

Ellen G. White 1886 Sign Of The Times

January 7, 1886

Watchfulness and Prayer

“Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” Luke 21:34-36.

In the solemn language of this scripture, a duty is pointed out which lies in the daily pathway of every one, whether old or young. This is the duty of watchfulness, and upon our faithfulness here our destiny for time and for eternity depends.

We are living in an important time. When in 1844 the message was proclaimed, “Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his Judgment is come,” that announcement stirred every soul to its very depths. A deep solemnity rested upon all who heard it. How earnest we were to show our faith by our works, and to have our words and actions make a favorable impression on the world. More than forty years have passed since that time, and we are that much nearer the close of the Judgment and the coming of the Son of man—“nearer the great white throne, nearer the crystal sea.”

Today angels are watching the development of character; and soon our lives will have to pass in review before God. Soon we shall be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and over against our names will be recorded the judgment rendered. And we shall receive the crowning gift of eternal life or be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. We may be unwilling to examine ourselves closely now to see what our spiritual condition is, and whether our hearts are being suitably impressed by the testing message of truth; but that will not make any difference with the work of the Judgment. Its decisions will be rendered just the same; and when the “Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels,” “he shall reward every man according to his works.”

“Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.” How many there are who are bereft of their reason, as much intoxicated with the cares of this life as is the drunkard with his liquor.

How many there are whose hearts are today aching under their load of care, and who are thinking, “Oh, if there was only some one to help me bear my burdens!” Well, there is some one to help you bear your burden; there is rest for you who are heavy laden. Jesus, the great Burden-bearer, invites, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Here is the promise of the Master; but it is on condition. “Take my yoke upon you,” he says, “and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” “For my yoke is grievous.” Is that what he says? No. “My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” The burden you are carrying which is so heavy, and which causes such weariness and perplexity, is your own burden. You desire to meet the world's standard; and in your eager efforts to gratify ambitious and worldly desires, you wound your consciences, and thus bring upon yourselves the additional burden of remorse. When you do not

want to be distinct from the world, but desire to mix up with it so that no difference is seen between you and the world, then you may know that you are drunken with the cares of this life. Oh, there are so many selfish interests, so many cords to bind us to this world! But we must keep cutting these cords, and be in a condition of waiting for our Lord.

The world has forced itself in between our souls and God. But what right have we to allow our hearts to become overcharged with the cares of this life? What right have we, through our devotion to the world, to neglect the affairs of the church and the interests of our fellowmen? Why should we manufacture for ourselves burdens and cares that Christ has not laid upon us? Why should we, through distrust of his promises, suffer from wearing, anxious care? He says: "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" "for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

"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 magnificence of Solomon was not to be compared to the beauty of one of these little flowers, with its delicate colors, which the God of Heaven had painted upon it by his wondrous skill. Will not He who has taken so much thought for the flowers of the field care for your mortal bodies? Will he not see that you have bread to eat and raiment to put on, O ye of little faith? And more than all this, will he not also clothe you with the garment of his own righteousness?

Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us that we know nothing about. But we are not excused from effort. While we may trust his constant care, we must not conclude that we may be slack in that which our hands find to do. We are to be "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

There is one thing in which we must be deeply in earnest, and that is in the service of God. There is no danger of having too much zeal here. If we would only work with an eye single to the glory of God, the mists would roll away, and our views of right and wrong would become clear. We should consecrate our property. The language of our hearts would be, "Lord, here is the means for which thou hast made me responsible; what wilt thou have me do with it?" And we should make straight paths for our feet, lest by any false step the lame be turned out of the way. The whole effort of our lives would be to glorify the Saviour, the Man of Calvary, and to prepare for the life immortal.

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always." There is great need of watchfulness, not for our own sakes only, but also for the sake of our influence upon others. Our influence is far-reaching. We may think that it is confined to our own households; that only the members of our own families know what we are and what we are doing. In some cases this may seem to be true; but in some way the influence of the home life goes out beyond the home.

And what do we learn from this? That in our homes and in all the relations of life, we should be watchful and prayerful. Solemn, sacred duties devolve upon us. We should so speak and so walk that the Spirit of God may be in our hearts, and his blessing in our homes. If we had more of the love of God in our hearts, and his praise were oftener upon our lips, we should be better prepared to glorify him here and hereafter. But what will our words accomplish, if they are not backed up by a holy life?

“Watch ye therefore, and pray always,” that “ye may stand before the Son of man,” What a position to stand in before the world, to be ready and waiting for the coming of the Lord, that at his appearing we may be able to say, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us.” What a triumph it will be to enter in through the gates into the city of God, bearing the palm branch of victory! what a privilege to have a right to the tree of life, and to eat of its precious fruits!

If we would share in the glorious reward promised to the overcomer, we must fight the good fight of faith. This is what the apostle Paul did, and he says: “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.” Let us be of the number of those that are “rich in good works,” “laying up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

January 14, 1886

Christian Homes

Our time, our strength, and our energies belong to God; and if they are consecrated to his service, our light will shine. It will affect first and most strongly those in our own homes, who are most intimately associated with us; but it will extend beyond the home, even to “the world.” To many it will be a savor of life unto life; but there are some who will refuse to see the light, or to walk in it. They are of that class spoken of by our Saviour, when he said: “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” Such are in a very dangerous position; but their course does not excuse any of us from letting our light shine.

Suppose that because some ship had disregarded his warning beacon, and gone to pieces on the rocks, the lighthouse-keeper should put out his lights, and say, “I will pay no more attention to the lighthouse,” what would be the consequence? But that is not the way he does. He keeps his lights burning all night, throwing their beams far out into the darkness, for the benefit of every mariner that comes within the dangerous reach of rocks and shoals. Were some ship to be wrecked because the lights went out, it would be telegraphed over the world that on such a night, at such a point, a ship went to pieces on the rocks because there was no light in the tower. But if some ships are wrecked because they pay no attention to the light, the lighthouse-keeper is guiltless; they were warned, but they paid no heed.

What if the light in the household should go out? Then every one in that house would be in darkness; and the result would be as disastrous as though the light were to go out in the lighthouse tower. 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 mould. Your children should be taught to control their tempers and to cultivate a loving, Christlike spirit. So direct them that they will love the service of God, that they will take more

pleasure in going to the house of worship than to places of amusement. Teach them that religion is a living principle. Had I been brought up with the idea that religion is a mere feeling, my life would have been a useless one. But I never let feeling come between Heaven and my soul. Whatever my feelings may be, I will seek God at the commencement of the day, at noon, and at night, that I may draw strength from the living Source of power.

Mothers, you have no right to spend time in ruffling, and tucking, and embroidering your children's dresses for display. Has not your time been given you for a higher and nobler purpose? Has it not been given you to be spent in beautifying the minds of your children, and cultivating loveliness of character? Should it not be spent in laying hold of the Mighty One of Heaven, and seeking him for power and wisdom to train your children for a place in his kingdom, to secure for them a life that will endure as long as the throne of Jehovah?

But how many mothers there are who are so far from God that they devote their time to their own gratification, and leave their children to be cared for by unconsecrated hands. Or perhaps the mother sits at her work night after night, while her children go to bed without a prayer or a good-night kiss. She does not bind their tender hearts to her own by the cords of love; for she is "too busy." And is this as God would have it? No, indeed! Something has taken away the mother's reason, and what is it? Is it not a desire to meet the world's standard and to conform to its customs?

Some may wonder why it is that we say so much about home religion and the children. It is because of the terrible neglect of home duties on the part of so many. As the servants of God, parents, you are responsible for the children committed to your care. Many of them are growing up without reverence, growing up careless and irreligious, unthankful and unholy.

If these children had been properly trained and disciplined, if they had been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, heavenly angels would be in your homes. If you were true home missionaries, in your daily life exemplifying the teachings of the word of God, you would be preparing yourselves for a wider field of usefulness, and at the same time fitting your children to stand by your side, as efficient workers in the cause of God. What an impression it makes upon society to see a family united in the work and service of the Lord. Such a family is a powerful discourse in favor of the reality of Christianity. Others see that there is an influence at work in the family that affects the children, and that the God of Abraham is with them. And that which has such a powerful influence on the children is felt beyond the home, and affects other lives. If the homes of professed Christians had a right religious mould, they would exert a mighty influence for good. They would indeed be the "light of the world."

A well-ordered Christian household is an argument that the infidel cannot resist. He finds no place for his cavils. And the children of such a household are prepared to meet the sophistries of infidelity. They have accepted the Bible as the basis of their faith, and they have a firm foundation that cannot be swept away by the in-coming tide of skepticism.

Said Christ, "Ye are the light of the world." He has committed talents to our keeping. What are we doing with his intrusted gifts? Are we letting our light shine by using them for his glory and the benefit of our fellow-men, or are we using them to advance our own selfish interests? Many are using them selfishly. They do not seem to realize that we are all Judgment-bound, and must soon give an account for the use we have made of our God-given opportunities to do good. But what

excuse will they give in that great day for not using in the cause of God their skill, their education, their tact, and their perseverance and zeal?

We need divine help if we would keep our lights burning. But Jesus died to provide that aid. He extends the invitation: "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." Cling to the arm of Infinite Power; then you will find him precious to your soul, and all Heaven will be at your command. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light," we shall have the companionship of holy angels. To "Joshua" it was said, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge," "I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." And who are "these that stand by"? They are the angels of God. Joshua must have a living, confiding trust in God every day; and then angels would walk with him, and the power of God would rest upon him in all his labors.

Then, Christian friends, fathers and mothers, let your light grow dim—no, never! Let your heart grow faint, or your hands weary—no, never! And by and by the portals of the celestial city will be opened to you; and you may present yourselves and your children before the throne, saying, "Here am I, and the children whom thou hath given me." And what a reward for faithfulness that will be, to see your children crowned with immortal life in the beautiful city of God!

January 14, 1886

The Missionary

A Warning

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

The foolish rich man loved and served himself. If he had loved God supremely, he would not have accumulated so great treasures that there would be lack of room to bestow them. Had he used his goods to supply the necessities of the poor, there would have been no need of tearing down his barns, and building greater. By employing his wealth as a bounty lent him of God with which to do good, he would have become rich in good works, would have laid up treasure in Heaven. But he disregarded the principles of the divine law. He did not love God supremely, nor his neighbor as himself.

While enjoying the gifts of Heaven, he failed to acknowledge whence all his possessions came. These earthly benefits he allowed to take his mind and absorb his affections so that the Giver was forgotten. He claimed as his own that which God had lent him. No grateful thanks ascended to his gracious Benefactor. The Master who had intrusted to him earthly riches with which to bless his fellow-men and glorify his Maker, was justly angry at his ingratitude.

This parable illustrates the sin and danger of a self-serving life. Poor are the devotees of mammon. They have embezzled the Lord's goods, placed their own name where God's name should be written, and robbed the soul of his love and favor. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." There are a greater number following the example of the foolish rich man than we imagine. The worship due to God is given to money. That which can satisfy the earthly, sensual faculties is sought as the highest good. Many show that they will not trust God's promises, but are trusting to property for happiness. They may call themselves rich, but God calls them poor. Men who claim to acknowledge God, forget him and disown him. They turn from the heavenly treasure for worldly pleasures and enjoyments, until the patience of God is exhausted, and he says, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches."

These warnings are for us, and it is for our interest to heed them. They should be repeated as earnestly, and set home as pointedly, as is the gospel of salvation through Christ. But though so plainly given by our Lord himself, but few dwell upon these lessons, because they would disturb the complacency of the rich man who lives for selfish enjoyment. Ministers have but little to do with these sharp warnings. God's professed people are not told of their danger. They follow the example of the foolish rich man, and flatter themselves they have all that the soul requires.

Listen to the words of your Redeemer: "'If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' Riches are mine. I have placed them in your hands to be wisely employed in my service, to aid the suffering, to invest in opening the gospel to those who are in darkness. Riches must not be your trust, your god, or your saviour."

The channels for doing good are many, and they stand wide open. Your barns are large, too large already. If they overflow, instead of building larger, send your treasure before you into Heaven. There are widows to feed, orphans to be taken under the guardianship of your home, and share your ample stores; there are souls perishing for the bread of life; missions are to be supported, meeting-houses to be built. If God's cause demands a part, not only of your interest, but of your principal, you are to give back to him his own. He calls upon you to sow now, that you may reap your harvest with eternal joy.

God's gifts increase as they are imparted. We see this illustrated in the case of the poor widow whom the prophet Elisha, by a miracle, relieved from debt. She had only one jar of oil; but the prophet told her to borrow vessels of her neighbors, and the oil poured from that one jar continued to flow till all the vessels were filled. The supply ceased only when no more vessels were brought to receive it. So it will be now. So long as we let the gifts of God flow into channels of good, the Lord will supply the flow.

Christ says to his sons and daughters, "Ye are the light of the world." But who gave you light? You did not have it in you naturally. God is the source of light; the truth has shone into our hearts, to be reflected to others. True love to God will produce love to man. This is what we need,—love that is patient, self-sacrificing, persevering, intelligent, practical.

The Lord has given you means, that in putting it to a right use you may develop good and noble traits of character. When you follow the purpose of your own selfish hearts, you are not only keeping your

means from the cause of God, but depriving yourselves of the opportunity to cultivate noble, unselfish principles; and thus your own character suffers loss.

The day of trial is before us; shall we stand acquitted or condemned? You who believe that the Lord is soon to come, will show your faith by your works. The Judgment is to sit, the books are to be opened, and every man will receive as his works have been. We are now trees in the Lord's garden, and he says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." If our faith has not led us to deny self, to make any and every sacrifice to save the souls of our fellowmen, it will not save us.

Every excuse which men offer for neglecting to obey God's requirements in regard to the use of their property, is an evidence of rebellion against him. The plea of the unprofitable servant is man's plea today, that the Lord has no right to require his servants to employ their time and ability in making money for him. But God requires of none of us that which it is not for our best interest to do. Many would be loth to put into words the reason they secretly cherish to vindicate themselves and silence their own conscience; but they are no less bringing upon themselves the denunciation pronounced upon the unprofitable servant. "Take the talent from him," will be heard by many unwilling ears.

What wrong have I done? may be asked. The answer comes, You tied up your Lord's money in large barns, in which to bestow your goods. You bound up his means in a fine house, in expensive carpets, furniture, and goodly things, while souls were left to perish in their sins. You buried your talents because you did not love God and his cause half so well as you loved yourself. God and man lost all the profits your means would have brought if rightly employed. Today the Lord is disappointed in you. He looked for a precious offering of gratitude, but no returns are made for his wondrous love and his great sacrifice for you. Do you inquire, Of what have I to repent?—Of a godless, self-loving, self-pleasing life. You have not reflected the light of a godly example. You said plainly, I claim my portion as my own.

I hope to see our brethren and sisters improving the little remaining moment of probationary time. Brethren, be not deceived; God is not mocked. The excuses you have prepared for the Judgment will not stand the test. Let us see active, energetic workers, who are looking for their Lord's return, and who are ready to present the talents they have traded upon, saying, Here, Lord, thy five talents have gained other five talents; thy two talents have gained other two. Where are the God-fearing workers? Let them come to the front. The Lord is coming. You have no time to lose. You are not to do as did the inhabitants of the antediluvian world,—plant and build, eat and drink, marry and give in marriage, the same as the careless worldling. Let the books of Heaven present a different record from that which now appears. Make haste to redeem the time; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.

E. G. White.

January 21, 1886

Bible Beneficence

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

The promises to the liberal are very great; and He who made them is able to fulfill his word, for his resources are infinite. Yet all his promises are based upon conditions, and it is only by complying with these that we can hope to gain the proffered blessing. God has intrusted of his bounties to every man, but in varying measure, according to their several capacities. These gifts of a kind Providence are to be wisely employed in the service of the Giver, and to be returned with interest at the day of reckoning. Those who prove themselves good stewards will receive in greater measure, as they dispense their means to advance the cause of God and to bless their fellow-men.

The children of God are not like worldlings, enshrouded in moral darkness, loving self, and seeking for earthly treasure. They are ever a "peculiar people, zealous of good works." It requires self-denial and self-sacrifice to follow in the footsteps of our Saviour. And in order to do this, we must cultivate a spirit of beneficence. The first great principle of God's law is supreme love to the Creator; the second, equal love to our neighbor. "On these two commandments," said Christ, "hang all the law and the prophets."

Experience shows that a spirit of benevolence is more frequently found among those of limited means than among the more wealthy. Many who greatly desire riches would be ruined by their possession. When such persons are intrusted with talents of means, they too often hoard or waste the Lord's money, until the Master says to them individually, "Thou shalt be no longer steward." They dishonestly use that which is another's as though it were their own. God will not intrust them with eternal riches.

The cry of souls that have been left in darkness, and the cry of the widow and the fatherless, go up to Heaven as a swift witness against the unfaithful stewards. But the poor man's gift, the fruit of self-denial to extend the precious light of truth, is as fragrant incense before God. Every act of self-sacrifice for the good of others will strengthen the spirit of beneficence in the giver's heart, allying him more closely to the Redeemer of the world, "who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through, his poverty might be rich."

The smallest sum given cheerfully as the result of self-denial is of more value in the sight of God than the offerings of those who could give thousands and yet feel no lack. The poor widow who cast two mites into the treasury of the Lord, showed love, faith, and benevolence. She gave all that she had, trusting to God's care for the uncertain future. Her little gift was pronounced by our Saviour the greatest that day cast into the treasury. Its value was measured, not by the worth of the coin, but by the purity of the motive which prompted her. God's blessing upon that sincere offering has made it the source of great results. The widow's mite has been like a tiny stream flowing down through the ages, widening and deepening in its course, and contributing in a thousand directions to the extension of the truth and the relief of the needy. The influence of that small gift has acted and reacted upon thousands of hearts in every age and in every country. As the result, unnumbered gifts have flowed into the treasury of the Lord from the liberal, self-denying poor. And again, her example has stimulated to good works thousands of ease-loving, selfish, and doubting ones, and their gifts also have gone to swell the value of her offering.

Liberality is a duty on no account to be neglected; but let not rich or poor for a moment entertain the thought that their offerings to God can atone for their defects of Christian character. Says the great apostle: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Again, he sets forth the fruits of true charity: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth." If we would be accepted as the followers of Christ, we must bring forth the fruits of his Spirit; for our Saviour himself declares: "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

It is to cultivate a spirit of benevolence in us that the Lord calls for our gifts and offerings. He is not dependent upon men for means to sustain his cause. He declares, by the prophet: "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine and the fullness thereof."

The Lord will not accept our offerings, if we withhold ourselves. He asks for that which is his own—not only the means intrusted to us, but all that we have and are, in body, soul, and spirit; for all has been purchased at the infinite price of the blood of Christ. God 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 he has chosen to employ men to do this work. And it is only as we fulfill the divine purpose in our creation, that life can be a blessing to us.

The Majesty of Heaven yielded up his high command, his glory with the Father, and even his own life, to save us. And now what will we do for him? God forbid that his professed children should live for themselves! There is work to be done for the Master, by our means and by our influence. God's claim underlies every other. The first and best of everything rightfully belongs to him. When Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven, he will have no use for the money which he has intrusted to us. It is in this life that he requires all our talents to be put out to the exchangers. In this life he calls upon us to bring all the tithes into the store-house, and thus prove him and see if he will not pour us out a blessing. This proposition is made by the Lord of hosts. Shall we comply with the conditions, and thus secure the promised blessing?

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." There has been a fearful withholding from God, and, as a result, the withdrawal of his special blessing. We should not look upon the tithe as the limit of our liberality. The Jews were required to bring to God numerous offerings besides the tithe; and shall not we, who enjoy the blessings of the gospel, do as much to sustain the cause of God as was done in the former, less-favored dispensation? As the work for this time is extending in the earth, the calls for help are constantly increasing. And in view of this the Lord commands us, "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house," that is, a surplus of means in the treasury, that the work of God in its various branches may be amply sustained.

As we are continually receiving the blessings of God, so are we to be continually giving. When the heavenly Benefactor ceases to give to us, then we may be excused; for we shall have nothing to bestow. God has never left us without evidence of his love. He gives us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, providing us abundantly with his bounties, and filling our hearts with gladness. He has declared that "while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

We are sustained every moment by God's care, and upheld by his power. He spreads our tables with food. He gives us peaceful and refreshing sleep. Weekly he brings to us the Sabbath, that we may rest from our temporal labors, and worship him in his own house. He has given us his word to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. In its sacred pages we find the counsels of wisdom; and as oft as we lift our hearts to him in penitence and faith, he grants us the blessings of his grace. Above all else is the infinite gift of God's dear Son, through whom flow all other blessings for this life and for the life to come.

Surely, goodness and mercy attend us at every step. Not till we wish the Infinite Father to cease bestowing his gifts on us, should we become impatient of giving. Not only should we faithfully render to God our tithes, which he claims as his own, but we should bring a tribute to his treasury as an offering of gratitude. Let us with joyful hearts bring to our Creator the first-fruits of all his bounties,—our choicest possessions, our best and holiest service.

January 28, 1886

“Preach the Word”

“Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth,” was the prayer of Christ for his disciples. In every age God has committed to his people some special truth which is directly opposed to the desires and purposes of the human heart, and which tends to separate his church from the world; and it has been the duty of his ministers to proclaim this truth, whether men would hear or forbear.

When Christ came as the teacher and guide of mankind, he brought to them truths glowing with the light of Heaven, showing in contrast the darkness of error, and revealing the superstition, self-righteousness, and bigotry of that age. His heart overflowed with love for the poor, the ignorant, the afflicted, and the fallen. He healed the sick, comforted the desponding, cast out devils, raised the dead, and preached to all the words of eternal life. But many who listened to the divine Teacher received his words with little favor. The priests and elders, the professed expositors of divine truth, were sending forth no rays of light. In their self-righteousness they held themselves aloof from the benighted people, who needed instruction and guidance. When Jesus took up the work which they had left undone, they felt that his life was a constant rebuke to them, and they feared that he would turn the hearts of the people from them, and destroy their influence. They were filled with pride, love of ostentation, and desire for praise; and they despised the humility and self-denial of Jesus. They hated the purity while they feared the power of his teachings. They refused to accept him themselves, and bent all their energies to hinder others from believing in him. No wonder he brought against them the terrible accusation: “Ye have taken away the key of knowledge. Ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.”

It is no argument against the truth that there are few who are willing to accept it. Few accepted the world's Redeemer. Though the multitude flocked around him, eager to receive temporal blessings, yet he sadly declared: “Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” Men are now no more favorable to practical godliness; they are just as intently seeking earthly good, to the neglect of eternal riches. And reformers of the present day will meet with the same discouragements as did their Master.

Of the people in his day Christ said: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." The Jews willfully closed their eyes and their ears, and barred their hearts with prejudice, lest they should see a better way, and be aroused from their dream of security. The people of the present generation are pursuing a similar course. New truths are constantly unfolding; new and clearer light is shining upon the pathway of God's people. But the great mass of mankind are satisfied with their present condition, and are unwilling to exchange error for truth. But we are to be sanctified through obedience to the truth. For want of this Bible sanctification, the soul of many a professed Christian has become a desecrated shrine, the haunt of hollow formalism, of selfishness and hypocrisy, pride and passion.

It is harder to reach the hearts of men today than it was twenty years ago. The most convincing arguments may be presented, and yet sinners seem as far from repentance as ever. The work of the faithful minister is no child's play. Earnest, untiring effort is required to wrench the prey of Satan from his grasp. But God will sustain his servants in the work which he himself has committed to their hands. Said Christ to his disciples, as they toiled upon the Sea of Galilee, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." When the gospel net is cast, there should be a watching by the net, with tears and earnest prayers. Let the workers determine not to let the net go till it is drawn ashore, with the fruit of their labor. Sometimes, indeed, we may say with Peter, "We have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing;" but still it is the Master's command, as of old, "Let down the net on the right side of the ship,"—work on in faith, and God will give success.

Whatever the trials and difficulties that the ambassador of Christ may have to meet, he can carry them all to God in prayer. He can weep between the porch and the altar, pleading, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." And by study of the Scriptures and earnest, wrestling prayer, he may become "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Labor on, then, while the day lasts, you who have been called to preach the good news of salvation through Christ; for the night cometh, wherein no man can work. God has called us to labor in his vineyard, and if we neglect our duty, souls will be lost through our unfaithfulness.

Though the servants of Christ may, at times, feel almost disheartened as they see how many obstacles there are in the way of Christian living, and how slowly the work of God seems to advance, their duty remains the same. They are to sow the seed of truth beside all waters. A constant effort to promote personal piety should be seen in all their public labors. They should not preach sermon after sermon on doctrinal subjects alone. Practical godliness should find a place in every discourse, and the discourses should be short and to the point.

The minister should not merely present the truth from the desk, but as the shepherd of the flock he should care for the sheep and the lambs, searching out the lost and straying, and bringing them back to the fold. He should visit every family, not merely as a guest to enjoy their hospitality, but to inquire into the spiritual condition of every member of the household. His own soul must be imbued with the love of God; then by kindly courtesy he may win his way to the hearts of all, and labor successfully for parents and children, entreating, warning, encouraging, as the case demands. Let him seek to keep the church alive, and laboring with him for the conversion of sinners. This is good

generalship; and the results will be found far better than if the minister performed all the work alone.

Jesus bids his people, "Go forward." The minister may labor for the people, but he cannot take the responsibility that God has placed upon them. There are higher attainments for us, there is a purer love, a deeper experience, if we will consecrate ourselves to God, and humbly take him at his word. The reason why we have no greater confidence and joy, is that we are not sanctified through obedience to the truth. There is in us an evil heart of unbelief. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. Then let us shake off the spiritual sloth that dishonors him and imperils our own souls. If we draw near to God, he will draw near to us. We must not wait for better opportunities, for strong persuasions, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing for ourselves. We must trust to the power of Jesus to save us. He is holding out to us the crown of life, and shall we not accept it? Let us come to him just as we are, and we shall find him a present help in our time of need.

The sweet sense of sins forgiven, the light and love which Christ alone can give, fill the soul with peace and joy. The assurance that we are under the protection of Omnipotence imparts courage and confidence, inspires a hope that is "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." This assurance is a source of strength unknown to the worldling or to the half-hearted professor. So long as we have the presence of our Saviour, difficulties cannot dismay nor dangers appall us; and we are ready cheerfully to perform whatever duty God requires of us. If we were only as free to speak of the blessings we receive from God as we are to talk of our doubts and discouragements, we should enjoy far more of his presence. Our kind heavenly Father declares: "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." Let us praise him more, and complain less; let us talk more of the love and wondrous power of our Redeemer, and we shall be brought nearer and nearer to him, into closer and still closer relations with him in whom our hope centers.

Shall we not consecrate ourselves to God without reserve? Christ, the King of glory, gave himself a ransom for us. Can we withhold anything from him? Shall we think our poor, unworthy selves too precious, our time or property too valuable, to give to Jesus? No, no; the deepest homage of our hearts, the most skillful service of our hands, our talents of ability and of means,—all are but too poor an offering to bring to Him who was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

January 28, 1886

Home Missionaries

Many professed Christians are laying upon the foundation-stone, wood, hay, and stubble, which the fires of the last day will consume. They engage in work that wearies, work that occupies golden hours; but it is not work that need be done. Their time is occupied, their energies exhausted, in that which will bring no precious returns either in this life or in the future, immortal life. What a difference will be seen when spiritual work engages the mind, when the talents are employed in the service of Jesus! The light that he has given us will then shine forth in direct, concentrated rays to others. All that we do for Jesus will enable us to enjoy this life better. Oh that all could see, as I have seen, the joy of those who have labored to the best of their ability, in humility and meekness, to help souls to come to Jesus! Oh, the joy that will be realized by the workers when the souls saved through

their instrumentality express their gratitude in the mansions above! While Christ will be glorified as the only Redeemer, there will be an overflowing of gratitude from the saved for the human instrumentalities employed in their salvation. Their gratitude to those who rescued them will find expression in words like these: "I was pursuing a course that was a dishonor and an offense to my Redeemer; you manifested a love for my soul; you opened to me the word of God. I was on the brink of ruin; your prayers, your tearful entreaties, your earnest interest, arrested my attention. I thought that you must have the truth or you would not be so earnest for the salvation of others. I read the word of God for myself, and found that what you had told me was the truth. I am saved, and I will praise my Redeemer for his matchless mercy and pardoning love."

Those who think they can do but little, should improve every opportunity to do that little. It may be the smallest link in the longest chain. Separated from other influences, it may appear of little worth; but in God's great chain of circumstances it may be the link which connects a soul to Heaven. All can do something if they will; but too often selfishness prevents them from doing what they might, until the souls whom they might have saved, are beyond the reach of human effort. Dear brethren and sisters, you need divine enlightenment. When you have such a close connection with the world's Redeemer as you should have, you will be led to make prompt, determined, personal efforts to save your fellow-men.

The future of God's people lies in the present. He has given us a time of probation in which our fidelity to him is to be tested. It is now that the test is being applied. Time, strength, means, light, and mental abilities are intrusted to us. What use are we making of these gifts? How are we standing the test? Do we realize that our eternal welfare is determined by our present course of action? If we fail to honor God here by making a right use of our trusts, we would not honor him if taken to Heaven. If we prove unfaithful to the lesser responsibilities, how can God put upon us those weightier, eternal responsibilities which every inhabitant of Heaven must bear? In those who are cleansed and renewed, the fruits will appear, not only in their confession of sins, but in their conduct toward others. If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Christ gave himself a sacrifice to save perishing sinners. He consented to poverty because he could thus best reach the poor and the oppressed; he could thus best understand their privations and sorrows. It was his great love for our souls that led him to renounce the enjoyments of Heaven, and even the comforts of this life; and if we have his spirit in our hearts, it will be manifested in a similar earnestness to save perishing souls. The measure of Christ's love that we possess, will be evidenced by the course we pursue. God is testing us to see whether we have chosen Christ or mammon as our master. His word plainly declares that we cannot serve both.

Mrs. E. G. White

February 11, 1886

Temperance Reform from a Bible Standpoint

We can have no right understanding of the subject of temperance until we consider it from a Bible standpoint. And nowhere shall we find a more comprehensive and forcible illustration of true temperance and its attendant blessings than is afforded by the history of the prophet Daniel and his associates in the court of Babylon. When they were selected to be taught the "learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans," that they might "stand in the king's palace," "the king appointed them a

daily portion of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank." "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank."

Not only did these young men decline to drink the king's wine, but they refrained from the luxuries of his table. The food apportioned to them "from the king's table" would include swine's flesh and other meats pronounced unclean by the law of Moses, and which the Jews were forbidden to eat. They requested the officer who had them in charge to grant them more simple fare; but he hesitated, fearing that such rigid abstinence as they proposed would affect their personal appearance unfavorably, and bring himself into disfavor with the king. Daniel pleaded for a ten days' trial. This was granted; and at the expiration of that time, these youth were found to be far more healthy in appearance than were those who had partaken of the king's dainties. Hence the simple "pulse and water" which they at first requested was thereafter the food of Daniel and his companions.

It was not their own pride or ambition that had brought these young men into the king's court, into the companionship of those who neither knew nor feared the true God. They were captives in a strange land, and Infinite Wisdom had placed them where they were. They considered their position, with its difficulties and its dangers; and then, in the fear of God, made their decision. Even at the risk of the king's displeasure, they would be true to the religion of their fathers. They obeyed the divine law, both natural and moral, and the blessing of God gave them strength and comeliness, and intellectual power.

These youth had received a right education in early life; and now, when separated from home influences and sacred associations, they honored the instructors of their childhood. With their habits of self-denial were coupled earnestness of purpose, diligence, and steadfastness. They had no time to squander in pleasure, vanity, or folly. They were not actuated by pride or unworthy ambition; but they sought to acquit themselves creditably, for the honor of their down-trodden people and for His glory whose servants they were.

God always honors the right. The most promising youth of every land subdued by the great conqueror, had been gathered at Babylon; yet amid them all, the Hebrew captives were without a rival. The erect form, the firm, elastic step, the fair countenance showing that the blood was uncorrupted, the undimmed senses, the untainted breath,—all were so many certificates of good habits,—insignia of the nobility with which nature honors those who are obedient to her laws. And when their ability and acquirements were tested by the king at the close of the three years of training, none were found "like unto Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah." Their keen apprehension, their choice and exact language, their extensive and varied knowledge, testified to the unimpaired strength and vigor of their mental powers.

The history of Daniel and his companions has been recorded on the pages of the inspired word for the benefit of the youth of all succeeding ages. What men have done, men may do. Did those faithful Hebrews stand firm amid great temptation, and bear a noble testimony in favor of true temperance? The youth of today may bear a similar testimony, even under circumstances as unfavorable. Would that they would emulate the example of these Hebrew youth; for all who will, may, like them, enjoy the favor and blessing of God.

The lesson from the experience of these youth is one which we would all do well to ponder. Our danger is not from scarcity, but from abundance. We are constantly tempted to excess. But those who would preserve their powers unimpaired for the service of God must observe strict temperance in the use of all his bounties, as well as total abstinence from every injurious or debasing indulgence.

Right physical habits promote mental superiority. Intellectual power, physical strength, and longevity depend upon immutable laws. There is no happen-so, no chance, about this matter. Heaven will not interfere to preserve men from the consequences of the violation of nature's laws. There is much of truth in the adage that every man is the architect of his own fortune. While parents are responsible for the stamp of character, as well as for the education and training which they give their sons and daughters, it is still true that our position and usefulness in the world depend, to a great degree, upon our own course of action.

Let old and young remember that for every violation of the laws of life, nature will utter her protest. The penalty will fall upon the mental as well as the physical powers. And it does not end with the guilty trifier. The effects of his misdemeanors are seen in his offspring, and thus hereditary evils are passed down, even to the third or fourth generation. Think of this, fathers, when you indulge in the use of the soul-and-brain-benumbing narcotic, tobacco. Where will this practice leave you? Whom will it affect besides yourselves?

Wherever we go, we encounter the tobacco devotee, enfeebling both mind and body by his darling indulgence. We rarely pass through a crowd, but men will puff their poisoned breath into our face. Is it honest to contaminate the air which others must breathe? Have men a right to deprive their Maker and the world of the service which was their due? Is such a course Christlike?

We are suffering for the wrong habits of our fathers, and yet how many take a course every way worse than theirs! Every year millions of gallons of intoxicating liquors are drunk, and millions of dollars are spent for tobacco. Opium, tea, coffee, tobacco, and intoxicating liquors are rapidly extinguishing the spark of vitality still left in the race. And the slaves of appetite, while constantly spending their earnings in sensual indulgence, rob their children of food and clothing and the advantages of education.

There can never be a right state of society while these evils exist. And no real reform will be effected until the law shall close up liquor saloons, not only on Sunday, but on all days of the week. The closing of these saloons would promote public order and domestic happiness. And why can they not be closed? It is not too much to say that liquor saloons would speedily be closed, in obedience to the dictates of reason and religion, if public officers were not among the patrons. These men by their influence corrupt society, and then they judge and condemn the erring ones who follow their example.

Only men of strict temperance and integrity should be admitted to our legislative halls and chosen to preside in our courts of justice. Property, reputation, and even life itself, are insecure when left to the judgment of men who are intemperate and immoral. How many innocent persons have been condemned to death, how many more have been robbed of all their earthly possessions, by the injustice of drinking jurors, lawyers, witnesses, and even judges!

The use of intoxicating liquor dethrones reason, and hardens the heart against every pure and holy influence. The inanimate rock will sooner listen to the appeals of truth and justice than will that man whose sensibilities are paralyzed by intemperance. The finer feelings of the heart are not blunted all at once. A gradual change is wrought. Those who venture to enter the forbidden path are gradually demoralized and corrupted. And though in the cities liquor saloons abound, making indulgence easy, and though youth are surrounded by allurements to tempt the appetite, the evil does not often begin with the use of intoxicating liquors. Tea, coffee, and tobacco are artificial stimulants, and their use creates the demand for the stronger stimulus found in alcoholic beverages. And while Christians are asleep, this giant evil of intemperance is gaining strength and making fresh victims.

There is need now of men like Daniel,—men who have the self-denial and the courage to be radical temperance reformers. Let every Christian see that his example and his influence are on the side of reform. Let ministers of the gospel be faithful in instructing and warning the people. And let all remember that our happiness in two worlds depends upon the right improvement of one.

February 18, 1886

The Burning of the Books on Magic

The temple of the goddess Diana at Ephesus, noted for its size and splendor, was one of the wonders of the world, and was the pride of both the city and the nation. The idol itself was but an uncouth wooden image, on which were inscribed characters and symbols that were supposed to possess great power. When pronounced, these mystic words were said to accomplish wonders; when written, they were considered a potent charm to guard their possessor from robbers, from disease, and even from death.

In the days of the apostles, the city of Ephesus was famed for the worship of the goddess Diana and the practice of magic. There were many devotees of magic arts, and numerous and costly books had been written in explanation of these mysteries. Here, in this stronghold of superstition and sorcery, the apostle Paul labored for several years. And the power of God was mightily displayed through his servant in the healing of the sick and the casting out of evil spirits.

The miracles wrought by Paul in the name of Jesus created great excitement among the Ephesians. And certain Jewish exorcists, believing that the sacred name acted as a charm, determined to cast out evil spirits by the same means that the apostle had employed. Seven brothers, the sons of Sceva, a chief priest of the Jews, were of this number. Finding a man who was possessed of an evil spirit, they addressed him, "We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth." But the evil spirit answered with scorn, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" And the man who was possessed attacked them, and overcame them, "so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." Their discomfiture was soon known to Jews and Gentiles throughout Ephesus; and it furnished unmistakable proof of the sacredness of the name of Jesus, and of the peril incurred by those who would invoke it while they had no faith in his divine mission.

Many who had hitherto heaped reproach on the name of Jesus now dared not breathe that name aloud. A large number, convinced that Jesus was all that Paul claimed him to be, determined to receive the gospel. These openly renounced the practice of sorcery, and acknowledged their secret arts to be Satanic and deceptive. They brought together the costly books on enchantment,

containing the mystic symbols of Diana and the secrets of their art, and burned them in the presence of the people. The value of the books thus sacrificed was estimated at fifty thousand pieces of silver, equal to about ten thousand dollars.

These books contained rules and forms of communication with evil spirits. They were the regulations for the worship of Satan, directions for soliciting his help and obtaining information from him. The system of magic, or sorcery, then extant, was the same as that which in this Christian age and nation is known as Spiritualism. In Paul's day many were deceived by this Satanic delusion, and many are deceived today by the same power. Satan finds access to thousands of minds by presenting himself under the guise of departed friends. The Scriptures of truth declare that "the dead know not anything." Their thoughts, their love, their hatred, have perished. The dead do not hold communion with the living. But Satan—true to his early cunning, when in the form of a serpent he deceived the mother of our race—employs this device to gain control of the minds of men.

And "magical books" have not been confined to the apostolic age, or to nations that are called heathen. The freedom of the press has been taken advantage of to spread abroad the influence of this baleful literature. Could all the modern productions of this class—all the publications of Spiritualism—be treated as were these magical books of the Ephesians, one of Satan's most successful avenues by which to gain access to the souls of men would be cut off.

This incident was placed on record that it might serve as an important lesson for every age. When convinced that their magical books were false and pernicious, the Ephesians were unwilling to sell them, and thus place temptation in the way of others. The power of truth triumphed over their prejudices, their favorite pursuits, and their love of money; and though it involved a great personal sacrifice, they promptly burned the records of divination.

The Ephesians directed their efforts against the very sin of which they were guilty. Do the people of God in this age take a similar course? There are many who do not. They manifest supreme devotion to their money, their business, their houses and lands. The covetous man fosters his love of gain. The sensualist is wedded to his darling passion. The ambitious man worships fame as his idol. These love their cherished objects of pursuit more than they love God. They are idolaters. But those who thus venture to cherish the sin which they love best are tampering with Satan's bewitching sorcery. The enchanting power of temptation has paralyzed conscience and blinded reason, so that they do not perceive their danger. The magical books have not been destroyed.

When the truth is presented to the understanding, and exerts its sanctifying power upon the heart, the sins which once reigned in the heart will be put away, that Jesus may occupy the soul-temple. If covetousness has been indulged, it will be given up. If ambition or love of the world has captivated the senses, a higher attraction will break its power. Deceit, falsehood, impurity, will be cleansed from the heart. He who maintains his allegiance to Christ can render no service to Christ's bitterest foe.

When the Ephesian converts burned their books on magic, they laid the ax to the root of the tree. They showed that they hated that which they had once loved, and loved that which they had once hated. The light of truth, shining into their minds, had convinced them of the unlawfulness of their arts, and had stirred their souls with abhorrence of their unholy deeds. However earnest and vigilant

they might have been to correct other evils, had they spared this one sin they would eventually have yielded their faith.

Such a change as was wrought in these Ephesians by the preaching of the truth will ever attend true conversion, and is the best evidence of a genuine work of grace in the heart. The world and the church have a right to expect such proof of conversion as was given by the Ephesians,—proof that a new moral taste has been created. You, dear reader, may not have practiced sorcery, you may not have tampered with Spiritualism; but remember that “to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey.” If you indulge in any practice forbidden in God's word, you have yielded obedience to Satan; you are his servant.

A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place of his conversion; yet this does not prove him to be unconverted. Said Christ to Nicodemus, “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” Though the work of grace is silent and almost imperceptible, it may be fully as effective as when its operations are more apparent. But if the heart has been renewed by the Holy Spirit, the life will bear witness to the fact. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Light and darkness are not more distinct than are the states of the converted and the unconverted. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, and the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been what they are.

The infidel, when converted, will abhor the books that led him to doubt the word of God. The dissolute man who has purified his soul by obedience to the truth, will not, from curiosity or habit, venture into the haunts of dissipation; neither will he permit his mind to dwell on the familiar scenes of vice. He will be awake to his danger, shunning temptation himself, and warning others of its subtle and bewitching power. The converted man will not only resist evil, but he will, so far as possible, place himself beyond the power of Satan's devices. Followers of Christ, have you burned the magical books?

March 11, 1886

Parental Responsibility

“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Notwithstanding the boasted advancement that has been made in educational methods, the training of children at the present day is sadly defective. It is the home training that is neglected. Parents, and especially mothers, do not realize their responsibility. They have neither the patience to instruct, nor the wisdom to control, the little ones intrusted to their keeping.

It is too true that mothers are not standing at their post of duty, faithful to their motherhood. They are generally the willing servants of worldliness and fashion. Many, even among those who profess to have renounced the world, are influenced to a great degree by its customs and its spirit. Many times the mother neglects her precious charge, and looks to the teacher of the Sabbath and the day school to make up her deficiency. But she has no right thus to shift her responsibility upon others, and leave them to do her work. God does not call her to engage in any enterprise to advance his cause or to benefit mankind that will lead her to neglect the physical, mental, and moral training of

her own children; and what shall we say of her course when she neglects her sacred duties from worldly and selfish motives?

The opinions and maxims of the world should not govern the mother, nor should she labor to reach the world's standard. She should decide for herself what is the great end and aim of life, and then bend all her efforts to attain that end. She may, for want of time, neglect many things about her house, with no serious results; but she cannot with impunity neglect the proper discipline of her children. Their defective characters will publish her unfaithfulness. The evils which she permits to pass uncorrected,—the coarse, rough manners, the disrespect and disobedience, the habits of idleness and inattention,—will reflect dishonor upon her, and will embitter her life. Mothers, to a great degree the destiny of your children rests in your hands. If you fail in duty, you may place them in the ranks of the enemy, and make them his agents to ruin souls; but by a godly example and faithful discipline you may lead them to Christ, and make them the instruments in his hands of saving many souls.

Wherever I go, I am pained by the lack of proper home discipline and restraint. Little children are allowed to answer back, to manifest disrespect and impertinence. Parents who permit this are more worthy of blame than their children. Impertinence should not be tolerated in a child even once. But fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts and grandparents, laugh at the exhibition of passion in the little creature a year old. Its imperfect utterances of disrespect, its childish willfulness, are thought pretty and cunning. Thus wrong habits are confirmed, and the child grows up an object of dislike to all around him.

One great reason why so many children are forward, bold, and impertinent is, that they are noticed and praised too much, and their smart, sharp sayings are repeated in their hearing. Do not put them on exhibition before visitors as prodigies of wit or wisdom, but leave them, as far as possible, to the simplicity of their childhood. Endeavor not to censure unduly, nor to overwhelm with praise and flattery.

Parents, you should begin early to teach your children respect, obedience, and self-control. Remember that every exhibition of passion that is not firmly and decidedly checked is a lesson of evil. Your neglect of proper restraint opens the door to Satan, and invites him to come in and control your children; and he will not be slow to improve his opportunity.

Children require patient, faithful care. It is not enough that they are fed and clothed; their mental powers must be developed, and their hearts imbued with right principles. They need constant care; but you need not let them see that you are ever guarding them. Learn the disposition of your children as revealed in their association with one another, and then seek to correct their faults by encouraging opposite traits. Children should be taught that the development of both the physical and the mental powers rests with themselves, and is the result of effort. They should early learn that happiness is not found in selfish gratification, but follows only in the wake of duty.

I have heard mothers say that they had not the ability to govern which others have; that it is a peculiar talent which they do not possess. Those who realize their deficiency in this respect should make the subject of family government their most diligent study. And yet the most valuable suggestions of others should not be adopted without thought and discrimination. They may not be equally adapted to the circumstances of every mother, or to the peculiar disposition and

temperament of each child in the family. Let the mother study with care the experience of others, note the difference between their methods and her own, and carefully test those that appear to be of real value. If one mode of discipline does not produce the desired results, let another plan be tried, and the effects carefully noted.

Mothers, above all others, should accustom themselves to thought and investigation. If they will persevere in this course, they will find that they are acquiring the faculty in which they thought themselves deficient; that they are learning to form aright the characters of their children. The result of the labor and thought given to this work will be seen in their obedience, their simplicity, their modesty and purity; and it will richly repay all the effort made.

A want of steadiness in family government is productive of great harm; in fact, it is nearly as bad as no government at all. The question is often asked, Why are the children of religious parents so often headstrong, defiant, and rebellious? The reason is to be found in the home training. The children have not had a good example, faithful instruction, and proper restraint. Too often the parents are not united in their family government. The father, who is with his children but little, and is ignorant of their peculiarities of disposition and temperament, is harsh and severe. He does not control his temper, but corrects in passion. The child knows this, and instead of being subdued, the punishment fills him with anger. The mother allows misdemeanors to pass at one time for which she will severely punish at another. The children never know just what to expect, and are tempted to see how far they can transgress with impunity. Thus are sown seeds of evil that spring up and bear fruit.

Firmness and decision are necessary. I have known parents to say, You cannot have this or that, and then relent, thinking they may be too strict, and give the child the very thing they at first refused. A life-long injury is thus inflicted. It is an important law of the mind—one which should not be overlooked—that when a desired object is so firmly denied as to remove all hope, the mind will soon cease to long for it, and will become occupied in other pursuits; but so long as there is any hope of gaining it, a persistent effort will be made for its attainment.

When it is necessary for parents to give a direct command, the penalty for disobedience should be as unvarying as are the laws of nature. Children who are under this firm, decisive rule, know that when a thing is forbidden or denied, no teasing or artifice will secure their object; hence they soon learn to submit, and are much happier in so doing. The children of undecided and overindulgent parents have a constant hope that they may gain their end by coaxing, crying, or sullenness, or that they may venture to disobey without suffering the penalty. Thus they are kept in a state of suspense, which makes them restless, irritable, and insubordinate. God holds such parents guilty of wrecking the happiness of their children. This wicked mismanagement is the key to the impenitence and irreligion of thousands. It has proved the ruin of many who have professed the Christian name. In many cases the restless, rebellious spirit, unsubdued in youth, creates disturbance in the church. Many church trials may be traced to defective family government. Intemperance and crime of every degree are often the fruits of seed sown by parents.

Let none imagine, however, that harshness and severity are necessary to secure obedience. I have seen the most efficient family government maintained without a harsh word or look. I have been in other families where commands were constantly given in an authoritative tone, and harsh rebukes and severe punishments were often administered. In the first case the children followed the course pursued by the parents, and seldom spoke to one another in harsh tones. In the second also the

parental example was imitated by the children; and cross words, fault-findings, and disputes were heard from morning till night.

Fathers and mothers, you are teachers; your children are the pupils. Your tones of voice, your deportment, your spirit, are copied by your little ones. You should be united in their government. Study their dispositions with care, and together seek wisdom and strength from God to deal with them aright. If you attempt to govern without exercising self-control, without system, thought, and prayer, you will most assuredly reap the bitter consequences. But when you have faithfully done your duty, you may then ask the Lord to do for your children that which you cannot do. And having trained them in the way they should go, you will find that when old they will not depart from it.

March 11, 1886

The Work in Europe

The following interesting paragraphs are from a private letter from Sister White, dated Basel, Switzerland, January 27:

“Every week letters come to this place from France, Italy, Russia, and India, stating that souls are embracing the truth from reading our French paper. Today one has been received with five names signed of persons who are much interested in the truth from reading *Les Signes*, and who send the pay for a year's subscription. Another comes from a man in France, thanking Brother Whitney for the papers sent him. He says he has no money to pay for the paper, and asks if Brother Whitney will take a blank book (a register) in exchange for it. His father and mother have been opposed to his reading *Les Signes*, but now they are reading it themselves. Brother Whitney has most precious letters from India and Russia also, commending *Les Signes*, and telling the good it has accomplished. These testimonies are cheering to our hearts.

“There have been some conversions here. One young man, a German, who was attending the theological college, left school, and is now in the office, working on the German paper. He is just the help that is needed here.

“These tokens that God is working in Europe are matters of great rejoicing to us. We expect the truth will go forth as a burning lamp. But it is harder for men and women who receive the truth here than it is in America. Workmen, jewelers, receive but one dollar a day as the highest wages, and they have large families to support. Many get for their day's work only from one to two francs; and when they receive the Sabbath, it is doubtful whether they can get any work, and they are obliged to take up with any jobs they can get.

“If our people in America could understand the privations that have to be endured here, and the close economy that has to be practiced in order to obtain even the necessities of life, they would guard their means that not one penny should be expended needlessly. There would not be a feather on their bonnets, and they would wear no needless ornaments; neither would there be any extravagant houses built, or money laid out in costly furniture. They should bear in mind that it is God's money that they are using,—money that could be invested in saving souls for whom Christ died. Any needless expenditure of this money is blocking up the way; for the means thus used would send publications and the living preacher to those who have not the truth.”

March 18, 1886

The Bible System of Tithes and Offerings

“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.” Proverbs 11:24, 25.

Giving is a part of gospel religion. The foundation of the plan of salvation was laid in sacrifice. Jesus left the royal courts of Heaven, and became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. His life on earth was unselfish, marked with humiliation and sacrifice. And is the servant greater than his Lord? Shall men, partakers of the great salvation which he wrought out for them, refuse to follow their Lord, and to share in his self-denial? When the world's Redeemer has suffered so much for us, shall we, the members of his body, live in thoughtless self-indulgence? No; self-denial is an essential condition of discipleship.

“I am the vine,” says Christ; “ye are the branches.” What a close union is this! The very vital principle, the sap, which flows through the vine, nourishes the branches, that they may flourish and bear fruit. The spirit of the Master will actuate his followers. Again Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” He leads the way in the path of self-denial, and requires nothing of his followers but that of which he has given them an example in his life.

Christ, as our head, led out in the great work of salvation; but he has intrusted that work to his followers upon earth. It cannot be carried on without means, and he has given his people a plan for raising means sufficient to make his cause prosperous. The tithing system, instituted for this purpose, reaches back to the time of Moses. Even as far back as the days of Adam, long before the definite system was given, men were required to offer to God gifts for religious purposes. They were thus to manifest their appreciation of the mercies and blessings they received.

These offerings were continued through successive generations. The principle was not unknown in the days of Job. Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. Jacob, when at Bethel, an exile and a penniless wanderer, promised the Lord, “Of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.”

God does not compel men to give to his cause. Their action must be voluntary. He will not have his treasury replenished with unwilling offerings. His design in the plan of systematic giving was to bring man into close relationship with his Creator and in sympathy and love with his fellow-men, thus placing upon him responsibilities that would counteract selfishness and strengthen disinterested, generous impulses. Man is inclined to be selfish, and to close his heart to generous deeds. The Lord, by requiring gifts to be made at stated times, designed that giving should become a habit, and be looked upon as a Christian duty. The heart, opened by one gift, was not to have time to close and become selfishly cold, before another offering was bestowed.

As to the amount required, God has specified one-tenth of the increase as his due; but other offerings should be made, and while the directions are definite enough for all to understand their duty, there is room for the judgment and the conscience to have free play. Says the apostle: “Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.” The tithing system is beautiful in

its equality and simplicity. It gives all an opportunity to help carry forward the precious work of salvation. Every man, woman, and child may become a treasurer for the Lord.

Great objects may be accomplished by this system. If all accept it, there will be no want of means to carry forward the work of God in the earth. The treasury will be full, and the contributions will not be left to the poorer members of the church. Every investment made will draw out the heart to love the cause of God more and more; and the liberal, who are willing to sacrifice for the spread of the truth and the salvation of souls, will be "laying up in store for themselves, a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

The Christian church, as a general thing, disregard the claims of God upon them to give of the things which they possess to support the warfare against the moral darkness which is flooding the world. Every church member should be an earnest worker, a liberal, systematic giver. But some rich men feel like murmuring because there are demands for money. They say that one object after another is continually arising, and there is no end to the calls for means. They do not remember that they will have a debt to settle with the Master by and by.

Says the apostle, "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price;" not with "corruptible things, as silver and gold," but with the "precious blood of Christ." In return he asks us to use his intrusted gifts to aid in the salvation of souls. He has given his blood; he asks our talents of means and of influence. It is through his poverty that we have eternal riches; and will we refuse to return to him the silver and the gold which are his own gifts? If men prefer to set aside the claims of God, and to hoard the means which he gives them, he will hold his peace at present. Frequently he will continue to test them by increasing his bounties, letting his blessings flow on; these men may pass on receiving honor of men, and without censure in the church, but soon it will be said to them, "Give an account of thy stewardship."

God is not dependent upon man. He says: "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine." "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof." It is for our own good that he has planned to have us bear some part in the advancement of his cause. He has honored us by making us co-workers with himself. He has ordained that there should be a necessity for the co-operation of men, that they may cultivate and keep in exercise their benevolent affections.

In the wise providence of God, the poor are always with us, that while we witness the various forms of suffering and necessity in the world, we may be tested, and may develop Christian character. God has placed them among us to call out Christian sympathy and love. They are here as Christ's representatives. He identifies himself with suffering humanity. He makes their necessities his own, and takes to his bosom the woes of the children of men. "Inasmuch," he says, as ye ministered not to "one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

The moral darkness of a ruined world also appeals to Christian men and women to put forth individual effort. They are required by the Scriptures to keep in constant exercise an interest in the salvation of their fellow-men. The condition of eternal life, as expressed by Christ himself, is supreme love to God and equal love to our neighbor.

The first disciples expressed their gratitude for the benefits of the Christian age in works of charity and benevolence. The outpouring of the Spirit of God, after Christ left his disciples and ascended to Heaven, led to self-denial and self-sacrifice for the salvation of others. When the poor saints at Jerusalem were in need, Paul, appealing to the Gentile Christians in their behalf, urged them to prove the sincerity of their love by their liberality. "Therefore," he says, "as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." Here benevolence is placed by the side of faith, love, and Christian diligence.

The gospel, as it extends and widens, requires greater provisions to sustain it than were called for anciently, and this makes the law of tithes and offerings a more urgent necessity now than under the Hebrew economy. The cause of God requires, not less, but greater gifts than at any other period of the world's history. The principle laid down by Christ is, that the offerings should be in proportion to the light and blessings enjoyed. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." But those who give in accordance with this rule will reap a proportionate blessing. "The liberal soul shall be made fat." "The liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand."

March 25, 1886

The Christian Light-Bearer

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

"Ye are the light of the world" said Christ to his disciples. As the sun goes forth in the heavens, dispelling the shades of night, and filling the world with brightness, so must the followers of Jesus let their light shine to dispel the moral darkness of a world lying in sin. But they have no light of themselves; it is the light of Heaven which they are to reflect to the world.

"A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." Our thoughts and purposes are the secret springs of action, and hence determine the character. The purpose formed in the heart need not be expressed in word or deed in order to make it sin, and bring the soul into condemnation. Every thought, feeling, and inclination, though unseen by men, is discerned by the eye of God. But it is only when the evil that has taken root in the heart reaches its fruition in the unlawful word or deed that man can judge the character of his fellow-man. The Christian is Christ's representative. He is to show to the world the transforming power of divine grace. He is a living epistle of the truth of God, known and read of all men. The rule given by Christ by which to determine who are his true followers is, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Many professed Christians, some even who expound the sacred truths of the Bible, are yet living as though there were no God who can read the innermost recesses of the soul. They forget the dignity and solemnity of their high calling as children of the heavenly King, and their responsibility as "the light of the world." They may not now realize their sinfulness; but when summoned before the great white throne, they will in speechless terror stand condemned. With the eye of the Judge looking

upon them, they will not dare to mention the excuses which they now so flippantly urge to shield themselves from the divine requirements. They knew their Master's will, but did it not.

And yet the faults and errors of church members will be no shield for the impenitent in the day of God. Those who would make them such when the claims of God are presented, evince their true character as lovers of sin. They are actuated by the same spirit as their master, whom the Bible declares to be the "accuser of the brethren." The fact that some professed Christians are not what they should be, proves nothing against religion, but only that these persons are not faithful to their profession. Neither does it prove that the church is corrupt. Does she not deal with offending members, and separate from her company those who persist in an evil way? And these persons who point so complacently to the faults of Christians are not consistent. They will make the most of a man's faults while he is a member of the church; but let him be expelled, and they turn about, and sympathize with him, declaring the church to be uncharitable and severe.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may ... glorify your Father which is in Heaven." The Christian's godly life and holy conversation are a daily testimony against sin and sinners. But he must present Christ, not self. Christ is the great remedy for sin. Our compassionate Redeemer has provided for us the help we need. He is waiting to impute his righteousness to the sincere penitent, and to kindle in his heart such divine love as only our gracious Redeemer can inspire. Then let us who profess to be his witnesses on earth, his ambassadors from the court of Heaven, glorify Him whom we represent, by being faithful to our trust as light-bearers to the world.

Every one who at last secures eternal life will here manifest zeal and devotion in the service of God. He will not desert the post of duty at the approach of trial, hardship, or reproach. He will be a diligent student of the Scriptures, and will follow the light as it shines upon his pathway. When some plain Scriptural requirement is presented, he will not stop to inquire, What will my friends say, if I take my position with the people of God? Knowing his duty, he will do it heartily and fearlessly. Of such true-hearted followers Jesus declares that he is not ashamed to call them brethren. The God of truth will be on their side, and will never forsake them. All apparent losses for Christ's sake will count to them as infinite gain.

Said our Saviour: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." The word of God, believed and obeyed, exerts a transforming power upon the life and character. Its sublime truths, its pure and holy principles, strengthen the intellect, ennoble the affections, enlighten the understanding. How great the loss which they sustain who neglect this store-house of eternal riches. But the word of God is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This is why so many are opposed to the truths which it teaches. They love some indulgence which it condemns, and hence hate the light which reveals their sin. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."

Many whom the world styles liberal, generous-hearted, noble men, are in the sight of God wicked and corrupt. For God sees not as man sees; his thoughts are not as our thoughts. Men in their self-complacency attempt to gloss over the defects in their lives and characters, and flatter themselves that all is well. But the light of truth would reveal their danger, and strike a death-blow to their self-satisfaction. Then they would see the importance of a holy life, and their own need of Christ as a Saviour.

We have but a brief space in which to prepare for the future life; and all who expect to dwell hereafter with the pure and holy, must here obtain a fitness for such society. Then let the moments heretofore squandered in idleness and folly be henceforth devoted to prayer and the reading of God's word. This discipline every Christian may have, and, rightly improved, it will make him wise unto eternal life.

The mind grows by what it is fed upon. The understanding gradually adapts itself to the subjects which it is required to grasp. If allowed to dwell only on the things of this life, it becomes dwarfed and enfeebled. If absorbed in vanity and folly, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. To secure strength and vigor, the mind must be tasked; and there is no other means by which this can be so successfully accomplished as by the study of the Holy Scriptures.

The means which God has provided to enable us to resist temptation are the study of his word, and earnest prayer. In his encounter with the prince of darkness in the wilderness of temptation, our Saviour prefaced every answer with the words, "It is written." It was the word of God that vanquished Satan. Those who make that word their study are arming themselves with weapons of divine power against the attacks of the foe. "Thy word," said the psalmist, "have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee."

In his conversation with Nicodemus, Christ explained the nature and importance of true conversion. He solemnly declared, "Except a man be born again,"—unless he receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life,—"he cannot see the kingdom of God." He is no longer to be a willing subject to the enemy of Christ, to remain in subjection to the power of sin.

Those who have experienced the new birth have but entered upon the Christian life. To such are addressed the words of the apostle, "As ye have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in him." In the temptations and trials of life, it is often hard to maintain the patience and gentleness of Christ; but let not those be discouraged who are sorely tried, and who feel that they have not strength enough to cope single-handed with the power of evil. God has promised grace according to our day. By patient endurance we may become strong, by failure we may learn success, and through apparent defeat we may conquer.

All the people of God should become co-laborers with him. None need wait for great opportunities nor ask for extraordinary talents. The ability that God has given them is all that he requires. He would have us each quietly, faithfully do what we can, and leave the result with him. Our daily life may be a light to the world, a living testimony to the power of divine grace; and the influence of that testimony will widen and deepen, so long as we are connected with the God of wisdom and power.

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." This is the rule of life laid down in the Holy Scriptures. And those who practice it will not love darkness rather than light; but they will come to the "light, that their deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

April 1, 1886

A Lesson from Noah's Time

“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot. They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.”

It is the nature of sin to spread and increase. Since the first sin of Adam, from generation to generation it has spread like a contagious disease. While the world was yet in its infancy, sin became fearful in its proportions. Hatred of God's law, and, as the sure result, hatred of all goodness, became universal. God, who had created man, and given him with an unsparing hand the bounties of his providence, was dishonored by the beings he had created, slighted and despised by the recipients of his gifts. But though sinful man forgot his benevolent Benefactor, God did not forget the creature he had formed. Not only did he send “rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons,” filling man's heart with “food and gladness,” but he sent him also messages of warning and entreaty. Man's wickedness was fully set before him, and the result of transgressing the divine law.

In the days of Noah, the wickedness of the world became so great that God could no longer bear with it; and he said, “I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth.” But he pitied the race, and in his love provided a refuge for all who would accept it. He gave the message to Noah to be given to the people: “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” Noah was directed to build an ark, and at the same time to preach that God would bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy the wicked. Those who would believe the message, and would prepare for that event by repentance and reformation, should find pardon and be saved; but a continued resistance of the entreaties and warnings from God through his servant Noah, would separate them from God, and as a result infinite mercy and love would cease its pleadings. The Spirit of God continued to strive with rebellious man until the time specified had nearly expired, when Noah and his family entered the ark, and the hand of God closed its door. Mercy had stepped from the golden throne, no longer to intercede for the guilty sinner.

All the men of that generation were not in the fullest sense of the term heathen idolaters. Many had a knowledge of God and his law; but they not only rejected the message of the faithful preacher of righteousness themselves, but used all their influence to prevent others from being obedient to God. To every one comes a day of trial and of trust. That generation had their day of opportunity and privilege while Noah was sounding the note of warning of the coming destruction; but they yielded their minds to the control of Satan rather than of God, and he deceived them, as he did our first parents. He set before them darkness and falsehood in the place of light and truth; and they accepted his sophistry and lies, because they were acceptable to them, and in harmony with their corrupt lives, while truth that would have saved them was rejected as a delusion.

Numbers were not on the side of right. The world was arrayed against God's justice and his laws, and Noah was regarded as a fanatic. Satan, when tempting Eve to disobey God, said to her, “Ye shall not surely die.” Great men, worldly, honored, and wise men, repeated the same story, “Ye shall not surely die.” “The threatenings of God,” they said, “are for the purpose of intimidating, and will never be verified. You need not be alarmed. Such an event as the destruction of the world by the God who made it, and the punishment of the beings he has created, will never take place. Be at peace; fear

not. Noah is crazy; he is the wildest fanatic." So the people did not humble their hearts before God, but continued their disobedience and wickedness, the same as though God had not spoken to them through his servant.

But Noah stood like a rock amid the tempest. He was surrounded by every species of wickedness and moral corruption; but amid popular contempt and ridicule, amid universal wickedness and disobedience, he distinguished himself by his holy integrity and unwavering faithfulness. While the world around him were disregarding God, and were indulging in all manner of extravagant dissipation which led to violence and crimes of every kind, the faithful preacher of righteousness declared to that generation that a flood of water was to deluge the world because of the unsurpassed wickedness of its inhabitants. He warned them to repent and believe, and find refuge in the ark.

The message of Noah was to him a reality. Amid the scoffs and jeers of the world, he was an unbending witness for God. His meekness and righteousness were in bright contrast to the revolting crimes, intrigue, and violence continually practiced around him. A power attended his words; for it was the voice of God to man through his servant. Connection with God made him strong in the strength of infinite power, while for one hundred and twenty years his solemn warning voice fell upon the ears of the men of that generation in regard to events, which, so far as human wisdom could judge, seemed impossible. Some were deeply convicted, and would have heeded the words of warning; but there were so many to jest and ridicule that they partook of the same spirit, resisted the invitations of mercy, refused to reform, and were soon among the boldest and most defiant scoffers; for none are so reckless, and go to such lengths in sin, as those who have once had light, but have resisted the convicting Spirit of God. Thus while God was working to draw man to himself, man, in his rebellion, was drawing away from God, and continually resisting the pleadings of infinite love.

The world before the flood reasoned that for centuries the laws of nature had been fixed. The recurring seasons had come in their order. The rivers and brooks had never yet passed their boundaries, but had borne their waters safely to the sea. Fixed decrees had kept the waters from overflowing their banks. But these reasoners did not recognize the Hand that had stayed the waters, saying, Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther.

As time passed on without any apparent change in nature, men whose hearts had at times trembled with fear, began to be reassured. They reasoned then as many reason now, that nature was above the God of nature, and that her ways were so fixed that God himself could not change them. Reasoning that if the message of Noah was correct nature would be turned out of her course, they made that message, in the minds of the world, a delusion, a grand deception. They manifested their indifference and contempt of the solemn warning of God by doing just as they had done before the warning had been given. They continued their festivities, their gluttonous feasts, eating and drinking, planting and building, in reference to the advantage they hoped to gain in the far future; and they went to greater lengths in wickedness, and in defiant disregard of God's requirements, to testify that they had no fear of the Almighty before their eyes.

How simple and childlike, amid the unbelief of a scoffing world, was the faith of Noah. His faith was indeed the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It was a faith that was perfected and made evident by his works. He gave to the world an example of believing just what

God said. In accordance with the directions of God, he commenced to construct the ark, an immense boat, on dry ground. Multitudes came from every direction to see this strange sight, and to hear the earnest, fervent words of this singular man, who seemed to believe every word he uttered. Noah was indeed singular. He was one in the world, but not one of the world. He made himself the object of contempt and ridicule by his steadfast adherence to the words of God; yet he obeyed without a questioning doubt. What a marked contrast to the prevailing unbelief and disregard of God's law.

The time of Noah prefigures the present age. Christ tells us that as it was in the time of Noah, so shall it be in the days that immediately precede his appearing in the clouds of heaven. Human nature in our day, uninfluenced by the Spirit of God, is the same as in the age of Noah. And Satan is not asleep; he is as active and vigilant now as he was then. While the voice of God is making itself heard through his servants in warning and entreaties, he is mustering his forces. He engages his host with gigantic energies to make, through his sophistry, cruelties, and oppression, the words of warning of none effect. The people are tested, and the great mass will be found on the side of the great deceiver, and will be overwhelmed in swift and irretrievable destruction. But those that heed the warnings of God, and in their lives bring forth fruits meet for repentance, shall "dwell in the secret place of the Most High;" they "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." For them is the promise: "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation."

April 8, 1886

The Law of God the Standard of Home Government

The work of parents is an important, a solemn work; the duties devolving upon them are great. But if they will study the word of God carefully, they will find in it full instructions, and many precious promises made to them on condition that they perform their work faithfully and well. It exhorts them to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and assures them that if they train up their children in the way they should go, when they are old they will not depart from it. Again, the admonition is given concerning the commands of God: "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

In order to do this work, parents must themselves become acquainted with the word of God. Instead of spending their time in gossip, or in needless ornamentation of their houses or their persons, they will seek diligently to understand the will of God as revealed to them in his word. And instead of speaking vain words and telling idle tales to their children, they will talk with them upon Bible subjects. That book was not designed for scholars alone. It was written in a plain, simple style to meet the understanding of the common people; and, with proper explanations, a large portion of it can be made intensely interesting and profitable to very small children.

Both parents and children should be under the control of God. There should be no oppression on the part of the parents, and no disobedience on the part of the children. Intelligent reason should take the lines of control. If parents in this age of the world meet the mind of God in the training of their children, a great reformation will be experienced in the character of many. Their habits, their tempers, and their ideas will have to be entirely changed before they can lead their children to obey God. They must first control their own will, and obey the word of God themselves. Instead of scolding, flying into a passion, and then indulging their children, those parents who are

conscientiously walking in the way of the Lord will seek by precept and example to educate their children in self-denial and self-control. They will also feel the responsibility of teaching them the truth. With the word of God spread out before them, the parents will show their children the importance of following the teaching of the Bible, and not departing from it under any consideration.

After the death of Moses, Joshua was the leader of Israel. But notwithstanding his national burdens, he could not forget the duties which rested upon him in regard to his own family. He enquires of the people whether they will serve the Lord fully and keep all of his commandments; and then he declares emphatically, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." This should be the language of every father and mother in our day.

Parents have before them the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful. The God of Heaven says: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." There will be no betrayal of the truth on his part; there will be no compromise in the matter. He will keep the law of God, he will teach his children to keep it. He will not allow blind affection, which is the veriest cruelty, to control him, neither will he permit his children to become the ruling power in the household. He will see that allegiance is given to the God of Heaven, and that Satan does not gain control over the members of his family.

Not until the parents themselves walk in the law of the Lord with perfect hearts will they be prepared to command their children after them. The Holy One of Israel has made known to us the statutes and laws which are to govern all human intelligences. These precepts, which have been pronounced "holy, just, and good," are to form the standard of action in the home. There can be no departure from them without sin; for they are the foundation of the Christian religion. One of the plainest of these precepts is that which relates to the observance of the Sabbath. "Six days shalt thou labor, 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."

All through the Bible we find that a careful observance of the Sabbath is repeatedly enjoined, and God has plainly stated that those who knowingly break the Sabbath shall not prosper. He who has given man six days wherein to labor to obtain a livelihood, has reserved only one day to himself; and he looks with indignation upon those who appropriate any portion of this time to their own secular business. There are some who carry their business into the hours of the Sabbath to such an extent that they write business letters, and even collect debts, pay bills, and settle accounts upon the Sabbath. But God's eye is upon them, and although they may appear for a time to prosper, he will surely visit them with judgment. He can by a word scatter faster than they can gather. By fire, by flood, by the tempest or the earthquake, he can cause them to lose all that they have gained by violating the Sabbath.

How blind are the Christian world to their own highest interest! They could see if they would, how the favor of God was removed from his people anciently, and they were left to be overcome by their enemies and to become a scattered and hated people, because they transgressed his commands and violated his Sabbath. The Lord has not changed, neither has he removed the sanctity from his rest-day.

Some who claim to be giving allegiance to the law of Jehovah have even gone so far in Sabbath desecration as to unite in partnership with those who have no respect for the Sabbath. The professed Sabbath-keeper may cease his own labors on the Sabbath, but his partner continues the work. How must angels look upon this partnership, as the Sabbath-observer kneels reverently before God in the house of worship, while those with whom he is united in business continue their labor just the same as on any other day? How does Heaven look upon the noise and confusion, the sound of the mechanic's ax and hammer, which ascends instead of thanksgiving, as if in defiance of his injunctions? Can the Lord regard as guiltless the man who thus unites with transgressors?

Atheism and infidelity prevail in every land. Bold blasphemers stand forth in the earth, the house of God's own building, and deny the existence of the Creator, and challenge the God of Heaven to strike them dead on the spot if their position is wrong. See the societies of infidels everywhere forming to devise means to spread their hellish poisons! See the papists plotting how to suppress the word of God, and to cover up the truth with the rubbish of error!

In view of all these influences which are at work in the world to instill infidel sentiments into the minds of the rising generation, shall those parents who have the light of truth aid in this work? Shall they, by their example, their influence, give the impression to their own children and to the world that it makes little difference whether they obey God in every particular? We all need both sound Bible doctrine and pure heart religion in order that we may represent the truth as it is in Jesus. We need continually to breathe the vitalizing atmosphere of Heaven that we may have spiritual health and strength. The truth of God must be an abiding, active principle in the heart, if we would exert a correct influence over others. It must have a controlling influence upon the conscience and the understanding, and upon the thoughts, and words, and deeds.

There is such a thing as holding the truth in unrighteousness; professing to believe it while our actions are like those of transgressors. Bible truth will be a power in the true believer's life. It will give directness to all his efforts, and a holy purpose to all his labors. Unbelievers frequently argue that those who profess to believe the Bible do not exemplify its teachings in their business relations with their fellowmen. My soul has often been grieved as I have seen those who advocate the law of God failing to carry out its principles in the public and private walks of life.

We have no time now to confer with flesh and blood. No time to study profits and losses, and to cut the sharp corners of truth so that they shall not disturb others. The customs of the world should not be imitated by the people of God. What may seem perfectly proper in unbelievers may not be at all right for those who profess to love God and keep his commandments. The question should not be, What is custom? What will others think and say? but, What has God said in his word? What will the effect of my example be upon the world and upon the members of my own family?

If religion is to influence society, it must first influence the home circle. If children were trained to love and fear God at home, when they go forth into the world they would be prepared to train their own families for God, and thus the principles of truth would become implanted in society, and would exert a telling influence in the world. Religion should not be divorced from home education. May God pity the parents who do not teach their children, by precept and by example, the way of the Lord; for they will have a fearful account to give to the Judge of all the earth for their wicked neglect of duty to their children and to society. They should present to their children the divine warnings

against sin, and teach them the importance of implicit obedience. They should show them the danger of joining hands with the world if they ever expect to become children of God.

Many Christian parents fail to command their children after them, and they wonder that their children are perverse, disobedient, unthankful, and unholy. Such parents are under the rebuke of God. They have neglected to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They have failed to teach them the first lesson in Christianity: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "Foolishness," says the wise man, "is bound in the heart of a child." The love of folly, the desire to do evil, the hatred of holy things, are some of the difficulties that parents must meet in the home mission field.

There are many, even among those who profess to be Christians, who do not take up their home duties in the fear of the Lord. There is many a prayerless home, and that, too, among those who profess to believe the special truths for this time. The Bible is not brought into the family as the guide of life. The parents not being men and women of prayer, do not train and command their households in the way of God's commandments. That holy standard is set aside because finite man thinks he sees a better way.

In the strength of God, parents must arise and command their households after them. They must learn to repress wrong with a firm hand, yet without impatience or passion. They must not leave the children to guess at what is right; but they must point out the way in unmistakable terms, and teach them to walk therein. Parents should pray much, and should lead the minds of the children up to God and Heaven. A religion of simple faith in the all-atoning sacrifice of Christ, and of implicit obedience of God's moral rule of right, will make the household such a one as Heaven can smile upon. It will be productive of purity and peace; for they are obeying that guide who came from Heaven to earth to lead erring man to the mansions above.

Oh, the sin of parental neglect! How many children are lost to God and become a source of sorrow and distress to their parents, because they are not trained according to God's express directions! What a history the Judgment will reveal of affliction and misery produced by the children of parents who professed to be Christians, but who did not make the word of God their standard, their rule of life. What a record of crimes of every magnitude will then be opened to the view of parents, and traced to their lax discipline. Their children, like Eli's, did wickedly from childhood; but instead of firmly restraining them, they caressed and indulged them. The inborn evil of the natural heart was permitted to grow and strengthen. Even the house of God was not revered.

Eli was a believer in God and in his word; but he did not, like Abraham, "command" his children and his household after him. Let us hear what God says about Eli's neglect: "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle," The Lord had borne long with Eli. He had been warned and instructed; but, like the parents of today, he had not heeded the warning. But when the Lord took hold of the case, he ceased not till he had made thorough work. He says: "When I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told Eli that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

Here the neglect of Eli is brought plainly before every father and mother in the land. As the result of his unsanctified affection, or his unwillingness to do a disagreeable duty, he reaped a harvest of iniquity in his perverse sons. Both the parent who permitted the wickedness and the children who

practiced it, were guilty before God, and he would accept no sacrifice or offering for their transgression. There are many lessons in the Bible calculated to impress fathers and mothers with the sin of neglecting their duty to their children; and yet how silent are the voices of the teachers in Israel on these important subjects! Parents allow the defects in their children to pass uncorrected, until the curse of God rests upon both their children and themselves. Like Eli, they do not show decision in repressing the first appearance of evil.

In what striking contrast do the cases of Eli and Abraham stand! The example of one is given that parents may shun a similar course; the example of the other is given for parents to imitate. The characteristics of each stand out sharp and distinct. Each was doing a work the result of which would not only be seen in his own life, but would reach down to future generations, to his children, and to his children's children. The influence that a person exerts in his own family is that which testifies of the genuineness of his religious experience. Neglectful and unfaithful there, he will be unfaithful everywhere. Home religion, home training, is what is now most needed. The future of society is indexed by the youth of today.

Basel, Switzerland,

Ellen G. White Writings

April 15, 1886

The Character of the Law of God

David says: "The law of the Lord is perfect." "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever." And Paul testifies: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

As the Supreme Ruler of the universe, God has ordained laws for the government not only of all living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything, whether great or small, animate or inanimate, is under fixed laws which cannot be disregarded. There are no exceptions to this rule; for nothing that the divine hand has made has been forgotten by the divine mind. But while everything in nature is governed by natural law, man alone, as an intelligent being, capable of understanding its requirements, is amenable to moral law. To man alone, the crowning work of his creation, God has given a conscience to realize the sacred claims of the divine law, and a heart capable of loving it as holy, just, and good; and of man prompt and perfect obedience is required. Yet God does not compel him to obey; he is left a free moral agent.

The subject of man's personal responsibility is understood by but few; and yet it is a matter of the greatest importance. We may each obey and live, or we may transgress God's law, defy his authority, and receive the punishment that is meet. Then to every soul the question comes home with force, Shall I obey the voice from Heaven, the ten words spoken from Sinai, or shall I go with the multitude who trample on that fiery law? To those who love God it will be the highest delight to keep his commandments, and to do those things that are pleasing in his sight. But the natural heart hates the law of God, and wars against its holy claims. Men shut their souls from the divine light, refusing to walk in it as it shines upon them. They sacrifice purity of heart, the favor of God, and their hope of Heaven, for selfish gratification or worldly gain.

Says the psalmist, "The law of the Lord is perfect." 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."

The law of God is simple, and easily understood. There are men who proudly boast that they believe only what they can understand, forgetting that there are mysteries in human life and in the manifestation of God's power in the works of nature,—mysteries which the deepest philosophy, the most extensive research, is powerless to explain. But there is no mystery in the law of God. All can comprehend the great truths which it embodies. The feeblest intellect can grasp these rules; the most ignorant can regulate the life, and form the character after the divine standard.

If the children of men would, to the best of their ability, obey this law, they would gain strength of mind and power of discernment to comprehend still more of God's purposes and plans. And this advancement would be continued, not only during the present life, but during eternal ages; for however far we may advance in the knowledge of God's wisdom and power, there is always an infinity beyond.

The divine law requires us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. Without the exercise of this love, the highest profession of faith is mere hypocrisy. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments," says Christ, "hang all the law and the prophets."

The law demands perfect obedience. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Not one of those ten precepts can be broken without disloyalty to the God of Heaven. The least deviation from its requirements, by neglect or willful transgression, is sin, and every sin exposes the sinner to the wrath of God. Obedience was the only condition upon which ancient Israel was to receive the fulfillment of the promises which made them the highly favored people of God; and obedience to that law will bring as great blessings to individuals and nations now as it would have brought to the Hebrews.

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. "Great peace have they which love thy law; and nothing shall offend them," says the inspired word. 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."

“By the law is the knowledge of sin:” for “sin is the transgression of the law.” 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.

We are living in an age of great wickedness. Multitudes are enslaved by sinful customs and evil habits, and the fetters that bind them are difficult to break. Iniquity, like a flood, is deluding [deluging] the earth. Crimes almost too fearful to be mentioned, are of daily occurrence. And yet men professing to be watchmen on the walls of Zion will teach that the law was designed for the Jews only, and passed away with the glorious privileges that ushered in the gospel age. Is there not a relation between the prevailing lawlessness and crime, and the fact that ministers and people hold and teach that the law is no longer of binding force?

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. God has given us powers to be exercised in good works; and if these powers are not put to use, we shall certainly be set down as wicked and slothful servants. We may not have committed grievous sins; such offenses may not stand registered against us in the book of God; but the fact that our deeds are not recorded as pure, good, elevated, and noble, showing that we have not improved our intrusted talents, places us under condemnation.

The law of God existed before man was created. It was adapted to the condition of holy beings; even angels were governed by it. After the fall, the principles of righteousness were unchanged. Nothing was taken from the law; not one of its holy precepts could be improved. And as it has existed from the beginning, so will it continue to exist throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. “Concerning thy testimonies,” says the psalmist, “I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever.”

By this law, which governs angels, which demands purity in the most secret thoughts, desires, and dispositions, and which “shall stand fast forever,” all the world is to be judged in the rapidly approaching day of God. Transgressors may flatter themselves that the Most High does not know, that the Almighty does not consider; he will not always bear with them. Soon they will receive the reward of their doings, the death that is the wages of sin; while the righteous nation, that have kept the law, will be ushered through the pearly gates of the celestial city, and will be crowned with immortal life and joy in the presence of God and the Lamb.

April 22, 1886

The Law in the Patriarchal Age

When Adam and Eve were created, and placed in their Eden home, they had a knowledge of the law that was to govern them. Its precepts were imprinted on their hearts by Jehovah himself, and they were acquainted with its claims upon them. When they transgressed that law, fell from that state of happy innocence, and became sinners in the sight of God, the dark future of the fallen race was not relieved by a single ray of hope. Because of the transgression of the divine law, paradise was lost to man, the curse was pronounced upon the earth, and the reign of death commenced.

But Heaven pitied man, and the plan of salvation was devised. When the curse was pronounced upon the race, in connection with the curse there was given the promise of pardon through a Saviour who was to come. This promise was the star of hope that lighted up the gloom, that, like the pall of death, hung over the future of man, and of the world which was given him as his dominion. The gospel was first preached to Adam and Eve in Eden. They sincerely repented of their guilt, believed the promise of God, and were saved from utter ruin.

Those who lived before the flood were favored in receiving instruction from Adam, who had conversed with God and angels in Eden. He lived nearly a thousand years, and by his teachings, and his example of humble obedience, he exalted the law of God. He sought to turn his posterity from transgression to a life of obedience and faith in a promised Saviour; but he found from sad experience that it was easier to open the flood gates of sin and woe upon the world, than to resist and press back the tide of moral wretchedness that was pressing in upon mankind in consequence of his transgression.

Enoch also was a preacher of righteousness, and sought to turn men from their evil ways. For three hundred years he walked with God, giving to the world the example of a pure and spotless life, one which was in marked contrast with the lives of the men of that self-willed and perverse generation, who openly disregarded God's holy law, and boasted of their freedom from its restraints. But his testimony and his example were alike unheeded; because men loved sin better than holiness. Enoch served God with singleness of heart; and the Lord communicated to him his will, and through holy vision revealed to him the great events connected with Christ's second appearing. And then this favored servant of the Lord was borne to Heaven by angels without seeing death.

At length the wickedness of man became so great that God could no longer bear with it; and he made known to Noah that because of the continual transgressions of his law, he would destroy man, whom he had created, by a flood of water which he would bring upon the earth. Noah and his family were obedient to the divine law, and for their loyalty to the God of Heaven they were saved from the destruction that overwhelmed the ungodly world around them. Thus the Lord preserved to himself a people in whose hearts was his law.

Noah warned the people. He believed that the threatened punishment would come upon the world, and he made every effort to turn that sinful generation from transgression to obedience. But he was unsuccessful. Only his own family at last received his message.

The terrible judgments of God in the destruction of the antediluvians should be a sufficient warning to all who have since lived upon the earth, that God will surely punish those who disregard his law.

But the human heart is prone to evil; and as people multiplied upon the earth after the flood, they soon became bold in their transgressions. Idolatry existed, and increased to a fearful extent, until finally the Lord left the hardened transgressors to follow their evil ways, while he chose Abraham, and made him the depository of his law for future generations.

Abraham was called out from an idolatrous family, and was appointed of God to preserve his truth amid the prevailing and increasing corruptions of that idolatrous age. The Lord appeared to Abraham, and said: "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee."

The Lord communicated his will to Abraham, and gave him a distinct knowledge of the requirements of the moral law, and of the salvation that would be accomplished through himself. It was a high honor to which Abraham was called, that of being the father of the people who for centuries were the guardians and preservers of the truth of God for the world,—of that people through whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed in the advent of the promised Messiah. But He who called the patriarch judged him worthy. This is the testimony of God concerning his chosen servant, as it stands registered on the sacred page: "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." And again: "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."

It is God that speaks. He who understands the thoughts afar off, and places the right estimate upon men, says, "I know him." There will be on the part of Abraham no betraying of the truth for selfish purposes. He will keep the law, and deal justly and righteously; for he knows that he must answer to God for his conduct. And he will not only fear the Lord himself, but he will cultivate religion in his home. He will instruct his family in righteousness; the law of his God will be the rule in his household. Would that this testimony could be borne of all who in this day have the knowledge of the way of the Lord, and profess to walk in it.

God conferred upon his faithful servant special honor and blessings. Through vision, and through the angels that walked and talked with him as friend with friend, he was made acquainted with the purposes as well as with the will of God. When judgments were about to be visited upon Sodom, the fact was not hidden from Abraham. "The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" And at the request of Abraham, he would have spared that wicked city, had even ten righteous persons been found in it.

The blessings upon the patriarch Abraham are repeated to Isaac in these words: "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

God gave to Abraham and to his seed the rite of circumcision as a token that he had separated them from all other nations as his peculiar treasure. By this sign, they solemnly agreed to fulfill the terms of the covenant made with Abraham and repeated to Isaac and Jacob. But the descendants of

Abraham departed from the worship of the true God, and transgressed his law. They mingled with the nations who had no knowledge or fear of God before their eyes, and gradually imitated their customs and manners, until God's anger was kindled against them, and he permitted them to have their own way and follow the devices of their own corrupt hearts.

God revealed to Abraham that his posterity would become bondmen to an idolatrous nation. But when they humbled themselves before God, and acknowledged his dealings, and cried unto him earnestly for deliverance from the oppressive yoke of the Egyptians, their cries and their promises to be obedient reached Heaven. Their prayers were answered in a most wonderful manner, and Israel was brought forth from Egypt, and the covenant made with their fathers was renewed to them.

Thus was the knowledge of the law of God preserved through successive generations from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, and from Abraham to Moses.

May 6, 1886

The Law Given to Israel

When the Lord was about to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage, he selected Moses as their leader. Moses was learned in all the knowledge of the Egyptians, and was a skilled and mighty warrior. He had also been fitted for his duties by long years of quiet meditation and communion with God in the wilderness of Horeb. Through Moses the Lord wrought many signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. He brought his people out of the house of bondage "by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors," even parting the waters of the Red Sea to make a way for them.

At length they came to the wilderness of Sinai, and camped before the mount; and there, in the most solemn manner, the Lord made a covenant with them. Moses was called up into the mountain, and given this message for the people: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; ... and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." Moses returned to the camp, and laid before the people all the words that the Lord had commanded him to utter; and they answered together, and said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

The Lord then graciously condescended to come down upon Mount Sinai, not to give a new law, but to speak with an audible voice, in the hearing of all the people, the law which had been from the beginning the foundation of his government. He would not permit even angels to communicate these sacred precepts to men, nor did he trust them to the memory of a people who were prone to forget his requirements. He would remove all possibility of misunderstanding, of mingling any tradition with the ten commandments of the moral law, or of confusing the divine requirements with the practices of men; and to do this, he not only spoke the ten words of the moral law in the hearing of all Israel, but he wrote them with his own finger upon tables of stone.

The Lord made the occasion of speaking his law a scene of awful grandeur and sublimity, in accordance with its exalted character. The people were to be impressed that everything connected with the service of God must be regarded with the greatest reverence. They were required to sanctify themselves and wash their clothes, and "be ready against the third day," when the Lord

would “come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai.” Bounds were set about the mountain that was so soon to be honored with the divine presence; and it was commanded that if so much as a beast touched the mountain it should be stoned or thrust through with a dart.

The third day came; and there were “thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount.” “And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.” The glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount in the sight of the assembled multitudes. So terrible were the tokens of Jehovah's presence that the hosts of Israel shook with fear, and fell upon their faces before the Lord. Even Moses exclaimed, “I exceedingly fear and quake.”

Then above the warring elements was heard the voice of Jehovah, speaking the ten precepts of his law. The people of Israel were overwhelmed with terror. The awful power of God's utterances seemed more than their trembling hearts could bear. They entreated Moses: “Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” For as God's great rule of right was presented before them, they realized, as never before, the offensive character of sin, and their own guilt in the sight of a pure and holy God.

Speaking out of the thick darkness that enshrouded him, as he stood upon the mount surrounded by a retinue of angels, the Lord made known his law. Moses, describing the scene, says: “The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them.” Thus were the sacred precepts of the decalogue spoken amid thunder and flame, and with a wonderful display of the power and majesty of the great Lawgiver. God accompanied the proclamation of his law with these exhibitions of his power and glory, that his people might never forget the scene, and that they might be impressed with profound veneration for the Author of the law, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He would also show to all men the sacredness, the importance, and the permanence of his law.

The law of ten precepts was by no means given exclusively to the Hebrews, but God highly honored them by making them the depositaries of his law for future generations. Those who trample upon God's authority, and show contempt for the law given in such grandeur at Sinai, virtually despise and set at naught the Lawgiver. For that law is Heaven's great standard of right, with which we are to compare our lives and characters. Because the law points out our sins and declares our guilt, we are not to trample it under our feet, nor to turn away when our characters stand revealed in all their moral deformity. But we are called upon to exercise repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. We must be doers of the word, and not hearers only. The heart, the seat of the affections, must be transformed; the moral nature must be renewed by grace.

It is a precious truth that the only one who can give peace to the weary, sin-sick soul is the originator of the law the sinner has violated. Christ knows the enormity of man's guilt; and for this reason he came to earth to open a way by which man may be released from the bondage of sin, and render acceptable obedience to the divine law. Thus may we become a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

But He who so freely pardons and receives the penitent sinner, will by no means justify those who remain willfully and persistently disobedient. The children of Israel, who had transgressed the first and second commandments, were charged not to be seen near the mount when God was about to descend to write the law a second time upon tables of stone, lest they should be consumed by the burning glory of his presence. And when Moses returned to the camp after spending forty days in the mount, communing with his Maker, they could not even look upon his face for the glory of his countenance. Even Aaron shrank from him in terror. How much less can transgressors look upon the Son of God when he shall appear in the clouds of heaven, in the glory of his Father, surrounded by all the angelic host, to execute judgment upon all who have disregarded the commandments of God, and have trodden under foot the blood of Christ.

May 13, 1886

Israel and the Law

The Lord gave the Israelites evidences of his presence with them, that they might know that he was leading them, and that they might fear his name and obey his voice. Great and radical changes were to be wrought in the lives of these demoralized people, upon whose characters, habits, and appetites, servitude and the idolatrous associations of Egypt had left their mark. God was lifting them to a higher moral level by giving them a knowledge of himself through the manifestations of divine power seen in his dealings with them, and an acquaintance with his will as expressed in the laws given for their government.

Moses, who under the divine direction was leading the children of Israel through to the promised land, understood the character and value of the law of God. He assured the people that no other nation had such wise, righteous, and merciful rules as had been given to the Hebrews. "Behold," he says, "I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."

Moses called their attention to the "day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb." "And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments." And he challenged the Hebrew host: "What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"

When Moses was about to relinquish the position that he had so long held as the visible leader of the hosts of Israel, he rehearsed in the hearing of the people the dealings of God with them and the rules and regulations he had given them. He endeavored to impress upon their minds the importance of obeying the law of God, and urged them to make its sacred precepts the rule of their daily life. As children of God, they should be willing to suffer any inconvenience, rather than to break one of his commandments. Such a course would be more pleasing to him than mere professions of loyalty or words of praise.

Obedience to God would preserve harmony between man and man and between man and his Maker, and would cause Israel to be regarded as a wise and understanding people. And in the path of obedience alone was there safety for them either as individuals or as a nation; for nothing but obedience would secure the divine favor, and insure to them happiness and prosperity in the land to which they were going. God had plainly stated this to them. If they did not keep his commandments, he would not—he could not—fulfill the rich promises which were given them on condition of obedience.

Israel was highly honored of God, and the surrounding nations looked upon them with wonder and admiration. Their laws and discipline, when compared with the laws of other nations, seemed, even to their enemies, in every way superior to their own. And Moses, as their visible leader and lawgiver, appears on the page of history as superior in wisdom and integrity to all the sovereigns and statesmen of earth; yet Moses ever recognizes that he is the servant of God, speaking and acting according to divine direction. He claims no credit for himself, but points the people to God as the source of power and wisdom.

When the law was given to Israel, the Sabbath was made specially prominent. It had been instituted in Eden as a memorial of God's creative work. After he had wrought six days, God rested on the seventh; and he blessed and sanctified that day, setting it apart as a day of rest and worship for mankind. And at Sinai he commanded: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." "In it thou shalt not do any work." Man was to rest from his labor, and as he should look upon the earth beneath, and the heavens above, his thoughts were to be directed toward Him who brought all these wonderful and beautiful things into existence; and his heart was to be filled with love and reverence to his Maker, as he should behold the tangible proofs of his infinite wisdom and goodness.

The Sabbath was placed in the decalogue as the seal of the living God, pointing out the Law-giver, and making known his right to rule. It was a sign between God and his people, a test of their loyalty to him. Moses was commanded to say to them from the Lord: "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." And when some of the people went out on the Sabbath to gather manna, the Lord asked, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?"

Particular directions were given in regard to the manner of observing the Sabbath. All unnecessary work was strictly forbidden, and the day before the Sabbath was made a day of preparation, that everything might be in readiness for its sacred hours. "This is that which 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."

The Israelites were not in any case to do their own work on the Sabbath. The divine direction was, "Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest. In earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest." In the busiest seasons of the year, when their fruits and grains were to be secured, they were not to trespass on holy time. They were to remember that their temporal blessings came from the bountiful hand of their Creator, and he could increase or diminish them according to their faithfulness or unfaithfulness in his service.

The Lord places a high estimate upon his Sabbath. Through his prophet he has promised: "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, honorable; and shalt honor 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, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

God is merciful. His requirements are reasonable, in accordance with the goodness and benevolence of his character. He claims the Sabbath as his own, and will not let his blessing rest upon those who disregard his holy day; yet the Sabbath institution was designed as a blessing to mankind. Man was not made to fit the Sabbath; the Sabbath was made after his creation, to meet the necessities of his nature. The Sabbath should stand before the people in its moral power, answering its original design—to keep in remembrance the living God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. But the Sabbath has been treated with great disrespect. Men have dared to detract from its dignity; they have ventured to remove the sanctity placed upon it by the Creator himself.

Temporal affairs must come under divine restrictions. The Sabbath is not to be moulded to meet men's business arrangements, but business affairs are to be arranged to meet God's great standard of righteousness. But the god of this world has confused the minds of many on this subject. They need to come into the divine presence, and listen to the voice of the great I AM.

With God there is no respect of persons. Those who fear him and work righteousness are precious in his sight; but he requires his people to show their allegiance by strict obedience to all the precepts of the moral law, the Sabbath commandment with the rest. God is jealous of his honor, and let men beware how they remove one jot or tittle of that law that he spoke with his own voice and wrote with his own finger upon tables of stone, and that he has pronounced holy, just, and good.

May 20, 1886

A Sabbath Reform Needed

As long as the children of Israel obeyed God, they were prosperous; but when they departed from him in disobeying his law, they brought upon themselves humiliation and distress. They were made to realize that their defense was of God, and that when his protection was withdrawn they were feeble, exposed to the ravages of their enemies. But though they were carried away into captivity, the eye of God was upon them; for they were to preserve the knowledge of his law until the promised Messiah should come.

One of the principal ways in which the Jews departed from God was in the desecration of the Sabbath. The heathen around them disregarded God's holy day, and through association with these idolatrous neighbors many had been led to imitate their example. Some not only traded with heathen merchants on the Sabbath day, but tried to overcome the scruples of their more conscientious countrymen, and lead them into the sin of Sabbath-breaking. Thus to a great extent the sacredness of the Sabbath was destroyed.

At this time Nehemiah was God's chosen instrument to effect a reformation among his people, and to deliver them from the oppression of their enemies. The circumstances were discouraging; but Nehemiah was a man of courage and fidelity. He caused the people to be instructed in the law they

had broken. Precept by precept it was carefully explained, that all might fully understand the will of God.

The Jews acknowledged that their deplorable condition was the result of their transgressions; and in a general assembly, the Levites, as the representatives of the people, confessed the goodness of God in his dealings with them, and their ingratitude and sins as a nation. Having suffered punishment for their sins, and acknowledged the justice of God in his dealings with them, the Israelites covenanted to obey his law. And that it might be a sure covenant, and preserved in a permanent form, it was written out; and the priests, the Levites, and the princes "sealed unto it." They had a clear understanding of the claims of God and of the character of sin; and with those who had real principle, to see and understand was to act.

The church of today has followed in the steps of the Jews of old setting aside the commandments of God. She has changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant, and now, as then, pride, unbelief, and infidelity are the result.

We need Nehemiahs now, faithful men who shall arouse the people to see how far they are from God through their transgressions. Said the psalmist, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law." These words are as applicable at the present time as they were in the days of the psalmist. The whole Christian world should search the Scriptures for themselves; for the law of God is made void by the teaching in the pulpits. The papal power has thought to change the law by instituting a Sabbath for the world and the Christian church; and this spurious Sabbath is exalted and revered, while the Sabbath of Jehovah is trampled beneath unholy feet. But will the Lord degrade his law to meet the standard of men? Will he accept a man made institution in place of the Sabbath which he has sanctified and blessed? No; the convenience or profit of men is not to interfere with the claims of God, for he is a jealous God. He does not alter his precepts to gratify the desires of the ambitious or the covetous. "Thus saith the Lord" is sufficient to settle all controversy.

He who instituted the Sabbath has never changed it to another day. He rested on a definite day, and blessed and sanctified a definite day, and he requires the human family to observe that definite day. The position that God blessed and sanctified a seventh part of time, and no day in particular, is a deception. By this means many have become so confused that they regard God's holy rest-day as possessing no special sacredness. Because the world do so, they feel at liberty to set the Bible Sabbath aside, and select one that suits their own convenience; and ministers of the gospel assure their congregations that this course is right.

There is need of a Sabbath reform among those who profess to observe God's holy rest-day. Many seek to please themselves rather than to honor God. Some discuss 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 enter into partnership with men who have no respect for the Sabbath. If, for the sake of gain, a Sabbath-keeper allows the business in which he has an interest to be carried 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. He should not allow men in his employ, paid by his money, to work on the Sabbath. Men may think they cannot afford to obey God in their business affairs; but they cannot afford to disobey him. He will not allow carelessness in the observance of the Sabbath to pass unpunished. If we would enjoy his blessing, the Sabbath must be kept holy.

Divine mercy has directed that the sick and suffering 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 until 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. This course might help the memory of these thoughtless ones, and make them more careful to do their own work on the six working days.

To keep the Sabbath holy, we should not even allow our minds to dwell upon things of a worldly character. Yet it is not necessary that we shut ourselves away from nature, and deprive ourselves of the free, invigorating air of heaven. The Sabbath was made to be a blessing to man, by calling his mind from secular labor to contemplate the goodness and glory of God. It is necessary that the people of God assemble stately for his worship, to interchange thoughts in regard to the truths of his word, and to devote a portion of time to 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.

Parents, why not make use of the precious lessons God has given you in the book of nature to give your children a correct idea of his character? Go and sit with them in the groves or bright sunshine, and give their restless minds something to feed upon by conversing with them on the wonderful works of God. Call their attention to the tokens of God's love to man as seen in his creative works, and their young minds will be attracted and interested, and their hearts will be inspired with love and reverence.

All who love God should do what they can to make the Sabbath a delight, holy and honorable. They cannot do this by seeking their own pleasure in sinful, forbidden amusements. But by exalting the Sabbath in the family, it may be made the most interesting day in the week, so that its weekly return will be hailed with joy by every member of the family. In no better way can parents exalt and honor the Sabbath than by devising means to impart proper instruction to their children and to interest them in spiritual things, giving them correct views of the character of God and what he requires of them in order to attain to eternal life. Parents, make the Sabbath a delight, that your children may look forward to it, and have a welcome for it in their hearts. Thus will God be honored in the home.

When Nehemiah moved out as a reformer and deliverer in Israel, he was actuated by love to God and anxiety for the prosperity of his people. His heart was in the work he had undertaken; and his hope, his energy, his enthusiasm, his determination of character, were contagious, and inspired others with the same courage and lofty purpose that animated him. Each man became a Nehemiah in his own sphere, and helped to make stronger the hand and heart of his neighbor; and soon feebleness was succeeded by strength and courage.

Here is a lesson for ministers and others who are laboring for the salvation of souls. Christian laborers should manifest the same zeal and earnestness that characterized Nehemiah. If ministers are inactive and irresolute, destitute of godly zeal, what can be expected of those to whom they minister? In some instances they may rise above the moral level of their teachers, but not often. But when ministers broaden their plans, and show that they are in earnest, the people will respond to their efforts; and disunited, dispirited workers will become united, strong, hopeful, and eager.

It is a sin to be heedless, purposeless, and indifferent in any work in which we may engage, but especially in the work of God. Every enterprise connected with his cause should be carried forward with energy, thought, and earnest prayer. Faithful standard-bearers for God and his truth are wanted, and many are ready to respond to the call. As these see the iniquity and violence that exist in consequence of making void the law of God, they will see greater reason than ever to reverence that law, and will highly prize its righteous, restraining influences. Contempt and reviling increase their love for the precepts of Jehovah. With David they will say: "I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold."

June 3, 1886

The Permanence of Truth

During all the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness, Jesus, who was equal with the Father, was their leader and guide. Enshrouded in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, his presence was ever with them. There were symbols and shadowy types pointing to a Saviour to come; there was also a present Saviour, who gave commands directly to Moses for the children of Israel, and who was set forth before them as the only channel of blessings. The sacrificial system was designed to typify the Saviour, who was to become the perfect offering for sinful man.

In the Jewish age, all the revealings of God to his people, everything relating to his worship, was closely connected with the sanctuary,—with the tabernacle in the wilderness, and afterward with the temple. Here God was worshiped; here the sacrificial offerings were presented before him. Here was the breastplate of the high priest, set with precious stones, from which messages from Jehovah were received. Here, in the holy of holies, overshadowed by the wings of cherubim, dwelt the perpetual token of the presence of the Holy One, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Here was the ark of the covenant, containing the tables of the law,—the ark which was to Israel the symbol of the divine presence, and the pledge of victory in battle. Idols could not stand before the sacred ark of God, and death was the penalty of a rash, irreverent touch or the glance of curiosity.

All through the pages of sacred history, where the dealings of God with his chosen people are recorded, there are burning traces of the great I AM. Never has he given to the sons of men more open manifestations of his power and glory than when he alone was acknowledged as Israel's ruler, and gave the law to his people. Here was a scepter swayed by no human hand; and the stately goings forth of Israel's invisible King were unspeakably grand and awful.

Truly this was a wonderful dispensation, and those who speak derisively of the old Jewish law and the Dark Ages, should remember that they are treading on holy ground. While we rejoice today that our Saviour has appeared on earth, and that the offering for sin typified in the ceremonial law has become a reality, we are not excusable in harboring feelings of disrespect for that period when Christ himself was the leader of his people. Those who do this may not know what they are doing; but they are showing themselves ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. They show that they need divine enlightenment, a more intelligent knowledge of God and his word.

The Christ typified in the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law is the very same Christ that is revealed in the gospel. The clouds that enshrouded his divine form have rolled back; the mists and shades have disappeared; and Jesus, the world's Redeemer, stands revealed. He came just as the

prophecies foretold that he would come. In his life and death, type met antitype, and the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish church found their fulfillment. He appeared among men, not as the Messiah that the Jews expected,—a king coming in power and glory to conquer their enemies and to exalt their favored nation, but as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He, the Majesty of Heaven, condescended to be our friend, our counselor, our guide, our perfect pattern, as well as our redeemer. “He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

God's work is the same in all time, although there are different degrees of development, and different manifestations of his power to meet the wants of man in the different ages. Commencing with the fall, down through the patriarchal and Jewish ages, even to the present time, there has been a gradual unfolding of the purposes of God in the plan of redemption. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel through Christ; they looked for the salvation of the race through man's substitute and surety. These holy men of old held communion with the Saviour who was to come to our world in human flesh; and some of them talked with Christ and heavenly angels face to face, as a man talks with his friend.

Through the sacred record, we may hold converse with the patriarchs, and listen to Moses as he legislates for Israel. We hear the warnings of the prophets as they look down through the ages, and reveal scenes that are to take place even down to the close of time. And as we see the events which they have foretold transpiring just as they predicted, we are brought into closer sympathy with these men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

As time rolls on, and new truths are revealed, light is thrown on that which has been known from the beginning; we see new beauty and force in the inspired word, and we study its sacred pages with a deeper and more absorbing interest. We see the significance of the Jewish economy, and the character and purposes of God are made manifest in his dealings with his chosen people. How grand was the arrangement of God to preserve the knowledge of himself, and of his law, which is the foundation of his government in Heaven and upon earth. Although darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, the Lord would not leave himself without a witness.

In the solemn service of the temple, the grand truths were typified which were to be revealed through successive generations. The cloud of incense bore upward the prayer of the contrite heart. The bleeding victim on the altar of sacrifice testified of a Redeemer to come, and from the holy of holies the visible token of the divine presence shone forth. Thus through age after age of idolatry and apostasy, the star of hope was kept shining in the darkened moral heavens, until the time came for the advent of the promised Messiah. Now, Christ, the true sacrifice, has shed his blood for the remission of sins, and is presenting it before the Father in our behalf. But the increased light that shines upon our pathway should not tempt us to despise the beginning. Every additional ray of light that we receive gives us a clearer and more distinct understanding of the plan of redemption, which is the working out of the divine will in the salvation of man.

God made man in his own image. He laid the foundations of the earth, and dressed it in the garb of beauty; he created all the wonders of the land and the sea. And he requires man to reverence his commandments, which were spoken amid such displays of divine power and majesty, and to obey them without questioning the feasibility or convenience of such obedience. The example of Adam and Eve should be a sufficient warning to us against any disobedience of the divine law. Their sin in

listening to the specious temptations of the enemy, brought guilt and sorrow upon the world, and, had it not been for the goodness and mercy of God, would have plunged the race into hopeless despair.

Let none for a moment deceive themselves with the thought that their sin will not bring its merited punishment. Their transgressions will be visited with the rod, because they have had the light, but have walked directly contrary to it. God will not more lightly pass over any violation of his law now than in the day when he pronounced judgment against Adam. The Saviour of the world raises his voice in protest against those who regard the law of God with carelessness and indifference. Said he: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven."

It is the grossest presumption for mortal man to venture upon a compromise with the Almighty, in order to secure his own temporal interests. "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God," is thundered from Sinai; and we may not disregard that voice because the words were spoken more than three thousand years ago, and were addressed to the lineal descendants of Abraham. The Lord requires willing sacrifice. No partial obedience, no divided interest, is accepted by Him who declares that the iniquities of the fathers shall be visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate him, and that he will show mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments.

There is nothing in the word of God to be thrown aside; there is nothing in the plan of redemption that is unimportant or that may be lightly disregarded. The Bible gives us an account of the dealings of God with man from the creation to the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven; it carries us even farther in the future, and opens before us the glories of the city of God, and the beauty and perfection of the earth made new, the saints' secure abode. But although the long line of events extends through so many centuries, and new and important truths are from time to time developed, that which was truth in the beginning is the truth still. The increased light of the present day does not contradict or make of none effect the dimmer light of the past.

All the truths of revelation are of value to us; and in contemplating things of eternal interest, we shall gain true perceptions of the character of God. The cultivation of reverence for him will affect the daily life. The entire character will be elevated and transformed. The soul will be brought into harmony with Heaven. The believer will become Christ-like, and will finally obtain an abundant entrance into the city of God.

June 10, 1886

Value of Bible Study

Said Christ: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." No one can neglect the word of God, and yet attain to Christian perfection. But by carefully searching that word, we become acquainted with the divine Model; and in order to imitate the Pattern, it must be frequently and closely inspected.

As we study the life of Christ, we discover in ourselves defects of character; our unlikeness to him is so great that we cannot be his followers without a very great change in our life. Still we study, with a

desire to be like our great Exemplar; we catch the looks, the spirit, of our beloved Master. By beholding, by "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith," we become changed into the same image. We cannot imitate the life of Christ while we are looking away from him; we must do it by dwelling upon and talking of him, by seeking to refine the taste and elevate the character, by trying through earnest, persevering effort, through faith and love, to approach the perfect Pattern. The attention being fixed upon Christ, his image, pure and spotless, becomes enshrined in the heart as "the chiefest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely." Even unconsciously we imitate that with which we are familiar; and by gaining a knowledge of Christ, of his words, his habits, his lessons of instruction, and by imitating the virtues of the character we have so closely studied, we become imbued with the spirit of the Master, which we have so much admired.

Those who know the blessedness of a union with God should not fail to exemplify the life of Christ in their daily conversation, in pure and virtuous characters. By doing good, by being courteous and beneficent, they adorn the Christian doctrine, and show that the truth of heavenly origin beautifies the character and ennobles the life. Christ's followers are "living epistles, known and read of all men." Their daily lives recommend the truth of God to those who have been prejudiced against it by nominal professors, who have a form of godliness, while their lives testify that they know nothing of its sanctifying power.

The word of God has been sadly neglected, instead of being appreciated as it should have been. This book, revealing the will of God to man, deserves to be held in the highest esteem; for it gives instruction of inestimable value to all classes. Its teachings are so plain that even the humblest and most ignorant can understand them, and learn to so order their conversation and be so circumspect in deportment as to bring no dishonor or reproach upon the cause of their Redeemer. If they have living faith in God, they will not by their inconsistencies furnish occasion to bring the truth into disrepute when it should be a savor of life unto life.

The truths of God's word, received into the heart, have an animating power; and those who will frame any excuse for neglecting to become acquainted with the Scriptures will neglect the claims of God in many respects. The character will be deformed, the words and acts a reproach to the truth.

The injunction of our Saviour to search the Scriptures should be religiously regarded by every man, women, and child who professes his name. The student in the Sabbath-school should feel as thoroughly in earnest to become intelligent in the knowledge of the Scriptures as to excel in the study of the sciences. If either is neglected, it should be the lessons of the six days. Teachers in the Sabbath-school have a missionary work given them; it is to teach the Scriptures, not, parrot-like, to repeat over that which they have taken no pains to understand. "They are they which testify of me"—the Redeemer, him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. If teachers are not imbued with a spirit of truth, and care not for the knowledge of what is revealed in the word of God, how can they present the truth in an attractive light to those under their charge? The prayer of Christ for his disciples was, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." If we are to be sanctified through a knowledge of the truth found in the word of God, we must have an intelligent knowledge of that word. We must search the Scriptures, not merely rush through a chapter and repeat it, taking no pains to understand it, but we must dig for the jewels of truth, which will enrich the mind, and fortify the soul against the wiles of the arch-deceiver.

Parents plead trifling excuses for not interesting themselves in the Bible lessons with their children, and they fail to become conversant with the Scriptures. Fathers excuse themselves from disciplining their own minds. They do not seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, but exalt the temporal above the spiritual and eternal. This forgetfulness of God and his word is the example they give their children, which moulds their minds after the worldly standard, and not after the exalted standard erected by Christ. Mothers, too, are unfaithful to their trust. The inward adorning of the mind and the culture of the soul are neglected as though inferior to the adornment of the apparel. Their own minds and the minds of their children are starved in order to follow custom and fashion.

Fathers and mothers, take up your long-neglected duties. Search the Scriptures yourselves; assist your children in the study of the sacred word. Make diligent work because of past neglect. Do not send the children away by themselves to study the Bible; but read it with them, teach them in a simple manner what you know, and keep in the school of Christ as diligent students yourselves.

Jesus, the greatest teacher the world has ever seen, recognized the value of the Holy Scriptures, and expounded them to his disciples. After his resurrection, he drew near to two of them as they were on the way to Emmaus, talking, as they went, of the disappointed hopes occasioned by the death of the beloved Master. They told him of the prophet mighty in word and deed who had been taken by wicked hands and crucified. And now it was the third day, and strange reports had been brought to their ears that Jesus had risen, and had been seen by Mary and certain of the disciples. Jesus said to them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And beginning at Moses and the prophets, "he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

Jesus reproved the disciples for not being acquainted with the scriptures that testified of the Messiah. Had they been familiar with the Scriptures, their faith would have been sustained in the hour of trial, and their hope would have remained unshaken; for the treatment Christ would receive at the hands of those he came to save was plainly stated in the prophecies. The disciples were astonished that they had not recognized Jesus at once, as soon as he spoke with them by the way, and that they had failed to remember the scriptures which he had brought to their mind. They had lost sight of the divine word; but when the things spoken by the prophets were brought to their remembrance, faith revived, and hope again sprang up in their hearts. And when he was parted from them, they said one to another, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

The apostle tells us: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If Christians would earnestly search the Scriptures, more hearts would burn with the vivid truths therein revealed. Their hopes would brighten as they dwell upon the precious promises strewn like pearls all through the sacred writings. In contemplating the history of the patriarchs, the prophets, the men who loved and feared God and who walked with him,—in dwelling upon the virtue and piety of these holy men of old,—the spirit which inspired them would kindle a flame of love and holy fervor in the hearts of those who would be like them in character.

June 17, 1886

The True Standard of Christian Excellence

“As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.”

It is the design of God that improvement shall be the life-work of all his people, and that in all their aims they shall be guided and controlled by Christian principle and correct experience. But many fail to understand the true object of life; and under the influence of cherished errors, they sacrifice all there is of life that is really valuable. The true man is one who is willing to sacrifice his own interest for the good of others, and who forgets himself in ministering to their happiness. Intellect is a mightier force than wealth or physical power. If sanctified and controlled by the Spirit of God, it can exert a powerful influence for good. Yet intellect alone does not make the man, according to the divine standard. When made a minister of vice, great intellect is a curse to the possessor and to all within its influence.

One's claim to a true manhood must be determined by the use of the powers which God has given him. Lord Byron had rare intellectual gifts; but he was not a man, according to God's standard. He was an agent of Satan. His passions were fierce and uncontrollable. He was sowing seed through his life which ripened into a harvest of corruption. His life-work lowered the standard of virtue. This man was one of the world's distinguished men; still the Lord acknowledged him only as one who had abused his God-given talents. Many others whom God endowed with giant minds, and whom the world called great men, rallied under the banner of Satan, and used the gifts of God for the perversion of truth and the destruction of the souls of men. Nero was acknowledged by the world as a great man; but did God regard him as such? No! he was not connected by living faith to the great heart of humanity. He and others like him in the world ate, and drank, and slept, as men of the world; but they were Satanic in their cruelty. Wherever went these monsters in human form, bloodshed and destruction marked their pathway. They were lauded while living, but when they were buried, the world rejoiced. In contrast with the lives of such men, is that of Martin Luther. He was not born a prince. He wore no royal crown. From a cloistered cell his voice was heard, and his influence felt. He had a noble, generous heart, as well as a vigorous intellect, and all his powers were exercised for the good of humanity. He stood bravely for truth and right, and breasted the world's opposition to benefit his fellow-men.

That which will bless humanity is spiritual life. If the man is in harmony with God, he will depend continually upon him for strength. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” It should be our life-work to press forward continually toward the perfection of Christian character, ever striving for conformity to the will of God, remembering that the efforts begun upon earth will continue throughout eternity. God has set before the human family an elevated standard, and he who is true to his God-given manhood, will not only promote the happiness of his fellow-creatures in this life, but will aid them to secure an eternal reward in the life to come.

Nor should any duty be regarded as small and unimportant. It is difficult for human beings to give attention to lesser matters while the mind is engaged in business of greater importance. But should not this union exist? Man formed in the image of his Maker should unite the larger responsibilities with the smaller. He may be engrossed with occupations of overwhelming importance, and neglect

the instruction which his children need. These duties may be looked upon as the lesser duties of life, when in reality they lie at the very foundation of society. Happiness of families and churches depends upon home influences. Eternal interests depend upon the proper discharge of the duties of this life. The world is not so much in need of great minds, as of good men who will be a blessing in their homes.

The members of the human family are entitled to the name of men and women only when they employ their talents, in every possible way, for the good of others. The life of Christ is before us as a pattern, and it is when ministering, like angels of mercy, to the wants of others that man is closely allied to God. It is the nature of Christianity to make happy families and happy members of society. Discord, selfishness, and strife will be put away from every one who possesses the Spirit of Christ.

Those who are partakers of Christ's love have no right to think that there is a limit to their influence and work in trying to benefit humanity. Christ did not become weary in his efforts to save fallen men; and our work is to be continuous and persevering. We shall find work to do until the Master shall bid us lay our armor at his feet; and we must wait and watch, submissive to God's will, ready and willing to respond to every call of duty.

Angels are engaged night and day in the service of God, for the uplifting of man in accordance with the plan of salvation. Man is required to love God supremely, that is, with all his might, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself. This he cannot possibly do unless he shall deny himself. Said Christ. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

To deny self means to rule the spirit when passion is seeking for the mastery; to resist the temptation to censure and to speak fault-finding words; to have patience with the child that is dull, and whose conduct is grievous and trying; to stand at the post of duty when others may fail; to lift responsibilities wherever and whenever duty requires it, not for applause, not for policy, but for the sake of the Master, who has given each of his followers a work to be done with unwavering fidelity; when one might praise himself, to keep silent and let other lips praise him. Self-denial is to do good to others when inclination would lead us to serve and please ourselves. Although our fellow-men may never appreciate our efforts, we are to work on.

Fellow-Christians, search carefully, and see whether the work of God is indeed the rule of your life. Do you take Christ with you when you leave the closet of prayer? Does your religion stand guard at the door of your lips? Is your heart drawn out in sympathy and love for others outside of your own family? Are you diligently seeking a clearer understanding of Scripture truth, that you may let your light shine forth to others? These questions you may answer to your own souls. Let your speech be seasoned with grace, and your demeanor show Christian elevation. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Ever remember that the moral nature needs to be braced with constant watchfulness and prayer. As long as you look to Christ, you are safe; but the moment you trust to yourself, you lose your hold upon God, and are in great peril.

Many limit the divine Providence, and divorce mercy and love from his character. They urge that the greatness and majesty of God would forbid him to interest himself in the concerns of the weakest of his creatures. But from the lips of Jesus we have the assurance: "Are not two sparrows sold for a

farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

June 24, 1886

Acceptable Worship

Through the psalmist God declares, “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.” Much of the public worship of God consists of praise and prayer, and every follower of Christ should engage in this worship. There is also the preaching service, conducted by those whose work it is to instruct the congregation in the word of God. Although all are not called to minister in word and doctrine, they need not be cold and responseless listeners. When the word of God was spoken to the Hebrews anciently, the Lord said to Moses, “And let all the people say, Amen.” This response, in the fervor of their souls, was required as evidence that they understood the word spoken and were interested in it.

When the ark of God was brought into the city of David and a psalm of joy and triumph was chanted, all the people said, Amen. And David felt that he was fully repaid for his labor and anxiety by this cheerful, universal response from the people.

There is too much formality in the church. Souls are perishing for light and knowledge. We should be so connected with the Source of light that we can be channels of light to the world. The Lord would have his ministers who preach the word energized by his Holy Spirit. And the people who hear should not sit in drowsy indifference or stare vacantly about, making no response to what is said. The spirit of the world has paralyzed the spirituality of such, and they are not awake to the precious theme of redemption. 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. They show zeal and ambition 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, and the Holy Spirit is grieved. Said Christ, “Take heed, therefore, how ye hear.” 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.

Those who profess to be guided by the word of God may be familiar with the evidences of their 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 are connected with Heaven, and intelligent in the things of God. The truth and the love of God is their meditation. They have feasted upon the word 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 concerning himself, “Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?”

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. Nothing of the world can make them sad

when Jesus makes them glad by his presence. Walking in the light, they will never disgrace their profession or bring reproach upon the cause of Christ. 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.

We should all be workers together with God. No idlers are acknowledged as his servants. The members of the church should individually feel that the life and prosperity of the church is affected by their course of action. Those in the church who have sufficient talent to engage in any of the various vocations of life, such as teaching, building, manufacturing, and farming, will generally be prepared to labor for the upbuilding of the church by serving on committees or as teachers in the Sabbath-schools, engaging in missionary labor, or filling the different offices connected with the church.

God requires that the first, the best, and the most useful talents shall be employed to carry forward his work upon the earth. The same zeal and energy, tact and order, which are exercised in counting-rooms, shops, and in the fine arts, should be brought into the religious life and exercised in the work of God. All are responsible for the talents given them of God to use to his glory. He calls for them to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

Many will give money because it costs less self-denial and self-sacrifice than to give themselves. Some say: My business claims all my time. So numerous are my engagements and so pressing their demands, I cannot give my time." Of what avail is means without agents to use it? Ministers cannot do a tithe of the work necessary to be done at this time to save souls and preserve the vitality of the church.

What revelations will be made in the day of God, when each individual will see his life as God sees it! What opportunities lost to save souls! How many precious hours wasted in following inclination instead of discharging duties! How much greater advancement might have been made in the knowledge of the truth! How much talent that was given of God for wise improvement, to be spent in his service, has been buried in the cares and allurements of this world! How much strength and courage might have been given to the individual members of the church, had they dedicated to God their talents and used them to his service and glory. And how many souls might have been saved, had they been wise, and sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

What can we say to arouse those who profess to be the followers of Christ, to a sense of the solemn responsibilities resting upon them? Is there no voice that shall arouse them to work while the day lasts? Our divine Master gave his life for a ruined world? Who will deny self, and make some sacrifice to save souls for whom he died?

In every act of life Christians should seek to represent Christ,—seek to make his service appear attractive. Let none make religion repulsive by groans and sighs and a relation of their trials, their self-denials, and sacrifices. Do not give the lie to your profession of faith by impatience, fretfulness, and repining. Let the graces of the Spirit be manifested in kindness, meekness, forbearance, cheerfulness, and love. Let it be seen that the love of Christ is an abiding motive; that your religion is not a dress to be put off and on to suit circumstances, but a principle, calm, steady, unvarying. Alas that pride, unbelief, and selfishness, like a foul cancer, are eating our vital godliness from the heart

of many a professed Christian! When judged according to their works, how many will learn, too late, that their religion was but a glittering cheat, unacknowledged by Jesus Christ.

Love to Jesus will be seen, will be felt. It cannot be hidden. It exerts a wondrous power. It makes the timid bold, the slothful diligent, the ignorant wise. It makes the stammering tongue eloquent, and rouses the dormant intellect into new life and vigor. It makes the desponding hopeful, the gloomy joyous. Love to Christ will lead its possessor to accept responsibilities for his sake, and to bear them in his strength. Love to Christ will not be dismayed by tribulation, nor turned aside from duty by reproaches. The soul that is not imbued with this love for Jesus is none of his.

Peace in Christ is of more value than all the treasures of earth. Let us seek the Lord with all our heart, let us learn of Christ to be meek and lowly, that we may find rest of soul. Let us arouse our dormant energies, and become active, earnest, fervent. The very example and deportment, as well as the words, of the Christian should be such as to awaken in the sinner a desire to come to the Fountain of life.

Then let us open our hearts to the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Let us work cheerfully, joyfully, in the service of our Master. Let us praise him, not only by our words in the congregation of his saints, but by a well ordered life and godly conversation,—a life of active, noble Christian effort. Let us give diligence to make our calling and election sure, remembering that we shall triumph at last, if we do not become weary in well-doing.

July 1, 1886

Importance of Home Training

In the words, "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," the psalmist sums up the results of careful home training. It should be the object of every parent to secure to his children a well-balanced, symmetrical character. And this is a work of no small magnitude and importance, but one that will require earnest thought and prayer, no less than patient, persevering effort. A right foundation must be laid, a framework, strong and firm, erected, and then day by day the work of building, polishing, perfecting, must go forward.

Parents, your own home is the first field in which you are called to labor. The precious plants in the home garden demand your first care. To you it is appointed to watch for souls as they that must give account. Carefully consider your work, its nature, its bearing, and its results. Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, you must instruct, warn, and counsel, ever remembering that your looks, words, and actions have a direct bearing upon the future course of your dear ones. Your work is not to paint a form of beauty upon canvas, or to chisel it from marble, but to impress upon a human soul the image of the Divine.

Did mothers but realize the importance of their mission, they would be much in secret prayer, presenting their children to Jesus, imploring his blessing upon them, and pleading for wisdom to discharge aright their sacred duties. Let the mother improve every opportunity to mould and fashion the disposition and habits of her children. Let her watch carefully the development of character, repressing traits that are too prominent, encouraging those that are deficient.

Mothers, will you not dispense with useless, unimportant labor for that which must perish with the using? Will you not seek to draw near to God, that his wisdom may guide and his grace assist you, in a work which will be as enduring as eternity? Aim to make your children perfect in character. Remember that such only can see God.

I speak the more freely and earnestly, because I know that many parents are neglecting their God-given work. They are themselves far from purity and holiness, and they do not see the defects of their children as they would if their own eyes were beholding and admiring the perfection of Christ's character.

Parents, for Christ's sake, for the sake of your children, seek to conform your own lives to the divine standard. Set a pure and noble example before your precious charge. Let nothing come in between you and your God. Be earnest, be patient and persevering, instant in season, and out of season. Give your children intellectual culture, and moral training. Let their young hearts be fortified with firm, pure principles. Teach them to exert every faculty of mind and body. While you have the opportunity, lay the foundation for a noble manhood and womanhood, and your labor will be rewarded a thousand fold.

You must make the Bible your guide, if you would bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Let the life and character of Christ be presented as the pattern for them to copy. If they err, read to them what the Lord has said concerning similar sins. There is need of constant care and diligence in this work. One wrong trait tolerated by parents, uncorrected by teachers, may cause the character to become deformed and unbalanced. Teach the children that they must have a new heart; that new tastes must be created, new motives inspired. They must have help from Christ; they must become acquainted with the character of God as revealed in his word.

Family prayer receives too little attention. In many cases, the morning and evening worship is little more than a mere form, a dull monotonous repetition of set phrases in which the spirit of gratitude or the sense of need finds no expression. The Lord accepts not such service. But the petitions of a humble heart and contrite spirit he will not despise. The opening of our hearts to our Heavenly Father, the acknowledgment of our entire dependence, the expression of our wants, the homage of grateful love,—this is true prayer. When we come pleading the merits of Christ's blood, and trusting with implicit faith his promises, we shall secure the blessing of the Lord.

Redeem the precious hours worse than wasted in talking of your troubles, or gossiping over the faults of others. Seek earnestly to God for help, and you will become strong in his strength. You may have Christ as a guest in your home. Be not satisfied merely to bear the name of Christ. Be in truth followers of Jesus. Let your hearts be warmed with his love. Make him your friend, your helper, your counselor.

The most valuable rules for social and family intercourse, are to be found in the Bible. There is not only the best and purest standard of morality, but the most valuable code of politeness. Our Saviour's sermon on the mount contains instruction of priceless worth to old and young. It should be often read in the family circle, and its precious teachings exemplified in the daily life. The golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," as well as the apostolic injunction, "In honor preferring one another," should be made the law of the family. Those

who cherish the spirit of Christ will manifest politeness at home, a spirit of benevolence even in little things. They will be constantly seeking to make all around them happy, forgetting self in their kind attentions to others. This is the fruit which grows upon the Christian tree.

Few realize the influence of the little things of life upon the development of character. Mothers, cease to spend your time and strength for that which is merely attractive to the eye, but which does not minister to comfort or real happiness, and you will cut off a large share of the cares and worries that make you nervous and irritable, impolite and unchristian. The precious moments heretofore given to needless labor should be devoted to beautifying the souls of your children, teaching them how they may obtain the inward adorning, that meek and quiet spirit which God accounts of great price.

If real politeness were practiced by all the followers of Christ, if obedience to the golden rule were made one of the corner-stones of Christian character, we would see fewer church-trials, less hardness and animosity between brethren. There would be no harsh, thoughtless words, no strife for the highest place. God's people will be tested. Every one will be exposed to the fierce fire of trial and temptation. If we would not be consumed as dross, we must have the love of God—the gold that has been tried—abiding in us. Now is the time to soften and subdue our rough, harsh traits of character. We must cherish kindness, forbearance, Christian integrity. Ungenerous criticism, hard speeches, questioning the motives of another, or magnifying his faults, open the door to Satan's temptations, and lead many away from God. The holy Scriptures give us a safe and profitable rule for thought and conversation. “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” If we would have our children practice kindness, courtesy, and love, we ourselves must set them the example.

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind.” It “thinketh no evil,”—another fruit borne on the tree of love. Our souls must be stayed upon God, imbued with his Spirit, if we would learn these sacred lessons. Said the apostle, “Gird up the loins of your mind.” If the thoughts are rightly disciplined, it will be a far less difficult task to control the feelings. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, will give us courage, hope, and constancy. Shall we not obey the teachings of God's word? Shall we not make it our guide and counselor? Shall we not devote time and thought to its perusal? How can Christians neglect the book in which God has revealed his will to men? Our children need help to understand the Scriptures. They should become acquainted with the life and character of Jesus, that they may love him, and choose to obey him.

Parents and guardians must exercise unceasing watchfulness. Every day new thoughts are awakened in the minds of the young; new impressions are made upon their hearts. The associations they form, the books they read, the habits they cherish,—all must be guarded; for the interests of the children, for this life and the next, are at stake.

“What now you do, you know not,

But shall hereafter know,

When the seeds your hands are sowing,

To a ripened harvest grow.”

When you stand before the great white throne, then your work will appear as it is. The books are opened, the record of every life made known. Many in that vast company are unprepared for the revelations made. Upon the ears of some, the words will fall with startling distinctness, "Weighed in the balance, and found wanting." To many parents the Judge will say in that day, "You had my word, plainly setting forth your duty. Why have you not obeyed its teachings? Knew ye not that it was the voice of God? Did I not bid you search the Scriptures, that you might not go astray? You have not only ruined your own souls, but by your pretensions to godliness you have misled many others. You have no part with me. Depart, depart!"

Another class stand pale and trembling, trusting in Christ, and yet oppressed with a sense of their own unworthiness. They hear with tears of joy and gratitude the Master's commendation. The day's of incessant toil, of burden-bearing, and of fear and anguish, are forgotten, as that voice, sweeter than the music of angel harps, pronounces the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter ye into the joy of your Lord." There stand the host of the redeemed, the palm branch of victory in their hand, the crown upon their head. These are the ones who by faithful, earnest labor, have obtained a fitness for Heaven. The life-work performed on earth is acknowledged in the heavenly courts as a work well done.

With joy unutterable, parents see the crown, the robe, the harp, given to their children. The days of hope and fear are ended. The seed sown with tears and prayers may have seemed to be sown in vain, but their harvest is reaped with joy at last. Their children have been redeemed. Fathers, mothers, shall the voices of your children swell the song of gladness in that day?

July 8, 1886

The Christian a Missionary Worker

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

None of us should feel content to save merely our own souls. Jesus, our perfect Pattern, left the royal courts of Heaven. He gave up his high command, and the glory that he had with the Father, and for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. He labored in his vineyard among the hills of Galilee, and at last bedewed with his own blood the seed which he had sown. When the harvest of the earth shall be gathered into Heaven's garner, and Christ shall look upon the saints redeemed, he will see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.

Those who appreciate the plan of salvation, the infinite price paid for man's redemption, will not live for themselves alone. They will have the deepest interest to save their fellowmen, that Christ may not have died for them in vain. All Heaven is interested in the salvation of souls, and all who are partakers of the heavenly benefits will feel an intense anxiety that this interest manifested in Heaven may not be in vain. They will on earth cooperate with the angels in Heaven, by manifesting their appreciation of the value of souls for whom Christ has died. They will, through their earnest, judicious labor, bring many to the fold of Christ. Not one who is a partaker of the divine nature will be indifferent in this matter. The world is our field; with a firm hold on God for his strength and his grace we may move forward in the pathway of duty, as co-laborers with the Redeemer of the world. Our work is to spread the light of truth and advance the work of moral reform, to elevate, ennoble,

and bless humanity. We should apply the principles of Christ's sermon on the mount to every move that we make, and then trust the consequences with God.

“I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.” “Likewise, I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” If God and Christ and angels rejoice when even one sinner repents and becomes obedient to Christ, should not man be imbued with the same spirit, and work for time and for eternity with persevering effort to save, not only his own soul, but the souls of others? If you work in this direction with whole-hearted interest as the followers of Christ, discharging every duty, improving every opportunity, your own souls will be gradually settling into the mould of a perfect Christian. The heart will not be sere and unfeeling. The spiritual life will not be dwarfed. The heart will glow with the impress of the divine image; for it will be in close sympathy with God. The whole life will flow out with cheerful readiness in channels of love and sympathy for humanity. Self will be forgotten, and the ways of this class will be established in God. In watering others, their own souls will be watered. The stream flowing through their souls is from a living spring, and is flowing out to others in good deeds, in earnest, unselfish effort for their salvation. In order to be a fruitful tree, the soul must derive its support and nourishment from the Fountain of life, and must be in harmony with the Creator.

All who are faithful workers for God will yield their spirit and all their powers a willing sacrifice to him. The Spirit of God operating upon their spirit calls forth the sacred harmonies of the soul in answer to the divine touch. This is true sanctification, as revealed in the word of God. It is the work of a lifetime. And that which the Spirit of God has begun upon the earth for the perfection of man, glory shall crown in the mansions of God. Those who are indolent and half-caring know not true happiness and peace. They are losing, even in this life; and what glory they lose in the future immortal life! I wish I could speak words to men and women which would nerve them to diligent action. The moments now granted us to work are few. We are standing upon the very borders of the eternal world. We have no time to lose. Every moment is golden, and altogether too precious to be devoted merely to self-serving. Who will seek God earnestly, and from him draw strength and grace to be his faithful workers in the missionary field? Individual effort is essential for the success of this work. The ease-loving and self-caring, the worldly, ambitious ones will be ashamed to engage perseveringly in the tract and missionary work. Some may take hold of it impulsively, but they will not be able to bear rebuffs, and sneers, and contempt. These soon become weary in well-doing, and fall back to their own position of living and caring for self. For such there will be no reward in Heaven, for Christ is to give to every one as his works shall be.

It is essential that all who have named the name of Christ have a personal knowledge of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. They should understand the Scriptures for themselves. All indifference and lethargy must be overcome. Work, work, is crowding upon the few who are willing and obedient. They overwork because they see so much to do and so few who are willing to lift the burden and bear the yoke of Christ. Many who see the work for this time, and realize its importance, are pressed under the weight of responsibility as a cart beneath sheaves, while hundreds are dying a spiritual death of inaction because they will not work at all. These might come into working order if they would gather divine strength, and yield not to passing influences. They have the opportunity to cultivate traits of character which would be the opposite of selfishness, which would refine, enrich, and ennoble their lives. These may grow in spirituality if they will accept any burdens of the work

where they can best serve the cause of God. Christians, in the fullest acceptance of the term, grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. They love God more and more, and are more and more desirous of acting a part in the great plan of salvation. Intellectual laziness and spiritual lethargy must be overcome, and as Christ's soldiers we must be faithful to duty, ready for every good work.

The sweet savor of Christ surrounds them; their influence is to elevate and bless. These are fruitful trees. Men and women of this stamp of character will render practical service in thoughtful deeds of kindness, and earnest, systematic labor. Self-importance, vanity, and pride should in no case be mingled with the sacred work. Those who become lifted up because they can do something in the cause of God, will be in danger of marring the work by their self-conceit, and they will ruin their own souls. All who are connected with the work of God should make their mission as attractive as possible, that they may create no distaste for the truth in consequence of their demeanor. Self must be hid in Jesus, and those who labor for God must have characters with a pleasant flavor. Now is the time to put forth earnest efforts. Men and women are needed to work in the great missionary field with determined effort, praying, and weeping, sowing the precious seed of truth in imitation of the Redeemer, who was the Prince of missionaries.

He who gives increased talents to those who have made a wise improvement of the talents intrusted to them, is pleased to acknowledge the service of his believing people in the Beloved, through whose strength and grace they have wrought. Those who have sought the development and perfection of Christian character by exercising their faculties in good works, in sowing the seeds of truth beside all waters, will in the world to come, reap that which they have sown. The work begun upon earth will reach its consummation in the higher and holier life, to endure through all eternity. The self-denial and self-sacrifice required in the cultivation of the heart in doing the works of Christ, will be infinitely overbalanced by the rich reward of the eternal weight of glory, the joys of the life which measures with the life of God.

If the Christian thrives and progresses at all, he must do so amid strangers to God, amid scoffing, subject to ridicule. He must stand upright like the palm tree in the desert. The sky may be as brass, the desert sand may beat about the palm tree's roots, and pile itself in heaps about its trunk. Yet the tree lives as an evergreen, fresh and vigorous amid the burning desert sands. Remove the sand till you reach the rootlets of the palm tree, and you discover the secret of its life; it strikes down deep beneath the surface, to the secret waters hidden in the earth. Christians indeed may be fitly represented by the palm tree. They are like Enoch; although surrounded by corrupting influences, their faith takes hold of the Unseen. They walk with God, deriving strength and grace from him to withstand the moral pollution surrounding them. Like Daniel in the courts of Babylon, they stand pure and uncontaminated; their life is hid with Christ in God. They are virtuous in spirit amid depravity; they are true and loyal, fervent and zealous, while surrounded by infidels, hypocritical professors, godless and worldly men. Their faith and life are hid with Christ in God. Jesus is in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Faith, like the rootlets of the palm tree, penetrates beneath the things which are seen, drawing spiritual nourishment from the Fountain of life.

The character of the true Christian will be consistent, meek, cheerful, fragrant with good works, and so resolute that sin will find no sanction in the heart, in the words uttered, or in silence. The peace of Christ ruling in the heart of the earnest, working Christian will be reflected upon others; and will

elevate and refine the taste, and sanctify the judgment. The faithful sower of the seed will hear the commendation of the Master, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." What is the joy of our Lord? It is the joy of seeing souls for whom Christ died redeemed in the kingdom of glory. Those who enter into the joys of their Lord will have the blessed satisfaction of seeing souls saved in the mansions of God through their instrumentality. These souls will be as stars in the crown of their rejoicing.

July 15, 1886

A Lesson from the Miracle at Bethesda

"Wisdom is justified of her children."

The healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda teaches an important lesson,—a lesson of priceless value to the Christian and of fearful import to the unbelieving and the skeptical. As the paralytic lay beside the pool, helpless and well-nigh hopeless, Jesus drew near, and asked, in tones of pity, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Be made whole!—this had been the burden of his desire and prayers for long, weary years. With trembling eagerness he told the story of his trials and disappointments to the sympathizing Son of God. No friend was near to bear him to the healing fountain at the troubling of the waters. His agonizing appeals for help fell unheeded. All around him were those who sought the coveted boon of health for their own loved ones; and while he painfully sought to reach the pool, another would be hurried down before him.

Jesus said to the sufferer, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." There was no assurance of divine help, no manifestation of miraculous power. What marvel had the man replied, "It is impossible! How can I be expected to use my limbs, that have not obeyed my will for thirty-eight years?" From a merely human point of view, such reasoning would appear consistent. The sufferer might have given place to doubt, and thus have permitted that God-given opportunity to pass unimproved. But no; without indulging a questioning thought, he seized his only opportunity. As he attempted to do what Christ had commanded, strength and vigor came; he was made whole.

Reader, is your mind filled with doubts and misgivings, and yet do you desire to receive the blessing of the Lord? Cease to question his word and distrust his promises. Obey the Saviour's bidding, and receive strength. If you hesitate, and wait to enter into a discussion with Satan, or to consider the difficulties and improbabilities, your opportunity will pass, perhaps forever.

The miracle at Bethesda should have convinced the Jews that Jesus was the Son of God; but they desired only a pretext for unbelief, and it was not hard to find what they sought. At the command of the Saviour, the impotent man had borne away the simple bed, or mat, on which he had so long lain; and Satan, ever ready with his insinuations, suggested that this act might be construed into a violation of the Sabbath. The Jews, by their customs and traditions, had perverted this sacred rest-day from its original design, making its observance a burden rather than a blessing. It was hoped that a controversy on this point would destroy the faith inspired in some hearts by the healing of this poor paralytic.

As the restored one went on his way with quick, elastic step, his pulses bounding with the vigor of renewed health, his countenance glowing with hope and joy, he was met by the Pharisees, who told him, with an air of great sanctity, that it was not lawful to carry his bed on the Sabbath day. There

was no rejoicing on their part at the deliverance of that long-imprisoned captive, no grateful praise that one was among them who could heal all manner of diseases. Their traditions had been disregarded, and this fact closed their eyes to the evidence of divine power. Bigoted and self-righteous, they would not admit that they could have misapprehended the true design of the Sabbath. Instead of this, they chose to condemn Jesus, notwithstanding the mighty miracle he had performed. There are men of the same spirit today, who are blinded by error, and yet they flatter themselves that they are right, and that all who differ from them are in the wrong.

The man who had been healed entered into no controversy with his accusers. He simply answered, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk." The Pharisees, pretending ignorance, still urged, "What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?" It was their policy to question and cavil, that they might perplex and entangle him, and lead him to doubt, or else cast discredit upon his testimony.

When the Jews were informed that it was Jesus of Nazareth who had performed the miracle of healing, they sought to put him to death, "because he had done these things on the Sabbath day." To their charges, Jesus calmly replied, "'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' Through the operations of nature, and by the ministration of angels, God is constantly working to sustain and bless humanity. I am working in perfect harmony with my Father." This answer furnished another pretext to condemn him. Murder was in their hearts, and they waited only for a plausible excuse to take his life. But Jesus steadily continues to assert his true position. "The Son," he says, "can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth."

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 criticising 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 criticise and condemn the Saviour's work, when they had such evidence of divine power as the miracle at Bethesda, can we wonder that they criticise 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.

Christ bade the Pharisees, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." The Jewish teachers professed to expound the word of God; but had they prayerfully studied and rightly understood its teachings, they would not have substituted their own traditions for the divine law.

Jesus continued; "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" The word of God is slighted and looked upon with distrust for the same reason as was its Author—because it reproveth and condemns sin. Many who are unwilling to obey its requirements,

endeavor to overthrow its authority. They read the Bible, or listen to its truths as presented from the sacred desk, merely to find fault with the Scriptures or with the sermon. Not a few become infidels, simply through their willful neglect of duty. Others are led to adopt skeptical principles from pride or indolence. They do not love close application, and will not put forth the effort necessary to accomplish anything noble or really useful; but they desire to be thought sharp and critical, to secure a reputation for superior wisdom. Turning their attention to the Bible, they find much which the finite mind, unenlightened by wisdom from above, is powerless to comprehend. Here is a field for the display of their talents, where they can gain a reputation for wit and sharpness without much effort; and they begin to express their doubts and cavilings.

These scoffers may utter many sharp, witty, apt things; but the "poison of asps is under their lips." The father of lies lends them his power and his Satanic cunning. Christians should avoid controversy with these men. We may feel that we are in no danger from their influence; but others will gather about to listen, and some soul may be led into the path of doubt and skepticism. Treat them kindly, but give them no opportunity to parade their infidelity. Give no place for Satan to insinuate his presence. Do not take one step on the enemy's ground.

God would have his people shun the society of infidels, atheists, and spiritualists. He has warned us of their character and their fate: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." "The transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off."

The great adversary will attempt to overthrow the faith of every follower of Christ. To some he appears as a roaring lion; to others he comes clothed in angel garments, his voice subdued to the gentlest whisper. Our only safety is in clinging with unwavering faith to the word of God, and promptly and resolutely shunning whatever that word condemns, no matter how pleasing its appearance or how specious its pretenses. Though the truth of God may be to the "Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness," to them that believe it is the "power of God and the wisdom of God;" for "wisdom is justified of her children."

July 22, 1886

Prompt and Cheerful Obedience

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

God, as the supreme ruler of the universe has ever required prompt and unquestioning obedience. Even Christ, in the days of his flesh, was obedient to the law of the Father. Through the inspired psalmist he declares: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire;" "burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." But men are lulled to sleep by the deceptions of Satan, who suggests excuses and conquers their scruples, saying, as he said to Eve in the garden, "Ye shall not surely die." They forget that the word of the Lord is steadfast, and that every transgression will receive a "just recompense of reward."

The Lord made a covenant with Abraham and his seed, and gave them the right [rite] of circumcision as a token that he had separated them from all nations as his peculiar treasure. Had the descendants

of Abraham faithfully kept this covenant, they would have escaped a great temptation to indulge in the sinful practices of other nations, and would not have been seduced into idolatry. By mingling with idolaters, they lost, to a great extent, their peculiar, holy character. To punish them, the Lord brought a famine upon their land, which compelled them to go down into Egypt to preserve their lives. The Lord suffered them to be oppressed by the Egyptians; but because of his covenant with Abraham, he did not forsake his people. He gave them an opportunity to turn to him in their distress, choose his righteous and merciful government, and obey his requirements.

The Lord heard the cries of his people in the land of their captivity, and delivered them, that they might be free to serve him. After they had left Egypt, and the waters of the Red Sea had been divided before them, he proved them, to see if they would trust in Him who by signs and wonders had delivered them from the house of bondage. But they failed to endure the trial. They murmured against God because of the difficulties in the way, and wished to return again to Egypt. Because of their dissatisfied, impatient, and rebellious spirit, they wandered for forty years in the wilderness. But the Lord was not chargeable with this delay in possessing Canaan. He was more grieved than they because he could not bring them into immediate possession of the promised land, and thus display before all nations his mighty power in the deliverance of his people. With their distrust of God, with their pride and unbelief, they were not prepared to enter Canaan. They would in no way represent that people whose God is the Lord; for they did not bear his character of purity, goodness, and benevolence.

The children of Israel forfeited the divine favor by their disobedience. Had they submitted to the authority of God, as a nation being governed by his judgments, and as individuals walking in his ordinances, they would have been a prosperous, holy, happy people. By their own perversity of spirit, the Israelites made it impossible for God to manifest his power in protecting them from the nations that opposed their passage to Canaan. When those who had been chosen of God as his peculiar people, who had witnessed so many displays of his greatness and the majesty of his power, imitated the iniquities of the heathen, their guilt was as much greater than that of the idolatrous nations as were their privileges. Not one of the good things that God had promised to his people would have failed, had they complied with the conditions upon which these blessings were to be bestowed; but God could not sanction sin, nor protect iniquity.

The history of the children of Israel is written for our admonition. We are probationers, as they were. God has given us his commandments, as he gave them to his people anciently. We may become strong in the strength of Israel's God, if we will believe and obey his word. But if we are disobedient, doubting, and rebellious, as were the multitudes who fell in the wilderness, we shall be found unworthy to possess those mansions which Christ has gone to prepare for his people.

Through Samuel, God commanded Saul to go and smite the Amalekites, and utterly destroy all their possessions. But Saul only partially obeyed the command; he destroyed the inferior cattle, but reserved the best, and spared the wicked king. The next day he met the prophet Samuel, and greeted him with flattering self-congratulations. Said he, "Blessed be thou of the Lord; I have performed the commandment of the Lord." But the prophet immediately responded, "What meaneth then the bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

Saul was confused, and sought to shirk responsibility by answering, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto the

Lord thy God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed.” Samuel reproved the king, reminding him of the explicit command of God directing him to destroy all things belonging to Amalek. He pointed out Saul's transgression, and declared that he had disobeyed the Lord. But Saul refused to acknowledge that he had done wrong, and again excused his sin by pleading that he had reserved the best of the cattle to sacrifice unto the Lord.

The king's persistency in refusing to see and confess his sin grieved Samuel to the heart. He sorrowfully asked, “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offering and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” “Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.” And for his transgression, the kingdom of Israel was rent from the hands of Saul, and given to a neighbor that was better than he, even David, the son of Jesse.

God is no less particular now than he was in ancient times. His eye is upon all his people, and over all the work of their hands. He will accept of no partial obedience; he will sanction no compromise with self. Nor will he suffer those who disobey his word to go unpunished. Though he may bear long with the transgressor, retribution will surely come at last.

God spoke to the children of Israel by the mouths of prophets and apostles; but there never was a time when men were more fully informed than they now are concerning his will and the course he would have them pursue. But will they profit by his teachings? Will they receive his reproofs and heed the warnings?

Disobedience hardens the heart and deadens the conscience of the guilty, and it also tends to corrupt the faith of others. That which at first looks very wrong to them, gradually loses this appearance, till finally they question whether it is really sin, and unconsciously fall into the same error. When a duty presents itself, we should not delay to meet its demands. Delay gives time for doubts to arise, unbelief creeps in, the judgment is perverted, the understanding darkened; and at length the reproofs of God's Spirit do not reach the heart of the deluded one, who has become so blinded as to feel that they cannot possibly be intended for him or apply to his case.

Precious probationary time is passing, and few realize its worth. The golden hours are squandered in worldly pursuits, in pleasure, in absolute sin, while a preparation for eternity, the great object for which they were given, is entirely overlooked. The law of God is slighted and forgotten; yet its precepts are none the less binding, and every transgression will receive its merited punishment. For purpose of worldly gain men desecrate the Sabbath; yet the claims of that holy day are not abrogated or lessened. God's command is clear and unquestionable on this point. He has peremptorily forbidden us to labor on the Sabbath; he has set it apart as a day sanctified to himself.

Those who would walk in the path of obedience to God's commandments will encounter many hindrances. There are strong and subtle influences that bind them to the ways of the world; but the power of the Lord can break these chains. He will remove these obstacles from before the feet of his faithful, humble children, or give them strength and courage to conquer every difficulty, if they earnestly beseech his help. All hindrances will vanish before an earnest desire and persistent effort to do the will of God. Light from Heaven will illuminate the pathway of those who, no matter what trials and perplexities they may encounter, go forward in the way of obedience, looking to Jesus for help and guidance.

Basel, Switzerland.

July 29, 1886

Christ and the Law

The law of God is changeless. For this reason, Christ died, taking upon himself the guilt of the transgressor, and making it possible for every penitent, repenting sinner to take hold of his strength, and through him to make peace with the offended Lawgiver.

“Sin is the transgression of the law,” and “the wages of sin is death.” It was sin that brought death into the world. Had there been no sin, there would have been no death. Christ died as the sinner's substitute, to save him from the penalty of his disobedience. Could the law of God have been changed or abolished, Christ need not have died; for death was not necessary in order to abolish the law. The fact that God spared not his own sinless, beloved Son from the penalty he pledged himself to bear as the sinner's substitute, is the most telling argument that could be produced to show that the claims of his law will not be released, even in the slightest degree, to save the transgressor. So in the death of Christ we have evidence, not only of God's love for sinful man, but of the changeless character of his law. The law could not be abolished; one precept could not be altered to save the sinner and meet man in his fallen condition; but God so loved the world that he gave his Son to suffer the penalty of its transgression in the sinner's stead.

It is by grace that the sinner is saved, being justified freely by the blood of Christ. But Christ did not die to save the sinner in his sins. The whole world is condemned as guilty before God, for they are transgressors of his holy law; and they will certainly perish unless they repent, turn from their disobedience, and through faith in Christ claim the merits of his precious blood. The sin of Adam and Eve lost holy Eden for themselves and their posterity, and those who continue to live in the transgression of God's law will never regain the lost paradise. But through the grace of Christ man may render acceptable obedience, and gain a home in the beautiful Eden restored.

There are some who do not understand the plan of redemption, but make the death of Christ an argument to prove that the law of God is abolished. Men who claim to be teachers of the people blind the eyes of the ignorant by blending the moral law with the ceremonial, and using the texts which speak of the ceremonial law to prove that the moral law has been abolished. This is a perversion of the Scriptures. There are two distinct laws brought to view. One is the law of types and shadows, which reached to the time of Christ, and ceased when type met antitype in his death. The other is the law of Jehovah, and is as abiding and changeless as his eternal throne. After the crucifixion, it was a denial of Christ for the Jews to continue to offer the burnt offerings and sacrifices which were typical of his death. It was saying to the world that they looked for a Redeemer to come, and had no faith in Him who had given his life for the sins of the world. Hence the ceremonial law ceased to be of force at the death of Christ.

The gospel of Christ reflects glory upon the Jewish age. It sheds light upon the whole Jewish economy, and gives significance to the ceremonial law. The tabernacle, or temple, of God on earth was a pattern of the original in Heaven. All the ceremonies of the Jewish law were prophetic, typical of mysteries in the plan of redemption. The rites and ceremonies of the law were given by Christ himself, who, enshrouded in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, was the leader of the

hosts of Israel; and this law should be treated with great respect, for it is sacred. Even after it was no longer to be observed, Paul presented it before the Jews in its true position and value, showing its place in the plan of redemption and its relation to the work of Christ; and the great apostle pronounces this law glorious, worthy of its divine Originator. That which was to be done away was glorious, but it was not the law instituted by God for the government of his family in Heaven and on earth; for as long as the heavens shall remain, so long shall the law of the Lord endure.

Christ came to teach men the way of salvation; and we might expect that when the shadowy service was no longer of any value, if the law of ten commandments were no longer binding, he would declare its abrogation. If the Old-Testament Scriptures were no longer to be regarded as a guide for Christians, he would make known the fact. But this was not the work of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost. In his memorable sermon on the mount, in which he announced to his followers the object of his mission, he expressly declared the perpetuity of the moral law. His solemn warnings to the neglecters and despisers of the law of God, echo down even to our time in the words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven."

These are the words of the great Teacher, but they are often perverted, and made to mean something altogether different from the lesson he designed to give to his disciples, and through them to all who should believe on his name. He came to fulfill the demands of the law, to magnify and make it honorable, to show to all that God will not remit the penalty of its transgression. The Most High will fulfill his word; it shall not return unto him void.

After his resurrection, when Jesus revealed himself to the two disciples who were on the way to Emmaus and to those assembled in Jerusalem, he did not point to the mighty works which he had done, to revive their faith in him as the promised Messiah; but he went back to Moses and the prophets, and explained the scriptures concerning himself. Holy prophets had foretold the manner of his birth, the events of his life, his mission, and his death and resurrection; and Jesus impressed upon his disciples the fact that in his life and death these prophecies had met their fulfillment. Hope revived in the hearts of the disciples, as for them the words of the prophets were clothed with new life and power, and they were ready to accept Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God, the long-expected Messiah.

There is no discord between the Old Testament and the New. In the Old Testament we find the gospel of a coming Saviour; in the New Testament we have the gospel of a Saviour revealed as the prophecies had foretold. While the Old Testament is constantly pointing forward to the true offering, the New Testament shows that the Saviour prefigured by the typical offerings has come. The dim glory of the Jewish age has been succeeded by the brighter, clearer glory of the Christian age. But not once has Christ stated, that his coming destroyed the claims of God's law. On the contrary, in the very last message to his church, by way of Patmos, he pronounces a benediction upon those who keep his Father's law: "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."

The world is full of evidences of the greatness, majesty, and benevolence of God; but the strongest evidence of his love for fallen man is contained in the gift of his Son, who took the nature of man,

descended to the office of a servant, tasted life's bitterest pain, and even died a terrible and ignominious death, that through him we might be restored to obedience and the favor of God, and gain eternal life. Christ, as our exemplar, kept his Father's law. As he overcame, so may we. And he has promised: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

August 5, 1886

The Law in the Christian Age

After the ascension of Christ, when his followers no longer enjoyed his personal presence and instruction, his disciples took up the work where he left it; and the words of truth, as they received them from Him who spake as never man spake, have come down to us clothed with divine power. Paul declared that he had taught the Ephesians "publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Peter and the other apostles preached the same gospel.

Why should the apostles teach repentance toward God?—Because the sinner is in trouble with the Father. He has transgressed the law; he must see his sin, and repent. What is his next work?—To look to Jesus, whose blood alone can cleanse from all sin. Faith in Christ is necessary; for there is no saving quality in law. The law condemns, but it cannot pardon the transgressor. The sinner must depend on the merits of the blood of Christ. "Let him take hold of my strength," says our merciful Redeemer, "that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." Our Lord declared that he would love most to whom most was forgiven; and he only will feel that he needs forgiveness who sees himself as he is, defiled by sin, a transgressor of God's holy law. He who has the fullest conviction of the sacred claims of the law, will most clearly see the enormity of his offenses, and will feel that he is indeed forgiven much.

We are nearing the close of time; and a broader, clearer light than others have been favored with shines upon us. The mists are rolling away, and if we are humble students of the divine word, its truths will be clearly revealed to us. But Satan and his host are warring against the commandments of God as never before. Every attempt is made to blind men's eyes to the truth. If it were possible, even the elect would be deceived. This is no common deception. Satan's great success consists in keeping men in ignorance of his devices; for then, through his subtlety, he can confuse the minds of the unwary, and, as it were, lead them blindfolded. He is close on the track of all who make profession of Bible truth. He is constantly planning their overthrow, and his temptations are soliciting them on every hand.

If there is one in a position to have a controlling influence over others, Satan works in a masterly manner to confuse that man's mind, and make right appear wrong, and wrong right. His suggestions are always designed to lessen the importance of God's requirements, and to set the mind at rest while the daily walk is contrary to the divine law, until finally the victim of his delusions flatters himself that he is walking with God, while he is all the time going contrary to his law.

Such persons think they have faith; but it is presumption. The great adversary has woven a snare for their feet; and when once they become entangled, he has no lack of agencies to involve them still

more deeply in his toils. Thus the deception grows stronger and stronger until souls are involved in irretrievable ruin.

As Satan, the god of this world, tempted Christ in the wilderness, so he will tempt every son and daughter of Adam. Our faith will be proved, our motives and principles will be tested; and if we have not a daily, living experience in the truth, and a union with Christ, we shall be swept away from our steadfastness into the error of the wicked.

If we could always remember that Satan comes to us in disguise, his motives concealed, and he himself clad in garments of light, we would be on our guard, and would not fall a prey to his devices. A defense has been furnished us. Says the apostle: "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

This is a safe armor, but it is not safer than we need; for the apostle continues: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," We should study the nature, character, and extent of this spiritual wickedness in high places, lest we become the dupes of the powers of darkness. But how difficult it is to awaken minds to realize the continual activity and great earnestness of our wily foe, notwithstanding the warnings and cautions of the Bible, and the experience of many who have been overthrown by his subtlety. The testimony loses its force; the warning passes out of the mind. Men cease to watch and pray; they do not solicit the aid of holy angels, who would lift up for them a standard against the enemy.

When this earth's history shall close, there will be only two divisions,—the righteous and the wicked. Every man, woman, and child will be found in one of these two armies. Jesus will be the leader of the righteous, and Satan of the opposing hosts. The angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, are rebels against the law of God, and enemies to all who love and obey his commandments; and all who are breaking, and teaching others to break, the law of God, the foundation of his government in Heaven and on earth, are co-operating with these fallen angels in their work, and are marshaled under the same chief, who directs their operations in opposition to the government of God. These will seek to strengthen their forces by gathering as many as possible into their ranks; and they will annoy and harass, falsify and misrepresent, all whom they cannot influence to join them in their work.

When Christ was upon the earth, there were some who bitterly opposed him. They did not like his teaching; his holy life was a rebuke to them. The apostles had the same spirit of opposition to meet. Spies were upon the track of these early preachers of righteousness, who caught up every word where there was the least chance to wrest the meaning. Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, was an especial object of wrath. His work and its results were falsely stated. His enemies sought to excite the malice of both Jews and Gentiles; and had it not been for the care of God, through the ministration of holy angels, his life would have been sacrificed long before it was, and his work cut short.

God has a people in the world now, whom he has set for the defense of his law; and we need not be surprised, or in any way discouraged, if we have to meet the same spirit of enmity. Christ said to the religious teachers in his day: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Why was this woe pronounced upon them? Was it because they kept the law of God?—No; "For ye shut up the

kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." There are just such teachers now. They will not obey the plainest requirements of the word of God; and after they have turned from the light themselves, they use all their influence to lead others to reject it also. They will not enter the path of obedience, and they are very earnest to hedge up the way that others may not enter.

They pervert the Scriptures, even teaching that it is a denial of Christ to keep the moral law. Error is cherished as precious light, while plain truth, so clear and pointed in the word of God, marking out the course they should pursue, is regarded as an idle tale. They may be professedly serving Christ; but they have changed masters, and are wholly on the enemy's side. The reason is given by the apostle, when he says: "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." These false teachers manifest the same spirit toward those who keep the commandments of God that the scribes and Pharisees manifested toward Christ.

Some who are unacquainted with the Bible think that what the ministers tell them must be true. They do not, like the noble Bereans, search the Scriptures for themselves; but they accept the statements of those who have studied the word of God, not to learn the truth, but to sustain false doctrines, to justify their own theories. Many times these false theories are a jumble of inconsistencies; and if men would use their reason, and take the Bible as it reads, they would see the absurdity of their positions. The plain "Thus saith the Lord," would dispel their errors, as the mist is dispelled by the glories of the rising sun.

As Protestants, the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the foundation of our faith; but by many "the Fathers" are quoted as authority. They do not come as humble learners in the school of Christ, saying, "Lord, what I know not, teach me. 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.'"

Says the wise man: "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." Men may close their eyes to the plainest truths in the word of God, they may trample his law under their feet; but the law, instituted in the beginning, proclaimed from Sinai, and engraven on tables of stone, will judge them in the last day.

Basel, Switzerland.

August 12, 1886

The Teacher's Responsibility

In an age like ours, in which iniquity abounds, and God's character and his law are alike regarded with indifference, and even contempt, special pains should be taken to teach the youth to study and to reverence and obey the divine will as revealed to man. Through the medium of the press, knowledge of every kind is placed within the reach of all; and yet how large a proportion in every community are depraved in morals, and superficial in mental attainments. This is because the words of God to men, which should receive our first attention, are neglected for the utterances of human wisdom. The fear of the Lord is fading from the minds of the youth because of their neglect of Bible

study. If all, both old and young, would become Bible readers and students, we should see a different state of things.

In our schools and colleges, moral and religious influences should not be put in the background. The study of the sciences, taken alone, cannot give students the discipline they need. A broader foundation must be laid. The student must receive such discipline as will afford the fullest and noblest development of character. An education is needed that will demand from teachers and principal such thought and effort as mere instruction in the sciences does not require.

The young should every day be impressed with a sense of their obligation to God. His law is continually violated, even by the children of religious parents. As a general thing the youth have but very little moral strength, because their education in this direction has been neglected; and a knowledge of the character of God, and of our obligations to him should not be regarded as of minor importance.

Morality and religion should receive special attention in our educational institutions; for the religion of the Bible is the only safeguard of the young. This is the education that is so much needed at the present time.

If morality and religion are to live in a school, it must be through a knowledge of God's word. As an educating power, the Bible is without a rival. This sacred word is the will of God revealed to men, and its study will ennoble every thought, feeling, and aspiration. Here we learn what God requires of the creatures formed in his image. Here we learn how to improve the present life so as to secure the future, immortal life. Here we may hold communion with patriarchs and prophets, and listen to the voice of the Eternal as he speaks with men. Here we may behold the Majesty of the Heavens, as he humbles himself to become our substitute and surety, to cope single-handed with the powers of darkness, and to gain the victory in our behalf. A reverent contemplation of such themes as these, cannot fail to soften, purify, and ennoble the heart, and, at the same time, to inspire the mind with new strength and vigor. No other book can satisfy the questionings of the mind and the cravings of the heart.

A clear conception of what God is, and what he requires us to be, will give us humble views of self. He who studies the sacred word until he is imbued with its sacred spirit, will learn that human intellect is not omnipotent; that without the help that none but God can give, human strength and wisdom are but weakness and ignorance.

Connected with God, every teacher will exert an influence to lead his pupils to study God's word and to obey his law. He will direct their minds to the contemplation of eternal interests, opening before them vast fields of thought, grand and ennobling themes, which the most vigorous intellect may put forth all its powers to grasp, and yet feel that there is an infinity beyond. How important it is, then, that teachers be persons capable of exerting a right influence; that they be men and women of religious experience, daily receiving divine light to impart to their pupils.

The object of our institutions of learning is to educate and train young men and women for lives of usefulness. This can only be accomplished by ever keeping before them their high and holy calling, the exalted claims which God has upon them, and by properly cultivating the mind and talents to meet the high standard of God's word. We cannot over-estimate the importance of having a right

class of educators. They should be men and women of irreproachable morals, who have stability of character, a clear conception of duty, and a depth of experience which will enable them to guide, counsel, and properly educate the youth under their care.

Everything connected with the work and influence of educators of youth is of importance. If they are lax in morals, if they are trifling in their deportment, if they are wanting in devotion, if they are not spiritual, the same want will be seen in the students under their care. If teachers bear the stamp of a pampered, petted life, if their parents have neglected the work of properly bringing them up, and educating them to meet the great moral standard of God's law, to bow in obedience to its claims, they will not be inclined to see the necessity of strict discipline in our schools, of yielding obedience to the ruler themselves, and thus giving a worthy example to their students. Those who have never been taught to yield to discipline, to be subordinate to authority, who have been left to their own head, their own master, will not be the ones to wisely discipline others, to preserve order in the school-room, and require obedience to the laws of the school. If this work is left to them, any amount of disorder and irregularity will be allowed to come in and demoralize the school.

Very much is at stake. Teachers should rule with all wisdom, observing invariably the laws of Christian politeness, courtesy, and kindness, at the same time possessing a firmness and dignity that will not be trampled upon. Educators should be men and women who value the souls of those placed under their charge; they are all to be treated as younger members of the Lord's family, as the purchase of the blood of Christ, his property. Teachers should not manifest preferences, nor have pets; but they should treat all with equity, without partiality. Life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel, and for every one who believes in Christ there is an immortal life in the future world. This fact gives dignity to every human being. All the instruction and every act of the teacher should be with the view of so educating the pupils under his charge as to not disappoint the expectations of Christ in these youth; for they are the purchase of his blood.

Teachers should ever bear in mind that in their lives, and characters, they should represent Christ's character, exemplifying his meekness, lowliness, and purity. They should always have one aim, one object in life,—the perfection of character according to the Divine Model, and the purpose to so teach, so educate, so labor, that they will, through the Mighty Helper, present every youth under their charge perfect in Christ Jesus. They may fail in some instances; for not all the youth will be subordinate. Some have so long chosen their own wills, that they will act without reference to God or man, they will not bring their lives within the line of law or duty. Self, undisciplined, rough, coarse and untamable, will seek for the mastery; and when the will is crossed they will lose self-control, and take the bit in their own mouth. Persuasion, counsel, prayers, entreaties are of no account with them. They are as unreasonable as the inebriate, and Satan controls their thoughts and their actions. The demon within them is enraged and they are as verily under his control as the person whose reason is dethroned by the intoxicating glass.

When these persons come to a better state of mind, they will consider how much they have lost. In the place of bruising Satan under their feet, they have opened the door of their lips and permitted him to control their tongues; they have opened the door of their minds and permitted him to take possession of them; they opened the door of their hearts and permitted him to occupy the highest seat in the soul temple. After these inglorious defeats, they will ever carry the wounds and scars with them. Even if Christ has mercy upon them, and pardons their sins, the scars remain; they were

conquered instead of conquering. In such conflicts with the enemy they are taken captives by Satan at his will.

Many times parents are justly censurable for the failures of their children. They have neglected their duty, and the teacher should not be expected to do the parent's work. The parents have the first and most favorable opportunity to control and train their children, when the spirit is teachable, and the mind and heart easily impressed. But sometimes they neglect these golden opportunities, and permit their children to follow their own will until they become hardened in an evil course; and then they send these undisciplined children to school, to receive the training which should have been given them at home. If the teachers succeed in reforming these wayward youth, they receive but little credit; but if the youth choose the society of the evil-disposed, and go on from bad to worse, the teachers are censured, and the school is denounced.

In our conversation one with another, our influence is constantly at work. Every one is dependent upon others, and there are obligations resting upon all,—something every day to receive, something to impart. By the human associations around us we are bound to one another, as by cords, in one great web of mutual obligations. These attachments are firm and strong and genuine. We may ignore or abuse them, but we cannot possibly break one of them. We may be disloyal to every one of them, but they exist all the same, and our accountability and responsibility are the same. Every teacher should impress these principles upon all who are under his influence. If the teacher is a Christian, he will reveal these principles in his every-day life. As one connected with God, as a representative of Jesus Christ, he will not require of the student that which he does not exemplify in his own life,—purity, impartiality, nobility of soul. He may then, as Christ's servant, teach all under his charge what is really a Christian life.

August 19, 1886

Have You Chosen Christ?

Just before his death, Joshua called upon the children of Israel to decide whether or not they would be loyal to the God of Heaven. Said he, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." The decision made by Israel that day is one that all are called upon to make; for there are still rival powers in the world. Let us consider the characters of these powers that are claiming the homage of men.

Christ, the loved commander of the hosts of Heaven, left the world of glory and the honor that he had with the Father, and came to this earth to live as a man among men, that he might rescue man from the pit of destruction into which he had fallen. He might have appeared with all the display of royalty, attended by ten thousand times ten thousand of his ministering angels; but he did not do this. He humbled himself, not only to take our nature, but to take upon him the form of a servant, to become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He came to do good, to help the needy and the distressed; to heal the sick; to speak peace to the suffering; to deliver those whom Satan was afflicting; to bring redemption to all who would accept the Heaven-sent blessing. Such is the character of Him who says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

There is another who claims to be the prince of this world; and very few have any idea of his activity and subtlety. He seeks the destruction of the children of men; the ruin of souls is his delight and his only employment. But his step is noiseless, his movements stealthy, and his batteries masked. He

has so concealed himself from view that many can hardly believe that he exists, much less can they be convinced of his amazing malignity, activity, and power. If he were to show himself openly in his true character, he would arouse the Christian's dormant energies, and send him to God in prayer.

Many have forgotten the past record of our old adversary; soon they will cease to regard him as an enemy at all, but will look upon him as a friend, one who is doing a good work. Under his specious, bewitching influence they will obey the worst impulses of the human heart, and yet believe that God is leading them. Could their eyes be opened to distinguish their captain, they would see that they are not serving God, but the enemy of all righteousness. They would see that the independence of which they boast is one of the heaviest fetters that Satan can rivet on unbalanced minds.

When Christ was in the world, Satan was constantly working to turn men's minds from him; and he succeeded to a great degree, because the natural heart chooses to do evil rather than good. There was an unceasing battle between Satan and his angels, and Christ and his angels. Our Saviour himself encountered this wily foe in the wilderness of temptation. During the forty days and nights of Christ's long fast, Satan, concealing his real character, sought by every means which he could devise, to overcome the Saviour of the world. He even disguised himself as an angel of light, a Heaven-sent friend, and offered to show him an easier way to gain his object than the path of trial and suffering upon which he had entered. But Jesus repulsed the enemy, and forced him to depart, a conquered foe.

And now Satan comes with his temptations to the children of men, who are often ignorant of his devices, and here he has better success. One of his most successful devices is to keep men in ignorance of his devices; for they will not be on their guard against an enemy of whose existence they are ignorant. It is not very long since I was asked, "Do you believe in a personal devil?" "I do," was the reply. "Well," rejoined the questioner, "I do not believe that there is any such being; our evil thoughts and impulses are all the devil we know anything about!" "But," I asked, "who suggests these thoughts? Whence do they originate, if not from Satan?"

Christian friends, do not be deceived by the fast-spreading delusion that Satan has no existence. Just as surely as we have a personal Saviour, we have also a personal adversary, cruel and cunning, who ever watches our steps, and plots to lead us astray. Wherever the opinion is entertained that he does not exist, there he is most busy. When we least suspect his presence, he is gaining advantage over us. I feel alarmed as I see so many yielding to his power while they know it not. Did they but see their danger, they would flee to Christ, the sinner's refuge. They would resist the wiles of the adversary. They would pray much for wisdom, grace, and strength, and would seek most earnestly to overcome every evil trait of character. They would walk in the path that Jesus trod, and shun that which Satan urges them to choose.

The tempter often whispers that the Christian life is one of exaction, of rigorous duties; that it is hard to be on the watch continually, and there is no need of being so particular. It was thus that he deceived and overthrew Eve in Eden, telling her that God's commands were arbitrary and unjust, given to prevent man from becoming free and exalted, like himself. His object is the same now that it was then. He desires to deceive and ruin us.

It is true that our Saviour represents his service as a yoke, and the Christian life as one of burden-bearing; yet contrasting these with the cruel power of Satan and the burdens imposed by sin, he

exclaims, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." If we try to meet the responsibilities of the Christian life and to perform its duties without Jesus as a helper, the yoke is galling, and the burden intolerably heavy. But it is not necessary that we should do this. We should study the life of Christ, cherish his spirit, and copy his example; then we shall be like him, and his peace will rule in our hearts. And the more we become like him, the more clearly shall we discern the temptations of Satan, and the more successfully resist his power.

Jesus invites us: "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." True happiness is to be found, not in self-indulgence and self-pleasing, but in learning of Christ, taking his yoke, and bearing his burden. Those who trust to their own wisdom and follow their own ways, go complaining at every step, because the burden which selfishness imposes upon them is so heavy and its yoke so galling. Selfishness cannot exist in a heart where Christ dwells; if cherished, it will crowd out everything else. It will lead persons to follow inclination rather than duty, to make self the subject of thought, and to gratify and indulge themselves, instead of seeking to be a blessing to others. Their wants, their pleasures, must come before everything else. In all this they exemplify the spirit of Satan. By their words and deeds they represent his character, instead of the character of Christ.

All this might be changed; for the grace of Christ is sufficient, if they would come to him. If they would lay off their self-imposed burden, renounce their allegiance to Satan, and take the burden which Jesus gives them, and let his yoke bind them to him in willing service, hope and joy would spring up in their hearts.

Jesus loves the purchase of his blood, and he longs to see them possess the peace which he alone can impart. He bids them learn of him meekness and lowliness of heart. This precious grace is rarely seen at the present day, even in those who profess to be Christians. Their own ways seem right in their eyes. In accepting the name of Christ, they do not accept his character, or submit to wear his yoke; therefore they know nothing of the joy and peace to be found in his service.

If we have become the disciples of Christ, we shall be learning of him—every day learning how to overcome some unlovely trait of character, every day copying his example, and coming a little nearer the pattern. If we are ever to inherit those mansions that he has gone to prepare for us, we must here be forming characters in accordance with our high destiny,—characters that will not mar the bliss of Heaven.

We now have the privilege of deciding whether we will be numbered with the servants of Christ or the servants of Satan; and every day we show by our conduct whose service we have chosen. If we are wise, we shall decide as did Joshua: "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

August 26, 1886

Right Methods in Education

There is at the present time an unparalleled interest in the subject of education. The wide diffusion of knowledge through the agency of the press, placing the means of self-culture within the reach of all, has awakened a general desire for mental improvement. But while we gratefully acknowledge our increased educational facilities, we should not ignore the defects in our present school systems. In many cases, physical as well as moral training has been neglected in the too eager desire to secure

intellectual culture; and the youth have left school with morals debased and physical powers enfeebled, with no knowledge of practical life, and little strength to perform its duties.

As these evils have come under my observation, the inquiry has arisen, Must our sons and daughters become moral and physical weaklings, in order to have the advantages afforded by an education in our schools? This should not be; and it need not be if teachers and students will but be true to the laws of nature, which are also the laws of God. A right education will make the youth strong, well-balanced men and women, by developing and calling into active exercise all the powers of mind and body. It will make them a blessing to the world; for it will enable them to attain a true and noble manhood and womanhood.

Many times students are so anxious to complete their education that they are not thorough in anything that they undertake. They do not understand the true object of education, and so fail to take such a course as to secure this object. They apply themselves to the study of mathematics or the languages, while they neglect a study far more essential to happiness and success in life. Many who can explore the depths of the earth with the geologist, or traverse the heavens with the astronomer, take not the slightest interest in their own bodies. Others can correctly describe every organ of the body, and tell how many bones there are in the human frame, and yet they are as ignorant of the laws of health, and the cure of disease, as though life were controlled by blind fate, instead of definite and unvarying law.

Sound health lies at the very foundation of the student's success. Without it, he can never see the fruition of his ambitions and his hopes. Hence a knowledge of the laws by which health is secured and preserved is of preeminent importance. The human body may be compared to nicely adjusted machinery, which needs care to keep it in running order. One part should not be subjected to constant wear and pressure, while another part is rusting from inaction. While the mind is taxed, the muscles also should have their proportion of exercise. Every young person should learn how to regulate his dietetic habits,—what to eat, when to eat, and how to eat. He should also learn how many hours may be spent in study, and how much time should be given to physical exercise.

It is a duty which every student owes to himself, to society, and to God, to properly regulate his habits of eating, sleeping, study, and exercise; but there are few who have the moral courage and the self-control to act from principle. The student who studies hard, sleeps and exercises little, and eats irregularly of an improper or inferior quality of food, is obtaining mental discipline at the expense of health and morals, of spirituality, and, it may be, of life itself.

Young persons are naturally active, and if they find no legitimate scope for their pent-up energies after the confinement of the schoolroom, they become restless and impatient of control; they are thus led to engage in the rude, unmanly sports that disgrace so many schools and colleges, and even to plunge into scenes of dissipation. And many who leave their homes innocent, are corrupted by their associations at school. Much could be done to obviate these evils, if every institution of learning would make provision for manual labor on the part of the students,—for actual practice in agriculture and the mechanic arts. Competent teachers should be provided to instruct the youth in various industrial pursuits, as well as in their studies in the school room. While a part of each day is devoted to mental improvement and physical labor, devotional exercises and the study of the Scriptures should not be overlooked.

Students trained in this manner would have habits of self-reliance, firmness, and perseverance, and would be prepared to engage successfully in the practical duties of life. They would have courage and determination to surmount obstacles, and moral stamina to resist evil influences.

If young persons can have but one set of faculties disciplined, which is most important, the study of the sciences, with the disadvantages to health and morals under which such knowledge is usually obtained, or a thorough training in practical duties, with sound morals and good physical development? In most cases both may be secured if parents will take a little pains; but if both cannot be had, we would unhesitatingly decide in favor of the latter.

Where useful labor is combined with study, there is no need of gymnastic exercises; and much more benefit is derived from work performed in the open air than from indoor exercise. The farmer and the mechanic each have physical exercise; yet the farmer is much the healthier of the two, for nothing short of the invigorating air and sunshine will fully meet the wants of the system. The farmer finds in his labor all the movements that were ever practiced in the gymnasium. And his movement room is the open fields; the canopy of heaven is its roof, and the solid earth its floor. A farmer who is temperate in all his habits usually enjoys good health. His work is pleasant; and his vigorous exercise causes full, deep, and strong inspirations and exhalations, which expand the lungs and purify the blood, sending the warm current of life bounding through arteries and veins.

In what contrast to the habits of the active farmer are those of the student who neglects physical exercise. The student sits day after day in a close room, bending over his desk or table, his chest contracted, his lungs crowded. His brain is taxed to the utmost, while his body is inactive. He cannot take full, deep inspirations; his blood moves sluggishly; his feet are cold, his head hot. How can such a person have health? It is not hard study that is destroying the health of students, so much as it is their disregard of nature's laws. Let them take regular exercise that will cause them to breathe deep and full, and they will soon feel that they have a new hold on life.

Young ladies, too, should be taught how to work. Experienced teachers should be employed to instruct them in the mysteries of the kitchen. A knowledge of domestic duties is beyond price to every woman. There are families without number whose happiness is wrecked by the inefficiency of the wife and mother. It is not so important that girls learn painting, fancy work, music, or even the more solid branches of study, as it is that they learn to cut, make, and mend their own clothing, and how to prepare palatable and wholesome food. That was a wise father, who, when asked what he intended to do with his daughters, replied, "I intend to apprentice them to their excellent mother, that they may learn the art of improving time, and be fitted to become wives and mothers, heads of families, and useful members of society."

Every young woman should be so educated that if called to fill the position of wife and mother, she may preside as a queen in her own domain. She should be fully competent to guide and instruct her children, and to direct her household affairs. It is her duty to understand the mechanism of the human body and the principles of hygiene, the matters of diet and dress, labor and recreation, and countless other things that intimately concern the well-being of her household. Many ladies, accounted well-educated, having graduated with honors at some institution of learning, are shamefully ignorant of the practical duties of life. They are destitute of the qualifications necessary for the proper regulation of the family, and hence essential to its happiness and well-being. They

may talk of woman's rights and her elevated sphere; yet they themselves fall far below the true sphere of woman.

Ignorance of useful employment is contrary to the design of God in the creation of man, and is by no means an essential characteristic of the true gentleman or lady. Idleness is sin, and ignorance of common duties is the result of folly,—a folly which the after-life will give ample occasion to bitterly regret.

“Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,” will be the rule of life with students who desire to serve and honor God. Such students will preserve their integrity in the face of temptation; they will come from school with well-developed intellects, and with health of body and soul, and the world will be the better for their influence and labors.

September 2, 1886

The Love of Gain

Paul writes to the Philippians: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” He admonishes his Hebrew brethren: “Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” To the Corinthians he writes: “Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.” These exhortations are needed; for naturally “all seek their own and not the things which are Jesus Christ's” or their neighbors’.

In the end it does not profit any one to be selfish; for God marks all such acts, and he will render to every man according to his works. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” “He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.”

Our mission in this world is to live for the good of others. And it is little things which test the character. It is the unpretending acts of daily self-denial, performed heartily and cheerfully, that God smiles upon. We should cherish love and forbearance, and should be a blessing to others by our forgetfulness of self and our care for their welfare.

Hospitality should be practiced. We should entertain those who need our care, and the benefit of our society and our homes, even though it be at some inconvenience. Some one must bear these necessary burdens; but many close their eyes to the good which they have opportunity to do for others, and by their neglect they lose the blessing which they might obtain, and those who have willing hearts, and who cheerfully make the cases of the needy their own, are burdened. The Lord has work enough to employ all his followers. All can show forth his glory if they will, but the majority refuse to make the necessary sacrifice. They profess faith, but have not works; and their faith is dead, being alone. They shun responsibilities and burdens, and will be rewarded as their works have been.

The work of the Lord is a great work, and wise men are needed to engage in it. God calls for earnest, unselfish, disinterested laborers, who will keep up the various branches of the work. Sacrifice, self-denial, toil, and disinterested benevolence characterized the life of Christ, who is our example in all things. He laid aside his glory, his high command, his honor, and his riches, and humbled himself to our necessities. The work and character of a true laborer will be in accordance with the life of Christ.

We cannot equal the example, but we should copy it. Love for souls for whom our Lord made this great sacrifice should stimulate his people to self-denying effort for their salvation. When this spirit actuates ministers and people, their labors will be fruitful; for the power of God will be seen upon them in the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit.

God would have his people arouse, and summon strength and courage to surmount obstacles. He would have them, if need be, labor, as did the apostle Paul, in weariness, in painfulness, in watching, forgetting infirmities in the deep interest felt in souls for whom Christ died. Many could do a good work in his cause if they were consecrated, having no selfish interests of their own to serve.

All are required to have an unselfish interest in the work of God, to labor for its advancement, and to give of their means for its support. Anciently the covetousness of some led them to make stinted offerings, and to withhold that which the Lord required. This was recorded against them in Heaven, and they were cursed in their harvests and their flocks just in proportion as they had withheld from the cause of God. Some were visited with affliction in their families. God would not accept a stinted offering nor one that was lame. It must be without blemish, the best of their flocks, and the best fruits of their fields. And it must be a free-will offering, if they would have the blessing of the Lord rest upon their families and their possessions.

Hearts will be tested and proved by the calls for means. This is a constant, living test, and one that it will be hard for the naturally selfish and covetous to bear. It is a test that enables each one to understand his own heart, to see whether the love of the truth or the love of the world predominates.

When the young man came to Jesus, and asked him what he should do to gain eternal life, Jesus told him to keep the commandments. The young man declared that he had done this from his youth, and Jesus said to him: "One thing thou lackest. Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me." The result was, that the young man went away sorrowful; "for he had great possessions." There are many like this young man. They desire eternal life; but the true spirit of sacrifice, which alone is acceptable to God, they do not possess. They love the world better than they love the truth. They are not being fitted up and made ready for the kingdom of God; and because of their covetousness, the prospering hand of God will not be with them to bless their undertakings.

God is acquainted with every heart. Every selfish motive is known to him; and he suffers circumstances to arise to try the hearts of his professed people, to prove them, and develop character. The lives of the professed people of God should testify that they are sincere. Unless their faith is shown by their works, it is dead; and nothing but a living faith will save them in the great day of final accounts.

It is time for those who have large possessions to begin to work fast. They should not only lay by them in store as God is now prospering them, but as he has prospered them. In the days of the apostles, arrangements were made that all should share equally in the burdens of the church, according to their several abilities. They did not think it consistent that some should be eased and others burdened.

Those who, like Judas, have set their hearts on their earthly treasure, will complain as he did when calls are made for the cause of God. His heart coveted the costly ointment poured upon Jesus, and he sought to hide his selfishness under the disguise of a pious, conscientious regard for the poor. "Why," he asked, "was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" He wished that he had the ointment in his possession; it would not thus be lavished upon the Saviour. He would sell it for money, and apply it to his own use.

As Judas brought up the poor as an excuse, so professed Christians whose hearts are covetous will seek to hide their selfishness under a pretended conscientiousness. They quote: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them." And they urge that these texts teach that they must be secret in their works of charity. They seem to have a conscientious desire to follow the Bible plan exactly, just as they understand it; but they entirely ignore the plain texts that enjoin liberal giving. The left hand does not know what the right hand does; for the right hand does nothing worthy of the notice of the left hand.

These persons do very little excusing themselves because they do not know how to give. But Jesus explained the matter so that there need be no misapprehension. "When thou doest thine alms," he says, "do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward." They gave to be regarded noble and generous by men. They received the praise they sought, and this was all the reward they would have. This lesson was designed to rebuke those who wished to receive glory of men. They gave large sums with this object in view, and the means given was often obtained by oppressing the hireling in his wages, and grinding the face of the poor.

Scripture testimony will harmonize when it is rightly understood. And our Saviour says: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." "By their fruits ye shall know them." The good works of the children of God are the most effectual preaching that the unbeliever has. He thinks that there must be a strong motive to actuate the Christian to deny self, and use his means to benefit his fellowmen, and advance the cause of God. It is unlike the spirit of the world. Such fruits testify to the genuineness of Christianity.

"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

September 9, 1886

Woman in the Home

The principle inculcated by the injunction, "Be ye kindly affectioned one to another," lies at the very foundation of domestic happiness. Christian courtesy should reign in every household. It is cheap, but it has power to soften natures which would grow hard and rough without it. The cultivation of a uniform courtesy, a willingness to do by others as we would like them to do by us, would banish half the ills of life. The wife and mother may bind the hearts of her husband and children to her own by the strong chords of love, if in her intercourse with them she will manifest unvarying love in gentle words and courteous deportment.

Marked diversities of disposition and character frequently exist in the same family; for it is in the order of God that persons of varied temperament should associate together. When this is the case, each member of the household should sacredly regard the feelings, and respect the rights of the others. By this means mutual consideration and forbearance will be cultivated, prejudices will be softened, and rough points of character smoothed. Harmony may be secured, and the blending of the varied temperaments may be a benefit to each. Christian courtesy is the golden clasp uniting the members of the family in bonds of love that become closer and stronger every day.

In many cases homes are made unhappy by the useless repining of the wife and mother, who turns with distaste from the simple, homely tasks of her domestic life. She looks upon her cares and duties as hardships, and the ministrations which might be made pleasant and interesting become the merest drudgery.

Many a woman goes through the routine of her daily duties with fidelity and exactness, while she is all the time comparing her lot with that of others whom she considers more favored, and is cherishing unsanctified longings for an easier position, where she will be free from the petty cares and exactions that vex her spirit. She little dreams that in that widely different sphere to which she aspires, trials fully as vexatious, though perhaps of a different nature, would certainly beset her. And while she is fruitlessly yearning for a different life, she is, by her sinful discontent, casting from her the blessings which a kind Providence has already granted.

Others become so occupied with their household cares that they forget the little courtesies which make life pleasant to their husbands and children. While their time and energies are absorbed in the preparation of something to eat or to wear, their husbands and sons come in and go out as strangers. And very many, finding nothing attractive at home, perhaps being greeted with continual scolding and murmuring, seek comfort and amusement in the dram-shop, or in other forbidden places.

The true wife and mother will pursue an entirely different course. She will perform her duties with dignity and cheerfulness, not considering it degrading to do with her own hands whatever it is necessary to do in a well-ordered household.

In order to be a good wife, it is not necessary that woman's nature should be utterly merged in that of her husband. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, an experience differing essentially from theirs. It is not the design of our Creator that our individuality should be lost in another's; he would have us possess our own characters, softened and sanctified by his sweet grace. He would hear our words fresh from our own hearts. He would have our yearning desires and earnest cries ascend to him marked by our own individuality. All do not have the same exercises of mind, and God calls for no second-hand experience. Our compassionate Redeemer reaches his helping hand to us just where we are.

If woman looks to God for strength and comfort, and in his fear seeks to perform her daily duties, she will win the respect and confidence of her husband, and see her children coming to maturity honorable men and women, having moral stamina to do right. But mothers who neglect present opportunities, and let their duties and burdens fall upon others, will find that their responsibility remains the same, and they will reap in bitterness what they have sown in carelessness and neglect.

There is no chance work in this life; the harvest will be determined by the character of the seed sown.

Many who do well under favorable circumstances seem to undergo a transformation of character when trials and adversity come; they deteriorate in proportion to their troubles. God never designed that we should thus be the sport of circumstances. We are not responsible for circumstances over which we have no control, and it is useless to deny that these often affect our life-work; but we sin when we permit circumstances to subvert principle, when we are unfaithful to our high trust, and neglect known duty.

The first and most urgent duty which the mother owes to her Creator is to train for him the children that he has given her. Infant children are a mirror for the mother in which she may see reflected her own habits and deportment. How careful, then, should be her language and behavior in the presence of these little learners. Whatever traits of character she wishes to see developed in them, she must cultivate in herself.

When the mother has gained the confidence of her children, and taught them to love and obey her, she has given them the first lesson in the Christian life. They must love and trust and obey their Saviour, as they love and trust and obey their parents. The love which in faithful care and right training the parent manifests for the child, faintly mirrors the love of Jesus for his faithful people.

Mothers, awake to the fact that your influence and example are affecting the character and destiny of your children; and in view of your responsibility, develop a well-balanced mind, and a pure character, reflecting only the true, the good, and the beautiful. Your compassionate Redeemer is watching you with love and sympathy, ready to hear your prayers, and to render you the assistance which you need. He knows the burdens of every mother's heart, and is her best friend in every emergency. His everlasting arms support the God-fearing, faithful mother. When upon earth, he had a mother that struggled with poverty, having many anxious cares and perplexities, and he sympathizes with every Christian mother in her cares and anxieties. That Saviour who took a long journey for the purpose of relieving the anxious heart of a woman whose daughter was possessed by an evil spirit, will hear the mother's prayers, and will bless her children.

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 wept tears of sympathy at the grave of Lazarus, and gave back to Martha and Mary their buried brother; who pardoned Mary Magdalene; who remembered his mother when he was hanging in agony upon the cross; who appeared to the weeping women, and made them his messengers to spread the first glad tidings of a risen Saviour,—he is woman's best friend today, and is ready to aid her in all the relations of life.

Our Saviour, who understands our heart-struggles, and knows the weakness of our natures, pities our infirmities, forgives our errors, and bestows upon us the graces which we earnestly desire. Joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, and charity are the elements of the Christian character. These precious graces are the fruit of the Spirit, and the Christian's crown and shield. Where these graces reign in the home, the sons are "as plants grown up in their youth," and the daughters "as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace." These heavenly attainments are not dependent upon circumstances, nor the will or imperfect judgment of man. Nothing can give more

perfect contentment and satisfaction than the cultivation of a Christian character; the most exalted aspirations can aim at nothing higher.

September 16, 1886

Women as Christian Laborers

He who died to redeem man from death, loves with a divine love; and he says to his followers: "This is my commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you." Christ showed his love for the fallen race by his actions. The true child of God will be Christlike; and as he grows in the knowledge of the truth, and is sanctified through the truth, he will be more and more like Christ, and more desirous to save souls, the purchase of his blood.

Some can do more than others; but all can do something. Women should not feel that they are excused because of their domestic cares. They should become intelligent as to how they can work most successfully and methodically in bringing souls to Christ. If all would realize the importance of doing to the utmost of their ability in the work of God, having a deep love for souls, feeling the burden of the work upon them, hundreds would be engaged as active workers who have hitherto been dull and uninterested, accomplishing nothing, or at most but very little.

In many cases the rubbish of the world has clogged the channels of the soul. Selfishness controls the mind and warps the character. Were the life hid with Christ in God, his service would be no drudgery. If the whole heart were consecrated to God, all would find something to do, and would covet a part in the work. They would sow beside all waters, praying and believing that the fruit would appear. The practical, God-fearing workers will be growing upward, praying in faith for grace and heavenly wisdom that they may do the work devolving upon them with cheerfulness and a willing mind. They will seek the divine rays of light that they may brighten the paths of others.

Those who are co-laborers with God will have no disposition to engage in the various expedients for amusement; they will not be seeking after happiness and enjoyment. In taking up their work in the fear of God, and doing service to the Master, they will secure the most substantial happiness. Connected with Jesus Christ, they will be wise unto salvation. They will be fruit-bearing trees. They will develop a blameless life, a beautiful character. The great work of redemption will be their first consideration. Eating and drinking and dressing, houses and lands, will be secondary matters. The peace of God within will force off the withered or gnarled branches of selfishness, vanity, pride, and indolence. It is faith and practice that make up the Christian's life. We do not meet the standard of Christianity in merely professing Christ and having our names upon the church book. We should be individual workers for Christ. By personal effort we can show that we are connected with him.

Christian women are called for. There is a wide field in which they may do good service for the Master. There are noble women who have had moral courage to decide in favor of the truth from the weight of evidence. They have tact, perception, and good ability, and could make successful Christian workers. There is work neglected or done imperfectly that could be thoroughly accomplished through the help that they are able to give. They could reach a class that ministers cannot reach. There are offices in the church that they could fill acceptably, and many branches of the church work that they could attend to if properly instructed.

Women can do good work in the missionary field, by writing to friends, and learning their true feelings in relation to the cause of God. Very valuable items are brought to light through this means. The workers should not seek for self-exaltation, but to present the truth in its simplicity wherever they shall have an opportunity. The money that has been spent for needless trimmings and useless ornaments should be devoted to the cause of God, and used to bring the light of truth to those who are in the darkness of error. The souls saved through their efforts will be more precious to them than costly and fashionable dress. The white robes and jeweled crown given them by Christ as the reward for their unselfish efforts in the salvation of souls, will be more valuable than needless adornments. The stars in their crowns will shine forever and ever, and will a thousand times repay them for the self-denial and self-sacrifice they have exercised in the cause of God.

Women of firm principle and decided character are needed, women who believe that we are indeed living in the last days, and that we have the last solemn message of warning to be given to the world. They should feel that they are engaged in an important work in spreading the rays of light which Heaven has shed upon them. When the love of God and his truth is an abiding principle, they will let nothing deter them from duty, or discourage them in their work. They will fear God, and will not be diverted from their labors in his cause by the temptation of lucrative situations and attractive prospects. They will preserve their integrity at any cost to themselves. These are the ones who will correctly represent the religion of Christ, whose words will be fitly spoken, like apples of gold in pictures of silver. Such persons can in many ways do a precious work for God. He calls upon them to go out into the harvest field, and help gather in the sheaves.

Intelligent Christian women may use their talents to the very highest account. They can show by their life of self-denial, and by their willingness to work to the best of their ability, that they believe the truth, and are being sanctified through it. Many need a work of this kind to develop the powers they possess. Wives and mothers should in no case neglect their husbands and their children; but they can do much without neglecting home duties, and all have not these responsibilities.

Who can have so deep a love for the souls of men and women for whom Christ died, as those who are partakers of his grace? Who can better represent the religion of Christ than Christian women, women who are earnestly laboring to bring souls to the light of truth? Who else is so well adapted to the work of the Sabbath-school? The true mother is the true teacher of children. If with a heart imbued with the love of Christ, she teaches the children of her class, praying with them and for them, she may see souls converted, and gathered into the fold of Christ. I do not recommend that woman should seek to become a voter or office-holder; but as a missionary, teaching the truth by epistolary correspondence, distributing reading matter, conversing with families and praying with the mother and children, she may do much, and be a blessing.

The Lord of the vineyard is saying to many women who are now doing nothing, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" They may be instruments of righteousness, rendering holy service. It was Mary who first preached a risen Jesus; and the refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth now. If there were twenty women where now there is one who would make the saving of souls their cherished work, we should see many more converted to the truth. Zealous and continued diligence in the cause of God would be wholly successful, and would astonish them with its results. The work must be accomplished through patience and

perseverance, and in this is manifested the real devotion to God. He calls for deeds, and not words only.

The work of God is worthy of our best efforts. In fulfillment of the divine plan, the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. He taught the erring and sinful ones whom he came to save, and wrestled in earnest prayer to his Father in their behalf; and we should engage in the same work. If it was not beneath the dignity of the Son of God, the Creator of worlds, should it be considered too humiliating or too self-sacrificing for his followers?—No, indeed. However aspiring we may be, there is no calling that is higher, holier, and more ennobling than to be a co-laborer with the Son of God.

Often we are so wrapped up in our selfish interests that our hearts are not allowed to take in the needs and wants of humanity; we are lacking in deeds of sympathy and benevolence, in sacred and social ministering to the needy, the oppressed, and the suffering. Women are needed who are not self-important, but gentle in manners and lowly of heart, who will work with the meekness of Christ wherever they can find anything to do for the salvation of souls. All who have been made partakers of the heavenly benefits, should be earnest and anxious that others, who do not have the privileges which they have enjoyed, should have the evidences of the truth presented before them. And they will not merely desire that others should have this benefit, but will see that they do have it, and will do their part toward the accomplishment of this object.

Those who become co-laborers with God will increase in moral and spiritual power, while those who devote their time and energies to serving themselves will dwarf, and wither, and die. Christian women, the youth, the middle-aged, and those of advanced years, may have a part in the work of God for this time; and in engaging in this work as they have opportunity, they will obtain an experience of the highest value to themselves. In forgetfulness of self, they will grow in grace. By training the mind in this direction, they will learn how to bear burdens for Jesus, and will realize the blessedness of the service. And soon the time will come when “they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

October 28, 1886

Talents a Trust from God

We are indebted to God for all the powers of mind that we possess. To each of us he has intrusted talents, and for their proper use he holds us responsible. It is his will that we so educate ourselves as to be able to use these talents in a manner to accomplish the greatest good in the world and to reflect glory to the Giver; and our faculties may be so cultivated, so discreetly directed and controlled, as to accomplish this object.

We are not all constituted alike. We have varied minds; some are strong upon certain points, and very weak upon others. These deficiencies, which are often so very evident, need not and should not exist. If those who have them would take pains to strengthen the weak points in their character by cultivation and exercise, they would soon find these inequalities disappearing. And when all the faculties are in harmonious exercise, the intellect will be clear and strong and the judgment sound.

It is duty to so educate the mind as to bring out all its energies and develop every faculty. If certain faculties are used to the neglect of others, the design of God is not fully carried out in us; for in a

great measure our faculties are mutually dependent, each having a bearing upon all the rest. One set of faculties cannot be effectually used while the others are weak and inactive. If all the attention is given to those faculties that are already strong, while the others are permitted to lie dormant, the development will be strong in one direction, and there will be extremes in the character, because the mental balance has not been preserved. And many minds are dwarfed because all their powers have not been cultivated.

It is agreeable, but not most profitable, to exercise those faculties that are naturally the strongest, to the neglect of those that are weak, and need to be strengthened. We are dependent upon God for the preservation of our faculties, and we have no right to neglect any of the powers that he has given us. There are monomaniacs all over the country. It is frequently the case that many are sane upon every subject but one. Their minds are unbalanced because one organ was specially exercised, while the others were permitted to lie dormant. The one that was in constant use became worn and diseased, and the others were weakened through inaction. God is not glorified when such a course is pursued, and his creatures become wrecked through an injudicious use of the powers that he has given them.

Many are not doing the greatest amount of good of which they are capable, because they exercise their minds in one direction, and neglect to give careful attention to those things for which they think they are not adapted. Faculties that are weak are thus allowed to remain so, because the work that would call them into exercise, and give them strength, is not pleasant. And yet the power to concentrate the mind upon one subject to the exclusion of all others, is well in a degree, if it is not carried so far that the mind cannot act healthfully.

Ministers should be guarded, lest they concentrate their minds and energies upon one subject, to the exclusion of others that may be of equal importance. They are in danger of narrowing down the work of God, and becoming one-idea men. Many times all the strength of their being is concentrated on the subject to which the attention is called for the time, and every other consideration is lost sight of. This one favorite theme is the burden of their thoughts and the subject of their conversation. All the evidence which has a bearing upon that subject is eagerly seized upon and appropriated, and dwelt upon at so great length that minds are wearied in following them.

Those who put the whole strength of their mind into one subject, are greatly deficient on other points. The subject before them enchains their attention, and they are led on and on, and go deeper and deeper into the matter. They become interested and absorbed, and see new light and beauty as they advance. But there are few minds that can follow them, unless they have given the subject the same careful thought. There is danger of such men planting the seed of truth so deep that the tender, precious blade will never find the surface.

Much hard labor is often expended that is not called for, and that will never be appreciated. Time is lost in explaining points which are either self-evident or really unimportant, and which would be taken for granted without proof. But while time should not be spent on unnecessary and trifling arguments, the really vital points should be made as plain and forcible as language and proof can make them.

The most essential points of Bible truth may be made indistinct by giving attention to every minute particular. Some, in their writings, need to be constantly guarded, lest they make blind points that

are plain in themselves, by covering them up with many arguments which will not be of lively interest to the reader. If they linger tediously upon points, giving every particular which suggests itself to the mind, their labor will be nearly lost; for the interest of the reader will not be deep enough to lead him to pursue the subject to its close. Much ground may be covered; but the work upon which so much labor is expended is not calculated to do the greatest amount of good, because it fails to awaken a general interest.

In this age, when pleasing fables are drifting upon the surface and attracting the mind, truth presented in an easy style, backed up by a few strong proofs, is better and more effective than if its advocates were to search extensively, and bring forth an overwhelming array of evidence; for the simple propositions do not then stand so clear and distinct in many minds as before the objections and evidences were brought before them. There are some who take many things for granted, and assertions will go farther with them than long, labored arguments.

This is a busy world. Men and women who engage in the business of life have not time to meditate, nor even to read the word of God thoroughly enough to understand all its important truths. Long, labored arguments will interest but few; for the people read as they run. It is better to keep a reserve of arguments and proof than to pour out a depth of knowledge on a subject that is in itself clear and plain.

Christ's ministry lasted only three years; but a great work was done in that short period. In these days there is also a great work to be done in a short time; and while many are getting ready to do something, souls will perish for the want of light and knowledge.

If men who are engaged in presenting and defending the truth of the Bible, undertake to investigate the statements, and show the fallacy and inconsistency of men who dishonestly turn the truth of God into a lie, Satan will stir up opponents enough to keep their pens constantly employed, while other branches of the truth of God will be left to suffer.

Said Nehemiah, when his enemies sought to entice him from his post of duty: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" We, too, are doing a great work, and we cannot come down. And we need more of the spirit of those men who were engaged in building the walls of Jerusalem. If Satan sees that he can keep men answering the objections of opponents, and thus keep their voices silent, and hinder them from doing the most important work for this time, he rejoices; for his object is accomplished.

The world needs laborers now. From every direction is heard the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us." Our success consists in reaching common minds. Plain, pointed arguments, standing out as mile-posts, will do more toward convincing people than will a large array of arguments which none but investigating minds will have interest to follow. And if the laborers are pure in heart and life, if they use to the glory of God the talents that he has committed to their keeping, they will have God on their side and heavenly angels to work with their efforts.

Basel, Switzerland.

November 4, 1886

Daniel an Example of Faithfulness

When Darius set over the provinces of his kingdom a hundred and twenty princes, and over these, three presidents, to whom the princes were to give account, we read that "Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was found in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." But evil angels, fearing the influence of this good man over the king and in the affairs of the kingdom, stirred up the presidents and princes to envy. These wicked men watched Daniel closely, that they might find some fault in him which they could report to the king; but they failed. "He was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."

Then Satan sought to make Daniel's faithfulness to God the cause of his destruction. The presidents and princes came tumultuously together unto the king, and said, "All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors and the princes, the counselors and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions." The king's pride was flattered. He was ignorant of the mischief purposed against Daniel, and he granted their request. The decree was signed, and became one of the unalterable laws of the Medes and Persians.

These envious men did not believe that Daniel would be untrue to his God, or that he would falter in his firm adherence to principle; and they were not mistaken in their estimate of his character. Daniel knew the value of communion with God. With full knowledge of the king's decree, he still bowed in prayer three times a day, "his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem." He did not seek to conceal his act, although he knew full well the consequences of his fidelity to God. He saw the dangers that beset his path; but his steps faltered not. Before those who were plotting his ruin, he would not allow even the appearance that his connection with Heaven was severed.

In all cases where the king had a right to command, Daniel would obey. He was willing to obey so far as he could do so consistently with truth and righteousness; but kings and decrees could not make him swerve from his allegiance to the King of kings. He knew that no man, not even his king, had a right to come between his conscience and his God, and interfere with the worship due to his Maker.

Daniel was true, noble, and generous. While he was anxious to be at peace with all men, he would not permit any power to turn him aside from the path of duty. He had an opportunity to testify in favor of the true God, and to present the reasons why he alone should receive worship, and the duty of rendering him praise and homage, and nobly did he improve it. Had he respected the king's decree in this instance, he would have dishonored God. He was surrounded by proud idolaters; but he was a faithful witness for the truth. His dauntless adherence to a right course of action, was as a bright light amid the moral darkness of that heathen court.

On account of his praying to God, Daniel was cast into the lion's den. Envious and wicked men thus far accomplished their purpose. But Daniel continued to pray, even among the lions. Did God forget his faithful servant, and suffer him to be destroyed? Oh, no; Jesus, the mighty Commander of the hosts of Heaven, sent his angels to close the mouths of those hungry lions, that they should not hurt the praying man of God; and all was peace in that terrible den. The king witnessed the miraculous preservation of Daniel, and brought him out with honors; while those who had plotted his destruction were utterly destroyed, with their wives and children, in the terrible manner in which they had planned to destroy Daniel.

Through the moral courage of this one man who chose, even in the face of death, to take a right course rather than a politic one, Satan was defeated, and God honored. For the deliverance of Daniel from the power of the lions was a striking evidence that the Being whom he worshiped was the true and living God. And the king wrote unto "all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth:" "I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and steadfast forever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end."

Daniel was sorely tried; but he overcame because he was of a humble and prayerful spirit. Although he was surrounded with distrust and suspicion, and his enemies laid a snare for his life, yet he maintained a serene and cheerful trust in God, never once deviating from principle. Although Daniel was a man of like passions with ourselves, the pen of inspiration presents him as a faultless character. His life is given us as a bright example of what man may become, even in this life, if he will make God his strength, and wisely improve the privileges and opportunities within his reach.

Daniel was a moral and intellectual giant; yet he did not reach this pre-eminence all at once and without effort. He was continually seeking for greater knowledge, for higher attainments. Other young men had the same advantages, but they did not, like him, bend all their energies to seek wisdom,—the knowledge of God as revealed in his word and in his works. Daniel was but a youth when he was brought into a heathen court in service to the king of Babylon; and because of his extreme youth when he was exposed to all the temptations of an Eastern court, his noble resistance of wrong and his steadfast adherence to the right, throughout his long career, are the more admirable. His example should be a source of strength to the tried and tempted, even at the present day.

Daniel loved, feared, and obeyed God; yet he did not flee away from the world to avoid its corrupting influence. In the providence of God, he was to be in the world, yet not of the world. With all the temptations and fascinations of court life surrounding him, he stood in the integrity of his soul; for he made God his strength; and he was not forsaken of him in his hour of greatest need.

From the history of Daniel we may learn that a strict compliance with the requirements of God will prove a blessing, not only in the future, immortal life, but also in the present life. Through religious principles, men may triumph over the temptations of Satan and the devices of wicked men, even though it costs them a great sacrifice. What if Daniel had made a compromise with those heathen rulers, and had denied his God? What if, on first entering the court, he had yielded to the pressure of temptation, by eating and drinking as was customary among the Babylonians? That one wrong step would probably have led to others, until, his connection with Heaven being severed, he would have been borne away by the power of temptation. But while he clung to God with unwavering, prayerful trust, he could not be forsaken. The divine protection is pledged to those who thus seek it, and God cannot forget his word.

It was through prayer and adherence to right principles that Daniel was enabled to stand firm in the hour of trial and temptation. The prayer of faith is the great strength of the Christian, and will assuredly prevail against the devices of the hosts of darkness. Satan well knows how needful are meditation and prayer to keep Christ's followers aroused to understand his devices, and resist his temptations; so he tries to lead men to believe that prayer is useless, and but a mere form. If he can divert the mind from these important exercises, so that the soul will not lean for help on the Mighty

One, and obtain divine strength to resist his attacks, he knows full well that he has gained a decided advantage.

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 no less than Daniel did. The destiny of earth's teeming millions is about to be decided; and our own future well-being, and the salvation of other souls, depend upon the course which we pursue. If we possess the same unwavering integrity that characterized the prophet of old, God will be honored through our course, and souls will be saved to shine as stars in the crown of our rejoicing.

Basel, Switzerland.

November 11, 1886

Courtesy a Christian Grace

As Christians we are commanded to be separate from the world; we are not to drink in its spirit or to follow its customs; but it is not necessary for us to become coarse and rough in our manners and expressions. The truth of God is designed to elevate the receiver, to refine his taste, and to sanctify his judgment. The character of the Christian should be holy, his manners comely, his words without guile. There should be a continual effort to imitate the society he hopes soon to join, that of angels who have never fallen by sin.

No man can be a Christian without having the Spirit of Christ; and if he has the Spirit of Christ, it will be manifested in kind words and a refined, courteous deportment. The religion of Jesus is designed to soften whatever is hard and rough in the temper, and to smooth off whatever is rugged or sharp in the manners. External change will testify to an internal change. The truth is the sanctifier, the refiner. Received into the heart, it works with hidden power, transforming the character. But those who profess to be followers of Christ, and are at the same time rough, unkind, and uncourteous in words and deportment, have not learned of Jesus. A blustering, overbearing, fault-finding man is not a Christian; for to be a Christian is to be Christ-like. It is no mark of a Christian to be continually jealous of one's dignity. All these manifestations show that men are still servants of the wicked one.

Very many who are seeking for happiness will be disappointed in their hopes, because they seek it amiss, and are indulging in sinful tempers and selfish feelings. By neglecting to discharge the little duties and observe the little courtesies of life, they violate the principles on which happiness depends. True happiness is not to be found in self-gratification, but in the path of duty. God desires man to be happy, and for this reason he gave him the precepts of his law, that in obeying these he might have joy at home and abroad. While he stands in his moral integrity, true to principle, and having the control of all his powers, he cannot be miserable. With its tendrils twined about God, the heart will be full of peace and joy, and the soul will flourish amid unbelief and depravity.

Kind words, pleasant looks, a cheerful countenance, throw a charm around the Christian that makes his influence almost irresistible. It is the religion of Christ in the heart that causes the words to be gentle, and the demeanor winning, even to those in the humblest walks of life. In forgetfulness of self, in the light and peace and happiness he is constantly bestowing on others, is seen the true dignity of the man. This is a way to gain respect, and extend the sphere of usefulness, which costs but little; and the one who pursues this course will not complain that he does not receive the honor

that is his due. But Bible rules must be written on the heart; Bible rules must be carried into the every-day life.

We are none of us what we may be, what God would have us be, and what his word requires us to be. And it is our unbelief that shuts us away from God; for we may at any time lift up our souls to him, and find grace and strength. When Christ shall come, our vile bodies are to be changed, and made like his glorious body; but the vile character will not be made holy then. The transformation of character must take place before his coming. 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.

Enoch was a marked character, and many look upon his life as something far above what the generality of mortals can ever reach. But Enoch's life and character, which were so holy that he was translated to Heaven without seeing death, represent the lives and characters of all who will be translated when Christ comes. His life was what the life of every individual may be if he will live near to God. We should remember that Enoch was surrounded by unholy influences. The society around him was so depraved that God brought a flood of waters on the world to destroy its inhabitants for their corruption. Were Enoch upon the earth today, his heart would be in harmony with all of God's requirements; he would walk with God, although surrounded by influences the most wicked and debasing. The palm-tree well represents the life of a Christian. It stands upright amid the burning desert sands, and dies not; for it draws sustenance from springs beneath the surface.

Joseph preserved his integrity when surrounded by idolaters in Egypt, in the midst of sin and blasphemy and corrupting influences. When tempted to turn aside from the path of virtue, his answer was, "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Enoch, Joseph, and Daniel depended upon a strength that was infinite; and 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, pure amid depravity, devout and fervent when brought in contact with atheism and idolatry. Through divine grace they cultivated only such qualities as were favorable to the development of pure and holy characters.

Thus may it be with us. The spirit which Enoch, Joseph, and Daniel possessed, we may have; we may draw from the same source of strength, possess the same power of self-control, and the same graces may shine out in our lives. Said Christ: "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." By reflecting the light of Christ to all around us, we shall become the light of the world; but a selfish, fault-finding, uncourteous person cannot have this sacred influence.

Pleasant, kind, and well-bred Christians will have an influence for God and his truth; it cannot be otherwise. The light borrowed from Heaven will shed its brightening rays through them to the pathway of others, leading them to exclaim, "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man whose strength is in thee." The words we speak, our daily deportment, are the fruit growing upon the tree. If the fruit is sour and unpalatable, the rootlets of that tree are not drawing nourishment from a pure source. If our characters are meek and lowly, if our affections are in harmony with our Saviour, we show that our life is hid with Christ in God, and we leave behind us a bright track. Our life will be in such

marked contrast to that of unbelievers, that our associates will discern that we have been with Jesus and learned of him.

The Christian need not become a recluse; but while necessarily associating with the world, he will not be of the world. Christian politeness should be cultivated, and daily put in practice. That unkind word should be left unspoken; that selfish disregard of the happiness of others should give place to thoughtful sympathy. True courtesy, blended with truth and justice, will make the life not only useful, but beautiful and fragrant with love and good works. It is no evidence that the Christian has lost his religion, because he has a good report among them that are without. Virtue, honesty, kindness, and faithful integrity make noble characters; those who possess these characteristics will win esteem, even of unbelievers, and their influence in the church will be very precious. We are required to be right in important matters; but faithfulness in little things will fit us for higher positions of trust.

On the part of many, there is a great lack of true courtesy. Much is said of the improvements that have been made since the days of the patriarchs; but those living in that age could boast of a higher state of refinement, and of more true courtesy of manners, than are possessed by the people in this age of boasted enlightenment. Integrity, justice, and Christian kindness, blended, make a beautiful combination. Courtesy is one of the graces of the Spirit. It is an attribute of Heaven. The angels never fly into a passion, never are envious, selfish, and jealous. No harsh or unkind words escape their lips. And if we are to be the companions of angels, we too must be refined and courteous. And we have none too much time to change our wrong habits, reform our defective characters, and obtain a fitness for the society of those heavenly beings. All harshness and severity, coarseness and unkindness, must be overcome; and now is the time for us to do the work. We can have no second probation. But if we do not improve these hours of privilege, we would not improve a second probation, should it be granted to us.

A Christian will cultivate that charity that is not easily provoked, that suffereth long and is kind, that hopeth all things, endureth all things. If this grace be in you, if you are ruled by the Spirit of Christ, your words and actions will testify that your religion is genuine; for your life will be full of good fruits. The children of God never forget to do good and to communicate. Good works are spontaneous with them; for God has transformed their natures by his grace. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

November 18, 1886

The Value of Prayer

"The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers."

We are told that Elijah "was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly," and his prayer was answered. A royal decree was signed in the courts of Babylon, that if for thirty days any man asked a petition of any God or man, save of Darius the king, he should be cast into the lions' den; but Daniel, notwithstanding he knew of the decree, failed not to pray three times a day, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, as he had done before the decree was made; and the God whom he served continually, delivered him out of the power of the lions. These holy men knew the value of communion with God.

When Jesus was upon earth, and walked a man among the children of men, he prayed, and oh, how earnest were his prayers! How often he spent the whole night upon the damp, cold ground, in agonizing supplication! And yet he was the beloved and sinless Son of God. If Jesus felt the necessity of communion with his Father, and manifested so much earnestness in calling upon him, how much more should we, whom he has called to be heirs of salvation, who are subject to the fiery temptations of the wily foe, and dependent upon divine grace for strength to overcome, have our whole souls stirred to wrestle with God. The language of our souls should be, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." But many have allowed their hearts to become overcharged with the cares of this life, and God and his word have been neglected.

The subjects of Satan, although they hate and war with one another, are active and united in the one object of destroying souls. They are vigilant in improving every opportunity to advance their common interest, and war against the kingdom of Christ. But He who is the great Commander in Heaven and on earth, has limited their power.

Satan is ever ready to insinuate that prayer is a mere form, and avails us nothing. He cannot bear to have his powerful rival appealed to. At the sound of fervent prayer, the hosts of darkness tremble. Fearing that their captive may escape, they form a wall around him, that Heaven's light may not reach his soul. But if in his distress and helplessness the sinner looks to Jesus, pleading the merits of his blood, our compassionate Redeemer listens to the earnest, persevering prayer of faith, and sends to his deliverance a re-enforcement of angels that excel in strength. And when these angels, all-powerful, clothed with the armory of Heaven, come to the help of the fainting, pursued soul, the angels of darkness fall back, well knowing that their battle is lost, and that one more soul is escaping from the power of their influence.

Prayer is the Christian's life. There is a remedy for the sin-sick soul, and that remedy is in Jesus. Precious Saviour! his grace is sufficient for the weakest, and the strongest must have his help or perish. A Christian has victory over his passions and besetments. I would not dishonor my Master so much as to admit that a careless, trifling, prayerless person is a Christian. It is the privilege of the Christian to enjoy the deep movings of the Spirit of God. A sweet, heavenly peace will pervade his mind. He will love to meditate upon God and Heaven, and to feast upon the glorious promises of the written word.

But how shall this victory over the world be obtained? Go to your closet, dear reader, and there plead with God: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Be in earnest; be sincere; Jacob-like, wrestle in prayer. Do not leave your closet until you feel strong in God. Remain until unutterable longings for salvation are awakened in your heart, and the sweet evidence is obtained of pardoned sin. Then when you leave your closet, watch; and so long as you watch and pray, the grace of God will appear in your life.

In no case neglect secret prayer; for it is the soul of religion. If you expect salvation, you must pray. Take time. Be not hurried and careless in your prayers. Intercede with God to work in you a thorough reformation, that the fruits of the Spirit may dwell in you, and that, by your godly life, you may shine as a light in the world. When you sincerely feel that without the help of God you perish, when you pant after him as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, then will the Lord strengthen you speedily, and you will have that peace that passeth understanding.

While you pray that you may not be led into temptation, remember that your work does not end with the prayer. You must then answer your own prayer as far as possible, by resisting temptation, and leave that which you cannot do for yourselves for Jesus to do for you. We cannot be too guarded in our words and deportment, lest we invite the enemy to approach us with his temptations. With the word of God for our guide, and Jesus for our heavenly teacher, we need not be ignorant of the divine requirements or of Satan's devices. And it will be no unpleasant task to be obedient to the will of God, when we yield ourselves fully to be directed by his Spirit.

Pray in the family. Morning and evening obtain the victory at your family altar. Let not your daily labor keep you from this duty. Take time to pray. And as you pray, believe that God hears you, have faith mixed with your prayers. Let faith take hold of the blessing, and it is yours.

In the morning the Christian's first thoughts should be of God. Come before him with humility, with a heart full of tenderness, and with a sense of the temptations and dangers that surround yourself and your children. Morning and evening, by earnest prayer and persevering faith, make a hedge about your children. Patiently instruct them; kindly and untiringly teach them how to live so that they may please God.

Teach your children reverence for God and the hour of prayer. The Lord our God is holy, and his name is to be treated with great reverence. Angels are displeased and disgusted with the irreverent manner in which the name of God, the great Jehovah, is sometimes used in prayer. They mention that name with the greatest awe, even veiling their faces when they speak the name of God; the name of Christ also is sacred, and is spoken with the greatest reverence. And those who in their prayers use the name of God in a common and flippant manner, have no sense of the exalted character of God, of Christ, or of heavenly things.

Pray in faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Prevailing prayer is the prayer of living faith; it takes God at his word, and claims his promises. Feeling has nothing to do with faith. When faith brings the blessing to your heart, and you rejoice in the blessing, then it is no more faith, but feeling. How strange it is that men will put confidence in the word of their fellow-men, and yet find it so hard to exercise living faith in God! The promises are ample; why not accept them just as they read? "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?"

Every petition that is offered to God in faith, and with a true heart, will be answered. Such prayer is never lost; but to claim that it will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. Then do not fear to trust him even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon his sure promise, "Ask, and ye shall receive."

Fervent and effectual prayer will be regarded in Heaven. It is the privilege of Christians to obtain strength from God to hold every precious gift of his Spirit. The power of God has not decreased. His grace and his Spirit will be just as freely bestowed now as formerly. It is the church of God that have lost their faith to claim, their energy to wrestle, as did Jacob, crying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Enduring faith has been dying away, and must be revived in the hearts of God's people. There must be a claiming of the blessing of God. Living faith always bears upward to God and glory; unbelief, downward to darkness and death.

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” We can overcome, fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that by prevailing prayer by his grace, we might overcome every temptation, every subtle snare of the adversary, and at last sit down with him in his kingdom.

Basel, Switzerland.

December 9, 1886

The Standard of Christian Excellence

“Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” Ephesians 1:8-11.

Our heavenly Father presents before his finite creatures no impossibilities; he requires not at their hands that which they cannot perform. He has not set before his church a standard to which they cannot attain; yet he designs that they shall labor earnestly to reach the high standard set before them in the text. He would have them pray that they may be “filled with the fruits of righteousness,” and then expect this blessing and receive it, and in all things grow up into Christ their living Head. This was the apostle's great desire, not with reference to the church at Ephesus only, but to all the churches that he had been instrumental in raising up.

It is because the individual members of the church do not cultivate personal piety, that they do not realize more of the help of God and of their own personal responsibility. There is a higher standard for us to meet. The world has too much of our thoughts, and the kingdom of Heaven too little. God has given us talents that he requires us to use for the upbuilding of his kingdom. Reader, will you look upon these talents as a sacred trust? Will you today inquire, “What use have I made of these entrusted talents, and what use am I now making of them? Have I given to temporal, earthly things my strength of purpose, my ability to plan and devise, my tact and skill, and brought to the Lord's work only a feeble, inefficient service? Shall the eternal be made secondary to the temporal? Will the Lord accept this at my hands?”

We often hear Christians express the desire that husband, or wife, or children, may join them in serving the Lord. This desire is right. It is the true missionary spirit,—the spirit that should actuate all the followers of Christ. His first disciples felt thus when they listened to the words of life from the lips of the divine Master. They were convinced that he was the Messiah, and they wanted their relatives and friends to acknowledge his claims.

But while we desire the conversion of our friends, are we doing all we can on our part? Are we faithful in our appointed work? On the contrary, do we not often come short of the duty required of us as co-laborers with Christ? Are we setting a right example in our families and before the world? Are we, like Abraham, commanding our children and our households after us, that they may keep the way of the Lord and do justice and judgment? Is Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith? and do we show forth in our character and our daily life, the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness

into his marvelous light? If we are doers of the word, and not hearers only, we shall be earnest, thorough, whole-hearted, and God will work with our efforts in behalf of our friends.

There is a work for each one to do; and none need err in that work; for the counsels of God in his word are broad and full. If we sincerely desire to make the name of God a praise in the earth, if we walk in the light that he permits to shine upon our pathway, we shall be children of the day, and not of the night. We shall know the will of God, and shall carry it out in all the transactions of our every-day life.

Many lack moral power, and know very little of the peace, and happiness, and joy of Heaven, because they do not live where Christ can be in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life. They claim to be children of God; but they are only a burden to the church, when God has given them the capacity to be great helps, and requires them to be co-laborers with Christ in the work of saving souls.

If those who are so wanting in spiritual life would see the force of the words of the text, and would realize their duty to heed and obey the lesson here given, there would be greater power in the church. If all the members would improve their talents to the best of their ability, their light would not be hidden under a bushel, but placed on a candlestick, where its clear, steady rays would shine forth to all around them.

We need greater earnestness in the cause of Christ. The solemn message of truth should be given with an intensity that would impress unbelievers that God is working with our efforts, that the Most High is our living source of strength. In this great work, not one-third is accomplished that might be done, because a few willing ones take the burden, and the careless and ease-loving shirk all responsibility. This is not in the order of God, neither is it well-pleasing to him. He has not selected a few to become efficient laborers and bear all the burdens of the cause of God, to do all the praying and all the watching, all the winning and entreating of sinners, while the majority of professed Christians have nothing to do but to look on. He does not want the powers of the workers taxed to the utmost to counteract the influence of worldly-minded, halting, doubting ones, who bear no burdens and show no efficiency as workers.

Is this indifference to continue from year to year? Is Satan always to triumph, and Christ to be disappointed in the servants whom he has redeemed at an infinite price? We are looking forward to the time when the latter rain will be poured out, confidently hoping for a better day, when the church shall be endued with power from on high, and thus fitted to do more efficient work for God. But the latter rain will never refresh and invigorate indolent souls, that are not using the power God has already given them. Spiritual laziness will not bring us nearer to God. There must be energy and zeal as well as devotion and personal piety, woven into all our works.

Those who cherish this inexcusable indolence, this feeling that they have no burden of the work of God, are recorded in the books of Heaven as unfaithful servants. The "Well done, good and faithful servants," will never be spoken to them; it will be spoken to those only who have done well,—to those who have been faithful, earnest, unselfish workers in the Master's vineyard.

There is on the part of many a bustling, out-of-door piety, but little of that heart and home religion which gathers the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and diffuses them to warm and gladden

sorrowing hearts. The great need of such is a higher, purer, nobler life. A holy joy should reign in the soul, and then the daily life will be as a heavenly radiance to brighten the pathway of others.

If we love God with all the heart, we must love his children also. This love is of the Spirit of God. It is the heavenly adorning that gives true nobility and dignity to the soul, and assimilates our lives to that of the Master. No matter how many good qualities we may have, no matter how honorable and refined we may consider ourselves, if the soul is not baptized with the heavenly grace of love, we are deficient in true goodness, and unfit for Heaven, where all is love and unity.

When the heavenly principle of love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not merely because favors are received of them, but because love is the principle of action, and modifies the character, governs the impulses, subdues enmity, and elevates and ennobles the affections. This love is not contracted so as to include only the home-circle, but is as broad as the world, and is in harmony with that of the angel-workers. This love cherished in the soul sweetens the entire life, and exerts a refining influence on all around. Possessing it, we cannot but be happy, let fortune smile or frown. God, in his providence, has willed that no one can secure happiness by living for himself alone. The joy of our Lord consisted in enduring toil and suffering for others; and we shall find true happiness in following his example, and living to do good to our fellow-men.

The mission of the church is to save souls. When Jesus was about to ascend on high, he pointed to the harvest fields, and said to his followers: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel." "Freely ye have received, freely give." God calls for talents of influence and of means; he calls for earnest, faithful toil. Shall we refuse to obey? Shall we not rather deny self that the wasting harvest may be gathered?

In order to have our labors accepted, we must learn in the school of Christ; we must have practical godliness. When we have the saving power of truth in our own souls, we cannot forbear communicating to others the practical truths that have made our own hearts joyful in God.

"Being filled with the fruits of the Spirit," said the apostle. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another."

Basel, Switzerland.

November 25, 1886

The Sin of Covetousness

"And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's who shall give you that which is your own?"
Luke 16:9-12.

The parable of the unjust steward was given to teach us a lesson in regard to our duty in temporal things. Every man is a steward of God. To each the Master has intrusted his means, and he says, "Occupy till I come." A time is coming when he will require his own with usury. He will say to each of his stewards, "Give an account of thy stewardship." But men often claim their means as their own. They seem to have no sense of the fact that the property they are using belongs to God, and that they must give him an account for the use they make of it.

Said the Saviour: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." By using our means to the glory of God here, we lay up a treasure in Heaven; and when earthly possessions are all gone, the faithful steward has Jesus and angels for his friends, to receive him home to everlasting habitations.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." He that is faithful in his earthly possessions, which are least, making a judicious use of the means which God has intrusted to his care, will be faithful in every other respect. Every investment made in the cause of God will increase his love for it. He will not be the poorer in this world, and he will be "laying up in store" for himself "a good foundation against the time to come," that he "may lay hold on eternal life."

"He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." If he will not give of his means to support the warfare against the moral darkness that is flooding the world, he will be unfaithful in the things of God in every respect. He keeps his means from doing good in the cause of God, and often that which is committed to his trust is taken from him.

"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" The Christian church, as a general rule, are disowning the claims of God upon them to give alms of the things which they possess; and the work of God can never advance as it should until the followers of Christ realize their duty in this respect. If they prove unfaithful in the management of their temporal affairs, God will never give them the true riches, the immortal inheritance.

"If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" Jesus has purchased redemption for us. It is ours; but we are placed here on probation to see if we will prove worthy of eternal life. Our heavenly Father tests us by trusting us with earthly possessions. If we use these freely to advance his cause and to benefit our fellow-men, we shall prove good stewards, and shall gain the approbation of our Lord. But we "cannot serve God and mammon;" for "if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him."

The idea of stewardship should have a practical bearing upon all the people of God. The parable of the talents has not been fully understood, or it would bar out covetousness, which God calls idolatry. The talents do not represent merely the ability to preach and to instruct from the word of God. The parable also applies to the temporal means which God has intrusted to his people. Those who received the five and the two talents traded, and doubled that which was committed to their trust. The servant who received the one talent, went and hid it in the earth; and that is what many of God's professed people are doing now. They claim that they have a right to do what they please with their possessions, and souls are not saved through the use they make of their Lord's money. Practical benevolence would give spiritual life to thousands of nominal professors of religion who

now mourn over their darkness. It would transform them from selfish, covetous worshipers of mammon, to earnest, faithful co-workers with Christ in the salvation of sinners.

The foundation of the plan of salvation was laid in sacrifice. Jesus left the royal courts of Heaven, and became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. All who share the salvation purchased for them at such an infinite sacrifice by the Son of God, will follow the example of the True Pattern. Christ is the chief corner-stone, and we must build upon this foundation. Each must have a spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice.

Says Christ: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The very vital principle, the sap which flows through the vine nourishes the branches, that they may flourish and bear fruit. The life of Christ upon earth was unselfish; it was marked with humiliation and sacrifice. Is the servant greater than his Lord? Shall the world's Redeemer practice self-denial and sacrifice on our account, and the members of Christ's body practice self-indulgence?—No; self-denial is an essential principle of discipleship.

The people of God should act from principle. They should always have a suitable object in view, and should give, not to be seen of men, and to be praised for their liberality, but to glorify God and help their fellow-men. Sometimes the motive in giving is selfish. There are persons who make large donations to public enterprises or charities, while a poor brother may be suffering close by them, and they do nothing to relieve him. Little acts of kindness performed in secret for this needy brother would bind their hearts together, and would be noticed and rewarded in Heaven; for the true spirit of sacrifice is acceptable to God. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

When Jesus was upon earth, he rebuked those who gave to be seen of men. He said to his disciples: "When thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you. They have their reward." They received praise of men, and this was all the reward they would ever have. Their alms giving was done in a very public manner, and their generosity was proclaimed before the people. In this way they often gave large sums which had been extorted from the needy by oppressing the hireling in his wages and grinding the face of the poor. The case of the Pharisees is not unlike that of many at the present time, who suppose themselves in a state of spiritual prosperity, and flatter themselves that they are in favor with God, when he despises their selfishness.

The selfish, covetous heart will be tested. Every motive is known to God, and he suffers circumstances to arise that will develop character, and show them themselves. "By their fruits ye shall know them," says the Saviour. The good deeds and generous works of the children of God are the most effectual preaching that the unbeliever has. He thinks that the Christian must have strong motives to lead him to deny self, and use his possessions for the good of others.

The principle of worldlings is to get all they can of the perishable things of this life. With them selfish love of gain is the ruling principle, and they cannot understand disinterested benevolence. There are thousands who are passing their lives in indulgence, and whose hearts are filled with repining. They

are the victims of selfishness and discontent. Unhappiness is stamped upon their countenances, and behind them is a desert, because their lives are not fruitful in good works. For 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.

The principle of the cross of Christ places all who believe under heavy obligations to deny self, to impart light to others, and to give of their means to extend the light. 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 Him whose servants we claim to be. And our happiness will be proportionate to our unselfish works, prompted by divine love; for in the plan of salvation God has appointed the law of action and reaction, making the work of beneficence, in all its branches, twice blessed.

Basel, Switzerland.

December 16, 1886

Cain and Abel Tested

[A sermon delivered at Basel, Switzerland, January 30, 1886.]

“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. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? if thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted, and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door; and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And 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 4:3-8.

Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, were unlike in character. Cain cherished feelings of rebellion and murmuring against God because of the curse pronounced upon the ground and upon the human race for Adam's sin; while Abel had a spirit of meekness and of submission to the authority of God.

These brothers were tested, as Adam had been tested before them, to see if they would be obedient to God's requirements. They had both been instructed in regard to the provision made for the salvation of man. Through the system of sacrificial offerings, God designed to impress upon the minds of men the offensive character of sin, and to make known to them its sure penalty, death. The offerings were to be a constant reminder that it was only through the promised Redeemer that man could come into the presence of God. Cain and Abel understood the system of offerings which they were required to carry out. They knew that in presenting these offerings they showed humble and reverential obedience to the will of God, and acknowledge faith in, and dependence upon, the Savior whom these offerings typified.

Cain and Abel erected their altars alike, and each brought an offering. Cain thought it unnecessary to be particular about fulfilling all the requirements of God; he therefore brought an offering without the shedding of blood. He brought of the fruits of the ground, and presented his offering before the Lord; but there was no token from Heaven to show that it was accepted. Abel entreated his brother

to come into the presence of God only in the divinely prescribed way. But his remonstrances made Cain all the more determined to carry out his own purpose. As the eldest, he felt above being advised by his brother, and despised his counsel.

Abel brought of the firstlings of the flock, the very best, as God had commanded him. In the slain lamb he sees by faith the Son of God, appointed to death because of the transgression of his Father's law. God has respect to Abel's offering. Fire flashes from heaven, and consumes the sacrifice of the penitent sinner.

Cain now has an opportunity to see and acknowledge his mistake. He may change his course of action, and testify his obedience by presenting an offering precisely in accordance with the divine specification; and He who is no respecter of persons will have respect to the offering of faith and obedience.

After the disrespect shown to his commands, God does not leave Cain to himself; but he condescends to reason with the man that has shown himself so unreasonable. "And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?"

The Lord was not ignorant of the feelings of resentment cherished by Cain; but he would have Cain reflect upon his course, and, becoming convinced of his sin, repent, and set his feet in the path of obedience. There was no cause for his wrathful feelings toward either his brother or his God; it was his own disregard of the plainly expressed will of God that had led to the rejection of his offering. Through his angel messenger, God said to this rebellious, stubborn man: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." "If thou doest well"—not having your own way, but obeying God's commandments, coming to him with the blood of the slain victim, thus showing faith in the promised Redeemer, who, in the fullness of time, would make an atonement for guilty man, that he might not perish, but have eternal life.

"And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." Abel's offering had been accepted; but this was because Abel had done in every particular as God required him to do. This would not rob Cain of his birthright. Abel would love him as his brother, and as the younger, be subject to him.

Thus the matter was plainly laid open before Cain; but his combativeness was aroused because his course was questioned, and he was not permitted to follow his own independent ideas. He was angry with God and angry with his brother. He was angry with God because he would not accept the plans of sinful man in place of the divine requirements, and he was angry with his brother for disagreeing with him. Satan presents a temptation. The thought that he suggests is a terrible one; will Cain receive it?—Yes; he is opening the door of his heart to the whisperings of Satan. Envious and jealous of the preference shown to his younger brother, he will not hesitate to take his life.

Cain invites Abel to walk with him in the fields, and he there gives utterance to his unbelief and his murmuring against God. He claims that he was doing well in presenting his offering; and the more he talks against God, and impeaches his justice and mercy in rejecting his own offering and accepting that of his brother Abel, the more bitter are his feelings of anger and resentment.

Abel defends the goodness and impartiality of God, and places before Cain the simple reason why God did not accept his offering.

The fact that Abel ventured to disagree with him and even went so far as to point out his errors, astonished Cain. It was a new experience; for Abel had hitherto submitted to the judgment of his elder brother; and Cain was enraged to the highest degree that Abel did not sympathize with him in his disaffection. Abel would yield when conscience was not concerned; but when the course of the God of Heaven was brought in question, and Cain spoke derisively of the sacrifice of faith, Abel was courageous to defend the truth. Cain's reason told him that Abel was right when he spoke of the necessity of presenting the blood of a slain victim if he would have his sacrifice accepted; but Satan presented the matter in a different light. He urged Cain on to a furious madness, till he slew his brother, and the sin of murder was laid upon his soul.

Some time had elapsed since the death of Abel. "And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?" How true it is that one sin leads to another; and how forcibly is this truth illustrated in the case of Cain! He seemed surprised at the question, "Where is Abel thy brother?" He had gone so far in sin, had so far yielded himself to the influence of Satan, that he had lost a sense of the presence of God, and of his greatness and knowledge. So he lied to the Lord to cover up his guilt. Cain knew very well where his brother was; and God knew where he was, for there was a witness to the bloody deed.

The spirit of Satan had entered into Cain. Satan was an accuser, and Cain began his evil course by accusing God of partiality and injustice. Satan was a deceiver, and Cain deceived Abel by inviting him into the field when murder was in his heart, that he might do the dark deed in secret. Satan "was a murderer from the beginning;" and he instigated Cain to do the same cruel work. "He is a liar, and the father of it;" and here, too, Cain showed himself an apt and proficient pupil.

Again the Lord said to Cain. "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." God had given Cain an opportunity to confess his sin before sentence should be pronounced against him. He had had time to reflect. He knew the enormity of the deed he had done, and of the falsehood he had told to conceal it. But he was rebellious still. The hand that had been stretched out against his brother was stretched out against God; and had the power been his, he would have silenced the accusing voice of God, as he had that of his brother.

Cain has proved himself incorrigible, and sentence is no longer deferred. The divine voice that has been heard in entreaty and expostulation pronounces the terrible words: "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." In remorse and anguish, but not in repentance, Cain exclaims, as many who have rejected the word of the Lord have done, and will do again, "My punishment is greater than I can bear."

(Concluded next week.)

December 23, 1886

Cain and Abel Tested

(Concluded.)

These two brothers, Cain and Abel, represent the whole human family. They were both tested on the point of obedience, and all will be tested as they were. Abel bore the proving of God. He revealed the gold of a righteous character, the principles of true godliness. But Cain's religion had not a good foundation; it rested on human merit. He brought to God something in which he had a personal interest,—the fruits of the ground, which had been cultivated by his toil; and he presented his offering as a favor done to God, through which he expected to secure the divine approval. He obeyed in building an altar, obeyed in bringing a sacrifice; but it was only a partial obedience. The essential part, the recognition of the need of a Redeemer, was left out.

As far as birth and religious instruction were concerned, these brothers were equal, though Cain, being the first-born, was in some respects the favored one. Both were sinners, and both acknowledged the claims of God as an object of worship. To all outward appearance, their religion was the same up to a certain point of time; but the Bible history shows us that there was a time when the difference between the two became very great. This difference lay in the obedience of one and the disobedience of the other.

The apostle says that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Abel grasped the great principles of redemption. He saw himself a sinner; and he saw sin, and its penalty, death, standing between his soul and communion with God. He brought the slain victim, the sacrificed life, thus acknowledging the claims of the law which had been transgressed. Through the shed blood he looked to the future Sacrifice, Christ dying on the cross of Calvary; and, trusting in the atonement that was there to be made, he had the witness that he was righteous and his offering accepted.

How did Abel know so well the plan of salvation?—Adam taught it to his children and grandchildren. And the apostle says that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” After Adam had sinned, a feeling of terror seized him. A constant dread was upon him; shame and remorse tortured his soul. In this state of mind he wished to be as far removed as possible from the presence of God, whom he had so loved to meet in his Eden home. But the Lord followed this conscience-stricken man, and while he condemned the sin of which Adam had been guilty, gave him words of gracious promise. In pronouncing the curse upon the deceiver, God had said: “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.”

This was the first gospel sermon ever preached to fallen man; this promise was the star of hope, illuminating the dark and dismal future of the race. Adam gladly received the welcome assurance of deliverance, and diligently instructed his children in the way of the Lord. This promise was presented in close connection with the altar of sacrificial offerings. The altar and the promise stand side by side, and one casts clear beams of light upon the other, showing that the justice of an offended God could be appeased only by the death of his beloved Son. The bleeding victim consuming on the altar illustrated Adam's teachings, and thus the sight of the eyes deepened the impression made by the hearing of the ear.

Abel heard these precious lessons, and to him they were like seed sown on good ground. Cain also heard them. He had the same privileges as his brother, but he did not improve them. He ventured to go contrary to the commands of God; and the result is strongly presented before us. Cain was not the victim of an arbitrary purpose; one was not elected to be chosen of God, and the other to be rejected. The whole matter rested upon doing or not doing as God had said.

In the case of Cain and Abel we have a type of two classes that will exist in the world till the close of time; and this type is worthy of close study. There is a marked difference in the characters of these two brothers, and the same difference is seen in the human family today. Cain represents those who carry out the principles and works of Satan, by worshiping God in a way of their own choosing. Like the leader whom they follow, they are willing to render partial obedience, but not entire submission to God. Man, in the pride of his heart, would like to believe that he can confer some favor upon God; that our heavenly Father may be the receiver, and not always the giver. But God will not be bribed. He says: "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof." Man has nothing to give that he has not first received from God.

The Cain class of worshipers includes by far the largest number; for every false religion that has been invented has been based on the Cain principle, that man can depend upon his own merits and righteousness for salvation.

The great controversy from Adam's day down to our time has been on the point of obedience or opposition to God's law; and every soul will be found on the side of the obedient or the rebellious. Satan, who was once a mighty and lofty angel in Heaven, is the leader of the rebellion against God. From the first it has been his object to dethrone God, by breaking down the rules of his government. He had induced angels to join him in Heaven; and when Adam sinned, he thought to carry the whole human race on his side. The declaration of God, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed," was the first intimation Satan received that the world would not be given over to his dark sway, but that man would have a Redeemer. There is naturally no enmity between fallen angels and fallen men. Both are evil; and evil, wherever it exists, will league against the good.

Man was promised a Redeemer, and was granted a second trial, to see if he would develop a righteous character; but he is left a free moral agent. And in all ages the multitudes have accepted the Cain principle, and have maintained that a partial obedience is all that is necessary. They have claimed a right to the favor of God, while disregarding his positive commands. This is the position of the Christian world today. God has given men a code of laws, and the fourth precept of that code enjoins the observance of the Sabbath as a memorial of creation. There is but one Sabbath of the Lord, and that is the seventh day. Special injunctions have been laid upon men to remember this day to keep it holy; but many show their contempt for the divine authority by keeping, in its place, a day which God has given them as a day of labor.

Those who cherish error have ever manifested a spirit of intolerance toward the obedient children of God. They are actuated by the spirit that led Cain to slay his brother. "And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." Abel, the first martyr, was not old and feeble, but a youth, full of life and vigor; but he lay down his life for the truth of God. And all the way down through the ages there have been some who have lost their lives because of their adherence to religious principles.

Our Saviour himself was a victim of religious intolerance. "He came unto his own; but his own received him not." Had he praised and exalted men, had he called corruption purity, and given license to human creeds by teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, they would have received him gladly. But his zeal for God, the righteous fervor with which he denounced every

abomination that was done in the land, and, above all, the sinless purity of his own character, aroused the bitter hatred of the "whited sepulchers" who deceived the people by the appearance of great sanctity. Satan and evil angels united with evil men to destroy from the earth the champion of truth. There was a bruising of the heel of the seed of the woman, when Christ was scorned as a deceiver, and was hunted down and put to death as a criminal; but could Satan have induced him to commit one sin, there would have been a bruising of the head, and the world would have been abandoned to the power of the prince of darkness.

The religion of Christ is for men to accept, with all its inconveniences. They may invent an easier way; but it will not lead to the city of God, the saints' secure abode. Only those who "do his commandments," will have "right to the tree of life," and "enter in through the gates into the city."

December 30, 1886

Intelligent Faith

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, 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.

The Jews rejected Christ; but they were self-deceived. They hated his teachings, because he exposed the secrets of their hearts and reproved their sins. They chose darkness rather than light, and would not come to the light, fearing that their deeds would be manifest. "This is the condemnation," said Christ, "that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." The Jews rejected Christ until their eyes were so blinded by the moral darkness that they thought they were doing God service in crucifying the Son whom he had sent unto them to be a messenger of light and hope.

Very many are in danger of a similar deception. God does not compel men to believe. He sets light before them, and Satan presents his darkness. While the deceiver is constantly crying, Light is here, truth is here; Jesus is saying, "I am the truth; I have the words of eternal life. If any man follow me, he shall not walk in darkness. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."

Sufficient evidence is given to balance our minds on the side of truth. If we love God, and desire to do his will, we shall choose the light and reject the darkness. But if we desire to carry out our own plans, and maintain the independence of the natural heart, like the Jews we shall refuse to submit to God; and we shall be in danger of as great deception as came upon them, and in our blind infatuation we may go to as great lengths as they did, and yet flatter ourselves that we are doing the will of God.

Minds that are submitted to Satan's control are led farther and farther from the light of truth into error and darkness. He has great power to entangle souls by confusing the minds of those who do not walk in the light which a kind Providence permits to shine upon their pathway. If he gains the least advantage, he will push it to the utmost; he will watch every opportunity to advantage his cause and ruin human souls.

Christ warned his disciples: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree

bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Here is a test which all may apply if they will. None need be left in uncertainty and doubt. There is always sufficient evidence upon which to base an intelligent faith. But God will never remove from any man all occasion for doubts. Those who love to dwell in the atmosphere of doubt and questioning unbelief can have the unenviable privilege. He who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things that he cannot make plain to his finite understanding, will be left to the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and skepticism, and will make shipwreck of faith.

It should not be considered a virtue to be on the side of the doubting rather than on the side of the believing. Jesus never praised unbelief, never commended a doubting, questioning spirit. He gave to his nation evidence of his Messiahship in the miracles he wrought; but there were some who reasoned these evidences away, and in every good work found something to question and censure.

The centurion who desired Christ to come and heal his servant felt unworthy to have Jesus come under his roof; but his faith was so strong that he entreated him just to say the word, and the work of healing would be done. "When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour."

Jesus here exalts faith in contrast with doubt. He shows the cause of stumbling on the part of the children of Israel. Their unbelief would lead to the rejection of light and would result in their condemnation and overthrow.

Thomas would not believe unless he could put his finger into the prints of the nails, and thrust his hand into the side of his Lord. He received the evidence he desired; but Jesus reproveth his unbelief: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

When Christ sent out the twelve, he commanded them: "And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into a house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And 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 Gomorrah in the day of Judgment, than for that city."

Jesus warned those whom he sent out to preach the gospel to beware of men; for they would be delivered up to the councils, and scourged in the synagogues. Men's hearts are no softer today than when Christ was upon the earth. They will scourge with the tongue of slander and falsehood. They will, with their evil surmisings, see fraud and dishonesty where all is right, and where perfect integrity exists.

Noah preached to the men of his time that God would give them one hundred and twenty years in which to repent of their sins and find refuge in the ark. This was abundant time in which to turn from their sins, overcome bad habits, and form righteous characters. But they refused the gracious invitation to repent and be saved. They denounced the preacher of righteousness as a visionary character, a fanatic, and an alarmist, and laughed to scorn what they termed his superstitious fears and forebodings. But though the merciful warning of God was rejected with mockery and derision, their unbelief did not hinder the predicted event. They were left in darkness to follow the curse that their own sinful hearts had chosen; but the flood came, and great was the wrath of God which was seen in the general ruin.

“As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.” This is the attitude of the world today. Men reject the truth of God, as they did in Noah's time.

God's word is our standard; but how few follow it. And yet we are responsible for our influence. Many lose their interest in the truth of God, because they have taken unbelief into close connection with themselves. They breathe the atmosphere of doubt, of questioning, of infidelity; their faith is imperceptibly undermined, and finally destroyed. The influence of the world and of selfishness is carried about by many who profess to be following the Bible. They are like a cloud, chilling the atmosphere in which others move. The baleful influence of sin poisons the life of the soul, and our only safety is in separation from those who walk in its darkness.

Our religion will be of little worth to our fellow-men, if it is only theoretical, and not practical. We must be steadfast in the faith; we must not be movable. We have our work before us, which is to cause the light of truth, as revealed in the law of God, to shine in upon other minds, and lead them out of darkness. This work requires determined, persevering energy, and a fixed purpose to succeed.

“If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” The greatest triumph given to us by the religion of Christ is control over ourselves. Our natural propensities must be controlled. Few realize what this is. They do not know their own weakness; and the natural sinfulness of the human heart often paralyzes their best endeavors. There must be a coming out from the world, and a nearness to God, if we would be adopted into the family of Heaven as children of the great King. We must walk by faith. When we do the will of God, we shall know of the doctrine. Our feet will be planted on the rock of eternal truth, and we shall not be swept away by the doubt and skepticism of an unbelieving age.