

Ellen G. White 1875 Signs of The Times

April 1, 1875

The Faith of Abraham

Abraham was directed of God to go up to Mount Moriah, and there offer up his son as a burnt offering. There the Lord tested Abraham by a most fearful trial. In taking Hagar for his wife he showed distrust in the promises of God. If he had patiently waited for the promise to be fulfilled in God's own time and manner, and had not sought to make a providence himself, he would not have been subjected to this the closest test that was ever required of man.

This command of God was calculated to stir his soul to its depths. He was one hundred and twenty years old when this terrible and startling command came to him, in a vision of the night. He was to travel three days' journey, and would have ample time for reflection. Fifty years previous, at the divine command, he had left father and mother, relatives and friends, and had become a pilgrim and a stranger in a land not his own. He had obeyed the command of God to send away his son Ishmael to wander in the wilderness. His soul was bowed down with grief at this separation, and his faith was sorely tried, yet he submitted because God required it.

But now a trial was before him which caused all his other afflictions to appear insignificant. The words of the command were sufficient to harrow up his soul and give him the deepest pain. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Over and over again did the burdened soul say, Oh! my son, my son, would to God my life would be accepted in the place of thine; then should my light not go out in darkness. Abraham arose before day, and as he looked up to the starry heavens, he called to mind the promise which God made to him fifty years before. "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." And now the same voice had commanded him to slay this only son, through whom this promise was to be fulfilled.

Abraham was tempted to believe that after all this might be a delusion. Stricken with grief, he bowed before God, and prayed as never before for a confirmation of this strange command, for greater light if he must perform this terrible duty. He remembered the angels sent to tell him of God's purpose to destroy Sodom, and those who bore to him the promise that he should have this same son Isaac. He walked forth where he had several times met the heavenly messengers, hoping to meet them again and receive some special direction from them; but he gained no light, darkness seemed to close about him, day was approaching, and he must be on his journey before light.

He first passed to the couch upon which Isaac slept in peaceful innocence; he was the joy of his heart, the comfort of his old age. Abraham's lips quivered, he turned quickly away, and looked upon the couch where Sarah was quietly sleeping. He knew that Isaac was her pride, that her heart was intertwined with his. Should he awake Sarah, that she might look upon her son for the last time? Should he tell her the

requirement of God? He knew that he himself had strength of faith, and confidence in God; he did not know the strength of Sarah's faith; but he did know the strength of her love for Isaac.

He passed from one sleeper to the other, undecided in regard to the wisest course to pursue. He finally awakened Isaac softly, informing him that he was commanded of God to offer sacrifice upon a distant mountain, and that he must accompany him. He called his servants, and made every necessary preparation for his long journey. If he could unburden his mind to Sarah, and they together bear the suffering and responsibility, it might bring him some relief; but he decided that this would not do; for her heart was bound up in her son, and she might hinder him. He went forth on his journey, with Satan by his side to suggest unbelief and impossibility.

While walking by the side of Isaac, he could not engage in conversation as usual, for a deep sorrow was concealed in his own breast. The night approaches, the longest day Abraham ever experienced has come to a close. He saw his loved son Isaac and the servants locked in slumber, but he could not sleep. He spent the night in prayer. He would pray, still hoping that some heavenly messenger would appear to tell him that it is enough, that he may return to Sarah, with Isaac unharmed. The stars seem to shine forth more beautiful than ever before, reminding him of the promise, As the number of the stars, so shall thy seed be.

No new light dawned upon the tortured soul of Abraham. A heavy pressure was upon him, but he staggered not at the promise. He reasoned not that his posterity, which would be as the stars, must now come through Ishmael, for God had plainly stated that through Isaac should the promise be fulfilled. Then again was that voice ringing in his ears, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." That terrible command which would leave him childless can scarcely be realized. He rises early to continue his toilsome journey. Satan whispers his doubts, but Abraham resists his suggestions.

All day he had hopes of meeting an angel coming to bless and comfort him, or perhaps to revoke the command of God, but no messenger of mercy appeared. Satan suggested that he must be deceived, for God had said, "Thou shalt not kill," and that it was not like God to require what he had forbidden. The second long day comes to a close, another sleepless night is spent in humiliation and prayer, and the journey of the third day is commenced. Abraham lifts his eyes to the mountains, and upon one he beholds the promised sign. He looks earnestly, and lo, a bright cloud hovered over the top of Mount Moriah. Now he knows it is all a terrible certainty, and no delusion.

He was yet a great distance from the mountain, but he removed the burden from the shoulders of his servants and bade them remain behind; while he placed the wood upon the shoulders of his son, and himself took the knife and fire. Abraham braced himself for his sad work which he must perform. He did not murmur against God, for Isaac had been given to him unexpectedly. He had received him with gratitude and great joy, and though he was the son of his old age, the son of his love, he yet believed that the same power that gave him Isaac, could raise him again even from the ashes of the burnt sacrifice. He strengthens his soul by the evidences he has had of the goodness and faithfulness of God. Had not God, who had graciously given Isaac to him perfect right to recall the gift, and demand him back?

Isaac had been a comfort, a sunbeam, a blessing to Abraham in his old age, and although this gift of God seemed so precious, so dear to him, yet he was now commanded to give it back to God. The words of God's command showed that he fully realized the pain which Abraham must feel in obeying his requirement, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." Abraham wanted no witnesses. It was enough that God could look on and not only see the full consecration of his darling Isaac, but read the heart and fully understand how severely he felt the test. He wished no one but God to witness this parting scene between father and son.

Abraham knew not how Isaac would receive the command of God. As they drew near the mountain, "Isaac spake to Abraham, his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" These endearing words, "My Father," pierced his affectionate heart, and again he thought, Oh! that I, in my old age, might die instead of Isaac. Still reluctant to open before his son the true purpose of his errand, Abraham answered, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering."

Isaac assisted his Father in building the altar. Together they placed on the wood, and the last work preparatory to the sacrifice is done. With quivering lips and trembling voice, Abraham revealed to his son the message that God had sent him. In obedience to God's command, he had taken the journey. Everything was ready. Isaac was the victim, the lamb to be slain. Had Isaac chosen to resist his father's command, he could have done so, for he was grown to manhood; but he had been so thoroughly instructed in the knowledge of God that he had perfect faith in his promises and requirements.

Abraham assured his son that his affection for him was not diminished, and that he would rather give his own life than to deprive him of life. But God had chosen Isaac, and his requirement must be fulfilled to the letter. He told Isaac that God had miraculously given him to his parents, and now he had required him again. He assured his son that God's promise, that "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," would be fulfilled; that doubtless God would raise him to life again from the dead. He told Isaac that he had hoped that the Messiah would spring from him. In this he was disappointed, and then, that his darling son must die by his own hand, increased his grief a hundred-fold.

Isaac at first heard the purpose of God with amazement amounting to terror. He considered the matter fully. He was the child of a miracle. If God had accepted him as a worthy sacrifice, he would cheerfully submit. Life was dear, life was precious, but his Creator had specified him, Isaac, to be offered up as a sacrifice. He comforted his father, by assuring him that God conferred honor upon him, in accepting him as a sacrifice; that in this requirement he saw not the wrath and displeasure of God, but special tokens that God loved him, in that he required him to be consecrated to himself in sacrifice.

He encouraged the almost nerveless hands of his father to bind the cords which confined him to the altar. The last words of endearing love were spoken by father and son, the last affectionate, filial, and parental tears were shed, the last embrace was given, and the father had pressed his beloved son to his aged breast for the last time. His hand is uplifted, grasping firmly the instrument of death, which was to take the life of Isaac, when suddenly his arm is stayed. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the

lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”

God estimated Abraham's obedience and unswerving faith, and 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.

All that we have is the Lord's. Our money, our time, talents and ourselves, all belong to him. He has lent them to us, to test and prove us, and to develop what is in our hearts. If we selfishly claim as our own the favors God has graciously intrusted to us, we shall meet with great loss, for we rob God, and in robbing him, we rob ourselves of heavenly blessings, and the benediction Christ will give the faithful and obedient: “Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

How many now who profess to be Christians would yield up to God their beloved Isaac? Our dearest treasure belongs to God. A solemn duty rests upon Christian parents to so educate and mould the minds of their children that they will ever have a high respect and exalted reverence for God and everything sacred and holy. Such will feel that God's claims must first be regarded, that nothing is too precious to sacrifice for him. Such will, like Abraham, exemplify their faith by their works.

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. Isaac felt that it was a privilege to yield his life as a sacrifice to God. If God could accept him, he felt that he was honored.

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. He gave his only begotten Son to die, that guilty man might live. Abraham's offering of Isaac was especially designed of God to prefigure the sacrifice of his Son.

Every step that Abraham advanced toward Mount Moriah, the Lord went with him. All the agony and grief that Abraham endured during the three days of his dark and fearful trial, were imposed upon him to give us a lesson in perfect faith and obedience, and that we might better comprehend how real was the great self-denial and infinite sacrifice of the Father in giving his only Son to die a shameful death for the guilty race. No trial, no suffering or test, could be brought to bear upon Abraham, which would cause such mental anguish, such torture of soul, as that of obeying God in offering up his son.

Our Heavenly Father surrendered his beloved Son to the agonies of the crucifixion. Legions of angels witnessed the humiliation and soul-anguish of the Son of God, but were not permitted to interpose as in the case of Isaac. No voice was heard to stay the sacrifice. God's dear Son, the world's Redeemer, was insulted, mocked at, derided, and tortured, until he bowed his head in death. What greater proof can the Infinite One give us of his divine love and pity. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

The meagre conception that many have of the worth of the soul, and the sacrifice of God's dear Son for sinful man, is shown by their works. Should God speak to them as he did to Abraham, Sacrifice your possessions, your temporal benefits that I have lent you to advance my cause, they would look in astonishment, thinking God did not mean just what he said. Their riches are as dear to them as their children, their worldly treasure is their Isaac. To honor God with their substance, they think, is a requirement altogether too great, and they cannot believe that God means it. What have this class sacrificed for God?

Men will show all the faith they have. If God should speak to them and command them to go and offer one of their beloved children, they would think God a hard master. Yet he has done more than this for them. No such command will come to test and prove them. God knew to whom he spake, when he gave the command to true and faithful Abraham. Abraham knew that it was God who had commanded, and that his promises were infallible. Had God commanded him to offer his gold, his silver, his flocks, or even his own life, he would have done so cheerfully. He would have felt that he was but yielding back to God that which belonged to him.

But there are many who know not what self-denial, or sacrifice, or devotion to God, is. They never can have extended and elevated views of the infinite sacrifice made by the Son of God to save a ruined world, until they surrender all to God. If God should speak to them in a command, as he did to Abraham, they would not be enough acquainted with his voice to understand that he did really require something of them, to show their love, and the genuineness of their faith.

The claims of God upon our love, affection, and possessions, our talents, and ourselves, are correspondingly great as was the infinite sacrifice made in giving his Son to die for sinful man. Those who really appreciate the work of the atonement, those who have a high sense of the sacrifice Christ has made to exalt them to his throne, will count it a special honor to be partakers with Christ in his self-denial, sacrifice, and suffering, that they may be co-workers with him in saving souls.

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. The talent of means devoted to the cause and work of God, is of tenfold more value, than if selfishly retained for the gratification of our own pleasure. The faith of the devoted martyrs was like that of Abraham, it was genuine. they valued the precious truth, and in their turn, although despised of men, hunted from place to place, persecuted, afflicted, and tormented, were valued of God. There was no place for them upon the earth, but of them, says the apostle, the world was not worthy. Those who clung to precious truth in face of prison, torture, and death, had faith that few now living possess.

Many have chosen a life of ease. They have exalted their earthly interests above the spiritual and eternal. They neglect to learn the hard lesson of self-denial, and of surrendering all to God. They do not count anything interesting, save that which is learned without much effort, and without involving any sacrifice of temporal enjoyment; and it is forgotten as soon as learned, because it cost them nothing.

The deepest poverty, with God's blessing, is better than houses and lands, and any amount of earthly treasure, without it. God's blessing places value on everything we possess; but if we have the whole world without his blessing we are indeed as poor as the beggar, for we can take nothing with us into the next world.

Those who profess to be looking for the soon coming of our Saviour, should have Abrahamic faith, a faith that is valued because it has cost them something, a faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. The example of Abraham is left on record for us upon whom the ends of the world have come. We must believe that God is in earnest with us, and that he is not to be trifled with. He means what he says, and he requires of us implicit faith and willing obedience. Then will he let his light shine around about us, and we shall be all light in the Lord.

April 29, 1875

Proper Education

God prepared for Adam and Eve a beautiful garden. He provided for them everything their wants required. He planted for them trees of every variety, bearing fruit. With a liberal hand he surrounded them with his bounties—the trees for usefulness and beauty, and the lovely flowers which sprung up spontaneously, and flourished in rich profusion around them, were to know nothing of decay. Adam and Eve were rich indeed. They possessed beautiful Eden. Adam was monarch in this beautiful domain. None can question the fact that Adam was rich. But God knew that Adam could not be happy unless he had employment. Therefore he gave him something to do. He was to dress the garden.

The Creator of man never designed that he should be idle. The Lord formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. It was the law of nature, therefore the law of God, that brain, nerve, and muscle should be in active motion. Young

gentlemen and ladies that refuse to labor because they are not compelled to, and because it is not fashionable, are not guided and controlled by enlightened reason. Those who shun manual labor, cannot have physical stamina. In order for the young to enjoy perfect health and perfect happiness, every organ and function must be in perfect operation as God designed they should be. If all the organs act their natural part, life, health, and happiness, will be the result. Too little exercise and staying indoors too much, will bring on feebleness and disease of some one or more of the organs. It is sinful to impair or weaken one of the powers God has given us. The Creator designed that we should have perfect bodies, that we might preserve them in health, and render to him the offering of a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God.

Exercise in useful labor will be carrying out the original plan of God, when he bade Adam and Eve to dress the garden. Life is precious, and should be preserved intelligently by regarding the laws of our being.

Fashionable idlers, who have plenty of leisure, fail to attain happiness. They have been educated to regard honest labor as only fit for the poor, while it would degrade the wealthy. They rob the brain and nervous system, by fashionable indolence, of a supply of animal energy that keeps the machinery of the body in healthful activity.

In order for the brain to have clearness and strength of thought, retentive memory and mental power, the muscles of the body should have exercise a portion of each day.

Adam was in glorious Eden. He was perfectly developed, and then set to work by his Maker that by exercise all his muscles should preserve their elasticity. Many young men and ladies are too proud, or too lazy, to engage in useful labor in the house or in the garden.

The world is full of women with but little vitality and less common sense. Society is in great need of healthful, sensible young women who are not afraid to work and soil their hands. God gave them hands to employ in useful labor. God did not give us the wonderful human machinery of the body to become paralyzed by inaction. The living machinery God designed should be in daily activity, and in this activity or motion of the machinery is its preserving power. Manual labor quickens the circulation of the blood. The more active the circulation the more free will be the blood from obstructions and impurities. The blood nourishes the body. The health of the body depends upon the healthful circulation of the blood. If work is performed without the heart being in it, it is simply drudgery, and the benefit which should result from the exercise is not gained.

Toiling mothers who have given their children the advantages of education, and have brought them up without disciplining them to self-denial and physical labor, and have given them liberty to follow their own pleasure, will not receive much happiness and comfort from these children. In my travels I have seen that those women who entered upon 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. They were as incompetent for the responsible position of mothers as a girl of fifteen years. Economy of means they knew nothing of, and yet these are the mothers that are bringing up children to take their place upon the stage of action, to act their part in the drama of life. 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 labors and economy, they are giving characters to them which will make their future married lives miserable. There will be disappointed husbands and neglected children, because of inefficient wives and mothers.

E. G. W.

July 22, 1875

Our Camp-Meeting in Wisconsin

June 18, I spoke to the people from the third and fourth chapters of Malachi, reading from the 13th verse of the third chapter to the 3d verse of the fourth chapter. I had freedom in speaking, and all listened with deep interest. And moistened eyes showed that many hearts were touched.

My husband spoke in the afternoon upon the sacredness of the work for the present time, the importance of all who labor in the cause of God taking broader views of the work, and following in his opening providence. He was very free, and his words made a marked impression upon the congregation.

After he closed his remarks I was requested to speak more especially for the benefit of the Danes present. I improved one hour, Bro. Matteson interpreting. I spoke of the missionary work that should be done by those of different languages who embraced the truth, in carrying the message of mercy and of warning to those of their nation. I mentioned the work in other countries, that there were Sabbath-keepers scattered all through Europe, that our publications were finding access to large numbers of the different nations, and that, as the result they were being led to search their Bibles, and there find the truth which is to us so precious.

While relating the wonderful work of God in bringing the light of truth to those of other nations, our American brethren present, as well as those of other tongues, were deeply interested, and I felt my own soul blessed.

In the evening, Bro. Smith spoke to a large congregation with clearness and freedom. All listened with great interest to his discourse.

June 19, at half-past five in the morning, the people assembled under the large tent for prayer and conference meeting. Several prayers were offered and many interesting testimonies borne.

One aged sister, with light and peace expressed in her countenance, spoke of the gratitude she felt in her heart for the privilege of attending the camp-meeting, and that her heart was so deeply affected while sister White was dwelling upon the work of the Lord in the earth that it seemed more than her

feeble frame could well endure. She expressed her desire to be among those who were doing the work of God, to whom he would finally say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Another sister said she felt reproved by the Spirit of the Lord, that she had followed him at too great a distance, but would come nearer to God. Another expressed her desire that the truth should have a sanctifying influence upon her affections and will, that she might give a better example to the world.

A young Danish brother expressed his desire for a new conversion to God, adding that he did not want to say more of the truth than he lived out. Another brother said he had just started out to obey the commandments of God, that he could find no other way of getting into Heaven than by willing obedience to all of God's commandments.

Many of the lonely ones have come, some a long distance, to attend this meeting and are anxious to express their gratitude for the privilege. One sister said she had not had the privilege of meeting with the people of God since the camp-meeting one year ago, that the paper and her Bible were all the preaching she had had.

A Mr. C., who is dwelling upon modern holiness, wanted a discourse given to those hungering after righteousness. My husband spoke on that point, as to what constituted Bible sanctification, stating that those who claimed to be enjoying sanctification while living in opposition to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, had the spurious article. He quoted the words of the apostle in defining "sin" as the "transgression of the law." And the words of Paul, "I had not known sin but by the law." And those of the beloved disciple, "And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 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." Here is the only genuine Bible sanctification. The sinner is required to exercise repentance toward God for the transgression of his law, and faith in Jesus Christ, the sinner's advocate.

Another testimony was borne, then my husband made some remarks in reference to the meeting. He stated that he had been thinking ever since he had started out to attend the camp-meetings, if there could not be some way devised, that, as soon as the brethren and sisters came to the meeting, they would become workers, all going to work at the first of the meeting. He stated that this was not the time nor place to consume precious moments in repeating the same testimonies over and over again, that there were men and women who felt burdened, from whom we wished to hear, those who felt the burden for souls out of Christ.

He stated that a yearly gathering cost much time and expense, farmers had come at great sacrifice, some had brought their unconverted children, hoping that their hearts would be touched, that there was great need of individual effort in the family tents, that too much precious time should not be spent in singing hymns that were not appropriate for the occasion, and that did not really give expression to the feelings. He exhorted all to settle into the work. He stated that he would not bind the feelings of any soul, would not mould their testimonies, but wanted the golden moments spent to the very best account, that all upon this important occasion should feel the necessity of watchfulness and prayer.

He further remarked in regard to that valueless, bogus sanctification which leaves the Father and his law out of the question. He stated that when our hearts kindle up as we read the claims of the law of God in his word, when we can pray with the psalmist, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," we are in a position to claim the merits of the blood of a crucified and risen Saviour, and may fully rely upon the prayer of Christ to his Father for the sanctification which comes through the belief of the truth.

At nine A.M., we again assembled in the large tent for prayer and conference meeting. The tent was well filled. The meeting commenced by singing the hymn:

"Just as I am—without one plea,

But that thy blood was shed for me,

And that thou bidst me come to thee,

O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

My husband followed with remarks appropriate to the hymn. He stated that all may come just as they are, without one plea, cleaving in faith to Jesus, believing that he is not only able to, but does, forgive sin and save to the uttermost all who come unto him. And that those who exalt Christ must have a high estimate of the law of God.

Many excellent testimonies were borne with expressions of earnest desires to settle into the work, to live out the truth, and be sanctified by it.

Sabbath forenoon my husband gave a discourse, and Bro. Matteson spoke in the afternoon. At four o'clock, P. M., we assembled for prayer and conference meeting. I felt deeply for those who were backslidden from God, and for those poor souls out of Christ. And from the fullness of my heart I spoke to those present. We then invited all to come forward who had backslidden, and those who wished to accept of Christ who had never made a profession of religion. There was a general move, over one hundred came forward, several for the first time. Opportunity was given for those who desired, to express their feelings. Many spoke with deep feeling. The convicting Spirit of the Lord was in our midst. Confessions were made with a spirit of contrition. We then sung:

"Just as I am—without one plea,"

I improved a few moments in speaking to those who had come forward. Another verse was then sung:

"Just as I am—and waiting not

To rid my soul of one dark blot,

To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot.

O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

A sister arose and with deep feeling said, just as I am, O Lord, I come, I come. A boy arose, wept, but could not speak his feelings. This was a testimony, even more powerful than words.

The meeting continued with intense interest for nearly three hours. Our ministering brethren then united in praying for those who had separated themselves from the congregation by coming forward to seek the Lord.

In the evening Bro. Smith spoke to a large and attentive audience. His subject was the United States in Prophecy.

Sunday morning we again met under the tent for prayer and conference meeting. At the commencement of the meeting several prayers were offered, and were followed by interesting testimonies.

In the forenoon my husband presented the reasons of our faith. In the afternoon I spoke upon the subject of God in nature, and the duties of mothers to their children. In the evening Bro. Smith spoke upon the mark of the beast. I regret that all our brethren did not have the benefit of Bro. Smith's discourses on doctrinal subjects. It is important that they become well acquainted with the reasons of our faith. Those who are detained from these meetings miss a great privilege. And those who come to our camp-meetings, and are engaged in business sessions while discourses are being given at the stand, lose opportunities which would be of the greatest benefit to them.

Tuesday morning we were awakened early by some taking down their tents and preparing to leave the ground. At quarter past six we assembled at the stand. My husband and myself each spoke about fifteen minutes. Bro. Decker was then ordained. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon us. It was a very solemn season, tears mingled with gladness of heart. And with this meeting, marked with the special blessing of God, closed our good camp-meeting.

E. G. White

August 5, 1875

Free-will Offerings

After the children of Israel had left Egypt, when there was but a step back from freedom to slavery, God commanded the tabernacle to be built from their scanty means. Their own tents were small, but they did not plead to enlarge their own tabernacles. God's house must first be built. God gave them the design he wished them to follow in building the tabernacle. They needed no urging. Gifts and free-will offerings came in abundance. Their ornaments and jewelry were taken from their person and cast into the treasury, to be used to beautify and enrich the house for God. Materials of gold, silver, brass, and ornamental work, were gladly given, each soul being anxious to have an interest in the tabernacle which was being erected for God. More than a million of dollars was expended in erecting that tabernacle. Moses did not need to urge the people, but he had to proclaim to them that they had enough, and their cheerful, willing labors and offerings must cease, for they could not appropriate all that they had already brought.

There are hearts now that are as free, willing, and anxious, to aid in the advancement of the work of God as were the children of Israel. Only let them be assured that there is a work to be done, and that God calls for their means and their hearty co-operation, and they will need no urging.

When we can have even a small comprehension of what Jesus has done for us, we shall feel our responsibility to do all that we can for Christ. The life of Jesus was spent in devising plans for our welfare. While we were enemies to God, he pitied us, and came from the courts of Heaven to suffer, the just for the unjust. He died, and rose again from the grave, to show his followers the way of life from the dead. He now stands before his Father as our great High Priest and our advocate, pleading our cause, and presenting our feeble progress with infinite grace before his Father. He forgives our transgressions, and by imputing unto us his righteousness, he links us to the Infinite. In the heavenly courts our Saviour stands and extends to the world the gracious invitation, Come, ye weary, ye poor, ye hungry; come, ye burdened, ye heavy-laden, sin-sick souls, come. And whosoever will, let him come and partake of the waters of life freely.

Can we be too earnest, and self-sacrificing in our efforts to set the truth before the world? Shall we plead for ease and for the pleasures of this life, to enjoy our pleasant homes and the society of family and friends, and let others do the work which must be done in warning the world? Shall we plead as did the ungrateful ones to whom Christ extended the invitation to come to supper, I pray thee have me excused? Or shall we gird on the armor with cheerfulness, hope, and faith, and like valiant soldiers, be willing to engage in the thickest of the fight, war the good warfare, share the glorious victory, and receive the eternal reward?

E. G. W.

August 5, 1875

The Mother's First Duties

Cleanliness, neatness, and order, are indispensable to the proper management of the household. But when the mother makes these the all-important duties of her life, and devotes herself to them, to the neglect of the physical development and the mental and moral training of her children, she makes a sad mistake. The Agriculturist speaks well upon this subject under the head of

Unprincipled Neatness

“Cleanliness is next to godliness;’ but let us never forget that godliness is the first thing to be sought, and after that cleanliness to any extent. If anybody supposes that I mean that you are to ‘get converted’ in the ordinary sense of that phrase, and then go on scrubbing and scouring with all your might, without any application of Christianity to these wash-board and dish-pan affairs, that person has not made my acquaintance. The ‘fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace,’ etc., and beyond all price; neatness is only a secondary matter.

“We are putting cleanliness above godliness if we brush and scour until our nerves are so wearied that good temper becomes almost a physical impossibility; or if we keep our friends in constant dread of

making a speck of dirt upon our premises; or if we allow ourselves to be greatly put out by any disasters that happen to our carpets or tablecloths. It is hard to bear these things, if we have not abundant means and plenty of assistance; and I do not know of anything but a true philosophy believed in by the heart, as well as the intellect, that will help us through. Do we really desire to lead true lives, and to do our duty by our families? Then we must settle in our minds what are the essentials to this end, and resolutely make other matters subordinate.

“It is neatness without principle that insists upon clean aprons and polished faces for the children more than upon gentle words and patient sympathy with their plans and pleasures, which concerns itself more about flies and dust than about family health and happiness. Bright windows and spotless paint and well-scoured floors are excellent things in their way; but if you can only secure them by a loss of all time and relish for reading and out-of-door recreation, have the nobleness to bear with some dirt and rags, rather than sacrifice the life for meat or the body for raiment. For the sake of all about you, as well as for your own sake, save your nerves from over-strain, and your intellectual life from starvation. But never sacrifice cleanliness to display. Those children are fortunate who are kept supplied with whole and clean clothing; but none of these things can begin to compare in value with a wise mother's love and care in respect to the formation of character and the development of a sound mind in a sound body. A husband has something to say ‘thank you’ for, whose buttons are never missing and whose dinner is always in good time and good order; but he deserves to miss the best gifts of this life who value these things above a wife's companionship and inspiration in all things most lovely and of good report.”

I have seen a mother whose critical eye could discern anything imperfect in the matching of the wood-work of her house, and who was very particular to have her house-cleaning thoroughly done at the precise time she had set, and would carry it through frequently at the expense of physical and spiritual health, while her children were left to run in the street and obtain a street education. These children were growing up coarse, selfish, rude, and disobedient. The mother, although she had hired help, was so much engaged in household cares that she could not afford time to properly train her children. She let them come up with deformity of character, undisciplined, and untrained. We could but feel that the fine taste of the mother was not exercised in the right direction, or she would have seen the necessity of moulding the minds and manners of her children, and educating them to have symmetrical characters and lovely tempers.

If the mother had let these things which she has allowed to claim her first attention come in secondarily, she would have regarded the physical, mental, and moral training of her children of almost infinite importance. Those who take upon themselves the responsibility of mothers should feel under the most solemn obligation to God and to their children, to so educate them that they will have amiable and affectionate dispositions, and that they will be pure in morals, refined in taste, and lovely in character.

The mother loves her children. This is right. She cannot help it. But this love is frequently misapplied; for it leads her to indulge her children to their injury.

For years I have looked upon these children with feelings of sadness, sometimes repeating to myself these words: “That which ye sow, ye shall also reap.” These children have needed the influence of a

calm, well-balanced mind. The mother's time could not be more profitably spent than in seeking heavenly wisdom, and in studying how to train her children for God. If she would succeed she should have a firm trust in God, and that cheerful, hopeful mind and peaceful temper which flows from pure religious principles. Every effort made in this direction will repay her tenfold.

If mothers neglect to properly educate their children, their neglect is reflected back upon them again, making their burdens and perplexities harder than they would have been if they had devoted time and patient care in training their children to obedience and submission. It will pay in the end for mothers to make the formation of the characters of their children their first and highest consideration, that the thorns may not take root and yield an abundant harvest. God calls upon mothers to become co-workers with him in the formation of the character of their children, instead of wasting their time in needless labor to make display in their houses for the eyes of visitors, while their children are coming up with characters that are warped and deformed. They are not trained for usefulness, and their minds molded that they may have self-denial and self-control, having beautiful characters that angels can love. The inward adorning the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit God values. In comparison with this, outward ornamentation is but little consequence.

Mothers have a sacred mission in directing and educating the minds of their children. They should not be so engrossed with the artificial and burdened with care that they cannot have time to educate their children from God's great book of nature, impressing their young minds with the beauties of opening buds and flowers. The lofty trees, the lovely birds caroling forth their happy songs to their Creator, speak to their senses of the goodness, mercy, and benevolence of God. Every leaf and flower with their varied tints, perfuming the air, teach them that God is love. All that is good and lovely and beautiful in this world speaks to them of the love of our Heavenly Father. The character of God they may discern in his created works. Parents should improve every opportunity to impress their children by connecting in their minds God with the things of nature, that they may look up through nature to nature's God. Lead your children to regard God as the Creator of all things, and to reverence and fear him who is exalted above the heavens, and to love him because he first loved them. The evidences of his love they have on every hand, speaking to them through the glories of nature. Your temporal matters may be neglected rather than the heart wants and culture of the minds of your children.

E. G. White.

August 12, 1875

From Meeting to Meeting

The following letter from sister White was written while traveling from one meeting to another. On the cars, and in the depots, wherever she could find opportunity, she has penned a few lines which we are pleased to present to the readers of the Signs.

W. C. W.

Our third camp-meeting is closed. We have been well cared for at these meetings. A small tent was furnished for our use, and our meals were prepared by kind friends, on the camp-ground. After the meetings were closed Bro. Chase took us to his home where we shared his hospitality taking a nights rest and a New England breakfast before starting on our way to the next meeting. On the way to Bro. Chase's, we passed through Monroe, where we labored seventeen years ago with Bro. Sperry. He has long since closed his labors, to rest till the voice of Jesus shall call the righteous from their graves to a glorious, immortal life. We work on, still waiting for Christ's appearing.

On Tuesday night we were awakened by a fearful storm. The lightning flashes followed in such quick succession as to make one blaze of light. The thunder, peal after peal, seemed to shake the earth. In the morning the heavens presented the appearance of burnished brass. This and another severe thunder storm the next night did great damage, shattering the forest trees, damaging houses, and in several cases injuring the sleeping inmates. The railroad was washed away in several places so delaying us that we did not reach the Minnesota Camp-ground till Friday.

It is painful to witness, as we pass from place to place, the reckless, frivolous conduct of many of the youth. The Bible attaches the greatest importance to moral rectitude. The books of Moses, the Psalms of David, the Proverbs, the Apostles, and the teachings of our Saviour, present the idea that every one is to be tried by his principles; not by his profession, his faith, or his appearance; for although of fine appearance, he may have hidden sins. The heart must be renewed; the tree must be made good or good fruit will not appear. "Marvel not" said Christ to Nicodemus, "that I said unto you, ye must be born again." A new moral taste has to be created before man will love to obey the law of God.

How much I have thought upon the popular revivals. There are a great many modern inventions to remedy the evils existing in society, but we have seen very little enduring good result from them. Advantage is taken of the impulses of the moment, to induce men to profess to leave a sinful life. Reformation in life is needed, but the reformation made under excitement will seldom outlast the excitement in which it originated. Conversions made by moving the feelings by the relation of anecdotes and sensational stories, do not bear the impress of Heaven. Heart work is needed. The sinner needs to have a clearly defined understanding of what sin is, and that he must repent of sin, which is the transgression of the law of God. When this is understood the seed is sown for a true and thorough conversion.

We have examples of men of debased morals who have been brought before the law of God, the true mirror: in it they have seen the defects of their character, and when pointed to the atoning blood of a crucified Redeemer, they accepted it as their only hope, they were truly converted. From this time their life was changed; they have not a sensational religion.

David sinned, he transgressed the law of God. A prophet of God was sent to reprove him, and convict him of his error. He did not sing affecting songs, nor tell touching anecdotes, but he brought before David an illustration of his own course, in a figure, and let him pass sentence upon himself, then he said, "Thou art the man." David repented and found pardon through Christ. And thus it must be with the

sinner now, he must realize the enormity of his sin, before he can exercise true repentance and experience a thorough conversion.

Ellen G. White.

August 19, 1875

Mothers and their Daughters

Some mothers are at fault in releasing their daughters from toil and care. By so doing they encourage them in indolence. The excuse these mothers sometimes plead is, "My daughters are not strong." But they take the sure course to make them weak and inefficient. Well-directed labor is just what they require to make them strong, vigorous, cheerful, happy, and courageous to meet the various trials with which this life is beset.

Mothers, labor will not injure your daughters so much as indolence will. Do they feel weary at the close of their day's duties? A night's rest will refresh and invigorate them, and in the morning they will be prepared to engage again in useful labor.

Many mothers are too ready to shield their delicate, ease-loving, pleasure-seeking, daughters from care and responsibility, as though they feared that a little care would injure them. These mothers make a sad mistake. In lifting responsibilities from their daughters, they make them inefficient for useful labor, and render them useless so far as practical life is concerned.

Their education has a tendency to make them thoughtless of others. They are frivolous, and, perhaps, vain. Their minds are occupied with themselves. Their own amusements and selfish gratifications are their chief study. They become proud, unteachable, and unamiable. They fancy themselves delicate in health, when they have the powers within them, if called into exercise, to make useful, working women.

Indolence is a curse to them. They learn the fashionable, simpering, and artificial lisp, so common with spoiled young ladies. Affectation is seen in almost every action. They are amused with themselves, and are thoughtless of others. They live upon the plenty which surrounds them in their parental homes, and depend upon the bounty given them of their parents. They lean upon parental strength, and fail to acquire the power of depending upon themselves. And those of this class are unprepared for the stern realities of life. They make no provision for the losses and disappointments of this inconstant life. They may be deprived of property and of parents. What then, will they lean upon? They have not acquired a principle of self-support, of noble independence and self reliance, and they droop through murmuring, disappointment, and discouragement. They may then regret the defects in their education, and blame their mothers for them. These are some of the many fruits of a mother's mistaken fondness.

Inactivity weakens the system. God made men and women to be active and useful. Nothing can increase the strength of the young like proper exercise of all the muscles in useful labor. But the indulgent mother frequently sacrifices her life in her misguided affection for her children. And are they, in any way, benefited by the great sacrifice of the precious strength of the mother? No; they are positively and

permanently injured. They are taught to think and care only for themselves. "Just as the twig is bent, the tree inclines."

Especially is this the case with those daughters who are more directly under the influence of the mother. She should instruct her daughters not to yield to indispositions and slight ailments. If they complain of inability to labor, they should not be urged to eat. They should be taught that if they are unable to perform light labor, the system is not in a condition to take care of food. They should fast for one or two meals, and drink only pure, soft water. The loss of a meal or two will enable the overburdened system to overcome slight indispositions; and even graver difficulties may be overcome by this simple process.

It is very injurious for persons in full flesh to lie in bed, simply because they feel sick. Some, even while thus inactive, eat regularly. The physical, mental, and moral powers are enfeebled by indolence.

Mothers, if your daughters are surrounded with plenty, do not make this an excuse for neglecting to give them an education in the useful branches of household labor. Do not encourage them in indolence, or allow frivolous employment of their time. You should help your children to acquire a knowledge, that, if necessary, they could live by their own labor. You should teach them to be decided in following the calls of duty.

Young friends, learn to lean upon divine strength. All other, in comparison with this, is feebleness. Although you may feel weak, you may look to God by faith, for energy to make your efforts efficient. In the strength of your Redeemer, you can follow in the path of duty. You can stand in his strength self-reliant, with noble independence, working with diligence to develop good physical, mental, and moral strength. You can do this while you depend upon the grace of your Redeemer to aid you in your efforts. Follow in the path of duty, and you may be assured that the dangers, trials, toils, and conflicts, of life, will never intrude their dark shadows in the mansions Christ is preparing for the faithful.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things have passed away."

E. G. White.

December 9, 1875

Fashionable Life

A life of fashion takes from the simplicity and attractive beauties of nature. Our artificial habits deprive us from enjoying the natural, and unfit us for practical life. How can Christian mothers, in the education of their children, follow in the steps of the multitude, and bow at the shrine of fashion?

To live fashionably is an expensive, as well as thankless, life. Much time and means are squandered merely to create sensation in fashionable society, which the Master has intrusted to his professed people, with which to bless the needy, and to advance his cause. Garments are prepared with much

labor and great expenditure of means, to beautify the person, and make the outward appearance beautiful; yet, notwithstanding all this artificial adornment, they poorly compare with the beauty of the simplest flower of nature.

The Redeemer of the world, in giving his lessons of trust to his disciples, points them to the lilies of the field, and says, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The great amount of needless toil to make the outward appearance attractive by artificial decorations is frequently at the sacrifice of health. After all the preparations that variety and pride can suggest, those who thus adorn themselves cannot bear comparison, in all their costly array, to the simple, natural lily of the field.

I would impress upon Christian mothers the necessity of being awake to the fact that every act of their lives is telling upon the future of their children, and is forming their characters to be swayed by the customs of society, or is giving them correct views of truth and right principles, as the basis of their actions. Many Christian mothers feel compelled, through false views, to fall into the customs of society, and the tide of fashion. With their mature experience they may be better able to withstand the current of fashionable life, and avoid its downward and vicious tendencies; but in adorning their houses, and in arraying their children according to the custom of fashionable society, they are giving examples to their children, and surrounding them with an influence, that is calculated to foster pride, vanity, and selfishness, and they are swept in with the current of fashion, drifting, drifting, away from true goodness and away from God.

How many precious hours are occupied by parents in the education of their children for fashionable miseries, for lives that are worse than lost. How much more profitable would be the lessons given to their children of the wonderful works of God in nature, seen in the simple, yet delicate, beautifully tinted flowers. Parents can teach their children that all the display and costly adornings cannot compare in beauty and glory to one of God's modest flowers. The minds of children should be led to see the hollowness of fashionable life.

Parents should overcome desires of living for appearance. They should rather devote time to make their children happy at their homes, that they may love the society of their parents; making them their confidants and advisers, and enjoying useful employment, acquiring a taste for the natural, rather than the artificial. We should imprint upon our children's minds that they are not their own, to go, and come, and dress, and act, as they please. They are God's property, purchased by the sacrifice of the life of Christ; and their life is not to be idled away in indolence, or in seeking their own pleasures. If they possess personal attractions, and rare natural abilities, greater care should be taken in their education, lest these endowments be turned to a curse, and are so used as to disqualify them for the sober realities of this life, and, through flattery, and vanity, and love of display, unfit them for the better life.

Our children should be carefully instructed in regard to their own being, and the obligations, relations, and duties of life. They should be taught that their life is not to be wasted in vanity, folly, and pride; for God has given them life to be improved. They should teach them that they have a place to fill, a part to

act, and an object to gain. They should educate them not to be carried, but to bear burdens, to deny self, and to practice self-control.

Mothers, the time devoted by many of you, with busied fingers and wearied eyes, diligently working in trimming, or in embroidering a skirt or dress, to attract admiration and envy by those who cannot have these extras, is poorly spent. In the end it will prove to you like the apples of Sodom, beautiful without, but ashes within. You are, in thus devoting time and means for display, teaching your children to love these things. "As the twig is bent, the tree inclines." As your sons and daughters become older, approaching manhood and womanhood, you mourn that their minds are frivolous, and absorbed in their pleasures, in fashionable dress, and outward display, while they have but little sense of their obligations to their parents, or to their God. They frequently have a positive disrelish for useful labor, or to lighten the burdens borne by their parents.

The seed that the parents have sown in the hearts of their children has sprung up, and is yielding an abundant harvest. The lessons they have taught their children are put into practical use. They are what their parents made them. They do not possess moral worth, or noble independence. They follow in the wake of fashion, and live to be petted, and flattered, and admired. Outward show is the ambition of their worse than useless lives.

Our children should be instructed that they may be intelligent in regard to their own physical organism. They can at an early age, by patient instruction, be made to understand that they should obey the laws of their being, if they would be free from pain and disease. They should understand that their lives cannot be useful, if they are crippled by disease. Neither can they please God if they bring sickness upon themselves by the disregard of nature's laws.

Many professedly Christian parents follow the example of the multitude in their conformity to the world. Parents, you have taken the responsibility of bringing children into the world, without any voice of theirs, and you are responsible for the lives and souls of your children. They have the attractions of the world to fascinate and allure. You can educate them so as to fortify them against its corrupting influence. You can train them to bear life's responsibilities, and to realize their obligations to God, truth, and duty, and the bearing that their actions will have upon their future immortal life. Many needless things are made of the first importance, even by Christian parents, in the education of their children. A close investigation, enlightened by the Spirit of God, would reveal to these parents that a great share of the burdens and fatigue of life they suffer, God has not bound upon them; but they gather them upon themselves in doing the very things God has expressly forbidden them to do.

"And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Many professed Christian parents, in order to gratify their children, labor, and expend means, wear away their strength, and even sacrifice their lives, in order to have their children keep pace with fashion. As I have seen these parents worrying, and complaining of trials, and temptations, and darkness, and gloom, fretting their way through life, carrying their unnecessary load of care, I have been reminded of the words of Christ to the Pharisees, "Ye tithe the mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment, and the love of God."

There is a natural tendency with all to be sentimental, rather than practical. In view of this fact, it is important that parents, in the education of their children, should direct and train their minds to love truth, duty, and self-denial, and to possess noble independence, to choose to be right, if the majority choose to be wrong. Our children who are receiving an education at school, should become intelligent in regard to their own bodies, the habitation God has given them, and bring their knowledge to bear upon their every-day life, that they may become intelligent in regard to the relation their eating, dressing, and walking, sustain to life, health, and happiness.

If they preserve to themselves sound constitutions and amiable tempers, they will possess true beauty that they can wear with a divine grace. And they will have no need to be adorned with artificials, for these are always expressive of an absence of the inward adorning of true moral worth. A beautiful character is of value in the sight of God. Such beauty will attract, but not mislead. Such charms are fast colors; they never fade.

Parents, here is a work before you. You may preserve your health by being less anxious for the outward, beautifying the person with artificial adornings, and devote your precious time to the adorning and beautifying of the mind. You may, in the fear of God, take up your neglected duty, and train your children to form characters for Heaven. The inspired apostle contrasts the inward adorning with the outward artificial display, and pronounces it not corruptible. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit he declares is of great price in the sight of God. If we are clearly told what God values, we shall be inexcusable if we continue to love display, to idolize our bodies, and to neglect to cultivate the inward adorning and perfect beautiful characters that God can approve.

E. G. W.