to them. But just as long as children are under the roof of the parents, dependent upon them, they should be subject to their control. Parents should move with decision, requiring that their views of right be followed out. . . .

Parents are required to restrain their children. The salvation of children depends very much upon the course pursued by the parents.⁹

You excuse yourself by saying that your children are now beyond your control, too old for you to command. In this you mistake. None of your children are too old to respect your authority and obey your commands while they have the shelter of your roof. . . .

But allowing that the two eldest are now beyond your control, they were not when God sent you the light that you were indulging them to their ruin; that you should discipline them. But you have three younger children who are walking in the way of sinners, disobedient, unthankful, unholy, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Your youngest son is following in the footsteps of his brother. What course are you pursuing toward him? Do you train him to habits of industry and usefulness? Are you taking up your fearfully neglected work and redeeming the past? Do you tremble at the word of God?¹⁰

Healthy Restraint

“The Lord said . . . [of Abraham]: I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment” (Genesis 18:17, 19).

Great as is the work of the mother, it should never be forgotten that the father also has a part to act in the education and training of his children, and that he is under the most solemn obligation to perform that work with fidelity. Especially as the children advance in years is the father’s influence needed, in union with that of the mother, to restrain, control, and guide. . . .

God requires every parent not only to give his children right instruction and a good example, but with promptness and decision to restrain their inclination to do evil.¹¹

Let the greatest care be bestowed upon the culture of your children. One child, properly disciplined in the principles of truth, who has the love and fear of God woven through the character, will possess a power for good in the world that cannot be estimated. The work of wise parents will never be appreciated by the world, but when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, their work will appear as God views it and will be rewarded before men and angels. It will be seen that one child who has been brought up in a faithful way has been a light in the world. It cost tears and anxiety and sleepless nights to oversee the character building of this child, but the work was done wisely, and the parents hear the “Well done” of the Master.

Parents, you should commence to discipline the minds of your children while very young, to the end that they may be Christians. Let all your efforts be for their salvation. Act as though they were placed in your care to be fitted as precious jewels to shine in the kingdom of God. Beware how you lull them to sleep over the pit of destruction with the mistaken thought that they are not old enough to be accountable, not old enough to repent of their sins and profess Christ.¹²

Genuine Love for Our Children

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:5, 6).

No barrier of coldness and reserve should be allowed to arise between parents and children. Let parents become acquainted with their children, seeking to understand their tastes and dispositions, entering into their feelings, and drawing out what is in their hearts.

Parents, let your children see that you love them and will do all in your power to make them happy. If you do so, your necessary restrictions will have far greater weight in their young minds. Rule your children with tenderness and compassion, remembering that “their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:10). If you desire the angels to do for your children the work given them of God, cooperate with them by doing your part.

Brought up under the wise and loving guidance of a true home, children will have no desire to wander away in search of pleasure and companionship. Evil will not attract them. The spirit that prevails in the home will mold their characters; they will form habits and principles that will be a strong defense against temptation when they shall leave the home shelter and take their place in the world.

Children as well as parents have important duties in the home. They should be taught that they are a part of the home firm. They are fed and clothed and loved and cared for, and they should respond to these many mercies by bearing their share of the home burdens and bringing all the happiness possible into the family of which they are members.

Children are sometimes tempted to chafe under restraint; but in afterlife they will bless their parents for the faithful care and strict watchfulness that guarded and guided them in their years of inexperience.¹³

Close to Our Children's Heart

"[John the Baptist] shall go before [Christ] in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children . . . ; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17).

Parents should redouble their efforts for the salvation of their children. They should faithfully instruct them, and not leave them to gather up their education as best they can. They should not be left to learn good and bad indiscriminately, with the idea that at some future time the good will predominate, and the evil lose its influence. The evil will increase faster than the good. It is possible the evil they have learned might be eradicated after many years; but who will venture this? Time is short. . . . It is their duty to select the society for them, and not suffer them to choose for themselves. If parents do not do this work, who will? Can others have that interest for your children which you should have? Can they have that constant care and deep love that parents have?¹⁴

Some parents mistake in giving their children too much liberty. They sometimes have so much confidence in them that they do not see their faults. It is wrong to allow children, at some expense, to visit at a distance, unaccompanied by their parents or guardians. It has a wrong influence upon the children.¹⁵

To save my children from being corrupted, I have not allowed them to sleep in the same bed, or in the same room, with other boys, and have, as occasion has required, when traveling, made a scanty bed upon the floor for them, rather than have them lodge with others. I have tried to keep them from associating with rough, rude boys and have presented inducements before them to make their employment at home cheerful and happy. By keeping their minds and hands occupied, they have had but little time, or disposition, to play in the street with other boys and obtain a street education.¹⁶

Do you allow your children to associate with other children without being present to know what kind of education they are receiving? Do not allow them to be alone with other children. Give them your special care.¹⁷

Watching Over My Vulnerable Flock

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41).

Be careful how you relinquish the government of your children to others. No one can properly relieve you of your God-given responsibility. Many children have been utterly ruined by the interference of relatives or friends in their home government. Mothers should never allow their sisters or mother to interfere with the wise management of their children. Though the mother may have received the very best training at the hands of *her* mother, yet, in nine cases out of ten, as a grandmother she would spoil her daughter’s children, by indulgence and injudicious praise. All the patient effort of the mother may be undone by this course of treatment. It is proverbial that grandparents, as a rule, are unfit to bring up their grandchildren. Men and women should pay all the respect and deference due to their parents; but in the matter of the management of their own children, they should allow no interference, but hold the reins of government in their own hands.

The mother must ever stand preeminent in this work of training the children. While grave and important duties rest upon the father, the mother, by almost constant association with her children, especially during their tender years, must always be their special instructor and companion. . . .

Parents seem to be in a lethargic sleep in regard to the responsibility of their position. They see the world teeming with sin and corruption, the newspapers full of reports of crime and wretchedness; yet they are not roused by these things to extra vigilance in bringing up their children to right habits, and with correct views of life and its requirements. People are shocked at the low moral condition of the youth of this age, and their tendency to evil; but few realize where the chief blame lies. We shall see no reform in society till parents rouse to an appreciation of their solemn, God-given responsibilities.¹⁸

Cooperating With God's Mercy

"The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them" (Psalm 103:17, 18).

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 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.¹⁹

You should correct your children in love. Do not let them have their own way until you get angry, and then punish them. Such correction only helps on the evil, instead of remedying it. After you have done your duty faithfully to your children, then carry them to God and ask Him to help you. Tell Him that you have done your part, and then in faith ask God to do His part, that which you cannot do. Ask Him to temper their dispositions, to make them mild and gentle by His Holy Spirit. He will hear you pray. He will love to answer your prayers.²⁰

God is high and lifted up, but the voice of prayer will reach His throne. The prayers of Christian mothers are regarded by the Father of all. He will not turn away your petitions, and leave you and yours to the buffetings of Satan in the day of conflict.²¹

Miracles for Every Generation

“It shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Exodus 13:14).

There has been too little definite work done in preparing our children for the tests that all must meet in their contact with the world and its influences. They have not been helped as they should to form characters strong enough to resist temptation and stand firm for the principles of right, in the terrible issues before all who remain faithful to the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Parents need to understand the temptations that the youth must daily meet, that they may teach them how to overcome them.²²

A Christian father is the house-band of his family, binding them close to the throne of God. Never is his interest in his children to flag. The father who has a family of boys should not leave these restless boys wholly to the care of the mother. This is too heavy a burden for her. He should make himself their companion and friend. He should exert himself to keep them from evil associates. It may be hard for the mother to exercise self-control. If the husband sees that his wife's weakness is endangering the safety of the children, he should take more of the burden upon himself, doing all in his power to lead his boys to God.

Parents are not left to carry forward alone the work on which so much depends. Christ says, “Come unto Me. I will bear your burdens and your perplexities. All power in heaven and in earth has been given to Me. I will give you strength.” Go to Him, fathers and mothers. Many of you cannot properly fulfill your trust until you are more closely connected with Christ. Some ask, “Why does not the Lord work miracles today, as He did when He was upon the earth?” Let parents live in the home the life of Christ, and the transformation in the lives of their children will testify to God's miracle-working power.²³

In What Tone Am I Speaking?

"[A virtuous woman] openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26).

Seize every opportunity to contribute to the happiness of those around you, sharing with them your affection. Words of kindness, looks of sympathy, expressions of appreciation, would to many a struggling, lonely one be as a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul. A word of cheer, an act of kindness, would go far to lighten the burdens that are resting heavily upon weary shoulders. It is in unselfish ministry that true happiness is found. And every word and deed of such service is recorded in the books of heaven as done for Christ. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren." He declares, "ye have done it unto Me" (Matthew 25:40). . . .

The looks, the tone of the voice, the actions—all have their influence in making or marring the happiness of the domestic circle. They are molding the temper and character of the children; they are inspiring or tending to destroy confidence and love. All are made either better or worse, happy or miserable, by these influences. We owe our families the knowledge of the word brought into practical life. All that it is possible for us to be to purify, enlighten, comfort, and encourage those connected with us in family relation should be done.²⁴

Parents, begin the work of grace in the church in your own home, so conducting yourselves that your children will see that you are cooperating with the heavenly angels. Be sure that you are converted every day. Train yourselves and your children for life eternal in the kingdom of God. Angels will be your strong helpers. Satan will tempt you, but do not yield. Do not speak one word of which the enemy can take an advantage. . . .

Let the determination of each member of the family be, "I will be a Christian, for in the school here below I must form a character which will give me entrance into the higher grade in heaven. I must do to others as I desire them to do to me, for only those who reveal Christ in this world can enter the courts of heaven." Make the home life as nearly as possible like heaven.²⁵

Banning Needless Distractions

"I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. . . . I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes" (Psalm 101:2, 3).

The vows of David recorded in Psalm 101 should be the vows of all upon whom rest the responsibilities of guarding the influences of the home.²⁶

Through unfaithfulness in the home, and idolatrous influences without, many of the Hebrew youth received an education differing widely from that which God had planned for them. They learned the ways of the heathen. . . .

We must be careful to maintain our allegiance to God as His peculiar people. While wickedness is increasing in the world, the people of God are to increase in understanding, in sanctified devotion to the cause of God, in keenness of perception to discern between righteousness and unrighteousness. At this time we cannot afford to run any risks. . . .

We should endeavor to keep out of our homes every influence that is not productive of good. In this matter some parents have much to learn. To those who feel free to read story magazines and novels, I say: You are sowing seed, the harvest of which you will not care to gather. There is no spiritual strength to be gained from such reading. Rather it destroys the love for the pure truth of the Word. Through the agency of novels and story magazines Satan is working to fill with unreal and trivial thoughts the minds that should be diligently studying the Word of God. Thus he is robbing thousands upon thousands of the time and energy and self-discipline demanded by the stern problems of life. . . .

Great blessings and spiritual strength will come to the families who will determine to put away those things which are unessential, and will resolutely take up the work of preparation for the coming of the Lord. God has entrusted parents with the work of helping their children to gain a Christlike experience. Will you prepare the way of the Lord by bearing a decided message for Him, not only in words, but by a godly example?²⁷

Hope Through Christ's Help

"I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children" (Isaiah 49:25).

Let us seek to follow the counsel of God in all things, for He is infinite in wisdom. Though in the past we have come short of doing what we might have done for our children and youth, let us now repent and redeem the time. . . . The message, "Go forward," is still to be heard and repeated.²⁸

Jesus knows the burden of every mother's heart. He is her best friend in every emergency. His everlasting arms support the God-fearing, faithful mother. That Saviour, who, when upon earth, had a mother that struggled with poverty and privation, having many anxious cares and perplexities in rearing her children, sympathizes with every Christian mother in her labors and hears her earnest prayers. That Saviour who went on a long journey for the purpose of relieving the anxious heart of a Canaanite woman, whose daughter was possessed by a devil, will do as much for the afflicted mother of today, in blessing her children, as He did for the supplicant in that case.

He who gave back to the widow her only son as he was carried to the burial is touched today by the woe of the bereaved mother. He who gave back to Mary and Martha their buried brother, who wept tears of sympathy at the grave of Lazarus, who pardoned Mary Magdalene, who remembered His mother when He was hanging in agony upon the cross, who appeared to the weeping women after His resurrection and made them His messengers to preach a risen Saviour, saying, "Go, tell my disciples that I go to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God," is a woman's best friend today, and ready to aid her in her need if she will trust Him. . . .

Mothers may come to Jesus with their worries and perplexities. They may find grace sufficient to support them, and to aid them in the management of their children.

The gates are open for every mother who would lay her burden at the Saviour's feet.²⁹

Teaching Helpfulness

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

Too often parents follow a course that develops evil in the child. Harsh and severe, they drive him to rebellion. Then they wonder why he has traits of character that are so unlovely, when they try so hard to break his stubborn will. It is in trying to break his will that they make their mistake. The child’s will is to be *trained, bent*, not broken.³⁰

Children can be educated to be helpful. They are naturally active and inclined to be busy; and this activity is susceptible of being trained and directed in the right channel. Children may be taught, when young, to lift daily their light burdens, each child having some particular task for the accomplishment of which he is responsible to his parents or guardian. They will thus learn to bear the yoke of duty while young; and the performance of their little tasks will become a pleasure, bringing them a happiness that is only gained by well-doing. . . .

As the children become older, still more can be required of them. It should not be exhaustive labor, nor should their work be so protracted as to fatigue and discourage them; but it should be judiciously selected with reference to the physical development most desirable and the proper cultivation of the mind and character.

Work is good for children; they are happier to be usefully employed a large share of the time; their innocent amusements are enjoyed with a keener zest after the successful completion of their tasks. . . . Mothers may make precious little helpers of their children; and, while teaching them to be useful, they may themselves gain knowledge of human nature and how to deal with these fresh, young beings and keep their hearts warm and youthful by contact with the little ones. . . .

Children that are properly trained, as they advance in years, learn to love that labor which makes the burdens of their friends lighter. This daily employment closes the door to many temptations to which the indolent are exposed.³¹

Constructive Correction

“Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul” (Proverbs 29:17).

The first lesson that children are to be taught is the lesson of obedience. When they have learned to obey their parents, it will not be hard for them to obey God. Obedience becomes a part of their nature.

But before parents can teach their children obedience, they must learn the lesson themselves by obedience to God. How can they discipline their children aright till they learn the meaning and the value of self-discipline? How can they lead their children up the difficult heights of self-control, self-denial, patience, and truthfulness, unless they first climb these heights themselves?

A parent gives way to temper before the child, and then wonders why the child is so difficult to control. But what could he expect? Children are quick to imitate; and the child is but putting into practice the lessons taught him by his parents in their outbursts of anger. . . .

Disobedience and rebellion must be punished; but remember that the punishment is to be given in the spirit of Christ. Require obedience, never with a storm of angry words, but firmly and kindly. And when called upon to discipline your child, remember your own relation to your heavenly Father. Have you walked perfectly before Him? Are you not wayward and disobedient? Do you not grieve Him continually? But does He deal with you in anger? Remember, too, that it is from you that your children have received their tendencies to wrong. Remember how often you act like grown-up children. In spite of your years of Christian experience, in spite of your many opportunities for self-discipline, how easily you are provoked to anger. Deal gently, then, with your children, remembering that they have not had the opportunities you have had to gain self-control. . . .

Ask God to forgive you for transmitting to your child a disposition so difficult to manage. Ask Him to give you wisdom, that you may deal with your wayward child in a way that will draw him nearer to you and to his heavenly Father.³²

Patient Endurance Worthwhile

"In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19).

God loves you, and is very patient toward you, notwithstanding your many errors and mistakes. In view of the tender, pitying love of God exercised in your behalf, should you not be more kind, forbearing, patient, and forgiving to your children?³³

We have no sympathy with that discipline which would discourage children by hard censure, or irritate them by passionate correction, and then, as the impulse changes, smother them with kisses, or harm them by injurious gratification. Excessive indulgence and undue severity are alike to be avoided. While vigilance and firmness are indispensable, so also are sympathy and tenderness. Parents, remember that you deal with children who are struggling with temptation, and that to them these evil promptings are as hard to resist as are those that assail persons of mature years. Children who really desire to do right may fail again and again, and as often need encouragement to energy and perseverance. Watch the workings of these young minds with prayerful solicitude. Strengthen every good impulse; encourage every noble action. . . .

The work of parents is continuous. It should not be laid hold of vigorously for one day and neglected the next. Many are ready to begin the work, but are not willing to persevere in it. They are eager to do some great thing, to make some great sacrifice; but they shrink from the unceasing care and effort in the little things of everyday life, the hourly pruning and training of the wayward tendencies, the work of giving instruction, reproof, or encouragement, little by little, as it is needed. They wish to see children correct their faults and form right characters at once, reaching the mountaintop at a bound, and not by successive steps; and because their hopes are not immediately realized, they become disheartened. Let all such persons take courage as they remember the words of the apostle, "Be not weary in well doing; for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not" (Galatians 6:9).³⁴

The Urgency of the Hour

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Romans 13:10, 11).

Never was there a period when so much was at stake as there is now. Never was there a generation upon whom rested such weighty responsibilities as upon this generation; for God has entrusted to the men of this time the last warning message.

Parents, ask yourselves the solemn question, “Have we educated our children to yield to paternal authority, and thus trained them to obey God, to love Him, to hold His law as the supreme guide of conduct and life? Have we educated them to be missionaries for Christ? to go about doing good? Believing parents, your children will have to fight decisive battles for the Lord in the day of conflict; and while they win victories for the Prince of Peace, they may be gaining triumphs for themselves. But if they have not been brought up in the fear of the Lord; if they have no knowledge of Christ, no connection with heaven, they will have no moral power, and they will yield to earthly potentates who have assumed to exalt themselves above the God of heaven in establishing a spurious sabbath to take the place of the Sabbath of Jehovah. The tender mercies of this power will be displayed in prison cells and dungeons. Already preparations are advancing, and movements are in progress, which will result in making an image to the beast. Events will be brought about in the earth’s history that will fulfill the predictions of prophecy. . . .

Fathers, mothers, I appeal to you to make most earnest efforts now for your children. Give them daily religious instruction. Teach them to love God, and to be true to the principles of right. With lofty, earnest faith, directed by the divine influence of the Holy Spirit, work, work *now*. Do not put it off one day, one hour. Teach your children that the heart must be trained to self-control and self-denial. The motives of the life must be in harmony with the law of God. Never be satisfied to have your children grow up apart from Christ. Never feel at ease while they are cold and indifferent. Cry to God day and night. Pray and work for the salvation of the souls of your children.³⁵

Teaching and Earning Respect

"We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence" (Hebrews 12:9).

The Lord would have us cultivate home religion, causing the fear of God to circulate through the family. When parents neglect their duty to their children, failing to govern them according to right principles, the enemy is given opportunity to gain control of their lives. Children who are allowed to disregard parental authority are never happy.³⁶

Teach your children about Jesus Christ. In a reverential tone weave His precious name into all your lessons. Teach them to love God, to fear to offend Him. You are commanded not only to educate but to train your children. Especially should they be taught to reverence the house of worship, that there may be no whispering, no lightness, no trifling, no careless inattention, no noisy walking out, during service. It is painful to see the little respect children are taught to have for the house of God. God has given directions to His people that great reverence be taught for the religious service. It should be a study with parents to make the social meeting of the highest interest to the children, that they may receive proper impressions as to what constitutes a Christian character.³⁷

There is danger of too severely criticizing small things. Criticism that is too severe, rules that are too rigid, lead to the disregard of all regulations; and by and by children thus educated will show the same disrespect for the laws of Christ.

Parents must be converted before they can guide their children aright. They must become submissive to the requirements of God before they can expect their children to submit to them. Then their words and even their thoughts will be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. Day by day they must learn from Jesus, catching His Spirit, that they may reveal the Christlikeness in their lives. In childhood and youth the powers of imitation are strong, and children should have the most perfect pattern set before them, that they may have unquestionable confidence in the wisdom of their parents.³⁸

Identifying With Children

“Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:5, 6).

You are not uniform in your treatment of your children. At times you indulge them to their injury, while at other times you refuse them some innocent gratification that would make them very happy. You turn from them with impatience and scorn their simple requests, forgetting that they can enjoy pleasures that to you seem foolish and childish. You do not stoop from the dignity of your age and station to understand and minister to the wants of your children. In this you fail to imitate Christ. He identified Himself with the lowly, the needy, and the afflicted. He took little children in His arms, and descended to the level of the young. His large heart of love could comprehend their trials and necessities, and He enjoyed their happiness. His spirit, wearied with the bustle and confusion of the crowded city, tired of association with crafty and hypocritical men, found rest and peace in the society of innocent children. His presence never repulsed them. The Majesty of heaven condescended to answer their questions and simplified His important lessons to meet their childish understanding. . . .

He knew that these children would listen to His counsel and accept Him as their Redeemer, while those who were worldly-wise and hardhearted would be less likely to follow Him and find a place in the kingdom of God. These little ones, by coming to Christ and receiving His advice and benediction, had His image and His gracious words stamped upon their plastic minds, never to be effaced. . . . The hearts of the young are most susceptible to the teachings of Christianity, easy to influence toward piety and virtue, and strong to retain the impressions received. But these tender, youthful ones should be approached with kindness and taught with love and patience.³⁹

Training in a Happy Atmosphere

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; 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).

Many parents forget their accountability to God to so educate their children for usefulness and duty that they will be a blessing to themselves and to others.⁴⁰

Speak kindly to your children. Fathers and mothers, remember how sensitive you are, how little you can bear to be blamed. Reflect, and know that your children are like you. That which you cannot bear, don't lay upon your children. If you cannot bear censure and blame, neither can your children who are weaker than you, and cannot endure as much. Let your pleasant, cheerful words ever be like sunbeams in your family. The fruits of self-control, thoughtfulness, and painstaking on your part will be an hundredfold.

No father or mother has any right to sadden and bring a gloomy cloud over their children's happiness, by faultfinding, or severe censure for little mistakes and trifles. Actual wrong and sin should be made to appear just as sinful as it is, and a decided, firm course should be pursued to prevent the recurrence of similar sins and wrongs. Impress them with a sense of their wrongs. Don't leave them in a hopeless state of mind. Leave upon their minds a degree of courage that they can improve and gain your confidence and approval.⁴¹

As the heavenly home would not be a home of bliss without the presence of Christ, neither can the earthly home be a happy one without His abiding love.⁴²

May the Lord impress fathers and mothers with the sacredness of their responsibilities. As you unite with the Lord in bringing up your children in His fear, you are preparing for—I was about to say higher responsibilities, but I cannot. There is no higher responsibility than the training of children. Study how to train your children so that they will develop into well-balanced, symmetrical men and women, useful to their fellowmen, and prepared to shine in the courts of the Lord.⁴³

Self-Control and Appreciation

“Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

Many who are now bemoaning the waywardness of their children have only themselves to blame. Let these look to their Bibles and see what God enjoins upon them as parents and guardians. Let them take up their long-neglected duties. They need to humble themselves and to repent before God for their neglect to follow His directions in the training of their children. They need to change their own course of action and to follow the Bible strictly and carefully as their guide and counsellor.⁴⁴

If parents desire to teach their children self-control, they must first form the habit themselves. The scolding and faultfinding of parents, encourages a hasty, passionate temper in their children. Love and justice should stand side by side in the government of the household. Let prompt obedience to parental authority be invariably enforced. God has given parents their work, to form the characters of their children after the divine Pattern. By His grace, they can accomplish the task; but it will require patient, painstaking effort, no less than firmness and decision, to guide the will and restrain the passions.⁴⁵

Scolding is never allowable; reproof and criticism from parents must have their time and place, but should never intrude so far upon the social life of the family as to render the home uncomfortable. A serious word in private will generally cure a fault more easily than many public criticisms.⁴⁶

We can subdue our children only as we subdue ourselves. But there are so many parents who have brought with them into the home life their hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong. They have not left their childishness behind. They scold their children for things which should never be noticed. Parents, never scold your children. Deal firmly but kindly with them. Keep them busy. Make them feel that they are a part of the family firm, that they can help mother and father. Thank them for what they do for you.⁴⁷

Calm Consistency

“Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged” (Colossians 3:21).

Children are often indulged from their babyhood, and wrong habits become fixed. The parents have been bending the sapling. By their course of training, the character develops, either into deformity or into symmetry and beauty. But while many err upon the side of indulgence, others go to the opposite extreme and rule their children with a rod of iron. Neither of these follow out the Bible directions, but both are doing a fearful work. They are molding the minds of their children and must render an account in the day of God for the manner in which they have done this. Eternity will reveal the results of the work done in this life. “As the twig is bent, the tree’s inclined.” . . .

If you would have the love and respect of your children, you must manifest affection for them. The indulgence of passion is never excusable; it is always blind and perverse. . . .

Notwithstanding the fact that Moses was the meekest man that lived upon the earth, on one occasion he drew the displeasure of God upon himself. He was harassed greatly by the murmuring of the children of Israel for water. The undeserved reproaches of the people which fell upon him led him for a moment to forget that their murmuring was not against him, but against God.⁴⁸

Souls are looking at you, fellow Christians, to see whether you are drunken with the cares of this life, or are preparing for the future, immortal life. They will watch to see what the influence of your life is, and whether you are true missionaries at home, training your children for heaven.

The Christian’s first duty is in the home. Fathers and mothers, yours is a great responsibility. You are preparing your children for life or for death; you are training them for an abiding place here in the earth, for self-gratification in this life, or for the immortal life, to praise God forever. And which shall it be? It should be the burden of your life to have every child that God has committed to your trust receive the divine mold.⁴⁹

Courtesy Through the Holy Spirit

“Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion” (Isaiah 8:18).

True politeness cannot be learned, like a lesson, by one effort, any time in one’s life; it must be inbred. “Well meaning, but rough,” is said of many a man; and too often the beginning of the difficulty lies with the parents in a family. Is it hard for the husband to give a smiling “Thank you” to his wife as she brings his slippers on his evening return home? Is it more difficult for the mother to say, “John, will you shut the door please”? than to use the laconic phrase, “Shut the door!” When Tom knocks over his sister’s baby house, why should not “Excuse me, I didn’t mean to,” be the instinctive apology?

Many who would not be guilty of discourtesy to a stranger, or to a friend in the world without, lay aside much, if not all, their suavity of manner on entering the home circle. The husband and wife dispense with those little graceful attentions which, though small, are never unimportant. The children are ordered hither and thither with crusty words; no “Thank you” rewards the little tireless feet that run on countless errands. The dinner is eaten in silence, broken only by faultfinding and reproof from the parents, and ill-humor and teasing among the children. In the evening, the father devotes himself to his newspaper, and the mother to her sewing, interrupting themselves only to give such peremptory orders as “Less noise, children;” “Stop quarreling;” and, finally, “Go to bed.”

In many families, there is no positive rudeness among the members, only a lack of those simple, affectionate attentions which awaken a spontaneous return; a want of that consideration and gentleness of demeanor which are well-springs of comfort in every household. . . . When the family gather alone around breakfast or dinner table, the same courtesy should prevail as if guests were present. Reproof, complaint, unpleasant discussion, and scandal, no less than moody silence, should be banished.⁵⁰

A Rare Yet Welcome Sight

*“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise”
(Matthew 21:16).*

No pleasanter sight is there than a family of young folks who are quick to perform little acts of attention toward their elders. The placing of the big arm chair in a warm place for mamma, running for a footstool for aunty, hunting up papa’s spectacles, and scores of little deeds show unsurpassed and loving hearts. But if mamma never returns a smiling “Thank you, dear,” if papa’s “Just what I was wanting, Susie,” does not indicate that the little attention is appreciated, the children soon drop the habit. Little people are imitative creatures, and quickly catch the spirit surrounding them. So, if, when the mother’s spool of cotton rolls from her lap, the father stoops to pick it up, bright eyes will see the act, and quick minds make a note of it. By example, a thousand times more quickly than by precept, can children be taught to speak kindly to each other, to acknowledge favors, to be gentle and unselfish, to be thoughtful and considerate of the comfort of the family. . . .

In some families, a spirit of contradiction and discussion mars the harmony; every statement is, as it were, dissected, and the absolute correctness of every word calculated. It interferes seriously with social freedom when unimportant inaccuracies are watched for, and exposed for the mere sake of exposure. Brothers and sisters also sometimes acquire an almost unconscious habit of teasing each other, half in earnest, half in fun. This is particularly uncomfortable for everybody else, whatever doubtful pleasure the parties themselves may experience.

In the home where true courtesy prevails, it seems to meet you on the very threshold. You feel the kindly welcome on entering. No rude eyes scan your dress. No angry voices are heard upstairs. No sullen children are sent from the room. No peremptory orders are given to cover the delinquencies of housekeepers or servants. A delightful atmosphere pervades the house—unmistakable, yet indescribable.⁵¹

A Timeless Responsibility

“Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old” (Proverbs 23:22).

“Should parents,” you ask, “select a companion without regard to the mind or feelings of son or daughter?” I put the question to you as it should be: Should a son or daughter select a companion without first consulting the parents, when such a step must materially affect the happiness of parents if they have any affection for their children? And should that child, notwithstanding the counsel and entreaties of his parents, persist in following his own course? I answer decidedly: No; not if he never marries. The fifth commandment forbids such a course.⁵²

Even after they are of age, children are required to respect their parents, and to look after their comfort. They should listen to the counsel of godly parents, and not feel that because a few more years are added to their life, they have grown out of their duty to them. There is a commandment with promise to those who honor their father and their mother. In these last days children are so noted for their disobedience and disrespect that God has especially noticed it, and it constitutes a sign that the end is near. It shows that Satan has almost complete control of the minds of the young. By many, age is no more respected. It is considered too old-fashioned to respect the aged. . . .

Anciently, children were not permitted to marry without the consent of their parents. Parents chose for their children. It was considered a crime for children to contract marriage upon their own responsibility. The matter was first laid before the parents, and they were to consider whether the person to be brought into a close relation to them was worthy, and whether the parties could provide for a family. It was considered by them of the greatest importance that they, the worshippers of the true God, should not intermarry with an idolatrous people, lest their families be led away from God. Even after children were married, they were under the most solemn obligation to their parents. . . . They were required to respect and obey their wishes unless these should conflict with the requirements of God.⁵³

Protecting Our Youth

“That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace” (Psalm 144:12).

Fathers and mothers, how are your children coming forth from under your hand? Are you training your daughters aright, laying for them the foundation of virtuous characters?⁵⁴

Girls should be taught that the true charm of womanliness is not alone in beauty of form or feature, nor in the possession of accomplishments; but in a meek and quiet spirit, in patience, generosity, kindness, and a willingness to do and suffer for others. They should be taught to work, to study to some purpose, to live for some object, to trust in God and fear Him, and to respect their parents. Then, as they advance in years, they will grow more pure-minded, self-reliant, and beloved. It will be impossible to degrade such a woman. She will escape the temptations and trials that have been the ruin of so many.⁵⁵

Parents are asleep. The children are infatuated with a lovesick sentimentalism, and the truth has no power to correct the wrong. What can be done to stay the tide of evil? Parents can do much if they will. . . .

When a girl’s company is frequently sought by boys or young men, something is wrong. That young girl needs a mother to show her her place, to restrain her, and teach her what belongs to a girl of her age.

The corrupting doctrine which has prevailed, that, as viewed from a health standpoint, the sexes must mingle together, has done its mischievous work. When parents and guardians manifest one tithe of the shrewdness which Satan possesses, then can this association of sexes be nearer harmless. As it is, Satan is most successful in his efforts to bewitch the minds of the youth; and the mingling of boys and girls only increases the evil twenty-fold. . . .

Until parents arouse, there is no hope for their children.⁵⁶

Awesome Accountability

*"Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?"
(Jeremiah 13:20).*

Many parents actually teach their children to disobey them, by excusing their disobedience, and glossing over their willful faults. . . . God has placed disobedience to parents side by side with blasphemy.

Disobedience to parents leads directly to disobedience to God; there is hardly a step between. The parents who neglect to exact obedience from their children virtually teach them to disobey the requirements of God, to sin against high Heaven, and jeopardize their souls. Such a course brings agony, disgrace, and ruin to both parents and children, both here and hereafter. When the work is complete and irreparable, the parents sometimes see too late the error of their lives, and trace the ruin of their child to their own neglect and culpable folly toward him from the cradle to manhood.

If parents would realize that they are answerable to God for every child committed to their trust, they would not dare to spend their precious time in the wearying round of fashion, pleasure, or even in business, to the exclusion of their family duties. One soul neglected, or indulged in wrong habits, serves to greatly increase the sin already existing in the world. The defects that have been fostered by the indulgence of thoughtless parents create in their child a morally deformed character; this, in an aggravated form, may in turn be transmitted to their offspring. . . .

Parents, remember that you are training your children not only for this life, but for the future, immortal life. No taint of sin will enter the abode of bliss. See that you do not, by sinful indulgence, fasten in the toils of Satan the children whom you regard so dear. What fearful guilt rests upon parents in this age of the world! . . . It is theirs to train souls for eternity; but how do they fall short of their duty! What woe will be theirs when the day of awakening comes all too late; and what retribution when the just Judge shall investigate their case, and inquire of them, Where are the children that I gave thee to train up for the courts of Heaven?⁵⁷

Looking Beyond the Circle

“Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us. . . . We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows” (Lamentations 5:1, 3).

Very much may be done for those who are deprived of the softening, subduing influences of the home circle. The spirit manifested by many shows that the language of the heart is, “Am I my brother’s keeper? I have no burden or responsibility aside from my own family. I have no special burden or interest for the students who occupy rooms in my house.” I would ask these persons if they have burdens and feel responsibilities for their own children. I am sorry to see so little anxiety on the part of some parents that all the influences surrounding their children should be favorable to the formation of Christian character; but those who do have soul-burdens for their own loved ones should not selfishly confine their interest to their own family. Jesus is our example in all things; but He has given us no example of such selfishness as we see manifested by many who profess to be His followers. If we abide in Christ, and His love abides in us, we shall love those for whom Christ died. . . . Had Christ studied His own profit, convenience, and pleasure, the world would have been left to perish in its sin and corruption.

A strange indifference in reference to the salvation of souls seems to have taken possession of many professed Christians. Sinners may be perishing all around them, and they have no particular burden in the matter. Will Christ say to these indifferent ones, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matthew 25:23)? The joy of Christ consists in seeing souls redeemed through the sacrifice He has made for them.⁵⁸

The selfish love of “me and mine” keeps many from doing their duty to others.⁵⁹

The best test of the Christianity of a home is the type of character begotten by its influence. Actions speak louder than the most positive profession of godliness.⁶⁰

The Creator's Official Memorial

"The heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made" (Genesis 2:1, 2).

The Sabbath was given to all mankind to commemorate the work of creation. The great Jehovah, when He had laid the foundations of the earth, when He had dressed the whole world in its garb of beauty, and created all the wonders of the land and the sea, instituted the Sabbath day and made it holy. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, the Sabbath was set apart as God's memorial. God sanctified and blessed the day in which He had rested from all His wondrous work. And this Sabbath, sanctified of God, was to be kept for a perpetual covenant. It was a memorial that was to stand from age to age, till the close of earth's history.¹

The Sabbath was instituted in Eden as a memorial of creation. It points men directly to the true God as the Maker of the heavens and the earth. Thus it stands as a mighty barrier against idolatry, atheism, and infidelity. Had the Sabbath been universally kept, not one of these evils could have gained a foothold in our world. There could not have been an infidel nor an idolater.²

The Sabbath is a token between God and His people. It is a holy day, given by the Creator to man as a day upon which to rest, and reflect upon sacred things. God designed it to be observed through every age as a perpetual covenant. It was to be regarded as a peculiar treasure, a trust to be carefully cherished.

As we observe the Sabbath, let us remember that it is the sign which heaven has given to man that he is accepted in the Beloved; that if he is obedient, he may enter the city of God, and partake of the fruit of the tree of life. As we refrain from labor on the seventh day, we testify to the world that we are on God's side, and are striving to live in perfect conformity to His commandments. Thus we recognize as our sovereign the God who made the world in six days and rested on the seventh.³

The Seventh Day Set Apart

“God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made” (Genesis 2:3).

The Sabbath was hallowed at the creation. As ordained for man, it had its origin when . . . “God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31) and He rested in the joy of His completed work.

Because He had rested upon the Sabbath, “God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it”—set it apart to a holy use. He gave it to Adam as a day of rest. It was a memorial of the work of creation, and thus a sign of God’s power and His love. The Scripture says, “He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.” “The things that are made,” declare “the invisible things of him since the creation of the world,” “even his everlasting power and divinity” (Genesis 2:3; Psalm 111:4; Romans 1:20, RV).

All things were created by the Son of God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1–3). And since the Sabbath is a memorial of the work of creation, it is a token of the love and power of Christ.

The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature, and brings us into communion with the Creator. In the song of the bird, the sighing of the trees, and the music of the sea, we still may hear His voice who talked with Adam in Eden in the cool of the day. And as we behold His power in nature, we find comfort, for the word that created all things is that which speaks life to the soul. He “who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). . . .

The Sabbath was embodied in the law given from Sinai; but it was not then first made known as a day of rest. The people of Israel had a knowledge of it before they came to Sinai⁴

The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of loyalty to the true God, “him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Revelation 14:7).⁵

Preparing for the Sabbath

“The Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning” (Exodus 16:23).

Speak not lightly of the restrictions placed upon Israel in Sinai regarding the cooking of manna. The Lord has placed barriers around His Sabbath, that it may not be regarded with the least carelessness or irreverence. When the Lord said, “Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe” (Exodus 16:23), He meant that Friday should be our preparation day, in which we are to do all our cooking. The Sabbath is not to be a day when titbits shall be prepared or cooked. If it is really essential to have beans on the Sabbath, let them be cooked on Friday, and kept warm in the oven. They need not be eaten cold unless preferred. But let no remarks be made as though it were a very light thing whether or not we regard the special requirements of God in regard to the Sabbath. It is not left for any man or woman to venture to disregard one requirement of God. . . .

The food which we have provided on the preparation day can be placed on the table warm, especially in cold weather. In traveling, persons eat cold lunches for days together, and realize no inconvenience or harm. We want palatable, healthful food every day of the week; but upon the Sabbath, let your cook have her day of rest, in the place of cooking for a family. Let every provision be made on Friday. But do not let the Sabbath be regarded as a day in which to get something especially gratifying to eat. Educate your children and every member of the family to enjoy plain, simple food, and to be ready to receive the blessing which the Lord of the Sabbath is waiting to bestow upon all who are in an attitude to receive it. He has this for everyone who shows his love for God in keeping holy the Sabbath day, God’s great memorial of creation. Speak softly, walk softly. Let not a word of lightness or trifling come from your lips. This is God’s day.⁶

The Miracle of the Manna

“Six days ye shall gather [manna]; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day” (Exodus 16:26–30).

While preparation for the Sabbath is to be made all through the week, Friday is to be the special preparation day. . . . There was something to be done in preparing the heaven-sent bread for the children of Israel. The Lord told them that this work must be done on Friday, the preparation day. This was a test to them. God desired to see whether or not they would keep the Sabbath holy.

This direction from the lips of Jehovah is for our instruction. The Bible is a perfect guide, and if its pages are prayerfully studied by hearts willing to understand, none need err upon this question.

Many need instruction as to how they should appear in the assembly for worship on the Sabbath. They are not to enter the presence of God in the common clothing worn during the week. All should have a special Sabbath suit to be worn when attending service in God’s house. While we should not conform to worldly fashions, we are not to be indifferent in regard to our outward appearance. We are to be neat and trim, though without adornment. The children of God should be pure within and without.

On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed. See that all the clothing is in readiness and that all the cooking is done. Let the boots be blacked and the baths be taken. It is possible to do this. If you make it a rule you can do it. The Sabbath is not to be given to the repairing of garments, to the cooking of food, to pleasure seeking, or to any other worldly employment.⁷

The Day Always to Remember

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8–11).

The command concerning the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is still binding upon all the inhabitants of this earth. God has set apart this day as a sign between Him and His people of their loyalty. God’s commandments never change; they are as enduring as eternity. The Lord has His messengers whom He bids to proclaim His law as changeless in its character. Those who obey this law will bear the seal of the living God. There is no sanctity in the first day of the week. The seventh day was set apart as a memorial of the work of creation. Everyone is to look to God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, for light and guidance, and Him alone are they to honor.⁸

[The fourth] is the only commandment which is prefaced with a “remember,” as though God had said, “Do not forget it.” He has given to man the Sabbath as a memorial of creation. Man is to obey His command, and as he observes this memorial, the mind will be directed to the living God, who created the heavens and the earth. If man had always remembered to keep holy the Sabbath, there would never have been an atheist or an infidel in our world; but Satan has made an effort to keep God out of the mind, and has worked his plans so as to accomplish this; and having banished God from the memory of man, he puts himself, if possible, in the place of God, and even goes so far as to exalt himself above God. . . .

We are now keeping the seventh day—the very day God has told us to keep.⁹

Regardless of How Busy We Are . . .

“Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest” (Exodus 34:21).

God said, *“Remember,”* knowing that man, in the multitude of his cares and perplexities, would be tempted to excuse himself from meeting the full requirements of the law or, in the press of worldly business, would forget its sacred importance. It is not the first day, or any common day, but the seventh that God has blessed and set apart for a sacred use.¹⁰

The children of Israel were erecting the tabernacle in the wilderness, and haste was necessary; but the word came to them: *“Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep”* (Exodus 31:13). Though the work on the tabernacle must be carried forward with expedition, the Sabbath must not be employed as a working day. Even the work on the Lord’s house must give way to the sacred observance of the Lord’s rest day.¹¹

The seventh day is God’s chosen day. He has not left this matter to be remodeled by priest or ruler. It is of too great importance to be left to human judgment. God saw that men would study their own convenience, and choose a day best suited to their inclinations, a day bearing no divine authority; and He has stated plainly that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord.

Every man in God’s world is under the laws of His government. God has placed the Sabbath in the bosom of the Decalogue, and has made it the criterion of obedience.¹²

When the Sabbath is . . . remembered, the temporal will not be allowed to encroach upon the spiritual. No duty pertaining to the six working days will be left for the Sabbath. During the week our energies will not be so exhausted in temporal labor that on the day when the Lord rested and was refreshed we shall be too weary to engage in His service.¹³

Before the setting of the sun let all secular work be laid aside and all secular papers be put out of sight. Parents, explain your work and its purpose to your children, and let them share in your preparation to keep the Sabbath according to the commandment.¹⁴

Hallowing God's Sacred Time

"Thus saith the Lord; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers" (Jeremiah 17:21, 22).

When the claims of the Sabbath are presented, there are many who ask, What difference does it make what day we keep as the Sabbath, so long as we observe one day in seven? We answer, It makes all possible difference whether we obey or disregard the word of God. God has given us the Sabbath as a memorial of the great work of creation. . . .

Satan is determined that the knowledge of God, of His creative power, shall be banished from the contemplation and remembrance of men. But he cannot accomplish his purpose while the fourth commandment is kept; for the Sabbath directs the minds of men to the Creator.¹⁵

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 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.¹⁶

Nothing which will in the sight of Heaven be regarded as a violation of the holy Sabbath should be left unsaid or undone, to be said or done upon the Sabbath. God requires not only that we refrain from physical labor upon the Sabbath, but that the mind be disciplined to dwell upon sacred themes.¹⁷

Watching My Thoughts and Words

"Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" (Amos 8:4, 5).

Are you as careful as you should be in keeping the Sabbath? You have something to do besides laying aside your work and amusements on that day. If you, on that day, lay plans of what you will do when the Sabbath is past, or talk of your work, amusements and clothes, you pollute the Sabbath. . . .

When you are speaking of your hope in God, of Jesus and of His soon coming, and of the beauties of the New Earth, you are not speaking your own words. Of these things you may freely speak on the Sabbath. On six days you may talk of business matters, and lay plans that are necessary; but the Sabbath is holy time, and all worldly thoughts must, on that day, be dismissed from the mind. The blessing of God will then rest upon you, and you will have the sweet consolations of His Spirit, and you will also have confidence when you approach the throne of grace.¹⁸

There is need of a Sabbath reform among us, who profess to observe God's holy rest day. Some discuss their business matters and lay plans on the Sabbath, and God looks upon this in the same light as though they engaged in the actual transaction of business. Others who are well acquainted with the Bible evidences that the seventh day is the Sabbath, enter into partnership with men who have no respect for God's holy day. A Sabbathkeeper cannot allow men in his employ, paid by his money, to work on the Sabbath. If, for the sake of gain, he allows the business in which he has an interest to be carried on on the Sabbath by his unbelieving partner, he is equally guilty with the unbeliever; and it is his duty to dissolve the relation, however much he may lose by so doing. Men may think they cannot afford to obey God, but they cannot afford to disobey Him. Those who are careless in their observance of the Sabbath will suffer great loss.¹⁹

The Christian Sabbath

“The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day” (Matthew 12:8).

Many endeavor to evade the claims of the fourth commandment by urging that the law of God was given to the Jews exclusively; that the seventh day of the week is the Jewish, while the first day is the Christian Sabbath. This distinction is not recognized in the Scriptures. There is no such contrast as is often claimed to exist between the Old and the New Testament, the law of God and the gospel of Christ, the requirements of the Jewish and those of the Christian dispensation. Every soul saved in the former dispensation was saved by Christ as verily as we are saved by Him today. Patriarchs and prophets were Christians. The gospel promise was given to the first pair in Eden, when they had by transgression separated themselves from God. The gospel was preached to Abraham. The Hebrews all drank of that spiritual Rock, which was Christ. It was by Christ that the worlds were made. By Christ the law was proclaimed from Sinai. Hence, Christ is, in the fullest sense, as He declares Himself to be, “Lord of the Sabbath.” He made the day sacred to Himself, on which to receive the worship of angels and of men.²⁰

God gave His law, and in the fourth precept of the Decalogue is His Sabbath, the very day on which we have turned aside from worldly business in order to observe it as a memorial of the creation of the heaven and the earth; and just as long as heaven and earth shall remain, just so long will this law be binding upon those who are living upon the earth. The instruction which Moses gave to the children of Israel concerning the statutes and the precepts of God did not originate with Moses, but with the God of heaven. We are told that Christ was in the pillar of the cloud by day, and in the fiery pillar at night. Men are enshrouded in darkness, and when they array Christ in the New Testament against Christ in the Old Testament, surely wisdom has departed from them. The Israelites of old were saved by Christ as verily as we are saved by Christ in this day.²¹

It's Lawful to Have Mercy

“Behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And [the Pharisees] asked [Jesus], saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other” (Matthew 12:10–13).

When Jesus came to our world, it was to let spiritual light shine forth. Hear, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth! The appointed Instructor was no less a personage than the only begotten Son of God. God was revealed in Christ. He made plain the treasures of truth. He displaced the rubbish that had been piled on the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, declaring Himself the Lord of the Sabbath. He who made the world and made man, made also the Sabbath, and gave it to man to keep holy.²²

Jesus wished to correct the false teachings of the Jews in regard to the Sabbath and also to impress His disciples with the fact that deeds of mercy were lawful on that day. In the matter of healing the withered hand He broke down the custom of the Jews, and left the fourth commandment standing as God had given it to the world. By this act He exalted the Sabbath, sweeping away the senseless restrictions that encumbered it. His act of mercy did honor to the day, while those who complained of Him, were, by their many useless rites and ceremonies, themselves dishonoring the Sabbath.

There are ministers today who teach that the Son of God broke the Sabbath and justified His disciples in doing the same. They take the same ground as did the caviling Jews, although ostensibly for another purpose, since they hold that Christ abolished the Sabbath.²³

God has given men six days wherein to labor, and He requires that their own work be done in the six working days. Acts of necessity and mercy are permitted on the Sabbath, the sick and suffering are at all times to be cared for; but unnecessary labor is to be strictly avoided.²⁴

Teaching as Jesus Taught

*“On the sabbath day [Jesus] entered into the synagogue, and taught”
(Mark 1:21).*

God was revealed in Christ. He made plain the treasures of truth. He displaced the rubbish that had been piled on the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, declaring Himself the Lord of the Sabbath. He who made the world and made man, also made the Sabbath, and gave it to man to keep holy.²⁵

Thousands who have never heard the truth are starving for the bread of life. They want light from heaven. Were the truth presented to them in love, the Holy Spirit would move upon their hearts, leading them to accept it.²⁶

Wise teachers—men and women who are apt in teaching the truths of the Word—are needed in our cities. Let these present the truth in all its sacred dignity, and with sanctified simplicity.²⁷

We are now holding meetings in the open air. . . . Planks had been arranged in a half circle for seats. Some were seated on rugs on the grass; others were in carriages just outside the fence.

There is no other way to reach these people but by holding open-air meetings. There seemed to be a deep interest manifested by some. Two or three are now on the point of deciding, and the ripening fields are all ready for the harvest. Unless we make decided effort to go outside our own immediate circle to meet the people where they are, we shall miss the saving of many souls.

There is not the least chance of getting into the little rough churches in the bush. We have been refused all chance to speak to the people in this way. But in the Lord’s great temple, the open air—the heavens our dome, and the earth our floor—we can obtain hearers who otherwise would not hear. We feel intensely over the matter of lifting the standard of truth in these places. . . . We see that there is a great work to be done in out-of-the-way places in the open air.²⁸

It is not ministers that can preach that are needed so much as men and women who understand how to teach the truth. . . . It needs men and women who will not be *sent* . . . but who will feel the burden to *go*.²⁹

Pondering God's Wondrous Works

"When the sabbath day was come, [Jesus] began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?" (Mark 6:2).

In order to keep the Sabbath holy, it is not necessary that we enclose ourselves in walls, shut away from the beautiful scenes of nature and from the free, invigorating air of heaven. We should in no case allow burdens and business transactions to divert our minds upon the Sabbath of the Lord, which He has sanctified. We should not allow our minds to dwell upon things of a worldly character even. But the mind cannot be refreshed, enlivened, and elevated by being confined nearly all the Sabbath hours within walls, listening to long sermons and tedious, formal prayers. The Sabbath of the Lord is put to a wrong use if thus celebrated. The object for which it was instituted is not attained. The Sabbath was made for man, to be a blessing to him by calling his mind from secular labor to contemplate the goodness and glory of God. It is necessary that the people of God assemble to talk of Him, to interchange thoughts and ideas in regard to the truths contained in His word, and to devote a portion of time to appropriate prayer. But these seasons, even upon the Sabbath, should not be made tedious by their length and lack of interest.

During a portion of the day, all should have an opportunity to be out of doors. How can children receive a more correct knowledge of God, and their minds be better impressed, than in spending a portion of their time out of doors, not in play, but in company with their parents? Let their young minds be associated with God in the beautiful scenery of nature, let their attention be called to the tokens of His love to man in His created works, and they will be attracted and interested. They will not be in danger of associating the character of God with everything that is stern and severe; but as they view the beautiful things which He has created for the happiness of man, they will be led to regard Him as a tender, loving Father.³⁰

A Blessing for the Whole Human Race

*“The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath”
(Mark 2:27).*

The Sabbath was not for Israel merely, but for the world. It had been made known to man in Eden, and, like the other precepts of the Decalogue, it is of imperishable obligation. Of that law of which the fourth commandment forms a part, Christ declares, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law” (Matthew 5:18).³¹

The Sabbath is not to be a gloomy day, a day of unrest and uneasiness. Parents may take their children outdoors, in the groves, in the flower garden, and teach them that the Lord has given them these beautiful things as an expression of His love. . . .

Let the mind be directed to the lessons of the book of nature, and to nature’s God, who made the world in six days, and rested on the seventh. . . . Do not make light of the Sabbath requirements; and when it comes to eating on the Sabbath, those who would feed on Christ, who would have the rich blessing of God, will partake of a very simple diet on that day.

The thoughts are not to be educated to be full of what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed. We need to prepare for the Sabbath. The clothing that we shall wear on that day is to be put in order.³²

When my children were small we had a large family of adopted children. We would have our work away before the setting of the sun. The children would hail the Sabbath as a joy. They would say, “Now Father and Mother will give us some of their time.” We would take them out for a walk. We would take the Bible and some religious instruction to read to them, and explain to them the Scriptures. We would keep praying that they should know the truth of God’s Word. We would not lie abed Sabbath mornings because it was Sabbath. We would have our preparations all ready the day before so that we could go to service without the hurry and worry. We would not stroll off and have a nice time to ourselves. We wanted our children to have all the privileges and blessings of God’s sanctified rest day.³³

Following Christ's Example

"[Jesus] came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power" (Luke 4:31, 32).

[Christ] did not remain in the pleasant courts of heaven, and leave a world to perish. Where are our home missionaries? May the Lord awaken an interest in the hearts of those who could do this work, that the light may shine into darkened places. Those who are content to sit under the clear light of truth Sabbath after Sabbath, and do nothing to diffuse this light, will lose the light themselves. If we would keep the light, we must be constantly giving it out. Jesus did not neglect the villages.³⁴

Sabbath morning the prayer and conference meetings were very interesting. Sabbath forenoon my husband spoke with freedom upon the subject of faith. Luke 12th chapter.

In the afternoon I spoke to the people upon the barren fig-tree. . . .

The word seemed to reach hearts. I then invited those who had never identified themselves with the people of God, and backsliders, and those who felt that they must have a new conversion, to come forward. Seventy-five responded to the call. My husband spoke with great freedom and power to the people, and addressed those who came forward particularly in regard to their having faith in the promises of God. He dwelt upon the simplicity of faith. Opportunity was given for all who wished to speak to relieve their minds. Many testimonies of confession were borne, well wet down with tears. A number stated that this was the first Sabbath they had kept.³⁵

At first I moved out timidly in the work of public speaking. If I had confidence, it was given me by the Holy Spirit. If I spoke with freedom and power, it was given me of God. Our meetings were usually conducted in such a manner that both of us took part. My husband would give a doctrinal discourse, then I would follow with an exhortation of considerable length, melting my way into the feelings of the congregation. Thus my husband sowed and I watered the seed of truth, and God did give the increase.³⁶

The Merciful Medical Missionary

“Behold, there was a certain man before [Jesus] which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; and answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?” (Luke 14:2–5).

Heaven’s work never ceases for a moment, and men should never rest from doing good. The Sabbath law forbids labor on the sanctified rest-day of the Lord. The toil that gains a livelihood must cease; no labor for worldly pleasure or profit is lawful upon the Lord’s day; but the work of Christ in healing the sick did honor to the holy Sabbath.³⁷

[The Pharisees, priests, and rulers] had much to unlearn of the traditions and inventions of men; they had need to learn the true principles of the law of Jehovah.

Christ saw that lessons must be given to scatter the rubbish of traditional exactions which they themselves had invented and piled upon the holy institution, given in love by a merciful God. The Sabbath was not to be that which the Jews had made it—a rigorous burden and exaction, loaded down with continual additions of their own invention. By this means the day was made what Satan had been working on human minds to make it—a grievous yoke in the place of a delight.³⁸

The Lord looks upon the creatures He has made with compassion, no matter to what race they may belong. . . . God is our common Father, and each one of us is our brother’s keeper.³⁹

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.⁴⁰

Unbelief Paralyzes!

“Jesus saith unto [the invalid at Bethesda], Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed” (John 5:8–10).

Ample evidence had been presented that Jesus was the promised Messiah; yet all who desired to doubt found opportunity. God works through whom He will, by ways and means of His own choosing; but there are ever some to act the part of the criticizing Pharisees, who could make the healing of a poor sufferer the occasion of a murderous outbreak. They cannot deny that the power of God is manifested through His servants; but still in some points the work does not accord with their judgment, and if they can find but the semblance of an excuse, they are free to question, doubt, and oppose.

Unbelief will always find an excuse for its existence. If men could criticize and condemn the Saviour’s work, when they had such evidence of divine power as the miracle at Bethesda, can we wonder that they criticize and condemn today? God would have men believe, not because there is no possibility of doubt, but because there is abundant evidence upon which to base an intelligent faith.⁴¹

God loves His purchased possession, and He longs to see them overcome the discouragement with which Satan would overpower them. Let no thought of unbelief afflict your souls; for unbelief acts as a paralysis upon the spiritual energies.⁴²

[Medical missionary work] is a work that the churches in every locality, north and south and east and west, should do. The churches have been given the opportunity of answering this work. Why have they not done it? Someone must fulfill the commission. . . .

Oh, how much, how very much remains to be done, and yet how many that might use their God-given talents aright are doing almost nothing besides caring for and pleasing themselves. But the hand of the Lord is stretched out still, and if they will work today in His vineyard, He will accept their service.⁴³

Assisting Small Groups

“If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:23, 24).

The boldness with which Jesus defended Himself, and interpreted the spirit of the law, silenced the rulers.⁴⁴

If we desire the blessing promised to the obedient, we must observe the Sabbath more strictly. I fear that we often travel on this day when it might be avoided. In harmony with the light which the Lord has given in regard to the observance of the Sabbath, we should be more careful about traveling on the boats or [trains] on this day. In these matters we should set a right example before our children and youth. In order to reach the churches that need our help, and to give them the message that God desires them to hear, it may be necessary for us to travel on the Sabbath; but so far as possible we should secure our tickets and make all necessary arrangements on some other day. . . .

Whenever there is opportunity we should speak to others in regard to the truth.⁴⁵

It is not safe to trifle with moral responsibilities nor to despise the day of small things.⁴⁶

On the Sabbath I spoke with freedom to the little company who reverence God’s holy day and assemble for His worship. A social meeting followed, in which sixteen testimonies were borne. We realized that the Lord’s presence is not confined to large assemblies, but that where two or three are gathered in His name, He meets with them. All seemed strengthened and encouraged. I felt the sweet peace of Christ, the consolation of His Spirit. I was in feeble health, but the precious evidence of the favor of God, more than repaid me for the effort made.

Would that our smaller churches could be more often visited. The faithful ones, who stand firmly in defense of the truth, would be cheered and strengthened by the testimony of their brethren.⁴⁷

Sabbathkeeping After the Cross

"[Joseph of Arimathea] went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment" (Luke 23:52–56).

Gently and reverently [John, Joseph of Arimathaea, and Nicodemus] removed with their own hands the body of Jesus from the cross. Their tears of sympathy fell fast as they looked upon His bruised and lacerated form. Joseph owned a new tomb, hewn in a rock. This he was reserving for himself; but it was near Calvary, and he now prepared it for Jesus. The body, together with the spices brought by Nicodemus, was carefully wrapped in a linen sheet, and the Redeemer was borne to the tomb. There the three disciples straightened the mangled limbs, and folded the bruised hands upon the pulseless breast. The Galilean women came to see that all had been done that could be done for the lifeless form of their beloved Teacher. Then they saw the heavy stone rolled against the entrance of the tomb, and the Saviour was left at rest. The women were last at the cross, and last at the tomb of Christ. While the evening shades were gathering, Mary Magdalene and the other Marys lingered about the resting place of their Lord, shedding tears of sorrow over the fate of Him whom they loved.⁴⁸

Luke, in his account of the Saviour's burial, speaks of the women who were with Him at His crucifixion, and says:

"They returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56).

The Saviour was buried on Friday, the sixth day of the week. The women prepared spices and ointments with which to embalm their Lord, and laid them aside, until the Sabbath was past. Not even the work of embalming the body of Jesus would they do upon the Sabbath day.⁴⁹

Learning to Seize Opportunities

"[Paul and his company] went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience" (Acts 13:13–16).

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 will 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. God's people are not to cease their labors till they encircle the world. The truth is to be proclaimed to all mankind. . . .

We are to stand firmly in defence of our principles in full view of the world. . . . Men of all ranks and capacities, with the various gifts, are to stand in their God-given armor, to cooperate harmoniously for a common result. They are to unite in the work of bringing the truth to all nations and peoples.⁵⁰

The truth of the Word must be inwrought in the soul. It is a power that works inwardly to bless the soul of the receiver, and outwardly to bless the souls of others. Take the Word just as it reads, and be a doer of it. The Holy Spirit works with the consecrated soul who searches the Scriptures.

Now, just now, is our great opportunity to study the word of life. The hearts of many in this world are hungering for the bread of life and thirsting for the water of salvation. They desire to know the Scriptures; they desire to know what the word of God says to them. The Holy Spirit is impressing their hearts, drawing them to the bread of life. They see everything around them changing. They come to hear the Word just as it reads. They desire to build upon a firm foundation; and therefore Christians are counseled to be always ready to give a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear.⁵¹

The Gentiles Enjoy the Sabbath

“When the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God” (Acts 13:42–44).

When . . . the Jews had left the synagogue, the Gentiles still lingered, and entreated that the same words might be spoken unto them the next Sabbath day. The apostles created a great interest in the place, among both Jews and Gentiles. They encouraged the believers and converts to stand fast in their faith, and to continue in the grace of God. The interest to hear the words of the apostles was so great that the whole city came together on the next Sabbath day. But now, as in the days of Christ, when the Jewish priests and rulers saw the multitudes that had assembled to hear the new doctrine, they were moved by envy and jealousy. . . . Their old bigotry and prejudice were also aroused, when they perceived great numbers of Gentiles mingling with the Jews in the congregation. . . .

They listened, on one Sabbath day, with intense interest to the teachings of Paul and Barnabas, who preached Jesus as the promised Messiah; and upon the next Sabbath day, because of the multitude of Gentiles who assembled also to hear them, they were excited to a frenzy of indignation, the words of the apostles were distorted in their minds, and they were unfitted to weigh the evidence presented by them. When they learned that the Messiah preached by the apostles was to be a light to the Gentiles, as well as the glory of His people Israel, they were beside themselves with rage, and used the most insulting language to the apostles.

The Gentiles, on the other hand, rejoiced exceedingly that Christ recognized them as the children of God, and with grateful hearts they listened to the word preached. The apostles now clearly discerned their duty, and the work which God would have them do. They turned without hesitation to the Gentiles, preaching Christ to them.⁵²

Fruitful Missionary Sabbaths

“On the sabbath we [Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke] went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened” (Acts 16:13, 14).

Lydia received the truth gladly. She and her household were converted and baptized, and she entreated the apostles to make her house their home.

God’s Spirit can only enlighten the understanding of those who are willing to be enlightened. We read that God opened the ears of Lydia, so that she attended to the message spoken by Paul. To declare the whole counsel of God and all that was essential for Lydia to receive—this was the part Paul was to act in her conversion; and then the God of all grace exercised His power, leading the soul in the right way. God and the human agent cooperated, and the work was wholly successful.⁵³

In every place the sick may be found, and those who go forth as workers for Christ should be true health reformers, prepared to give those who are sick the simple treatments that will relieve them, and then pray with them. Thus they will open the door for the entrance of the truth. The doing of this work will be followed by good results. Our Sabbathkeeping families should keep their minds filled with helpful principles of health reform and other lines of truth, that they may be a help to their neighbors. Be practical missionaries. Gather up all the knowledge possible that will help to combat disease. This may be done by those who are diligent students.

But few can take a course of training in our medical institutions. But all can study our health literature and become intelligent on this important subject.⁵⁴

Let all be fully prepared to disseminate the light by word and by pamphlet. There should be hundreds of little tracts scattered as the leaves of autumn.⁵⁵

Symbolic of Spiritual Rest in Christ

“We which have believed do enter into rest, as [God] said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. . . . There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Hebrews 4:3, 4, 9–11).

None should feel at liberty to spend sanctified time in an unprofitable manner. It is displeasing to God for Sabbathkeepers to sleep during much of the Sabbath. They dishonor their Creator in so doing, and, by their example, say that the six days are too precious for them to spend in resting. They must make money, although it be by robbing themselves of needed sleep, which they make up by sleeping away holy time. They then excuse themselves by saying: “The Sabbath was given for a day of rest. I will not deprive myself of rest to attend meeting, for I need rest.” Such make a wrong use of the sanctified day. They should, upon that day especially, interest their families in its observance and assemble at the house of prayer with the few or with the many, as the case may be. They should devote their time and energies to spiritual exercises, that the divine influence resting upon the Sabbath may attend them through the week. Of all the days in the week, none are so favorable for devotional thoughts and feelings as the Sabbath.

All heaven was represented to me as beholding and watching upon the Sabbath those who acknowledge the claims of the fourth commandment and are observing the Sabbath. Angels were marking their interest in, and high regard for, this divine institution. Those who sanctified the Lord God in their hearts by a strictly devotional frame of mind, and who sought to improve the sacred hours in keeping the Sabbath to the best of their ability, and to honor God by calling the Sabbath a delight—these the angels were specially blessing.⁵⁶

Let's Follow the Right Signpost!

“Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you” (Exodus 31:13).

The Christian world has chosen another mark than that of God. I will copy a few lines from an article I have read, called “The Changed Signpost:” “Some years ago, . . . it was thought a good joke to turn round a signpost erected at a junction where two roads met. Of course the perplexity and misery which that often caused was great. Once a signpost was erected by God for those who journeyed through this world. The road to happiness was as clearly defined as was the road to the city of refuge under the Jewish dispensation. One finger of the signpost pointed out loving obedience to the Creator as the road to felicity; while the other indicated disobedience, or sin, as the path to misery. In an evil hour for our race, the great enemy turned the signpost round; so that ever since that time, multitudes have mistaken the true road to happiness.”

The Lord has stated expressly that life and truth are to be found in the path of obedience. Obedience is the waymark all must follow. God has declared that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord. He has exalted this day as a memorial of His work of creation, plainly stating that it is to be a sign between Him and His people throughout their generations. Thrice is this repeated in the thirty-first chapter of Exodus, and the speaker is Jesus Christ. . . .

The Lord has clearly defined the road to the city of God; but the great apostate has changed the signpost, setting up a false one—a spurious sabbath. . . .

The enemy of all good has turned the signpost round, so that it points to the path of disobedience as the path of happiness. He has insulted Jehovah by refusing to obey a “Thus saith the Lord.” He has thought to change times and laws; but has he done this? The words in the thirty-first chapter of Exodus answer this question. With His own finger the Lord wrote the commandments on the tables of stone.⁵⁷

A Perpetual Covenant

“The children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed” (Exodus 31:16, 17).

Shall we set aside the divine command given in such positive language, and follow the path of the transgressor? Who will venture to change the signpost, so that it shall point the wrong way, vindicating the man of sin? It is a terrible thing to place a human institution where the Lord’s great memorial should be. It is a terrible thing for men to arrogate to themselves the power to set aside the day that God has sanctified and blessed, declaring it to be His holy day, and put in its place a common working day; to try to compel men to respect and reverence this day.

The Lord’s word is truth. It is so plain that we cannot mistake its meaning. It is not evidence that people need; for this they have. But they do not desire to walk in the way of the Lord’s commandments. The world is walking contrary to the divine will; but God has a people on this earth, and between Him and them the Sabbath is a sign, whereby they know that He is the Lord that sanctifies them. . . .

What does the Lord require of us? The observance of His Sabbath, “as a perpetual covenant.” God wishes every family to bear this sign. Thus we may show that we are loyal and true to His commandments. Look at our world, full of disrespect for God, in open rebellion against Him who in a moment could destroy every soul that breathes the breath of life. What has made the world so full of violence? A disregard of God’s law. This was what filled the earth with rebellion and corruption in the days before the flood. See the regard shown today for the spurious sabbath. And those who make laws to guard this false rest day make laws also which legalize the liquor traffic, a curse that is brutalizing the beings made in the image of God, by taking away their reason.⁵⁸

“In the Spirit on the Lord’s Day”

“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” (Revelation 1:9, 10).

“He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him” (1 John 3:24).

God honors those who honor Him by obedience to His precepts. John, the beloved disciple, was banished to the isle of Patmos for his faithfulness. “I John,” he writes, “who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” (Revelation 1:9, 10). Did John here mean Sunday? There is but one day called the Lord’s day, and that is the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath instituted at creation. God created the world in six days, and on the seventh he rested and was refreshed. He blessed and sanctified this day, and set it apart to be observed as a memorial of creation. And on the seventh day John heard behind him “a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches.” “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man” (Revelation 1:10–12). Thus Christ honored John for his steadfast obedience to Him.

Adam and Eve lost all access to Eden and to the tree of life because they took the word of another before the Word of God. By this act of disobedience they opened the floodgates of woe upon our world. But those who steadfastly adhere to God’s Word, will hear the benediction, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).⁵⁹

God's Sign of Sanctification

"I gave [Israel] my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them" (Ezekiel 20:12).

The Sabbath is the clasp which unites God and His people.⁶⁰

Sanctified and blessed by God, the Sabbath was designed to be the great memorial of creation, and a blessing to mankind. But men are trampling it underfoot. It is the test of today, as Christ was the test when He was in our world in human form. It will ever stand unmoved, a rock of offense to the Christian world, as was Christ to the Jewish nation. As the rejection of Christ decided the eternal destiny of the Jews, so the rejection of God's holy memorial will decide the fate of many professing Christians.

Men may ignore the Sabbath, they may trample it under their feet; but they cannot make it less binding upon them. No one has any excuse for accepting the rubbish that has been piled upon the Sabbath of the Lord.⁶¹

Sanctification is claimed by professed Christians who ignore God's holy rest day for a spurious sabbath. But God declares that the sanctification coming from Him is bestowed on those only who honor Him by obeying His commands. The sanctification claimed by those who continue in transgression is a spurious sanctification. Thus the religious world is deceived by the enemy of God and man.

In the temple service the Lord gave special directions that the priests were to use on their censers only the sacred fire of God's own kindling, which was kept burning day and night. But Nadab and Abihu perverted their senses by the use of wine, so that they could not distinguish between the sacred and the common. They "took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1).

Those who ignore the Lord's Sabbath to keep holy the first day of the week, offer strange fire to God. It is a strange sabbath, which He has commanded them not.⁶²

A Sign That He Is Our God

“Hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God” (Ezekiel 20:20).

Men say in regard to the Sabbath, It makes no difference what day we keep, provided we keep the seventh part of time. How dare they substitute the word of man for the word of God? How dare they lead their fellowmen away from obedience to the Creator? . . .

Let man with his human theories step aside. Let the divine voice be heard, saying, “Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: . . . It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever” (Exodus 31:14, 17). . . .

The law of God is made void, and God calls upon us to stand in defense of the truth.⁶³

Can we who see the Sabbath as the sign of the living God consent to renounce that sign? Do we wish to renounce it? Or do we desire to keep and cherish the sign which God has given to designate His commandment-keeping people? The world’s persistent unbelief of this grand truth does not lessen its importance. Although we may refuse to obey, it remains the truth still; if not allowed to guide, it will condemn us.

Now is the time when God calls upon us to honor His precepts that have been made void. As soon as the light shines upon us, we are to seek, by voice and pen and influence, to make up the breach in the law of God.⁶⁴

God gave the Sabbath to His people to be a continual sign of His love and mercy and of their obedience. As He rested on this day and was refreshed, so He desired His people to rest and be refreshed. It was to be a constant reminder to them that they were included in His covenant of grace. Throughout your generations, He said, the Sabbath is to be My sign, My pledge, to you that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you, that I have chosen you and set you apart as My peculiar people. And as you keep the Sabbath holy, you will bear testimony to the nations of the earth that you are My chosen people.⁶⁵

A Message for the Last Days

“Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil” (Isaiah 56:1, 2).

In this perilous period, when we see universal contempt placed upon the law of God, when the world is choosing between the holy Sabbath of the fourth commandment and the spurious sabbath, shall we say one word that will detract from the words of the Lord of the Sabbath? The Lord God of heaven knew what a deadening influence the abounding iniquity would have upon the chosen believers, what a paralyzing power it would be against piety and true loyalty to God. In giving us the statement of the occurrences which would mark the approach of the second advent of our Lord and Saviour, Christ says, “Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12). We see this fulfilled to the letter. The experience of many is becoming dwarfed and sickly and wonderfully deformed. Everything that surrounds us creates an atmosphere that is saturated with unrighteousness. Even under the most faithful surroundings, it is difficult to hold fast the Christian profession of faith unto the end, to stand decidedly and earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. But it is most difficult to keep true and loyal to God’s holy commandments, when there are few in number to help and encourage one another, and when many of these are sickly and ready to die because they do not honor God by keeping His commandments truly and loyally.

Much so-called Christianity passes for genuine, faithful soundness, but it is because those who profess it have no persecution to endure for the truth’s sake. When the day comes when the law of God is made void, and the church is sifted by the fiery trials that are to try all that live upon the earth, a great proportion of those who are supposed to be genuine will give heed to seducing spirits, and will turn traitors and betray sacred trusts. They will prove our very worst persecutors.⁶⁶

A Joyous Task

“If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth” (Isaiah 58:13, 14).

Let little companies of workers go out as the Lord’s missionaries, and do as Christ commissioned the first disciples to do. Let them go into the different parts of our cities, two and two, and give the Lord’s message of warning. Tell the people the story of Creation, and how at the close of His work the Lord rested upon and blessed the Sabbath day, setting it apart as a memorial of His work.

Church members young and old should be educated to go forth to proclaim this last message to the world. If they will go in humility, angels of God will go with them, teaching them to lift up the voice in prayer, how to raise the voice in song, and how to proclaim the gospel message for this time. We have not a moment to lose. . . .

Who will take up this work of teaching Bible truth to old and young? Who will carry the message, following Christ’s plan of labor? . . .

Will you heed His voice? Will you become His messengers? Will you seek the sheep that are lost? Will you teach the Word in all humility and earnestness to those who will hear?

Young men and women, take up the work to which God calls you. Tell the wondrous story of the cross. Christ will lead you, and teach you to use your abilities to good purpose. As you receive the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, and you seek to teach others, your minds will be refreshed, and you will be enabled to present words that are new and strangely beautiful to your hearers. Pray, and sing, and speak the word. . . .

Spiritual freedom will come to those who consecrate themselves unreservedly, and the quickening grace of Christ will bring light and peace and joy.⁶⁷

Repairing the Breach

“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” (Isaiah 58:12).

In the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah is outlined the work God’s people are to do. A breach has been made in the law, and this breach is to be repaired. The true Sabbath is to be restored to its rightful position as God’s rest day. The law is to be magnified and made honorable. To those who do this work the Lord says: “Thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in” (Verse 12).⁶⁸

In the closing work of God in the earth, the standard of His law will be again exalted. False religion may prevail, iniquity may abound, the love of many may wax cold, the cross of Calvary may be lost sight of, and darkness, like the pall of death, may spread over the world; the whole force of the popular current may be turned against the truth; plot after plot may be formed to overthrow the people of God; but in the hour of greatest peril the God of Elijah will raise up human instrumentalities to bear a message that will not be silenced. In the populous cities of the land, and in the places where men have gone to the greatest lengths in speaking against the Most High, the voice of stern rebuke will be heard. Boldly will men of God’s appointment denounce the union of the church with the world. Earnestly will they call upon men and women to turn from the observance of a man-made institution to the observance of the true Sabbath. . . .

The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The observance of the false sabbath will be urged upon us. The contest will be between the commandments of God and the commandments of men.⁶⁹

I saw that God had children who do not see and keep the Sabbath. They have not rejected the light upon it. And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and proclaimed the Sabbath more fully.⁷⁰

The Final Test Before Eternity

“As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 66:22, 23).

No earthly ruler is to be looked upon as above the Ruler who made the world in six days, and rested on the seventh-day, sanctifying and blessing it.⁷¹

The excuse for refusing to observe the Sabbath of God’s appointment is often made that it does not make any difference upon which day we rest, so long as it is one day in the seven. But it makes every difference upon which day you rest. Resting upon the day God commanded reveals the fact that you honor the Maker of heaven and earth; but disregarding that fact makes it evident that you do not honor God.⁷²

History will be repeated. False religion will be exalted. The first day of the week, a common working day, possessing no sanctity whatever, will be set up as was the image at Babylon. . . .

Trial and persecution will come to all who, in obedience to the Word of God, refuse to worship this false sabbath. Force is the last resort of every false religion. At first it tries attraction, as the king of Babylon tried the power of music and outward show. If these attractions, invented by men inspired by Satan, failed to make men worship the image, the hungry flames of the furnace were ready to consume them. So it will be now.⁷³

It means eternal salvation to keep the Sabbath holy unto the Lord. God says: “Them that honor Me I will honor” (1 Samuel 2:30).⁷⁴

So long as the heavens and the earth endure, the Sabbath will continue as a sign of the Creator’s power. And when Eden shall bloom on earth again, God’s holy rest day will be honored by all beneath the sun. “From one sabbath to another” the inhabitants of the glorified new earth shall “come to worship before me, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 66:23).⁷⁵

A Good Time in the Garden

"The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15).

Adam and Eve were given the garden of Eden to care for. They were "to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15). They were happy in their work. Mind, heart, and will acted in perfect harmony. In their labor they found no weariness, no toil. Their hours were filled with useful work and communion with each other.¹

Adam toiled in the garden of Eden, and felt it to be one of the pleasures of his holy existence to do so. Later, when he was driven from his beautiful home, as the result of his disobedience, and was forced to struggle with a stubborn soil to gain his daily bread, that very labor, although far different from his pleasant occupation in the garden, was a relief to his sorrowing soul, a protection against temptation.

Judicious labor is a healthful tonic for the human race. It makes the feeble strong, the timid brave, the poor rich, and the wretched happy. Our varied trusts are proportioned to our various abilities. Every man will be rewarded of God according to his individual capacity. He expects corresponding returns for the talents He has given to His servants. It is not the greatness of the talents possessed that determines the reward, but the manner in which they are used, the degree of faithfulness with which the duties of life have been performed, be they great or small. Where much is given much will be required.

Whoever does his work conscientiously and well, whether in the shop, the field, or the pulpit, will be rewarded according to the spirit in which he has worked.

Idleness is the greatest curse that can fall upon man; for vice and crime follow in its train. Satan lies in ambush, ready to surprise and destroy those who are unguarded, whose leisure gives him opportunity . . . under some attractive disguise. He is never more successful than when he comes to men in their idle hours.²

Exercise in the open air should be prescribed as a life-giving necessity. And for such exercises there is nothing better than the cultivation of the soil.³

Country Homes

“My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places; when it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place” (Isaiah 32:18, 19).

When Lot entered Sodom, he fully intended to keep himself free from iniquity and to command his household after him. But he signally failed. The corrupting influences about him had an effect upon his own faith, and his children’s connection with the inhabitants of Sodom bound up his interest in a measure with theirs. The result is before us. Many are still making a similar mistake.

Let it be your study to select and make your homes as far from Sodom and Gomorrah as you can. Keep out of the large cities. If possible make your homes in the quiet retirement of the country, even if you can never become wealthy by so doing. Locate where there is the best influence.

I am instructed by the Lord to warn our people not to flock to the cities to find homes for their families. To fathers and to mothers I am instructed to say, Fail not to keep your children within your own premises.⁴

Keep out of the cities. Build no sanitariums in the cities. Educate our people to get out of the cities into the country, where they can obtain a small piece of land, and make a home for themselves and their children. When the question arose in regard to the establishment of a sanitarium in the city of Los Angeles, I felt that I must oppose this move. I carried a very heavy burden in regard to the matter, and I could not keep silent. It is time, brethren, that we heeded the testimonies sent us in mercy and love from the Lord of heaven.

Our restaurants must be in the cities; for otherwise the workers in these restaurants could not reach the people and teach them the principles of right living. And for the present we shall have to occupy meeting houses in the cities. But ere long there will be such strife and confusion in the cities that those who wish to leave them will not be able.⁵

The Blessing of Farm Skills

“Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds” (Proverbs 27:23).

Out of the cities, has been my constant advice. But it has taken years for our people to become aroused to an understanding of the situation. It has taken years for them to realize that the Lord would have them leave the cities and do their work in the quiet of the country, away from the turmoil and noise and confusion.⁶

Come where there is the best influence. Give your children employment. Let them learn some trade. Teach them to be useful on some piece of ground. If you do not keep them busy, the devil will. Children have active minds, and they need to be employed in lifting the burdens of practical life. They should never be left to pick up their employment. Parents should control this matter themselves.⁷

In the cultivation of the soil the thoughtful worker will find that treasures little dreamed of are opening up before him. No one can succeed in agriculture or gardening without attention to the laws involved. The special needs of every variety of plant must be studied. Different varieties require different soil and cultivation, and compliance with the laws governing each is the condition of success. The attention required in transplanting, that not even a root fiber shall be crowded or misplaced, the care of the young plants, the pruning and watering, the shielding from frost at night and sun by day, keeping out weeds, disease, and insect pests, the training and arranging, not only teach important lessons concerning the development of character, but the work itself is a means of development. In cultivating carefulness, patience, attention to detail, obedience to law, it imparts a most essential training. The constant contact with the mystery of life and the loveliness of nature, as well as the tenderness called forth in ministering to these beautiful objects of God’s creation, tends to quicken the mind and refine and elevate the character; and the lessons taught prepare the worker to deal more successfully with other minds.⁸

Agricultural Wisdom

“The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing” (Proverbs 20:4).

Christian farmers can do real missionary work in helping the poor to find homes on the land and in teaching them how to till the soil and make it productive. Teach them how to use the implements of agriculture, how to cultivate various crops, how to plant and care for orchards.

Many who till the soil fail to secure adequate returns because of their neglect. Their orchards are not properly cared for, the crops are not put in at the right time, and a mere surface work is done in cultivating the soil. Their ill success they charge to the unproductiveness of the land. False witness is often borne in condemning land that, if properly worked, would yield rich returns. The narrow plans, the little strength put forth, the little study as to the best methods, call loudly for reform.

Let proper methods be taught to all who are willing to learn. If any do not wish you to speak to them of advanced ideas, let the lessons be given silently. Keep up the culture of your own land. Drop a word to your neighbors when you can, and let the harvest be eloquent in favor of right methods. Demonstrate what can be done with the land when properly worked.⁹

Men are wanted to educate others how to plow, and how to use the implements of agriculture. Who will be missionaries to do this work, to teach proper methods to the youth, and to all who feel willing and humble enough to learn? If any do not want you to give them improved ideas, let the lessons be given silently, showing what can be done in setting out orchards and planting corn; let the harvest be eloquent in favor of right methods of labor.¹⁰

It is God’s plan that agriculture shall be connected with the work of our sanitariums and schools. Our youth need the education to be gained from this line of work. It is well, and more than well—it is essential—that efforts be made to carry out the Lord’s plan in this respect.¹¹

Developing Habits of Industry

"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 received instruction" (Proverbs 24:30–32).

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. . . .

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. . . .

Never should idleness be fostered or permitted in children, for it soon becomes a habit. . . .

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.¹²

Health and Dignity in Manual Labor

“The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep” (Ecclesiastes 5:12).

Young men are anxious to become teachers, clerks, merchants, physicians, lawyers, or to occupy some other position that does not require physical toil. Young women shun housework and seek an education in other lines. These need to learn that no man or woman is degraded by honest toil.¹³

Those who combine useful labor with study have no need of gymnastic exercises. And work performed in the open air is tenfold more beneficial to health than indoor labor. Both the mechanic and the farmer have physical exercise, yet the farmer is the healthier of the two. Nothing short of nature’s invigorating air and sunshine will fully meet the demands of the system. The tiller of the soil finds in his labor all the movements that were ever practiced in the gymnasium. His movement-room is the open fields. The canopy of heaven is its roof, the solid earth its floor. Here he plows and hoes, sows and reaps. Watch him, as in “haying time” he mows and rakes, pitches and tumbles, lifts and loads, throws off, treads down, and stows away. These various movements call into action the bones, joints, muscles, sinews, and nerves of the body. His vigorous exercise causes full, deep, strong inspirations and exhalations, which expand the lungs and purify the blood, sending the warm current of life bounding through arteries and veins. A farmer who is temperate in all his habits, usually enjoys health. His work is pleasant to him. He has a good appetite. He sleeps well, and may be happy.

Contrast the condition of the active farmer with that of the student who neglects physical exercise. He sits in a close room, bending over his desk or table, his chest contracted, his lungs crowded. He cannot take full, deep inspirations. His brain is tasked to the utmost, while his body is as inactive as though he had no particular use for it. His blood moves sluggishly through the system. His feet are cold, his head hot. How can such a person have health?¹⁴

Considering Our Ways

“Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways” (Haggai 1:4, 5).

God has the first and highest claims upon His people. Set your affections upon Him and upon heavenly things. Your tendrils must be severed from everything earthly. . . .

Will separation from the world, in obedience to the divine command, unfit us for the work the Lord has left us? Will it hinder us from doing good to those around us? No; the firmer hold we have on heaven, the greater will be our power for usefulness. We should study the Pattern, that the spirit which dwelt in Christ may dwell in us. The Saviour was not found among the exalted and honorable of the world. He did not spend His time among those who were seeking their ease and pleasure. He worked to help those who needed help, to save the lost and perishing, to lift up the bowed down, to break the yoke of oppression from those in bondage, to heal the afflicted, and to speak words of sympathy and consolation to the distressed and sorrowing.

We are required to follow the Master’s example. The more we partake of the spirit of Christ, the more we shall seek to do for our fellow men. We shall bless the needy and comfort the distressed. Filled with a love for perishing souls, we shall find our delight in following the footsteps of the Majesty of heaven.

The requirements of God are set plainly before us; the question to be settled is, Will we comply with them? Will we accept the condition laid down in His word—separation from the world? This is not the work of a moment or of a day. It is not accomplished by bowing at the family altar and offering up lip-service, nor by public exhortation and prayer. It is a lifelong work. Our consecration to God must be a living principle, interwoven with the life, and leading to self-denial and self-sacrifice. It must underlie all our thoughts, and be the spring of every action. This will elevate us above the world, and separate us from its polluting influence.¹⁵

A Greater Need Today

“Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit” (Haggai 1:6–10).

[The Lord] might have made angels the ambassadors of His truth; He might have made known His will, as He proclaimed the law from Sinai, with His own voice; but in His infinite love and wisdom He called men to become colaborers with Himself, by choosing them to do this work.

In the days of Israel the tithe and freewill offerings were needed to maintain the ordinances of divine service. Should the people of God give less in this age? . . . Should not our gratitude find expression in more abundant gifts to extend to others the message of salvation? The work of the gospel, as it widens, requires greater provision to sustain it than was called for anciently; and this makes the law of tithes and offerings of even more urgent necessity now than under the Hebrew economy.¹⁶

Let those that have work bringing the highest wages come forward and act a part proportionate to the wages they receive. Let the men who have limited wages have an interest in this matter also. Do what you can, and lay aside something besides your tithe money. Have you a box for this purpose? Explain to your children that it is the self-denial box, in which you lay aside every penny, every shilling, that you can obtain and do not need to spend for actual necessities. It is for the Lord’s house. It is sacred self-denial money. . . . Doing this, every member of the family will be blessed.¹⁷

The Source and Purpose of Money

“Remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth” (Deuteronomy 8:18).

If you have extravagant habits, cut them away from your life. Such habits, indulged, will make you bankrupt for eternity. And habits of economy, industry, and sobriety are, even in this world, a better portion for you and your children than a rich dowry.

We are travelers, pilgrims and strangers, on earth. Let us not spend our means in gratifying desires that God bids us repress. Let us rather set a right example before our associates. Let us fitly represent our faith by restricting our wants. Let the churches arise as one, and work earnestly as those who are walking in the full light of truth for these last days. Let your influence impress souls with the sacredness of God’s requirements.

If in the Providence of God you have been given riches, do not settle down with the thought that you need not engage in useful labor, that you have enough, and can eat, drink, and be merry. Do not stand idle while others are struggling to obtain means for the cause. Invest our means in the Lord’s work. If you do less than your duty in giving help to the perishing, remember that your indolence is incurring guilt.

It is God who gives men power to get wealth, and He has bestowed this ability, not as a means of gratifying self, but as a means of returning to God His own. With this object it is not a sin to acquire means. Money is to be earned by labor. Every youth should be trained to habits of industry. The Bible condemns no man for being rich if he has acquired his riches honestly. It is the selfish love of money wrongfully employed that is the root of all evil. Wealth will prove a blessing if we regard it as the Lord’s, to be received with thankfulness and with thankfulness returned to the Giver.

But of what value is untold wealth if it is hoarded in expensive mansions or in bank stocks? What do these weigh in comparison with the salvation of one soul for whom the Son of the infinite God has died?¹⁸

How We Are Exalted

“Jacob vowed a vow, saying, . . . This stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee” (Genesis 28:20, 22).

Christ assigned to men the work of spreading the gospel. But while some go forth to preach, He calls upon others to answer to His claims upon them for tithes and offerings with which to support the ministry and to spread the printed truth all over the land. This is God’s means of exalting man. It is just the work which he needs, for it will stir the deepest sympathies of his heart and call into exercise the highest capabilities of the mind.

Every good thing of earth was placed here by the bountiful hand of God as an expression of His love to man. The poor are His, and the cause of religion is His. He has placed means in the hands of men, that His divine gifts may flow through human channels in doing the work appointed us in saving our fellow men. Everyone has his appointed work in the great field; and yet none should receive the idea that God is dependent upon man. He could speak the word, and every son of poverty would be made rich. In a moment of time He could heal the human race of all their diseases. He might dispense with ministers altogether and make angels the ambassadors of His truth. He might have written the truth upon the firmament, or imprinted it upon the leaves of the trees and upon the flowers of the field; or He might with an audible voice have proclaimed it from heaven. But the all-wise God did not choose any of these ways. He knew that man must have something to do in order that life might be a blessing to him. The gold and silver are the Lord’s, and He could rain them from heaven if He chose; but instead of this He has made man His steward, entrusting him with means, not to be hoarded, but to be used in benefiting others. He thus makes man the medium through which to distribute His blessings on earth. God planned the system of beneficence in order that man might become, like his Creator, benevolent and unselfish in character, and finally be a partaker with Him of the eternal, glorious reward.¹⁹

Pricking the Conscience

“Unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: and thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings” (Deuteronomy 12:5, 6).

When we speak of the tithe as the standard of the Jewish contributions to religious purposes, we do not speak understandingly. The Lord kept His claims paramount, and in almost every article they were reminded of the Giver by being required to make returns to Him. They were required to pay a ransom for their firstborn son, for the first fruits of their flocks, and for the first gathering of the harvest. They were required to leave the corners of their harvest fields for the destitute. Whatever dropped from their hands in reaping was left for the poor, and once in every seven years their lands were allowed to produce spontaneously for the needy. Then there were the sacrificial offerings, the trespass offerings, the sin offerings, and the remission of all debts every seventh year. There were also numerous expenses for hospitalities and gifts to the poor, and there were assessments upon their property.

At stated periods, in order to preserve the integrity of the law, the people were interviewed as to whether they had faithfully performed their vows or not. A conscientious few made returns to God of about one third of all their income for the benefit of religious interests and for the poor. These exactions were not from a particular class of the people, but from *all*. . . .

There must be an awakening among us as a people upon this matter. There are but few men who feel conscience-stricken if they neglect their duty in beneficence. . . . We must have new and deeper convictions on this subject. The conscience must be aroused, and the matter receive earnest attention; for an account must be rendered to God in the last day, and His claims must be settled.²⁰

Exchanging Vanity for Eternal Value

“There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease” (Ecclesiastes 6:1, 2) .

Many, absorbed in their interest in worldly treasures, become insensible to the claims of God and the needs of their fellow men. They regard their wealth as a means of glorifying themselves. They add house to house, and land to land; they fill their homes with luxuries, while all about them 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 the wicked one.

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. . . .

It is by no casual, accidental touch that wealthy, world-loving, world-worshipping souls can be drawn to Christ. These persons are often the most difficult of access. Personal effort must be put forth for them by men and women imbued with the missionary spirit, those who will not fail or be discouraged. . . .

Many suppose that in order to reach the higher classes, a manner of life and method of work must be adopted that will be suited to their fastidious tastes. An appearance of wealth, costly edifices, expensive dress, equipage, and surroundings, conformity to worldly customs, the artificial polish of fashionable society, classical culture, the graces of oratory, are thought to be essential. This is an error. The way of worldly policy is not God’s way of reaching the higher classes. That which will reach them effectually is a consistent, unselfish presentation of the gospel of Christ.²¹

We should inquire diligently of ourselves: What treasure have we secured in the kingdom of God? Are we rich toward God?²²

Witnessing in All Circumstances

“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Habakkuk 3:17, 18).

You see the truth, you understand the claims of God’s law; you know that no willful transgressor will enter into life, and yet you see that law made void in the world. What is your duty? You are not to ask, “What is convenient for me? what is agreeable?” but, “What can I do to save souls?”

There is a great work before us. The world is to be warned. This work calls for the exercise of all the talents that God has entrusted to our keeping. He has given us abilities that enable us to exert an influence on other minds. We have talents in the pen, the press, the voice, the purse, and the sanctified affections of the soul. All these talents are the Lord’s. He has lent them to us, and He holds us responsible for the use we make of them—for the faithful discharge of our duty to the world. We may come very near to Jesus; we may commune with Him, and having found rest and peace to our own souls, we may show forth to others the beauties of true holiness.

We shall meet with conflicts to test our faith and courage, but they will make us strong if we conquer through the grace which Jesus is willing to give. But we must believe; we must grasp the promises without a doubt. They are ample and rich, even during the perils and trials of the last days. . . . As we exercise faith, talk faith, and act faith, the promises of God will be verified to us. And as we walk consistently with our profession of faith, we are also teaching others to walk circumspectly.

Do not choose darkness. Come out of the cold, dark caverns of unbelief into the upper chamber, where you may bask in the sunshine of God’s love, and enjoy peace and rest in the presence of Jesus.²³

Stewards of God's Mysteries

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians 4:1).

God has not revealed to us the time when [the third angel's] message will close, or when probation will have an end. Those things that are revealed we shall accept for ourselves and for our children; but let us not seek to know that which has been kept secret in the councils of the Almighty. It is our duty to watch and work and wait, to labor every moment for the souls of men that are ready to perish. We are to keep walking continually in the footsteps of Jesus, working in His lines, dispensing His gifts as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Satan will be ready to give to anyone who is not learning every day of Jesus, a special message of his own creating, in order to make of no effect the wonderful truth for this time.

Letters have come to me asking me if I have any special light as to the time when probation will close; and I answer that I have only this message to bear, that it is now time to work while the day lasts, for the night cometh in which no man can work. Now, just now, it is time for us to be watching, working, and waiting. The Word of the Lord reveals the fact that the end of all things is at hand.²⁴

The message that we have to bear is not one that we need cringe to declare. Its advocates are not to seek to cover it, to conceal its origin and purpose. As those who have made solemn vows to God, and who have been commissioned as the messengers of Christ, as stewards of the mysteries of grace, we are under obligation to declare faithfully the whole counsel of God.

We are not to make less prominent the special truths that have separated us from the world, and made us what we are; for they are fraught with eternal interests. God has given us light in regard to the things that are now taking place, and with pen and voice we are to proclaim the truth to the world. But it is the life of Christ in the soul, it is the active principle of love imparted by the Holy Spirit, that alone will make our words fruitful.²⁵

Stewards of God's Money

*"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful"
(1 Corinthians 4:2).*

Entire devotion and benevolence, prompted by grateful love, will impart to the smallest offering, the willing sacrifice, a divine fragrance, making the gift of priceless value. . . .

[Christ] has advanced us the wages in His suffering life and spilled blood, to bind us in willing servitude to Himself. All the good things we have are a loan from our Saviour. He has made us stewards. Our smallest offerings, our humblest services, presented in faith and love, may be consecrated gifts to win souls to the service of the Master and to promote His glory. The interest and prosperity of Christ's kingdom should be paramount to every other consideration. Those who make their pleasure and selfish interest the chief objects of their lives are not faithful stewards.

Those who deny self to do others good, and who devote themselves and all they have to Christ's service, will realize the happiness which the selfish man seeks for in vain. Said our Saviour: "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:33). Charity "seeketh not her own" (1 Corinthians 13:5). This is the fruit of that disinterested love and benevolence which characterized the life of Christ. The law of God in our hearts will bring our own interests in subordination to high and eternal considerations. We are enjoined by Christ to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. This is our first and highest duty. Our Master expressly warned His servants not to lay up treasures upon the earth; for in so doing their hearts would be upon earthly rather than heavenly things. Here is where many poor souls have made shipwreck of faith. They have gone directly contrary to the express injunction of our Lord, and have allowed the love of money to become the ruling passion of their lives. They are intemperate in their efforts to acquire means. . . .

Christians forget that they are servants of the Master; that they themselves, their time, and all that they have belong to Him.²⁶

Giving Brings Greater Joy

“Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:34, 35).

If those who have means should realize that they are accountable to God for every dollar that they expend, their supposed wants would be much less. If conscience were alive, she would testify of needless appropriations to the gratification of appetite, of pride, vanity, and love of amusements, and would report the squandering of the Lord’s money, which should have been devoted to His cause.²⁷

The principle of the cross of Christ brings all who believe under heavy obligations to deny self, to impart light to others, and to give of their means to extend the light. If they are in connection with heaven they will be engaged in the work in harmony with the angels.

The principle of worldlings is to get all they can of the perishable things of this life. Selfish love of gain is the ruling principle in their lives. But the purest joy is not found in riches nor where covetousness is always craving, but where contentment reigns and where self-sacrificing love is the ruling principle. There are thousands who are passing their lives in indulgence and whose hearts are filled with repining. They are victims of selfishness and discontent in the vain effort to satisfy their minds with indulgence. But unhappiness is stamped upon their very countenances, and behind them is a desert, because their course is not fruitful in good works.

In proportion as the love of Christ fills our hearts and controls our lives, covetousness, selfishness, and love of ease will be overcome, and it will be our pleasure to do the will of Christ, whose servants we claim to be. Our happiness will then be proportionate to our unselfish works, prompted by the love of Christ.²⁸

Living Examples of Self-Denial

“Ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God” (1 Thessalonians 2:9).

Paul’s life was an exemplification of the truths he taught, and herein lay his power.²⁹

God would have you arouse and possess strength to surmount obstacles; be not easily discouraged; if need be, labor, as did the apostle Paul, in weariness, in painfulness, in watching, forgetting infirmities in the deep interest felt for souls for whom Christ died.³⁰

Mark the humble life of the Son of God. He was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3). Behold His ignominy, His agony in Gethsemane, and learn what self-denial is. Are we suffering want? so was Christ, the Majesty of heaven. But His poverty was for our sakes. Are we ranked among the rich? so was He. But He consented for our sakes to become poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. In Christ we have self-denial exemplified. His sacrifice consisted not merely in leaving the royal courts of heaven, in being tried by wicked men as a criminal and pronounced guilty, and in being delivered up to die as a malefactor, but in bearing the weight of the sins of the world. The life of Christ rebukes our indifference and coldness. We are near the close of time, when Satan has come down, having great wrath, knowing that his time is short. He is working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. The warfare has been left in our hands by our great Leader for us to carry forward with vigor. We are not doing a twentieth part of what we might do if we were awake. The work is retarded by love of ease and a lack of the self-denying spirit of which our Saviour has given us an example in His life.³¹

If unbelievers see in our works and lives devotion and self-sacrifice in order to save souls ready to perish, they will be impressed with the reality of the truths we profess. The truth that sanctifies the receiver will make its impression upon them.³²

Let Us Not Steal!

“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28).

The time of trouble is just before us; and then stern necessity will require the people of God to deny self, and to eat merely enough to sustain life; but God will prepare us for that time. In that fearful hour our necessity will be God’s opportunity to impart His strengthening power, and to sustain His people. But now God requires them to labor with their hands, the thing that is good, and lay by them in store as He has prospered them, and do their part in sustaining the cause of truth.³³

Some close their ears to the calls made for money to be used in sending missionaries to foreign countries and in publishing the truth and scattering it like autumn leaves all over the world. Such excuse their covetousness by informing you that they have made arrangements to be charitable at death. They have considered the cause of God in their wills. Therefore they live a life of avarice, robbing God in tithes and in offerings, and in their wills return to God but a small portion of that which He has lent them, while a very large proportion is appropriated to relatives who have no interest in the truth. This is the worst kind of robbery. They rob God of His just dues, not only all through life, but also at death.³⁴

There are youth in the _____ church who should be cultivating the grace of Christian steadfastness and growing up to be men of faith. They should become firm, unwavering, rooted and grounded in the truth. The church needs the very help which God designed they should give. Those professing His name have not consecrated their powers fully and entirely to Him, but have yielded them, in a measure, to the service of Satan. Such have been, and still are, robbing God. Like the unfaithful steward to whom were entrusted talents, they have hid the gifts of God in the world.³⁵

Let us be sure that we are not robbing God in any jots or tittles, for much is involved in this question.³⁶

Stewards Called to Give

“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).

All things belong to God. Men may ignore His claims. While He bountifully bestows His blessings upon them, they may use His gifts for their own selfish gratification; but they will be called to give an account for their stewardship.

A steward identifies himself with his master. He accepts the responsibilities of a steward, and he must act in his master's stead, doing as his master would do were he presiding. His master's interests become his.³⁷

The Lord would have His followers dispense their means while they can do it themselves. Some may inquire: “Must we actually dispossess ourselves of everything which we call our own?” We may not be required to do this now; but we must be willing to do so for Christ's sake. We must acknowledge that our possessions are absolutely His, by using of them freely whenever means is needed to advance His cause.³⁸

I saw that if any held on to their property and did not inquire of the Lord as to their duty, He would not make duty known, and they would be permitted to keep their property, and in the time of trouble it would come up before them like a mountain to crush them, and they would try to dispose of it, but would not be able. I heard some mourn like this: “The cause was languishing, God's people were starving for the truth, and we made no effort to supply the lack; now our property is useless. Oh, that we had let it go, and laid up treasure in heaven!” I saw that a *sacrifice* did not increase, but it decreased and was *consumed*. I also saw that God had not required all of His people to dispose of their property at the same time; but if they desired to be taught, He would teach them, in a time of need, when to sell and how much to sell. Some have been required to dispose of their property in times past to sustain the Advent cause, while others have been permitted to keep theirs until a time of need. Then, as the cause needs it, their duty is to sell.³⁹

Preparing to Meet Our Lord

“Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing” (Luke 12:42, 43).

The Lord has shown me the danger of letting our minds be filled with worldly thoughts and cares. I saw that some minds are led away from present truth and a love of the Holy Bible by reading other exciting books; others are filled with perplexity and care for what they shall eat, drink, and wear. Some are looking too far off for the coming of the Lord. Time has continued a few years longer than they expected; therefore they think it may continue a few years more, and in this way their minds are being led from present truth, out after the world. In these things I saw great danger; for if the mind is filled with other things, present truth is shut out, and there is no place in our foreheads for the seal of the living God. I saw that the time for Jesus to be in the most holy place was nearly finished and that time can last but a very little longer. What leisure time we have should be spent in searching the Bible, which is to judge us in the last day.

My dear brethren and sisters, let the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ be in your minds continually and let them crowd out worldly thoughts and cares. When you lie down and when you rise up, let them be your meditation. Live and act wholly in reference to the coming of the Son of man. The sealing time is very short, and will soon be over. Now is the time, while the four angels are holding the four winds, to make our calling and election sure.⁴⁰

The ministers are asleep; the lay members are asleep; and a world is perishing in sin. May God help His people to arouse and walk and work as men and women on the borders of the eternal world. Soon an awful surprise is coming upon the inhabitants of the world. Suddenly, with power and great glory, Christ will come. Then there will be no time to prepare to meet Him. Now is the time for us to give the warning message.⁴¹

Awakening to Accountability

“Give an account of thy stewardship” (Luke 16:2).

Probation is about to close. In heaven the edict will soon go forth, “It is done.” . . . The enemy is playing the game of life for every soul. He is working to remove from us everything of a spiritual nature, and in the place of the precious graces of Christ to crowd our hearts with the evil traits of the carnal nature—hatred, evil surmising, jealousy, love of the world, love of self, love of pleasure, and the pride of life. We need to be fortified against the incoming foe, who is working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; for unless we are watchful and prayerful, these evils will enter the heart, and crowd out all that is good.

Many who profess to believe the word of God do not seem to understand the deceptive working of the enemy. They do not realize that the end of time is near; but Satan knows it; and while men sleep, he works. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life are controlling men and women. Satan is at work even among the people of God, to cause disunion. Selfishness, corruption, and evil of every kind are taking a firm hold upon hearts. With many the precious word of God is neglected. A novel or a storybook engages the attention, and fascinates the mind. That which excites the imagination is eagerly devoured, while the word of God is set aside. It was because they overlooked the word of God that the Jewish nation rejected Christ, demanding that a robber be granted them, and that the Prince of Life be crucified. And in these last days professed Christians are committing the same sin. They are weighed in the balances, and are found wanting because they suffer their minds to be engrossed with things of little importance, while eternal truth is neglected. The truth of God, which would elevate and sanctify and refine, and fit men for the finishing touch of immortality, is set aside for things of minor importance. Oh that this blindness might pass away, and men and women understand the work that Satan is accomplishing among them!⁴²

Education for the Final Exam

“Of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:12–14).

Age after age the curiosity of men has led them to seek for the tree of knowledge; and often they think they are plucking fruit most essential, when, like Solomon in his research, they find it altogether vanity and nothingness in comparison with the science of true holiness which will open to them the gates of the city of God. The mass of books which have been thought essential for school education contains erroneous principles, which, if carried into practical life, will lead the students into false paths, away from consecration to God. . . .

Human ambition has been seeking for that kind of knowledge that will bring to men self-exaltation and supremacy. Thus Adam and Eve were worked upon by Satan until God’s restraint was snapped asunder, and their education under the teacher of lies began in order that they might have the knowledge which God had refused them—a knowledge of the consequences of transgression. And since that time, the sons of men have had a practical knowledge of evil; but Christ came to the world to show them that He had planted for them the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. He came to restore the moral image of God in man, to elevate and ennoble our mental powers.⁴³

The very points of study are neglected that are most needed to prepare the students to stand the last great examination, and to fit them for missionary work in home and foreign fields. The education that is needed now is one that will qualify the students for practical missionary work, by teaching them to bring every faculty under the control of the Spirit of God. The study book which is of the highest value is that which contains the instruction of Christ, the Teacher of teachers.⁴⁴

Let Us Not Be Naive

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Students who have had the benefits of religious teaching at home, and who are ignorant of the vices of society, frequently become the best acquainted with those whose minds have been cast in an inferior mold, and whose advantages for mental culture and religious training have been very limited. And they are in danger, by mingling in the society of this class and by breathing an atmosphere that is not elevating but that tends to lower and degrade the morals, of sinking to the same low level as their companions. It is the delight of a large class of students, in their unemployed hours, to have a high time. And very many of those who leave their homes innocent and pure become corrupted by their associations at school.⁴⁵

Never did your sons in their helpless babyhood need a mother more than in their boyhood and youth. Your daughters also need a watchful guardianship of an affectionate Christian mother. Do not leave them to become demoralized by improper associations. The children need to be instructed, to be guided in safe paths, to be kept from vice, to be won by kindness, and by diligent training to be confirmed in well-doing. The Saviour discerns a value and dignity in every soul, because of the image of God which it bears. He died that your children might have the gift of eternal life. He looks upon them with divine compassion. Their souls may be saved unto eternal life, and they are just as precious as the souls of others. You have before your own door a little plot of ground to care for, and God will hold you responsible for this work which He has left in your hands. Through earnest prayer and study, you may become wise in your home, learning the different dispositions of your children, and carefully noting their behavior. You may have at home a little school, of which you shall be the teacher. If you seek wisdom from the Lord to understand His way and to keep it, He will give you wisdom and grace.⁴⁶

Bad Books to the Fire

“Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver” (Acts 19:19).

[The Ephesians] brought together the manuals of enchantment, the costly books containing the mystic symbols of Diana, and the secrets of their art, and burned them in the presence of all the people. The sacrifice thus made was estimated at fifty thousand pieces of silver, equal to about ten thousand dollars.

The conversion of these Ephesians was attended with the results that always follow genuine conversion. When convinced that their magical books were false and pernicious, they were unwilling to sell them and thus place temptation in the way of others. They promptly burned the records of divination, at a great personal sacrifice. The power of truth triumphed over men’s prejudices, favorite pursuits, and love of money.⁴⁷

Dear youth, cease to read the magazines containing stories. Put away every novel. In the days of Paul, those who were converted at Ephesus burned their magical books. We would do well to clear our houses of all the story magazines and the publications containing ridiculous pictures—representations originated by satanic agencies. The youth cannot afford to poison their minds with such things.⁴⁸

I would that all the cheap, trashy literature in every home might be burned up! You cannot do better, my dear young friends, than to burn everything that would tempt you to indulge in the reading of fictitious stories. The Canadian Un.⁴⁹

Have the disciples of Christ burned the magical books? Have they made a decided change in their principles and habits of life? Have they separated themselves from the enchantments of the world? . . . God does not give His angels charge to keep those who choose to walk in forbidden paths. . . .

Again we would ask the followers of Christ, “Have you burned the magical books?”⁵⁰

Shunning Infidel Sciences

“Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith” (1 Timothy 6:20, 21).

We need to guard continually against the sophistry in regard to geology and other branches of science falsely so-called, which have not one semblance of truth.⁵¹

God has illuminated the human intellect, and poured a flood of light on the world in the discoveries of art and science. But those who view these from a merely human standpoint will most assuredly come to wrong conclusions. The thorns of error, skepticism, and infidelity are disguised by being covered with the garments of philosophy and science. Satan has devised this ingenious manner of winning the soul away from the living God.⁵²

There are many men of noble qualities whom God would use in His cause; but the bewitching power of Satan has been cast over them like a spell. Science, falsely so-called, would lead them to reason away the very foundation of true religion. It has so confused their senses that the testimony of the Spirit and word of God is questioned.⁵³

The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. Those who have rendered supreme homage to “science falsely so called” will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal.⁵⁴

Which Wisdom Is My Priority?

“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain” (1 Corinthians 3:18–20).

The wisdom of the world is too highly valued, the wisdom from above too little sought, by the professed people of the Lord. Men may have a knowledge of Christian doctrine, and yet understand little of Christian experience. Many are keen, apt, prompt, in worldly affairs, while they manifest little interest, tact, or energy in the service of God. They do not exercise their sharpness and shrewdness in watching to discern the devices of Satan, and studying how they may outgeneral the enemy. They do not summon all their powers to form wise plans and put forth earnest, systematic effort to advance the cause of God. The wisdom exercised in worldly temporal things is seldom devoted to spiritual and eternal things. In this manner do men of ability give evidence that they are more carnal than spiritual.

Every man, of whatever trade or profession, should make the cause of God his first interest; he should not only exercise his talents to advance the Lord’s work, but should cultivate his ability to this end. Many a man devotes months and years to the acquirement of a trade or profession that he may become a successful worker in the world; and yet he makes no special effort to cultivate those talents which would render him a successful laborer in the vineyard of the Lord. He has perverted his powers, misused his talents. He has shown disrespect to his heavenly Master. This is the great sin of the professed people of God. They serve themselves, and serve the world. They may have the name of being shrewd, successful financiers; but they neglect to increase by use the talents which God has given them for his service. The worldly tact is becoming stronger by exercise; the spiritual is becoming weaker through inactivity.⁵⁵

Watching How We're Building

"Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon" (1 Corinthians 3:10).

You must render an account to God as to how you build; for every provision has been made that you may be successful in your work. Will He who with His divine finger drew the boundaries of Judea, who designated the exact spot where the temple should stand, who wrought out designs for the Jewish church and for the service of the sanctuary, leave His people, His chosen people, who keep His commandments, to a chance experience, to accident, to stumble along in darkness? Shall those to whom He has committed most precious light, to whom He has entrusted the third angel's message, have less of His providential leading than had His ancient people?

O that the church was awake! O that all who profess the truth for this time were sanctified through the truth, that they might discern the designs of God, and understand their own individual responsibility to give the light to the world. The seed of truth will spring forth in a new creation, and souls will be converted to God.

In the face of what might be done, will the church sleep on, or will they feel the responsibility and the honor that is conferred upon them through the merciful providence of God, and gather up their hereditary trusts, and the advantages of present light, and feel the necessity of rising to the urgent emergency that now presents itself before us? The world is watching our movements with greater interest than we imagine.⁵⁶

Be careful how you build, and what kind of material you put into the building. The characters you are now forming will be lasting as eternity.

Let Jesus take possession of your mind, your heart, and your affections, and work as Christ worked, doing conscientiously the home duties, little acts of self-denial, and deeds of kindness, employing the moments diligently, keeping a careful watch against little sins and a grateful heart for little blessings.⁵⁷

Raising Our Structure of Character

“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 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 3:12, 13).

Those who have counted the cost and wish to build for eternity must put good material into their building. If they accept of rotten timbers, if they are content with deficiencies of character, the building is doomed to ruin. Let all take heed how they build. The storm of temptation will sweep over the building, and unless it is firmly and faithfully constructed it will not stand the test. . . .

We are living in times of peril that should cause the hearts of all to fear. We see the minds of many wandering through the mazes of skepticism. The causes of this are ignorance, pride, and a defective character. Humility is a hard lesson for fallen man to learn. There is something in the human heart which rises in opposition to revealed truth on subjects connected with God and sinners, the transgression of the divine law, and pardon through Christ.

My brethren and sisters, old and young, when you have an hour of leisure, open the Bible and store the mind with its precious truths. When engaged in labor, guard the mind, keep it stayed upon God, talk less, and meditate more. Remember: “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Matthew 12:36). Let your words be select; this will close a door against the adversary of souls. Let your day be entered upon with prayer; work as in God’s sight. . . . If you turn from good counsel and choose to associate with those who you have reason to suspect are not religiously inclined, although they profess to be Christians, you will soon become like them.⁵⁸

Day by day we need to realize the necessity of being converted. Do not stand on the line of demarcation, trying to balance between Christ and the world. Keep in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord.⁵⁹

Awakening to Zeal

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Corinthians 15:34).

The money that is lavishly spent by many believers for unnecessary things should be given to the work of winning souls that are ready to perish. It is time that our people felt the need of being laborers together with God. Self-denial and self-sacrifice are highly appropriate for this time.⁶⁰

If we have the interest that Knox had when he pleaded before God for Scotland, we shall have success. He cried, “Give me Scotland, Lord, or I die.” And when we take hold of the work and wrestle with God, saying, “I must have souls; I will never give up the struggle,” we will find that God will look upon our efforts with favor. He sees that if He gives you souls as the result of your ministry, it will not make you proud or lifted up. You will not be in a position where you will feel for an instant that someone else will get the credit for these souls; but you will feel so grateful to God that they are saved, that His praise will be in your hearts and on your lips day and night. It is such men that God will make mighty instruments to do His work. I feel in earnest upon these points.

Those who have associated with them, those who are trying to learn how to do the work of God, should feel a constant burden on their souls as to what education they are giving these workers. Eternity will tell what kind of mold they are giving those who are connected with them in this work. If they have the Spirit and Power which Paul had, the Spirit of God working in them mightily to present every man perfect in Jesus Christ, they will ever seek, both by precept and example, to build them up in the most holy faith. The mold which these workers receive, they will in turn give to others. The influence is far-reaching, even to eternity.⁶¹

Nothing will so arouse in men and women a self-sacrificing zeal as to send them forth into new fields to work for those in darkness.⁶²

Wisdom Assured

“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. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering” (James 1:5, 6).

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 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.⁶³

Oh that those to whom have been entrusted so great and solemn truths would manifest corresponding faith! They should trust their work in the Lord’s hands, pleading upon their knees for wisdom and guidance, and then, instead of taking the burden all back, and seeking to plan and execute in their own strength, and groaning because they are overburdened, let them leave it with the Lord. Amid a life of constant activity they will thus find rest to their souls.⁶⁴

Blameless in God's Sight

"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

While with penitence and humble trust we meditate upon Jesus, whom our sins have pierced and our sorrows have burdened, we may learn to walk in His footsteps. By beholding Him we become changed into His divine likeness. And when this work is wrought in us, we shall claim no righteousness of our own, but shall exalt Jesus Christ, while we hang our helpless souls upon His merits.

Our Saviour ever condemned self-righteousness. He taught His disciples that the highest type of religion is that which manifests itself in a quiet, unobtrusive manner. He cautioned them to perform their deeds of charity quietly; not for display, not to be praised or honored of men, but for the glory of God, expecting their reward hereafter. If they should perform good deeds to be lauded by men, no reward would be given them by their Father in heaven.⁶⁵

If at any time we do not clearly understand the testimony of the Scriptures concerning any duty, we are bidden to go to the great Teacher. Whenever we lack wisdom, it is our privilege and our duty to ask of God. If we come in humility and faith, we shall not be sent empty away.

But when one sees clearly the claims of duty, let him not presume to go to God with the prayer that he may be excused from obedience because it involves a cross. Let him go, rather, with a humble, submissive spirit, asking for divine strength and wisdom, to accept and to practice the truth.⁶⁶

Our safety is in beholding Christ. When self is the object of worship, when, filled with self-exaltation, men bow to their own image, losing sight of Christ, they are in fearful danger. Christ is the light of the world. Turn your face from Him, and you walk in darkness. Keep your eyes fixed on His perfection, and you walk in the light of heaven.⁶⁷

A Clean, Holy Temple

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Why do not men and women read, and become intelligent upon these things which so decidedly affect their physical, intellectual, and moral strength? God has given you a habitation to care for and preserve in the best condition for His service and glory.¹

It is a duty to know how to preserve the body in the very best condition of health, and it is a sacred duty to live up to the light which God has graciously given. If we close our eyes to the light for fear we shall see our wrongs, which we are unwilling to forsake, our sins are not lessened but increased. If light is turned from in one case, it will be disregarded in another. It is just as much sin to violate the laws of our being as to break one of the Ten Commandments, for we cannot do either without breaking God’s law. We cannot love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength while we are loving our appetites, our tastes, a great deal better than we love the Lord.²

The people whom God is leading will be peculiar. They will not be like the world. . . . Christ will dwell in the heart. The temple of God will be holy. Your body, says the apostle, is the temple of the Holy Ghost. God does not require His children to deny themselves to the injury of physical strength. He requires them to obey natural law, to preserve physical health. Nature’s path is the road He marks out, and it is broad enough for any Christian. God has, with a lavish hand, provided us with rich and varied bounties for our sustenance and enjoyment. But in order for us to enjoy the natural appetite, which will preserve health and prolong life, He restricts the appetite. He says: Beware; restrain, deny, unnatural appetite. If we create a perverted appetite, we violate the laws of our being and assume the responsibility of abusing our bodies and of bringing disease upon ourselves.³

God Wants Us to Prosper

“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 2).

The Lord is not glorified by the reflections that are cast upon Him, when men attribute to Him their sufferings; for the Lord has no pleasure in the suffering and death of His people. He would have them pursue a right course of action, carefully looking after their bodies that they may be in health, and know how to keep the habitation in order. If we neglect to heed the simple laws by which we may preserve health, and fail to cultivate right habits, the Lord will not work a miracle to heal our disorders, while we continue to transgress His laws. Men are sleeping in their graves that the Lord would have had live. They destroyed themselves through lack of knowledge. On many points they were instructed, and yet failed to carry out the instruction given them; but let us become enlightened Christians, walking in the light, and overcoming every defect that we may reap reward in this life, and gain the life eternal hereafter.⁴

[God’s children] cannot afford to waste any mental or physical strength.

The question of how to preserve the health is one of primary importance. When we study this question in the fear of God we shall learn that it is best, for both our physical and our spiritual advancement, to observe simplicity in diet. Let us patiently study this question. We need knowledge and judgment in order to move wisely in this matter. Nature’s laws are not to be resisted, but obeyed.

Those who have received instruction regarding the evils of the use of flesh foods, tea and coffee, and rich and unhealthful food preparations, and who are determined to make a covenant with God by sacrifice, will not continue to indulge their appetite for food that they know to be unhealthful. God demands that the appetites be cleansed, and that self-denial be practiced in regard to those things which are not good. This is a work that will have to be done before His people can stand before Him a perfected people.⁵

Looking for a Time of Health

"We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!" (Jeremiah 8:15).

Many students are deplorably ignorant of the fact that diet exerts a powerful influence upon the health. Some have never made a determined effort to control the appetite, or to observe proper rules in regard to diet. They eat too much, even at their meals, and some eat between meals whenever the temptation is presented. If those who profess to be Christians desire to solve the questions so perplexing to them, why their minds are so dull, why their religious aspirations are so feeble, they need not, in many instances, go farther than the table; here is cause enough, if there were no other.

Many separate themselves from God by their indulgence of appetite. He who notices the fall of a sparrow, who numbers the very hairs of the head, marks the sin of those who indulge perverted appetite at the expense of weakening the physical powers, benumbing the intellect, and deadening the moral perceptions.⁶

The dishes of soft foods, the soups and liquid foods, or the free use of meat, are not the best to give healthful muscles, sound digestive organs, or clear brains. . . . The diet question is to be studied; no one person's appetite, or tastes, or fancy, or notion is to be followed; but there is need of great reform.⁷

We should educate ourselves, not only to live in harmony with the laws of health, but to teach others the better way. Many, even of those who profess to believe the special truths for this time, are lamentably ignorant with regard to health and temperance. They need to be educated, line upon line, precept upon precept. The subject must be kept fresh before them. This matter must not be passed over as nonessential; for nearly every family needs to be stirred up on the question. The conscience must be aroused to the duty of practicing the principles of true reform. . . .

Seek to arouse the intellect and the conscience. Bring into service all the talent at command, and follow up the work with publications upon the subject. "Educate, educate, educate."⁸

Balm in Gilead

Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jeremiah 8:22).

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 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 the effect produced upon the system.⁹

God does not require His children to deny themselves to the injury of physical strength. He requires them to obey natural law, in order to preserve physical health. Nature's path is the road He marks out, and it is broad enough for any Christian. With a lavish hand God has provided us with rich and varied bounties for our sustenance and enjoyment. But in order for us to enjoy the natural appetite, which will preserve health and prolong life, He restricts the appetite. He says, Beware! restrain, deny, unnatural appetite. If we create a perverted appetite, we violate the laws of our being, and assume the responsibility of abusing our bodies and of bringing disease upon ourselves.¹⁰

There is a balm in Gilead; there is a Physician there. Jesus is the great physician.¹¹

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.¹²

Surrendering the Appetite to God

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

A solemn responsibility rests upon those who know the truth, that all their works shall correspond with their faith and that their lives shall be refined and sanctified, and they be prepared for the work that must rapidly be done in these closing days of the message. They have no time or strength to spend in the indulgence of appetite.¹³

Reform, continual reform, must be kept before the people, and by our example we must enforce our teaching. True religion and the laws of health go hand in hand. It is impossible to work for the salvation of men and women without presenting to them the need of breaking away from sinful gratifications, which destroy the health, debase the soul, and prevent divine truth from impressing the mind. Men and women must be taught to take a careful view of every habit and every practice, and at once put away those things that cause an unhealthy condition of the body and thus cast a dark shadow over the mind.

God desires His light bearers ever to keep a high standard before them. By precept and example they must hold their perfect standard high above Satan’s false standard, which, if followed, will lead to misery, degradation, disease, and death for both body and soul. Let those who have obtained a knowledge of how to eat and drink and dress so as to preserve health impart this knowledge to others. Let the poor have the gospel of health preached unto them from a practical point of view, that they may know how to care properly for the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴

The subject of temperance, in all its bearings, has an important place in the work of salvation.¹⁵

The unsanctified will and passions must be crucified. This may be regarded as a close and severe work. Yet it must be done, or you will hear the terrible sentence from the mouth of Jesus: “Depart.” You can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth you.¹⁶

This Is God's Food

“And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat” (Genesis 1:29).

Grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables constitute the diet chosen for us by our Creator. These foods, prepared in as simple and natural a manner as possible, are the most healthful and nourishing. They impart a strength, a power of endurance, and a vigor of intellect that are not afforded by a more complex and stimulating diet.

But not all foods wholesome in themselves are equally suited to our needs under all circumstances. Care should be taken in the selection of food. Our diet should be suited to the season, to the climate in which we live, and to the occupation we follow. Some foods that are adapted for use at one season or in one climate are not suited to another. So there are different foods best suited for persons in different occupations. Often food that can be used with benefit by those engaged in hard physical labor is unsuitable for persons of sedentary pursuits or intense mental application. God has given us an ample variety of healthful foods, and each person should choose from it the things that experience and sound judgment prove to be best suited to his own necessities.

Nature's abundant supply of fruits, nuts, and grains is ample, and year by year the products of all lands are more generally distributed to all, by the increased facilities for transportation. As a result many articles of food which a few years ago were regarded as expensive luxuries are now within the reach of all as foods for everyday use. This is especially the case with dried and canned fruits.

Nuts and nut foods are coming largely into use to take the place of flesh meats. With nuts may be combined grains, fruits, and some roots, to make foods that are healthful and nourishing. Care should be taken, however, not to use too large a proportion of nuts.¹⁷

Too Much Sweetness Can Deceive

“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 16:25).

Sugar clogs the system. It hinders the working of the living machine. . . .

There was one case in Montcalm County, Michigan, to which I will refer. The individual was a noble man. He stood six feet and was of fine appearance. I was called to visit him in his sickness. I had previously conversed with him in regard to his manner of living. “I do not like the looks of your eyes,” said I. He was eating large quantities of sugar. I asked him why he did this. He said that he had left off meat, and did not know what would supply its place as well as sugar. His food did not satisfy him, simply because his wife did not know how to cook. Some of you send your daughters, who have nearly grown to womanhood, to school to learn the sciences before they know how to cook, when this should be made of the first importance. Here was a woman who did not know how to cook; she had not learned how to prepare healthful food. The wife and mother was deficient in this important branch of education; and as the result, poorly cooked food not being sufficient to sustain the demands of the system, sugar was eaten immoderately, which brought on a diseased condition of the entire system. This man’s life was sacrificed unnecessarily to bad cooking. When I went to see the sick man I tried to tell them as well as I could how to manage, and soon he began slowly to improve. But he imprudently exercised his strength when not able, ate a small amount not of the right quality, and was taken down again. This time there was no help for him. His system appeared to be a living mass of corruption. He died a victim to poor cooking. He tried to make sugar supply the place of good cooking, and it only made matters worse. . . .

Sugar, when largely used, is more injurious than meat.¹⁸

The various little dishes connected for desserts are injurious instead of helpful and healthful, and from the light given me there should be a decided change in the preparation of food.¹⁹

Reasonable Service

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

[Christ] condescended to a life of humiliation. He was subjected to scorn. He was despised and rejected of men. He bore insult and mockery, and a most painful death in the most shameful manner, in order that He might exalt and save the fallen sons and daughters of Adam from hopeless misery. In view of this unparalleled sacrifice and mysterious love manifested for us by our Redeemer, shall we withhold from God our entire service, which at the best is so feeble? . . .

Christians should not make it a practice to urge their families to work until their energy is exhausted, and there is no vitality left to devote to the service of God, who requires soul, body, mind, and strength. If you employ the powers of your entire being to serve your own interest, what have you reserved to offer to God? Is it not a lame sacrifice? . . .

Time is well spent that is devoted to the instruction of your children. You may be living, acceptable missionaries for God, and yet be mechanics, merchants, and farmers. You can engage in the work of your Master with all your souls, and let your light shine to others. May the Lord arouse you, is my prayer, to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added. How do you prove God? Have you not made all the provisions it was possible for you to make? Have you not looked far into the future to arrange for your supposed future wants? Have you not taken thought for the morrow, and is not your salvation made secondary? You do not attend to things of eternal moment; but are looking years into the future to provide for your families.

But what says our Lord? “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” (Matthew 6:25). . . .

The words of our Saviour here quoted need no comment.²⁰

Fresh Air and Sunshine

“Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun” (Ecclesiastes 11:7).

Seeing the flowers, plucking the ripe fruit from the trees, hearing the happy songs of the birds, have a peculiarly exhilarating effect on the nervous system. From out-of-door life, men, women, and children will gain the desire to be pure and guileless. By the influence of the quickening, reviving, life-giving properties of nature’s great medicinal resources, the functions of the body are strengthened, the intellect awakened, the imagination quickened, the spirits enlivened. The mind is prepared to appreciate the beauties of God’s word. . . .

How much better it is for the sick to be in the open air than within four walls, decorated though these walls may be with many pictures!²¹

By the beauty of flower and field, [the mind of the sick] will be diverted from themselves, from their aches and pains, and they will be led to look from nature to the God of nature, who has provided so abundantly the beauties of the natural world. The convalescent can lie in the shade of the trees, and those who are stronger can, if they wish, work among the flowers, doing just a little at first, and increasing their efforts as they grow stronger. Working in the garden, gathering flowers and fruit, listening to the birds praising God, the patients will be wonderfully blessed. Angels of God will draw near to them. They will forget their sorrows. Melancholy and depression will leave them. The fresh air and sunshine, and the exercise taken, will bring them life and vitality. The wearied brain and nerves will find relief.²²

Nature is God’s physician. The pure air, the glad sunshine, the beautiful flowers and trees, the orchards and vineyards, and outdoor exercise amid these surroundings, are health-giving—the elixir of life. Outdoor life is the only medicine that many invalids need. . . .

How grateful to weary invalids accustomed to city life, the glare of many lights, and the noise of the streets are the quiet and freedom of the country!²³

Wonderful Water

"[The Lord] sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst" (Psalm 104:10, 11).

God's miracles do not always bear the outward semblance of miracles. Often they are brought about in a way which looks like the natural course of events. When we pray for the sick, we also work for them. We answer our own prayers by using the remedies within our reach. Water, wisely applied, is a most powerful remedy.²⁴

The impurities of the body, if not allowed to escape, are taken back into the blood, and forced upon the internal organs. Nature, to relieve herself of poisonous impurities, makes an effort to free the system, which effort produces fevers, and what is termed disease. But even then, if those who are afflicted would assist nature in her efforts, by the use of pure, soft water, much suffering would be prevented. But many, instead of doing this, and seeking to remove the poisonous matter from the system, take a more deadly poison into the system, to remove a poison already there.²⁵

Many have never experienced the beneficial effects of water, and are afraid to use one of Heaven's greatest blessings. Water has been refused to persons suffering with burning fevers, through fear that it would injure them. If, in their fevered state, water had been given them to drink freely, and applications had also been made externally, long days and nights of suffering would have been saved, and many precious lives spared. But thousands have died with raging fevers consuming them, until the fuel which fed the fever was burnt up, the vitals consumed, and have died in the greatest agony, without being permitted to have water to allay their burning thirst.²⁶

Brother H. . . . Plenty of exercise in the open air, and an abstemious diet, are essential to your health. You should not eat more than two meals a day. If you feel that you must eat at night, take a drink of cold water, and in the morning you will feel much better for not having eaten.²⁷

Cleanliness Needed

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22).

A great amount of suffering might be saved if all would labor to prevent disease, by strictly obeying the laws of health. Strict habits of cleanliness should be observed. Many, while well, will not take the trouble to keep in a healthy condition. They neglect personal cleanliness, and are not careful to keep their clothing pure. Impurities are constantly and imperceptibly passing from the body, through the pores, and if the surface of the skin is not kept in a healthy condition, the system is burdened with impure matter. If the clothing worn is not often washed, and frequently aired, it becomes filthy with impurities which are thrown off from the body by sensible and insensible perspiration. And if the garments worn are not frequently cleansed from these impurities, the pores of the skin absorb again the waste matter thrown off. The impurities of the body, if not allowed to escape, are taken back into the blood, and forced upon the internal organs. . . .

Families have been afflicted with fevers, some have died, and the remaining portion of the family circle have almost murmured against their Maker because of their distressing bereavements, when the sole cause of all their sickness and death has been the result of their own carelessness. The impurities about their own premises have brought upon them contagious diseases, and the sad afflictions which they charge upon God. Every family that prizes health should cleanse their houses and their premises of all decaying substances.

God commanded that the children of Israel should in no case allow impurities of their persons, or of their clothing. Those who had any personal uncleanness were shut out of the camp until evening, and then were required to cleanse themselves and their clothing before they could enter the camp. Also they were commanded of God to have no impurities upon their premises. . . .

In regard to cleanliness, God requires no less of His people now, than He did of ancient Israel.²⁸

Self-Control in Everything

“Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Corinthians 9:25).

Children are frequently indulged in eating what they choose and when they choose, without reference to health. There are many children who are educated gourmards from their babyhood. Through indulgence of appetite they are made dyspeptics at an early age. Self-indulgence and intemperance in eating grow with their growth and strengthen with their strength. Mental and physical vigor are sacrificed through the indulgence of parents. A taste is formed for certain articles of food from which they can receive no benefit, but only injury; and as the system is taxed, the constitution becomes debilitated.²⁹

All who have a true sense of the sacrifice made by Christ in leaving His home in heaven to come to this world that He might by His own life show man how to resist temptation will cheerfully deny self and choose to be partakers with Christ of His sufferings.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Those who overcome as Christ overcame will need to constantly guard themselves against the temptations of Satan. The appetite and passions should be restricted and under the control of enlightened conscience, that the intellect may be unimpaired, the perceptive powers clear, so that the workings of Satan and his snares may not be interpreted to be the providence of God. Many desire the final reward and victory which are to be given to overcomers, but are not willing to endure toil, privation, and denial of self, as did their Redeemer. It is only through obedience and continual effort that we shall overcome as Christ overcame.

The controlling power of appetite will prove the ruin of thousands, when, if they had conquered on this point, they would have had moral power to gain the victory over every other temptation of Satan. But those who are slaves to appetite will fail in perfecting Christian character.³⁰

Therapeutic Trust

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God” (Psalm 42:11).

What you want is the Spirit of Jesus. You need to cherish it continually; and then when difficulties shall arise, you will be hid in Christ, and will manifest the Spirit of Christ on any and every occasion. You should not encourage a feeling of sympathy and pity for yourself. All self should be hid in Jesus Christ, and then you will feel such sincere sorrow and pity for the souls who do not know what is for their best good, that you will forget all about your being misused.

We must bear in mind continually this fact: that the hand of Jesus reaches over every one of His sincere followers, and every blow that is aimed at you to injure you, wounds the hand of Jesus that covers you. So you are to lose self entirely; to put it out of sight as much as possible; and when you see that your words are not received by those you greatly desire to help and save, then you must flee to Christ and pray. . . .

We are not one-fifth part as meek and humble as we should be.³¹

It is a duty we owe to ourselves to cultivate self-reliance and independence of character; but these traits must be blended with meekness and humility. When we trust to our own wisdom and judgment, as a large number do, we are in the sure path to shame and confusion of face. It is only through divine grace that we can overcome the defects in our character; but unless we make continued efforts to subdue them, they will become stronger.³²

Satan tries to interpose himself between us and Christ, but we must drive him back by talking faith and by exalting the power of Jesus to save us. Shall we not take steps in advance without delay? Shall we not show that we are not afraid to trust our Saviour in the darkness as well as in the light?³³

Happy Faith Is Medicinal

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones” (Proverbs 17:22).

The sympathy which exists between the mind and the body is very great. When one is affected, the other responds. The condition of the mind has much to do with the health of the physical system. If the mind is free and happy, under a consciousness of rightdoing and a sense of satisfaction in causing happiness to others, it will create a cheerfulness that will react upon the whole system, causing a freer circulation of the blood and a toning up of the entire body. The blessing of God is a healer, and those who are abundant in benefiting others will realize that wondrous blessing in their hearts and lives.³⁴

The influence of the Spirit of God is the very best medicine for disease. Heaven is all health; and the more deeply heavenly influences are realized, the more sure will be the recovery of the believing invalid. The true principles of Christianity open before all a source of inestimable happiness. Religion is a continual wellspring, from which the Christian can drink at will and never exhaust the fountain.

The relation which exists between the mind and the body is very intimate. When one is affected, the other sympathizes. The condition of the mind affects the health of the physical system. If the mind is free and happy, from a consciousness of rightdoing and a sense of satisfaction in causing happiness to others, it creates a cheerfulness that will react upon the whole system, causing a freer circulation of the blood and a toning up of the entire body. The blessing of God is a healing power, and those who are abundant in benefiting others will realize that wondrous blessing in both heart and life.

When men who have indulged in wrong habits and sinful practices yield to the power of divine truth, the application of that truth to the heart revives the moral powers, which had seemed to be paralyzed. The receiver possesses stronger, clearer understanding than before he riveted his soul to the eternal Rock. Even his physical health improves.³⁵

Humbling Ourselves for Health

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones” (Proverbs 3:7, 8).

My brother, you have much to learn. You indulge your appetite by eating more food than your system can convert into good blood. It is sin to be intemperate in the quantity of food eaten, even if the quality is unobjectionable. Many feel that if they do not eat meat and the grosser articles of food, they may eat of simple food until they cannot well eat more. This is a mistake. Many professed health reformers are nothing less than gluttons. They lay upon the digestive organs so great a burden that the vitality of the system is exhausted in the effort to dispose of it. It also has a depressing influence upon the intellect; for the brain nerve power is called upon to assist the stomach in its work. Overeating, even of the simplest food, benumbs the sensitive nerves of the brain, and weakens its vitality. Overeating has a worse effect upon the system than overworking; the energies of the soul are more effectually prostrated by intemperate eating than by intemperate working.³⁶

The self-denial, humility, and temperance required of the righteous, whom God especially leads and blesses, is to be presented to the people in contrast to the extravagant, health-destroying habits of those who live in this degenerate age.

God has shown that health reform is as closely connected with the third angel's message as the hand is with the body. There is nowhere to be found so great a cause of physical and moral degeneracy as a neglect of this important subject. Those who indulge appetite and passion, and close their eyes to the light for fear they will see sinful indulgences which they are unwilling to forsake, are guilty before God. Whoever turns from the light in one instance hardens his heart to disregard the light upon other matters. Whoever violates moral obligations in the matter of eating and dressing, prepares the way to violate the claims of God in regard to eternal interests.

Our bodies are not our own.³⁷

God's Ways Promote Health

"My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh" (Proverbs 4:20–22).

There is health in obedience to God's law.

The wise man says that wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Proverbs 3:17). Many cherish the impression that devotion to God is detrimental to health and to cheerful happiness in the social relations of life. But those who walk in the path of wisdom and holiness find that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8). They are alive to the enjoyment of life's real pleasures, while they are not troubled with vain regrets over misspent hours, nor with gloom or horror of mind, as the worldling too often is when not diverted by some exciting amusement. . . . Godliness does not conflict with the laws of health, but is in harmony with them. Had men ever been obedient to the law of Ten Commandments, . . . the curse of disease that now floods the world would not be.

The assurance of God's approval will promote physical health. It fortifies the soul against doubt, perplexity, and excessive grief, that so often sap the vital forces and induce nervous diseases.

The consciousness of rightdoing is the best medicine for diseased bodies and minds. The special blessing of God resting upon the receiver is health and strength.

A person whose mind is quiet and satisfied in God is in the pathway to health. To have a consciousness that the eyes of the Lord are upon us, and His ears open to hear our prayers, is a satisfaction indeed. To know that we have a never-failing Friend in whom we can confide all the secrets of the soul, is a privilege which words can never express.

Courage, hope, faith, sympathy, love, promote health and prolong life. A contented mind, a cheerful spirit, is health to the body and strength to the soul.³⁸

Overcoming Prejudice in Health Lines

"I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after" (Jeremiah 30:17).

The physician who endeavors to enlighten his patients as to the nature and causes of their maladies and to teach them how to avoid disease, may have uphill work; but if he is a conscientious reformer, he will talk plainly of the ruinous effects of self-indulgence in eating, drinking, and dressing, of the overtaxation of the vital forces that has brought his patients where they are. He will not increase the evil by administering drugs till exhausted nature gives up the struggle, but will teach the patients how to form correct habits, and to aid nature in her work of restoration by a wise use of her own simple remedies.³⁹

Dr. Kellogg, God has given you favor with the medical fraternity, and he would have you hold that favor. But in no case are you to stand as do the physicians of the world to exalt allopathy above every other practice, and call all other methods quackery and error; for from the beginning to the present time the results of allopathy have made a most objectionable showing. There has been loss of life in your sanitarium because drugs have been administered, and these give no chance for nature to do her work of restoration. Drug medication has broken up the power of the human machinery, and the patients have died. Others have carried the drugs away with them, making less effective the simple remedies nature uses to restore the system. The students in your institution [Battle Creek Sanitarium] are not to be educated to regard drugs as a necessity. They are to be educated to leave drugs alone.⁴⁰

All who have had the light on health reform are to put their intelligence into practical use, and will thus remove prejudice against health reform. To furnish conveniences for the wise treatment of common ailments will be blessed of God, and do far more good than merely teaching without practicing.⁴¹

The Poultice Prescription

"In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying, I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. . . . And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered" (2 Kings 20:1-3, 7).

One word from God, one touch of the divine finger, would have been enough to cure Hezekiah instantly. But instead, he was given directions to make a poultice of figs, and lay it upon the part affected. This was done, and Hezekiah was restored to health. It would be well to treasure this prescription which the Lord ordered to be used, more than we do.⁴²

The medical fraternity . . . would call the Lord's prescription for Hezekiah quackery. Death was pronounced upon the king, but he prayed for life, and his prayer was heard. Those who had the care of him were told to get a bunch of figs and put them on the sore, and the king was restored. This means was taken by God to teach them that all their preparations were only depriving the king of the power to rally and overcome disease. While they pursued their course of treatment, his life could not be saved. The Lord diverted their minds from their wonderful mysteries to a simple remedy of nature. There are lessons for us all in these directions.⁴³

If the eyes are weak, if there is pain in the eyes, or inflammation, soft flannel cloths wet in hot water and salt, will bring relief quickly.

When the head is congested, if the feet and limbs are put in a bath with a little mustard, relief will be obtained.

There are many more simple remedies which will do much to restore healthful action to the body. All these simple preparations the Lord expects us to use for ourselves, but man's extremities are God's opportunities.⁴⁴

“None of These Diseases”

“If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee” (Exodus 15:26).

The Lord gave His word to ancient Israel, that if they would cleave strictly to Him and do all His requirements, He would keep them from all the diseases such as He had brought upon the Egyptians; but this promise was given on the condition of obedience.⁴⁵

The grace of God is always reformatory. Every human being is in a school, where he is to learn to give up hurtful practices, and to obtain a knowledge of what he can do for himself. Those who ignore these things, who take no precautions in regard to getting pure air to breathe and pure water to drink, cannot be free from disease. Their systems are defiled and the human structure injured. . . .

Knowledge is strewn along their pathway, but they refuse to gather up the rays of light, saying that they depend on God. But will God do those things that He has left for them to do? Will He supply their neglect? Will He wink at their willing ignorance, and do great things for them, by restoring soul, body, and spirit, while they ignore the most simple agencies, the use of which would bring them their health? While day by day they indulge their appetite by eating that which brings disease, can they expect the Lord to work a miracle to restore them? This is not the Lord’s way of working.⁴⁶

Those who perceive the evidences of God’s love, who understand something of the wisdom and beneficence of His laws, and the blessings that result from obedience, will come to regard their duties and obligations from an altogether different point of view. Instead of looking upon an observance of the laws of health as a matter of sacrifice or self-denial, they will regard it, as it really is, as an inestimable blessing.⁴⁷

Witnessing for the Great Healer

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases” (Psalm 103:2, 3).

John the Baptist received a training for his life work, not in the schools of the rabbis, but in the wilderness, alone with God and His Word. As he prayed, the Scriptures were opened before him in a wonderful manner. And today God is just as willing to instruct those who will humbly seek for that wisdom which cometh from above. . . .

We have not time to spend years in studying subjects that will be of no practical value. We are not to think that we must climb to the highest rounds of knowledge on every science. Time is short, and we must labor earnestly to save souls. If we will take the Word of God, and study it diligently and prayerfully, we will find the light and the knowledge that we need.⁴⁸

Before there were any sanitariums among us, my husband and I began work in medical missionary lines. We would bring to our house cases that had been given up by the physicians to die. When we knew not what to do for them we would pray to God most earnestly, and He always sent His blessing. He is the mighty Healer, and He worked with us. We never had time or opportunity to take a medical course, but we had success as we moved out in the fear of God and sought Him for wisdom at every step. This gave us courage in the Lord.

Thus we combined prayer and labor. We used the simple water treatments, and then tried to fasten the eyes of the patients on the Great Healer. We told them what He could do for them. If we can inspire the patients with hope, this is greatly to their advantage. We want all that have any part to act in our sanitariums to have a firm grasp on the power of the Infinite. We believe in Him and in the power of His word. When we do our best for the recovery of the sick, we may then look for Him to be with us, that we may see of His salvation. We put too little confidence in the power of the hand that rules the world.⁴⁹

In the Master's Footsteps

"All they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto [Jesus]; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them" (Luke 4:40).

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). . . .

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.⁵⁰

In no other line of the work is the truth to shine more brightly than in the medical missionary work. Every true medical missionary has a remedy for the sin-sick soul as well as for the diseased body. By faith in Christ he is to act as an evangelist, a messenger of mercy. As he uses the simple remedies which God has provided for the cure of physical suffering, he is to speak of Christ's power to heal the maladies of the soul.⁵¹

Prayer to the Great Physician for the healing of the soul brings the blessing of God. Prayer unites us one to another and to God. Prayer brings Jesus to our side, and gives new strength and fresh grace to the fainting, perplexed soul. By prayer the sick have been encouraged to believe that God will look with compassion upon them. A ray of light penetrates to the hopeless soul, and becomes a savor of life unto life.⁵²

Speech That Heals

“There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health” (Proverbs 12:18).

In one moment, by the hasty, passionate, careless tongue, may be wrought evil that a whole lifetime’s repentance cannot undo. Oh, the hearts that are broken, the friends estranged, the lives wrecked, by the harsh, hasty words of those who might have brought help and healing!⁵³

A contented mind, a cheerful spirit, is health to the body and strength to the soul. Nothing is so fruitful a cause of disease as depression, gloominess, and sadness.⁵⁴

God calls not only for our gifts for the needy, but for our cheerful countenance, our hopeful words, our kindly handclasp. When Christ healed the sick, He laid His hands upon them. So should we come in close touch with those whom we seek to benefit.

There are many from whom hope has departed. Bring back the sunshine to them. Many have lost their courage. Speak to them words of cheer. Pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. Read to them from the word of God. Upon many is a soul sickness which no earthly balm can reach nor physician heal. Pray for these souls, bring them to Jesus. Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician there.⁵⁵

We shall find the footprints of Jesus by the sickbed, by the side of suffering humanity, in the hovels of the poverty-stricken and distressed. We may walk in these footsteps, comforting the suffering, speaking words of hope and comfort to the despondent. Doing as Jesus did when He was upon earth, we shall walk in His blessed steps.⁵⁶

With unfailing tenderness and gentleness [Jesus] met every form of human woe and affliction. Not for Himself, but for others, did He labor. He was willing to humble Himself, to deny Himself. He did not seek to distinguish Himself. He was the servant of all. It was His meat and drink to be a comfort and a consolation to others, to gladden the sad and heavy-laden ones with whom He daily came in contact.⁵⁷

The Power of Pleasant Words

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones” (Proverbs 16:24).

Words of kindness and sympathy will do good as a medicine, and will heal souls that are in despair. The knowledge of the word of God brought into the practical life will have a healing, soothing power. Harshness of speech will never bring blessing to yourself or to any other soul.⁵⁸

Unless we control our words and temper, we are slaves to Satan. We are in subjection to him. He leads us captive. All this jangling and unpleasant, impatient, fretful words are an offering presented to his satanic majesty. And it is a costly offering, more costly than any sacrifice we can make to God, for it destroys the peace and happiness of whole families, destroys health, and is eventually the cause of forfeiting an eternal life of happiness. The restraint God’s word imposes upon us is for our own interest. It increases the happiness of our families and of all around us. It refines our taste, sanctifies our judgment, and brings peace of mind, and, in the end, everlasting life. Under this holy restraint we shall increase in grace and humility, and it will become easy to speak right. The natural, passionate temper will be held in subjection. An indwelling Saviour will strengthen us every hour. Ministering angels will linger in our dwellings and with joy carry heavenward the tidings of our advance in the divine life, and the recording angel will make a cheerful, happy record.⁵⁹

Keep on the armor of Christ’s righteousness. Pleasant words, faithful attendance, a desire to relieve suffering, will win a way for you to turn the mind to the never failing source of healing, the One who died to pay the ransom price for lost and ruined men. The enemy will press the battle to the gates, but keep the armor on.⁶⁰

Those who are fighting the battle of life at great odds may be strengthened and encouraged by little attentions that cost only a loving effort. To such the strong, helpful grasp of the hand by a true friend is worth more than gold or silver. Words of kindness are as welcome as the smile of angels.⁶¹

Miraculous Power

“Peter said [to the lame man asking for alms], Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength” (Acts 3:6, 7).

With mighty power the disciples preached a crucified and risen Saviour. Signs and wonders were wrought by them in the name of Jesus; the sick were healed; and a man who had been lame from his birth was restored to perfect soundness and entered with Peter and John into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God in the sight of all the people. The news spread, and the people began to press around the disciples. Many ran together, greatly astonished at the cure that had been wrought.

When Jesus died, the priests thought that no more miracles would be performed among them, that the excitement would die out and the people would again turn to the traditions of men. But lo! right among them the disciples were working miracles, and the people were filled with amazement. Jesus had been crucified, and they wondered where His followers had obtained this power. When He was alive, they thought that He imparted power to them; but when He died, they expected the miracles to cease.⁶²

The Jews were astonished that the disciples could perform miracles similar to those of Jesus. He, they supposed, was dead, and they had expected all such wonderful manifestations to cease with Him. Yet here was this man who had been a helpless cripple for forty years, now rejoicing in the full use of his limbs, free from pain, and happy in believing upon Jesus.

The apostles saw the amazement of the people, and questioned them why they should be astonished at the miracle which they had witnessed, and regard them with awe as though it were through their own power they had done this thing. Peter assured them it was done through the merits of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had rejected and crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead the third day.⁶³

Cooperating With Christ Today

"[Peter said, Christ's] name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all" (Acts 3:16).

The manner of Jesus in working His miracles was very different from that of His apostles. His language was that of one who possessed power in Himself. "Be thou clean." "Peace, be still." Neither did He hesitate to accept the honor offered Him on these occasions, nor seek to divert the minds of the people from Himself, as though His miracles were not wrought by His own power, for His own glory. But the apostles wrought miracles only in the name of Jesus, and refused to receive the least honor to themselves. They claimed to be only instruments of that Jesus whom the Jews had crucified, but whom God had raised and elevated to His right hand. He was to receive all the honor and praise.⁶⁴

Some have asked me, "Why should we have sanitariums? Why should we not, like Christ, pray for the sick, that they may be healed miraculously?" I have answered, "Suppose we were able to do this in all cases; how many would appreciate the healing? Would those who were healed become health reformers, or continue to be health destroyers?"

Jesus Christ is the Great Healer, but He desires that by living in conformity with His laws we may cooperate with Him in the recovery and the maintenance of health. Combined with the work of healing there must be an imparting of knowledge of how to resist temptations. Those who come to our sanitariums should be aroused to a sense of their own responsibility to work in harmony with the God of truth.

We cannot heal. We cannot change the diseased conditions of the body. But it is our part, as medical missionaries, as workers together with God, to use the means that He has provided. Then we should pray that God will bless these agencies. We do believe in a God; we believe in a God who hears and answers prayer.⁶⁵

Faith for Healing

“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; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James 5:14, 15).

Multitudes have heard me speak, and have read my writings, but no one has ever heard me claim to work miracles. I have at times been called upon to pray for the sick, and the word of the Lord has been verified. [James 5:14, 15 quoted.] Christ is the great miracle worker. To Him be all the glory.

The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way, for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God’s servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.

For this reason the Lord has marked out a way in which His people are to carry forward a work of physical healing, combined with the teaching of the Word. Sanitariums are to be established, and with these institutions are to be connected workers who will carry forward genuine medical missionary work. Thus a guarding influence is thrown around those who come to the sanitariums for treatment.

This is the provision the Lord has made whereby gospel medical missionary work is to be done for many souls.

It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who will be alive on the earth when past woes and celestial glory will be blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By the means of the angels there will be constant communication between heaven and earth. And Satan, surrounded by evil angels, and claiming to be God, will work miracles of all kinds to deceive, if possible, the very elect. God’s people will not find their safety in working miracles, for Satan would counterfeit any miracle that might be worked.⁶⁶

Praying for the Sick

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed” (James 5:16).

When wrongs have been righted, we may present the needs of the sick to the Lord in calm faith, as His Spirit may indicate. He knows each individual by name, and cares for each as if there were not another upon the earth for whom He gave His beloved Son. Because God’s love is so great and so unending, the sick should be encouraged to trust in Him and be cheerful. To be anxious about themselves tends to cause weakness and disease. If they will rise above depression and gloom, their prospect of recovery will be better; for “the eye of the Lord is upon them” “that hope in His mercy” (Psalm 33:18).

In prayer for the sick it should be remembered that “we know not what we should pray for as we ought” (Romans 8:26). We do not know whether the blessing we desire will be best or not. Therefore our prayers should include this thought: “Lord, thou knowest every secret of the soul. Thou art acquainted with these persons. Jesus, their Advocate, gave His life for them. His love for them is greater than ours can possibly be. If, therefore, it is for Thy glory and the good of the afflicted ones, we ask, in the name of Jesus, that they may be restored to health. If it be not Thy will that they may be restored, we ask that Thy grace may comfort and Thy presence sustain them in their sufferings.”

God knows the end from the beginning. He is acquainted with the hearts of all men. He reads every secret of the soul. He knows whether those for whom prayer is offered would or would not be able to endure the trials that would come upon them should they live. He knows whether their lives would be a blessing or a curse to themselves and to the world. This is one reason why, while presenting our petitions with earnestness, we should say, “Nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). . . .

We know that God hears us if we ask according to His will. But to press our petitions without a submissive spirit is not right; our prayers must take the form, not of command, but of intercession.⁶⁷

Bringing My Body Into Subjection

"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:27).

If Paul was in danger from intemperance, we are in greater danger, because we do not feel and realize as he did the necessity of glorifying God in our bodies and spirits, which are His. Overeating is the sin of this age.⁶⁸

Some who have preached to others will themselves be cast away because they have not perfected a Christian character. In their labor they do not save souls, and fail even to save their own. They do not see the importance of self-knowledge and self-control. They do not watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation. If they would watch, they would become acquainted with their weak points, where they are most likely to be assailed by temptation. With watchfulness and prayer their weakest points can be so guarded as to become their strongest points, and they can encounter temptation without being overcome. . . . There is with nearly all a neglect of self-examination.⁶⁹

If all who profess to be followers of Christ were truly sanctified, their means, instead of being spent for needless and even hurtful indulgences, would be turned into the Lord's treasury, and Christians would set an example of temperance, self-denial, and self-sacrifice. Then they would be the light of the world.

The world is given up to self-indulgence. "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16) control the masses of the people. But Christ's followers have a holier calling.⁷⁰

Providence has been leading the people of God out from the extravagant habits of the world, away from the indulgence of appetite and passion, to take their stand upon the platform of self-denial and temperance in all things. The people whom God is leading will be peculiar. They will not be like the world. But if they follow the leadings of God, they will accomplish His purposes, and will yield their will to His will. Christ will dwell in the heart. The temple of God will be holy.⁷¹

A Little-Known Health Secret

“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? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily” (Isaiah 58:6–8).

Doing good is an excellent remedy for disease.⁷²

All who surrender themselves to God in unselfish service for humanity are in cooperation with the Lord of glory. This thought sweetens all toil, it braces the will, it nerves the spirit for whatever may befall. Working with unselfish heart, ennobled by being partakers of Christ’s sufferings, sharing His sympathies, they help to swell the tide of His joy, and bring honor and praise to His exalted name. In fellowship with God, with Christ, and with holy angels, they are surrounded with a heavenly atmosphere, an atmosphere that brings health to the body, vigor to the intellect, and joy to the soul.

All who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to God’s service will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth His highest energies to work in heart and mind.⁷³

As you stand firm for God, filled with courage and perseverance, constantly revealing self-denial, angels from heaven will come into this [Fernando, California] school. They will keep guard over you. Your health will be precious in God’s sight, because you keep His commandments.⁷⁴

The Lord has given you your life as a sacred trust. Spend it for Him. Visit the sick; comfort the poor and sorrowful, speaking to them of the compassionate Redeemer. This work will bring to you health of body and peace of mind. Your countenance will reflect the joy that comes as the reward of unselfish service.⁷⁵

Who Lives in That House?

"[Jesus] called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1, 2).

Several years ago, during a former visit to the South, while out on long drives, I sometimes asked who occupied the homes we passed, and I learned that in many of the larger Southern houses were men who bear important responsibilities in the care of great estates. Upon further inquiry, I learned that no one had sought to bring before these men the Word of life. None had gone to them, with Bible in hand, and said, 'We have something precious for you, and we want that you should hear it.' Now it has been presented before me repeatedly that this is a line of work that must be done. We are to go out into the highways and into the hedges and carry to the people the message of truth that Christ has given us. We are to compel many to come in. . . .

The Lord is calling upon His people to take up different lines of missionary work, to sow beside all waters. We do but a small part of the work that He desires us to do among our neighbors and friends. By kindness to the poor, the sick, or the bereaved we may obtain an influence over them, so that divine truth will find access to their hearts. No such opportunity for service should be allowed to pass unimproved. It is the highest missionary work that we can do. The presentation of the truth in love and sympathy from house to house is in harmony with the instruction of Christ to His disciples when He sent them out on their first missionary tour.⁷⁶

It is this work lying nearest us that the Lord now calls upon the church to undertake. We are not to stand, saying: 'Who is my neighbor?' We are to remember that our neighbor is the one who most needs our sympathy and help. . . . There are no territorial lines, no artificial distinctions, no caste, no aristocracy.⁷⁷

O that thousands more of our people had a realization of the time in which we are living, and of the work to be done in field service, in house-to-house labor.⁷⁸

Mercy for the Ignorant

“Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them. They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof” (Job 24:12, 13).

God’s test of the heathen, who have not the light, and of those living where the knowledge of truth and light has been abundant, is altogether different. He accepts from those in heathen lands a phase of righteousness which does not satisfy Him when offered by those of Christian lands. He does not require much where much has not been bestowed.¹

We are under obligation to will to do the will of God. The Saviour is working for us. He is our Advocate in the heavenly courts, ever making intercession for us. The cry of the one ready to perish finds swift entrance to His ear. “He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper” (Psalm 72:12). Shall we not work for Him on the lines He has marked out? Shall we not be Christlike advocates of those who err?

Christ suffered, being tempted; therefore He always sympathizes with the tempted ones whom Satan is seeking to destroy. That He might be a merciful and faithful high priest, He was in all things made like those He came to help. He has compassion on the ignorant, and on those who are out of the way; for when on this earth He was compassed with infirmity. He is able to help us in our perplexities. As He works for us, let us work for one another. Let us reveal His love for our fellow workers, acting in such a way that they will have full confidence in us.

Many more than we suppose need a helping hand held out to them. There are many to whom words of compassion and sympathy would be as a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul. Are you doing Christ service by ministering to weary, discouraged fellow-beings? In love and pity Christ helps us. Shall we not impart His grace to others, by speaking to them words of hope and courage?²

Knowledge to Bless All

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children” (Hosea 4:6).

God has caused precious light to be brought out in publications, and these should be owned and read by every family. Parents, your children are in danger of going contrary to the light given of heaven, and you should both purchase and read the books, for they will be a blessing to you and yours. You should lend *Spirit of Prophecy* to your neighbors and prevail upon them to buy copies for themselves. Missionaries for God, you should be earnest, active, vigorous workers.

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, 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.³

Shall the warnings from God be passed by unheeded? Shall the opportunities for service be unimproved? Shall the world's scorn, the pride of reason, conformity to human customs and traditions, hold the professed followers of Christ from service to Him? Will they reject God's word as the Jewish leaders rejected Christ? The result of Israel's sin is before us. Will the church of today take warning?⁴

We are first to take heed to ourselves, receiving with humble hearts the principles of truth and working them out in perfect obedience. This will bring joy and peace.⁵

Shun Whatever the Word Condemns

“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination” (Proverbs 28:9).

Satan will endeavor to destroy the faith of every follower of Christ. He comes to some as a roaring lion. To others he appears in angel garments, his voice subdued to the gentlest whisper. Our only safety is to cling with unwavering faith to the word of God, and promptly and resolutely to shun whatever that word condemns, it matters not how pleasing its appearance, or how specious its pretenses.

There are some professed Christians who are always weak, always desponding. They permit themselves to be constantly harassed by doubts, and seem to think they must always remain in this condition. These persons might be free, did they but realize their danger, and put forth an effort to escape from the snare of Satan. Let them cease to give utterance to their doubts. Every unbelieving word strengthens their own tendency to doubt, and plants the evil seed in the minds of others. Whatever we choose to sow, that we must reap. If the farmer sows wheat, he will reap wheat. If he sows thistle seed, his harvest will consist only of thistles. . . .

God will never remove all excuse for unbelief. Those who look for hooks to hang their doubts upon will find them close at hand. It is far easier to suggest doubts than to inspire faith. Because the natural heart is at enmity with God, a greater effort is required to believe than to doubt the word of the Most High. And Satan himself opposes everything that would strengthen faith.

There is one course which all must pursue who honestly desire to be freed from doubts. They are cherishing some indulgence forbidden by the word of God, or neglecting some duty enjoined therein. Let those who complain that they walk in darkness, give heed to the light which already shines upon them, and they will receive greater light. Let them do every duty which has been made plain to their understanding, and they will be enabled to understand and perform those of which they are now in doubt.⁶

The Word Inspires True Fellowship

“If we say that we have fellowship with [God], and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:6, 7).

If the people of God would appreciate His word, we should have a heaven in the church here below. Christians would be eager, hungry, to search the word. They would be anxious for time to compare scripture with scripture and to meditate upon the word. They would be more eager for the light of the word than for the morning paper, magazines, or novels. Their greatest desire would be to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God. And as a result their lives would be conformed to the principles and promises of the word. Its instruction would be to them as the leaves of the tree of life. It would be in them a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. Refreshing showers of grace would refresh and revive the soul, causing them to forget all toil and weariness. They would be strengthened and encouraged by the words of inspiration.

Ministers would be inspired with divine faith. Their prayers would be characterized by earnestness, filled with the divine assurance of truth. Weariness would be forgotten in the sunlight of heaven. Truth would be interwoven with their lives, and its heavenly principles would be as a fresh, running stream, constantly satisfying the soul.

The Lord’s philosophy is the rule of the Christian’s life. The entire being is imbued with the life-giving principles of heaven. The busy nothings which consume the time of so many shrink into their proper position before a healthy, sanctifying Bible piety.

The Bible, and the Bible alone, can produce this good result. It is the wisdom of God and the power of God, and it works with all power in the receptive heart. Oh, what heights we might reach if we would conform our wills to the will of God! It is the power of God that we need, wherever we are.⁷

To Walk in the Light Means to Love

“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him” (1 John 2:9, 10).

We must put away all selfishness, and work together in love and unity. We have loved and petted ourselves, and excused ourselves in waywardness; but we have been unmerciful toward our brethren, who may not be as faulty as ourselves. The Lord loves us, and bears with us, even when we are ungrateful to Him, forgetful of His mercies, wickedly unbelieving; but consider, brethren, how relentless we are to one another, how pitiless; how we hurt and wound one another, when we should love as Christ has loved us. Let us make a complete change. Let us cultivate the precious plant of love, and delight to help one another. We must be kind, forbearing, patient with one another’s errors; we must keep our sharp criticisms for ourselves, but hope all things, believe all things, of our brethren.

Some of you seem to be earnestly seeking for forgiveness of sins, for freedom in God. Do you deserve the pardon that you are seeking? No, you do not; nevertheless, God is willing to grant it freely. And dare you withhold from your brethren the forgiveness and affection of which you do not think them worthy? Would you have God deal thus with you? Deal with your brethren as you wish God to deal with you. If we expect our prayers for forgiveness to be heard, we must offer them in a forgiving spirit. We must forgive others in the same manner, and to the same extent, that we ourselves hope to be forgiven. The hard-heartedness that professed Christians manifest toward one another is not Christlike, but savors of the satanic. We must every one of us open our hearts wide to the love of Jesus, and encourage pity and affection for our brethren.

It was “while we were yet sinners,” that “Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). In view of His unmerited love and mercy toward us, how can we cherish malice, or even one feeling of unkindness toward our brethren, the purchase of His blood?⁸

Have I Passed From Death Unto Life?

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John 3:14).

Let us put away all suspicion and hatred, and all feelings of bitterness, even toward our worst enemies, those who seek to do us harm. But, brethren, do not wait till the heart is in harmony with your brother before you come to Jesus; for it is His Spirit and power working in you that will give you the victory.

Many are filled with self-importance, and esteem themselves above their brethren. Such should let self die; let the carnal mind be crucified. If you have enmity, suspicion, envy, and jealousy in your hearts, you have a work to do. Confess your sins; come into harmony with your brethren. Speak well of them. Throw out no unfavorable hints, no suggestions that will awaken distrust in the minds of others. Guard their reputation as sacredly as you would have them guard yours; love them as you would be loved of Jesus. Work for their interest, instead of seeking to tear them down, that you may build up self on their ruins. Satan is an accuser of the brethren, and he loves to have you help him. But disappoint him; do not let him triumph over you.

Some pride themselves on being outspoken, blunt, and rough, and they call this frankness; but it is not rightly named. It is selfishness of the deepest dye. These persons may have virtues; they may be liberal and have kind impulses; but their discourteous manners render them almost insupportable. They criticize, they wound, they say disagreeable things. Does the character they are cultivating represent Jesus? Will it fit them for the society of heaven? We shall do well to examine ourselves, to see what manner of spirit we are cherishing. Let us learn to speak gently, quietly, even under circumstances the most trying. Let us control not only our words, but our thoughts and imagination. Let us be kind, courteous, in our words and deportment. There is a great neglect in this respect. We do not adorn the doctrines we profess. We are not what we might be, nor what God would have us to be.⁹

No One Knows It All

“And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Corinthians 8:2).

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 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.¹⁰

Turning at God's Reproof

"How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you" (Proverbs 1:22, 23).

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.¹¹

We may learn the truth of the Bible by living up to all the light that we have in doing the will of God; or we may do as many others are doing, darken and pervert our belief, and corrupt our faith by disobedience. Men turn away from God's great moral standard of righteousness, and try to doubt that it is "holy, and just, and good." They want liberty to sin, and at length they come to doubt that the claims of the law are binding. Because their carnal hearts desire to transgress its precepts, the law of God has become to them a yoke of bondage. Such may, after some disappointment, return to the truth; but they will leave it again, for their hearts are not thoroughly changed. The most useful men in the world have not been the exalted, self-sufficient ones, who have been praised and petted by society; but those who have walked humbly with God, who have been unassuming in manner and guileless in conversation, who have given all the glory to God, not taking any of it to themselves, are the ones who have exerted the most decided and healthful influence upon the church. When they stand before the people, as a mouthpiece for God, everything around them is forgotten. Their words come forth in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. They exert their God-given ability to set things in order in the church, whether it makes them friends or foes. When straight, solemn testimony is needed, in rebuking sin and iniquity, even though it be in those of high position, they will not hold their peace, but will heed the instruction of the God of truth.¹²

Taking Heed How We Hear

“The turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil” (Proverbs 1:32, 33).

The truth of God’s word is spoken to leaden ears, and hard, unimpressible hearts. The impression given the unbeliever by these professed Christians is anything but favorable for the religion of Christ. These dull, careless ones show ambition and zeal when engaged in the business of the world, but things of eternal importance do not engross the mind and interest them as do worldly things. The voice of God through His messengers is a pleasant song; but its sacred warnings, reproofs, and encouragements are all unheeded. Eternal and sacred things are placed upon a level with common things. The Holy Spirit is grieved. Said Christ, “Take heed therefore how ye hear” (Luke 8:18). Those are spiritually dead who profess to worship God while the heart is not in the work. There should be a hearty, wide-awake church to encourage and uphold the hands of the ministers of Jesus Christ.

The people who profess to believe the truth may be familiar with the evidences of our faith, and yet be like the pretentious fig tree, which flaunted its foliage in the face of the world, but when searched by the Master, was found destitute of fruit. Fruitful Christians will be connected with God, and intelligent in the things of God. The truth and the love of God is their meditation. They have feasted upon the words of life, and when they hear it spoken from the desk, they can say, as did the two disciples who were traveling to Emmaus when Christ explained to them the prophecies in reference to himself, “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (Luke 24:32).

All who are connected with the light will let their light shine to the world, and will, in their testimonies, praise God, to whom their hearts will flow forth in gratitude. Those who have a vital union with Christ will rejoice in the assurance of His love.¹³

The Danger of Turning Away

“If thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land” (Deuteronomy 30:17, 18).

The restless, surging masses of humanity have forgotten their Creator; transgression of God’s law has brought discord, misery, and desolation upon our world; and yet, in their blindness and madness, men continue to transgress. They refuse to listen to the voice of God, inviting them to find peace in Him. Kings, statesmen, the mighty ones of the earth, are powerless to give peace and rest to the soul. It is only in obedience to God’s law that true happiness can be found. We must submit our will to God if we would have His divine and eternal harmony in our souls.¹⁴

In these days [God] has instituted no new plan to preserve the purity of His people. As of old, He entreats the erring ones who profess His name to repent and turn from their evil ways. Now, as then, by the mouth of His chosen servants He predicts the dangers before them. He sounds the note of warning and reproves sin. . . . But the Israel of our time have the same temptations to scorn reproof and hate counsel as had ancient Israel. They too often turn a deaf ear to the words that God has given His servants for the benefit of those who profess the truth.¹⁵

Those who refuse to listen in this their day of test and trial will have to meet the results of their own perversity. They may grasp eagerly for the treasures of the earth, seek its honors and pleasures, but what a scene will the judgment present when the books are opened, and every man is rewarded according as his works have been!

The soul’s value is estimated by the cross of Calvary. The Lord appreciates the souls for whom He died, and wants them to be the subjects of His kingdom; but the god of this world blinds the perceptive powers of men so that they do not see their peril.¹⁶

Trembling at God's Word

"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the 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).

Those only who read the Scriptures as the voice of God speaking to them are true learners. They tremble at the voice of God, for to them it is a living reality. They open their understanding to divine instruction and pray for grace, that they may obtain a preparation for service. As the heavenly torch is placed in his hand, the seeker for truth sees his own frailty, his infirmity, the hopelessness of looking to himself for righteousness. He sees that there is in him nothing that can recommend him to God. He prays for the Holy Spirit, the representative of Christ, to be his constant guide, to lead him into all truth.¹⁷

In this age of the world, when Satan is seeking, through manifold agencies, to blind the eyes of men and women to the binding claims of the law of God, there is need of men who can cause many to "tremble at the commandment of our God" (Ezra 10:3). There is need of true reformers, who will point transgressors to the great Lawgiver and teach them that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Psalm 19:7). There is need of men mighty in the Scriptures, men whose every word and act exalts the statutes of Jehovah, men who seek to strengthen faith. Teachers are needed, oh, so much, who will inspire hearts with reverence and love for the Scriptures.¹⁸

All need to enquire, "What must I do to be saved?" God requires humble, contrite hearts, that tremble at His word. It is only from the divine altar that we can receive the celestial torch, which, when received, will give us a full view of our incompetence, and reveal to us the dignity and glory of Christ. When this is seen, God places us under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and it will lead us into all truth.¹⁹

The Blessing of Reproof

"The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Proverbs 6:23).

We must guard against undue severity toward the wrongdoer, but we must also be careful not to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There is need of showing Christlike patience and love for the erring one, but there is also danger of showing so great toleration for his error that he will look upon himself as undeserving of reproof, and will reject it as uncalled for and unjust.

Ministers of the gospel sometimes do great harm by allowing their forbearance toward the erring to degenerate into toleration of sins and even participation in them. Thus they are led to excuse and palliate that which God condemns, and after a time they become so blinded as to commend the very ones whom God commands them to reprove. He who has blunted his spiritual perceptions by sinful leniency toward those whom God condemns, will ere long commit a greater sin by severity and harshness toward those whom God approves.²⁰

The impressions of the Holy Spirit, if disregarded today, will not be as strong tomorrow. The heart becomes less impressible, and lapses into a perilous unconsciousness of the shortness of life, and of the great eternity beyond. Our condemnation in the judgment will not result from the fact that we have been in error, but from the fact that we have neglected heaven-sent opportunities for learning what is truth.²¹

Those who realize their need of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, will have contrition of soul, will repent for their resistance of the Spirit of the Lord. They will confess their sin in refusing the light that heaven has so graciously sent them, and they will forsake the sin that grieved and insulted the Spirit of the Lord. They will humble self, and accept the power and grace of Christ, acknowledging the messages of warning, reproof, and encouragement. Then their faith in the work of God will be made manifest, and they will rely upon the atoning sacrifice.²²

Now Is the Time

"We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)" (2 Corinthians 6:1, 2).

I am thankful that it is not too late for wrongs to be righted; it is not too late to examine our own hearts, and prove ourselves, whether we are in the faith or not; it is not too late to assure ourselves that Christ is abiding in our heart by faith. If we compare ourselves with the great moral standard, we shall understand what are our defects of character. But whatever our defects and shortcomings, we should not be discouraged. We must see our sins, and put them away; for Christ cannot abide in a divided heart.

Our greatest sins which separate our souls from God are unbelief and hardness of heart. Why is it that we are so unbelieving and unimpressible? The reason for it is, we are filled with self-confidence. We feel self-sufficient. If we receive some token of God's blessing, we take it as a guarantee that we are all right; and when reproof comes, we say, "I know that God has accepted me, for He has blessed me, and I will not accept this reproof." What a terrible condition we would be in if the Lord did not bless us! We must study Christ, the Pattern of character that God has given us. If we have a garment to cut, we study the pattern. And in the Christian life, we must give up our own ideas and plans, and go according to the Pattern. But instead of this, we work away from the Pattern. We should not be full of self-conceit. We must say as did John, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

The more you study and copy the Pattern, the less confidence you will have in self. . . . When you see your case as it stands before God, you will have different ideas in regard to your own defects of character than you now have. When views are presented that do not seem in harmony with your own, it should drive you to study your Bible.²³

God Has Shown the Way

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8).

The words and law of God, written in the soul, and exhibited in a consecrated, holy life, have a powerful influence to convict the world. Covetousness, which is idolatry, and envy, and love of the world, will be rooted from the hearts of those who are obedient to Christ, and it will be their pleasure to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God. Oh, how much is comprised in this, walking humbly before God! The law of God, if written in the heart, will bring the mind and will into subjection to the obedience of Christ.

Our faith is peculiar. Many who profess to be living under the sound of the last message of mercy are not separated in their affections from the world. They bow down before the friendship of the world and sacrifice light and principle to secure its favor. The apostle describes the favored people of God in these words: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).²⁴

We do not appreciate the Bible as we should. We do not have a proper estimate of the richness of its stores, nor do we realize the great necessity of searching the Scriptures for ourselves. Men neglect the study of the word of God in order to pursue some worldly interest, or to engage in the pleasures of the time. Some trivial affair is made an excuse for ignorance of the Scriptures given by inspiration of God. But anything of an earthly character might better be put off, than this all-important study, that is to make us wise unto eternal life.²⁵

It is the privilege of every child of God to store his mind with divine truth, and the more he does this the more vigor and clearness of mind he will have to fathom the deep things of God. He will be more and more earnest and vigorous, as the principles of the truth are carried out in his daily life.²⁶

Richness in God's Requirements

"What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13).

Obedience to the Lord's specified statutes will bring the richest blessings.²⁷

You must have an experience much deeper than you have yet even thought of having. Many who are already members of God's great family know little of what it means to behold His glory and to be changed from glory to glory. Many of you have a twilight perception of Christ's excellence, and your souls thrill with joy. You long for a fuller, deeper sense of the Saviour's love. You are unsatisfied. But do not despair. Give to Jesus the heart's best and holiest affections. Treasure every ray of light. Cherish every desire of the soul after God. Give yourselves the culture of spiritual thoughts and holy communings. You have seen but the first rays of the early dawn of His glory. As you follow on to know the Lord, you will know that His going forth is prepared as the morning. "The path of the righteous is as the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18, RV, margin). Having repented of our sins, confessed them, and found pardon, we are to continue to learn of Christ until we come into the full noontide of a perfect gospel faith.²⁸

A life of quiet prayerful meditation is not all that Jesus expects of us. He expects fruit, exemplifying in our lives the virtues of true godliness, not only being good but doing good. The soul must be consecrated by its surrender to God in perfect obedience to His requirements, keeping all of His commandments.²⁹

God requires of us nothing that we cannot in His strength perform; nothing that is not for our own good and the good of our children.³⁰

No Good Thing Withheld

“The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11).

Your faith must not let go of the promises of God, if you do not see or feel the immediate answer to your prayers. Be not afraid to trust God. Rely upon His sure promise: “Ask, and ye shall receive” (John 16:24). God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from His saints that walk uprightly. Man is erring, and although his petitions are sent up from an honest heart, he does not always ask for the things that are good for himself, or that will glorify God. When this is so, our wise and good Father hears our prayers, and will answer, sometimes immediately; but He gives us the things that are for our best good and His own glory. God gives us blessings; if we could look into His plan, we would clearly see that He knows what is best for us and that our prayers are answered. Nothing hurtful is given, but the blessing we need, in the place of something we asked for that would not be good for us, but to our hurt. . . .

If we do not feel immediate answers to our prayers, we should hold fast our faith, not allowing distrust to come in, for that will separate us from God. If our faith wavers, we shall receive nothing from Him. Our confidence in God should be strong; and when we need it most, the blessing will fall upon us like a shower of rain.

When the servants of God pray for His Spirit and blessing, it sometimes comes immediately; but it is not always then bestowed. At such times, faint not. Let your faith hold fast the promise that it will come. Let your trust be fully in God, and often that blessing will come when you need it most, and you will unexpectedly receive help from God when you are presenting the truth to unbelievers, and will be enabled to speak the word with clearness and power. . . .

Every prayer which is sent up in faith from an honest heart will be heard of God and answered, and the one that sent up the petition will have the blessing when he needs it most, and it will often exceed his expectations.³¹

In the Light of God's Countenance

"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance" (Psalm 89:15).

God requires of us to make it our first business to attend to the health and prosperity of the soul. We should know that we are enjoying the favor of God, that He smiles upon us, and that we are His children indeed, and in a position where He can commune with us, and we with Him. We should not be at rest until we are in that position of lowliness and meekness that He can safely bless us, and we be brought into a sacred nearness with God, where His light may shine upon us, and we reflect that light to all around us. But we cannot do this unless we are earnestly striving ourselves to live in the light. This God requires of all His followers.³²

To dwell upon the beauty, goodness, mercy, and love of Jesus is strengthening to the mental and moral powers, and while the mind is kept trained to do the works of Christ, to be obedient children, you will habitually inquire, Is this the way of the Lord? Will Jesus be pleased to have me do this? Will this course be to please myself or to please Jesus? . . .

Many need to make a decided change in the tenor of their thoughts and actions, if they would please Jesus. We can seldom see our sins in the grievous light that God can. Many have habituated themselves to pursue a course of sin, and their hearts harden, under the influence of the power of Satan. And their thoughts are brought into captivity to his evil influences; but when in the strength and grace of God they place their minds against the temptations of Satan, their minds are made clear, their hearts and consciences by being influenced by the Spirit of God are made sensitive, and then sin appears as it is—exceedingly sinful. Then is the time when the secret sins are set in the light of their countenance. They confess their sins to God, and repent of them and become ashamed of sin. . . . He casts them from the light of His countenance behind His back.³³

Come Out of the Cellar!

“O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord” (Isaiah 2:5).

God would have you put away your darkness, and show that there is a power in the Christian religion that there is not in the world. He wants to make you all light in Him; He wants to fill your hearts with love, and peace, and hope. If, then, you continue to cling to your darkness, you dishonor Him; for you do not correctly represent to the world a sin-pardoning Saviour. If you are gloomy, desponding, hopeless, you are a poor representative of the Christian religion. Christ died for all. The sacrifice was complete. It is your privilege and duty to show to the world that you have an entire, all-powerful Saviour. It was the Son of the infinite God who died to purchase a full and free salvation for all that would accept it. Then why not take Him as your Saviour? He rebukes your unbelief; He honors your faith.

Go into a cellar, and you may well talk of darkness, and say, “I cannot see; I cannot see.” But come up into the upper chamber, where the light shines, and you need not be in darkness. Come where Christ is, and you will have light. Talk unbelief, and you will have unbelief; but talk faith, and you will have faith. According to the seed sown will be the harvest. If you talk of heaven and the eternal reward, you will become lighter and lighter in the Lord, and your faith will grow, because it is exercised. Fasten your eyes upon Jesus, dear friends, and by beholding you will become assimilated to His image. Do not allow your thoughts to dwell continually upon things of the earth, but place them upon things that are heavenly, and then, wherever you are, you will be a light to the world.

Live the life of faith day by day. Do not become anxious and distressed about the time of trouble, and thus have a time of trouble beforehand. Do not keep thinking, “I am afraid I shall not stand in the great testing day.” You are to live for the present, for this day only. Tomorrow is not yours. Today you are to maintain the victory over self. Today you are to live a life of prayer. Today you are to fight the good fight of faith.³⁴

From Where Is My Light Coming?

“Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow” (Isaiah 50:11).

The people of God are to walk in the light of heaven, not in the light of the sparks of their own kindling, or in the light of the sparks which the enemy will kindle for them. He will make fires enough to lead us astray if we will be led. We must place ourselves in that position where we reach the highest standard of truth and righteousness, equity and judgment.³⁵

Many look to their ministers to bring the light from God to them, seeming to think this a cheaper way than to be to the trouble of going to God for it themselves. Such lose much. If they would daily follow Christ and make Him their guide and counselor, they might obtain a clear knowledge of His will, and thus be gaining a valuable experience. For want of this very experience, brethren professing the truth walk in the sparks of others' kindling; they are unacquainted with the Spirit of God and have not a knowledge of His will, and are therefore easily moved from their faith. They are unstable, because they trusted in others to obtain an experience for them. Ample provisions have been made for every son and daughter of Adam to obtain individually a knowledge of the divine will, to perfect Christian character, and to be purified through the truth.³⁶

It is a fearful thing to have great light and blessing, to have many opportunities and privileges, and yet make no saving use of them. Those who do not make a saving use of their opportunities will be condemned by the privileges God has granted to them; but those who walk in the light will have increased light. Those who have had the light of truth, and yet have failed to walk in the light, are under the same sentence of condemnation as were Chorazin and Bethsaida. Shall not these warnings be heeded? Shall not these admonitions have weight with us? In the near future it will be seen just who have been walking humbly with God, and who have been obeying His orders.³⁷

The Light of Life

“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

God’s people dwell too much under a cloud. It is not His will that they should live in unbelief. Jesus is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. His children are the children of light. They are renewed in His image, and called out of darkness into His marvelous light. He is the light of the world, and so also are they that follow Him. They shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The more closely the people of God strive to imitate Christ, the more perseveringly will they be pursued by the enemy; but their nearness to Christ strengthens them to resist the efforts of our wily foe to draw them from Christ.

I was shown that there was too much comparing ourselves among ourselves, taking fallible mortals for a pattern, when we have a sure, unerring pattern. We should not measure ourselves by the world, nor by the opinions of men, nor by what we were before we embraced the truth. But our faith and position in the world, as they now are, must be compared with what they would have been if our course had been continually onward and upward since we professed to be followers of Christ. This is the only safe comparison that can be made. In every other there will be self-deception. If the moral character and spiritual state of God’s people do not correspond with the blessings, privileges, and light which have been conferred upon them, they are weighed in the balance, and angels make the report, WANTING.

With some the knowledge of their true state seems to be hidden from them. They see the truth, but perceive not its importance or its claims. They hear the truth, but do not fully understand it, because they do not conform their lives to it, and therefore are not sanctified through obeying it.³⁸

The path of obedience is the path of safety. “He that walketh uprightly walketh surely” (Proverbs 10:9).³⁹

The Lord has one path of safety for His people, and that is the path of obedience to His word.⁴⁰

The path of obedience is the only path that leads to heaven.⁴¹

Stumbling From the Ancient Path

“If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him” (John 11:9, 10).

How many have a dwarfed religious experience. They do not draw nourishment from Christ. They love the world and the things that the world loves. At times their hearts are touched by the love of Christ, but they are not careful to watch and pray. They do not take the path of self-denial and cross-bearing, and follow in the way which Jesus trod while upon earth. They choose to indulge self, and spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which satisfieth not. They are like those whom the prophet describes, when he says, “There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart. Therefore thus saith the Lord; ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such things: the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing. Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken? Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up” (Jeremiah 18:12–15). Those who allow the cares of this world to crowd out the good seed become surfeited with this world. The time that they should devote to the service of God is devoted to the gratification of self. The work of the Lord should be their first anxiety, but Jesus and the souls He died for are treated as matters of secondary importance. Their love of the world, their desire for riches, their anxiety to meet the world’s standard, to follow the fashions of the world, to try every new thing, choke out the world, and it becomes unfruitful.⁴²

The bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness will disperse every dark cloud. . . . How comforting it is to know that we do not need to stumble our way along in midnight darkness. Light is sown for the righteous, and truth and gladness for the upright in heart.⁴³

Living Up to the Light

“Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (John 12:35, 36).

No man or church can associate with a pleasure-loving class, and reveal that they appreciate the rich current which the Lord has sent to those who have simple faith in His word. The world is polluted, corrupted, as was the world in the days of Noah. The only remedy is belief in the truth, acceptance of the light.⁴⁴

The remnant people of God must be a converted people. The presentation of this message is to result in the conversion and sanctification of souls. We are to feel the power of the Spirit of God in this movement. This is a wonderful, definite message; it means everything to the receiver, and it is to be proclaimed with a loud cry. We must have a true, abiding faith that this message will go forth with increasing importance till the close of time.

There are some professed believers who accept certain portions of the *Testimonies* as the message of God, while they reject those portions that condemn their favorite indulgences. Such persons are working contrary to their own welfare and the welfare of the church. It is essential that we walk in the light while we have the light. Those who claim to believe in health reform, and yet work counter to its principles in the daily life practice, are hurting their own souls and are leaving wrong impressions upon the minds of believers and unbelievers.

A solemn responsibility rests upon those who know the truth, that all their works shall correspond with their faith, and that their lives shall be refined and sanctified, and they be prepared for the work that must rapidly be done in these closing days of the message. They have no time or strength to spend in the indulgence of appetite. . . . There are many among us who are deficient in spirituality and who, unless they are wholly converted, will certainly be lost. Can you afford to run the risk?⁴⁵

Proving What Is Acceptable

“Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord” (Ephesians 5:8–10).

God has called us to service as well as to right living. He requires all to do with faithfulness the duties of today; but these duties are much neglected by the majority of professed Christians. They shun the lowly and humble poor, and self-denying, self-sacrificing work for Christ. Their supreme selfishness leads them to choose easier and more agreeable work.

It was not so with the Majesty of heaven. When He whom angels worshipped, He who was rich in honor and glory, came to earth, and found Himself in fashion as a man, He did not hold Himself aloof from the unfortunate, nor excuse Himself from the hard, self-denying path He had entered upon as a teacher of righteousness.⁴⁶

Very few have an experimental knowledge of the sanctifying influence of the truths which they profess. Their obedience and devotion have not been in accordance with their light and privileges. They have no real sense of the obligation resting upon them to walk as children of the light, and not as children of darkness. If the light that has been given to these had been given Sodom and Gomorrah, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes, and would have escaped the signal wrath of God. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for those who have been privileged with the clear light, and have had a vast amount of labor, but have not profited by it. They have neglected the great salvation which God in mercy was willing to bestow.⁴⁷

Worldly men are governed by worldly principles; they can appreciate no other. But Christians should not be governed by these principles. They should not seek to strengthen themselves in the performance of duty by any other consideration than a love to obey every requirement of God as found in His word and dictated by an enlightened conscience.⁴⁸

Separate and Distinct

“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11).

Christ’s followers are required to come out from the world, and be separate, and touch not the unclean, and they have the promise of being the sons and daughters of the Most High, members of the royal family. But if the conditions are not complied with on their part, they will not, cannot, realize the fulfillment of the promise. A profession of Christianity is nothing in the sight of God; but true, humble, willing obedience to His requirements designates the children of His adoption, the recipients of His grace, the partakers of His great salvation. Such will be peculiar, a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men. Their peculiar, holy character will be discernible, and will distinctly separate them from the world, from its affections and lust. . . .

Few among us answer to this description. Their love to God is in word, not in deed and in truth. Their course of action, their works, testify of them that they are not children of the light but of darkness. Their works have not been wrought in God, but in selfishness, in unrighteousness. Their hearts are strangers to His renewing grace. They have not experienced the transforming power which leads them to walk even as Christ walked. Those who are living branches of the heavenly Vine will partake of the sap and nourishment of the Vine. They will not be withered and fruitless branches, but will show life and vigor, and will flourish and bear fruit to the glory of God. They will be careful to depart from all iniquity and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.⁴⁹

In the renewed heart there will be a fixed principle to obey the will of God, because there is a love for what is just, and good, and holy. There will be no hesitating, conferring with the taste, or studying of convenience, or moving in a certain course because others do so. Everyone should live for himself. The minds of all who are renewed by grace will be an open medium, continually receiving light, grace, and truth from above, and transmitting the same to others. Their works are fruitful. Their fruit is unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.⁵⁰

Light Reproves Refreshingly

“All things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light” (Ephesians 5:13).

Let the clear light shine forth. Carefully and prayerfully studied, God’s Word keeps men well-balanced. In this Word we find God’s way clearly defined. No one who searches the Word with sincerity will walk in darkness. But we cannot cast aside the light God sends, and at the same time walk in its rays. To be Christians at all, we must be Christians in all things, revealing His virtues, doing His works. The truth is our safeguard. Planted in the heart by the Holy Spirit, it enables us to see clearly the difference between what is right and what is wrong.⁵¹

Shall we choose darkness rather than light because the light shows us our sins and reproves us? Shall we refuse to come to the light, lest our deeds shall be made manifest? When the truth controls the life, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fulness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The light of truth irradiates the soul temple. The understanding takes hold of Christ. The light is not hated because it reproves and warns, but it is accepted and rejoiced in.

Christ declared, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). If man’s will is submitted to the will of God, the man, though a sinner, will be drawn to Christ. He will realize something of the love manifested by God when He gave His Son to die on Calvary’s cross, to bring life and immortality within the reach of men. The acceptance of the Saviour brings perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the Christ-life, revealed in the character, testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world. No other power could bring about so marked a change in a man’s words, spirit, and actions.

Without Christ the heart of man is cold. But when one feels his need of the Sun of Righteousness; when he comes to Jesus, saying, Lord, I am sinful, unworthy, helpless; save me, or I perish, he is accepted in the Beloved, and his heart is warmed by the rays of divine love.⁵²

God Is Sending a Wake-Up Call

“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:14–17).

We are certainly living in the closing days of this earth’s history. We need to devote much time to our spiritual interests, if we would experience the spiritual growth that is essential in this age. We are to make decided reforms. The Voice said: The watchmen need to awake, and give the trumpet a certain sound. The morning cometh; and also the night. Wake up, My watchmen. Voices that should now be heard presenting the truth are silent.⁵³

We need to awaken and to understand the truth as it is in Jesus. We need to consult the word of God in order that we shall not seek to evade disagreeable work. When we realize that we are workers together with God, the promises will not be spoken with half indifference, but will burn in our hearts, and kindle on our lips. We shall present them to the throne of God with earnestness, and the Lord will pour out His Spirit.⁵⁴

At Christ’s first advent the angels broke the silence of the night with acclamations of praise, and proclaimed, “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will toward men.” He is soon to come again with power and great glory. Those who are not wedded to the world will realize that the time demands something more than a weak, faint, methodical discourse. They will see that there must be earnestness and power accompanying the Word, which will arouse the powers of hell to oppose the warnings. God designs to come to the people to awaken men out of their carnal security, that they may prepare themselves for the great event right upon us. . . . God will accept no sleepy, tame message at this time. In old time “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21). and we may expect such teaching in our day. . . . Let no one suppose that God will not manifest His power among His believing people; for He will work and none can hinder Him.”⁵⁵

“Of God, and Not of Us”

“God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Corinthians 4:6, 7).

Many are gaining a fuller comprehension of the lessons contained in the holy Book than they have seen in the past, and they discern a higher standard of piety. They see that there is a work to be done for the world which will require earnest zeal and energy, self-denial, and self-sacrifice for Christ. A higher, holier type of Christianity than we have seen for many years will be revealed. We need so much the divine touch, that we may no longer work on according to our, ease-loving, indifferent, low standard. But when the church is properly educated, and its members wisely trained, both old and young will have a mind to work.⁵⁶

Paul would impress upon the minds of the ministers and people the reason why the gospel was committed to weak and erring men—that man might not receive the honor due to God only, but that God might receive all the glory. The ambassador is not to congratulate himself and take to himself the honor of success, or even to divide the honor with God, as if by his own power he had accomplished the work. Elaborate reasoning or argumentative demonstrations of doctrines seldom impress upon the hearer the sense of his need and his peril. Simple, brief statements, from a heart made soft and sympathetic by the love of Christ, will be as the grain of mustard seed. . . .

Will my brethren take heed that no glory is given to men? Will they acknowledge that Christ does the work upon the human heart, and not they themselves?⁵⁷

The consecrated messengers who in the early days of Christianity carried to a perishing world the glad tidings of salvation, allowed no thought of self-exaltation to mar their presentation of Christ and Him crucified. They coveted neither authority nor preeminence.⁵⁸

Finding Heaven on Fallen Earth

“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, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:4–6).

If the Lord reproved His people anciently because they neglected to seek counsel of Him when in difficulty, will He not be displeased today if His people, instead of depending on the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness to lighten their way, turn from Him in their test and trial for the aid of human beings who are as erring and inefficient as themselves? Where is our strength? Is it in men who are as helpless and dependent as ourselves, who need guidance from God even as we do?⁵⁹

In the hour of greatest need, when discouragement would overwhelm the soul, it is then that the watchful eye of Jesus sees that we need His help. The hour of man’s necessity is the hour of God’s opportunity. When all human support fails, then Jesus comes to our aid, and His presence scatters the darkness and lifts the cloud of gloom.⁶⁰

If you sit in heavenly places with Christ, you cannot refrain from praising God. Begin to educate your tongues to praise Him and train your hearts to make melody to God; and when the evil one begins to settle his gloom about you, sing praise to God. When things go cross-ways at your homes, strike up a song about the matchless charms of the Son of God, and I tell you, when you touch this strain, Satan will leave you. You can drive out the enemy with his gloom; his dark shadow will be swept from your pathway by praising God, and you can see, oh, so much clearer, the love and compassion of your heavenly Father. It is Satan’s studied effort to eclipse the light of the Sun of Righteousness so that you cannot see it. Your mind should be uplifted to God; you should have praise meetings in your family and in the church. Do not tell a dismal story at any time or in any place. Let the whole world look upon you, and say, “These are people who love God; for we can see His image reflected in them.”⁶¹

Walking in Love

“walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us” (Ephesians 5:2).

He who lives near to Jesus will understand much of the mystery of godliness. He will recognize the mercy that administers reproof, that tests the character, and brings to light the purpose of the heart.⁶²

Take away suffering and need, and we should have no way of understanding the mercy and love of God, no way of knowing the compassionate, sympathetic heavenly Father. Never does the gospel put on an aspect of greater loveliness than when it is brought to the most needy and destitute regions. Then it is that its light shines forth with the clearest radiance and the greatest power. Truth from the word of God enters the hovel of the peasant; rays from the Sun of Righteousness light up the rude cottage of the poor, bringing gladness to the sick and suffering. Angels of God are there, and the simple faith shown makes the crust of bread and the cup of water a banquet. The sin-pardoning Saviour welcomes the poor and ignorant, and gives them to eat of the bread that comes down from heaven. They drink of the water of life. Those who have been loathed and abandoned are through faith and pardon raised to the dignity of sons and daughters of God. Lifted above the world, they sit in heavenly places in Christ. They may have no earthly treasure, but they have found the pearl of great price.⁶³

The love which Christ has evinced for us is without a parallel. . . . 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.⁶⁴

This Is Love

"This is love, that we walk after his commandments" (2 John 6).

Every sinful indulgence, every form of vice, all selfish ambition, is condemned by the moral law. The cheap, loose, inattentive type of mind and character which is so prevalent in this generation, is not sanctioned by the law of God. That law condemns the sensual vice that clothes itself in an appearance of loveliness until the soul is ensnared and learns by bitter experience how hateful are the results of indulgence in sin. The law of God is an emanation from the divine mind, and the commandments cover the moral obligation of men.

During the brief probation of life, we are to be educated and disciplined for the future immortal life, and the rule of life is to be the commandments of God. "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," are not grievous commands. The law of God is not a yoke of bondage, for the doers of the law shall find life and strength in obedience, and through the grace given them by Jesus Christ they are enabled to be truly obedient to God's holy rule of life. To keep God's commandments is to keep the soul in the love of God, to secure life from evil, and to discipline the character for a heaven of love.

Those who teach that the binding claims of the law of God have been abolished, think that they know all about the commandments of God; but they make it manifest by their course of disobedience that they are ignorant of the first and last principles of the law, and that they know nothing of the character of God, which is portrayed in the law. . . . Those who imagine that they understand the law of God while living in disobedience, make their ignorance manifest by their life and example, and reveal the fact that they have no comprehension of the depth and significance of its precepts.

The law is our teacher, instructing us as to what is rectitude and perfection of character, in order that through the righteousness of Christ we may have a living connection with God.⁶⁵

Beams From the Sun of Righteousness

“Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:2).

Light is a blessing, a universal blessing, pouring forth its treasures on a world unthankful, unholy, demoralized. So it is with the light of the Sun of Righteousness. The whole earth, wrapped as it is in the darkness of sin, and sorrow, and pain, is to be lighted with the knowledge of God’s love. From no sect, rank, or class of people is the light shining from heaven’s throne to be excluded.

The message of hope and mercy is to be carried to the ends of the earth. Whosoever will, may reach forth and take hold of God’s strength and make peace with Him, and he shall make peace. No longer are the heathen to be wrapped in midnight darkness. The gloom is to disappear before the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. The power of hell has been overcome.⁶⁶

The Lord gives to the earth not only clouds and rain, but the beautiful smiling sunshine which causes the seeds sown to spring up, the green foliage and buds and flowers to appear. Just so, dear parents, should be your work in your family and in the vineyard of the Lord. You need to give not only restrictions and reproofs and correction, but encouragement, the pleasant sunshine of kind words—cheerful, joyful, happy words—in your homes and in the church. . . .

We want more sunshiny parents and more sunshiny Christians. Oh, what a revelation will be made in the great day of accounts when the judgment shall sit and the books be opened! We are too much shut up to ourselves. The kindly, encouraging word is withheld. The smile which costs us nothing is not given to the children, to the destitute, the oppressed and discouraged.⁶⁷

The wails of a world’s sorrows are all around us; its shadow is pressing in upon us, and our minds must be ready for every good word and work because we know we have the presence of Jesus. The sweet influence of His Holy Spirit is teaching and guiding our thoughts, to speak the words that will refresh and cheer and brighten the path of others.⁶⁸

A Prayer for Us

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22).

Our heavenly Father, we come to Thee this evening, as our only Refuge, as our only Helper, as the only One who can save us from ourselves. . . . Thou alone canst break the iron bands of the heart. Thou alone canst cause the blind eyes to discern what sin is. Thou alone canst impress the understanding with a realization of the character that every soul must have and reveal in this world before he can be prepared for translation into the family of heaven. Oh, my Father, my Father, the blindness, the terrible blindness, that comes over the people, that they do not discern what manner of character Thou canst accept and what Thou wilt be compelled to reject! We ask Thee, Lord, that Thou wouldst work upon minds and hearts. Oh, that Thou wouldst impress upon all the terrible nature of sin, and how Thou dost regard sin.

Oh, my Father, my Father, Thou didst so love the world that Thou gavest Thine only beloved Son to die a shameful death, that the world through Him might have everlasting life! Thou hast given the human family here below the privilege of educating themselves in right-doing, that they may be prepared to unite with the sinless family above, and dwell forevermore in Thy kingdom. We see the opportunities and the privileges that are passing by, and yet there are hearts that are becoming more and still more hardened, less and still less sensitive. Oh, we pray Thee, for the sake of Jesus Christ who has borne the stripes, who has suffered the agonies of the crucifixion to make it possible for every soul that lives to unite with the family of God—oh, we pray, my Saviour, we pray Thee to break up this hardness of heart! I pray Thee to melt and subdue the soul.¹

Avoiding Arrogance

“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate” (Proverbs 8:13).

God has granted to His people at the present day, great light and knowledge. He will impart strength and wisdom to His servants as long as they humbly rely upon Him. They may, by their consistent course, commend to others the religion of Christ. But those who take advantage of their position to indulge in self-exaltation, arrogance, or harshness, cast doubt upon the work of God, and furnish the skeptical an excuse for their wicked distrust and unbelief.²

There is in human nature a tendency to run to extremes and from one extreme to another entirely opposite. Many are fanatics. They are consumed by a fiery zeal which is mistaken for religion, but character is the true test of discipleship. Have they the meekness of Christ? have they His humility and sweet benevolence? Is the soul temple emptied of pride, arrogance, selfishness, and censoriousness? If not, they know not what manner of spirit they are of. They do not realize that true Christianity consists in bearing much fruit to the glory of God.³

If you form too high an opinion of yourself you will think that your labors are of more real consequence than they are, and you will plead individual independence which borders on arrogance. If you go to the other extreme and form too low an opinion of yourself you will feel inferior and will leave an impression of inferiority which will greatly limit the influence that you might have for good. You should avoid either extreme. Feeling should not control you; circumstances should not affect you. You may form a correct estimate of yourself, one which will prove a safeguard from both extremes. You may be dignified without vain self-confidence; you may be condescending and yielding without sacrificing self-respect or individual independence, and your life may be of great influence with those in the higher as well as the lower walks of life.⁴

The Iniquity of Idleness

“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy” (Ezekiel 16:49).

If your children have been unaccustomed to labor, they will soon become weary. They will complain of side ache, pain in the shoulders, and tired limbs; and you will be in danger, through sympathy, of doing the work yourselves. . . . Inactivity is the greatest cause of side ache and shoulder ache among children. . . .

Few of the youth show real sound judgment and good common sense. They lead a butterfly life with no special object in view. When this class of worldly associates get together, about all you can hear is a few silly remarks about dress, or some frivolous matter, and then they laugh at their own remarks which they consider very bright. This is frequently done in the presence of older persons, who can but feel saddened at such lack of reverence for their years. These youth seem to have lost all sense of modesty and good manners. Yet the manner in which they have been instructed leads them to think it the height of gentility.

This spirit is like a contagious disease. God’s people should choose the society for their children and teach them to avoid the company of these vain worldlings. Mothers should take their daughters with them into the kitchen and patiently educate them. Their constitution will be better for such labor, their muscles will gain tone and strength, and their meditations will be more healthy and elevated at the close of the day. . . . Do not intimate to your children that it is no matter whether they labor or not. Teach them that their help is needed, that their time is of value, and that you depend on their labor. . . .

Much sin has resulted from idleness. Active hands and minds do not find time to heed every temptation which the enemy suggests, but idle hands and brains are all ready for Satan to control. The mind, when not properly occupied, dwells upon improper things. Parents should teach their children that idleness is sin.⁵

Gaining Wisdom in Relating to Others

“Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom” (Proverbs 13:10).

The love of God must pervade the soul, or the fruits of righteousness will not appear. It is not safe to indulge in vanity and pride, or love of power or gain. It is the worst phase of selfishness to fret and censure and complain because you have the power to do this and those whom you abuse in this way cannot prevent you. It is selfishness that causes variance in the family circle and in the church. Unchristian hearts will think they can discern great wrongs in others where none exist and will dwell upon little matters until they appear greatly magnified. The work of adjusting these little matters, which seem so large to some, God has left for His followers themselves to do. Let not those unhappy differences remain till they become a root of bitterness in the church, whereby many will be defiled. When Christ is in the heart it will be so softened and subdued by love for God and man that fretting, faultfinding, and contention will not exist there. The religion of Christ in the heart will gain for its possessor a complete victory over those passions that are seeking for the mastery.

Said Christ: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these [needed] things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). This promise will never fail. We cannot enjoy the favor of God unless we comply with the conditions upon which His favor is bestowed. By so doing there will come to us that peace, contentment, and wisdom that the world can neither give nor take away. If you would, as a church, secure the rich blessing of God, you must individually make Him first and last and best in every thought, plan, and work. Obedience to God is the first duty of the Christian. A humble mind and a grateful heart will elevate us above petty trials and real difficulties. The less earnest, energetic, and vigilant we are in the service of the Master, the more will the mind dwell upon self, magnifying molehills into mountains of difficulty. We shall feel that we are abused, when no disrespect even was designed.⁶

Choose Charity Instead

“Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer” (Psalm 101:5).

Let not the common, cheap, earthly things engross the mind that the presence of Jesus shall be withdrawn. The life of the church is communicated from Christ, and we help the church when we work in harmony with the life-giving power, losing sight of ourselves, and seeking to build one another up in the most holy faith.

God may choose instrumentalities that we do not accept, because they do not exactly meet our ideas. They do not work in the very line marked out as perfect, and in place of leaving them with God, for His Spirit to work with them, many begin to present difficulties, barricade the way, and cherish a grieved feeling because they see that they are doing a work that has not been done. Then begins the dissecting of character and the gathering up of tidbits of complaints, and faultfinding and slander, and magnifying of little occurrences and events into grave sins. This has been done in the church until we are weak, and we will always be weak unless this narrow order of things is changed. May the Lord show you all what to do that you may be filled with thanksgiving, gratitude and praise to God for the precious gift of the Son of God, and put away envyings, jealousies and rivalries, that true love and unity may exist.

Christ prayed that His disciples might be one even as He and His Father are one. In what does this unity consist? This oneness does not exist because everyone has the same disposition, the same temperament, and thinks in the very same channel. All do not possess the same degree of intelligence. All have not the same experience. In a church there are different gifts and varied experiences. In temporal matters there are a great variety of ways of management, and yet these variations in manner of labor, in the exercise of gifts, do not create dissension, discord, and disunion.⁷

Wisdom With the Lowly

“When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom” (Proverbs 11:2).

We are living in an age when the minds of men are ever on the stretch for something new. Rightly directed, and kept within proper limits, this desire is commendable. God has given us in His created works enough to excite thought and stimulate investigation. He does not desire men to be less acute, less inquiring, or less intelligent. But with all our aspirations, and in all our researches, we should remember that arrogance is not greatness, nor is conceit knowledge. Human pride is an evidence, not of strength, but of weakness. It reveals not wisdom, but folly. To exalt reason unduly is to abase it. To place the human in rivalry with the divine is to make it contemptible.

How can man be just with God? This is the one great question that most concerns mankind. Can human reasoning find an answer? No; revelation alone can solve this all-important problem, can shed light upon the pathway of man’s life. What folly, then, to turn from the one great source of light, the Sun of righteousness, to follow the feeble and uncertain light of human wisdom!⁸

If the young would study the glorious works of God in nature, and His majesty and power as revealed in His word, they would come from every such exercise with faculties quickened and elevated. A vigor would be received, having no kin to arrogance. By a contemplation of the marvels of divine power, the mind will learn that hardest but most useful of all lessons, that human wisdom, unless connected with the Infinite, and sanctified by the grace of Christ, is foolishness.

The work of God’s dear Son in undertaking to link the created with the Uncreated, the finite with the Infinite, in His own divine person, is a subject that may well employ our thoughts for a lifetime. This work of Christ was to confirm the beings of other worlds in their innocency and loyalty, as well as to save the lost and perishing of this world. He opened a way for the disobedient to return to their allegiance to God.⁹

A Fearful Trait of Character

*“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall”
(Proverbs 16:18).*

The apostle [Paul] declares that in the last days men will “heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:3), because they desire to hear smooth things. . . . [Such false religious teachers] have the form of godliness and appear to be laboring for the good of souls, while they are at heart avaricious, selfish, ease-loving, following the promptings of their own unconsecrated hearts. They are in conflict with Christ and His teachings, and are destitute of His meek and lowly spirit.

The preacher who bears the sacred truth for these last days must be the opposite of all this and, by his life of practical godliness, plainly mark the distinction existing between the false and the true shepherd. The Good Shepherd came to seek and to save that which was lost. He has manifested in His works His love for His sheep. All the shepherds who work under the Chief Shepherd will possess His characteristics; they will be meek and lowly of heart. Childlike faith brings rest to the soul and also works by love and is ever interested for others. If the Spirit of Christ dwells in them, they will be Christlike and do the works of Christ. Many who profess to be the ministers of Christ have mistaken their master. They claim to be serving Christ and are not aware that it is Satan’s banner under which they are rallying. They may be worldly wise and eager for strife and vainglory, making a show of doing a great work; but God has no use for them. The motives which prompt to action give character to the work. Although men may not discern the deficiency, God marks it.

The letter of the truth may convince some souls who will take firm hold of the faith and be saved at last; but the selfish preacher who presented the truth to them will have no credit with God for their conversion. He will be judged for his unfaithfulness while professing to be a watchman on the walls of Zion. Pride of heart is a fearful trait of character. “Pride goeth before destruction” (Proverbs 16:18). This is true in the family, the church, and the nation.¹⁰

Be Not Dazzled by the Proud

“Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud” (Psalm 40:4).

The wisdom of the world is too highly valued, the wisdom from above too little sought, by the professed people of the Lord. Men may have a knowledge of Christian doctrine, and yet understand little of Christian experience. Many are keen, apt, prompt in worldly affairs, while they manifest little interest, tact, or energy in the service of God. They do not exercise their sharpness and shrewdness in watching to discern the devices of Satan, and studying how they may outgeneral the enemy. They do not summon all their powers to form wise plans and put forth earnest, systematic effort to advance the cause of God. The wisdom exercised in worldly temporal things is seldom devoted to spiritual and eternal things. In this manner do men of ability give evidence that they are more carnal than spiritual.

Every man, of whatever trade or profession, should make the cause of God his first interest; he should not only exercise his talents to advance the Lord’s work, but should cultivate his ability to this end. Many a man devotes months and years to the acquirement of a trade or profession that he may become a successful worker in the world; and yet he makes no special effort to cultivate those talents which would render him a successful laborer in the vineyard of the Lord. He has perverted his powers, misused his talents. He has shown disrespect to his heavenly Master. This is the great sin of the professed people of God. They serve themselves, and serve the world. They may have the name of being shrewd, successful financiers; but they neglect to increase by use the talents which God has given them for His service. The worldly tact is becoming stronger by exercise; the spiritual is becoming weaker through inactivity.

The present is a time when these talents, used in the cause of God, would tell with great effect in the upbuilding of His kingdom. . . .

We are building for eternity. It is doubly important now that we take heed how we build.¹¹

The Example of Jesus Christ

"[Jesus said,] I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." (John 5:30).

The holy life and character of Christ is a faithful example. His confidence in His heavenly Father was unlimited. His obedience and submission were unreserved and perfect. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister to others. He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. In all things He submitted Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. From the lips of the Saviour of the world were heard these words: "I can of Mine own self do nothing" (John 5:30).

He became poor, and made Himself of no reputation. He was hungry and frequently thirsty, and many times weary in His labors; but He had not where to lay His head. When the cold, damp shades of night gathered about Him, the earth was frequently His bed. Yet He blessed those who hated Him. What a life! what an experience! Can we, the professed followers of Christ, cheerfully endure privation and suffering as did our Lord, without murmuring? Can we drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism? If so, we may share with Him His glory in His heavenly kingdom. If not, we shall have no part with Him.¹²

Men may acquire all the knowledge possible to be imparted by the human teacher; but there is still greater wisdom required of them by God. Like Moses, they must learn meekness, lowliness of heart, and distrust of self. Our Saviour Himself, bearing the test for humanity, acknowledged that of Himself He could do nothing. We must also learn that there is no strength in humanity alone. Man becomes efficient only by becoming a partaker of the divine nature. . . .

Let every selfish desire to distinguish yourselves be set aside; take every suggestion from humanity, to God, trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit; every unholy ambition should be blotted out, lest the Lord shall say: "I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation" (Job 5:3).¹³

The Example of Paul

"I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31).

The Lord requires us to be submissive to His will, subdued by His Spirit, and sanctified to His service. Selfishness must be put away, and we must overcome every defect in our characters as Christ overcame. In order to accomplish this work, we must die daily to self.¹⁴

The struggle for conquest over self, for holiness and heaven, is a lifelong struggle. Without continual effort and constant activity there can be no advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor's crown.

The strongest evidence of man's fall from a higher state is the fact that it costs so much to return. The way of return can be gained only by hard fighting, inch by inch, every hour. By a momentary act of will, one may place himself in the power of evil; but it requires more than a momentary act of will to break these fetters and attain to a higher, holier life. The purpose may be formed, the work begun; but its accomplishment will require toil, time, and perseverance, patience and sacrifice.

Beset with temptations without number, we must resist firmly or be conquered. Should we come to the close of life with our work undone, it would be an eternal loss.

Paul's sanctification was the result of a constant conflict with self. He said: "I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31). His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God's will, however crucifying to his own nature.

God leads His people on step by step. The Christian life is a battle and a march. In this warfare there is no release; the effort must be continuous and persevering. It is by unceasing endeavor that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. Christian integrity must be sought with resistless energy and maintained with a resolute fixedness of purpose.

No one will be borne upward without stern, persevering effort in his own behalf. All must engage in this warfare for themselves. Individually we are responsible for the issue of the struggle.¹⁵

The Instruction of Wisdom

“The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility” (Proverbs 15:33).

In this generation there are many whose eyes become dazzled by the glare of human speculations, “science falsely so called” (1 Timothy 6:20); they discern not the net, and walk into it as readily as if blindfolded. God designed that man’s intellectual powers should be held as a gift from his Maker and employed in the service of truth and righteousness; but when they are idolized, and laid upon the shrine of Satan to be employed in the service of a false religion, then intelligence can accomplish greater harm than ignorance.¹⁶

There is no limit to the usefulness of those who put self to one side, make room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts, and live lives wholly sanctified to the service of God, enduring the necessary discipline imposed by the Lord without complaining or fainting by the way. If they will not faint at the rebuke of the Lord, and become hard-hearted and stubborn, the Lord will teach both young and old, hour by hour, day by day. He longs to reveal His salvation to the children of men; and if His chosen people will remove the obstructions, He will pour forth the waters of salvation in abundant streams through the human channels.

Many who are seeking efficiency for the exalted work of God by perfecting their education in the schools of men will find that they have failed of learning the more important lessons which the Lord would teach them. By neglecting to submit themselves to the impressions of the Holy Spirit, by not living in obedience to all God’s requirements, their spiritual efficiency has become weakened; they have lost what ability they had to do successful work for the Lord. By absenting themselves from the school of Christ, they have forgotten the sound of the voice of the Teacher, and He cannot direct their course.¹⁷

Piety and a religious experience lie at the very foundation of true education.¹⁸

Humbled and Tested for Salvation

“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no” (Deuteronomy 8:2).

God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel: “God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people.” Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: “They are joined to their idols, let them alone,” and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.

God proves His people in this world. This is the fitting-up place to appear in His presence. Here, in this world, in these last days, persons will show what power affects their hearts and controls their actions. If it is the power of divine truth, it will lead to good works. It will elevate the receiver, and make him noblehearted and generous, like his divine Lord.¹⁹

All Good Things Are Supplied

“By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life” (Proverbs 22:4).

We need to trust Jesus daily, hourly. He has promised that as our day is, so shall our strength be. By His grace we may bear all the burdens of the present, and perform its duties. Many are weighed down by the anticipation of future troubles. They are constantly seeking to bring tomorrow’s burdens into today. But Jesus promises grace only for today. He bids us not to burden ourselves with the cares and troubles of tomorrow.

Self-exaltation, as well as unbelief, robs us of many blessings. The Lord would work for us in mighty power if we would humble our hearts before Him, and remain humble when we see of His salvation, giving the glory to Him, not to man. We have deprived ourselves of many blessings by being so ready to exalt self when the Lord has blessed us.

When we are closely united to Christ, our self-confidence will disappear. Our self-important words will be left unspoken. We shall humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. We shall pray, we shall believe, we shall be kind and true and tender-hearted, loving one another as Christ has loved us. Unkind criticism will die when we live the truth.

Christianity means more than making good resolutions, more than having a fitful, spasmodic experience. Our thoughts must be brought into captivity to Christ. There must be a steady, persevering cultivation of Christlike thoughts. There must be earnest prayer. Weaken the hands of the enemy by wrestling with God in prayer. Pray in the name of Christ for what you need, and then in His strength answer your prayer by bringing your actions into harmony with it. Remember that unless you follow Christ in self-denial, your prayers will not reach the throne of God. Christ points you to the path of self-denial, saying, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). He has made abundant provision for the sufficiency of those who will to do His requirements.²⁰

The Greatest Battle Ever Fought

“Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5).

Pride and the love of the world are the snares which are so great a hindrance to spirituality and a growth in grace.

This world is not the Christian’s heaven, but merely the workshop of God, where we are to be fitted up to unite with sinless angels in a holy heaven. We should be constantly training the mind to noble, unselfish thoughts.²¹

Brother S is weak in many things. If God required him to expose and condemn a neighbor, to reprove and correct a brother, or to resist and destroy his enemies, it would be to him a comparatively natural and easy work. But a warfare against self, subduing the desires and affections of his own heart, and searching out and controlling the secret motives of the heart, is a more difficult warfare. How unwilling is he to be faithful in such a contest as this! The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God and being clothed with humility, possessing that love that is pure, peaceable, and easy to be entreated, full of gentleness and good fruits, is not an easy attainment. And yet it is his privilege and his duty to be a perfect overcomer here. The soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in knowledge and true holiness.²²

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Professors of religion are not willing to closely examine themselves to see whether they are in the faith; and it is a fearful fact that many are leaning on a false hope. Some lean upon an old experience which they had years ago; but when brought down to this heart-searching time, when all should have a daily experience, they have nothing to relate. They seem to think that a profession of the truth will save them. When they subdue those sins which God hates, Jesus will come in and sup with them and they with Him. They will then draw divine strength from Jesus, and will grow up in Him.²³

Our Need for Revival

“O Lord, I have heard thy speech, [and] was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy” (Habakkuk 3:2).

A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer. While the people are so destitute of God’s Holy Spirit, they cannot appreciate the preaching of the Word; but when the Spirit’s power touches their hearts, then the discourses given will not be without effect. Guided by the teachings of God’s Word, with the manifestation of His Spirit, in the exercise of sound discretion, those who attend our meetings will gain a precious experience, and returning home, will be prepared to exert a healthful influence.

The old standard bearers knew what it was to wrestle with God in prayer, and to enjoy the outpouring of His Spirit. But these are passing off from the stage of action; and who are coming up to fill their places? How is it with the rising generation? Are they converted to God? Are we awake to the work that is going on in the heavenly sanctuary, or are we waiting for some compelling power to come upon the church before we shall arouse? . . .

We must enter upon the work individually. We must pray more, and talk less.²⁴

Let the complaining and faultfinding cease, and the time heretofore worse than wasted in this manner be spent in prayers of living faith for the refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Let us arouse as one man, and unitedly call upon God to send down His grace upon the souls of His people, and to revive His work in the midst of the years.²⁵

Cast Down to Be Lifted Up

“When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person” (Job 22:29).

In order to be happy, we must learn self-denial at the foot of the cross.²⁶

At times a deep sense of our unworthiness will send a thrill of terror through the soul, but this is no evidence that God has changed toward us, or we toward God. No effort should be made to rein the mind up to a certain intensity of emotion. We may not feel today the peace and joy which we felt yesterday; but we should by faith grasp the hand of Christ, and trust Him as fully in the darkness as in the light.

Satan may whisper, “You are too great a sinner for Christ to save.” While you acknowledge that you are indeed sinful and unworthy, you may meet the tempter with the cry, “By virtue of the atonement, I claim Christ as my Saviour. I trust not to my own merits, but to the precious blood of Jesus, which cleanses me. This moment I hang my helpless soul on Christ.” The Christian life must be a life of constant, living faith. An unyielding trust, a firm reliance upon Christ, will bring peace and assurance to the soul.²⁷

If we are intent upon searching our own hearts, putting away our sins, and correcting our evil tendencies, our souls will not be lifted up unto vanity; we shall be distrustful of ourselves, having an abiding sense that our sufficiency is of God.

We have far more to fear from within than from without. The hindrances to strength and success are far greater from the church itself than from the world.²⁸

We lose many and rich blessings because we neglect to seek the Lord with humble hearts. When we come to Him in sincerity of heart, asking Him to reveal our defects, He will show us a true picture of ourselves, reflected in the mirror of His Word. Then, having seen ourselves as God sees us, let us not go away forgetting what manner of men we are. Let us study critically the features of our character that are defective, and seek for grace to make them like the pattern presented in the Word of God.²⁹

Setting Our Hearts in Order

“A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Proverbs 29:23).

There should be a humbling before the Lord; the Israel of God should rend the heart, and not the garment. Childlike simplicity is rarely seen; the approbation of man is more thought of than the displeasure of God. Set your hearts in order, dear brethren and sisters, lest the brittle thread of life be cut, and you lie down in the grave unsheltered, unprepared for the judgment. Unless you make your peace with God, and tear yourselves from the world, your hearts will grow harder, and you will lean upon a false prop, a supposed preparation, and find out your mistake too late to secure a well-grounded hope.

The ax must be laid at the root of the tree. Pride and worldliness should not be suffered in the church. It is these things that separate God from His people. They have been asleep to the pride and conformity to the world which exist in the very midst of the church. Pride, covetousness, selfishness, and love of the world, are constantly increasing. The external appearance is an index to the heart. When hearts are affected by the truth, there will be a death to the world; and those who are dead to the world will not be moved by the laugh, the jeer, and the scorn of unbelievers. They will feel an anxious desire to be like their Master, separate from the world. They will not imitate its fashions or customs. The noble object will be ever before them, to glorify God, and gain the immortal inheritance, and in comparison with this everything of an earthly nature will sink into insignificance.

Too many neglect the Bible. They do not make that book their study and their rule of life as they should. Especially are the young guilty of this neglect. Most of them find plenty of time to read almost any other book; but the precious book that points to eternal life, the important book that is to judge them in the last day, is scarcely studied at all. . . . All must understand the reason of their hope, to strengthen their own souls in the fierce conflict before the people of God. Without this, they will be wanting, and cannot have firmness and decision.³⁰

Spirit and Heart Revived

*“Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?”
(Psalm 85:6).*

Let those who hate the law of the Lord rave and pour out their anathemas against such as have moral courage to receive and live the truth. The Lord is our strength. It is safe for us not to build up self, but to let the Lord work His will in and by and through us. Let us preserve a contrite, humble spirit, which the Lord will revive.³¹

There are in our world many who are nearer the kingdom of God than we suppose. In this dark world of sin the Lord has many precious jewels, to whom He will guide His messengers. God will use His believing ones as His instrumentalities, through them ministering to souls fainting for the bread of life. Words of hope and cheer falling from lips that have been touched by a live coal from God’s altar will revive and comfort those who are weary and distressed.³²

Let self be put out of sight. Christ alone is to be exalted. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,” let every eye be directed, and praise from every heart ascend. (Revelation 1:5.)

The life in which the fear of the Lord is cherished will not be a life of sadness and gloom. It is the absence of Christ that makes the countenance sad, and the life a pilgrimage of sighs. Those who are filled with self-esteem and self-love do not feel the need of a living, personal union with Christ. The heart that has not fallen on the Rock is proud of its wholeness. Men want a dignified religion. They desire to walk in a path wide enough to take in their own attributes. Their self-love, their love of popularity and love of praise, exclude the Saviour from their hearts, and without Him there is gloom and sadness. But Christ dwelling in the soul is a wellspring of joy. For all who receive Him, the very keynote of the word of God is rejoicing.³³

Keeping Our Focus

“Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil” (Proverbs 4:25–27).

All need to inquire, “What must I do to be saved?” God requires humble, contrite hearts, that tremble at His word. It is only from the divine altar that we can receive the celestial torch, which, when received, will give us a full view of our incompetence, and reveal to us the dignity and glory of Christ.³⁴

Shall men and women whom God has blessed with great light, permit themselves to be led astray by the flattering lies of the enemy of their souls? Shall they seek for distinction, for worldly honor and prosperity, when it involves disobedience to the commands of God? Will they yield their eternal interests and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage? Shall we not arouse, and shake off the dangerous lethargy of the world, which is lulling us to sleep in the cradle of carnal security? Will you who are intimidated with the jeers of those who trample upon God’s commandments yield to the temptation to be cowards, and to forfeit the favor of God rather than to endure the reproaches of your neighbors who laugh at your singular faith? God’s Spirit will not always strive with man. Those that slight the invitation, scorn the last message of mercy that God sends for their salvation, and they cannot taste of the blessed supper. Jesus, the compassionate Saviour, has sent to our world the general invitation, “Come; for all things are now ready” (Luke 14:17). Will you imitate the Jews, who refused the invitation? To us the invitation is given, and the Lord would have you fear and tremble at His word, that He may kindle in your heart hope and faith and holy trust. He commands you to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and promises that all necessary things shall be added unto you. He unfolds before you the glories of paradise, and the question is, Will you accept His invitation?³⁵

The Lord Hears

"[The Lord] forgetteth not the cry of the humble" (Psalm 9:12).

Every prayer offered in faith lifts the suppliant above discouraging doubts and human passions. Prayer gives strength to renew the conflict with the powers of darkness, to bear trials patiently, and to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ.

While you take counsel with your doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that you cannot see clearly before you have faith, your perplexities will only increase and deepen. If you come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as you really are, and in humble, trusting prayer make your wants known to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to your cry, and will let light shine into your heart and all around you; for through sincere prayer your soul is brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. You may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of your Redeemer is bending over you in compassion and love, but this is even so. You may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon you in love and pitying tenderness. . . .

You have need of constant watchfulness, lest Satan beguile you through his subtlety, corrupt your minds, and lead you into inconsistencies and gross darkness. Your watchfulness should be characterized by a spirit of humble dependence upon God. It should not be carried on with a proud, self-reliant spirit, but with a deep sense of your personal weakness, and a childlike trust in the promises of God.³⁶

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). Fear lest you make a mistake, and bring dishonor upon the name of the Lord. Cry unto Him, believing that He has power to save. This is the humility that we want; not a humility on stilts, parading itself before the eyes of men, that it may win praise for righteousness. We need a Physician and Restorer; and when we come unto Christ petitioning for His grace, the Comforter will breathe into our souls His words, "My peace I give unto you" (John 14:27).³⁷

Aiming for the Eternal Best

“Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud” (Proverbs 16:19).

There is too much of self and too little of Jesus in the ministry of all denominations. The Lord uses humble men to proclaim His messages. Had Christ come in the majesty of a king, with the pomp which attends the great men of earth, many would have accepted Him. But Jesus of Nazareth did not dazzle the senses with a display of outward glory, and make this the foundation of their reverence. He came as a humble man, to be the Teacher and Exemplar as well as the Redeemer of the race. Had He encouraged pomp, had He come followed by a retinue of the great men of earth, how could He have taught humility? how could He have presented such burning truths as in His sermon upon the Mount? His example was such as He wished all His followers to imitate. Where would have been the hope of the lowly in life, had He come in exaltation and dwelt as a king upon the earth? Jesus knew the needs of the world better than they themselves knew. He did not come as an angel, clothed with the panoply of heaven, but as a man. Yet combined with His humility was an inherent power and grandeur that awed men while they loved Him. Although possessing such loveliness, such an unassuming appearance, He moved among them with the dignity and power of a heaven-born king.³⁸

You have been invited to learn of Christ, who is meek and lowly of heart. Precious lesson! If well learned, it will transform the whole life.³⁹

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.⁴⁰

Our only safety is in being shielded by the grace of God every moment, and not putting out our own spiritual eyesight so that we call evil good, and good, evil. . . .

Our efforts, our self-denial, our perseverance, must be proportionate to the infinitive value of the object of which we are in pursuit.⁴¹

Come With Contrition

“Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord” (2 Chronicles 34:27).

It is necessary that every individual member build upon the Rock, Christ Jesus. A storm is arising that will wrench and test the spiritual foundation of every one to the utmost. Therefore avoid the sand bed; hunt for the rock. Dig deep; lay your foundation sure. Build, oh, build for eternity! Build with tears, with heartfelt prayers.⁴²

Jesus does not desire those who have been purchased at such a cost to become the sport of the enemy’s temptations. He does not desire us to be overcome and perish. He who curbed the lions in their den, and walked with His faithful witnesses amid the fiery flames, is just as ready to work in our behalf to subdue every evil in our nature. Today He is standing at the altar of mercy, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Whosoever will, may take hold of God’s strength, and make peace with Him, and He will make peace.

The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand besides the great Sin Bearer in the light proceeding from the throne of God.⁴³

The crisis is right upon us. We want now to be seeking God in our homes, with weeping and with fasting and with prayer.⁴⁴

We are to come to God as little children; and as we realize our poverty and weakness, we are not to tell it to men, who can give us no strength, but to God; for He will know just what to do for us.⁴⁵

Making My Boast in the Lord

“My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad” (Psalm 34:2).

Let your stewardship and your service and all your business dealing be marked by strict integrity and the sanctifying influence of the truth, that others may take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus, and have learned of Him. Be faithful in all that you do. Let not one selfish, covetous act be recorded in the books of heaven against your name. Do not allow it to be seen that while you profess to be children of God, you are really serving the world. Serve God with heart and soul and mind and strength. Then angels of heaven will come close to you, and will lift up for you a standard against the enemy.

Give your whole heart and life to the service of Him who gave Himself for your redemption. Disappoint the enemy. Refuse to be his tool for the carrying out of his plans. Turn away from the financial advantages which he offers you, and which, if accepted, would prove a curse to your religious experience. Then you can say in the cleanness of your heart, “My soul shall make her boast in the Lord” (Psalm 34:2). Let there be in your lives no deceitful devising, no artifice, no underhand schemes and contrivings. Depart from all things that you would condemn in others.⁴⁶

Many are still tested as was Abraham. They do not hear the voice of God speaking directly from the heavens, but He calls them by the teachings of His word and the events of His providence. They may be required to abandon a career that promises wealth and honor, to leave congenial and profitable associations, and separate from kindred, to enter upon what appears to be only a path of self-denial, hardship, and sacrifice. God has a work for them to do; but a life of ease and the influence of friends and kindred would hinder the development of the very traits essential for its accomplishment. He calls them away from human influences and aid, and leads them to feel the need of His help, and to depend upon Him alone, that He may reveal Himself to them.⁴⁷

Exalting the Giver of All Talents

“Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:12).

As you make advances in the Christian life, you will be constantly growing up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. In your experience, you will be proving what is the length and breadth, the depth and height, of the love of God, which passeth knowledge. You will feel your unworthiness. You will have no disposition to claim perfection of character, but only to exalt the perfection of your Redeemer. The more thorough and rich your experience in the knowledge of Jesus, the more humble will be your views of self. The lower you lie at the foot of the cross, the clearer and more exalted will be your conceptions of your Redeemer. To love God supremely, and your neighbor as yourself, is true sanctification. Bible conversion will lead to constant and abiding activity, which will be free from all selfishness, all self-exaltation, and all boastful claims of holiness. If you are truly converted to God, you will exert a strong and telling influence on the side of truth. An intelligent knowledge of what it means to be a Christian will make you a blessing wherever you go. Whether you have one, two, or five talents, all will be devoted to the service of Him who has committed them to you in trust, that you may not receive the grace of God in vain. According to the light and knowledge given to us, we are to be examples to others. We are to have such a hold upon truth, and the Author of truth, as to make us a power for good in the world, to bless and to elevate those around us. . . .

To each one is given his work, and if he does his work with fidelity and zeal, he is a faithful steward of the grace of God.

God does not intend that your light shall so shine that your good words or works shall bring the praise of men to yourself; but that the Author of all good shall be glorified and exalted. Jesus, in His life, gave to men a model of character. How little power did the world have over Him to mold Him according to its standard! All its influence was thrown off.⁴⁸

The Need to Watch Our Attitude

“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (James 4:6).

There is always hope of repentance and reformation in one who recognizes his faults. But some are too proud to confess that they are in the wrong, even when their errors are plainly pointed out and they see them. In a general way they will admit that they are human, liable to err; but they expect others to trust them as if they were unerring; such confessions count for nothing with God. . . .

It is very discouraging to labor for this class. If their wrong course is pointed out to them as being dangerous both to themselves and to others, they seek to excuse it by laying the blame on circumstances, or leaving others to suffer the censure which justly belongs to them. They are filled with indignation that anyone should regard them as sinners. The one who reproves them is looked upon as having done them a personal injury.

And yet these very ones who are so blind to their own faults are often quick to perceive the faults of another, quick to criticize his words, and condemn him for something he did or neglected to do. They do not realize that their own errors may be much more grievous in the sight of God. They are like the man represented by Christ as seeking to pull a mote out of his brother’s eye while he had a beam in his own eye. The Spirit of God makes manifest and reproves the sins that lie hidden, concealed in darkness sins which if cherished will increase, and ruin the soul; but those who think themselves above reproof resist the influence of the Spirit of God. In their efforts to correct others, they do not manifest patience, kindness, and respect. They do not show an unselfish spirit, the tenderness and love of Jesus. They are sharp, rasping, and positively wicked in their words and spirit.

Every unkind criticism of others, every thought of self-esteem, is “the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity” (Isaiah 58:9). This lifting up of self in pride, as if you were faultless, and magnifying the faults of others, is offensive to God.⁴⁹

Uplifted Daily

*“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up”
(James 4:10).*

This is the great day of atonement. How much better it is for us to afflict our souls than to be engaged in strife for the highest place, causing heart-burning and discord. Never think or speak evil. When tempted to do this, go by yourself, and ask God to help you to overcome this hateful sin. Humble yourselves in the sight of God, and He will lift you up. Let us praise God that when we humble ourselves, His merciful hand lifts us up.⁵⁰

Wake up and feel that God will help you. Let it be the language of your soul, He must increase, I must decrease. Put “me” and “I” just where they belong, and lift up Jesus, talk of Jesus. If He does not lie at the foundation of all your plans, if your eye is not single to the glory of God, and yourself obedient to all His requirements, keeping eternal realities in view, you are on the losing side.

Take no more upon you than you can bear pleasantly and kindly toward all. When you have not strength and the help of One who is all-sufficient to carry you and your burdens, then your burdens oppress you. Christ declares His yoke to be easy, and His burden light. Through Jesus Christ you can wear the yoke gracefully. If you exalt yourself, then you will place yourself where it will be necessary for the Lord to abase you. If you humble yourself at every step, Jesus will lift you up, but let Jesus do all the lifting up, and remember that Jesus always bears the heavy end of the yoke. Then, if you are laborers together with God, you have a divine Helper at every step. You can be in the world and not be of the world; pure in heart, full of the milk of human kindness; keeping the way of the Lord, to do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with God.

Let every page in your lifework be fresh and pure and clean in the morning, then keep your heart uplifted to God, breathing out your prayer to Him for guidance, for the upholding by His free Spirit; pray for wisdom that comes from above, that the angels of God may be by your side to help you.⁵¹

God Cares for You

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:6, 7).

If by faith you cast all your care upon [God] who marks the falling of a sparrow, you will not trust in vain. If you will rest upon His sure promises, and maintain your integrity, angels of God will be round about you. Maintain good works in faith before God; then will your steps be ordered by the Lord, and His prospering hand will not be removed from you.

If you should be left to mark out your own course, you would make poor work of the matter, and would speedily make shipwreck of faith. Take all your cares and burdens to the Burden Bearer. But suffer not a blot to tarnish your Christian character. . . . We have a heavenly Father who careth for His children, and will and does make His grace sufficient in every time of need. When we take into our own hands the management of things that concern us, and depend upon our own wisdom for success, we may well have anxiety and anticipate danger and loss, for it will most certainly come upon us.

Full and entire consecration to God is required of us. While the Redeemer of sinful mortals was laboring and suffering for us, He denied Himself, and His whole life was one continued scene of toil and privation. Had He chosen to do so, He could have passed His days on earth in ease and plenty, and appropriated to Himself all the pleasures and enjoyments of this life. But He did not; He considered not His own convenience. He lived not to gratify Himself, but to do good and to save others from suffering, to help those who most needed help. He endured to the end. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and He hath borne the iniquity of us all. The bitter cup was apportioned to us to drink. Our sins mingled it. But our dear Saviour took the cup from our lips and drank it Himself, and in its stead He presents to us a cup of mercy, blessing, and salvation.⁵²

When Facing Persecution

“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues” (Psalm 31:19, 20).

Reproach and falsehood have ever followed those who were faithful in the discharge of duty. A righteous character, though blackened in reputation by slander and falsehood, will preserve the purity of its virtue and excellence. Trampled in the mire, or exalted to heaven, the Christian’s life should be the same, and the proud consciousness of innocence is its own reward. The persecution of enemies tests the foundation upon which the reputation really rests. Sooner or later it is revealed to the world whether or not the evil reports were true, or were the poisoned shafts of malice and revenge. Constancy in serving God is the only safe manner of settling such questions. Jesus would have His people use great care to give the enemies of His cause no ground to condemn their holy faith. No wrong action should cast a stigma upon its purity. When all arguments fail, the slanderers frequently open their galling fire upon the besieged servants of God; but their lying tongues eventually bring curses upon themselves. God will finally vindicate the right, honor the guiltless, and hide them in the secret of his pavilion from the strife of tongues.

God’s servants have always suffered reproach; but the great work moves on, amid persecution, imprisonments, stripes, and death. The character of the persecution changes with the times, but the principle—the spirit that underlies it—is the same that stoned and beat and slew the chosen of the Lord centuries ago.

There was never one who walked a man among men more cruelly slandered than the Son of God. He was met at every point with bitter reproaches. They hated him without a cause. . . . Yet He stood calmly before them declaring that reproach was a part of the Christian’s legacy, counseling His followers how to meet the arrows of malice.⁵³

The Lord Will Arise

*“Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble”
(Psalm 10:12).*

The tempest is coming and we must get ready for its fury by having repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human lives will be sacrificed by millions. Fires will break out unexpectedly and no human effort will be able to quench them. The palaces of earth will be swept away in the fury of the flames. Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent; confusion, collision, and death without a moment’s warning will occur on the great lines of travel. The end is near, probation is closing. Oh, let us seek God while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near! The prophet says: “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 2:3).⁵⁴

In the last scenes of this earth’s history, war will rage. There will be pestilence, plague, and famine. The waters of the deep will overflow their boundaries. Property and life will be destroyed by fire and flood. This should show us that the souls for whom Christ has died should be fitting up for the mansions Christ has gone to prepare for them.⁵⁵

We live in an age when to resist evil calls for constant watchfulness and prayer. God’s precious Word is the standard for youth who would be loyal to the King of heaven. Let them study the Scriptures. Let them commit text after text to memory, and acquire a knowledge of what the Lord has said; and then let His word be strictly obeyed. When tested, and in trial, let the youth spread out the Word of God before them, and with humble hearts, and in faith, seek the Lord for wisdom to find out His way, and for strength to walk in it. The Lord loves His children, and with a devotion stronger than that of a mother for her child.⁵⁶

“The World Passeth Away”

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15–17).

Those who think they can serve the world and yet love God are double-minded. But they cannot serve God and mammon. They are men of two minds, loving the world and losing all sense of their obligation to God, and yet professing to be Christ’s followers. They are neither the one thing nor the other. They will lose both worlds unless they cleanse their hands and purify their hearts through obedience to the pure principles of truth. . . .

It is worldly lust that is destroying true godliness.⁵⁷

God will have a people separate and distinct from the world. When any cherish a desire to imitate the fashions of the world, He ceases to acknowledge them as His children, and they become the children of the world and of darkness. Those that had professed Christ, virtually put Him off, and show that they are strangers to grace and to the meek and lowly Jesus. Had they acquainted themselves with Him, they would walk worthy of Him.⁵⁸

Oh that Christ’s followers might realize that it is not houses and lands, bank stock or wheat fields, or even life itself, that is now at stake; but souls for whom Christ died! We should ever remember that the men and women whom we daily meet are Judgment-bound. They will stand before the great white throne to testify against us if we are unfaithful to duty, if our example shall lead them away from the truth and from Christ, or to bear witness that our fidelity has encouraged them in the path of righteousness. These souls will either live to offer praise to God and the Lamb through ceaseless ages, or they will perish with the wicked. Christ suffered and died that they might enjoy a blissful eternity. What sacrifices are we willing to make for their salvation?⁵⁹

Making God's Way Known

"God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations" (Psalm 67:1, 2).

Do you feel the importance and the burden, so that you will introduce the truth to your best friends and those with whom you associate from day to day? Are you missionaries in your neighborhoods, and in your own families? Are you seeking to have a deep work of reformation going forward where you are best known? Is your life such as to give you influence at home with your families and workmen? You can hang up the charts, and show them the truth, as it is there illustrated. You can teach them, if you have a mind thus to do, by explaining prophetic history, and tracing down prophecies, that the end of all things is at hand. You can impress them with the sacredness of the law of God, and show them its claims upon them. . . .

By wisdom and meekness you may win souls to Christ and to the truth. But some, instead of doing this work, make their own business of the highest consequence. They are conversing upon their temporal business, and they are urging all to energy, that they may obtain the greatest amount of labor. This is their first great burden of interest from morning until noon, and from noon until night. All through the day their deportment and actions say to their workmen, My farm is my God and of more value to me than the truth or the salvation of your souls. The day's record passes above, and "wanting" is written against that man's name. He professes to be a servant of Jesus Christ, but has served only his own interest. He is an unfaithful servant. You are surrounded with men and women who will appear in the judgment against you. They will say, "You believed these things, and why did you not tell me? Your houses and lands were of more interest to you than my soul's salvation."

It is displeasing to God for any who profess to love Him to work so hard with their hands and brains in their own business as to unfit themselves to render to God that service which comes from a fervent spirit.¹

Declaring God's Glory

"Sing unto the Lord, all the earth; shew forth from day to day his salvation. Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations" (1 Chronicles 16:23, 24).

"The Spirit of God is continually impressing the minds of men to seek for those things which alone will give peace and rest—the higher, holier joys of heaven. Christ, the Lord of life and glory, gave His life to redeem man from Satan's power. Our Saviour is constantly at work, through influences seen and unseen, to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of this life to the priceless treasure which may be theirs in the immortal future.

God would have His people, in words and in deportment, declare to the world that no earthly attractions or worldly possessions are of sufficient value to compensate for the loss of the heavenly inheritance. Those who are truly children of the light and of the day will not be vain or frivolous in conversation, in dress, or in deportment, but sober, contemplative, constantly exerting an influence to attract souls to the Redeemer. The love of Christ, reflected from the cross, is pleading in behalf of the sinner, drawing him by cords of infinite love to the peace and happiness found in our Saviour. God enjoins upon all His followers to bear a living testimony in unmistakable language by their conduct, their dress and conversation, in all the pursuits of life, that the power of true godliness is profitable to all in this life and in the life to come; that this alone can satisfy the soul of the receiver.²

We are not to make less prominent the special truths that have separated us from the world, and made us what we are; for they are fraught with eternal interests. God has given us light in regard to the things that are now taking place in the last remnant of time, and with pen and voice we are to proclaim the truth to the world, not in a tame, spiritless way, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power of God. . . .

We should now purpose, as did Daniel and his fellows in Babylon, that we will be true to principle, come what may. . . . They stood firm in the time of trial and were cast into the furnace, and they were not forsaken of God.³

Why Delay to Delight God?

“Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth” (Ecclesiastes 11:1, 2).

Our accountability to heaven should cause us to fear and tremble. The decisions of the last day turn upon practical benevolence. Christ acknowledges every act of beneficence as done to Himself.

There is a great work to be done in our world. Men and women are to be converted, not by the gift of tongues nor by the working of miracles, but by the preaching of Christ crucified. Why delay the effort to make the world better? Why wait for some wonderful thing to be done, some costly apparatus to be provided? However humble your sphere, however lowly your work, if you labor in harmony with the teachings of the Saviour, He will reveal Himself through you, and your influence will draw souls to Him. He will honor the meek and lowly ones, who seek earnestly to do service for Him. Into all that we do, whether our work be in the shop, on the farm, or in the office, we are to bring the endeavor to save souls.

We are to sow beside all waters, keeping our souls in the love of God, working while it is day, using the means entrusted to us in the Master's service. Whatever our hands find to do, we are to do it with cheerfulness; whatever sacrifice we are called upon to make, we are to make it cheerfully. . . .

The Saviour takes those whom He finds will be molded and uses them for His own name's glory. He uses material that others would pass by, and works in all who will give themselves to Him. He delights to take apparently hopeless material, those whom Satan has debased, and through whom he has worked, and make them the subjects of His grace. He rejoices to deliver them from suffering, and from the wrath that is to fall upon the disobedient. He makes His children His agents in the accomplishment of this work, and in its success, even in this life, they find a precious reward.⁴

Learning From Jesus . . . and Job

“I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out” (Job 29:15, 16).

[Christ] has made it our duty to live for others’ good. He came from the royal courts of heaven to this world to show how great an interest He had in man. . . .

If the Majesty of heaven could do so much to show His love for man, what ought not men to be willing to do to help one another out of the pit of darkness and suffering! . . . Our love is frequently selfish, for we confine it to prescribed limits. When we come into close union and fellowship with Christ, our love and sympathy and our works of benevolence will reach down deeper and will widen and strengthen with exercise. The love and interest of Christ’s followers must be as broad as the world. Those who live merely for “me and mine” will fail of heaven. God calls upon you as a family to cultivate love, to become less sensitive in regard to yourselves and more sensitive to the griefs and trials of others. This selfish spirit that you have cherished all your lives is correctly represented by the priest and the Levite who passed by the unfortunate on the other side. They saw that he needed help, but purposely avoided him.

Each one of you needs to awake and face square about to get out of the cart rut of selfishness. Improve the short, probationary time given you by working with your might to redeem the failures of your past life. God has placed you in a world of suffering to prove you, to see if you will be found worthy of the gift of eternal life. There are those all around you who have woes, who need words of sympathy, love, and tenderness, and our humble, pitying prayers. Some are suffering under the iron hand of poverty, some with disease, and others with heartaches, despondency, and gloom. Like Job, you should be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, and you should inquire into the cause which you know not and search it out with the object in view to relieve their necessities and help just where they most need help.⁵

Constant Witnesses

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he” (Isaiah 43:10).

“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 . . . need to sit at the 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? . . .

The very strongest incentives to faithfulness are set before us, the highest motives, the most glorious rewards. . . . Those who reach the portals of eternal bliss will not count that any sacrifice which they have made was too great.⁶

Meeting Real Needs

“I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God” (Isaiah 43:12).

Have you tasted of the powers of the world to come? Have you been eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God? Then, although ministerial hands may not have been laid upon you in ordination, Christ has laid His hands upon you and has said: “Ye are My witnesses” (Isaiah 43:12).

Those whom God employs as His instruments may be regarded by some as inefficient; but if they can pray, if in simplicity they can talk the truth because they love it, they may reach the people through the Holy Spirit’s power. As they present the truth in simplicity, reading from the word or recalling incidents of experience, the Holy Spirit makes an impression on mind and character.⁷

I have wondered why our people, those who are not ordained ministers, but who have a connection with God, who understand the Scriptures, do not open the Word to others. If they would engage in this work, great blessing would come to their own souls. God wants His people to work. To every man—and that means every woman, also—He has given His work, and this work each one is to perform according to his several ability.⁸

It is not the Lord’s purpose that ministers should be left to do the greatest part of the work of sowing the seeds of truth. Men who are not called to the ministry are to be encouraged to labor for the Master according to their several ability. Hundreds of men and women now idle could do acceptable service. By carrying the truth into the homes of their friends and neighbors, they could do a great work for the Master. God is no respecter of persons. He will use humble, devoted Christians, even if they have not received so thorough an education as some others. Let such ones engage in service for Him by doing house-to-house work. Sitting by the fireside, they can—if humble, discreet, and godly—do more to meet the real needs of families than could an ordained minister.⁹

Speaking Boldly for Christ

“Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any” (Isaiah 44:8).

Persons are sometimes so reserved, timid, and sensitive upon religious subjects, even after they have given their hearts to God, that they do not receive the strength which they might have. We talk without reserve of our temporal affairs, and why should we be so reluctant to speak of our eternal interests? Would that all hearts might be inspired with holy boldness. Would that we all might lift up Jesus before the people with courage, and fortitude, and faith.¹⁰

It was Caleb’s faith in God that gave him courage; that kept him from the fear of man, even the mighty giants, the sons of Anak, and enabled him to stand boldly and unflinchingly in defense of the right. From the same exalted source, the mighty General of the armies of heaven, every true soldier of the cross of Christ must receive strength and courage to overcome obstacles that often seem insurmountable. The law of God is made void; and those who would do their duty must be ever ready to speak the words that God gives them.¹¹

We are not to be depressed or discouraged, but filled with holy boldness. We are not to be disheartened by the prevalence of sin, or by the difficulties that arise on the right hand and on the left. We must put on the whole armor of God, and stand firm for the right.¹²

Show a firm, undeviating trust in God. Be ever true to principle. Waver not; speak decidedly that which you know to be truth, and leave the consequences with God. Bear in mind that God tests the genuineness of your desire. Believe the word of God, and never cease to press your petitions to His throne. . . . By precept and example keep the standard uplifted. Your testimony, in its genuineness and reality, God will make powerful in the power of the life to come. The word of the Lord will be in your mouth as truth and righteousness.¹³

Two Keys to Overcoming

“Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Revelation 12:10, 11).

We can be overcomers only by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of our testimony. By a well-ordered life and a godly conversation, we become lights in the church and in the world.¹⁴

To obtain a fitness for the coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven should be considered of more importance than anything else. We need to have heaven brought into our souls, and Christ manifested in our lives. We need to be willing to deny self, and to sacrifice our own wills and ways to the will and way of God. It is our privilege to be overcomers by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.¹⁵

All should have something to say for the Lord, for by so doing they will be blest. A book of remembrance is written of those who do not forsake the assembling of themselves together, but speak often one to another. The remnant are to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. Some expect to overcome alone by the blood of the Lamb, without making any special effort of their own. . . . God has been merciful in giving us the power of speech. He has given us a tongue, and we are accountable to Him for its use. We should glorify God with our mouth, speaking in honor of the truth and of His unbounded mercy, and overcome by the word of our testimony through the blood of the Lamb.

We should not come together to remain silent; those only are remembered of the Lord who assemble to speak of His honor and glory and tell of His power; upon such the blessing of God will rest, and they will be refreshed.¹⁶

Our testimony means a great deal. It is before all the heavenly universe and before the world.¹⁷

From Timidity to Courage

“Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels” (Luke 9:26).

Sister Pierce has not much self-esteem and self-confidence. She has many fears, yet does not come under the head of the fearful and unbelieving, who will find no place in the kingdom of God. Those outside of the city are among the most confident, boastful, and apparently zealous ones who live in word, but not in deed and in truth. Their hearts are not right with God. His fear is not before them. The fearful and unbelieving, who are punished with the second death, are of that class who are ashamed of Christ in this world. They are afraid to do right and follow Christ, lest they should meet with pecuniary loss. They neglect their duty, to avoid reproach and trials, and to escape dangers. Those who dare not do right because they will thus expose themselves to trials, persecution, loss, and suffering are cowards, and, with idolaters, liars, and all sinners, they are ripening for the second death.¹⁸

We are living in the most solemn period of this world’s history when the last conflict between truth and error is raging; and we need courage and firmness for the right, and a prayerful trust in God.¹⁹

Nearly all persons can speak loud enough to be heard in ordinary conversation, and why should not the same voice and talent be used when they are called upon to bear testimony or offer prayer? When speaking of heavenly and divine things, why not speak in distinct tones, in a manner that will make it manifest that you know what you are talking about, and are not ashamed to show your colors? . . . Lift up your eyes toward the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ your Mediator stands before the Father to present your prayers as fragrant incense, mingled with His own merit and spotless righteousness.²⁰

Rely constantly upon your Saviour; go to Him for wisdom, for courage.²¹

Lay People Confessing Christ

“Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God” (Luke 12:8, 9).

Practical religion carries with it energy and perseverance. Its operations are manifested in meekness, love, humbleness of mind, in self-denial and disinterested benevolence. Our heavenly Father weighs the purposes and intentions of the heart. If the greater amount of your strength, anxiety, and interest is employed to serve yourselves and your families, and for the purpose of carrying forward your worldly enterprises, how can you testify to an unbelieving world that the truths you believe are a reality? How do you show to others that your faith is genuine, and that you really believe that the end of all things is at hand?

It is impossible for men to have this belief and not express it and show this faith by their works. It is impossible for them to feel the worth of souls for whom Christ died, and to believe in His speedy coming, if their interest is devoted to acquiring, and their strength wholly spent in caring for, the things of this world. . . .

Missionaries are wanted. We wish you all possessed a living, missionary spirit. You need not, in order to become missionaries, go to California or to Europe. You have work to do in your own families and in your neighborhoods. If your works have not been in accordance with your faith where you are best known, so that you are in good repute with those that are without, you are not the men upon whom God will place the burden of a work for more distant localities and foreign missions. Do you feel the importance and the burden, so that you will introduce the truth to your best friends and those with whom you associate from day to day? Are you missionaries in your neighborhoods, and in your own families? Are you seeking to have a deep work of reformation going forward where you are best known? . . .

Many have been converted to the truth by working with men who judiciously gave them precept backed up by example.²²

Laboring Two by Two

“The Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come” (Luke 10:1).

When Christ sent forth His disciples on their missionary tour, He sent them out two by two. This is the Lord’s plan.²³

Not only men, but women, can enter the canvassing field. And canvassers are to go out two by two. This is the Lord’s plan.

As long as probation continues, there will be opportunity for the canvasser to work. When the religious denominations unite with the papacy to oppress God’s people, places where there is religious freedom will be opened by evangelistic canvassing. If in one place the persecution becomes severe, let the workers do as Christ directed: “When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another” (Matthew 10:23). If persecution comes there, go to still another place. God will lead His people, making them a blessing in many places. Were it not for persecution, they would not be so widely scattered abroad to proclaim the truth. And Christ declares, “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” (v. 23). Until in heaven is spoken the word, “It is finished,” there will be places for labor and hearts to receive the message.²⁴

My brethren, will you use the talent of speech in earnest persuasion to lead our people to see the importance of the work? We must arouse the zeal and earnestness of the canvassing agents, calling on them to take the light into the dark places of the earth. There is no release for any who have talents and capabilities. They are required to be the Lord’s instruments, required to cooperate with the Lord Jesus in shedding the light of heaven into this sin-darkened world.

To secure your present and future good, Christ gave Himself as a sacrifice. Will you draw back from making a covenant with God by sacrifice? Christ died on the cross to save the world from perishing in sin. He asks your cooperation in His work of soul-saving. You are to be His helping hand, to do the work that needs to be done, to place the truth before as many as possible.²⁵

Ripe for Harvesting

“The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2).

The great work now to be accomplished is to bring up the people of God to engage in the work and exert a holy influence. They should act the part of laborers. With wisdom, caution, and love, they should labor for the salvation of neighbors and friends. There is too distant a feeling manifested. The cross is not laid right hold of and borne as it should be. All should feel that they are their brother's keeper, that they are in a great degree responsible for the souls of those around them. The brethren err when they leave this work all to the ministers. The harvest is great, and the laborers are few. Those who are of good repute, whose lives are in accordance with their faith, can be workmen. They can converse with others, and urge upon them the importance of the truth. They must not wait for the ministers and neglect a plain duty which God has left for them to perform.²⁶

Do not hesitate to work for the Lord because you think you can do but little. Do your little with fidelity; for God will work with your efforts. He will write your name in the book of life as one worthy to enter into the joy of the Lord.²⁷

Who among God's professing people will take up this sacred work, and labor for the souls who are perishing for lack of knowledge? The world must be warned. Many places are pointed out to me as in need of consecrated, faithful, untiring effort. Christ is opening the hearts and minds of many in our large cities. These need the truths of God's Word; and if we will come into a sacred nearness with Christ, and will seek to draw near to these people, impressions for good will be made. We need to wake up, and enter into sympathy with Christ and with our fellowmen. The large and small cities, and places nigh and afar off, are to be worked, and worked intelligently. Never draw back. The Lord will make the right impressions upon hearts, if we will work in unison with His Spirit.²⁸

God's Voice to the Conscience

"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

Who is ready at the call of Providence to renounce cherished plans and familiar associations? Who will accept new duties and enter untried fields, doing God's work with firm and willing heart, for Christ's sake counting his losses gain? He who will do this has the faith of Abraham.²⁹

When the Lord's 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.³⁰

There is something for everyone to do. Every soul that believes the truth is to stand in his lot and place, saying: "Here am I; send me."³¹

Missionary Techniques

“Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you” (Luke 10:8, 9).

During the life of Christ the sick and afflicted were objects of His special care. When He sent out His disciples He commissioned them to heal the sick as well as to preach the gospel. When He sent forth the seventy He commanded them to heal the sick, and next to preach that the kingdom of God had come nigh unto them. Their physical health was to be first cared for, in order that the way might be prepared for their minds to be reached by those truths which the apostles were to preach.

The Saviour of the world devoted more time and labor to healing the afflicted of their maladies than to preaching. His last injunction to His apostles, His representatives upon the earth, was to lay hands on the sick that they might recover. When the Master shall come, He will commend those who have visited the sick and relieved the necessities of the afflicted.³²

In every place the sick may be found, and those who go forth as workers for Christ should be true health reformers, prepared to give those who are sick the simple treatments that will relieve them, and then pray with them. Thus they will open the door for the entrance of the truth. The doing of this work will be followed by good results.³³

Brethren who wish to change their location, who have the glory of God in view, and feel that individual responsibility rests upon them to do others good, to benefit and save souls for whom Christ withheld not His precious life, should move into towns and villages where there is little or no light and where they can be of real service and bless others with their labor and experience. Missionaries are wanted to go into towns and villages, and raise the standard of truth, that God may have His witnesses scattered all over the land, that the light of truth may penetrate where it has not yet reached, and the standard of truth be raised where it is not yet known.³⁴

Seeking the Teachable Souls

“Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city” (Matthew 10:14, 15).

There are very few who realize the exalted nature of the work of God in comparison with the temporal business cares of life. Jesus, the heavenly Teacher, has given us lessons of instruction through His disciples. When He sent out the twelve, He instructed them that into whatever city or town they should enter they must inquire who in it was worthy of their attention and visits; and if a suitable place was found where the people would esteem the blessing sent them—the privilege of entertaining the messengers of Christ—there they were to abide and there let their peace rest until they left that city. They were not instructed to visit any and every house indiscriminately, urging their presence upon the people whether they were welcome or not; but if they were not welcomed, if their peace could not rest in the house, they were to leave it and seek a house where the members were worthy and where their spirit could rest.

When the messengers of Christ who go forth to teach the truth to others are rejected and their words find no place in the heart, Christ is rejected and His word despised in the messengers of truth whom He has chosen and sent. This has just as full an application in this age of the world as it had when Christ gave the instruction to His chosen messengers.

When Christ was upon the earth, there were men who had no respect or reverence for God’s messengers and no more regard for their warning than for their own judgment; also in this age of the world there are those who do not respect the testimony of God’s chosen servants so highly as their own opinions. Such cannot be benefited by the labors of God’s servants, and time should not be lost in degrading the work of God to meet such minds.³⁵

The Promise of God's Presence

"Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9, 10).

God's messengers in the great cities are not to become discouraged over the wickedness, the injustice, the depravity, which they are called upon to face while endeavoring to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. The Lord would cheer every such worker with the same message that He gave to the apostle Paul in wicked Corinth: [Acts 18:9, 10 quoted.] Let those engaged in soul-saving ministry remember that while there are many who will not heed the counsel of God in His word, the whole world will not turn from light and truth, from the invitations of a patient, forbearing Saviour. In every city, filled though it may be with violence and crime, there are many who with proper teaching may learn to become followers of Jesus. Thousands may thus be reached with saving truth and be led to receive Christ as a personal Saviour.³⁶

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. But Christ is on the field of action. The Holy Spirit is at work. Divine agencies are combining with the human in reshaping the character according to the perfect pattern, and man is to work out that which God works in. Will we as a people do this God-given work? Will we carefully heed all the light that has been given, keeping constantly before us the one object of fitting students for the kingdom of God? If by faith we advance step by step in the right way, following the Great Leader, light will shine along our pathway; and circumstances will occur to remove the difficulties. The approval of God will give hope, and ministering angels will cooperate with us, bringing light and grace, and courage and gladness.³⁷

Enlarging Our Borders

“Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited” (Isaiah 54:2, 3).

God has given me a message for His people. They must awake, spread their tents, and enlarge their borders. My brethren and sisters, you have been bought with a price, and all that you have and are is to be used to the glory of God and for the good of your fellowmen. Christ died on the cross to save the world from perishing in sin. He asks your cooperation in this work. You are to be His helping hand. With earnest, unwearying effort you are to seek to save the lost. Remember that it was your sins that made the cross necessary. . . .

The transforming power of Christ’s grace molds the one who gives himself to God’s service. Imbued with the Spirit of the Redeemer, he is ready to deny self, ready to take up the cross, ready to make any sacrifice for the Master. No longer can he be indifferent to the souls perishing around him. He is lifted above self-serving. He has been created anew in Christ, and self-serving has no place in his life. He realizes that every part of his being belongs to Christ, who has redeemed him from the slavery of sin; that every moment of his future has been bought with the precious lifeblood of God’s only-begotten Son.

Have you so deep an appreciation of the sacrifice made on Calvary that you are willing to make every other interest subordinate to the work of saving souls? The same intensity of desire to save sinners that marked the life of the Saviour marks the life of His true follower. The Christian has no desire to live for self. He delights to consecrate all that he has and is to the Master’s service. He is moved by an inexpressible desire to win souls to Christ. Those who have nothing of this desire might better be concerned for their own salvation. Let them pray for the spirit of service.³⁸

Living the Great Commission

"[Jesus said,] All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:18–20).

We are to be consecrated channels, through which the heavenly life is to flow to others. The Holy Spirit is to animate and pervade the whole church, purifying and cementing hearts. Those who have been buried with Christ in baptism are to rise to newness of life, giving a living representation of the life of Christ. Upon us is laid a sacred charge. The commission has been given us: [Matthew 28:19, 20 quoted.] You are dedicated to the work of making known the gospel of salvation. Heaven's perfection is to be your power.³⁹

The presentation of the truth, in love and simplicity, from house to house, is in harmony with the instruction that Christ gave His disciples when He sent them out on their first missionary tour. By songs of praise, by humble, heartfelt prayers, many will be reached. The divine Worker will be present to send conviction to hearts. "I am with you alway," is His promise. With the assurance of the abiding presence of such a helper we may labor with faith and hope and courage.

From city to city, from country to country, they are to carry the publications containing the promise of the Saviour's soon coming. . . .

Those who have long known the truth need to seek the Lord most earnestly, that their hearts may be filled with a determination to work for their neighbors. My brethren and sisters, visit those who live near you, and by sympathy and kindness seek to reach their hearts. Be sure to work in a way that will remove prejudice instead of creating it. And remember that those who know the truth for this time and yet confine their efforts to their own churches, refusing to work for their unconverted neighbors, will be called to account for unfulfilled duties.⁴⁰

A Vision to Be Fulfilled

“Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled” (Luke 14:23).

In many states there are settlements of industrious, well-to-do farmers, who have never had the truth for this time. Such places should be worked. Let our lay members take up this line of service. By lending or selling books, by distributing papers, and by holding Bible readings, our lay members could do much in their own neighborhoods. Filled with love for souls they could proclaim the message with such power that many would be converted.

Two Bible workers were seated in a family. With the open Bible before them, they presented the Lord Jesus Christ as the sin-pardoning Saviour. Earnest prayer was offered to God, and hearts were softened and subdued by the influence of the Spirit of God. Their prayers were uttered with freshness and power. As the word of God was explained, I saw that a soft, radiant light illumined the Scriptures, and I said, softly: “Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled” (Luke 14:23).

The precious light was communicated from neighbor to neighbor. Family altars which had been broken down were again erected, and many were converted.

My brethren and sisters, give yourselves to the Lord for service. Allow no opportunity to pass unimproved. Visit the sick and suffering, and show a kindly interest in them. If possible, do something to make them more comfortable. Through this means you can reach their hearts and speak a word for Christ.

Eternity alone will reveal how far-reaching such a line of labor can be. Other lines of usefulness will open before those who are willing to do the duty nearest them. It is not learned, eloquent speakers that are needed now, but humble, Christlike men and women, who have learned from Jesus of Nazareth to be meek and lowly, and who, trusting in His strength, will go forth into the highways and hedges to give the invitation: “Come; for all things are now ready” (Verse 17).⁴¹

A Privilege and a Duty

“What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops” (Matthew 10:27).

The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God’s people are to be true to the trust committed to them. They are not to engage in speculation, neither are they to enter into business enterprises with unbelievers; for this would hinder them in their God-given work.

Christ says of His people: “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). It is not a small matter that the counsels and plans of God have been so clearly opened to us. It is a wonderful privilege to be able to understand the will of God as revealed in the sure word of prophecy. This places on us a heavy responsibility. God expects us to impart to others the knowledge that He has given us. It is His purpose that divine and human instrumentalities shall unite in the proclamation of the warning message.

So far as his opportunities extend, everyone who has received the light of truth is under the same responsibility as was the prophet of Israel to whom came the word: “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 33:7–9).

Are we to wait until the fulfillment of the prophecies of the end before we say anything concerning them? Of what value will our words be then? Shall we wait until God’s judgments fall upon the transgressor before we tell him how to avoid them? Where is our faith in the word of God?⁴²

Presenting the Truth at Any Cost

“Ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. And the gospel must first be published among all nations” (Mark 13:9, 10).

There is the highest reason for us to prize the true Sabbath and stand in its defense, for it is the sign which distinguishes the people of God from the world. The commandment that the world makes void is the one to which, for this very reason, God’s people will give greater honor. It is when the unbelieving cast contempt upon the Word of God that the faithful Calebs are called for. It is then that they will stand firm at the post of duty, without parade, and without swerving because of reproach. The unbelieving spies stood ready to destroy Caleb. He saw the stones in the hands of those who had brought a false report, but this did not deter him; he had a message, and he would bear it. The same spirit will be manifested today by those who are true to God. . . . When men press close to the side of Jesus, when Christ is abiding in their hearts by faith, their love for the commandments of God grows stronger in proportion to the contempt which the world heaps upon His holy precepts. It is at this time that the true Sabbath must be brought before the people by both pen and voice. As the fourth commandment and those who observe it are ignored and despised, the faithful feel that it is the time not to hide their faith but to exalt the law of Jehovah by unfurling the banner on which is inscribed the message of the third angel, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Let not those who have the truth as it is in Jesus give sanction, even by their silence, to the work of the mystery of iniquity. Let them never cease to sound the note of alarm. . . . Teach them that although the time will come when we can wage the war only at the risk of property and liberty, yet the conflict must be met, in the spirit and meekness of Christ; the truth is to be maintained and advocated as it is in Jesus. Wealth, honor, comfort, home—everything else—is to be a secondary consideration. The truth must not be hid, it must not be denied or disguised, but fully avowed, and boldly proclaimed.⁴³

Arising and Shining

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isaiah 60:1–3).

The disciples of Christ are to represent Him in their everyday life, and thus the true light from heaven will shine forth in clear, steady rays to the world; thus a character is revealed entirely different from that which is seen in those who do not make the word of God their guide and standard. A knowledge of God must be preserved amid the darkness that covers the world and the gross darkness that envelops the people.⁴⁴

When Zion shall arise and shine, her light will be most penetrating, and precious songs of praise and thanksgiving will be heard in the assemblies of the saints. Murmuring and complaining over little disappointments and difficulties will cease. As we apply the golden eyesalve we shall see the glories beyond. Faith will cut through the heavy shadow of Satan, and we shall see our Advocate offering up the incense of His own merits in our behalf. When we see this as it is, as the Lord desires us to see it, we shall be filled with a sense of the immensity and diversity of the love of God.⁴⁵

Brethren and sisters, we need the converting power of God and His truth to light our hearts, that we may lead those who are around us to the light.

Have we not been seeking our own path of duty? Have we not been asleep to the things of God? Shall we not awake now, and shall we not get a living connection with the God of heaven? Shall we not now place our feet in the path of duty?⁴⁶

If upon your spirit the glory of the Lord is risen, . . . to you is this word from the Master sent. Have you stood with Christ on the mount of transfiguration? Down in the plain there are souls enslaved by Satan; they are waiting for the word of faith and prayer to set them free.⁴⁷

Knowledge of God's Glory

"The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

O how we need men who will search and believe the word of God, who will present Jesus to the world in His divine and human nature, declaring with power and in demonstration of the Spirit, that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). O how we need believers who will now present Christ in life and character, who will hold Him up before the world as the brightness of the Father's glory, proclaiming that God is love!

The dying world is before you, and you can find work to do anywhere in its borders; but what are you doing for the salvation of those for whom Christ has died? God in His providence has been preparing the way for the coming of the living agent to all lands, that men may hear the good news of salvation. All things are now ready, and the angels wait for the cooperation of those who believe the truth for these last days, that they may go forth, and work with the followers of Christ in drawing souls to God.

All heaven is interested in man's salvation, and the work may be done speedily, the kingdom of God may come, and the earth be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea. The great desire of the heavenly intelligences is that the character of God, so long misrepresented and misinterpreted, may be rightly represented before those who have been deceived by the devices of the enemy. Satan has imputed to God his own attributes, and is it not now time that the name of Christ should be great among the heathen? God calls for those who have been enlightened to fall into line, and begin aggressive warfare on the strongholds of the evil one.

Sabbath after Sabbath many of you hear the voice of the living preacher, but how many feel the need of bringing the truth into your practical life? How many realize that light is given you that you may reflect it upon others? There is great need that the people should be educated that they may do the part of the work that has been appointed unto them to do.⁴⁸

The Gospel to All Nations

“It behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations” (Luke 24:46, 47).

Christ was standing only a few steps from His heavenly throne when He gave His commission to his disciples, and included as missionaries all who would believe on His name. . . . If those who claim to have a living experience in the things of God had done their appointed duty as God ordained, the whole world would have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our world with power and great glory.

God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world. Christ tells us when that day will be ushered in, and says, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness, . . . and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14). Satan has worked in such a way as to blind the understanding of men, and to cause those who profess to be followers of Christ to neglect their weighty responsibilities, and to lose their first love. He has worked in such a way that a hard, selfish, Satanic spirit has taken possession of many who have loved souls for whom Christ died. They might have worked in a variety of ways as God’s instrumentalities. They might have visited from house to house, and opened the Scriptures to those whose understanding is darkened. Angels of God would have been close beside them to impress the hearts of those who were thirsting for the waters of life. God would have imbued the workers with His Holy Spirit as they sought to diffuse the light that He had given them. He who works with an eye single to the glory of God will have increased light as he imparts light. He will see and realize the value of souls, and contact with an unconverted soul will lead him to kindle his taper at the divine altar, and bear its light to his fellowmen. God will use the most humble men, even if they have not been ordained. Let all open the heart to the voice and the knock of Jesus, and let him in. The Lord has waited long for the missionary spirit to pervade the church, so that everyone would work as in the sight of the hosts of heaven.⁴⁹

Everyone's Responsibility

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"
(Mark 16:15).

Every converted soul has a work to do. We are to receive grace in order to freely give grace. We are to let the light shine forth from the bright and morning Star, to shed forth light in works of self-denial and self-sacrifice, following the example that Christ has given us in His own life and character. We are to draw from "the Root" that substance that will enable us to bear much fruit. Every soul who has heard the divine invitation is to echo the message from hill and valley, saying to those with whom he comes in contact, "Come." From the moment of conversion, those who receive Christ are to become the light of the world. They are to reflect the glory of the bright and morning Star. Jesus would impress upon the church the fact that they are His brethren, that they are to unite with Him as laborers together with God. They are to be a brotherhood for the saving of humanity. Christ expects a very different work from the churches than that which has been given to Him. . . .

Those who are truly the followers of Christ love as brethren, and are the salt of the earth, the light of the world. Every true believer catches the beams from the Morning Star, and transmits the light to those who sit in darkness. Not only do they shine amid the darkness in their own neighborhoods, but as a church they go forth to regions beyond. The Lord expects every man to do his duty. Everyone who unites with the church is to be one with Christ, diffusing the beams of the Morning Star, and becoming the light of the world. Christ and His people are to be copartners in the great work of saving the world.

The churches have not been educated altogether as they should have been educated. They have been educated to depend upon the ministers to pray and open the Scriptures to the people who assemble to worship God. God would have the people hear the voice of God, and go to work for the Master. Thousands might be at work who are not ordained to preach the gospel.⁵⁰

The Disciples' Day to Be Repeated

"[The disciples] went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them" (Mark 16:20).

Many workers are to act their part, doing house-to-house work and giving Bible readings in families. They are to show their growth in grace by submission to the will of Christ. Thus they will gain a rich experience. As in faith they receive, believe, and obey Christ's word, the efficiency of the Holy Spirit will be seen in their lifework. There will be seen an intensity of earnest effort. There will be cherished a faith that works by love and purifies the soul. The fruits of the Spirit will be seen in the life.

Christ is the Light of the world. Those who follow Him do not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. . . . Behold Christ. Beholding Him brings heart and mind and character into conformity to the will of God.

There is need of all the instruction that our missions can give. Continue in your work in the power of the same Spirit that led in its establishment. By opening the Scriptures, by praying, by exercising faith, educate the people in the way of the Lord; and there will be built up a church founded on the Rock, Christ Jesus.

The work must be carried forward in the simplicity of truth. God says: "I have words of encouragement for you." The Lord has in our large cities many precious souls who have not bowed the knee to Baal, and He has those who have worshipped Baal ignorantly. On these the light of truth is to shine, that they may see Christ as the way, the truth, and the life.

Carry forward your work in humility. Never rise above the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. Not in the art of display, but in lifting up Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer, will you find success in winning souls. As you work for God in humility and lowliness of heart, He will manifest Himself to you.⁵¹

O that you may go forth as the disciples did after the day of Pentecost, and then your testimony will have a living ring, and souls will be converted to God.⁵²

A Solemn, Powerful Message

“Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him” (Luke 12:3–5).

Determined effort to oppose the spread of the message will be aroused, but we are to remember that Jesus, who is our Example, did not fail, and was not discouraged. His method of labor must be our method of labor. He did not hesitate or sermonize, but He instructed men with authority, as a teacher sent from God.⁵³

The work in the large cities is to be done after Christ’s order, not after the order of a theatrical performance. It is not a theatrical performance that glorifies God, but the presentation of the truth in the love of Christ.

Do not divest the truth of its dignity and impressiveness by preliminaries that are more after the order of the world than after the order of heaven. Let your hearers understand that you hold meetings, not to charm their senses with music and other things, but to preach the truth in all its solemnity, that it may come to them as a warning, arousing them from their deathlike sleep of self-indulgence. It is the naked truth that like a sharp, two-edged sword cuts both ways. It is this that will arouse those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

He who gave His life to save men and women from idolatry and self-indulgence left an example to be followed by all who take up the work of presenting the gospel to others. God’s servants in this age have been given most solemn truths to proclaim, and their actions and methods and plans must correspond to the importance of their message. If you are presenting the word in Christ’s way, your audience will be deeply impressed with the truths you teach. The conviction will come to them that this is the word of the living God.⁵⁴

Worldwide in Scope

"I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." (Isaiah 42:6, 7).

God's work in the earth in these last days is to reflect the light that Christ brought into the world. This light is to dissipate the gross darkness of ages. Men and women in heathen darkness are to be reached by those who at one time were in a similar condition of ignorance, but who have received the knowledge of the truth of God's word. These heathen nations will accept eagerly the instruction given them in a knowledge of God.

Very precious to God is His work in the earth. Christ and heavenly angels are watching it every moment. As we draw near to the coming of Christ, more and still more of missionary work will engage our efforts. The message of the renewing power of God's grace will be carried to every country and clime, until the truth shall belt the world. Of the number of them that shall be sealed will be those who have come from every nation and kindred and tongue and people. From every country will be gathered men and women who will stand before the throne of God and before the Lamb, crying, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Revelation 7:10). But before this work can be accomplished, we must experience here in our own country the work of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts.⁵⁵

Do we abide in Christ, and are we one with Him? The message that we bear is worldwide. It must come before all nations, tongues, and people. The Lord will not require any one of us to go forth with this message unless He shall give us power and grace to present it to the people in a manner corresponding to its importance. The great question with us today is, Are we carrying this solemn message of truth in a manner that is equal to its importance?⁵⁶

Faithful New Sabbathkeepers

“The sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer” (Isaiah 56:6, 7).

We want to know the truth, the whole truth as it is in Jesus. We cannot afford to cherish error on any point. Those who take their stand firmly upon the truth will know what affliction and persecution are. Few at the present time have any experimental knowledge of what these are. They may think they are having a hard time, but God is simply testing them to see if they have root in themselves. He is proving them, as He proved Adam and Eve in Eden, to see if they will obey Him.

“Well,” says one, “if it were convenient, I would keep the Sabbath; but as it is, there is too great a cross connected with it.” Paul says, “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). Here is a double crucifixion. As the conscientious Christian takes his stand upon Bible truth, there are always those who refuse to accept it, and choose the world. The wife may take her position in favor of truth, while the husband may oppose it. Here a trial comes in at once, the trial of separation in faith and feeling. Shall we say to that wife, “You should leave your husband because he does not keep the Sabbath?” No, indeed. If she was a faithful wife before she accepted the truth, and if she sees in her friends those for whom Christ has died, she will seek to discharge her duties with even greater fidelity after she accepts the truth, that if possible she may lead them to see the light. “But,” it is asked, “should not the believing wife yield her convictions of duty because of her husband’s unbelief?” By no means; because Christ is her Lord and Master. She cannot cast aside the claims of high Heaven upon her. The same is true of the believing husband or child. . . . If we have correct ideas of the mission of Christ on earth, and of what our work is, we shall not become discouraged because we are few.⁵⁷

Are We Preparing This Generation?

“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

As the “whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together” (Romans 8:26, 22), the heart of the infinite Father is pained in sympathy. Our world is a vast lazar house, a scene of misery that we dare not allow even our thoughts to dwell upon. Did we realize it as it is, the burden would be too terrible. Yet God feels it all. In order to destroy sin and its results He gave His best Beloved, and He has put it in our power, through cooperation with Him, to bring this scene of misery to an end. [Matthew 24:14 quoted.]

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15) is Christ’s command to His followers. Not that all are called to be ministers or missionaries in the ordinary sense of the term; but all may be workers with Him in giving the “glad tidings” to their fellowmen. To all, great or small, learned or ignorant, old or young, the command is given.

In view of this command, can we educate our sons and daughters for a life of respectable conventionality, a life professedly Christian, but lacking His self-sacrifice, a life on which the verdict of Him who is truth must be, “I know you not”?

Thousands are doing this. They think to secure for their children the benefits of the gospel while they deny its spirit. But this cannot be. Those who reject the privilege of fellowship with Christ in service, reject the only training that imparts a fitness for participation with Him in His glory. They reject the training that in this life gives strength and nobility of character. Many a father and mother, denying their children to the cross of Christ, have learned too late that they were thus giving them over to the enemy of God and man. They sealed their ruin, not alone for the future but for the present life. Temptation overcame them. They grew up a curse to the world, a grief and shame to those who gave them being.⁵⁸

The Lamb's Wife Must Be Ready

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:7, 8).

Those who claim to be Christians are in continual need of a power outside of, and beyond, themselves. They need to watch unto prayer, and to place themselves under the guardianship of God, else they will be overcome by the enemy. The Christian must look to God, as a servant to his master, as a handmaid to her mistress, saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). The servant of God must use his ability in such a way that it will bring glory to God. When he yields himself to the control of the Spirit of God, he will be renewed, transformed into the image of Christ. He will give his affections to God, he will be enlightened, strengthened, and sanctified, and will become a channel of light to the world.⁵⁹

More than eighteen hundred years have passed since the Saviour gave the promise of His coming. Throughout the centuries His words have filled with courage the hearts of His faithful ones. The promise has not yet been fulfilled; the Lifegiver's voice has not yet called the sleeping saints from their graves; but none the less sure is the word that has been spoken. In His own time God will fulfill His word. Shall any become weary now? Shall we lose our hold on faith when we are so near the eternal world? Shall any say, The city is a great way off? No, no. A little longer, and we shall see the King in His beauty. A little longer, and He will wipe all tears from our eyes. A little longer, and He will present us "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

All heaven is astir, engaged in preparing for the day of God's vengeance, the day of Zion's deliverance. The time of tarrying is almost ended. The pilgrims and strangers who have so long been seeking a better country are almost home.⁶⁰

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1 THESSALONIANS

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