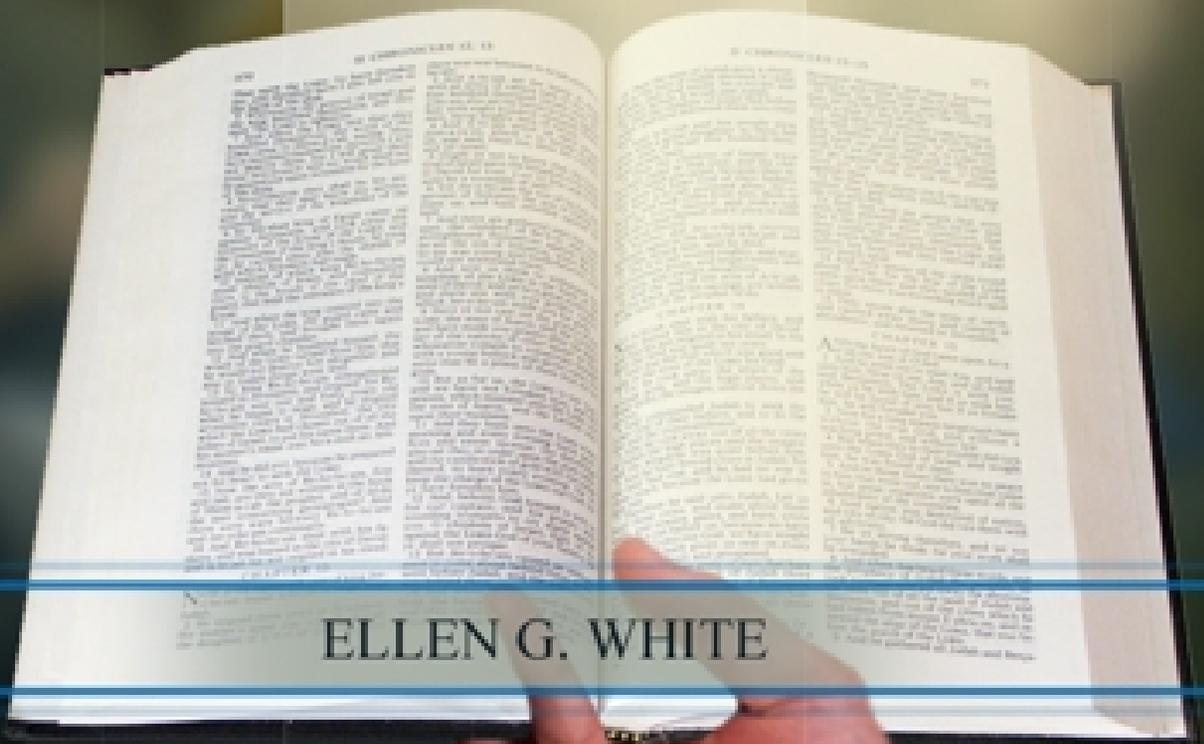


Ellen G. White Estate

GOSPEL WORKERS

1892



ELLEN G. WHITE

Gospel Workers 1892

Ellen G. White

1892

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Overview

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About the Author

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

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Preface

As setting forth the scope and design of this work, it would perhaps be more appropriate to call the attention of the reader to the table of contents than to the few words that may be written by way of preface. If the reader will glance over that portion of the book, he will see at once the important field of thought to which the mind is led, and the wide range of practical truths on which instruction is given.

1. The minister and the missionary are particularly mentioned, but what is written is also for the “gospel worker” in general. And how many does this embrace? All who have partaken of the blessings of the gospel should seek to make known its benefits to others. The instruction of this work is therefore for all.

2. It is not sent out that its instructions may be put into practice by way of experiment; for these principles have been tried and tested, many have studied the truths herein set forth, have listened to these words of instruction, and have tried to follow the counsel given. And the results have always been most happy, and the fruits good. Such persons have called for the matter of this book to be set forth in this form, for their own further study and for the good of others. A compliance with this desire is one reason why this work now appears.

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In order to bring the book within desired limits, it has been necessary to omit parts of articles taken from the “Testimonies.” All such omissions are marked by periods(...). Quotations taken from the “Testimonies” are credited to volume and page; and for convenience, all other selections, whether from unpublished manuscript or other sources, except in the chapters of fragments, are credited Ms.

3. The publishers therefore send it forth, commending it to the attention and earnest, diligent study of all, with the full assurance that as its instruction shall be put into practice, it will prove a source of perennial benefit and blessing to the cause of the master, in the earth.

Publishers.

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Section 1—The Minister

[vii]

Ambassadors for Christ

While Christ is the minister in the sanctuary above, he is also, through his delegates, the minister of his church on earth. He speaks to the people through chosen men, and carries forward his work through them, as when, in the days of his humiliation, he moved visibly upon the earth. Although centuries have passed, the lapse of time has not changed his parting promise to his disciples. “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” [Matthew 28:20.] From Christ’s ascension to the present day, men ordained of God, deriving their authority from him, have become teachers of the faith. Christ, the True Shepherd, superintends his work through the instrumentality of these under-shepherds. Thus the position of those who labor in word and doctrine becomes very important. In Christ’s stead they beseech the people to be reconciled to God.

The people should not regard their ministers as mere public speakers and orators, but as Christ’s ambassadors, receiving their wisdom and power from the great Head of the church. To slight and disregard the word spoken by Christ’s representative, is showing disrespect, not only to the man, but also to the Master who has sent him. He is in Christ’s stead; and the voice of the Saviour should be heard in his representative.

[12] Many of our ministers have made a great mistake in giving discourses which were wholly argumentative. There are souls who listen to the theory of the truth, and are impressed with the evidences brought out, and then, if a portion of the discourse presents Christ as the Saviour of the world, the seed sown may spring up and bear fruit to the glory of God. But in many discourses the cross of Christ is not presented before the people. Some may be listening to the last sermon they will ever hear, and others will never again be so situated that they can have the chain of truth brought before them, and a practical application made of it to their hearts. That golden opportunity lost, is lost forever. Had Christ and his redeeming love

been exalted in connection with the theory of truth, it might have balanced them on his side.

There are more souls longing to understand how they may come to Christ than we imagine. Many listen to popular sermons from the pulpit, and know no better than before they listened, how to find Jesus and the peace and rest which their souls desire. Ministers who preach the last message of mercy to the world should bear in mind that Christ is to be exalted as the sinner's refuge. Many ministers think that it is not necessary to preach repentance and faith, with a heart all subdued by the love of God; they take it for granted that their hearers are perfectly acquainted with the gospel, and that matters of a different nature must be presented in order to hold their attention. If their hearers are interested, they take it as evidence of success. The people are more ignorant in regard to the plan of salvation, and need more instruction upon this all-important subject, than upon any other.

Those who assemble to listen to the truth should expect to be profited, as did Cornelius and his friends: "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." [[Acts 10:33](#).]

Theoretical discourses are essential, that all may know the form of doctrine, and see the chain of truth, link after link, uniting in a perfect whole. But no discourse should ever be delivered without presenting Christ and him crucified as the foundation of the gospel, making a practical application of the truths set forth, and impressing upon the people the fact that the doctrine of Christ is not yea and nay, but yea and amen in Christ Jesus. [13]

After the theory of truth has been presented, then comes the laborious part of the work. The people should not be left without instruction in the practical truths which relate to their every-day life. They must see and feel that they are sinners, and need to be converted to God. What Christ said, what he did, and what he taught, should be brought before them in the most impressive manner.

The work of the minister is only begun when the truth is opened to the understanding of the people. Christ is our mediator and officiating high priest in the presence of the Father. He was shown to John as a lamb that had been slain, as in the very act of pouring out his blood in the sinner's behalf. When the law of God is set

before the sinner, showing him the depth of his sins, he should then be pointed to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. He should be taught repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus will the labor of Christ's representative be in harmony with the Saviour's work in the heavenly sanctuary.

[14] Ministers would reach many more hearts if they would dwell more upon practical godliness. Frequently, when efforts are made to introduce the truth into new fields, the labor is almost entirely theoretical. The people are unsettled. They see the force of truth, and are anxious to obtain a sure foundation. When their feelings are softened, is the time, above all others, to urge the religion of Christ home upon the conscience; but too often the course of lectures has been allowed to close without that work being done for the people which they needed. That effort was too much like the offering of Cain; it had not the sacrificial blood to make it acceptable to God. Cain was right in making an offering, but he left out all that made it of any value—the blood of the atonement.

It is a sad fact that the reason why many dwell so much on theory and so little on practical godliness, is that Christ is not abiding in their own hearts. They do not have a living connection with God. Many souls decide in favor of the truth, from the weight of evidence, without being converted. Practical discourses were not given in connection with the doctrinal, that, as the hearers should see the beautiful chain of truth, they might fall in love with its Author, and be sanctified through obedience. The minister's work is not done until he has urged home upon his hearers the necessity of a change of character in accordance with the pure principles of the truth which they have received.

A formal religion is to be dreaded; for in it is no Saviour. Plain, close, searching, practical discourses were given by Christ. His ambassadors should follow his example in every discourse. Christ and his Father were one; in all the Father's requirements Christ cheerfully acquiesced. He had the mind of God. The Redeemer was the perfect pattern. Jehovah was manifested in him. Heaven was enshrined in humanity, and humanity inclosed in the bosom of Infinite Love. If ministers will in meekness sit at the feet of Jesus, they will soon obtain right views of God's character, and will be able to teach others also. Some enter the ministry without deep love

to God or to their fellow-men. Selfishness and self-indulgence will be manifested in the lives of such; and while these unconsecrated, unfaithful watchmen are serving themselves, instead of feeding the flock and attending to their pastoral duties, the people perish for want of proper instruction.

In every discourse fervent appeals should be made to the people to forsake their sins and turn to Christ. The popular sins and indulgences of our day should be condemned, and practical godliness enforced. The minister should be deeply in earnest himself, feeling from the heart the words he utters, and unable to repress his feeling of concern for the souls of men and women for whom Christ died. Of the Master it was said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." [John 2:17.] The same earnestness should be felt by his representatives. [15]

An infinite sacrifice has been made for man, and made in vain for every soul who will not accept of salvation. How important, then, that the one who presents the truth shall do so under a full sense of the responsibility resting upon him! How tender, pitiful, and courteous should be all his conduct in dealing with the souls of men, when the Redeemer of the world has shown that he values them so highly! The question is asked by Christ, "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household?" [Matthew 24:45.] Jesus asks, "Who?" and every minister of the gospel should repeat the question to his own heart. As he views the solemn truths, and his mind beholds the picture drawn of the faithful and wise steward, his soul should be stirred to the very depths.

To every man is given his work; not one is excused. Each has a part to act, according to his capacity; and it devolves upon the one who presents the truth carefully and prayerfully, to learn the ability of all who accept the truth, and then to instruct them and lead them along, step by step, letting them realize the burden of responsibility resting upon them to do the work that God has for them to do. It should be urged upon them again and again, that no one will be able to resist temptation, to answer the purpose of God, and to live the life of a Christian, unless he shall take up his work, be it great or small, and do that work with conscientious fidelity. There is something for all to do besides going to church, and listening to the word of God. [16]

They must practice the truth heard, carrying its principles into their every-day life. They must be doing work for Christ constantly, not from selfish motives, but with an eye single to the glory of Him who made every sacrifice to save them from ruin.

Ministers should impress upon those who accept the truth that they must have Christ in their homes; that they need grace and wisdom from him in guiding and controlling their children. It is part of the work which God has left for them to do, to educate and discipline these children, bringing them into subjection. Let the kindness and courtesy of the minister be seen in his treatment of children. He should ever bear in mind that they are miniature men and women, younger members of the Lord's family. These may be very near and dear to the Master, and if properly instructed and disciplined, will do service for him even in their youth. Christ is grieved with every harsh, severe, and inconsiderate word spoken to children. Their rights are not always respected, and they are frequently treated as though they had not an individual character, which needs to be properly developed that it may not be warped, and the purpose of God in their lives prove a failure.

From a child, Timothy knew the Scriptures; and this knowledge was a safeguard to him against the evil influences surrounding him, and the temptation to choose pleasure and selfish gratification before duty. Such a safeguard all our children need; and it should be a part of the work of parents and of Christ's ambassadors to see that the children are properly instructed in the word of God.

[17] If the minister would meet the approval of his Lord, he must labor with fidelity to present every man perfect in Christ. He should not, in his manner of labor, carry the impression that it is of little consequence whether men do or do not accept the truth and practice true godliness; but the faithfulness and self-sacrifice manifested in his life should be such as to convince the sinner that eternal interests are at stake, and that his soul is in peril unless he responds to the earnest labor put forth in his behalf. Those who have been brought from error and darkness to truth and light have great changes to make, and unless the necessity of thorough reform is pressed home upon the conscience, they will be like the man who looked into the mirror, the law of God, and discovered the defects in his moral character, but went away and forgot what manner of man he was.

The mind must be kept awake to a sense of responsibility, or it will settle back into a state of even more careless inattention than before it was aroused.

The work of the ambassadors for Christ is far greater and more responsible than many dream of. They should not be at all satisfied with their success until they can, by their earnest labors and the blessing of God, present to him serviceable Christians, who have a true sense of their responsibility, and will do their appointed work. The proper labor and instruction will result in bringing into working order those men and women whose characters are strong, and their convictions so firm that nothing of a selfish character is permitted to hinder them in their work, to lessen their faith, or to deter them from duty. If the minister has properly instructed those under his care, when he leaves for other fields of labor, the work left will not ravel out; for it will be bound off so firmly as to be secure. Unless those who receive the truth are thoroughly converted, and there is a radical change in their life and character, the soul is not riveted to the eternal Rock; and after the labor of the minister ceases, and the novelty is gone, the impression soon wears away, the truth loses its power to charm, and they exert no holier influence, and are no better, for their profession of the truth. [18]

I am astonished that with the examples before us of what man may be and what he may do, we are not stimulated to greater exertion to emulate the good works of the righteous. All may not occupy a position of prominence; yet all may fill positions of usefulness and trust, and may, by their persevering fidelity, do far more good than they have any idea that they can do. Those who embrace the truth should seek a clear understanding of the Scriptures, and an experimental knowledge of a living Saviour. The intellect should be cultivated, the memory taxed. All intellectual laziness is sin, and spiritual lethargy is death.

O that I could command language of sufficient force to make the impression I wish to make upon my fellow-laborers in the gospel! My brethren, you are handling the words of life; you are dealing with minds that are capable of the highest development, if directed in the right channel. But there is too much exhibition of self in the discourses given. Christ crucified, Christ ascended into the heavens, Christ coming again, should so soften, gladden, and fill the mind

of the minister of the gospel that he will present these truths to the people in love and deep earnestness. The minister will then be lost sight of, and Jesus magnified. The people will be so impressed with these all-absorbing subjects that they will talk of them and praise them, instead of praising the minister—the mere instrument. But if the people, while they praise the minister, have little interest in the word preached, he may know that the truth is not sanctifying his own soul. He does not speak to his hearers in such a manner that Jesus is honored and his love magnified.

[19] Christ said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” [Matthew 5:16.] Let your light so shine that the glory will redound to God instead of to yourselves. If the praise comes to you, well may you tremble and be ashamed, for the great object is defeated; it is not God, but the servant, that is magnified. Let your light *so shine*; be careful, minister of Christ, in what manner your light shines. If it flashes heavenward, revealing the excellence of Christ, it shines aright. If it is turned upon yourself, if you exhibit yourself, and attract the people to admire you, it would be better for you to hold your peace altogether; for your light shines in the wrong way.

Ministers of Christ, you may be connected with God if you will watch and pray. Let your words be seasoned with salt, and let Christian courtesy and true elevation pervade your demeanor. If the peace of God is ruling within, its power will not only strengthen, but soften your hearts, and you will be living representatives of Christ. The people who profess the truth are backsliding from God. Jesus is soon to come, and they are not ready. The minister must reach a higher standard himself, a faith marked with greater firmness, an experience that is living and vivid, not dull and commonplace, like that of the nominal professors. The word of God sets a high mark before you. Will you, through fasting and prayerful effort, attain to the completeness and consistency of Christian character? You should make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way. A close connection with God will bring to you, in your labor, that vital power which arouses the conscience, and convicts the sinner of sin, leading him to cry, “What shall I do to be saved?”

The commission which Christ gave to the disciples, just prior to his ascension to heaven, was, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” [[Matthew 28:19, 20](#); [John 17:20](#).] The commission reaches those who shall believe on his word through his disciples. And all who are called of God to stand as ambassadors for him, should take the lessons upon practical godliness given them by Christ in his word, and teach them to the people. [20]

Christ opened the Scriptures to his disciples, beginning at Moses and the prophets, and instructed them in all things concerning himself, and also explained to them the prophecies. The apostles, in their preaching, went back to Adam’s day, and brought their hearers down through prophetic history, and ended with Christ and him crucified, calling upon sinners to repent and turn from their sins to God. The representatives of Christ in our day should follow their example, and in every discourse magnify Christ as the Exalted One, as all and in all.

Not only is formality taking possession of the nominal churches, but it is increasing to an alarming extent among those who profess to be keeping the commandments of God, and looking for the soon appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven. We should not be narrow in our views, and limit our facilities for doing good; yet while we extend our influence and enlarge our plans as Providence opens the way, we should be more earnest to avoid the idolatry of the world. While we make greater efforts to increase our usefulness, we must make corresponding efforts to obtain wisdom from God to carry on all the branches of the work after his own order, and not from a worldly standpoint. We should not pattern after the customs of the world, but make the most of the facilities which God has placed within our reach to get the truth before the people.

When as a people our works correspond to our profession, we shall see very much more accomplished than now. When we have men as devoted as Elijah, and possessing the faith which he had, we shall see that God will reveal himself to us as he did to holy men of old. When we have men, who, while they acknowledge their deficiencies, will plead with God in earnest faith, as did Jacob, we [21]

shall see the same results. Power will come from God to man in answer to the prayer of faith. There is but little faith in the world. There are but few who are living near to God. And how can we expect more power, and that God will reveal himself to men, when his word is handled negligently, and when hearts are not sanctified through the truth? Men who are not half converted, who are self-confident and self-sufficient in character, preach the truth to others. But God does not work with them, for they are not holy in heart and life. They do not walk humbly with God. We must have a converted ministry, and then we shall see the light of God, and his power aiding all our efforts.

The watchmen anciently placed upon the walls of Jerusalem and other cities, occupied a most responsible position. Upon their faithfulness depended the safety of all within those cities. When danger was apprehended, they were not to keep silent day nor night. Every few moments they were required to call to one another, to see if all were awake, and no harm had come to any. Sentinels were stationed upon some eminence overlooking the important posts to be guarded, and the cry of warning or of good cheer was sounded from them. This was borne from one to another, each repeating the words, till it went the entire rounds of the city.

[22] These watchmen represent the ministry, upon whose fidelity depends the salvation of souls. The stewards of the mysteries of God should stand as watchmen upon the walls of Zion; and if they see the sword coming, they should sound the note of warning. If they are sleepy sentinels, if their spiritual senses are so benumbed that they see and realize no danger, and the people perish, God will require their blood at the watchmen's hands.

“O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.” The watchmen will need to live very near to God, to hear his word and be impressed with his Spirit, that the people may not look to them in vain. “When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.” [[Ezekiel 33:7-9.](#)]

Ambassadors of Christ should take heed that they do not, through their unfaithfulness, lose their own souls and the souls of those who hear them.

I was shown the churches in different States that profess to be keeping the commandments of God, and looking for the second coming of Christ. There is an alarming amount of indifference, pride, love of the world, and cold formality existing among them. And these are the people who are fast coming to resemble ancient Israel, so far as the want of piety is concerned. Many make high claims to godliness, and yet are destitute of self-control. Appetite and passion bear sway; self is made prominent. Many are arbitrary, dictatorial, overbearing, boastful, proud, and unconsecrated. Yet some of these persons are ministers, handling sacred truths. Unless they repent, their candlestick will be removed out of its place. The Saviour's curse pronounced upon the fruitless fig-tree is a sermon to all formalists and boasting hypocrites who stand forth to the world in pretentious leaves, but are devoid of fruit. What a rebuke to those who have a form of godliness, while in their unchristian lives they deny the power thereof! He who treated with tenderness the very chief of sinners, he who never spurned true meekness and penitence, however great the guilt, came down with scathing denunciations upon those who made high professions of godliness, but in works denied their faith.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:403](#).

[23]

Consecration to the Work

God selected Abraham as his messenger, through whom to communicate light to the world. The word of God came to him, not with the presentation of flattering prospects in this life, of large salary, of great appreciation and worldly honor. “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee,” [Genesis 12:1.] was the divine message to Abraham. The patriarch obeyed, and “went out, not knowing whither he went,” [Hebrews 11:8] as God’s light-bearer, to keep his name alive in the earth. He forsook his country, his home, his relatives, and all pleasant associations connected with his early life, to become a pilgrim and a stranger.

[24] It is frequently more essential than many realize, that early associations should be broken up, in order that those who are to speak “in Christ’s stead,” may stand in a position where God can educate and qualify them for his great work. Kindred and friends often have an influence which God sees will greatly interfere with the instructions he designs to give his servants. Suggestions will be made by those who are not in close connection with Heaven that will, if heeded, turn aside from their holy work those who should be light-bearers to the world. Before God can use him, Abraham must be separated from his former associations, that he may not be controlled by human influence, or rely upon human aid. Now that he has become connected with God, this man must henceforth dwell among strangers. His character must be peculiar, differing from all the world. He could not even explain his course of action so as to be understood by his friends; for they were idolaters. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned; therefore his motives and his actions were beyond the comprehension of his kindred and friends.

Abraham’s unquestioning obedience was one of the most striking instances of faith, of reliance upon God, to be found in the Sacred Record. With only the naked promise that his descendants should possess Canaan, without the least outward evidence, he followed

on where God should lead, fully and sincerely complying with the conditions on his part, and confident that the Lord would faithfully perform his word. The patriarch went wherever God indicated his duty; he passed through wildernesses without terror; he went among idolatrous nations with the one thought, "God has spoken; I am obeying his voice; he will guide, he will protect me."

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

Ministers of the gospel have a sacred work. They have a solemn message of warning to bear to the world,—a message which will be a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. They are God's messengers to man; and they should never lose sight of their mission or of their responsibilities. They are not like worldlings; they cannot be like them. If they would be true to God, they must maintain their separate, holy character. If they cease to connect with Heaven, they are in greater danger than others, and can exert a stronger influence in the wrong direction; for Satan has his eye constantly upon them, waiting for some weakness to be developed, whereby he may make a successful attack. And how he triumphs when he succeeds! for when one who is an ambassador for Christ is off his watch, the great adversary may through him secure many souls to himself.

[25]

Those who closely connect with God may not be prosperous in the things of this life; they may often be sorely tried and afflicted. Joseph was maligned and persecuted because he preserved his virtue and integrity. David, that chosen messenger of God, was hunted like a beast of prey by his wicked enemies. Daniel was cast into a den of lions, because he was true and unyielding in his allegiance to God. Job was deprived of his worldly possessions, and so afflicted in body that he was abhorred by his relatives and friends; yet he

preserved his integrity and his faithfulness to God. Jeremiah would speak the words which God had put into his mouth, and his plain testimony so enraged the king and princes that he was cast into a loathsome pit. Stephen was stoned because he would preach Christ and him crucified. Paul was imprisoned, beaten with rods, stoned, and finally put to death, because he was a faithful messenger to carry the gospel to the Gentiles. The beloved John was banished to the Isle of Patmos, “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” [Revelation 1:9.]

[26] These examples of human steadfastness, in the might of divine power, are a witness to the world of the faithfulness of God’s promises—of his abiding presence and sustaining grace. As the world looks upon these humble men, it cannot discern their moral value with God. It is a work of faith to calmly repose in God in the darkest hour—however severely tried and tempest-tossed, to feel that our Father is at the helm. The eye of faith alone can look beyond the things of time and sense to estimate the worth of eternal riches.

The great military commander conquers nations, and shakes the armies of half the world; but he dies of disappointment, and in exile. The philosopher who ranges through the universe, everywhere tracing the manifestations of God’s power, and delighting in their harmony, often fails to behold in these marvelous wonders the hand that formed them all. “Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.” [Psalm 49:20.] No hope of glorious immortality lights up the future of the enemies of God. But those heroes of faith have the promise of an inheritance of greater value than any earthly riches,—an inheritance that will satisfy the longings of the soul. They may be unknown and unacknowledged by the world, but they are enrolled as citizens in the record books of heaven. An exalted greatness, an enduring, eternal weight of glory, will be the final reward of those whom God has made heirs of all things.

Ministers of the gospel should make the truth of God the theme of study, of meditation, and of conversation. The mind that dwells much on the revealed will of God to man will become strong in the truth. Those who read and study with an earnest desire for divine light, whether they are ministers or not, will soon discover in the Scriptures a beauty and harmony which will captivate their attention, elevate their thoughts, and give them an inspiration and an energy of

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argument that will be powerful to convict and convert souls.

There is danger that ministers who profess to believe present truth will rest satisfied with presenting the theory only, while their own souls do not feel its sanctifying power. Some have not the love of God in the heart, softening, molding, and ennobling the life. The psalmist declares of the good man, "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Referring to his own experience, he exclaims, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word." [[Psalm 1:2](#); [119:97](#), [148](#).]

No man is qualified to stand in the sacred desk unless he has felt the transforming influence of the truth of God upon his own soul. Then, and not till then, can he by precept and example rightly represent the life of Christ. But many, in their labors, exalt themselves rather than their Master; and the people are converted to the minister instead of to Christ.

I am pained to know that some who preach the present truth today are really unconverted men. They are not connected with God. They have a head religion, but no conversion of the heart; and these are the very ones who are the most self-confident and self-sufficient; and this self-sufficiency will stand in the way of their gaining that experience which is essential to make them effective workers in the Lord's vineyard. I wish I could arouse those who claim to be watchmen on the walls of Zion, to realize their responsibility. They should awake, and take a higher stand for God; for souls are perishing through their neglect. They must have that sincere devotion to God that will lead them to see as God sees, and take the words of warning from him and sound the alarm to those who are in peril. The Lord will not hide his truth from the faithful watchman. Those who do the will of God shall know of the doctrine. "The wise shall understand;" but "the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand." [[Daniel 12:10](#).]

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Jesus said to his disciples, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." [[Matthew 11:29](#).] I would plead with those who have accepted the position of teachers, first to become humble learners, and ever to remain as pupils in the school of Christ, to receive from the Master lessons of meekness and lowliness of heart. Humility of spirit, combined with earnest activity, will result in the salvation of

souls so dearly purchased by the blood of Christ. The minister may understand and believe the theory of truth, and be able to present it to others; but this is not all that is required of him. “Faith without works is dead.” [James 2:20.] He needs the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. A living faith in Christ will bring every action of the life and every emotion of the soul into harmony with God’s truth and righteousness.

Fretfulness, self-exaltation, pride, passion, and every other trait of character unlike our holy Pattern, must be overcome; and then humility, meekness, and sincere gratitude to Jesus for his great salvation will continually flow out from the pure fountain of the heart. The voice of Jesus should be heard in the message coming from the lips of his ambassador.

[29] We must have a converted ministry. The efficiency and power attending a truly converted minister would make the hypocrites in Zion tremble, and sinners afraid. The standard of truth and holiness is trailing in the dust. If those who sound the solemn notes of warning for this time could realize their accountability to God, they would see the necessity for fervent prayer. When the cities were hushed in midnight slumber, when every man had gone to his own house, Christ, our example, would repair to the Mount of Olives, and there, amid the overshadowing trees, would spend the entire night in prayer. He who was himself without the taint of sin,—a treasure-house of blessing; whose voice was heard in the fourth watch of the night by the terrified disciples upon the stormy sea, in heavenly benediction; and whose word could summon the dead from their graves,—he it was who made supplication with strong crying and tears. He prayed not for himself, but for those whom he came to save. As he became a suppliant, seeking at the hand of his Father fresh supplies of strength, and coming forth refreshed and invigorated as man’s substitute, he identified himself with suffering humanity, and gave them an example of the necessity of prayer.

His nature was without the taint of sin. As the Son of man, he prayed to the Father, showing that human nature requires all the divine support which man can obtain that he may be braced for duty and prepared for trial. As the Prince of Life, he had power with God, and prevailed for his people. This Saviour, who prayed for those that felt no need of prayer, and wept for those that felt no need of

tears, is now before the throne, to receive and present to his Father the petitions of those for whom he prayed on earth. The example of Christ is for us to follow. Prayer is a necessity in our labor for the salvation of souls. God alone can give the increase of the seed we sow.

We fail many times because we do not realize that, by his Spirit, Christ is with us as truly as when, in the days of his humiliation, he moved visibly upon the earth. The lapse of time has wrought no change in his parting promise to his apostles as he was taken up from them into heaven, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He has ordained that there should be a succession of men who derive authority from the first teachers of the faith for the continual preaching of Christ and him crucified. The great Teacher has delegated power to his servants, who "have this treasure [30] in earthen vessels." [2 Corinthians 4:7.] Christ will superintend the work of his ambassadors, if they wait for his instruction and guidance.

Ministers who are truly Christ's representatives will be men of prayer. With an earnestness and a faith that will not be denied, they will plead with God that they may be strengthened and fortified for duty and trial, and that their lips may be sanctified by a touch of the living coal from off the altar, to speak the words of God to the people. "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." [Isaiah 50:4.]

Christ said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." [Luke 22:31, 32.] Who can estimate the result of the prayers of the world's Redeemer? When Christ shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied, then will be seen and realized the value of his earnest prayers while his divinity was veiled with humanity.

Jesus pleaded, not for one only, but for all his disciples, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." [John 17:24.] His eye pierced the dark veil of the future, and read the life-history of every son and daughter of Adam. He felt the burdens and sorrows of every tempest-tossed soul; and that earnest

prayer included with his living disciples all his followers, to the close of time. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” [John 17:20.] Yes; that prayer of Christ embraces even us. We should be comforted by the thought that we have a great Intercessor in the heavens, presenting our petitions before God. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” [1 John 2:1.] In the hour of greatest need, when discouragement would overwhelm the soul, it is then that the watchful eye of Jesus sees that we need his help. The hour of man’s necessity is the hour of God’s opportunity. When all human support fails, then Jesus comes to our aid, and his presence scatters the darkness and lifts the cloud of gloom.

In their little boat upon the Sea of Galilee, amid the storm and darkness, the disciples toiled hard to reach the shore, but found all their efforts unsuccessful. As despair seized them, Jesus was seen walking upon the foam-capped billows. Even the presence of Christ they did not at first discern, and their terror increased, until his voice, saying, “It is I; be not afraid,” [Matthew 14:27.] dispelled their fears, and gave them hope and joy. Then how willingly the poor, wearied disciples ceased their efforts, and trusted all to the Master.

This striking incident illustrates the experience of the followers of Christ. How often do we tug at the oars, as though our own strength and wisdom were sufficient, until we find our efforts useless. Then, with trembling hands and failing strength, we give up the work to Jesus, and confess we are unable to perform it. Our compassionate Redeemer pities our weakness; and when, in answer to the cry of faith, he takes up the work we ask him to do, how easily he accomplishes that which seemed to us so difficult.

The history of God’s ancient people furnishes us with many encouraging examples of prevailing prayer. When the Amalekites came to attack the camp of Israel in the wilderness, Moses knew that his people were not prepared for the encounter. He sent Joshua with a band of soldiers to meet the enemy, while he himself, with Aaron and Hur, took his position on a hill overlooking the battle-field. There the man of God laid the case before Him who alone was able to give them the victory. With hands outstretched toward heaven, Moses prayed earnestly for the success of the armies of Israel. It was observed that while his hands were reaching upward, Israel prevailed

against the foe; but when through fatigue they were allowed to fall, Amalek prevailed. Aaron and Hur stayed up the hands of Moses, until victory, full and complete, turned upon the side of Israel, and their enemies were driven from the field.

This instance was to be a lesson to all Israel to the close of time, that God is the strength of his people. When Israel triumphed, Moses was reaching his hands toward heaven, and interceding in their behalf; so when all the Israel of God prevail, it is because the Mighty One undertakes their case, and fights their battles for them. Moses did not ask or believe that God would overcome their foes while Israel remained inactive. He marshaled all his forces and sent them out as well prepared as their facilities could make them, and then he took the whole matter to God in prayer. Moses on the mount was pleading with the Lord, while Joshua, with his brave followers, was below, doing his best to meet and repulse the enemies of Israel and of God.

That prayer which comes forth from an earnest, believing heart is the effectual, fervent prayer that availeth much. God does not always answer our prayers as we expect, for we may not ask what would be for our highest good; but in his infinite love and wisdom he will give us those things which we most need. Happy the minister who has a faithful Aaron and Hur to strengthen his hands when they become weary, and to hold them up by faith and prayer. Such a support is a powerful aid to the servant of Christ in his work, and will often make the cause of truth to triumph gloriously.

After the transgression of Israel in making the golden calf, Moses again goes to plead with God in behalf of his people. He has some knowledge of those who have been placed under his care; he knows the perversity of the human heart, and realizes the difficulties with which he must contend. But he has learned from experience that in order to have an influence with the people, he must first have power with God. The Lord reads the sincerity and unselfish purpose of the heart of his servant, and condescends to commune with this feeble mortal, face to face, as a man speaks with a friend. Moses casts himself and all his burdens fully upon God, and freely pours out his soul before him. The Lord does not reprove his servant, but stoops to listen to his supplications.

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Moses has a deep sense of his unworthiness, and his unfitness for the great work to which God has called him. He pleads with intense earnestness that the Lord will go with him. The answer comes, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." [See [Exodus 33:12-23](#).] But Moses does not feel that he can stop here. He has gained much, but he longs to come still nearer to God, to obtain a stronger assurance of his abiding presence. He has carried the burden of Israel; he has borne an overwhelming weight of responsibility; when the people sinned, he suffered keen remorse, as though he himself were guilty; and now there presses upon his soul a sense of the terrible results, should God leave Israel to hardness and impenitence of heart. They would not hesitate to kill Moses, and through their own rashness and perversity they would soon fall a prey to their enemies, and thus dishonor the name of God before the heathen. Moses presses his petition with such earnestness and fervency that the answer comes, "I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name."

[34] Now, indeed, we would expect the prophet to cease pleading; but no, emboldened by his success, he ventures to come still nearer to God, with a holy familiarity which is almost beyond our comprehension. He now makes a request which no human being ever made before: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." What a petition to come from a finite, mortal man! But is he repulsed? does God reprove him for presumption? No; we hear the gracious words: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee."

The unveiled glory of God no man could look upon and live; but Moses is assured that he shall behold as much of the divine glory as he can bear in his present, mortal state. That hand that made the world, that holds the mountains in their places, takes this man of dust,—this man of mighty faith,—and mercifully covers him in a cleft of the rock, while the glory of God and all his goodness pass before him. Can we marvel that the "excellent glory" reflected from Omnipotence shone in the face of Moses with such brightness that the people could not look upon it? The impress of God was upon him, making him appear as one of the shining angels from the throne.

This experience, above all else the assurance that God would hear his prayer, and that the divine presence would attend him, was of more value to Moses as a leader than the learning of Egypt, or all his attainments in military science. No earthly power or skill or learning can supply the place of God's immediate presence. In the history of Moses we may see what intimate communion with God it is man's privilege to enjoy. To the transgressor it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But Moses was not afraid to be alone with the Author of that law which had been spoken with such awful grandeur from Mount Sinai; for his soul was in harmony with the will of his Maker.

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. The eye of faith will discern God very near, and the suppliant may obtain precious evidence of the divine love and care for him. But why is it that so many prayers are never answered? David says, "I cried unto Him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." [Psalm 66:17, 18.] By another prophet the Lord gives us the promise, "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." [Jeremiah 29:13.] Again, he speaks of some who "have not cried unto me with their heart." [Hosea 7:14.] Such petitions are prayers of form, lip-service only, which the Lord does not accept. [35]

The prayer which Nathanael offered while he was under the fig-tree, came from a sincere heart, and it was heard and answered by the Master. Christ said of him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" [John 1:47.] The Lord reads the hearts of all, and understands their motives and purposes. "The prayer of the upright is his delight." [Proverbs 15:18.] He will not be slow to hear those who open their hearts to him, not exalting self, but sincerely feeling their great weakness and unworthiness.

There is need of prayer,—most earnest, fervent, agonizing prayer,—such prayer as David offered when he exclaimed: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." "I have longed after thy precepts;" "I have longed for thy salvation." "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments." [Psalm 42:1; 119:40, 174; 84:2; 119:20.] This is the spirit of wrestling

[36] prayer, such as was possessed by the royal psalmist. Daniel prayed to God, not exalting himself or claiming any goodness: “O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God.” [Daniel 9:19.] This is what James calls the effectual, fervent prayer. Of Christ it is said, “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly.” [Luke 22:44.] In what contrast to this intercession by the Majesty of heaven are the feeble, heartless prayers that are offered to God. Many are content with lip-service, and but few have a sincere, earnest, affectionate longing after God.

Communion with God imparts to the soul an intimate knowledge of his will. But many who profess the faith know not what true conversion is. They have no experience in communion with the Father through Jesus Christ, and have never felt the power of divine grace to sanctify the heart. Praying and sinning, sinning and praying, their lives are full of malice, deceit, envy, jealousy, and self-love. The prayers of this class are an abomination to God. True prayer engages the energies of the soul, and affects the life. He who thus pours out his wants before God feels the emptiness of everything else under heaven. “All my desire is before thee,” said David, “and my groaning is not hid from thee.” “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” “When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me.” [Psalm 38:9; 42:2, 4.]

As our numbers are increasing, broader plans must be laid to meet the increasing demands of the times; but we see no special increase of fervent piety, of Christian simplicity, and earnest devotion. The church seem content to take only the first steps in conversion. They are more ready for active labor than for humble devotion,—more ready to engage in outward religious service than in the inner work of the heart. Meditation and prayer are neglected for bustle and show. Religion must begin with emptying and purifying the heart, and must be nurtured by daily prayer.

[37] The steady progress of our work and our increased facilities are filling the hearts and minds of many of our people with satisfaction and pride, which we fear will take the place of the love of God in the soul. Busy activity in the mechanical part of even the work of God may so occupy the mind that prayer shall be neglected, and self-importance and self-sufficiency, so ready to urge their way, shall

take the place of true goodness, meekness, and lowliness of heart. The zealous cry may be heard, "The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these!" [Jeremiah 7:4.] "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord." [2 Kings 10:16.] But where are the burden-bearers? where are the fathers and mothers in Israel? where are those who carry upon the heart the burden for souls, and who come in close sympathy with their fellow-men, ready to place themselves in any position to save them from eternal ruin?

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." [Zechariah 4:6.] "Ye are," says Christ, "the light of the world." What a responsibility! There is need of fasting, humiliation, and prayer over our decaying zeal and languishing spirituality. The love of many is waxing cold. The efforts of many of our preachers are not what they should be. When some who lack the Spirit and power of God enter a new field, they begin to denounce other denominations, thinking that they can convince the people of the truth by presenting the inconsistencies of the popular churches. It may seem necessary on some occasions to speak of these things, but in general it only creates prejudice against our work, and closes the ears of many who might otherwise have listened to the truth. If these teachers were connected closely with Christ, they would have divine wisdom to know how to approach the people. They would not so soon forget the darkness and error, the passion and prejudice, which kept themselves from the truth.

If these teachers would work with the spirit of the Master, very different results would follow. With meekness and long-suffering, gentleness and love, yet with decided earnestness, they would seek to direct those erring souls to a crucified and risen Saviour. When this is done, we shall see God moving upon the hearts of men. The great apostle says, "We are laborers together with God." [1 Corinthians 3:9.] What a work for poor mortals! We are provided with spiritual weapons to fight the "good fight of faith;" but some seem to have drawn from the armory of heaven only its thunder-bolts. How long must these defects exist?

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While in the midst of a religious interest, some neglect the most important part of the work. They fail to visit and become acquainted with those who have shown an interest to present themselves night after night to listen to the explanation of the Scriptures. Conversation

upon religious subjects, and earnest prayer with such at the right time, might balance many souls in the right direction. Ministers who neglect their duty in this respect are not true shepherds of the flock. At the very time when they should be most active in visiting, conversing, and praying with these interested ones, some are employed in writing unnecessarily long letters to persons at a distance. O, what are we doing for the Master! When probation shall end, how many will see the opportunities they have neglected to render service to their dear Lord who died for them. And even those who were accounted most faithful will see much more that they might have done, had not their minds been diverted by worldly surroundings.

[39] We entreat the heralds of the gospel of Christ never to become discouraged in the work, never to regard the most hardened sinner as beyond the reach of the grace of God. Such may accept the truth in the love of it, and become the salt of the earth. He who turns the hearts of men as the rivers of water are turned, can bring the most selfish, sin-hardened soul to surrender to Christ. Is anything too hard for God to do? “My word,” he says, “shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” [[Isaiah 55:11](#).]

God will not place his benediction upon those who are negligent, selfish, and ease-loving, who will not lift burdens in his cause. The “Well done” will be pronounced upon those only who have done well. Every man is to be rewarded “according as his work shall be.” [[Revelation 22:12](#).] We want an active ministry,—men of prayer, who will wrestle with God as did Jacob, saying, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” [[Genesis 32:26](#).] If we obtain the victor’s crown, we must stretch every nerve, and exercise every power. We can never be saved in inactivity. To be an idler in the Lord’s vineyard is to relinquish all title to the reward of the righteous.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:523](#).

The Need of Preaching Christ

A great and solemn truth has been intrusted to us, for which we are responsible. Too often this truth is presented in cold theory. Sermon after sermon upon doctrinal points is delivered to people who come and go, some of whom will never have another as favorable opportunity of being convicted and converted to Christ. Golden opportunities are lost by delivering elaborate discourses, which display self, but do not magnify Christ. A theory of the truth without vital godliness cannot remove the moral darkness which envelops the soul.

Most precious gems of truth are often rendered powerless by the wisdom of words in which they are clothed, while the power of the Spirit of God is lacking. Christ presented the truth in its simplicity; and he reached not only the most elevated, but the lowliest men of earth. The minister who is God's ambassador and Christ's representative on the earth, who humbles himself that God may be exalted, will possess the genuine quality of eloquence. True piety, a close connection with God, and a daily, living experience in the knowledge of Christ, will make eloquent even the stammering tongue.

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As I see the wants in young churches, as I see and realize their great need of vital godliness and their deficiency in true religious experience, my heart is sad. I know that those who bear the message of truth to them do not properly instruct them on all points essential to the perfection of a symmetrical character in Christ Jesus. These things may be neglected too long by the teachers of the truth. Speaking of the gospel, Paul says: "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles [mark the explanation of the mystery]; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we

preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.” [Colossians 1:25-29]

[41] Here the ministers of Christ have their work, their qualifications, and the power of God’s grace working in them, clearly defined. God has been pleased recently [First published in 1879.] to show me a great deficiency in many who profess to be representatives of Christ. In short, if they are deficient in faith and in a knowledge of vital godliness, they are not only deceiving their own souls, but are making a failure in the work of presenting every man perfect in Christ. Many whom they bring into the truth are destitute of true godliness. They may have a theory of the truth, but they are not thoroughly converted. Their hearts are carnal; they do not abide in Christ and he in them. It is the duty of the minister to present the theory of the truth; but he should not rest with having done this merely. He should adopt the language of Paul, “I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

A vital connection with the Chief Shepherd will make the under-shepherd a living representative of Christ, a light indeed to the world. An understanding of all points of our faith is indeed essential, but it is of greater importance that the minister shall be sanctified through the truth which he presents for the purpose of enlightening the consciences of his hearers. In a series of meetings not one discourse should be given consisting of theory alone, nor should one long, tedious prayer be made. Such prayers God does not hear. I have listened to many prosy, sermonizing prayers that were uncalled for and out of place. A prayer with one half the number of words, offered in fervor and faith, would have softened the hearts of the hearers; but instead of this, I have seen them wait impatiently, as though wishing that every word would end the prayer. Had the minister wrestled with God in his chamber until he felt that his faith could grasp the eternal promise, “Ask, and ye shall receive,” [John 16:24.] he would have come to the point at once, asking with earnestness and faith for what he needed.

We need a converted ministry; otherwise the churches raised up through their labors, having no root in themselves, will not be able to stand alone. The faithful minister of Christ will take the burden

upon his soul. He will not hunger after popularity. The Christian minister should never enter the desk until he has first sought God in his closet, and has come into close connection with him. He may, with humility, lift his thirsty soul to God, and be refreshed with the dew of grace before he shall speak to the people. With an unction of the Holy Spirit upon him, giving him a burden for souls, he will not dismiss a congregation without presenting before them Jesus Christ, the sinner's only refuge, making earnest appeals that will reach their hearts. He should feel that he may never meet these hearers again until the great day of God.

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The Master who has chosen him, who knows the hearts of all men, will give him utterance, that he may speak the words he ought to speak at the right time and with power. And those who become truly convicted of sin, and charmed with the Way, the Truth, and the Life, will find sufficient to do without extolling the ability of the minister. Christ and his love will be exalted above any human instrument. The man will be lost sight of, because Christ is magnified and is the theme of thought. Many are converted to the minister, and are not really converted to Christ. We marvel at the stupor that benumbs the spiritual senses. There is a lack of vital power. Lifeless prayers are offered, and testimonies are borne which fail to edify or strengthen the hearers. It becomes every minister of Christ to inquire the cause of this.

Paul writes to his Colossian brethren: "As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. [Not an unsanctified love of the smartness, ability, or oratory of the preacher, but a love born of the Spirit of God, which his servant represented in his words and character.] For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." [Colossians 1:7-12.]

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Ministers who labor in towns and cities to present the truth should not feel content, nor that their work is ended, until those who have accepted the theory of the truth realize indeed the effect of its sanctifying power, and are truly converted to God. God would be better pleased to have six truly converted to the truth as the result of their labors, than to have sixty make a nominal profession, and yet not be thoroughly converted. These ministers should devote less time to preaching sermons, and reserve a portion of their strength to visit and pray with those who are interested, giving them godly instruction, to the end that they may “present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” [[Colossians 1:28.](#)]

[44] The love of God must be living in the heart of the teacher of the truth. His own heart must be imbued with that deep and fervent love which Christ possessed; then it will flow out to others. Ministers should teach that all who accept the truth should bring forth fruit to the glory of God. They should teach that self-sacrifice must be practiced every day; that many things which have been cherished must be yielded; and that many duties, disagreeable though they may appear, must be performed. Business interests, social endearments, ease, honor, reputation, in short, everything, must be held in subjection to the superior and ever-paramount claims of Christ. Ministers who are not men of vital piety, who stir up an interest among the people, but leave the work in the rough, leave an exceedingly difficult field for others to enter and finish the work they failed to complete. These men will be proved; and if they do not do their work more faithfully, they will, after a still further test, be laid aside as cumberers of the ground, unfaithful watchmen.

God would not have men go forth as teachers who have not studiously learned their lessons, and who will not continue to study that they may present every point of present truth in an intelligent, acceptable manner. With a knowledge of the theory, they should continually be obtaining a more thorough knowledge of Christ. Rules and studies are necessary; but with them the minister should combine earnest prayer that he may be faithful, not building upon the foundation wood, hay, or stubble, which will be consumed by the fires of the last day. Prayer and study should go hand in hand.

The fact that a minister is applauded and praised is no evidence that he has spoken under the influence of the Spirit. It is too fre-

quently the case that young converts, unless guarded, will set their affections more upon their minister than upon their Redeemer. They feel that they have been greatly benefited by their minister's labors. They conceive that he possesses the most exalted gifts and graces, and that no other can do as well as he; therefore they attach undue importance to the man and his labors. This is a confidence that disposes them to idolize the man, and look to him more than to God, and in doing this they do not please God nor grow in grace. They do great harm to the minister, especially if he is young, and developing into a promising gospel laborer.

These teachers, if they are really men of God, receive their words from God. Their manner of address may be faulty, and need much improvement; yet if God breathes through them, words of inspiration, the power is not of man, but of God. The Giver should have the glory and the heart's affections, while the minister should be esteemed, loved, and respected for his work's sake, because he is God's servant to bear the message of mercy to sinners. The Son of God is often eclipsed by the man standing between him and the people. The man is praised, petted, and exalted, and the people get scarcely a glimpse of Jesus, who, by the precious beams of light reflected from him, should eclipse everything besides. [45]

The minister of Christ who is imbued with the Spirit and love of his Master, will so labor that the character of God and of his dear Son may be made manifest in the fullest and clearest manner. He will strive to have his hearers become intelligent in their conceptions of the character of God, that his glory may be acknowledged on the earth. A man is no sooner converted than in his heart is born a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart. The Spirit of Christ illuminating the soul is represented by the light, which dispels all darkness; it is compared to salt, because of its preserving qualities; and to leaven, which secretly exerts its transforming power.

Those whom Christ has connected with himself will, as far as in them lies, labor diligently and perseveringly, as he labored, to save souls who are perishing around them. They will reach the people by prayer, earnest, fervent prayer, and personal effort. It is impossible for those who are thoroughly converted to God, enjoying

communion with him, to be negligent of the vital interests of those who are perishing outside of Christ.

[46] The minister should not do all the work himself, but he should unite with him those who have taken hold of the truth. He will thus teach others to work after he shall leave. A working church will ever be a growing church. They will ever find a stimulus and a tonic in trying to help others, and in doing it they will be strengthened and encouraged.

I have read of a man who, journeying on a winter's day through the deep, drifted snow, became benumbed by the cold, which was almost imperceptibly stealing away his vital powers. And as he was nearly chilled to death by the embrace of the frost king, and about to give up the struggle for life, he heard the moans of a brother traveler, who was perishing with cold, as he was about to perish. His sympathy was aroused, and he determined to rescue him. He chafed the ice-clad limbs of the unfortunate man, and after considerable effort, raised him to his feet; and as he could not stand, he bore him in sympathizing arms through the very drifts he had thought he could never succeed in getting through alone. And when he had borne his fellow-traveler to a place of safety, the truth flashed home to him that in saving his neighbor he had saved himself also. His earnest efforts to save another quickened the blood which was freezing in his own veins, and created a healthful warmth in the extremities of his body.

These lessons must be urged upon young believers continually, not only by precept, but by example, that in their Christian experience they may realize similar results. Let the desponding ones, those disposed to think the way to life is very trying and difficult, go to work and seek to help others. In such efforts, mingled with prayer for divine light, their own hearts will throb with the quickening influence of the grace of God; their own affections will glow with more divine fervor, and their whole Christian life will be more of a reality, more earnest, more prayerful.

[47] The minister of Christ should be a man of prayer, a man of piety; cheerful, but never coarse and rough, jesting or frivolous. A spirit of frivolity may be in keeping with the profession of clowns and theatrical performers, but it is altogether beneath the dignity of a

man who is chosen to stand between the living and the dead, and to be mouth-piece for God.

Every day's labor is faithfully chronicled in the books of God. As men claiming spiritual illumination, you will give moral tone to the character of all with whom you are connected. As faithful ministers of the gospel, you should bend all the energies of the mind and all the opportunities of your life to make your work wholly successful, and present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. In order to do this, you must pray earnestly. Ministers of the gospel must be in possession of that power which wrought such wonders for the humble fishermen of Galilee.

Moral and intellectual powers are needed in order to discharge with fidelity the important duties devolving upon you; but these may be possessed, and yet there may be a great lack of godliness. The endowment of the Holy Spirit is indispensably essential to success in your great work. Said Christ, "Without me ye can do nothing." [John 15:5.] But through Christ strengthening you, you can do all things.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:313](#).

Labor in New Fields

[48] December 10, 1871, I was shown that God would accomplish a great work through the truth, if devoted, self-sacrificing men would give themselves unreservedly to the work of presenting it to those in darkness. Those who have a knowledge of the precious truth, and who are consecrated to God, should avail themselves of every opportunity where there is an opening to press in the truth. Angels of God are moving on the hearts and consciences of the people of other nations, and honest souls are troubled as they witness the signs of the times in the unsettled state of the nations. The inquiry arises in their hearts, What will be the end of all these things? While God and angels are at work to impress hearts, the servants of Christ seem to be asleep. But few are working in unison with the heavenly messengers. All men and women who are Christians in every sense of the word, should be workers in the vineyard of the Lord. They should be wide awake, zealously laboring for the salvation of their fellow-men, and should imitate the example that the Saviour of the world has given them in his life of self-denial, sacrifice, and faithful, earnest labor.

There has been but little of the missionary spirit among Sabbath-keeping Adventists. If ministers and people were sufficiently aroused, they would not rest thus indifferently, while God has honored them by making them the depositaries of his law, by printing it in their minds and writing it upon their hearts. These truths of vital importance are to test the world; and yet in our own country there are cities, villages, and towns that have never heard the warning message. Young men who feel stirred by the appeals that have been made for help in this great work of advancing the cause of God, make some advance moves, but do not get the burden of the work upon them sufficiently to accomplish what they might. They are willing to do a small work, which does not require special effort. Therefore they do not learn to place their whole dependence upon God, and by living faith draw from the great Fountain and Source

of light and strength, in order that their efforts may prove wholly successful.

Those who think that they have a work to do for the Master should not begin their efforts among the churches; they should go out into new fields, and prove their gifts. In this way they can test themselves, and settle the matter to their own satisfaction, whether God has indeed chosen them for this work. They will feel the necessity of studying the word of God, and praying earnestly for heavenly wisdom and divine aid. By meeting with opponents who bring up objections to the important points of our faith, they will be brought where they will obtain a most valuable experience. They will feel their weakness, and be driven to the word of God and to prayer. In this exercise of their gifts, they will be learning and improving, and gaining confidence, courage, and faith, and will eventually have a valuable experience....

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If young men who begin to labor in this cause would have the missionary spirit, they would give evidence that God has indeed called them to the work. But when they do not go out into new places, but are content to go from church to church, they give evidence that the burden of the work is not upon them. The ideas of our young preachers are not broad enough. Their zeal is too feeble. Were the young men awake and devoted to the Lord, they would be diligent every moment of their time, and would seek to qualify themselves to become laborers in the missionary field rather than to become combatants.

Young men should be qualifying themselves by becoming familiar with other languages, that God may use them as mediums to communicate his saving truth to those of other nations. These young men may obtain a knowledge of other languages even while engaged in laboring for sinners. If they are economical of their time, they can be improving their minds, and qualifying themselves for more extended usefulness. If young women who have borne but little responsibility would devote themselves to God, they could qualify themselves for usefulness by studying and becoming familiar with other languages. They could devote themselves to the work of translating.

Our publications should be printed in other languages, that foreign nations may be reached. Much can be done through the medium

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of the press, but still more can be accomplished if the influence of the publications could be aided by that of the living preacher. Missionaries are needed to go to other nations to preach the truth in a guarded, careful manner. The cause of present truth can be greatly extended by personal effort. The contact of mind with mind will do more to remove prejudice, if the labor is discreet, than our publications alone can do. Those who engage in this work should not consult their ease or inclination; neither should they have love for popularity or display.

When the churches see young men possessing zeal to qualify themselves to extend their labors to cities, villages, and towns that have never been aroused to the truth, and missionaries volunteering to go to other nations to carry the truth to them, the churches will be encouraged and strengthened far more than by receiving the labors of inexperienced young men. As they see their ministers' hearts all aglow with love and zeal for the truth, and with a desire to save souls, the churches will arouse. These generally have gifts and power within themselves to bless and strengthen themselves, and to gather the sheep and lambs into the fold. They need to be thrown upon their own resources, that all the gifts that are lying dormant may thus be called into active service.

[51] As churches are established, it should be set before them that it is even from among them that men must be taken to carry the truth to others, and raise up new churches; therefore they must all work, and cultivate to the utmost the talents that God has given them, and be training their minds to engage in the service of their Master. If these messengers are pure in heart and life, if their example is what it should be, their labors will be highly successful; for they have a most powerful truth, one that is clear and connected, and that has convincing arguments in its favor. They have God on their side, and the angels of God to work with their efforts.

The reason why there has been so little accomplished by those who preach the truth, is not wholly that the truth they bear is unpopular, but that the men who bear the message are not sanctified by the truths they preach. The Saviour withdraws his smiles, and the inspiration of his Spirit is not upon them. The presence and power of God to convict the sinner and cleanse from all unrighteousness, is not manifest. Sudden destruction is right upon the people, and yet

they are not fearfully alarmed. Unconsecrated ministers make the work very hard for those who follow after them, and who have the burden and spirit of the work upon them....

Every opportunity should be improved to extend the truth to other nations. This will be attended with considerable expense, but expense should in no case hinder the performance of this work. Money is of value only as it is used to advance the interest of the kingdom of God. The Lord has lent men means for this very purpose, to use in sending the truth to their fellow-men. There is a great amount of surplus means in the ranks of Seventh-day Adventists; and the selfish withholding of it from the cause of God, is blinding their eyes to the importance of the work of God, making it impossible for them to discern the solemnity of the times in which we live, or the value of eternal riches. They do not view Calvary in the right light, and therefore cannot appreciate the worth of the soul for which Christ paid an infinite price.

Men will invest means in that which they value the most, and which they think will bring them the greatest profits. When men will run great risks and invest much in worldly enterprises, but are unwilling to venture or invest much in the cause of God to send the truth to their fellow-men, they give evidence that they value their earthly treasure just as much more highly than the heavenly as their works show....

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It will be difficult to overcome prejudice, and to convince the unbelieving that our efforts to help them are disinterested. But this should not hinder our labor. There is no precept in the word of God that tells us to do good to those only who appreciate and respond to our efforts, and to benefit those only who will thank us for it. God has sent us to work in his vineyard. It is our business to do all we can. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that." [[Ecclesiastes 11:6](#).] We have too little faith. We limit the Holy One of Israel. We should be grateful that God condescends to use any of us as his instruments. For every earnest prayer put up in faith for anything, answers will be returned. They may not come just as we have expected; but they will come—not perhaps as we have desired, but at the very time when we most need them. But O, how sinful is our unbelief! "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in

you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” [John 15:7.]

Young men who are engaged in this work should not trust too much to their own abilities. They are inexperienced, and should seek to learn wisdom from those who have had long experience in the work, and who have had opportunities to study character.

[53] Instead of laboring among the churches, God designs that our ministers should spread abroad, and our missionary labor be extended over as much ground as we can possibly occupy to advantage, going in every direction to raise up new companies. We should ever leave upon the minds of new disciples an impression of the importance of our mission. As able men are converted to the truth, they should not require laborers to keep their flagging faith alive; but these men should be impressed with the necessity of laboring in the vineyard. As long as churches rely upon laborers from abroad to strengthen and encourage their faith, they will not become strong in themselves. They should be instructed that their strength will increase in proportion to their personal efforts. The more closely the New Testament plan is followed in missionary labor, the more successful will be the efforts put forth.

We should work as did our divine Teacher, sowing the seeds of truth with care, anxiety, and self-denial. We must have the mind of Christ if we would not become weary in well-doing. His was a life of continual sacrifice for others' good. We must follow his example. We must sow the seed of truth, and trust in God to quicken it into life. The precious seed may lie dormant for some time, when the grace of God may convict the heart, and the seed sown be awakened to life, and spring up, and bear fruit to the glory of God. Missionaries in this great work are wanted to labor unselfishly, earnestly, and perseveringly, as co-workers with Christ and the heavenly angels in the salvation of their fellow-men.

Especially should our ministers beware of indolence and pride, which are apt to grow out of a consciousness that we have the truth, and strong arguments which our opponents cannot meet; and while the truths which we handle are mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of the powers of darkness, there is danger of neglecting personal piety, purity of heart, and entire consecration to God. There is danger of their feeling that they are rich and increased with goods,

while they lack the essential qualifications of Christians. They may be wretched, poor, miserable, blind, and naked. They do not feel the necessity of living in obedience to Christ every day and every hour. Spiritual pride eats out the vitals of religion. In order to preserve humility, it would be well to remember how we appear in the sight of a holy God, who reads every secret of the soul, and how we should appear in the sight of our fellow-men if they all knew us as well as God knows us. For this reason, to humble us, we are directed to confess our faults, and improve this opportunity to subdue our pride.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:202](#). [54]

The Spirit of Self-Sacrifice

The great work now to be accomplished is to bring up the people of God to engage in the work, and exert a holy influence. They should act the part of laborers. With wisdom, caution, and love, they should labor for the salvation of neighbors and friends. There is too distant a feeling manifested. The cross is not laid right hold of, and borne as it should be. All should feel that they are their brother's keeper, that they are in a great degree responsible for the souls of those around them. The brethren err when they leave this work all to the ministers. The harvest is great, and the laborers are few. Those who are of good repute, whose lives are in accordance with their faith, can be workmen. They can converse with others, and urge upon them the importance of the truth. They must not wait for the ministers, and neglect a plain duty which God has left for them to perform.

[55] Some of our ministers feel but little disposition to take upon them the burden of the work of God, and labor with that disinterested benevolence which characterized the life of our divine Lord. The churches, as a general rule, are farther advanced than some of the ministers. They have had faith in the testimonies which God has been pleased to give, and have acted upon them, while some of the preachers are far behind. They profess to believe the testimonies borne, and some do harm by making them an iron rule for those who have had no experience in reference to them, but they fail to carry them out themselves. They have had repeated testimonies, which they have utterly disregarded. The course of such is not consistent.

The people of God generally feel a united interest in the spread of the truth. They cheerfully contribute toward a liberal support of those who labor in word and doctrine. And I saw that it is the duty of those who have the responsibility of distributing means, to see that the liberalities of the church are not squandered. Some of these liberal brethren have been laboring for years with shattered nerves and broken-down constitutions, caused by excessive labor in the past

to obtain possessions here, and now as they freely give a portion of the substance which has cost them so much, it is the duty of those who labor in word and doctrine to manifest a zeal and self-sacrifice, at least equal to that shown by these brethren.

God's servants must go out free. They must know in whom they trust. There is power in Christ and his salvation to make them free men; and unless they are free in him, they cannot build up his church and gather in souls. Will God send out a man to rescue souls from the snare of Satan, when his own feet are entangled in the net? God's servants must not be wavering. If their feet are sliding, how can they say to those of a fearful heart, "Be strong"? God would have his servants hold up the feeble hands and strengthen the wavering. Those who are not prepared to do this, would better first labor for themselves, and pray until they are endowed with power from on high.

God is displeased with the lack of self-denial in some of his servants. They have not the burden of the work upon them. They seem to be in a death-like stupor. Angels of God stand amazed, and ashamed of this lack of self-denial and perseverance. While the Author of our salvation was laboring and suffering for us, he denied himself, and his whole life was one continued scene of toil and privation. He could have passed his days on earth in ease and plenty, and appropriated to himself the pleasures of this life; but he considered not his own convenience. He lived to do others good. He suffered to save others from suffering. He endured to the end, and finished the work which was given him to do. All this was to save us from ruin. And now, can it be that we, the unworthy objects of so great love, will seek a better position in this life than was given to our Lord? Every moment of our lives we have been partakers of the blessings of his great love, and for this very reason we cannot fully realize the depths of ignorance and misery from which we have been saved. Can we look upon Him whom our sins have pierced, and not be willing to drink with him the bitter cup of humiliation and sorrow? Can we look upon Christ crucified, and wish to enter his kingdom in any other way than through much tribulation?

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The preachers are not all given up to the work of God, as he requires them to be. Some have felt that the lot of a preacher was hard, because they had to be separated from their families. They

forget that once it was harder laboring than it is now. Once there were but few friends of the cause. They forget those upon whom God laid the burden of the work in the past. There were but a few then who received the truth as the result of much labor. God's chosen servants wept and prayed for a clear understanding of truth, and suffered privation and much self-denial, in order to carry it to others. Step by step they followed as God's opening providence led the way. They did not study their own convenience, or shrink at hardships. Through these men, God prepared the way, and made the truth plain [57] to the understanding of every honest mind. Everything has been made ready to the hands of ministers who have since embraced the truth, yet some of them have failed to take upon them the burden of the work. They seek for an easier lot, a less self-denying position. This earth is not the resting-place of Christians, much less for the chosen ministers of God. They forget that Christ left his riches and glory in heaven, and came to earth to die, and that he has commanded us to love one another even as he has loved us. They forget those of whom the world was not worthy, who wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, and were afflicted and tormented.

I was shown the Waldenses, and what they suffered for their religion. They conscientiously studied the word of God, and lived up to the light which shone upon them. They were persecuted, and driven from their homes; their possessions, gained by hard labor, were taken from them, and their houses burned. They fled to the mountains, and there suffered incredible hardships. They endured hunger, fatigue, cold, and nakedness. The only clothing which many of them could obtain was the skins of animals. And yet the scattered and homeless ones would assemble to unite their voices in singing and praising God that they were accounted worthy to suffer for Christ's name. They encouraged and cheered one another, and were grateful for even their miserable retreat. Many of their children sickened and died from cold and hunger; yet the parents did not for a moment think of yielding their religion. They prized the love and favor of God far above earthly ease or worldly riches. They received consolation from God, and with pleasing anticipations looked forward to the recompense of reward.

Again, I was shown Martin Luther, whom God raised up to do a special work. How precious to him was the knowledge of truth

revealed in the word of God! His mind was starving for something sure upon which to build his hope that God would be his Father, and heaven his home. The new and precious light which dawned upon him from the word of God was of priceless value, and he thought that if he went forth with it, he could convince the world. He stood up against the ire of a fallen church, and strengthened those who with him were feasting upon the rich truths contained in the word of God. Luther was God's chosen instrument to tear off the garb of hypocrisy from the papal church, and expose her corruption. He raised his voice zealously, and in the power of the Holy Spirit rebuked the existing sins of the leaders of the people. Proclamations went forth to kill him wherever he might be found; he seemed left to the mercies of a superstitious people who were obedient to the head of the Roman church. Yet he counted not his life dear unto himself. Luther knew that he was not safe anywhere, yet he trembled not. The light which he saw and feasted upon was life to him, and was of more value than all the treasures of earth. Earthly treasures he knew would fail; but the rich truths opened to his understanding, operating upon his heart, would live, and if obeyed, would lead him to immortality.

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When summoned to Augsburg to answer for his faith, he obeyed the summons. That one lone man who had stirred the rage of priests and people was arraigned before those who had caused the world to tremble,—a meek lamb surrounded by angry lions; yet for the sake of Christ and the truth, he stood up undaunted, and with holy eloquence, which the truth alone can inspire, he gave the reasons of his faith. His enemies tried by various means to silence the bold advocate for truth. At first they flattered him, and held out the promise that he should be exalted and honored. But life and honors were valueless to him, if purchased at the sacrifice of the truth. Brighter and clearer shone the word of God upon his understanding, giving him a more vivid sense of the errors, corruptions, and hypocrisy of the papacy. His enemies then sought to intimidate him, and cause him to renounce his faith; but he boldly stood in defense of the truth. He was ready to die for his faith, if God required; but to yield it—never! God preserved his life. He bade angels attend him, and baffle the rage and purposes of his enemies, and bring him unharmed through the stormy conflict.

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The calm, dignified power of Luther humbled his enemies, and dealt a most dreadful blow to the papacy. The great and proud men in power meant that his blood should atone for the mischief he had done their cause. Their plans were laid; but a mightier than they had charge of Luther. His work was not finished. The friends of Luther hastened his departure from Augsburg. He left the city by night, mounted upon a horse without bridle, himself unarmed and without boots or spurs. In great weariness he pursued his journey until he was among his friends.

Again the indignation of the papists was aroused, and they resolved to stop the mouth of that fearless advocate of truth. They summoned him to Worms, fully determined to make him answer for his folly. He was in feeble health, yet he did not excuse himself. He well knew the dangers that were before him. He knew that his powerful enemies would take any measure to silence him. They were crying for his blood as eagerly as the Jews clamored for the blood of Christ. Yet he trusted in that God who preserved the three worthies in the burning fiery furnace. His anxiety and care were not for himself. He sought not his own ease, but his great anxiety was that the truth, to him so precious, should not be exposed to the insults of the ungodly. He was ready to die, rather than allow its enemies to triumph. As he entered Worms, thousands of persons pressed around and followed him. Emperors and others in high authority were attended with no greater company. The excitement was intense; and one in that throng, with a shrill and plaintive voice, chanted a funeral dirge to warn Luther of what awaited him. But the Reformer had counted the cost, and was ready to seal his testimony with his blood, if God so ordained.

Luther was about to appear to answer for his faith before a most imposing assembly, and he looked to God in faith for strength. For a little time his courage and faith were tested. Perils in every form were presented before him. He became sad. Clouds gathered around him, and hid from him the face of God. He longed to go forth with a confident assurance that God was with him. He could not be satisfied unless he was shut in with God. With broken cries he sent up his agonizing prayer to Heaven. His spirit at times seemed to faint, as his enemies, in his imagination, multiplied before him. He trembled at his danger. I saw that God in his wise providence prepared him in

this way that he might not forget in whom to trust, and that he should not rush on presumptuously into danger. As his own instrument, God was fitting him for the great work before him.

Luther's prayer was heard. His courage and faith returned as he met his enemies. Meek as a lamb, he stood, surrounded by the great men of the earth, who, like angry wolves, fastened their eyes upon him, hoping to awe him with their power and greatness. But he had taken hold of the strength of God, and feared not. His words were spoken with such majesty and power that his enemies could do nothing against him. God was speaking through Luther, and he had brought together sovereigns and professed wise men, that he might publicly bring to naught their wisdom, and that they all might see the strength and firmness of feeble man when leaning upon God, his eternal Rock.

The calm bearing of Luther was in striking contrast to the passion and rage exhibited by those so-called great men. They could not frighten him into a recantation of the truth. In noble simplicity and calm firmness he stood like a rock. The opposition of his enemies, their rage and threats, like a mighty wave, surged against him, and broke harmless at his feet. He remained unmoved. They were chagrined that their power, which had caused kings and nobles to tremble, should be thus despised by a humble man, and they longed to make him feel their wrath by torturing his life away. But One who is mightier than the potentates of earth had charge of this fearless witness. God had a work for him to do. He must yet suffer for the truth. He must see it wade through bloody persecutions. He must see it clothed in sackcloth, and covered with reproach by fanatics. He must live to justify it, and to be its defender when the mighty powers of earth should seek to tear it down. He must live to see it triumph, and tear away the errors and superstitions of the papacy. Luther gained a victory at Worms which weakened the papacy, the news of which spread to other kingdoms and nations. It was an effectual blow in favor of the Reformation. [61]

Ministers who are preaching present truth were held up to me in contrast with the leading men of the Reformation; especially was Luther's devoted, zealous life placed beside the lives of some of our preachers. He proved his undying love for the truth by his courage, his calm firmness, his self-denial. He encountered trials

and sacrifices, and at times suffered the deepest anguish of soul, while standing in defense of the truth; yet he murmured not. He was hunted like a wild beast of prey, yet for Christ's sake he endured all cheerfully.

[62] The last merciful message is intrusted to God's humble, faithful servants of this time. God has led along those who would not shun responsibility, and has laid burdens upon them, and has through them presented to his people a plan of systematic benevolence in which all can engage, and work in harmony. This system has been carried out, and has worked like magic. It liberally sustains the preachers and the cause. As soon as the preachers ceased their opposition, and stood out of the way, the people heartily responded to the call, and prized the system. Everything is made convenient and easy for the preachers, that they may work, free from embarrassment. Our people have taken hold with a will and an interest which is not to be found among any other class. And God is displeased with preachers who now complain, and fail to throw their whole energies into this all-important work. They are without excuse, yet some are deceived, and think that they are sacrificing much, and are having a hard time, when they really know nothing about suffering, self-denial, or want. They may often be weary, so would they be if they were dependent on manual labor for a support.

Some have thought it would be easier to labor with their hands, and have often expressed their choice to do so. Such do not know what they are talking about. They are deceiving themselves. Some have very expensive families to provide for, and they lack management. They do not realize that they are indebted to the cause of God for their homes and all that they have. They have not realized how much it costs to live. Should they engage in manual labor, they would not be free from anxiety and weariness. They could not, while laboring to support their families, be sitting down at their own fireside. It is only a few weary hours that a laboring man with a family dependent upon him for support can spend with his family at home. Some ministers do not love industrious labor, and they have cherished a feeling of dissatisfaction which is very unreasonable. God has marked every murmuring thought and word and feeling.

[63] Heaven is insulted by such an exhibition of weakness and lack of devotion to the cause of God.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:368](#).

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Not all who are preaching the truth realize that their testimony and example are deciding the destiny of souls. If they are unfaithful in their mission, and become careless in their work, souls will be lost as the result. If they are self-sacrificing and faithful in the work which the Master has given them to do, they will be instrumental in the salvation of many. Some permit trifles to divert them from the work. Bad roads, rainy weather, or little matters at home, are sufficient excuses for them to leave the work of laboring for souls. And frequently this is done at the most important time in the work. When an interest has been raised, and the minds of the people are agitated, the interest is left to die out because the minister chooses a more pleasant and easy field. Those who pursue this course show plainly that they do not have the burden of the work upon them. They wish to be carried by the people. They are not willing to endure the privations and hardships which are ever the lot of a true shepherd.

Some have no experience in taking hold of the work as though it was of vital importance. They do not enter upon it with zeal and earnestness which would show they are doing work that will have to bear the test of the Judgment. They work too much in their own strength, They do not make God their trust, and therefore errors and imperfections mark all their efforts. They do not give the Lord an opportunity to do anything for them. They do not walk by faith, but by sight. They will go no faster or farther than they can see. They do not seem to understand that venturing something for the truth's sake has any part in their religious experience.

Some go from their homes to labor in the gospel field, but do not act as though the truths which they speak were a reality to them. Their actions show that they have not experienced the saving power of the truth themselves. When out of the desk, they appear to have no burden for the truth. They labor sometimes apparently to profit, but more frequently to no profit. Such feel as much entitled to the wages they receive as though they had earned them; notwithstanding their unconsecration has cost more labor, anxiety, and pain of heart to those laborers who have the burden of the work upon them than all their efforts have done good. Such are not profitable workmen. But they will have to bear this responsibility themselves.

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It is often the case that ministers are inclined to visit almost entirely among the churches, devoting their time and strength where their labor will do no good. Frequently the churches are in advance of the ministers who labor among them, and would be in a more prosperous condition if those ministers would keep out of their way, and give them an opportunity to work. The efforts of such ministers to build up the churches only tear them down. The theory of the truth is presented over and over again, but it is not accompanied by the vitalizing power of God. They manifest a listless indifference; the spirit is contagious, and the churches lose their interest and burden for the salvation of others. Thus by their preaching and example, the ministers lull the people to carnal security. If they would leave the churches, go out into new fields, and labor to raise up churches, they would understand their ability, and what it costs to bring souls out to take their position upon the truth. And they would then realize how careful they should be that their example and influence might never discourage or weaken those whom it had required so much hard, prayerful labor to convert to the truth. "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." [[Galatians 6:4.](#)]

[65] The churches give of their means to sustain the ministers in their labors. What have they to encourage them in their liberality? Some ministers labor from month to month, and accomplish so little that the churches become disheartened; they cannot see that anything is being done to convert souls to the truth, nor to make those who are church-members more spiritual or fervent in their love to God and his truth. Those who are handling sacred things should be wholly consecrated to the work. They should possess an unselfish interest in it, and a fervent love for perishing souls. If they do not have this, they have mistaken their mission, and should cease their labor of teaching others; for they do more harm than they can possibly do good. Some ministers display themselves, but do not feed the flock that are perishing for meat in due season.

There is a disposition with some to shrink from opposition. They fear to go into new places, because of the darkness and the conflicts they expect to meet. This is cowardice. The people must be met where they are. They need stirring appeals, and practical as well

as doctrinal discourses. Precept backed up by example will have a powerful influence.

A faithful shepherd will not study his own ease and convenience, but will labor for the interest of the sheep. In this great work he will forget self; in his search for the lost sheep he will not realize that he himself is weary, cold, and hungry. He has but one object in view; to save the lost and wandering sheep, at whatever expense it may be to himself. His wages will not influence him in his labor, nor turn him from his duty. He has received his commission from the Majesty of heaven, and he expects his reward when the work intrusted to him is done. [For the paragraph on Bible Study, omitted in this article, see “The Importance of Bible Study,” P. 121.]...

The glorious results that attended the ministry of the chosen disciples of Christ were the effect of bearing about in their bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus. Some of those who testified of Christ were unlearned and ignorant men; but grace and truth reigned in their hearts, inspiring and purifying their lives, and controlling their actions. They were living representatives of the mind and spirit of Christ. They were living epistles, known and read of all men. They were hated and persecuted by all who would not receive the truth they preached, and who despised the cross of Christ.

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Wicked men will not oppose a form of godliness, nor reject a popular ministry which presents no cross for them to bear. The natural heart will raise no serious objection to a religion in which there is nothing to make the transgressor of the law tremble, or bring to bear upon the heart and conscience the terrible realities of a judgment to come. It is the demonstration of the Spirit and the power of God which raises opposition, and leads the natural heart to rebel. The truth that saves the soul must not only come from God, but his Spirit must attend its communication to others, else it falls powerless before opposing influences. O that the truth might fall from the lips of God’s servants with such power as to burn its way to the hearts of the people!

Ministers must be endued with power from on high. When the truth in its simplicity and strength, as it is in Jesus, is brought to bear against the spirit of the world, condemning its exciting pleasures and corrupting charms, it will then be plainly seen that there is no concord between Christ and Belial. The natural heart cannot

discern the things of the Spirit of God. An unconsecrated minister, presenting the truth in an unimpassioned manner, his own soul unmoved by the truths he speaks to others, will do only harm. Every effort he makes only lowers the standard.

[67] Selfish interest must be swallowed up in deep anxiety for the salvation of souls. Some ministers have labored, not because they dared not do otherwise, not because the woe was upon them, but having in view the wages they were to receive. Said the angel, "Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for naught? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for naught. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts neither will I accept an offering at your hand." [[Malachi 1:10.](#)]

It is entirely wrong to hire every errand that is done for the Lord. The treasury of the Lord has been drained by those who have been only an injury to the cause. If ministers give themselves wholly to the work of God, and devote all their energies to building up his cause, they will have no lack. As regards temporal things, they have a better portion than their Lord, and better than his chosen disciples, whom he sent forth to save perishing man. Our great Exemplar, who was in the brightness of his Father's glory, was despised and rejected of men. Reproach and falsehood followed him. His chosen disciples were living examples of the life and spirit of their Master. They were honored with stripes and imprisonment; and it was finally their portion to seal their ministry with their blood.

When ministers are so interested in the work that they love it as a part of their existence, then they can say, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." [[Romans 8:35-39.](#)]

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"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which

is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." [1 Peter 5:1-4.]—[Testimonies for the Church 2:338](#).

Bible Examples of Self-Sacrifice

We feel pained beyond measure to see some of our ministers hovering about the churches, apparently putting forth some little effort, but having next to nothing to show for their labors. The field is the world. Let them go out into the unbelieving world, and labor to convert souls to the truth. We refer our brethren and sisters to the example of Abraham going up to Mount Moriah to offer his only son at the command of God. Here was obedience and sacrifice. Moses was in kingly courts, and a prospective crown was before him. But he turned away from the tempting bribe, and "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." [[Hebrews 11:24-26](#).]

The apostles counted not their lives dear unto themselves, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. Paul and Silas suffered the loss of all things. They suffered scourging, and were in no gentle manner thrown upon the cold floor of a dungeon in a most painful position, their feet elevated and fastened in the stocks. Did repinings and complaints then reach the ear of the jailer? O, no! From the inner prison, voices broke the silence of midnight with songs of joy and praise to God. These disciples were cheered by a deep and earnest love for the cause of their Redeemer, for which they suffered.

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As the truth of God fills our hearts, absorbs our affections, and controls our lives, we also will count it joy to suffer for the truth's sake. No prison walls, no martyr's stake, can then daunt or hinder us in the great work.

“Come, O my soul, to Calvary.”

Mark the humble life of the Son of God. He was a “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” Behold his ignominy, his agony in Gethsemane, and learn what self-denial is. Are we suffering want? so was Christ, the Majesty of heaven; but his poverty was for our sake. Are we ranked among the rich? so was he; but he consented for our sake to become poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. In Christ we have self-denial exemplified. His sacrifice consisted not merely in leaving the royal courts of heaven, in being tried by wicked men as a criminal and pronounced guilty, and in being delivered up to die as a malefactor; but in bearing the weight of the sins of the world. The life of Christ rebukes our indifference and coldness. We are near the close of time, when Satan has come down, having great wrath, knowing that his time is short. He is working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. The warfare has been left in our hands by our great Leader for us to carry forward with vigor. We are not doing a twentieth part of what we might do if we were awake. The work is retarded by love of ease, and a lack of the self-denying spirit of which our Saviour has given us an example in his life,—[Testimonies for the Church 3:406](#).

Pastoral Labor

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We are living in a most solemn time. All have a work to do requiring diligence. Especially is this true of the pastor, who is to care for and feed the flock of God. The one whose special work it is to lead the people into the path of truth, should be an able expositor of the word, capable of adapting his teachings to the wants of the people. He should be so closely connected with Heaven as to become a living channel of light, a mouth-piece for God.

A pastor should have a correct understanding of the word and also of the human character. Our faith is unpopular. The people are unwilling to be convinced that they are so deeply in error; a great work is to be done, and at present there are but few to do it. One man usually performs the labor which should be shared by two; for the work of the evangelist is necessarily combined with that of the pastor, bringing a double burden upon the worker in the field.

The minister of Christ should be a Bible student, that his mind may be stored with Bible evidence; for a minister is strong only when he is fortified with Scripture truth. Argument is good in its place, but far more can be reached by simple explanations of the word of God. The lessons of Christ were illustrated so clearly that the lowest and most simple-minded could readily comprehend them. Jesus did not employ long and difficult words in his discourses, but used plain language, adapted to the minds of the common people. He ventured no further into the subject he was expounding than they were able to follow him.

There are many men of good minds, who are intelligent in regard to the Scriptures, whose usefulness is greatly hindered by their defective method of labor. Some ministers who engage in the work of saving souls, fail to secure the best results, because they do not carry through with thoroughness the work that they began with so much enthusiasm. Others are not acceptable because they cling tenaciously to preconceived notions, making these prominent, and thereby failing to conform their teachings to the actual needs of the

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people. Many have no idea of the necessity of adapting themselves to circumstances, and meeting the people where they are. They do not identify themselves with those whom they wish to help and elevate to the true, Bible standard of Christianity.

In order to be a truly successful minister, one must wholly consecrate himself to the work of saving souls. It is highly essential that he should be closely united with Christ, seeking continual counsel from him, and depending upon his aid. Some fail of success because they trust to the strength of argument alone, and do not cry earnestly to God for his wisdom to direct them and his grace to sanctify their efforts. Long discourses and tedious prayers are positively injurious to a religious interest, and fail to carry conviction to the consciences of the people. This propensity for speech-making frequently dampens a religious interest that might have produced great results.

The true ambassador of Christ is in perfect union with Him whom he represents, and his engrossing object is the salvation of souls. The wealth of earth dwindles into insignificance when compared with the worth of a single soul for whom our Lord and Master died. He who weigheth the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, regards a human soul as of infinite value.

In the work of the ministry there are battles to fight and victories to gain. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth," said Christ; "I came not to send peace, but a sword." [[Matthew 10:34.](#)] The opening labors of the Christian church were attended with hardships and bitter griefs, and the successors of the early apostles find that they must meet with trials similar to theirs; privations, calumny, and every species of opposition meet them in their labors. They must be men of stanch moral courage and of spiritual muscle.

Great moral darkness prevails, and only the power of truth can drive away the shadows from a single mind. We are battling with giant errors and the strongest prejudices, and without the special help of God our efforts will fail either to convert souls or to elevate our own moral nature. Human skill and the very best natural abilities and acquisitions are powerless to quicken the soul to discern the enormity of sin and to banish it from the heart.

Ministers should be careful not to expect too much from persons who are still groping in the darkness of error. They should do their work well, relying upon God to impart to inquiring souls the

mysterious, quickening influence of his Holy Spirit, knowing that without this their labors will be unsuccessful. They should be patient and wise in dealing with minds, remembering how manifold are the circumstances that have developed such different traits in individuals. They should strictly guard themselves also, lest self should get the supremacy, and Jesus should be left out of the question.

Some ministers fail of success because they do not give their undivided interest to the work when very much depends upon persistent, well-directed labor. Many are not laborers; they do not pursue their work outside of the pulpit. They shirk the duty of going from house to house and laboring wisely in the home circle. They need to cultivate that rare Christian courtesy which would render them kind and considerate toward the souls under their care, working for them with true earnestness and faith, teaching them the way of life.

Ministers can do much toward molding the characters of those with whom they are associated. If they are sharp, critical, and exacting, they will be sure to meet these unhappy elements in the people upon whom their influence is strongest; though the result is not, perhaps, of the nature which they desire, yet it is none the less the effect of their own example. [73]

It cannot be expected that the people will enjoy peace and harmony unless their religious teachers, whose footsteps they follow, have these principles largely developed, and manifest them in their lives. The minister of Christ has great responsibilities to bear, if he would become an example for his people and a correct exponent of his Master's doctrine. Men were awed by the purity and moral dignity of our Saviour, while his unselfish love and gentle benignity won their hearts. He was the embodiment of perfection. If his representatives would see fruits attending their labors similar to those that crowned the ministry of Christ, they should earnestly strive to imitate his virtues and cultivate those traits of character which would make them like him.

It requires much forethought and wisdom from God to labor successfully for the salvation of sinners. If the soul of the laborer is filled with the grace of God, his teaching will not irritate his hearers, but melt its way to their hearts, and open them for the reception of the truth.

The workers in the field should not allow themselves to be discouraged; but whatever their surroundings, they should exercise hope and faith. The minister's work is but just begun when he has presented the truth from the pulpit. He is then to become acquainted with his hearers. Many a laborer greatly fails in not coming in close sympathy with those who most need his help. With the Bible in his hand, he should seek in a courteous manner to learn the objections which exist in the minds of those who are beginning to inquire, "What is truth?"

They should be carefully and tenderly led and educated as pupils in school. Many have to unlearn theories which have been ingrafted into their lives. As they become convinced that they have been in error concerning Bible subjects, they are thrown into perplexity and doubt. They need the tenderest sympathy and the most judicious help; they should be carefully instructed; and should be prayed for and prayed with, watched and guarded with the kindest solicitude. Those who have fallen under temptation and have backslidden from God, need help. This class is represented in the lessons of Christ by the lost sheep. The shepherd left the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and hunted for the one lost sheep until he found it; he then returned with rejoicing, bearing it on his shoulder. Also by the illustration of the woman who searched for the lost piece of silver until she found it, and called together her neighbors to rejoice with her that the lost was found. The connection of heavenly angels with the Christian's work is here brought clearly to light. There is more joy in the presence of the angels in heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. There is joy with the Father and with Christ. All heaven is interested in the salvation of man. He who is instrumental in saving a soul is at liberty to rejoice; for angels of God have witnessed his efforts with the most intense interest, and rejoice with him in his success.

How thorough, then, should be the labor and how deep the sympathy of man for his fellow-man. It is a great privilege to be a co-worker with Christ in the salvation of souls. He, with patient, unselfish efforts sought to reach man in his fallen condition, and to rescue him from the consequences of sin; therefore his disciples,

who are the teachers of his word, should closely imitate their great Exemplar.

It is necessary, in order to pursue this great and arduous work, that the ministers of Christ should possess physical health. To attain this end, they must become regular in their habits, and adopt a healthful system of living. Many are continually complaining and suffering from various indispositions. This is almost always because they do not labor wisely, nor observe the laws of health. They frequently remain too much in-doors, occupying heated rooms filled with impure air. Here they apply themselves closely to study or writing, taking little physical exercise, and having little change of employment. As a consequence, the blood becomes sluggish, and the powers of the mind are enfeebled.

The whole system needs the invigorating influence of exercise in the open air. A few hours of manual labor each day would tend to renew the bodily vigor, and rest and relax the mind. In this way the general health would be promoted, and a greater amount of pastoral labor could be performed.

The incessant reading and writing of many ministers unfits them for pastoral work. They consume valuable time in abstract study, which should be expended in helping the needy at the right moment. Some ministers have given themselves to the work of writing during a period of decided religious interest, and it has frequently been the case that their writings have had no special connection with the work in hand. This is a glaring error; for at such times it is the duty of the minister to use his entire strength in pushing forward the cause of God. His mind should be clear and centered upon the one object of saving souls. Should his thoughts be preoccupied with other subjects, many might be lost to the cause who could have been saved by timely instruction. Some ministers are easily diverted from their work. They become discouraged, or are attracted to their homes, and leave a growing interest to die for want of attention. The harm done to the cause in this way can scarcely be estimated. When an effort to promulgate the truth is started, the minister in charge should feel responsible to carry it through successfully. If his labors appear to be without result, he should seek by earnest prayer to discover if they are what they should be. He should humble his soul before God in self-examination, and by faith cling to the divine promises,

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humbly continuing his efforts till he is satisfied that he has faithfully discharged his duty, and done everything in his power to gain the desired result.

Ministers frequently report that they left the best of interest at one point to enter a new field. This is wrong; they should have finished the work they began; for in leaving it incomplete, they do more harm than good by spoiling the field for the next laborer. No field is so unpromising as that which has been cultivated just enough to give the weeds a more luxuriant growth.

Much prayer, with wise labor, is needed in new fields. Men of God are wanted, not merely men who can talk, but those who have an experimental knowledge of the mystery of godliness, and who can meet the urgent wants of the people,—those who solemnly realize the importance of their position as servants of Jesus, and will cheerfully take up the cross that he has taught them how to bear.

When the temptation comes to seclude themselves, and indulge in reading and writing at a time when other duties claim their immediate attention, they should be strong enough to deny self, and devote themselves to the work that lies directly before them. This is undoubtedly one of the most trying tests that a studious mind is called to undergo.

[77] The duties of a pastor are often shamefully neglected because the minister lacks strength to sacrifice his personal inclinations for seclusion and study. The pastor should visit from house to house among his flock, teaching, conversing, and praying with each family, and looking out for the welfare of their souls. Those who have manifested a desire to become acquainted with the principles of our faith should not be neglected, but thoroughly instructed in the truth. No opportunity to do good should be lost by the watchful and zealous minister of God.

Certain ministers who have been invited to houses by the heads of families, have spent the few hours of their visit in secluding themselves in an unoccupied room to indulge their inclination for reading and writing. The family that entertained them derived no benefit from the visit. The ministers accepted the hospitality extended them without giving an equivalent in the labor that was so much needed.

People are easily reached through the avenues of the social circle. But many ministers dread the task of visiting; they have not

cultivated social qualities, have not acquired that genial spirit that wins its way to the hearts of the people. It is highly important that a pastor should mingle much with his people, that he may become acquainted with the different phases of human nature, readily understand the workings of the mind, adapt his teachings to the intellect of his people, and learn that grand charity possessed only by those who closely study the nature and needs of men.

Those who seclude themselves from the people are in no condition to help them. A skillful physician must understand the nature of various diseases, and must have a thorough knowledge of the human structure. He must be prompt in attending to the patients. He knows that delays are dangerous. When his experienced hand is laid upon the pulse of the sufferer, and he carefully notes the peculiar indication of the malady, his previous knowledge enables him to determine concerning the nature of the disease and the treatment necessary to arrest its progress. As the physician deals with physical disease, so does the pastor minister to the sin-sick soul. And his work is as much more important than that of the former as eternal life is more valuable than temporal existence. The pastor meets with an endless variety of temperaments; and it is his duty to become acquainted with the members of families that listen to his teachings, in order to determine what means will best influence them in the right direction. [78]

In view of these grave responsibilities, the question will arise, "Who is sufficient for these things?" [2 Corinthians 2:16.] The heart of the laborer will almost faint as he considers the various arduous duties devolving upon him; but the words of Christ strengthen the soul with the comforting assurance, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." [Matthew 28:20.] The difficulties and dangers that threaten the safety of those he loves, should make him cautious and circumspect in his manner of dealing with them, and watchful of them as one who must give an account. He should judiciously employ his influence in winning souls to Christ, and impressing the truth upon inquiring minds. He should take care that the world, by its delusive attractions, does not lead them away from God, and steel their hearts against the influence of his grace.

The minister is not to rule imperiously over the flock intrusted to his care, but to be their ensample, and to show them the way

[79] to heaven. Following the example of Christ, he should intercede with God for the people of his care till he sees that his prayers are answered. Jesus exercised human and divine sympathy toward man. He is our example in all things. God is our father and governor, and the Christian minister is the representative of his Son on earth. The principles that rule in heaven should rule upon earth; the same love that animates the angels, the same purity and holiness that reign in heaven, should, as far as possible, be reproduced upon earth. God holds the minister responsible for the power he exercises, but does not justify his servants in perverting that power into despotism over the flock of their care.

God has given to his servants precious knowledge of his truth, and he desires that they shall closely connect themselves with Jesus, and through sympathy draw near to their brethren, that they may do them all the good that lies in their power. The Redeemer of the world did not consult his own pleasure, but went about doing good. He bound himself closely to the Father, that he might bring their united strength to bear upon the souls of men to save them from eternal ruin. In like manner should his servants cultivate spirituality if they expect to succeed in their work.

Jesus pitied poor sinners so much that he left the courts of heaven, and laid aside the robes of royalty, humiliating himself to humanity, that he might become acquainted with the needs of man, and help him to rise above the degradation of the fall. When he has given to man such unquestionable evidence of his love and tenderest sympathy, how important that his representatives should imitate his example in coming close to their fellow-men, and helping them to form a true Christian character. But some have been too ready to engage in church trials, and have borne sharp and unsympathizing testimony against the erring. In thus acting, they have yielded to a natural propensity that should have been firmly subdued. This is not the calm justice of the Christian executive, but the harsh criticism of a hasty temperament.

The churches need education more than censure. Instead of blaming them too severely for their want of spirituality and neglect of duty, the minister should, by precept and example, teach them to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

[80] Our ministers who have reached the age of forty or fifty years

should not feel that their labor is less efficient than formerly. Men of years and experience are just the ones to put forth strong and well-directed efforts. They are specially needed at this time; the churches cannot afford to part with them. Such ones should not talk of physical and mental feebleness, nor feel that their day of usefulness is over.

Many of them have suffered from severe mental taxation, unrelieved by physical exercise. The result is a deterioration of their powers, and a tendency to shirk responsibilities. What they need is more active labor. This is not confined to those whose heads are white with the frost of time, but men young in years have fallen into the same state, and have become mentally feeble. They have a list of set discourses; but if they get beyond the boundaries of these, they lose their soundings.

The old-fashioned pastor, who traveled on horseback, and spent much time in visiting his flock, enjoyed much better health, notwithstanding his hardships and exposures, than our ministers of today, who avoid all physical exertion as far as possible, and confine themselves to their books.

Ministers of age and experience should feel it their duty, as God's hired servants, to go forward, progressing every day, continually becoming more efficient in their work, and constantly gathering fresh matter to set before the people. Every effort to expound the gospel should be an improvement upon that which preceded it. Every year they should develop a deeper piety, a tenderer spirit, greater spirituality, and a more thorough knowledge of Bible truth. The greater their age and experience, the nearer should they be able to approach the hearts of the people, having a more perfect knowledge of them.

Men are needed for this time who are not afraid to lift their voices for the right, whoever may oppose them. They should be of strong integrity and tried courage. The church calls for them, and God will work with their efforts to uphold all branches of the gospel ministry.—[Testimonies for the Church 4.260](#). [81]

Faithfulness in Reproving Sin

God does not desire wooden men to guard the interests of his institutions and the church, but he wants living, working men,—men who have ability and quick perception, men who have eyes, and open them that they may see, and hearts that are susceptible to the influences of his Spirit. He holds men to a strict accountability in guarding the interests of his cause....

As the people stood before Mount Sinai, listening to the voice of God, they were so forcibly impressed with his sacred presence that they retreated in terror, and cried out to Moses, “Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” [Exodus 20:19.] There before the mount they made solemn vows of allegiance to God; but scarcely had the thunders, and the trumpet, and the voice of the Lord ceased, when they were bowed upon their knees before an idol. Their leader had been called away from their sight, and was enveloped in a thick cloud, in converse with God.

[82] The fellow laborer of Moses, who was left with the solemn charge of the people in his absence, heard them uttering complaints that Moses had left them, and expressing a desire to return to Egypt; yet, through fear of offending the people, he was silent. He did not stand up boldly for God; but to please the people he made a golden calf. He seemed to be asleep to the beginning of the evil. When the first rebellious word was spoken, Aaron might have checked it; but so fearful was he of offending the people, that he apparently united with them, and was finally persuaded to make a golden calf for them to worship.

Ministers should be faithful watchmen, seeing the evil and warning the people. Their dangers must be set before them continually, and pressed home upon them. The exhortation given to Timothy was, “Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.” [2 Timothy 4:2.] ...

God wants men to cultivate force of character. Those who are merely time-servers are not the ones who will receive a rich reward

by and by. He wants those who labor in his cause to be men of keen feeling and quick perception. They should be temperate in eating; rich and luxurious food should find no place upon their tables; and when the brain is constantly taxed, and there is a lack of physical exercise, they should eat sparingly, even of plain food. Daniel's clearness of mind and firmness of purpose, his strength of intellect in acquiring knowledge, were due in a great degree to the plainness of his diet, in connection with his life of prayer.

Eli was a good man, pure in morals; but he was too indulgent. He incurred the displeasure of God because he did not strengthen the weak points in his character. He did not want to hurt the feelings of any one, and had not the moral courage to rebuke and reprove sin. His sons were vile men; yet he did not remove them from their position of trust. These sons profaned the house of God. He knew this, and felt sad in consequence of it, for he loved purity and righteousness; but he had not sufficient moral force to suppress the evil. He loved peace and harmony, and became more and more insensible to impurity and crime. But the great God takes the matter in hand himself. When the rebuke falls upon him, through the instrumentality of a child, he accepts it, feeling that it is what he deserves. He does not show any resentment toward Samuel, the messenger of God; he loves him as he has done, but condemns himself. [83]

The guilty sons of Eli were slain in battle. He could endure to hear that his sons were slain, but he could not bear the news that the ark of God was taken. He knew that his sin of neglect in failing to stand for the right and restrain wrong had at last deprived Israel of her strength and glory. The pallor of death came upon his face, and he fell backward and died.

What a lesson have we here for parents and guardians of youth, and for those who minister in the service of God. When existing evils are not met and checked, because men have too little courage to reprove wrong, or because they have too little interest or are too indolent to tax their own powers in putting forth earnest efforts to purify the family or the church of God, they are accountable for the evil which may result in consequence of neglect to do their duty. We are just as accountable for evils that we might have checked in

others, by reproof, by warning, by exercise of parental or pastoral authority, as if we were guilty of the acts ourselves.

Eli should have first attempted to restrain evil by mild measures; but if that would not avail, he should have subdued the wrong by the sternest measures. God's honor must be sacredly preserved, even if it separates us from the nearest relative. One defect in a man otherwise talented may destroy his usefulness in this life, and cause him to hear in the day of God the unwelcome words, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." [[Matthew 7:23.](#)]

[84] Eli was gentle, loving, and kind, and had a true interest in the service of God and the prosperity of his cause. He was a man who had power in prayer. He never rose up in rebellion against the words of God. But he was wanting; he did not have firmness of character to reprove sin and execute justice against the sinner, so that God could depend upon him to keep Israel pure. He did not add to his faith the courage and power to say "No" at the right time and in the right place. Sin is sin; righteousness is righteousness. The trumpet note of warning must be sounded. We are living in a fearfully wicked age. The worship of God will become corrupted unless there are wide-awake men at every post of duty. It is no time now for any to be absorbed in selfish ease. Not one of the words which God has spoken must be allowed to fall to the ground.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:513.](#)

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I was pointed back, and saw that in every important move, every decision made or point gained by God's people, some have arisen to carry matters to extremes, and to move in an extravagant manner, which has disgusted unbelievers, distressed God's people, and brought the cause of God into disrepute. The people whom God is leading out in these last days will be troubled with just such things. But much evil will be avoided if the ministers of Christ will be of one mind, united in their plans of action, and united in effort. If they will stand together, sustain one another, and faithfully reprove and rebuke wrong, they will soon cause it to wither. But Satan has controlled these matters very much. Private members and even preachers have sympathized with disaffected ones who have been

reproved for their wrongs, and division of feeling has been the result. The one who has ventured out and discharged his disagreeable duty by faithfully meeting error and wrong, is grieved and wounded that he receives not the fullest sympathy of his preaching brethren. He becomes discouraged in discharging these painful duties, lays down the cross, and withholds the pointed testimony. His soul is shut up in darkness, and the church suffers for the lack of the very testimony which God designed should live among his people. Satan's object is gained when the faithful testimony is suppressed. Those who so readily sympathize with the wrong, consider it a virtue; but they realize not that they are exerting a scattering influence, and that they themselves help to carry out Satan's plans. [85]

I saw that many souls have been destroyed because their brethren unwisely sympathized with them, when their only hope was to be left to see and realize the full extent of their wrongs. But as they eagerly accept the sympathy of unwise brethren, they receive the idea that they are abused; and if they attempt to retrace their steps, they make half-hearted work. They divide the matter to suit their natural feelings, lay blame upon the reprover, and so patch up the matter. It is not probed to the bottom, and is not healed, and they again fall into the same wrong, because they were not left to feel the extent of their wrong, and humble themselves before God and let him build them up. False sympathizers have worked in direct opposition to the mind of Christ and ministering angels.

Ministers of Christ should arise and engage in the work of God with all their energies. God's servants are not excused if they shun pointed testimony. They should reprove and rebuke wrong, and not suffer sin upon a brother.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:212](#).

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Never was there greater need of faithful warnings and reproofs, and close, straight dealing, than at this very time. Satan has come down with great power, knowing that his time is short. He is flooding the world with pleasing fables, and the people of God love to have smooth things spoken to them. Sin and iniquity are not abhorred. I was shown that God's people must make more firm, determined efforts to press back the incoming darkness. The close work of the [86]

Spirit of God is needed now as never before. Stupidity must be shaken off. We must arouse from the lethargy that will prove our destruction unless we resist it. Satan has a powerful, controlling influence upon minds. Preachers and people are in danger of being found upon the side of the powers of darkness. There is no such thing now as a neutral position. We are all decidedly for the right, or decidedly with the wrong. Christ said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." [[Matthew 12:30.](#)]

There are ever to be found those who will sympathize with those who are wrong. Satan had sympathizers in heaven, and took large numbers of the angels with him. God and Christ and heavenly angels were on one side, and Satan on the other. Notwithstanding the infinite power and majesty of God and Christ, angels became disaffected. The insinuations of Satan took effect, and they really came to believe that the Father and the Son were their enemies, and that Satan was their benefactor. Satan has the same power and the same control over minds now, only it has increased a hundred-fold by exercise and experience. Men and women today are deceived, blinded by his insinuations and devices, and know it not. By giving place to doubts and unbelief in regard to the work of God, and by cherishing feelings of distrust and cruel jealousies, they are preparing themselves for complete deception. They rise up with bitter feelings against the ones who dare to speak of their errors and reprove their sins.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:327.](#)

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[87] The servants of God should manifest a tender, compassionate spirit, and show to all that they are not actuated by any personal motives in their dealings with the people, and that they do not take delight in giving messages of wrath in the name of the Lord. But they must never flinch from pointing out the sins that are corrupting the professed people of God, nor cease striving to influence them to turn from their errors and obey the Lord.

Those who seek to cloak sin, and make it appear less aggravated to the mind of the offender, are doing the work of the false prophets, and may expect the retributive wrath of God to follow such

a course. The Lord will never accommodate his ways to the wishes of corrupt men. The false prophet condemned Jeremiah for afflicting the people with his severe denunciations; and he sought to reassure them by promising them prosperity, thinking that the poor people should not be continually reminded of their sins and threatened with punishment. This course strengthened the people to resist the true prophet's counsel, and intensified their enmity toward him.

God has no sympathy with the evil-doer. He gives no one liberty to gloss over the sins of his people, nor to cry, "Peace! peace!" when he has declared that there shall be no peace for the wicked. Those who stir up rebellion against the servants whom God sends to deliver his messages, are rebelling against the word of the Lord.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:185](#).

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Ministers who are preaching present truth should not neglect the solemn message to the Laodiceans. The testimony of the True Witness is not a smooth message. The Lord does not say to them, "You are about right; you have borne chastisement and reproof that you never deserved; you have been unnecessarily discouraged by severity; you are not guilty of the wrongs and sins for which you have been reproved."

The True Witness declares that when you suppose you are really in a good condition of prosperity, you are in need of everything.... Because Christ bears this rebuking testimony, shall we suppose that he is destitute of tender love to his people?—O, no! He who died to redeem man from death, loves with a divine love, and those whom he loves he rebukes. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." [[Revelation 3:19](#).]—[Testimonies for the Church 3:257](#).

[88]

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You profess to be a watchman on the walls of Zion, [From a Personal Testimony] a shepherd to the flock, yet you saw the poor sheep torn and scattered, and gave no warning. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say

unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.” “Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.” [Ezekiel 3:17-19, 21.] What is a watchman for, unless it be to watch for evil and give the warning? What is a shepherd for, unless it be to watch for every danger lest the sheep be harmed and destroyed by wolves? What excuse could a shepherd plead for suffering the flock to stray from the true pasture, and be torn and scattered and devoured by wolves? How would an excuse stand made by the shepherd that the sheep led him astray? that they left the true pasture, and led him out of the way? Such a plea would tell with force against that shepherd’s ability to watch over the sheep. No more confidence could be placed in him as a faithful shepherd to care for the sheep, and bring them back as they might stray from the right path.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:313](#).

[89] I saw that when the messengers enter a new place, their labor is worse than lost unless they bear a plain, pointed testimony. They should keep up the distinction between the church of Christ and formal, dead professors. There was a failure in this respect in----[From a Personal Testimony] It should have been urged upon the people that we possess truths of vital importance, and that their eternal interest depended upon the decision they there made; that in order to be sanctified through the truth, they would have to give up their idols, confess their sins, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance.

Those who engage in the solemn work of bearing the third angel’s message, must move out decidedly, and in the Spirit and power of God fearlessly preach the truth, and let it cut. They should elevate the standard of truth, and urge the people to come up to it. It has too frequently been lowered to meet the people in their condition of darkness and sin. It is the pointed testimony that will bring them up to decide. A peaceful testimony will not do this. The people have the privilege of listening to this kind of teaching from popular pulpits; but those servants to whom God has intrusted the solemn, fearful

message which is to bring out and fit up a people for the coming of Christ, should bear a plain, pointed testimony. Our truth is as much more solemn than that of nominal professors, as the heavens are higher than the earth.

The people are asleep in their sins, and need to be alarmed before they can shake off this lethargy. Their ministers have preached smooth things; but God's servants, who bear sacred, vital truths, should cry aloud and spare not, that the truth may tear off the garment of security, and find its way to the heart.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:248](#).

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Those who have been thrust out to bear a plain, pointed testimony, in the fear of God to reprove wrong, to labor with all their energies to build up God's people, and to establish them upon important points of present truth, have too often received censure instead of sympathy and help, while those who, like yourself, [From a Personal Testimony] have taken a non-committal position, are thought to be devoted, and to have a mild spirit. God does not thus regard them. The forerunner of Christ's first advent was a very plain-spoken man. He rebuked sin, and called things by their right names. He laid the ax at the root of the tree. He thus addressed one class of professed converts who came to be baptized of him in Jordan: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.... And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." [[Matthew 3:7-10](#).]

[90]

In this fearful time, just before Christ is to come the second time, God's faithful preachers will have to bear a still more pointed testimony than was borne by John the Baptist. A responsible, important work is before them; and those who speak smooth things, God will not acknowledge as his shepherds. A fearful woe is upon them.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:321](#).

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Ministers of the present truth, while they bear a pointed testimony, reproving individual wrongs and seeking to tear away the idols from the camp of Israel, should manifest forbearance. They should preach the truth in its solemnity and importance, and if this finds its way to the heart, it will accomplish that for the receiver which nothing else can. But if the truth spoken in the demonstration of the Spirit, does not cut away the idols, it will be of no avail to denounce and bear down upon the individual. It may appear that some are joined to their idols, yet I saw that we should be very reluctant to give up the poor, deceived ones. We should ever bear in mind that we are all erring mortals, and that Christ exercises much pity for our weakness, and loves us although we err. If God should deal with us as we often deal with one another, we should be consumed. While ministers preach the plain, cutting truth, they must let the truth do the cutting and hewing, not do it themselves. They should lay the ax—the truths of God’s word—at the root of the tree, and something will be accomplished. Pour out the testimony just as straight as it is found in the word of God, with a heart full of the warming, quickening influence of his Spirit, all in tenderness, yearning for souls, and work among God’s people will be effectual.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:383](#).

Compassion for the Erring

Christ identified himself with the necessities of his people. Their needs and their sufferings were his. He says, “I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.” [Matthew 25:35, 36.] God’s servants should have hearts of tender affection and sincere love for the followers of Christ. They should manifest that deep interest that Christ brings to view in the care of the shepherd for the lost sheep; they should follow the example given by Christ, and exercise the same compassion and gentleness, and the same tender, pitying love that he has exercised toward us.

The great moral powers of the soul are faith, hope, and love. If these are inactive, a minister may be ever so earnest and zealous, but his labor will not be accepted by God, and cannot be productive of good to the church. A minister of Christ who bears the solemn message from God to the people, should ever deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God. The spirit of Christ in the heart will incline every power of the soul to nourish and protect the sheep of his pasture, like a faithful, true shepherd. Love is the golden chain which binds believing hearts to one another in willing bonds of friendship, tenderness, and faithful constancy; and which binds the soul to God. There is a decided lack of love, compassion, and pitying tenderness among brethren. The ministers of Christ are too cold and heartless. Their hearts are not all aglow with tender compassion and earnest love. The purest and most elevated devotion to God is that which is manifested in the most earnest desires and efforts to win souls to Christ. The reason ministers who preach present truth are not more successful is, they are deficient, greatly deficient, in faith, hope, and love. There are toils and conflicts, self-denials and secret heart-trials, for us all to meet and bear. There will be sorrow and tears for our sins; there will be constant struggles and watchings, mingled with remorse and shame because of our deficiencies.

[92]

Let not the ministers of the cross of our dear Saviour forget their own experience in these things; but let them ever bear in mind that they are but men, liable to err, and possessing like passions with their brethren; and that if they help their brethren, they must be persevering in their efforts to do them good, having their hearts filled with pity and love. They must come to the hearts of their brethren, and help them where they are weak and need help the most. Those who labor in word and doctrine should break their own hard, proud, unbelieving hearts, if they would witness the same in their brethren. Christ has done all for us, because we were helpless; we were bound in chains of darkness, sin, and despair, and could therefore do nothing for ourselves. It is through the exercise of faith, hope, and love that we come nearer and nearer to the standard of perfect holiness. Our brethren feel the same need of pitying help that we have felt. We should not burden them with unnecessary censure, but should let the love of Christ constrain us to be very compassionate and tender, that we can weep over the erring and those who have backslidden from God. The soul is of infinite value. Its worth can be estimated only by the price paid to ransom it. Calvary! Calvary! Calvary! will explain the true value of the soul.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:186](#).

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If, after one has done the best he can in his judgment, another thinks he can see where he could have improved the matter, he should kindly and patiently give the brother the benefit of his judgment, but should not censure him nor question his integrity of purpose any sooner than he himself would wish to be suspected or unjustly censured. If the brother who feels the cause of God at heart, sees that, in his earnest efforts to do, he has made a failure, he will feel deeply over the matter; for he will be inclined to distrust himself, and to lose confidence in his own judgment. Nothing will so weaken his courage and godlike manhood as to realize his mistakes in the work that God has appointed him to do,—a work which he loves better than his life. How unjust, then, for his brethren who discover his errors to keep pressing the thorn deeper and deeper into his heart, to make him feel more intensely, when with every thrust they are

weakening his faith and courage, and his confidence in himself to work successfully in the upbuilding of the cause of God.

Frequently the truth and facts are to be plainly spoken to the erring, to make them see and feel their error, that they may reform. But this should ever be done with pitying tenderness, not with harshness or severity, but considering one's own weakness, lest he also be tempted. When the one at fault sees and acknowledges his error, then, instead of grieving him, and seeking to make him feel more deeply, comfort should be given. In the sermon of Christ upon the mount, he said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." [Matthew 7:1-4.] Our Saviour reprov'd for rash judgment. "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye," "and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?" [Matthew 7:1-4.] It is frequently the case that while one is quick to discern the errors of his brethren, he may be in greater faults himself, but be blind to them. [94]

All who are followers of Christ should deal with one another exactly as we wish the Lord to deal with us in our errors and weaknesses; for we are all erring, and need his pity and forgiveness. Jesus consented to take human nature, that he might know how to pity, and how to plead with his Father in behalf of sinful, erring mortals. He volunteered to become man's advocate, and he humiliated himself to become acquainted with the temptations wherewith man was beset, that he might succor those who should be tempted, and be a tender and faithful high priest.

Frequently there is necessity for plainly rebuking sin and reprov-ing wrong. But ministers who are working for the salvation of their fellow-men, should not be pitiless toward the errors of one another, nor make prominent the defects in their organizations. They should not expose or reprove their weaknesses. They should inquire if such a course, pursued by another toward themselves, would bring about the desired effect; would it increase their love for, and confidence in, the one who thus made prominent their mistakes? Especially should the mistakes of ministers who are engaged in the work of God be kept within as small a circle as possible; for there are many weak ones who will take advantage if they are aware that those who minister in word and doctrine have weaknesses like other men. And [95]

it is a most cruel thing for the faults of a minister to be exposed to unbelievers, if that minister is counted worthy to labor in [the] future for the salvation of souls. No good can come of this exposure, but only harm. The Lord frowns upon this course, for it is undermining the confidence of the people in those whom he accepts to carry forward his work. The character of every laborer should be jealously guarded by brother ministers. God says, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." [[1 Chronicles 16:22.](#)] Love and confidence should be cherished. A lack of this love and confidence in one minister for another does not increase the happiness of the one thus deficient, but as he makes his brother unhappy, he is unhappy himself. There is greater power in love than was ever found in censure. Love will melt its way through barriers, while censure will close up every avenue of the soul....

In the prayer that Christ taught his disciples was the request, Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. We cannot repeat this prayer from the heart, and dare to be unforgiving; for we ask the Lord to forgive our trespasses against him in the same manner as we forgive those who trespass against us. But few realize the true import of this prayer. If those who are unforgiving did comprehend the depth of its meaning, they would not dare to repeat it, and ask God to deal with them as they deal with their fellow-mortals. And yet this spirit of hardness and lack of forgiveness exists, even among brethren, to a fearful extent. Brother is exacting with brother.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:92.](#)

Decision and Promptness in the Work of God

[96]

Independent men of earnest endeavor are needed, not men as impressible as putty. Those who want their work made ready to their hand, who desire a fixed amount to do and a fixed salary, and who wish to prove an exact fit without the trouble of adaptation or training, are not the men whom God calls to work in his cause. A man who cannot adapt his abilities to almost any place if necessity requires, is not the man for this time. Men whom God will connect with his work are not limp and fiberless, without muscle or moral force of character. It is only by continued and persevering labor that men can be disciplined to bear a part in the work of God. These men should not become discouraged if circumstances and surroundings are the most unfavorable. They should not give up their purpose as a complete failure until they are convinced beyond a doubt that they cannot do much for the honor of God and the good of souls.

There are men who flatter themselves that they might do something great and good if they were only circumstanced differently, while they make no use of the faculties they already have by working in the positions where providence has placed them. Man can make his circumstances, but circumstances should never make the man. Man should seize circumstances as his instruments with which to work. He should master circumstances, but should never allow circumstances to master him. Individual independence and individual power are the qualities now needed. Individual character need not be sacrificed, but it should be modulated, refined, elevated....

The cause of God demands men who can see quickly and act instantaneously at the right time and with power. If you wait to measure every difficulty and balance every perplexity you meet, you will do but little. You will have obstacles and difficulties to encounter at every turn, and you must with firm purpose decide to conquer them, or they will conquer you.

[97]

Sometimes various ways and purposes, different modes of operation in connection with the work of God, are about evenly balanced

in the mind; but it is at this very point that the nicest discrimination is necessary. And if anything is accomplished to the purpose, it must be done at the golden moment. The slightest inclination of the weight in the balance should be seen, and should determine the matter at once. Long delays tire the angels. It is even more excusable to make a wrong decision sometimes than to be continually in a wavering position; to be hesitating, sometimes inclined in one direction, then in another. More perplexity and wretchedness result from thus hesitating and doubting than from sometimes moving too hastily.

I have been shown that the most signal victories and the most fearful defeats have been on the turn of minutes. God requires promptness of action. Delays, doubtings, hesitation, and indecision frequently give the enemy every advantage....

The timing of things may tell much in favor of truth. Victories are frequently lost through delays. There will be crises in this cause. Prompt and decisive action at the right time will gain glorious triumphs, while delay and neglect will result in great failures and positive dishonor to God. Rapid movements at the critical moment often disarm the enemy, and he is disappointed and vanquished, for he had expected time to lay plans and work by artifice.

[98] God wants men connected with his work in Battle Creek whose judgment is at hand, whose minds, when it is necessary, will act like the lightning. The greatest promptness is positively necessary in the hour of peril and danger. Every plan may be well laid to accomplish certain results, and yet a delay of a very short time may leave things to assume an entirely different shape, and the great objects which might have been gained are lost through lack of quick foresight and prompt dispatch. Much may be done in training the mind to overcome indolence. There are times when caution and great deliberation are necessary; rashness would be folly. But even here, much has been lost by too great hesitancy. Caution, up to a certain point, is required; but hesitancy and policy on particular occasions have been more disastrous than would have been a failure through rashness.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:496](#).

Thoroughness in the Work

A solemn responsibility rests upon the ministers of Christ to do their work with thoroughness. Many have left some portion of the work undone because it was not agreeable, expecting the next coming minister to finish it up for them. They would better not engage in the work unless they can bind it off thoroughly, so that it may not ravel out. They should lead the young disciples along wisely and judiciously, step by step, onward and upward, until every essential point has been brought before them.

A mere assent to the truth is not enough. There must be prayerful labor with those who embrace the truth, until they shall be convicted of their sins and shall seek God and be converted. Then they should be instructed in regard to the claims of God upon them in tithes and offerings. They must learn that the tithing system is binding upon God's people in these last days as truly as it was upon ancient Israel. The tract and missionary work should be presented before them. [99] Nothing should be kept back. But all points of truth should not be given abruptly in the first few lectures; gradually, cautiously, with his own heart imbued with the spirit of the work of God, the teacher should give meat in due season.

Ministers too frequently neglect these important branches of the work,—health reform, spiritual gifts, systematic benevolence, and the great branches of the missionary work. Under their labors, large numbers may embrace the theory of the truth, but in time it is found that there are many who will not bear the proving of God. If the teacher of truth had brought these converts along as he should have done, presenting before them the obligation which rested upon them, many who afterward drew back to perdition might have been saved.

When a second minister follows the first, and in the fear of God presents the practical duties, the claims of God upon his people, some draw back, saying, "The minister who brought us the truth did not mention these things. We have been deceived. These things were kept back." And they become offended because of the word.

Some will not accept the tithing system; they turn away, and no longer walk with those who believe and love the truth. When the tract and missionary field is opened before them, inviting them to work in it, they answer, "It was not so taught us," and they hesitate to engage in the work. How much better it would be for the cause if the messenger of truth had faithfully and thoroughly educated these converts in regard to all these essential matters, even if there were fewer whom he could number as having been added to the church under his labors.

[100] Ministers must impress upon those for whom they labor the importance of bearing burdens in connection with the work of God. The people must be taught that every department of the work of God should enlist their support and engage their interest. The great missionary field is open to us, and the subject must be agitated, agitated, again and again. The people must understand that it is not the hearers of the word but the doers of the word who will have eternal life. Not one is exempted from this work of benevolence. All who become partakers of the grace of Christ are not only to communicate of their substance to advance the truth, but to give themselves to God without reserve.—MS.

Division of Labor

A serious and perhaps unsuspected hindrance to the success of the truth is to be found in our churches themselves. When an effort is made to present our faith to unbelievers, the members of the church too often stand back, as though they were not an interested party, and let all the burden rest upon the minister. For this reason the labor of our most able ministers has been at times productive of little good. The very best sermons may be preached, the message may be just what the people need, and yet no souls are gained as sheaves to present to Christ. In laboring where there are some already in the faith, the minister should at first seek not so much to convert unbelievers as to secure his army of workers. Let him labor for the members of the church individually, seeking to arouse them to gain a deeper experience themselves, and to work for others. When the members of the church are prepared to sustain the minister by their prayers and labors, greater success will attend his efforts.—**MS.**

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I saw that nothing lasting can be accomplished for churches in different places unless they are aroused to feel that a responsibility rests upon them. Every member of the body should feel that the salvation of his own soul depends upon his own individual effort. Souls cannot be saved without exertion. The minister cannot save the people. He can be a channel through which God will impart light to his people; but after the light is given, it is left with the people to appropriate that light, and, in their turn, let it shine forth to others.—**Testimonies for the Church 2:121.**

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The minister should not feel that it is his duty to do all the talking and all the laboring and all the praying; but he should educate workers in every church. Let different ones take turns in leading

the meetings, and in giving Bible readings, and in so doing you will be calling into use the talents which God has given you, and at the same time educating workers.

“In some respects the pastor occupies a position similar to that of the foreman of a gang of laboring men or the captain of a ship’s crew. They are expected to see that the men over whom they are set, do the work assigned to them correctly and promptly, and if occasion shall require it, only in case of emergency are they to execute in detail.

“The owner of a large mill once found his superintendent in a wheel-pit, making some simple repairs, while a half-dozen workmen in that line were standing by, idly looking on. The proprietor, after learning the facts so as to be sure that no injustice be done, called the foreman to his office, and handed him his discharge and full pay. In surprise the foreman asked for an explanation. It was given in these words: ‘I employed you to keep six men at work. I found the six idle, and you doing the work of but one, and your work could have been done just as well by any one of the six. I cannot afford to pay the wages of seven for you to teach the six how to be idle.’

[102] “This incident may be applicable in some cases, in others not. But many pastors fail in not knowing how, or in not trying, to get the full membership of the church actively engaged in the various departments of church work. If pastors would give more attention to getting and keeping their flock actively at work, they would accomplish more good, have more time for study and religious visiting, and also avoid many causes of friction.”

Some, through inexperience, will make mistakes, but should be kindly shown how they can do their work better. And thus you can be educating, until you have men and women of experience in the cause of God, who can bear responsibilities, and who will be prepared for the good work that is suffering so much for the want of laborers. We need men who can take responsibilities; and the best way for them to gain the experience they need, is to engage with heart and mind in the work.—**MS.**

A Personal Faith in Christ Our Greatest Need

“Ye shall be witnesses unto me.” [Acts 1:8] These words of Jesus have lost none of their force. Our Saviour calls for faithful witnesses in these days of religious formalism. But how few, even among the professed ambassadors for Christ, are ready to give a faithful, personal testimony for their Master. Many can tell what the great and good men of generations past have done, and dared, and suffered, and enjoyed. They become eloquent in setting forth the power of the gospel, which has enabled others to rejoice in trying conflicts and to stand firm against fierce temptations. But while so earnest in bringing forward other Christians as witnesses for Jesus, they seem to have no fresh, timely experience of their own to relate.

[103]

Ministers of Christ, what have you to say for yourselves? What soul conflicts have you entered that have been for your good, for the good of souls, and for the glory of God? You who profess to be proclaiming the last solemn message to the world, what is your experience in the knowledge of the truth, and its effect upon your own hearts? Does your character testify for Christ? Can you speak of the refining, ennobling, sanctifying influence of the truth as it is in Jesus? What have *you* seen, and what have *you* known, of the power of Christ? This is the kind of witness for which the Lord calls, and for which the churches are suffering.—MS.

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The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken. If he can control minds so that doubt and unbelief and darkness shall compose the experience of those who claim to be the children of God, he can overcome them with temptation. That simple faith that takes God at his word

should be encouraged. God's people must have that faith which will lay hold of divine power; "for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." [Ephesians 2:8.] Those who believe that God for Christ's sake has forgiven their sins should not, through temptation, fail to press on to fight the good fight of faith. Their faith should grow stronger until their Christian life, as well as their words, shall declare, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

[104] If we would have the spirit and power of the third angel's message, we must present the law and the gospel together, for they go hand in hand. As a power from beneath is stirring up the children of disobedience to make void the law of God, and to trample upon the faith of Christ as our righteousness, a power from above is moving upon the hearts of those who are loyal, to exalt the law, and to lift up Jesus as a complete Saviour. Unless divine power is brought into the experience of the people of God, false theories and erroneous ideas will take minds captive, Christ and his righteousness will be dropped out of the experience of many, and their faith will be without power or life. Such will not have a daily, living experience of the love of God in the heart; and if they do not zealously repent, they will be among those who are represented by the Laodiceans, who will be spewed out of the mouth of God.

The Lord can do little for his people, because of their limited faith. The ministers have not presented Christ in his fullness to the people, either in the churches or in new fields, and the people have not an intelligent faith. They have not been instructed as they should have been, that Christ is unto them salvation and righteousness. It is Satan's studied purpose to keep souls from believing in Christ as their only hope; for the blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin is efficacious in behalf of those only who believe in its merit, and who present it before the Father as did Abel in his offering.

The offering of Cain was an offense to God, because it was a Christless offering. The burden of our message is not only the commandments of God, but the faith of Jesus. A bright light shines upon our pathway today, and it leads to increased faith in Jesus. We must receive every ray of light, and walk in it, that it may not be our condemnation in the Judgment. Our duties and obligations become more important as we obtain more distinct views of truth.

Light makes manifest and reproves the errors that were concealed in darkness; and as light comes, the life and character of men must change correspondingly, to be in harmony with it. Sins that were once sins of ignorance because of the blindness of the mind, can no more be indulged in without incurring guilt. As increased light is given, men must be reformed, elevated, and refined by it, or they will be more perverse and stubborn than before the light came.—MS. [105]

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In every church there is need of the simplicity of living, abiding faith. The people are starving for the bread of life. The teachers of the word need the unction from the Holy One. Because they are not united to Christ by faith, their spiritual perceptions are not acute to discern the working of the Spirit of God. Earthliness, carnality, marks the experience of many, making them bodies of darkness rather than of light. Hence there are jealousies, envyings, and divisions. Many are trying to patch up an old experience, instead of turning to Christ in penitence and faith. There are some of this class who have an understanding of the theory of the truth, and desire to labor for others; but their efforts will be in vain, for their own souls are not aglow with the love of Jesus.

Without a living faith in Christ as a personal Saviour, it is impossible to make our influence felt in a skeptical world. If you would draw sinners out of the swift-running current, your own feet must not stand on slippery places. He who has his own heart imbued with the love of Jesus can feed the flock of God. He has a living experience, and can say with the apostle John, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; ... that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.” [1 John 1:1-3.]—MS.

Meditation and Prayer

God should be the highest object of our thoughts. Meditating upon him, and pleading with him, elevates the soul and quickens the affections. A neglect of meditation and prayer will surely result in a declension in religious interests. Then will be seen carelessness and slothfulness. Religion is not merely an emotion, a feeling. It is a principle that is interwoven with all the daily duties and transactions of life. Nothing will be entertained, no business engaged in, that will prevent the accompaniment of this principle. To retain pure and undefiled religion it is necessary to be workers, persevering in effort. We must do something ourselves. No one else can do our work. None but ourselves can work out our salvation with fear and trembling. This is the very work which the Lord has left for us to do....

Decided perseverance in a course of righteousness, disciplining the mind by religious exercises to love, devotion, and heavenly things, will bring the greatest amount of happiness.

If we make God our trust, we have it in our power to control the mind in these things. Through continued exercise, it will become strong to battle with internal foes, and to subdue self, until there is a complete transformation, and the passions, appetites, and will are brought into perfect subjection. Then there will be daily piety at home and abroad, and when we engage in labor for souls, a power will attend our efforts. The humble Christian will have seasons of devotion which are not spasmodic, fitful, or superstitious, but calm and tranquil, deep, constant, and earnest. The love of God, the practice of holiness, will be pleasant when there is a perfect surrender to God....

[107] The Majesty of heaven, while engaged in his earthly ministry, prayed much to his Father. He was frequently bowed all night in prayer. His spirit was often sorrowful as he felt the powers of the darkness of this world, and he left the busy city and the noisy throng, to seek a retired place to make his intercessions. The Mount of

Olives was the favorite resort of the Son of God for his devotions. Frequently after the multitude had left him for the retirement of the night, he rested not, though weary with the labors of the day. In the Gospel of John we read, "And every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives." [John 7:53; 8:1.] While the city was hushed in silence, and the disciples had returned to their homes to obtain refreshment in sleep, Jesus slept not. His divine pleadings were ascending to his Father from the Mount of Olives that his disciples might be kept from the evil influences which they would daily encounter in the world, and that his own soul might be strengthened and braced for the duties and trials of the coming day. All night, while his followers were sleeping, was their divine Teacher praying. The dew and frost of night fell upon his head bowed in prayer. His example is left for his followers.

The Majesty of heaven, while engaged in his mission, was often in earnest prayer. He did not always visit Olivet, for his disciples had learned his favorite retreat, and often followed him. He chose the stillness of night, when there would be no interruption. Jesus could heal the sick and raise the dead. He was himself a source of blessing and strength. He commanded even the tempests, and they obeyed him. He was unsullied with corruption, a stranger to sin; yet he prayed, and that often with strong crying and tears. He prayed for his disciples and for himself, thus identifying himself with our needs, our weaknesses, and our failings, which are so common with humanity. He was a mighty petitioner, not possessing the passions of our human, fallen natures, but compassed with like infirmities, tempted in all points even as we are. Jesus endured agony which required help and support from his Father. [108]

Christ is our example. Are the ministers of Christ tempted and fiercely buffeted by Satan? so also was He who knew no sin. He turned to his Father in these hours of distress. He came to earth that he might provide a way whereby we could find grace and strength to help in every time of need, by following his example in frequent, earnest prayer. If the ministers of Christ will imitate this pattern, they will be imbued with his spirit, and angels will minister unto them.

Angels ministered to Jesus, yet their presence did not make his life one of ease and freedom from severe conflict and fierce

temptations. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. If ministers, while engaged in the work which the Master has appointed them to do, have trials and perplexities and temptations, should they be discouraged, when they know that there is One who has endured all these before them? Should they cast away their confidence because they do not realize all that they expect from their labors? Christ labored earnestly for his own nation; but his efforts were despised by the very ones he came to save, and they put to death Him who came to give them life.

[109] There is a sufficient number of ministers, but a great lack of laborers. Laborers, co-workers with God, have a sense of the sacredness of the work, and of the severe conflicts they must meet in order to carry it forward successfully. Laborers will not faint and despond in view of the labor, arduous though it may be. In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul says: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." [[Romans 5:1-5](#).] In him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. We are without excuse if we fail to avail ourselves of the ample provisions made for us that we might be wanting in nothing. Shrinking from hardships, complaining under tribulation, makes the servants of God weak and inefficient in bearing responsibilities and burdens.

All who stand unshrinkingly in the forefront of the battle must feel the special warfare of Satan against them. As they realize his attacks, they will flee to the Stronghold. They feel their need of special strength from God, and they labor in his strength; therefore the victories they gain do not exalt them, but lead them in faith to lean more securely upon the Mighty One. Deep and fervent gratitude to God is awakened in their hearts, and they are joyful in the tribulation which they experience while pressed by the enemy. These willing servants are gaining an experience and forming a character which will do honor to the cause of God.

The present is a season of solemn privilege and sacred trust to the servants of God. If these trusts are faithfully kept, great will be the reward of the faithful servant when the Master shall say, "Give an account of thy stewardship." The earnest toil, the unselfish work, the patient, persevering effort, will be rewarded abundantly; Jesus will say, "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends, guests." The approval of the Master is not given because of the greatness of the work performed, because many things have been gained, but because of the fidelity in even a few things. It is not the great results we attain, but the motives from which we act, that weigh with God. He prizes goodness and faithfulness more than the greatness of the work accomplished.

I have been shown that many are in the greatest danger of failing to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. Ministers are in danger of losing their own souls. Some who have preached to others will themselves be cast away, because they have not perfected a Christian character. In their labor they do not save souls, and fail even to save their own. They do not see the importance of self-knowledge and self-control. They do not watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation. If they would watch, they would become acquainted with their weak points, where they are most likely to be assailed by temptation. With watchfulness and prayer, their weakest points can be so guarded as to become their strongest points, and they can encounter temptation without being overcome. Every follower of Christ should daily examine himself, that he may become perfectly acquainted with his own conduct. There is with nearly all a neglect of self-examination. This neglect is positively dangerous in one who professes to be a mouth-piece for God, occupying the fearful, responsible position of receiving the words from God to give to his people. The daily conduct of such a person has great influence upon others. If he has any success in labor, he brings his converts to his own low standard, and it is seldom that they rise higher. Their minister's ways, his words, his gestures and manners, his faith, and his piety are considered a sample of those of all Sabbath-keeping Adventists; and if they pattern after him who has taught them the truth, they think they are doing all their duty. [110]

There is much in the conduct of a minister that he can improve. Many see and feel their lack, yet they seem to be ignorant of the

[111] influence they exert. They are conscious of their actions as they perform them, but suffer them to pass from their memory, and therefore do not reform. If ministers would make the actions of each day a subject of careful thought and deliberate review, with the object to become acquainted with their own habits of life, they would better know themselves. By a close scrutiny of their daily life under all circumstances, they would know their own motives, the principles which actuate them. This daily review of our acts, to see whether conscience approves or condemns, is necessary for all who wish to arrive at the perfection of Christian character. Many acts which pass for good works, even deeds of benevolence, will, when closely investigated, be found to be prompted by wrong motives. Many receive applause for virtues which they do not possess. The Searcher of hearts inspects motives, and often the deeds which are highly applauded by men are recorded by him as springing from selfish motives and base hypocrisy. Every act of our lives, whether excellent and praiseworthy or deserving of censure, is judged by the Searcher of hearts according to the motives which prompted it.

Even some ministers who are advocating the law of God have but little knowledge of themselves. They do not meditate, and investigate their motives. They do not see their errors and sins, because they do not, in sincerity and earnestness, take a view of their life, their acts, and their character, separate and as a whole, and compare them with the sacred, holy law of God. The claims of God's law are not really understood by them, and they are daily living in transgression of the spirit of that law which they profess to revere. "By the law," Paul says, "is the knowledge of sin." "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." [[Romans 3:20](#); [7:7](#).] Some who labor in word and doctrine have not a practical understanding of the law of God and its holy claims, or of the atonement of Christ. They themselves need to be converted before they can convert sinners.

[112] The faithful mirror which would reveal the defects in the character is neglected; therefore deformity and sin exist, and are apparent to others, if not understood by those who are in fault. The hateful sin of selfishness exists to a great degree, even in some who profess to be devoted to the work of God. If they would compare their character with his requirements, especially with the great standard,

his holy, just, and good law, they would ascertain, if earnest, honest searchers, that they are fearfully wanting. But some are not willing to look far enough or deep enough to see the depravity of their own hearts. They are wanting in very many respects; yet they remain in willing ignorance of their guilt, and are so intent upon caring for their own interests that God has no care for them. Some are not naturally devotional, and therefore should encourage and cultivate a habit of close examination of their own lives and motives, and should especially cherish a love for religious exercises and for secret prayer.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:505](#).

Answers to Prayer

When at Battle Creek, Mich., May 5, 1855, I saw that there was a great lack of faith with the servants of God, as well as with the church. They were too easily discouraged, too ready to doubt God, too willing to believe that they had a hard lot, and that God had forsaken them. I saw that this was cruel. God so loved them as to give his dearly beloved Son to die for them, and all heaven was interested in their salvation; yet after all that had been done for them, it was hard to believe and trust so kind and good a Father. He has said that he is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. I saw that the servants of God and the church were too easily discouraged. When they asked their Father in heaven for things which they thought they needed, and these did not immediately come, their faith wavered, their courage fled, and a murmuring feeling took possession of them. This, I saw, displeased God.

[113]

Every saint who comes to God with a true heart, and sends his honest petitions to him in faith, will have his prayers answered. Your faith must not let go of the promises of God, if you do not see or feel the immediate answer to your prayers. Be not afraid to trust God. Rely upon his sure promise, "Ask, and ye shall receive." [John 16:24.] God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from his saints that walk uprightly. Man is erring, and although his petitions are sent up from an honest heart, he does not always ask for the things that are good for himself, or that will glorify God. When this is so, our wise and good Father hears our prayers, and will answer, sometimes immediately; but he gives us the things that are for our best good and his own glory. God gives us blessings; if we could look into his plan, we would clearly see that he knows what is best for us, and that our prayers are answered. Nothing hurtful is given, but the blessing we need, in the place of something we asked for, that would not be good for us, but to our hurt.

I saw that if we do not feel immediate answers to our prayers, we should hold fast our faith, not allowing distrust to come in, for that will separate us from God. If our faith wavers, we shall receive nothing from him. Our confidence in God should be strong; and when we need it most, the blessing will fall upon us like a shower of rain.

When the servants of God pray for his Spirit and blessing, it sometimes comes immediately; but it is not always then bestowed. At such times, faint not. Let your faith hold fast the promise that it will come. Let your trust be fully in God, and often that blessing will come when you need it most, and you will unexpectedly receive help from God when you are presenting the truth to unbelievers, and will be enabled to speak the word with clearness and power. [114]

It was represented to me like children asking a blessing of their earthly parents who love them. They ask something that the parent knows will hurt them; the parent gives them the things that will be good and healthful for them, in the place of that which they desired. I saw that every prayer which is sent up in faith from an honest heart, will be heard of God and answered; and the one that sent up the petition will have the blessing when he needs it most, and it will often exceed his expectations. Not a prayer of a true saint is lost if sent up in faith, from an honest heart.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:120](#).

The Cause of Doubts

Some are often heard talking of doubts and unbelief, and dwelling upon the wonderful struggles they have had with infidel feelings. They dwell upon discouraging influences as so affecting their faith, hope, and courage in the truth and in the ultimate success of the work and cause in which they are engaged, as to make it a special virtue to be found on the side of the doubting. At times they seem to really enjoy hovering about the infidel's position, and strengthening their unbelief with every circumstance they can gather as an excuse for their darkness. To such we would say, You would better come down at once, and leave the walls of Zion, until you become converted men and good Christians. Before you take the responsibility of becoming ministers, you are required by God to separate yourselves from the love of this world. The reward of those who continue in this doubting position will be that given to the fearful and unbelieving.

[115] But what is the reason of these doubts, this darkness and unbelief? I answer, These men are not right with God. They are not dealing honestly and truly with their own souls. They have neglected to cultivate personal piety. They have not separated themselves from all selfishness, and from sin and sinners. They have failed to study the self-denying, self-sacrificing life of our Lord, and have failed to imitate his example of purity, devotion, and self-sacrifice. The sin which easily besets has been strengthened by indulgence. By their own negligence and sin, they have separated themselves from the company of the Divine Teacher, and he is a day's journey in advance of them. They have for their company, the indolent, slothful, backsliding, unbelieving, irreverent, unthankful, unholy, and their attendants, the evil angels. What marvel that such are in darkness, or that they have doubts of doctrine? "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." [John 7:17.] He shall know of a certainty in regard to this matter. This promise should put to flight all doubts and questionings. It is separation from Christ that brings doubts.

He is followed by the earnest, honest, true, faithful, humble, meek, and pure, whom holy angels, clothed with the panoply of heaven, are sanctifying, enlightening, purifying, and guarding; for they are heaven-bound.

No greater evidence need be asked that a person is at a great distance from Jesus, and living in neglect of secret prayer, neglecting personal piety, than the fact that he thus talks doubts and unbelief because his surroundings are not favorable. Such persons have not the pure, true, undefiled religion of Christ. They have a spurious article, which the refining process will utterly consume as dross. As soon as God proves them, and tests their faith, they waver, they stand feebly, swaying first one way, then the other. They have not the genuine article that Paul possessed, that could glory in tribulation, because “tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.” [Romans 5:3-5.] They have a religion of circumstance. If all around them are strong in faith and courage in the ultimate success of the third angel’s message, and no special influence is brought to bear against them, they then appear to have some faith. But as soon as adversity seems to come upon the cause, and the work drags heavily, and the help of every one is needed, these poor souls, though they may be professed ministers of the gospel, expect everything to come to naught. These hinder instead of helping. [116]

If apostasy arises, and rebellion is manifested, you do not hear them say, in words of encouragement and lofty cheer, “Brethren, faint not; be of good courage.” “Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.” [2 Timothy 2:19.] Men who are thus affected by circumstances should remain at their homes, and employ their physical and mental strength in a less responsible position, where they will not be liable to meet such strong opposition. If everything moves smoothly, they may pass for very good, devotional men. But these are not the ones whom the Master will send to do his work; for this is opposed by those who are emissaries of Satan. Satan also, and his host of evil angels, will be arrayed against them. God has made provision for the men whom he has called to do his work, that they may come off

conquerors in every contest. Those who follow his directions will never meet with defeat.

[117] The Lord, speaking through Paul, tells us how to fortify ourselves against Satan and his emissaries: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” [[Ephesians 6:10-18.](#)] ...

Shall our zeal, our fervor, be kindled only when we are surrounded by those who are awake and zealous in the work and cause of God? Can we not stand in God, let our surroundings be ever so unpleasant and discouraging? “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 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? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded,

[118] that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, not depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God,

which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” [[Romans 8:31-39](#)][—Testimonies for the Church 2:513](#).

Danger in Cherishing Doubts

Some have given a willing ear to the tempter, and have talked out their unbelief, and wounded the cause. Satan has claims upon them, for they have not recovered themselves from his snare. They have conducted themselves like children who were wholly unacquainted with the wiles of the tempter. They have had sufficient experience, and should have understood his workings. He has suggested doubts to their minds, and instead of repelling them at once, they have reasoned and parleyed with the archdeceiver, and listened to his reasonings, as though charmed by the old serpent. A few texts which were not perfectly explainable to the satisfaction of their own minds, have been sufficient to shake the whole structure of truth, and to obscure the plainest facts of the word of God. These men are erring mortals. They have not perfect wisdom and knowledge in all the Scriptures. Some passages are placed beyond the reach of human minds, until such time as God chooses, in his own wisdom, to open them. Satan has been leading some on a trail which ends in certain infidelity. They have suffered their unbelief to becloud the harmonious, glorious chain of truth, and have acted as though it was their business to explain every difficult passage of Scripture, and if our faith did not enable them to do this, it was faulty.

[119] I saw that those who have an evil heart of unbelief will doubt, and will think it noble and a virtue to doubt the word of God. Those who think it a virtue to quibble can have plenty of room to disbelieve the inspiration and truth of God's word. God does not compel any to believe. They can choose to rely upon the evidences he has been pleased to give, or doubt, and cavil, and perish.

I was shown that those who are troubled with doubts and infidelity should not go out to labor for others. That which is in the mind must flow out, and they realize not the effect of a hint, or the smallest doubt expressed. Satan makes it a barbed arrow. It acts like a slow poison, which, before the victim is made sensible of his danger, affects the whole system, undermines a good constitution,

and finally causes death. It is just so with the poison of doubt and unbelief of Scripture facts. One who has influence suggests to others that which Satan has suggested to him, that one scripture contradicts another; and thus, in a very wise manner, as though he had found out some wonderful mystery, which had been hid from believers and the holy in every age of the world, he casts midnight darkness into other minds. They lose the relish they once had for the truth, and become infidels. All this is the work of a few words spoken, which had a hidden power because they seemed involved in mystery.

This is the work of a cunning devil. Those who are troubled with doubts, and have difficulties which they cannot solve, should not throw other weak minds into the same perplexity. Some have hinted or talked their unbelief, and have passed on, little dreaming of the effect produced. In some instances, the seeds of unbelief have taken immediate effect, while in others they have lain buried quite a length of time, until the individual has taken a wrong course and given place to the enemy, and the light of God has been withdrawn from him, and he has fallen under the powerful temptations of Satan. Then the seeds of infidelity which were sown so long ago spring up. Satan nourishes them, and they bear fruit. Anything coming from ministers who should stand in the light, has a powerful influence. And when they have not stood in the clear light of God, Satan has used them as agents, and has through them transmitted his fiery darts to minds not prepared to resist what has come from their ministers.

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I saw that ministers, as well as people, have a warfare before them to resist Satan. The professed minister of Christ is in a fearful position when serving the purposes of the tempter, by listening to his whisperings, and letting him captivate the mind and guide the thoughts. The minister's most grievous sin in the sight of God is talking about his unbelief, and drawing other minds into the same dark channel, thus suffering Satan to carry out a twofold purpose in tempting him. He unsettles the mind of the one whose course has encouraged his temptations, and then leads that one to unsettle the minds of many.

It is time that the watchmen upon the walls of Zion understood the responsibility and sacredness of their mission. They should feel that a woe is upon them if they do not perform the work which God has committed to them. If they become unfaithful, they are

endangering the safety of the flock of God, endangering the cause of truth, and exposing it to the ridicule of our enemies. O what a work is this! It will surely meet its reward. Some ministers, as well as people, need converting. They need to be torn to pieces, and made over new. Their work among the churches is worse than lost, and in their present weak, tottering condition, it would be more pleasing to God for them to cease their efforts to help others, and labor with their hands until they are converted. Then they could strengthen their brethren.

[121] Ministers must arouse. They profess to be generals in the army of the great King, and at the same time are sympathizers with the great rebel leader and his host. Some have exposed the cause of God and the sacred truths of his word to the reproaches of the rebel host. They have removed a portion of their armor, and Satan has hurled in his poisoned arrows. They have strengthened the hands of the rebel leaders, and weakened themselves, and caused Satan and his hellish clan to rear their heads in triumph, and exult on account of the victory they have let him gain. O, what a lack of wisdom! What blindness! What foolish generalship, to open their weakest points to their deadliest foes! How unlike the course pursued by Martin Luther! He was willing to sacrifice his life, if need be, but the truth, never! His words are, "Let us only take care that the gospel be not exposed to the insults of the ungodly, and let us shed our blood in its defense, rather than allow them to triumph. Who will say whether my life or my death would contribute most to the salvation of my brethren?"—[Testimonies for the Church 1:377](#).

The Importance of Bible Study

Ministers should become Bible students. Are the truths which they handle mighty? Then they should seek to handle them skillfully. Their ideas should be clear and strong, and their spirits fervent, or they will weaken the force of the truth which they handle. By tamely presenting the truth, merely repeating the theory without being stirred by it themselves, they can never convert men. If they should live as long as did Noah, their efforts would be without effect. Their love for souls must be intense, and their zeal fervent. A listless, unfeeling manner of presenting the truth will never arouse men and women from their deathlike slumber. They must show by their manners, by their acts and words, and by their preaching and praying, that they believe that Christ is at the door. Men and women are in the last hours of probation, and yet are careless and stupid, and preachers have no power to arouse them; they are asleep themselves. Sleeping ministers preaching to a sleeping people!

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A great work must be accomplished for ministers, in order for them to make the preaching of the truth a success. The word of God should be thoroughly studied. All other reading is inferior to this. A careful study of the Bible will not necessarily exclude all other reading of a religious nature; but if the word of God is studied prayerfully, all reading which will have a tendency to divert the mind from it will be excluded. If we study the word of God with interest, and pray to understand it, new beauties will be seen in every line. God will reveal precious truth so clearly that the mind will derive sincere pleasure, and have a continual feast as its comforting and sublime truths are unfolded....

Those who engage in the business of school-teaching prepare for the work. They qualify themselves by attending school, and interesting their minds in study. They are not allowed to teach children and youth in the sciences, unless they are capable of instructing them. Upon applying for a situation as teacher, they have to pass an examination before competent persons. It is an important work to

deal with young minds, and instruct them correctly in the sciences. But of how much greater importance is the work of the ministry! Yet many engage in the important business of interesting men and women to enter the school of Christ, where they are to learn how they may form characters for heaven, who need to become students themselves. Some who enter the ministry do not feel the burden of the work upon them. They have received incorrect ideas of the qualifications of a minister. They have thought that it required but little close study in the sciences or in the word of God to make a minister. Some who are teaching present truth are not acquainted with their Bibles. They are so deficient in Bible knowledge that it is difficult for them to quote a text of Scripture correctly from memory. By blundering along in the awkward manner they do, they sin against God. They mangle the Scripture, and make the Bible say things that are not written therein.

Some who have all their lives been led by feeling, have thought that an education or a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures was of no consequence, if they only had the Spirit. But God never sends his Spirit to sanction ignorance. Those who have not knowledge, and who are so situated that it is impossible for them to obtain it, the Lord may, and does, pity and bless, and sometimes he condescends to make his strength perfect in their weakness. But he makes it the duty of such to study his word. A lack of knowledge in the sciences is no excuse for a neglect of Bible study; for the words of inspiration are so plain that the unlearned may understand them.

Of all men upon the face of the earth, those who are handling solemn truths for these perilous times should understand their Bibles, and become acquainted with the evidences of our faith. Unless they possess a knowledge of the word of life, they have no right to undertake to instruct others in the way to life. Ministers should give all diligence to add to their “faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity,” [2 Peter 1:5-7.] Some of our ministers graduate when they have scarcely learned the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. Those who are ambassadors for Christ, who stand in his stead, beseeching souls to be reconciled to God, should be qualified to present our faith intelligently, and be able to give the

reasons of their hope with meekness and fear. Christ said, “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.” [John 5:39.]

Ministers who teach unpopular truth will be beset by men who are urged on by Satan, and who, like their master, can quote Scripture readily; and shall the servants of God be unequal to the servants of Satan in handling the words of inspiration? They should, like Christ, meet scripture with scripture. O that those who minister in holy things would awake, and, like the noble Bereans, search the Scriptures daily! Brethren in the ministry, I entreat you to study the Scriptures with humble prayer for an understanding heart, that you may teach the way of life more perfectly. Your counsel, prayers, and example must be a savor of life unto life, or you are unqualified to point out the way of life to others.

The Master requires all his servants to improve upon the talents he has committed to them. But how much more will he require of those who profess to understand the way of life, and who take upon themselves the responsibility of guiding others therein. The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy: “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be *able* to teach others also.” [John 5:39.]—[Testimonies for the Church 2:337](#).

How Shall We Search the Scriptures?

How shall we search the Scriptures in order to understand what they teach? We should come to the investigation of God's word with a contrite heart, a teachable and prayerful spirit. We are not to think, as did the Jews, that our own ideas and opinions are infallible; nor with the papists, that certain individuals are the sole guardians of truth and knowledge, that men have no right to search the Scriptures for themselves, but must accept the explanations given by the Fathers of the church. We should not study the Bible for the purpose of sustaining our preconceived opinions, but with the single object of learning what God has said.

Some have feared that if in even a single point they acknowledge themselves in error, other minds would be led to doubt the whole theory of truth. Therefore they have felt that investigation should not be permitted; that it would tend to dissension and disunion. But if such is to be the result of investigation, the sooner it comes the better. If there are those whose faith in God's word will not stand the test of an investigation of the Scriptures, the sooner they are revealed the better; for then the way will be opened to show them their error. We cannot hold that a position once taken, an idea once advocated, is not, under any circumstances, to be relinquished. There is but one who is infallible,—He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Those who allow prejudice to bar the mind against the reception of truth cannot receive the divine enlightenment. Yet, when a view of Scripture is presented, many do not ask, Is it True,—in harmony with God's word? but, By whom is it advocated? and unless it comes through the very channel that pleases them, they do not accept it. So [126] thoroughly satisfied are they with their own ideas, that they will not examine the Scripture evidence, with a desire to learn, but refuse to be interested, merely because of their prejudices.

The Lord often works where we least expect him; he surprises us by revealing his power through instruments of his own choice, while he passes by the men to whom we have looked as those through

whom light should come. God desires us to receive the truth upon its own merits,—because it is truth.

The Bible must not be interpreted to suit the ideas of men, however long they may have held these ideas to be true. We are not to accept the opinion of commentators as the voice of God; they were erring mortals like ourselves. God has given reasoning powers to us as well as to them. We should make the Bible its own expositor.

All should be careful about presenting new views of Scripture before they have given these points thorough study, and are fully prepared to sustain them from the Bible. Introduce nothing that will cause dissension, without clear evidence that in it God is giving a special message for this time.

But beware of rejecting that which is truth. The great danger with our people has been that of depending upon men, and making flesh their arm. Those who have not been in the habit of searching the Bible for themselves, or weighing evidence, have confidence in the leading men, and accept the decisions they make, and thus many will reject the very messages God sends to his people, if these leading brethren do not accept them.

No one should claim that he has all the light there is for God's people. The Lord will not tolerate this. He has said, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." [Revelation 3:8.] Even if all our leading men should refuse light and truth, that door will still remain open. The Lord will raise up men who will give the people the message for this time.

Truth is eternal, and conflict with error will only make manifest its strength. We should never refuse to examine the Scriptures with those who, we have reason to believe, desire to know what is truth. Suppose a brother held a view that differed from yours, and he should come to you, proposing that you sit down with him and make an investigation of that point in the Scriptures; should you rise up, filled with prejudice, and condemn his ideas, while refusing to give him a candid hearing? The only right way would be to sit down as Christians, and investigate the position presented, in the light of God's work, which will reveal truth and unmask error. To ridicule his ideas would not weaken his position in the least if it were false, or strengthen your position if it were true. If the pillars of our faith

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will not stand the test of investigation, it is time that we knew it. There must be no spirit of Phariseeism cherished among us.

We should come with reverence to the study of the Bible, feeling that we are in the presence of God. All lightness and trifling should be laid aside. While some portions of the word are easily understood, the true meaning of other parts is not so readily discerned. There must be patient study and meditation, and earnest prayer. Every student, as he opens the Scriptures, should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and the promise is sure, that it will be given.

The spirit in which you come to the investigation of the Scriptures will determine the character of the assistant at your side. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance. But if the Bible is opened with irreverence, with a feeling of self-sufficiency, if the heart is filled with prejudice, Satan is beside you, and he will set the plain statements of God's word in a perverted light.

[128] There are some who indulge in levity, sarcasm, and even mockery toward those who differ with them. Others present an array of objections to any new view; and when these objections are plainly answered by the words of Scripture, they do not acknowledge the evidence presented, nor allow themselves to be convinced. Their questioning is not for the purpose of arriving at truth, but was intended merely to confuse the minds of others.

Some have thought it an evidence of intellectual keenness and superiority to perplex minds in regard to what is truth. They resort to subtlety of argument, to playing upon words; they take unjust advantage in asking questions. When their questions have been fairly answered, they will turn the subject, bring up another point, to avoid acknowledging the truth. We should beware of indulging the spirit which controlled the Jews. They would not learn of Christ, because his explanation of the Scriptures did not agree with their ideas; therefore they became spies upon his track, "laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him." [Luke 11:54, 52.] Let us not bring upon ourselves the fearful denunciation of the Saviour's words, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." [Luke 11:54, 52.]

It does not require much learning or ability to ask questions that are difficult to answer. A child may ask questions over which the wisest men may be puzzled. Let us not engage in a contest of this kind. The very same unbelief exists in our time as prevailed in the days of Christ. Now as then the desire for preferment and the praise of men leads people away from the simplicity of true godliness. There is no pride so dangerous as spiritual pride.

Young men should search the Scriptures for themselves. They are not to feel that it is sufficient for those older in experience to find out the truth; that the younger ones can accept it from them as authority. The Jews perished as a nation because they were drawn from the truth of the Bible by their rulers, priests, and elders. Had they heeded the lessons of Jesus, and searched the Scriptures for themselves, they would not have perished. [129]

Young men in our ranks are watching to see in what spirit the ministers come to the investigation of the Scriptures; whether they have a teachable spirit, and are humble enough to accept evidence, and receive light from the messengers whom God chooses to send.

We must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God. We must not become set in our ideas, and think that no one should interfere with our opinions.

When a point of doctrine that you do not understand comes to your attention, go to God on your knees, that you may understand what is truth, and not be found as were the Jews, fighting against God. While warning men to beware of accepting anything unless it is truth, we should also warn them not to imperil their souls by rejecting messages of light, but to press out of the darkness by earnest study of the word of God.

When Nathanael came to Jesus, the Saviour exclaimed, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus answered, "When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." [John 1:47, 48.] And Jesus will see us also in [130]

the secret places of prayer, if we seek him for light that we may know what is truth.

If a brother is teaching error, those who are in responsible positions ought to know it; and if he is teaching truth, they ought to take their stand at his side. We should all know what is being taught among us; for if it is truth, we need to know it. The Sabbath-school teacher needs to know it, and every Sabbath-school scholar ought to understand it. We are all under obligation to God to understand what he sends us. He has given directions by which we may test every doctrine,—“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” [Isaiah 8:20.] But if it is according to this test, do not be so full of prejudice that you cannot acknowledge a point simply because it does not agree with your ideas.

It is impossible for any mind to comprehend all the richness and greatness of even one promise of God. One catches the glory of one point of view, another the beauty and grace from another point, and the soul is filled with the heavenly light. If we saw all the glory, the spirit would faint. But we can bear far greater revelations from God’s abundant promises than we now enjoy. It makes my heart sad to think how we lose sight of the fullness of blessing designed for us. We content ourselves with momentary flashes of spiritual illumination, when we might walk day after day in the light of His presence.

[131] Dear brethren, pray as you never before prayed, for beams from the Sun of Righteousness to shine upon the word, that you may be able to understand its true meaning. Jesus pleaded that his disciples might be sanctified through the truth,—the word of God. Then how earnestly should we pray that He who “searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God,” [1 Corinthians 2:10.] He whose office it is to bring all things to the remembrance of God’s people, and to guide them into all truth, may be with us in the investigation of his holy word.—MS.

Examination for the Ministry

I saw that God had laid upon his chosen ministers the duty of deciding who was fit for the holy work [of the ministry]; and in union with the church and the manifest tokens of the Holy Spirit, they were to decide who should go, and who were unfit to go. I saw that if it should be left to a few individuals here and there to decide who was sufficient for this great work, confusion and distraction everywhere would be the fruit.

God has repeatedly shown that persons should not be encouraged into the field without unmistakable evidence that he has called them. The Lord will not intrust the burden for his flock to unqualified individuals. Those whom God calls must be men of deep experience, tried and proved, men of sound judgment, men who will dare to reprove sin in the spirit of meekness, men who understand how to feed the flock. God knows the heart, and he knows whom to select.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:209](#).

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There has been too little done in examining ministers, and for this very reason churches have had the labors of unconverted, inefficient men, who have lulled the members to sleep, instead of awakening them to greater zeal and earnestness in the cause of God. There are ministers who come to the prayer-meeting, and pray the same old, lifeless prayers over and over; they preach the same dry discourses from week to week and from month to month. They have nothing new and inspiring to present to their congregations, and it is evident that they are not partakers of the divine nature; Christ is not abiding in the heart by faith. Those who claim to keep and teach the holy law of God, and yet are continually transgressing that law, are stumbling-blocks both to sinners and to believers in the truth. The loose, lax way in which many regard the law of Jehovah and the gift of his Son, is an insult to God. The only way in which we can correct this

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wide-spread evil, is to examine closely every one who would become a teacher of the word. Those upon whom this responsibility rests, should acquaint themselves with his history since he has professed to believe the truth. His Christian experience and his knowledge of the Scriptures, the way in which he holds the present truth, should all be understood. No one should be accepted as a laborer in the cause of God, until he makes it manifest that he has a real, living experience in the things of God.—MS.

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Those who are about to enter upon the sacred work of teaching Bible truth to the world, should be carefully examined by faithful, experienced persons. [See also P. 122.] After they have had some experience, there is still another work to be done for them; they should be presented before the Lord in earnest prayer that he would indicate by his Holy Spirit if they are acceptable to him. The apostle says, “Lay hands suddenly on no man.” [1 Timothy 5:22.] In the days of the apostles, the ministers of God did not dare to rely upon their own judgment in selecting or accepting men to take the solemn and sacred position of mouth-piece for God. They selected the men whom their judgment would accept, and then they placed them before the Lord to see if he would accept them to go forth as his representatives. No less than this should be done now.

[133] In many places we meet men who have been hurried into responsible positions as elders of the church, when they are not qualified for such a position. They have not proper government over themselves. Their influence is not good. The church is in trouble continually in consequence of the defective character of the leader. Hands have been laid too suddenly upon these men.

Ministers of God should be of good repute, capable of discreetly managing an interest after they have aroused it. We stand in great need of competent men who will bring honor instead of disgrace upon the cause which they represent. Ministers should be examined especially to see if they have an intelligent understanding of the truth for this time, so that they can give a connected discourse upon the prophecies or upon practical subjects. If they cannot clearly present Bible subjects, they need to be hearers and learners still.

They should earnestly and prayerfully search the Scriptures, and become conversant with them, in order to be teachers of Bible truth to others. All these things should be carefully and prayerfully considered before men are hurried into the field of labor.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:406](#).

Young Ministers

[134] In the providence of God, Moses obtained an experience in care-taking, in thoughtfulness, in tender solicitude for his flock, that he might, as a faithful shepherd, be ready when God should call him to take charge of his people. A similar experience is essential for those who engage in the great work of preaching the truth. In order to lead souls to the life-giving fountain, the preacher must first drink at the fountain himself. He must see the infinite sacrifice made by the Son of God to save fallen men, and his own soul must be imbued with the spirit of undying love. If God appoints us hard labor to perform, we must do it without a murmur. If the path is difficult and dangerous, it is God's plan to have us follow in meekness, and cry unto him for strength. A lesson is to be learned from the experience of some of our ministers who have known nothing comparatively of difficulties and trials, yet ever look upon themselves as martyrs. They have yet to learn to accept with thankfulness the way of God's choosing, remembering the Author of our salvation. The work of the minister should be pursued with an earnestness, energy, and zeal as much greater than that put forth in business transactions as the labor is more sacred and the result more momentous. Each day's work should tell in the eternal records as "well done;" so that if no other day should be granted in which to labor, the work would be thoroughly finished. Our ministers, young men especially, should realize the preparation necessary to fit them for their solemn work, and to prepare them for the society of pure angels. In order to be at home in heaven, we must have heaven enshrined in our hearts here. If this is not the case with us, it were better than we had no part in the work of God.

The ministry is corrupted by unsanctified ministers. Unless there shall be altogether a higher and more spiritual standard for the ministry, the truth of the gospel will become more and more powerless. The human mind is represented by the rich soil of a garden. Unless it shall receive proper cultivation, it will be overgrown with the weeds

and briers of ignorance. The mind and heart need culture daily, and neglect will be productive of evil. The more natural ability God has bestowed upon an individual, the greater the improvement he is required to make, and the greater his responsibility to use his time and talents for the glory of God. The mind must not remain dormant. If it is not exercised in the acquisition of knowledge, there will be a sinking into ignorance, superstition, and fancy. If the intellectual faculties are not cultivated as they should be to glorify God, they will become powerful aids in leading to perdition. [135]

While young men should guard against being pompous and independent, they should be continually making marked improvement. They should accept every opportunity to cultivate the more noble, generous traits of character. If young men would feel their dependence upon God every moment, and cherish a spirit of prayer, a breathing out of the soul to God at all times and in all places, they might better know the will of God....

The greatest victories which are gained to the cause are not by labored argument, ample facilities, abundance of influence, and plenty of means; but they are those victories which are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power. When Jacob found himself utterly prostrate and in a helpless condition, he poured out his soul to God in an agony of earnestness. The angel of God pleaded to be released; but Jacob would not let go his hold. The stricken man, suffering bodily pain, presented his earnest supplication with the boldness which living faith imparts. "I will not let thee go," he said, "except thou bless me." [[Genesis 32:26](#).]

There are deep mysteries in the word of God, which will never be discovered by minds that are unaided by the Spirit of God. There are also unsearchable mysteries in the plan of redemption, which finite minds can never comprehend. Inexperienced youth might better tax their minds and exercise their ability to gain an understanding of matters that are revealed; for unless they possess more spiritual enlightenment than they now have, it would take a lifetime to learn the revealed will of God. When they have cherished the light they already have, and made a practical use of it, they will be able to take a step forward. God's providence is a continual school, in which he is ever leading men to see the true aims of life. None are too young, [136]

and none too old, to learn in this school, by paying diligent heed to the lessons taught by the Divine Teacher. He is the True Shepherd, and he calls his sheep by name. By the wanderers his voice is heard, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." [Isaiah 30:21.]

Young men who have never made a success in the temporal duties of life will be equally unprepared to engage in the higher duties. A religious experience is attained only through conflict, through disappointment, through severe discipline of self, through earnest prayer. Living faith must grasp the promises unflinchingly, and then many may come from close communion with God with shining faces, saying, as did Jacob, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." [Genesis 32:30.]

[137] The steps upward to heaven must be taken one at a time; every advance step strengthens us for the next. The transforming power of the grace of God upon the human heart is a work which many do not comprehend, because they are too indolent to make the necessary effort. The lessons which young ministers learn in going about and being waited upon when they have not a fitness for the work, have a demoralizing influence upon them. They do not know their place and keep it. They are not balanced by firm principles. They talk knowingly of things they know nothing of, and hence those who accept them as teachers are misled. One such person will inspire more skepticism in minds than several will be able to counteract, do the best they can. Men of small minds delight to quibble, to criticise, to seek for something to question, thinking this a mark of sharpness; but instead it shows a mind lacking refinement and elevation. How much better to be engaged in seeking to cultivate themselves, and to ennoble and elevate their minds. As a flower turns to the sun, that the bright rays may aid in perfecting its beauty and symmetry, so should the youth turn to the Son of Righteousness, that Heaven's light may shine upon them, perfecting their characters and giving them a deep and abiding experience in the things of God. Then they may reflect the divine rays of light upon others. Those who choose to gather doubts, and unbelief, and skepticism, will experience no growth in grace or spirituality, and are unfitted for the solemn responsibility of bearing the truth to others.

The world is to be warned of its coming doom. The slumbers of those who are lying in sin and error are so deep, so deathlike, that

the voice of God through a wide-awake minister is needed to awaken them. Unless the ministers are converted, the people will not be. The cold formalism that is now prevailing among us must give place to the living energy of experimental godliness. There is no fault with the theory of the truth; it is perfectly clear and harmonious. But young ministers may speak the truth fluently, and yet have no real sense of the words they utter. They do not appreciate the value of the truth they present, and little realize what it has cost those who, with prayers and tears, through trial and opposition, have sought for it as for hid treasures. Every new link in the chain of truth was to them as precious as tried gold. These links are now united in a perfect whole. Truths have been dug out of the rubbish of superstition and error, by earnest prayer for light and knowledge, and have been presented to the people as precious pearls of priceless value.

The gospel is a revelation to man of beams of light and hope from the eternal world. All the light does not burst upon us at once, but it comes as we can bear it. Inquiring minds that hunger for a knowledge of God's will are never satisfied; the deeper they search, the more they realize their ignorance and deplore their blindness. It is beyond the power of man to conceive the high and noble attainments that are within his reach, if he will combine human effort with the grace of God, who is the Source of all wisdom and power. And there is an eternal weight of glory beyond. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." [1 [Corinthians 2:9](#).]

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We have the most solemn message of truth ever borne to the world. This truth is more and more respected by unbelievers, because it cannot be controverted. In view of this fact, our young men become self-confident and self-inflated. They take the truths which have been brought out by other minds, and without study or earnest prayer, meet opponents and engage in contests, indulging in sharp speeches and witticisms, flattering themselves that this is doing the work of a gospel minister. In order to be fitted for God's work, these men need as thorough a conversion as Paul experienced. Ministers must be living representatives of the truth they preach. They must have greater spiritual life, characterized by greater simplicity. The words must be received from God and given to the people. The attention of the people must be arrested. Our message is a savor of life unto life

or of death unto death. The destiny of souls is balancing. Multitudes are in the valley of decision. A voice should be heard crying, "If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." [[1 Kings 18:21.](#)]

[139] Prompt, energetic, and earnest action may save an undecided soul. No one can tell how much is lost by attempting to preach without the unction of the Holy Spirit. There are souls in every congregation who are hesitating, almost persuaded to be wholly for God. The decision is being made for time and for eternity; but it is too often the case that the minister has not the spirit and power of the message of truth in his own heart, hence no direct appeals are made to those souls that are trembling in the balance. The result is that impressions are not deepened upon the hearts of the convicted ones; and they leave the meeting feeling less inclined to accept the service of Christ than when they came. They decide to wait for a more favorable opportunity; but it never comes. That godless discourse, like Cain's offering, lacked the Saviour. The golden opportunity is lost, and the cases of these souls are decided. Is not too much at stake to preach in an indifferent manner, and without feeling the burden of souls?

In this age of moral darkness it will take something more than dry theory to move souls. Ministers must have a living connection with God. They must preach as though they believed what they said. Living truths, falling from the lips of the man of God, will cause sinners to tremble, and the convicted to cry out, "Jehovah is the God; I am resolved to be wholly on the Lord's side." Never should the messenger of God cease his strivings for greater light and power from above. He should toil on, pray on, hope on, amid discouragement and darkness, determined to gain a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, and to come behind in no gift. As long as there is one soul to be benefited, he should press forward with new courage at every effort. There is work, earnest work, to be accomplished. Souls for whom Christ died are in peril. So long as Jesus has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," [[Hebrews 13:5.](#)] so long as the crown of righteousness is offered to the overcomer, so long as our Advocate pleads in the sinner's behalf, ministers of Christ should labor in hope, with tireless energy and persevering faith.

But while the truth of God is carried by young and inexperienced men whose hearts are scarcely touched by the grace of God, the cause will languish.... Men who dare to assume the responsibilities of receiving the word from the mouth of God and giving it to the people, make themselves accountable for the truth they present and the influence they exert. If they are truly men of God, their hope is not in themselves, but in what he will do for them and through them. They do not go forth self-inflated, calling the attention of the people to their smartness and aptness; they feel their responsibility, and work with spiritual energy, treading in the path of self-denial which the Master trod. Self-sacrifice is seen at every step, and they mourn because of their inability to do more in the cause of God. Their path is one of trial and conflict; but it is marked by the foot-prints of their Redeemer, the Captain of their salvation, who was made perfect through suffering. [140]

In their labor the under-shepherds must closely follow the directions and manifest the spirit of the Chief Shepherd. Skepticism and apostasy are met everywhere. God wants men to labor in his cause who have hearts as true as steel, and who will stand steadfast in integrity, undaunted by circumstances. Amid trial and gloom they are just what they were when their prospects were brightened by hope, and when their outward surroundings were all that they could desire. Daniel in the lions' den is the same Daniel who stood before the king, encircled by the light of God. Paul in the dark dungeon, awaiting the sentence which he knew was to come from the cruel Nero, is the same Paul who addressed the court of the Areopagus. A man whose heart is stayed upon God in the hour of his most afflicting trials and most discouraging surroundings, is just what he was in prosperity, when the light and favor of God seemed to be upon him. Faith reaches to the unseen, and grasps eternal things....

Ministers should dare to be true, Paul wrote to Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." [1 Timothy 4:12, 15, 16.] The word and will of God are expressed in the Scriptures by inspired [141]

penmen. We should bind them as frontlets between our eyes, and walk according to their precepts; then we shall walk safely. Every chapter and every verse is a communication from God to man. In studying the word, the soul that hungers and thirsts for righteousness will be impressed by the divine utterances. Skepticism can have no power over a soul that with humility searches the Scriptures.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:442](#).

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There are but few preachers among us. And because the cause of God seemed to need help so much, some have been led to think that almost any one claiming to be a minister would be acceptable. Some have thought that because persons could pray and exhort with a degree of freedom in meeting, they were qualified to go forth as laborers. And before they were proved, or could show any good fruit of their labors, men whom God has not sent have been encouraged and flattered by some brethren lacking experience. But their work shows the character of the workman. They scatter and confuse, but do not gather in and build up. A few may receive the truth as the fruit of their labors; but these generally rise no higher than those from whom they learned the truth. The same lack which marked their own course is seen in their converts.

[142] The success of this cause does not depend upon our having a large number of ministers; but it is of the highest importance that those who do labor in connection with the cause of God should be men who really feel the burden and sacredness of the work to which he has called them. A few self-sacrificing, godly men, small in their own estimation, can do a greater amount of good than a much larger number, if a part of these are unqualified for the work, yet self-confident and boastful of their own talents. A number of these in the field, who would better fill some calling at home, would make it necessary that nearly all the time of the faithful ministers be spent in following after them to correct their wrong influence. The future usefulness of young preachers depends much upon the manner in which they enter upon their labors. Brethren who have the cause of God at heart are so anxious to see the truth advance that they are in danger of doing too much for ministers who have

not been proved, by helping them liberally to means, and giving them influence. Those who enter the gospel field should be left to earn themselves a reputation, even if it must be through trials and privations. They should first give full proof of their ministry.

Brethren of experience should be guarded; and instead of expecting these young preachers to help and lead them, should feel a responsibility upon them to take charge of these young preachers, to instruct, advise, and lead them, to have a fatherly care for them. Young ministers should have system, a firm purpose, and a mind to work, that they may eat no man's bread for naught. They should not go from place to place, and introduce some points of our faith calculated to stir up prejudice, and leave before the evidences of present truth are half presented. Young men who think that they have a duty to do in connection with the work should not take the responsibility of teaching the truth, until they have availed themselves of the privilege of being under the influence of some experienced preacher who is systematic in his work; they should learn of him as a pupil at school would learn of his teacher. They should not go hither and thither, with no definite object or matured plans to carry out in their labor.

Some who have but little experience, and are least qualified to teach the truth, are the last to ask counsel of their experienced brethren. They put on the minister, and place themselves on a level with those of long and tried experience, and are not satisfied unless they can lead, thinking that because they are ministers, they know all that is worth knowing. Such preachers certainly lack a true knowledge of themselves. They do not possess becoming modesty, and have altogether too high an opinion of their own abilities. Ministers of experience, who realize the sacredness of the work, and feel the weight of the cause upon them, are jealous of themselves. They consider it a privilege to advise with their brethren, and are not offended if improvements are suggested in their plans of labor, or in their manner of speaking.

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Those ministers who have come out from the different denominations to embrace the third angel's message often wish to teach when they should be learners. Some have a great share of their former teaching to unlearn before they can fully learn the principles of present truth. Ministers will injure the cause of God by going forth

to labor for others when there is as great a work to be done for them to fit them for their labors, as they may wish to do for unbelievers. If they are unqualified for the work, it will require the labor of two or three faithful ministers to follow after and correct their wrong influence. In the end it would be cheaper for the cause of God to give such ministers a good support to remain at home and do no injury in the field.

[144] Preachers have been regarded by some as especially inspired, as being only mediums for the Lord to speak through. If the aged and those of long experience see failings in a minister, and suggest improvements in his manners, in the tone of his voice, or in his gestures, he has sometimes felt hurt, and has reasoned that God called him just as he was, that the power was of God and not of himself, and that God must do the work for him, that he did not preach according to man's wisdom, etc. It is a mistake to think that a man cannot preach unless he becomes wrought up to a high degree of excitement. Men who are thus dependent upon feeling, may be of use in exhortation, when they feel just like it, but they will never make good, burden-bearing laborers. When the work moves hard, and everything assumes a discouraging aspect, the excitable and those dependent upon feeling are not prepared to bear their share of the burdens. In times of discouragement and darkness, how important to have calm, thinking men, who are not dependent on circumstances, but who trust God, and labor on in the darkness as well as in the light. Men who serve God from principle, although their faith may be severely tried, will be seen leaning securely upon the never-failing arm of Jehovah.

Young preachers, and men who have once been ministers, who have been coarse and rough in their manners, making expressions in their conversation which were not perfectly modest and chaste, are not fit to engage in this work until they give evidence of an entire reform. One word spoken unadvisedly may do more harm than a series of meetings held by them will do good. They leave the standard of truth, which should be ever exalted, lowered to the dust before the community. Their converts generally come up no higher than the standard raised for them by the ministers. Men who are standing between the living and the dead, should be just right. The minister should not be off his guard for a single moment. He

is laboring to elevate others by bringing them up upon the platform of truth. Let him show to others that the truth has done something for him. He should see the evil of these careless, rough, vulgar expressions, and should put away and despise everything of this character. Unless he does this, his converts will pattern after him. And when faithful ministers shall follow after, and labor with these converts to correct their wrongs, they will excuse themselves by referring to the minister. If you condemn his course, they will turn to you and ask, "Why do you uphold and give influence to men by sending them out to preach to sinners, while they are sinners themselves?"

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The work in which we are engaged is a responsible and exalted work. Those who minister in word and doctrine should themselves be patterns of good works. They should be examples in holiness, cleanliness, and order. The appearance of the servant of God, out of the pulpit and in, should be that of a living preacher. He can accomplish far more by his godly example than by merely preaching in the desk, while his influence out of the desk is not worthy of imitation. Those who labor in this cause are bearing to the world the most elevated truth that was ever committed to mortals.

Men who are chosen of God to labor in this cause, will give proof of their high calling, and will regard it as their highest duty to grow and improve until they shall become able workmen. Then, as they manifest an earnestness to improve upon the talent which God has intrusted to them, they should be helped judiciously. But the encouragement given them should not savor of flattery, for Satan himself will do enough of that kind of work. Men who think that they have a duty to preach, should not be sustained in throwing themselves and their families at once upon the brethren for support. They are not entitled to this until they can show good fruits of their labor. There is danger now of injuring young preachers, and those who have but little experience, by flattery, and by relieving them of burdens in life. When not preaching, they should be doing what they can for their own support. This is the best way to test the nature of their call to preach. If they desire to preach only that they may be supported as ministers, and the church pursue a judicious course, they will soon lose their burden, and leave preaching for a more profitable business. Paul, a most eloquent preacher, miraculously

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converted by God to do a special work, was not above labor. He says, “Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it.” “Neither did we eat any man’s bread for naught; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you.” [[1 Corinthians 4:11, 12](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:8](#).]

I have been shown that many do not rightly estimate the talents which are among them. Some brethren do not understand what preaching talent would be the best for the advancement of the cause of truth, but think only of the present gratification of their feelings. Without reflection they will show preference for a speaker who manifests considerable zeal in his preaching, and relates anecdotes which please the ear and animate the mind for a moment, but leave no lasting impression. At the same time they will put a low estimate upon a preacher who has prayerfully studied that he may present before the people the arguments of our position in a calm manner, and in a connected form. His labor is not appreciated, and he is often treated with indifference.

[147] A man may preach in a spirited manner and please the ear, but convey no new idea or real intelligence to the mind. The impressions received through such preaching last no longer than while the speaker’s voice is heard. When search is made for the fruit of such labor, there is little to be found. These flashy gifts are not as beneficial, and as well adapted to advance the cause of truth, as a gift that can be trusted in difficult places. In the work of teaching the truth it is necessary that the important points of our position be well fortified with Scripture evidences. Assertions may silence the unbeliever, but will not convince him. Believers are not the only ones for whose benefit laborers are sent into the field. The salvation of souls is the great object.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:442](#).

Manner of Speaking

Some of our most talented ministers are doing themselves great injury by their defective manner of speaking. While teaching the people their duty to obey God's moral law, they should not be found violating his physical laws. Ministers should stand erect, and speak slowly, firmly, and distinctly, taking a full inspiration of air at every sentence, and throwing out the words by exercising the abdominal muscles. If they will observe this simple rule, giving attention to the laws of health in other respects, they may preserve their life and usefulness much longer than men in any other profession.

The chest will become broader, and by educating the voice, the speaker need seldom become hoarse, even by constant speaking. Instead of becoming consumptives by speaking, our ministers may, by care, overcome all tendency to consumption. I would say to my ministering brethren, Unless you educate yourselves to speak according to physical law, you will sacrifice life, and many will mourn the loss of "those martyrs to the cause of truth," when the facts in the case are, that by indulging in wrong habits you did injustice to yourselves and to the truth which you represented, and robbed God and the world of the service you might have rendered. God would have been pleased to have you live, but you slowly committed suicide.

The manner in which the truth is presented, often has much to do in determining whether it will be accepted or rejected. All who labor in the great cause of reform should study to become efficient workmen, that they may accomplish the greatest possible amount of good, and not detract from the force of the truth by their own deficiencies.

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Ministers and teachers should discipline themselves to clear and distinct articulation, giving the full sound to every word. Those who talk rapidly, from the throat, jumbling the words together and raising their voices to an unnaturally high pitch, soon become hoarse, and the words spoken lose half the force which they would have if spoken

slowly, distinctly, and not so loud. The sympathies of the hearers are awakened for the speaker; for they know that he is doing violence to himself, and they fear that he will break down at any moment. It is no evidence that a man has zeal for God because he works himself up into a frenzy of excitement and gesticulation. "Bodily exercise," says the apostle, "profiteth little." [[1 Timothy 4:8.](#)]

The Saviour of the world would have his co-laborers represent him; and the more closely a man walks with God, the more faultless will be his manner of address, his deportment, his attitude, and his gestures. Coarse and uncouth manners were never seen in our Pattern, Christ Jesus. He was a representative of heaven, and his followers must be like him.

Some reason that the Lord will by his Spirit qualify a man to speak as he would have him; but the Lord does not propose to do the work which he has given man to do. He has given us reasoning powers, and opportunities to educate the mind and manners. And after we have done all we can for ourselves, making the best use of the advantages within our reach, then we may look to God with earnest prayer to do by his Spirit that which we cannot do for ourselves, and we shall ever find in our Saviour power and efficiency.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:404.](#)

[149] From the light I have had, the ministry is a sacred and exalted office, and those who accept this position should have Christ in their hearts, and manifest an earnest desire to represent him worthily before the people, in all their acts, in their dress, in their speaking, and even in their manner of speaking. They should speak with reverence. Some destroy the solemn impression they may have made upon the people, by raising their voices to a very high pitch, and hallooing and screaming out the truth. When presented in this manner, truth loses much of its sweetness, its force and solemnity. But if the voice is toned right, if it has solemnity, and is so modulated as to be even pathetic, it will produce a much better impression. This was the tone in which Christ taught his disciples. He impressed them with solemnity; he spoke in a pathetic manner. But this loud hallooing—what does it do? It does not give the people any more exalted views of the truth, and does not impress them any more deeply. It only causes a disagreeable sensation to the hearers, and

wears out the vocal organs of the speaker. The tones of the voice have much to do in affecting the hearts of those that hear.

Many who might be useful men, are using up their vital force, and destroying their lungs and vocal organs, by their manner of speaking. Some ministers have acquired a habit of hurriedly rattling off what they have to say, as though they had a lesson to repeat, and were hastening through it as fast as possible. This is not the best manner of speaking. By using proper care, every minister can educate himself to speak distinctly and impressively, not to hurriedly crowd the words together, without taking time to breathe. He should speak in a moderate manner, that the people may get the ideas fixed in their minds as he passes along. But when the matter is rushed through so rapidly, the people cannot get the points in their minds, and they do not have the time to receive the impression that it is important for them to have; nor is there time for the truth to affect them as it otherwise would. [150]

Speaking from the throat, all the time fretting and irritating the vocal organs, is not the best way to improve health or to increase the efficiency of those organs. You should take a full inspiration, and let the action come from the abdominal muscles. Let the lungs be only the channel; do not depend upon them to do the work. If you let your words come from deep down, exercising the abdominal muscles, you can speak to thousands with just as much ease as you can speak to ten.

Some of our preachers are killing themselves by long, tedious praying and loud speaking, when a lower tone would make a better impression, and save their own strength. Now, while you go on regardless of the laws of life and health, and follow the impulse of the moment, do not charge it upon God if you break down. Many of you waste time and strength in long preliminaries and excuses as you begin to speak. Instead of apologizing because you are about to address the people, you should begin your labor as though God had something for you to say to them. Some use up nearly half an hour in making apologies; thus the time is frittered away, and when they get to their subject, where they are desirous of fastening the points of truth, the people are wearied out, and cannot see their force or be impressed with them. You should make the essential points of present truth as distinct as mile-posts, so that the people

will understand them. They will then see the arguments you want to present, and the positions you want to sustain.

[151] There is another class that address the people in a whining tone. Their hearts are not softened by the Spirit of God, and they think they must make an impression by the appearance of humility. Such a course does not exalt the gospel ministry, but brings it down, degrades it. Ministers should present the truth warm from glory. They should speak in such a manner as rightly to represent Christ, and preserve the dignity becoming his ministers.

The long prayers made by some ministers have been a great failure. Praying to great length, as some do, is all out of place. They injure the throat and vocal organs, and then they talk of breaking down by their hard labor. They injure themselves when it is not called for. Many feel that praying injures their vocal organs more than talking. This is in consequence of the unnatural position of the body, and the manner of holding the head. They can stand and talk, and not feel injured. The position in prayer should be perfectly natural. Long praying wearies, and is not in accordance with the gospel of Christ. Half or even a quarter of an hour is altogether too long. A few minutes' time is long enough to bring your case before God, and tell him what you want; and you can take the people with you, and not weary them out, and lessen their interest in devotion and prayer. They may be refreshed and strengthened, instead of exhausted....

[152] Ministers should speak in a manner to reach and impress the people. The teachings of Christ were impressive and solemn; his voice was melodious. And should not we, as well as Christ, study to have melody in our voices? He had a mighty influence, for he was the Son of God. We are so far beneath him and so far deficient, that, do the very best we can, our efforts will be poor. We cannot gain and hold the influence that he had; but why should we not educate ourselves to come just as near to the Pattern as it is possible for us to do, that we may have the greatest possible influence upon the people? Our words, our actions, our deportment, our dress,—everything should preach. Not only with our words should we speak to the people, but everything pertaining to our person should be a sermon to them, that right impressions may be made upon them, and

that the truth spoken may be taken by them to their homes. Thus our faith will stand in a better light before the community.

I never realized more than I do today the exalted character of the work, its sacredness and holiness, and the importance of our being fitted for it. I see the need in myself. I must have a new fitting up, a holy unction, or I cannot go any farther to instruct others. I must know that I am walking with God. I must know that I understand the mystery of godliness. I must know that the grace of God is in my own heart, that my own life is in accordance with his will, that I am walking in his footsteps. Then my words will be true, and my actions right.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:615](#).

Danger in Overwork

I saw that some of our ministers do not understand how to preserve their strength so as to be able to perform the greatest amount of labor without exhaustion. Ministers should not pray so loud and long as to exhaust their strength. It is not necessary to weary the throat and lungs in prayer. God's ear is ever open to hear the heart-felt petitions of his humble servants, and he does not require them to wear out the organs of speech in addressing him. It is the perfect trust, the firm reliance, the steady claiming of the promises of God, the simple faith that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all those who diligently seek him, that prevails with God.

[153] Ministers should discipline themselves, and learn how to perform the greatest amount of labor in the brief period allotted them, and yet preserve a good degree of strength, so that if an extra effort should be required, they may have a reserve of vital force sufficient for the occasion, which they can employ without injuring themselves. Sometimes all the strength they have is needed in order to put forth effort at a given point; and if they have previously exhausted their fund of strength, and cannot command the power to make this effort, all they have done is lost. At times all the mental and physical energies may be drawn upon to make the very strongest stand, to array evidences in the clearest light, and set them before the people in the most pointed manner, and urge them home by the strongest appeals. As souls are on the point of leaving the enemy's ranks and coming upon the Lord's side, the contest is most severe and close. Satan and his angels are unwilling that any who have served under the banner of darkness should take their position under the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel.

I was shown opposing armies who had endured a painful struggle in battle. The victory was gained by neither, and at length the loyal realize that their strength and force are wearing away, and that they will be unable to silence their enemies unless they make a charge upon them, and obtain their instruments of warfare. It is then, at

the risk of their lives, that they summon all their powers, and rush upon the foe. It is a fearful struggle; but victory is gained, the strongholds are taken. If at the critical period the army is so weak through exhaustion that it is impossible to make the last charge, and batter down the enemy's fortifications, the whole struggle of days, weeks, and even months, is lost; many lives are sacrificed, and nothing gained.

A similar work is before us. Many are convinced that we have the truth, and yet they are held as with iron bands; they dare not risk the consequences of taking their position on the side of truth. Many are in the valley of decision, where special, close, and pointed appeals are necessary to move them to lay down their weapons of warfare, and take their position on the Lord's side. Just at this critical period, Satan throws the strongest bands around these souls. If the servants of God are all exhausted, having expended their fund of physical and mental strength, they think they can do no more, and frequently leave the field entirely, to begin operations elsewhere. And all, or nearly all, the time, means, and labor have been spent for naught. Yes, it is worse than if they had never begun the work in that place; for after the people have been deeply convicted by the Spirit of God, and brought to the point of decision, and are left to lose their interest, and decide against these evidences, they cannot as easily be brought where their minds will again be agitated upon the subject. They have in many cases made their final decision. [154]

If ministers would preserve a reserve force, and at the very point where everything seems to move the hardest, then make the most earnest efforts, the strongest appeals, the closest applications, and, like valiant soldiers, at the critical moment make the charge upon the enemy, they would gain the victory. Souls would have strength to break the bands of Satan, and make their decisions for everlasting life. Well-directed labor at the right time will make a long-tried effort successful, when to leave the labor, even for a few days, will in many cases cause an entire failure. Ministers must give themselves as missionaries to the work, and learn how to make their efforts count to the very best advantage.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:645](#).

Order and Discipline

I was shown that ministers of Christ should discipline themselves for the warfare. Greater wisdom is required in generalship in the work of God than is required of the generals engaged in national battles. Ministers of God's choosing are engaged in a great work. They are warring not merely against men, but against Satan and his angels. Wise generalship is required here. They must become Bible students, and give themselves wholly to the work. When they begin to labor in a place, they should be able to give the reasons of our faith, not in a boisterous manner, not with a perfect storm, but with meekness and fear. The power which will convince, is strong arguments presented in meekness and in the fear of God. Able ministers of Christ are required for the work in these last days in peril,—able in word and doctrine, acquainted with the Scriptures, and understanding the reasons of our faith. I was directed to these scriptures, the meaning of which has not been realized by some ministers: “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” [[1 Peter 3:15](#); [Colossians 4:6](#); [2 Timothy 2:24-26](#).]

The man of God, the minister of Christ, is required to be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. A pompous minister, all dignity, is not needed for this good work. But decorum is necessary in the desk. A minister of the gospel should not be regardless of his attitude. If he is the representative of Christ, his deportment, his attitude, his gestures, should be of such a character as will not strike the

beholder with disgust. Ministers should possess refinement. They should discard all uncouth manners, attitudes, and gestures, and should encourage in themselves humble dignity of bearing. They should be clothed in a manner befitting the dignity of their position. Their speech should be in every respect solemn and well chosen. I was shown that it is wrong to make coarse, irreverent expressions, to relate anecdotes to amuse, or present comic illustrations to create a laugh. Sarcasm and playing upon the words of an opponent are all out of God's order. Ministers should not feel that they can make no improvement in voice or manners; much can be done. The voice can be cultivated so that quite lengthy speaking will not injure the vocal organs.

Ministers should love order, and should discipline themselves, and then they can successfully discipline the church of God and teach them to work harmoniously, like a well-drilled company of soldiers. If discipline and order are necessary for successful action on the battle-field, the same are as much more needful in the warfare in which we are engaged as the object to be gained is of greater value and more elevated in character than those for which opposing forces contend upon the field of battle. In the conflict in which we are engaged, eternal interests are at stake.

Angels work harmoniously. Perfect order characterizes all their movements. The more closely we imitate the harmony and order of the angelic host, the more successful will be the efforts of these heavenly agents in our behalf. If we see no necessity for harmonious action, and are disorderly, undisciplined, and disorganized in our course of action, angels, who are thoroughly organized and move in perfect order, cannot work for us successfully. They turn away in grief, for they are not authorized to bless confusion, distraction, and disorganization. All who desire the co-operation of the heavenly messengers, must work in unison with them. Those who have the unction from on high, will in all their efforts encourage order, discipline, and union of action, and then the angels of God can co-operate with them. But never, never, will these heavenly messengers place their indorsement upon irregularity, disorganization, and disorder. All these evils are the result of Satan's efforts to weaken our forces, to destroy courage, and prevent successful action.

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Satan well knows that success can only attend order and harmonious action. He well knows that everything connected with heaven is in perfect order, that subjection and thorough discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. It is his studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from heaven's arrangement as he can; therefore he deceives even the professed people of God, and makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to spirituality; that the only safety for them is to let each pursue his own course, and to remain especially distinct from bodies of Christians who are united, and are laboring to establish discipline and harmony of action. All the efforts made to establish order are considered dangerous, a restriction of rightful liberty, and hence are feared as popery. These deceived souls consider it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They will not take any man's say-so. They are amenable to no man. I was shown that it is Satan's special work to lead men to feel that it is God's order for them to strike out for themselves, and choose their own course, independent of their brethren.

[158] I was pointed back to the children of Israel. Very soon after leaving Egypt they were organized and most thoroughly disciplined. God had in his special providence qualified Moses to stand at the head of the armies of Israel. He had been a mighty warrior to lead the armies of the Egyptians, and in generalship he could not be surpassed by any man. The Lord did not leave his holy tabernacle to be borne indiscriminately by any tribe that might choose. He was so particular as to specify the order he would have observed in bearing the sacred ark, and to designate a special family of the tribe of the Levites to bear it. When it was for the good of the people and for the glory of God that they should pitch their tents in a certain place, God signified his will to them by causing the pillar of cloud to rest directly over the tabernacle, where it remained until he would have them journey again. In all their journeying they were required to observe perfect order. Every tribe carried a standard bearing the sign which distinguished that tribe, and each tribe was required to pitch under its own standard. When the ark moved, the armies journeyed, the different tribes marching in order, under their own standards. The Levites were designated by the Lord as the tribe in the midst of whom the sacred ark was to be borne, Moses and Aaron marching

just in front of the ark, and the sons of Aaron following near them, each bearing a trumpet. They were to receive directions from Moses, which they were to signify to the people by speaking through the trumpets. These trumpets gave special sounds, which the people understood, and they directed their movements accordingly.

A special signal was first given by the trumpeters to call the attention of the people; then all were to be attentive, and obey the certain sound of the trumpets. There was no confusion of sound in the voices of the trumpets, therefore there was no excuse for confusion in movements. The head officer of each company gave definite directions in regard to the movements they were required to make, and none who gave attention were left in ignorance of what they were to do. If any failed to comply with the requirements given by the Lord to Moses, and by Moses to the people, they were punished with death. It would be no excuse to plead that they knew not the nature of these requirements; for they would only prove themselves willingly ignorant, and would receive the just punishment for their transgression. If they did not know the will of God concerning them, it was their own fault. They had the same opportunities to obtain the knowledge imparted as others of the people had, therefore their sin of not knowing, not understanding, was as great in the sight of God as if they had heard and then transgressed.

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The Lord designated a special family of the tribe of Levi to bear the ark; and others of the Levites were specially appointed by God to bear the tabernacle and all its furniture, and to perform the work of setting up and taking down the tabernacle. And if any man from curiosity or from lack of order, got out of his place, and touched any part of the sanctuary or furniture, or even came near any of the workmen, he was to be put to death. God did not leave his holy tabernacle to be borne, erected, and taken down, indiscriminately, by any tribe who might choose the office, but persons were chosen who could appreciate the sacredness of the work in which they were engaged. These men appointed by God were directed to impress upon the people the special sacredness of the ark and all that appertained thereunto, lest they should look upon these things without realizing their holiness, and should be cut off from Israel. All things pertaining to the most holy place were to be looked upon with reverence.

[160] The travels of the children of Israel are faithfully described; the deliverance which the Lord wrought for them, their perfect organization and special order, their sin in murmuring against Moses and thus against God, their transgressions, their rebellions, their punishments, their carcasses strewn in the wilderness because of their unwillingness to submit to God's wise arrangements,—this faithful picture is hung up before us as a warning lest we follow their example of disobedience, and fall like them.

“But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” [1 [Corinthians 10:5-12.](#)] Has God changed from a God of order?—No; he is the same in the present dispensation as in the former. Paul says, “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.” [1 [Corinthians 14:33.](#)] He is as particular now as then. And he designs that we should learn lessons of order and organization from the perfect order instituted in the days of Moses, for the benefit of the children of Israel.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:647.](#)

Carefulness in Dress

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The God of heaven, whose arm moves the world, who sustains us and gives us life and health, has given us evidence that he may be honored or dishonored by the apparel of those who officiate before him. He gave special directions to Moses in regard to everything connected with his service. He gave instruction even in regard to the arrangement of their houses, and specified the dress which those should wear who were to minister in his service. They were to maintain order in everything, and especially to preserve cleanliness.

Read the directions that were given to Moses, to be made known to the children of Israel as God was about to come down upon the mount to speak in their hearing his holy law. What did he command Moses to have the people do?—To be ready against the third day; for on the third day, said he, the Lord will come down upon the mount in the sight of all the people. They were to set bounds about the mount. “And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.” [Exodus 19:10.] That great and mighty God who created the beautiful Eden, and everything lovely in it, is a God of order; and he wants order and cleanliness with his people. That mighty God directed Moses to tell the people to wash their clothes, lest there should be impurity in their clothing and about their persons as they came up before the Lord. And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and they washed their clothes, according to the command of God....

There was to be nothing slack and untidy about those who appeared before him, when they came into his holy presence. And why was this? What was the object of all this carefulness? Was it merely to recommend the people to God? Was it merely to gain his approbation? The reason that was given me was this, that a right impression might be made upon the people. If those who ministered in sacred office should fail to manifest care and reverence for God, in their apparel and their deportment, the people would lose their awe and their reverence for God and his sacred service. If the priests

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showed great reverence for God by being very careful and very particular as they came into his presence, it gave the people an exalted idea of God and his requirements. It showed them that God was holy, that his work was sacred, and that everything in connection with his work must be holy; that it must be free from everything like impurity and uncleanness; and that all defilement must be put away from those who approach nigh to God.

From the light that has been given me, there has been a carelessness in this respect. I might speak of it as Paul presents it. It is carried out in will-worship and neglecting of the body. But this voluntary humility, this will-worship and neglecting of the body, is not the humility that savors of heaven. That humility will be particular to have person, and actions, and apparel of all who preach the holy truth of God, right and perfectly proper, so that every item connected with us will recommend our holy religion. The very dress will be a recommendation of the truth to unbelievers. It will be a sermon in itself...

[163] Anciently the priests were required to have their garments in a particular style to do service in the holy place, and minister in the priest's office. They were to have garments in accordance with their work, and God distinctly specified what these should be. The laver was placed between the altar and the congregation, that before they came into the presence of God, in the sight of the congregation, they might wash their hands and their feet. What impression was this to make upon the people? It was to show them that every particle of dust must be put away before they could go into the presence of God; for he was so high and holy that unless they did comply with these conditions, death would follow....

The Lord requires his ministers to be pure and holy, rightly to represent the principles of truth in their own lives, and by their example to bring others up upon a high level.

God requires all who profess to be his chosen people, though they are not teachers of the truth, to be careful to preserve personal cleanliness and purity, also cleanliness and order in their houses and upon their premises. We are examples to the world, living epistles known and read of all men. God requires all who profess godliness, and especially those who teach the truth to others, to abstain from all appearance of evil.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:610](#).

Physical Labor and Mental Activity

[From a Personal Testimony.]

When not actively engaged in preaching, the apostle Paul worked at his trade as a tent-maker. This he was obliged to do on account of having accepted unpopular truth. Before embracing Christianity, he had occupied an elevated position, and was not dependent upon his labor for support. Among the Jews it was customary to teach the children some trade, however high the position they were expected to fill, that a reverse of circumstances might not leave them incapable of sustaining themselves. In accordance with this custom, Paul was a tent-maker; and when his means had been expended to advance the cause of Christ and for his own support, he resorted to his trade in order to gain a livelihood.

No man ever lived who was a more earnest, energetic, and self-sacrificing disciple of Christ than was Paul. He was one of the world's greatest teachers. He crossed the seas, and traveled far and near, until a large portion of the world had learned from his lips the story of the cross of Christ. He possessed a burning desire to bring perishing man to a knowledge of the truth through a Saviour's love. His soul was wrapped up in the work of the ministry, and it was with feelings of pain that he withdrew from this work to toil for his own bodily necessities; but he seated himself to the drudgery of the craftsman, that he might not be burdensome to the churches that were pressed with poverty. Although he had planted many churches, he refused to be supported by them, fearing that his usefulness and success as a minister of the gospel might be interfered with by suspicions of his motives. He would remove all occasion for his enemies to misrepresent him, and thus detract from the force of his message.

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Paul appeals to his Corinthian brethren to understand that as a laborer in the gospel, he might claim his support, instead of sustaining himself; but this right he was willing to forego, fearing that the

acceptance of means for his support might possibly stand in the way of his usefulness. Although feeble in health, he labored during the day in serving the cause of Christ, and then toiled a large share of the night, and frequently all night, that he might make provision for his own and others' necessities. The apostle would also give an example to his brethren, thus dignifying and honoring industry. When our ministers feel that they are suffering hardships and privations in the cause of Christ, let them in imagination visit the workshop of the apostle Paul, bearing in mind that while this chosen man of God is fashioning the canvass, he is working for bread which he has justly earned by his labors as an apostle of Jesus Christ. At the call of duty, this great apostle would lay aside his business to meet the most violent opponents, and stop their proud boasting, and then he would

[165] resume his humble employment. His religious industry is a rebuke to the indolence of some of our ministers. When they have opportunity to labor to help sustain themselves, they should do so with gladness.

God never designed that man should live in idleness. When Adam was in Eden, means were devised for his employment. Though the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, yet he that dealeth with a slack hand will become poor. Those who are diligent in business may not always be prospered; but drowsiness and indolence are sure to grieve the Spirit of God and destroy true godliness. A stagnant pool becomes offensive; but a pure, flowing brook spreads health and gladness over the land. A man of persevering industry will be a blessing anywhere. The exercise of man's physical and mental powers is necessary to their full and proper development.

Young ministers should study to make themselves useful wherever they are. When invited to visit persons at their homes, they should not sit idle, making no effort to help the ones whose hospitality they share. Obligations are mutual; if the minister shares the hospitality of his friends, it is his duty to respond to their kindness by being thoughtful and considerate in his conduct toward them. The entertainer may be a man of care and hard labor. By manifesting a disposition not only to wait upon himself, but to render timely assistance, the minister may often find access to the heart, and open the way for the reception of truth.

When responsibilities are to be intrusted to an individual, the question is not asked whether he is eloquent or wealthy, but whether he is honest, faithful, and industrious; for whatever may be his accomplishments, without these qualifications he is utterly unfit for any position of trust. Many who have begun life with fair prospects, fail of success because they lack industry. Young men who habitually mingle in the little groups gathered in stores or on the street, ever engaging in discussion or gossip, will never grow to the proportions of men of understanding. Continual application will accomplish for man what nothing else can. Those who are never content without the consciousness that they are growing every day, will truly make a success of life.

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Many have failed, signally failed, where they might have made a success. They have not felt the burden of the work; they have taken things as leisurely as though they had a temporal millennium in which to work for the salvation of souls. Because of this lack of earnestness and zeal, but few would receive the impression that they really meant what they said. The cause of God is not so much in need of preachers as of earnest, persevering workers for the Master. God alone can measure the powers of the human mind. It was not his design that man should be content to remain in the lowlands of ignorance, but that he should secure all the advantages of an enlightened, cultivated intellect. Every man and every woman should feel that obligations are resting upon them to reach the very height of intellectual greatness. While none should be puffed up because of the knowledge they have acquired, it is the privilege of all to enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that with every advance step they are rendered more capable of honoring and glorifying God. They may draw from an inexhaustible fountain, the Source of all wisdom and knowledge.

Having entered the school of Christ, the student is prepared to engage in the pursuit of knowledge without becoming dizzy from the height to which he is climbing. As he goes on from truth to truth, obtaining clearer and brighter views of the wonderful laws of science and of nature, he becomes enraptured with the amazing exhibitions of God's love to man. He sees with intelligent eyes the perfection, knowledge, and wisdom of God stretching beyond into infinity. As his mind enlarges and expands, pure streams of life pour

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into his soul. The more he drinks from the fountain of knowledge, the purer and happier his contemplation of God's infinity, and the greater his longing for wisdom sufficient to comprehend the deep things of God.

Mental culture is what we, as a people, need, and what we must have in order to meet the demands of the time. Poverty, humble origin, and unfavorable surroundings, need not prevent the cultivation of the mind. The mental faculties must be kept under the control of the will, and the mind not allowed to wander or become distracted with a variety of subjects at a time, being thorough in none. Difficulties will be met in all studies; but never cease through discouragement. Search, study, and pray; face every difficulty manfully and vigorously; call the power of will and the grace of patience to your aid, and then dig more earnestly till the gem of truth lies before you, plain and beautiful, all the more precious because of the difficulties involved in finding it. Do not, then, continually dwell upon this one point, concentrating all the energies of the mind upon it, constantly urging it upon the attention of others, but take another subject, and carefully examine that. Thus mystery after mystery will be unfolded to your comprehension. Two valuable victories will be gained by this course. You have not only secured useful knowledge, but the exercise of the mind has increased mental power. The key found to unlock one mystery, may reveal also other precious gems of knowledge heretofore undiscovered.

[168] God has no use for lazy men in his cause; he wants thoughtful, kind, affectionate, earnest workers. Active exertion will do our preachers good. Indolence is proof of depravity. Every faculty of the mind, every bone in the body, every muscle of the limbs, show that God designed our faculties to be used, not to remain inactive. Men who will unnecessarily take the hours of daylight for sleep, have no sense of the value of precious, golden moments. Such men will prove only a curse to the cause of God.

Persons who have not acquired habits of close industry and economy of time should have set rules to prompt them to regularity and dispatch. Washington, the nation's statesman, was enabled to perform a great amount of business because he was thorough in preserving order and regularity. Every paper had its date and its place, and no time was lost in looking up what had been mislaid.

Men of God must be diligent in study, earnest in the acquirement of knowledge, never wasting an hour. Through persevering exertion they may rise to almost any degree of eminence as Christians, as men of power and influence. But many will never attain superior rank in the pulpit or in business, because of their unfixeness of purpose, and the laxness of habits contracted in their youth. Careless inattention is seen in everything they undertake. A sudden impulse now and then is not sufficient to accomplish a reformation in these ease-loving, indolent ones; this is a work which requires patient continuance in well-doing. Men of business can be truly successful only by having regular hours for rising, for prayer, for meals, and for retirement. If order and regularity are essential in worldly business, how much more so in doing work for God!

The bright morning hours are wasted by many in bed. These precious hours, once lost, are gone never to return; they are lost for time and for eternity. Only one hour lost each day, and what a waste of time in the course of a year! Let the slumberer think of this, and pause to consider how he will give an account to God for lost opportunities.

Ministers should devote time to reading, to study, to meditation and prayer. They should store the mind with useful knowledge, committing to memory portions of Scripture, tracing out the fulfillment of the prophecies, and learning the lessons which Christ gave to his disciples. Take a book with you to read when traveling on the cars or waiting in the depot. Employ every spare moment in doing something. In this way an effectual door will be closed against a thousand temptations. Had King David been engaged in some useful employment, he would not have been guilty of the murder of Uriah. Satan is ever ready to employ him who does not employ himself. The mind which is continually striving to rise to the height of intellectual greatness will find no time for cheap, foolish thoughts, which are the parent of evil actions. There are men of good ability among us, who, by proper cultivation, might become eminently useful; yet they do not love exertion, and, failing to see the crime of neglecting to put to the best use the faculties with which they have been endowed by the Creator, they settle down at their ease, to remain uncultivated in mind. But very few are meeting the mind of God. Of these slothful servants God will inquire, "What hast thou done with

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the talents I gave thee?" Many will be found in that day, who, having had one talent, bound it in a napkin, and hid it in the earth. These unprofitable servants will be cast into outer darkness; while those who had put out their talents to the exchangers and doubled them, will receive the plaudit, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." [Matthew 25:21.]

[170] Many of our ministers can present to the people only a few doctrinal discourses. The same exertion and application which made them familiar with these points, will enable them to gain an understanding of others. The prophecies and other doctrinal subjects should be thoroughly understood by them all. But some who have been engaged in preaching for years, are content to confine themselves to a few subjects, being too indolent to search the Scriptures diligently and prayerfully, that they may become giants in the understanding of Bible doctrines and the practical lessons of Christ. The minds of all should be stored with a knowledge of the truths of God's word, that they may be prepared, at any moment when required, to present from the storehouse things new and old. Minds have been crippled and dwarfed for want of zeal, and of earnest, severe taxation. The time has come when God says, "Go forward, and cultivate the abilities I have given you."

The world is teeming with errors and fables. Novelties in the form of sensational dramas are continually arising to engross the mind; and absurd theories abound which are destructive to moral and spiritual advancement. The cause of God needs men of intellect, men of thought, men well versed in the Scriptures, to meet the inflowing tide of opposition. We should give no sanction to arrogance, narrow-mindedness, and inconsistencies, although the garment of professed piety may be thrown over them. Those who have the sanctifying power of the truth upon their hearts will exert a persuasive influence. Knowing that the advocates of error cannot create or destroy truth, they can afford to be considerate and calm.

It is not enough for our ministers to have a superficial knowledge of the truth. Subjects which are handled by men who have perverted their God-given powers to tear down the truth, are constantly coming up for investigation. Bigotry must be laid aside. The Satanic delusions of the age must be met clearly and intelligently with the sword

of the Spirit, which is the word of God. He who guides the planets in their courses, and upholds the worlds by his power, has made provision for man formed in his image, that he may be little less than the angels of God while in the performance of his duties on earth. God's purposes have not been answered by men who have been entrusted with the most solemn truth ever given to man. He designs that we should rise higher and higher toward a state of perfection, seeing and realizing at every step the power and glory of God. Man does not know himself. Our responsibilities are exactly proportioned to our light, opportunities, and privileges. We are responsible for the good we might have done, but failed to do because we were too indolent to use the means for our improvement which were placed within our reach. [171]

The precious book of God contains rules of life for men of every class and every vocation. Examples are here found which it would be well for all to study and imitate. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." [Matthew 20:28.] The true honor and glory of the servant of Christ consists, not in the number of sermons preached, nor in the amount of writing accomplished, but in the work of faithfully ministering to the wants of the people. If he neglects this part of his work, he has no right to the name of minister.

Men are needed for this time who can understand the wants of the people, and minister to their necessities. The faithful minister of Christ watches at every outpost to warn, to reprove, to counsel, to entreat, and to encourage his fellow-men, laboring with the Spirit of God which worketh in him mightily, that he may present every man perfect in Christ. Such a man is acknowledged in heaven as a minister, treading in the footsteps of his great Exemplar...

The harmonious, healthy action of all the powers of the body and mind results in happiness; and the more elevated and refined the powers, the more pure and unalloyed the happiness. An aimless life is a living death. The powers of the mind should be exercised upon themes relating to our eternal interests. This will be conducive to health of body and mind. There are many, even among our preachers, who want to rise in the world without effort. They are ambitious to do some great work of usefulness, while they disregard the little every-day duties which would render them helpful, and make them [172]

ministers after Christ's order. They wish to do the work that others are doing, but have no relish for the discipline necessary to fit them for it. This yearning desire by both men and women to do something far in advance of their present capabilities, is simply causing them to make decided failures at the outset. They indignantly refuse to climb the ladder, wishing to be elevated by a less laborious process.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:409](#).

Our Duty to Preserve Health

I am pained at heart as I see so many feeble ministers, so many on beds of sickness, and so many closing the scenes of their earthly history,—men who have carried the burden of responsibility in the work of God, whose whole heart was in their work. The conviction that they must cease their labor in the cause they loved, was far more painful to them than their sufferings from disease, or even death itself.

Is it not time for us to understand that nature will not long suffer abuse without protesting? Our heavenly Father does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men. He is not the author of sickness and death. He is the source of life; he would have men live, and he desires them to be obedient to the laws of life and health, that they may live.

Those who accept the present truth and are sanctified through it, have an intense desire to represent the truth in their life and character. They have a deep yearning of soul that others may see the light and rejoice in it. As the true watchman goes forth bearing precious seed, sowing beside all waters, weeping and praying, the burden of labor is very taxing to mind and heart. He cannot keep up the strain continuously, his soul stirred to the very depths, without wearing out prematurely. Strength and efficiency are needed in every discourse. And from time to time, fresh supplies of things new and old need to be brought forth from the store-house of God's word. This will impart life and power to the hearers. God does not want you to become so exhausted that your efforts have no freshness or life.

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Those who are engaged in constant mental labor, whether in study or preaching, need rest and change. The earnest student is constantly taxing the brain, too often while neglecting physical exercise, and as the result the bodily powers are enfeebled, and mental effort is restricted. Thus the student fails of accomplishing the very work that he might have done, had he labored wisely.

If they worked intelligently, giving both mind and body a due share of exercise, ministers would not so readily succumb to disease. If all our workers were so situated that they could spend a few hours each day in out-door labor, and felt free to do this, it would be a blessing to them; they would be able to discharge more successfully the duties of their calling. If they have not time for complete relaxation, they could be planning and praying while at work with their hands, and could return to their labor refreshed in body and spirit.

Some of our ministers feel that they must every day perform some labor that they can report to the Conference. And as the result of trying to do this, their efforts are too often weak and inefficient. They should have periods of rest, of entire freedom from taxing labor. But these cannot take the place of daily physical exercise.

[174] Brethren, when you take time to cultivate your garden, thus gaining the exercise needed to keep the system in good working order, you are just as much doing the work of God as in holding meetings. God is our Father, he loves us, and he does not require any of his servants to abuse their bodies.

Another cause both of ill health and of inefficiency in labor, is indigestion. It is impossible for the brain to do its best work when the digestive powers are abused. Many eat hurriedly of various kinds of food, which set up a war in the stomach, and thus confuse the brain. The use of unhealthful food, and overeating of even that which is wholesome, should alike be avoided. Many eat at all hours, regardless of the laws of health. Then gloom covers the mind. How can men be honored with divine enlightenment, when they are so reckless in their habits, so inattentive to the light which God has given in regard to these things? Brethren, is it not time for you to be converted on these points of selfish indulgence? “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” [[1 Corinthians 9:24-27](#).] Study this solemnly.

Do not, however, feel it your duty to live on an insufficient diet. Learn for yourselves what you should eat, what kinds of food best nourish the body, and then follow the dictates of reason and conscience. At meal-time cast off care and taxing thought. Do not be hurried, but eat slowly and with cheerfulness, your heart filled with gratitude to God for all his blessings. And do not engage in brain labor immediately after a meal. Exercise moderately, and give a little time for the stomach to begin its work. [175]

This is not a matter of trifling importance. We must pay attention to it if healthful vigor and a right tone are to be given to the various branches of the work. The character and efficiency of the work depend largely upon the physical condition of the workers. Many committee meetings, and other meetings for counsel have taken an unhappy tone from the dyspeptic condition of those assembled. And many a sermon has received a dark shadow from the minister's indigestion.

Health is an inestimable blessing, and one which is more closely related to conscience and religion than many realize. It has a great deal to do with one's capability. Every minister should feel that as he would be a faithful guardian of the flock, he must preserve all his powers in condition for the best possible service.

We are all deficient in practical knowledge concerning this matter. The wonderful mechanism of the human body does not receive half the care that is often given to a mere lifeless machine. Men give years of study in preparation for this ministry, and yet so weaken their powers during this preparatory work, that they die prematurely.

Our workers should use their knowledge of the laws of life and health. They should study from cause to effect. Read the best authors on these subjects, and obey religiously that which your reason tells you is truth.—MS.

Well-Balanced Effort

God has committed to each of us sacred trusts, for which he holds us accountable. He desires us so to educate the mind that we may be able to accomplish the greatest good, and reflect the glory to the Giver. We are indebted to God for all the powers of the mind. These powers can be cultivated, and so discreetly directed and controlled as to accomplish the purpose for which they were given. It is duty so to educate the mind as to bring out the energies of the soul, and develop every faculty. When all the faculties are in exercise, the intellect will be strengthened, and the purpose for which they were given will be accomplished.

Many are not doing the greatest amount of good, because they exercise the intellect in one direction, and neglect to give careful attention to those things for which they think they are not adapted. Some faculties that are weak are thus allowed to lie dormant, because the work that should call them into exercise and consequently give them strength, is not pleasant. All the powers of the mind should be exercised, all the faculties cultivated. Perception, judgment, memory, and all the reasoning powers, should have equal strength in order that the mind may be well balanced....

We have no right to neglect any one of the powers that God has given us. All over the country we see monomaniacs. Frequently they are sane upon every subject but one. The reason of this is that one organ of the mind was specially exercised, while others were permitted to lie dormant. The one that was in constant use became worn and diseased, and the man became a wreck. God was not glorified by this course. Had he exercised all the organs equally, all would have had a healthy development; all the labor would not have been thrown upon one, therefore no one would have broken down.

Ministers should be guarded, lest they thwart the purposes of God by plans of their own. They are in danger of narrowing down the work of God, and confining their labor to certain localities, and not cultivating a special interest for the work of God in all its

various departments. There are some who concentrate their minds upon one subject, to the exclusion of others which may be of equal importance. They are one-idea men. All the strength of their being is concentrated on the subject upon which the mind is exercised for the time. Every other consideration is lost sight of. This one favorite theme is the burden of their thoughts and their conversation. All the evidence which has a bearing upon that subject is eagerly seized and appropriated, and dwelt upon at so great length that minds are wearied in following them.

Time is frequently lost in explaining points which are really unimportant, and which would be taken for granted without producing proof; for they are self-evident. But the real, vital points should be made as plain and forcible as language and proof can make them. The power to concentrate the mind upon one subject to the exclusion of all others, is good in a degree; but the constant exercise of this faculty wears upon those organs that are called into use to do this work; it throws too great a tax upon them, and the result is a failure to accomplish the greatest amount of good. The principal wear comes upon one set of organs, while the others lie dormant. The mind cannot thus be healthfully exercised, and in consequence, life is shortened.

All the faculties should bear a part of the labor, working harmoniously, balancing one another. Those who put the whole strength of their mind into one subject, are greatly deficient on other points, for the reason that the faculties are not equally cultivated. The subject before them enchains their attention, and they are led on and on, and go deeper and deeper into the matter. They see knowledge and light as they become interested and absorbed. But there are very few minds that can follow them, unless they have given the subject the same depth of thought. There is danger that such men will plow and plant the seed of truth so deep that the tender, precious blade will never find the surface.

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Much hard labor is often expended that is not called for, and that will never be appreciated. If those who have large concentrativeness cultivate this faculty to the neglect of others, they cannot have well-proportioned minds. They are like machinery in which only one set of wheels works at a time. While some wheels are rusting from inaction, others are wearing from constant use. Men who

cultivate one or two faculties, and do not exercise all equally, cannot accomplish one half the good in the world that God designed they should. They are one-sided men; only half the power that God has given them is put to use, while the other half is rusting from inaction.

If this class of minds have a special work requiring thought, they should not exercise all their powers upon that one thing, to the exclusion of every other interest. While they make the subject before them their principal business, other branches of the work should have a portion of their time. This would be much better for themselves, and for the cause generally. One branch of the work should not have exclusive attention, to the neglect of all others. In their writings some need to be constantly guarded, that they do not make points blind that are plain, 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 is nearly lost. The interest of the reader will not be deep enough to pursue the subject to its close. The most essential points of truth may be made indistinct by giving attention to every minute point. Much ground is covered; but the work upon which so much labor is expended is not adapted to do the greatest amount of good, by awakening a general interest.

In this age, when pleasing fables are drifting upon the surface and attracting the mind, it is better to present truth in an easy style, backed up with a few strong proofs, than to search and bring forth an overwhelming array of evidence; for the point does not then stand so distinct in many minds as before the objections and evidences were brought before them. With many, assertions will go farther than long arguments. They take many things for granted. Proof does not help the case in the minds of such....

Meeting Objections

Time and strength can be better employed than in dwelling at length upon the quibbles of our opponents who deal in slander and misrepresentations. While precious time is employed in following the crooks and turns of dishonest opponents, the people who are open to conviction are dying for want of knowledge. A train of senseless

quibbles of Satan's own invention, is brought before minds, while the people are crying for food—for meat in due season.

It takes those who have trained their minds to war against the truth, to manufacture quibbles. And we are not wise to take them from their hands, and pass them out to thousands who would never have thought of them had we not published them to the world.... The plan of Christ's teaching should be ours. He was plain and simple, striking directly at the root of the matter, and the minds of all were met. It is not the best policy to be so very explicit, and say all upon a point that can be said, when a few arguments will cover the ground, and be sufficient for all practical purposes to convince or silence opponents. You may remove every prop today, and close the mouths of objectors so that they can say nothing, and tomorrow they will go over the same ground again. Thus it will be, over and over, because they do not love the light, and will not come to the light, lest their darkness and error should be removed from them. It is a better plan to keep a reserve of arguments than to pour out a depth of knowledge upon a subject which would be taken for granted without labored argument. Christ's ministry lasted only three years, and a great work was done in that short period. In these last days, there is a great work to be done in a short time. While many are getting ready to do something, souls will perish for the light and knowledge. [180]

If men who are engaged in presenting and defending the truth of the Bible, undertake to investigate 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 work will be left to suffer.

We must have more of the spirit of those men who were engaged in building the walls of Jerusalem. We are doing a great work, and cannot come down. If Satan can keep men answering the objections of opponents, and thus keep their voices silent, and hinder them from doing the most important work for the present time, his object is accomplished....

The world needs labor now. Calls are coming in from every direction like the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us." Plain, pointed arguments, standing out like mile-posts, will do more toward convincing minds generally than will a large array of arguments which cover a great deal of ground, but which none but investigating

minds will have interest to follow.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:32](#).

Discussions Not to be Sought

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[From a Personal Testimony.]

I was shown that here is the danger of young ministers who engage in discussion: They turn their minds to the study of the word to gather the sharp things, and they become sarcastic, and in their efforts to meet an opponent, too frequently leave God out of the question. The excitement of debate lessens their interest in meetings where this special excitement does not exist. Those who engage in debates are not the most successful laborers, and the best adapted to build up the cause. By some, discussion is coveted, and they prefer this kind of labor above any other. They do not study the Bible with humility of mind, that they may know how to attain the love of God; as Paul says, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." [[Ephesians 3:17-19.](#)]

Young preachers should avoid discussions; for they do not increase spirituality or humbleness of mind. In some cases it may be necessary to meet a proud boaster against the truth of God in open debate; but generally these discussions, either oral or written, result in more harm than good. After a discussion, the greater responsibility rests upon the minister to keep up the interest. He should beware of the reaction which is liable to take place after a religious excitement, and not yield to discouragement himself.

Men who will not admit the claims of God's law, which are so very plain, will generally pursue a lawless course; for they have so long taken sides with the great rebel in warring against the law of God, which is the foundation of his government in heaven and earth, that they are trained in this labor. In their warfare they will not open their eyes or consciences to light. They close their eyes, lest they shall become enlightened. Their case is as hopeless as was that of

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the Jews who would not see the light which Christ brought to them. The wonderful evidences which he gave them of his Messiahship, in the miracles that he performed, in healing the sick, raising the dead, and doing the works which no other man had done or could do, instead of melting and subduing their hearts, and overcoming their wicked prejudices, inspired them with satanic hatred and fury, such as Satan possessed when he was thrust out of heaven. The greater the light and evidence they had, the greater was their hatred. They were determined to extinguish the light by putting Christ to death.

The haters of God's law, which is the foundation of his government in heaven and earth, occupy the same ground as did the unbelieving Jews. Their defiant power will follow those who keep the commandments of God, and any amount of light will be rejected by them. They have so long violated conscience, and hardened their hearts by choosing darkness rather than light, that they think it a virtue, in order to gain their object, to bear false witness, or stoop to almost any course of equivocation or deception, as did the Jews in their rejection of Christ. They reason that the end justifies the means. They virtually crucify the law of the Father, as the Jews crucified Christ.

[183] We should embrace every opportunity to present the truth in its purity and simplicity, where there is any desire or interest to hear the reasons of our faith. Those who have dwelt mostly upon the prophecies and the theoretical points of our faith, should without delay become Bible students upon practical subjects. They should take a deeper draught at the fountain of divine truth. They should carefully study the life of Christ, and his lessons of practical godliness, given for the benefit of all, and to be the rule of right living for all who should believe on his name. They should be imbued with the spirit of their great Exemplar, and have a high sense of the sacred life of a follower of Christ.

Christ met the case of every class in the subjects and manner of his teaching. He dined and lodged with the rich and the poor, and made himself familiar with the interests and occupations of men, that he might gain access to their hearts. The learned and the most intellectual were gratified and charmed with his discourses, and yet they were so plain and simple as to be comprehended by the humblest minds. Christ availed himself of every opportunity to

give instruction to the people upon those heavenly doctrines and precepts which should be incorporated into their lives, and which would distinguish them from all other religionists because of their holy, elevated character. These lessons of divine instruction are not brought to bear upon men's consciences as they should be. The sermons of Christ would furnish ministers believing present truth with discourses which would be appropriate on almost any occasion. Here is a field of study for the Bible student, in which he cannot be interested without having the spirit of the heavenly Teacher in his own heart. Here are subjects which Christ presented to all classes. Thousands of people of every stamp of character and every grade of society, were attracted and charmed with the matter brought before them.

Some ministers who have been long in the work of preaching present truth, have made great failures in their labors. They have educated themselves as combatants. They have studied out argumentative subjects for the object of discussion, and these subjects which they have prepared, they love to use. The truth of God is plain, clear, and conclusive. It is harmonious, and, in contrast with error, shines with clearness and beauty. Its consistency commends it to the judgment of every heart that is not filled with prejudice. Our preachers present the arguments upon the truth, which have been made ready for them, and if there are no hindrances, the truth bears away the victory. But I was shown that in many cases the poor instrument takes the credit of the victory gained, and the people, who are more earthly than spiritual, praise and honor the instrument, while the truth of God is not exalted by the victory it gained.

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Those who love to engage in discussion generally lose their spirituality. They do not trust in God as they should. They have the theory of the truth prepared to whip an opponent. The feelings of their own unsanctified hearts have prepared many sharp, close things to use as a snap to their whip to irritate and provoke their opponent. The spirit of Christ has no part in this. While furnished with conclusive arguments, the debater soon thinks that he is strong enough to triumph over his opponent, and God is left out of the matter. Some of our ministers have made discussion their principal business. When in the midst of the excitement raised by discussion, they seem nerved up, and feel strong and talk strong; and in the

excitement many things pass with the people as all right, which in themselves are decidedly wrong, and a shame to him who was guilty of uttering words so unbecoming a Christian minister.

[185] These things have a bad influence on ministers who are handling sacred, elevated truths,—truths which are to prove as a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death, to those who hear them. Generally, the influence of discussions upon our ministers is to make them self-sufficient, exalted in their own estimation. This is not all. Those who love to debate are unfitted for being pastors to the flock. They have trained their minds to meet opponents, and to say sarcastic things; and they cannot come down to meet hearts that are sorrowing, and need to be comforted. They have also dwelt so much upon the argumentative that they have neglected the practical subjects that the flock of God need. They have but little knowledge of the sermons of Christ, which enter into the every-day life of the Christian, and they have but little disposition to study them. They have risen above the simplicity of the work. When they were little in their own eyes, God helped them; angels of God ministered unto them, and made their labors highly successful in convincing men and women of the truth. But in the training of their minds for discussion, they frequently become coarse and rough. They lose the interest and tender sympathy which should ever attend the efforts of a shepherd of Christ.

Debating ministers are generally disqualified to help the flock where they most need help. Having neglected practical religion in their own hearts and lives, they cannot teach it to the flock. Unless there is an excitement, they do not know how to labor; they seem shorn of their strength. If they try to speak, they do not seem to know how to present a subject that is proper for the occasion. When they should present a subject which will feed the flock of God, and which will reach and melt hearts, they go back to some of the old stereotyped matter, and go through the arranged arguments, which are dry and uninteresting. Thus, instead of light, they bring darkness to the flock, and also to their own souls.

Some of our ministers fail to cultivate spirituality, but encourage a show of zeal, and a certain activity which rests upon an uncertain foundation. Ministers of calm contemplation, of thought and devotion, of conscience and faith, combined with activity and zeal, are

wanted in this age. The two qualities, thought and devotion, activity and zeal, should go together.

Debating ministers are the most unreliable among us, because they cannot be depended upon when the work goes hard. Bring them into a place where there is but little interest, and they manifest a want of courage, zeal, and real interest. They depend as much upon being enlivened and invigorated by the excitement created by debate or opposition, as does the inebriate upon his dram. These ministers need to be converted anew. They need to drink deep of the unceasing streams which proceed from the eternal Rock.

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The eternal welfare of sinners regulated the conduct of Jesus. He went about doing good. Benevolence was the life of his soul. He not only did good to all who came to him soliciting his mercy, but he perseveringly sought them out. He was never elated with applause, or dejected by censure or disappointment. When he met with the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, he was of good courage. The most important discourse that Inspiration has given us, Christ preached to only one listener. As he sat upon the well to rest, for he was weary, a Samaritan woman came to draw water; he saw an opportunity to reach her mind, and through her to reach the minds of the Samaritans, who were in great darkness and error. Although weary, he presented the truths of his spiritual kingdom, which charmed the heathen woman, and filled her with admiration for Christ. She went forth publishing the news, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" [John 4:29.] This woman's testimony converted many to a belief in Christ. Through her report, many came to hear him for themselves, and believed because of his own word.

However small may be the number of interested listeners, if the heart is reached and the understanding convinced, they can, like the Samaritan woman, carry a report which will raise the interest of hundreds to investigate for themselves. While laboring in places to create an interest, there will be many discouragements; but if at first there seems to be but little interest, it is no evidence that you have mistaken your duty and place of labor. If the interest steadily increases, and the people move understandingly, not from impulse, but from principle, the interest is much more healthy and durable than it is where a great excitement and interest are created suddenly,

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and the feelings are excited by listening to a debate, a sharp contest on both sides of the question, for and against the truth. Fierce opposition is thus created, positions are taken, and rapid decisions made. A feverish state of things is the result. Calm consideration and judgment are wanting. Let this excitement subside, or let reaction take place by indiscreet management, and the interest can never be raised again. The feelings and sympathies of the people were stirred, but their consciences were not convicted, their hearts were not broken and humbled before God.

In the presentation of unpopular truth, which involves a heavy cross, preachers should be careful that every word is as God would have it. Their words should never cut. They should present the truth in humility, with the deepest love for souls, and an earnest desire for their salvation, and let the truth cut. They should not defy ministers of other denominations, and seek to provoke a debate. They should not stand in a position like that of Goliath when he defied the armies of Israel. Israel did not defy Goliath, but Goliath made his proud boasts against God and his people. The defying, the boasting, and the railing must come from the opposers of truth, who act the Goliath; but none of this spirit should be seen in those whom God has sent forth to proclaim the last message of warning to a doomed world.

[188] Goliath trusted in his armor. He terrified the armies of Israel by his defiant, savage boastings, while he made a most imposing display of his armor, which was his strength. David, in his humility and zeal for God and his people, proposed to meet this boaster. Saul consented, and had his own kingly armor placed upon David. But David would not consent to wear it. He laid off the king's armor; for he had not proved it. He had proved God, and in trusting in him had gained special victories. To put on Saul's armor would give the impression that he was a warrior, when he was only little David, who tended the sheep. He did not mean that any credit should be given to the armor of Saul; for his trust was in the Lord God of Israel. He selected a few pebbles from the brook, and with his sling and staff, his only weapons, he went forth in the name of the God of Israel to meet the armed warrior.

Goliath disdained David; for his appearance was that of a mere youth untaught in the tactics of warfare. Goliath railed upon David, and cursed him by his gods. He felt that it was an insult upon his

dignity to have a mere stripling, without armor, come to meet him. He made his boast of what he would do to him. David did not become irritated because he was looked upon as so inferior, neither did he tremble at the giant's terrible threats, but replied, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." [1 Samuel 17:45, 47.] David tells Goliath that in the name of the Lord he will do to him the very things that Goliath had threatened to do to David. "And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands."

Our ministers should not defy and provoke discussion. Let the defying be on the side of the opposers of God's truth....

I was shown that some of our young ministers are getting a passion for debating, and that, unless they see their danger, this will prove a snare to them.... These young preachers should study the practical teachings of Christ as well as the theoretical, and learn of Jesus, that they may have his grace, his meekness, his humility and lowliness of mind. If they, like David, are brought into a position where God's cause really calls for them to meet a defier of Israel, and if they go forth in the strength of God, relying wholly upon him, he will carry them through, and cause his truth to triumph gloriously. Christ has given us an example. "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." [Jude 9.]

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As soon as a preacher comes down from the position a minister should ever occupy, and descends to the comical to create a laugh over his opponent, or when he is sarcastic and sharp, and rails upon him, he does that which the Saviour of the world did not dare to do; for he places himself upon the enemy's ground. Ministers who contend with opposers of the truth of God, do not have to meet men merely, but Satan and his host of evil angels. Satan watches for a chance to get the advantage of ministers who are advocating the truth; and when they cease to put their entire trust in God, and their words are not in the spirit and love of Christ, the angels of God cannot strengthen and enlighten them. They leave them to their own strength, and evil angels press in their darkness; for this reason the

opponents of the truth sometimes seem to have the advantage, and the discussion does more harm than real good.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:212](#).

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[190] Discussions cannot always be avoided. In some cases the circumstances are such that of the two evils the choice must be made of the least, which is discussion.

People who love to see opponents combat, may clamor for discussion. Others, who have a desire to hear the evidence on both sides, may urge discussion in all honesty of motive; but whenever discussions can be avoided, they should be; for the result is seldom honoring to God. They generally strengthen combativeness, and weaken that pure love and sacred sympathy which should ever exist in the hearts of Christians, although they may differ in opinions.

In this age of the world a demand for a discussion is not real evidence of earnest desire on the part of the people to investigate the truth, but comes through the love of novelty and the excitement which generally attends discussions. God is seldom glorified or the truth advanced in these combats. Truth is too solemn, too momentous in its results, to make it a small matter whether it is received or rejected. To discuss truth for the sake of showing opponents the skill of the combatants, is ever poor policy; for it does but very little to advance the truth.

Opponents to the truth will show skill in misstating the positions of its defenders. They will make the most solemn, sacred truths the subject of ridicule. They will generally sport and deride precious, sacred truth, and place it in so false a light before the people that minds that are darkened by error and polluted by sin, do not discern the motives and objects of these designing men in thus covering up and falsifying precious and important truth. Because of the men who engage in them, there are but few discussions that it is possible to conduct upon right principles. Sharp thrusts are too frequently given by both parties, personalities are indulged in, and frequently both parties descend to sarcasm and witticism. The love of souls is lost in the greater desire for the mastery. Prejudice, deep and bitter, is often the result of discussions.

I have beheld angels grieved as the most precious jewels of truth [191] have been brought before men utterly incapable of appreciating the evidences in favor of the truth. Their entire being was at war with the principles of truth; their natures were at enmity with it. Their object in discussing was not that they might get hold of the evidences of the truth themselves, or that the people might have a fair understanding of our true position, but that they might confuse the understanding by placing the truth in a perverted light before the people. There are men who have educated themselves as combatants. It is their policy to misstate an opponent, and to cover up clear arguments with dishonest quibbles. They have devoted their God-given powers to this dishonest work, for there is nothing in their hearts in harmony with the pure principles of truth. They seize any argument they can get with which to tear down the advocates of truth, when they themselves do not believe the things they urge against them. They bolster themselves up in their chosen position, irrespective of justice and truth. They do not consider that before them is the Judgment, and that then their ill-gotten triumph, with all its disastrous results, will appear in its true character. Error, with all its deceptive policies, its windings and twistings and turnings to change the truth into a lie, will then appear in all its deformity. No victory will stand in the day of God, except that which truth, pure, elevated, sacred truth, shall win to the glory of God.

Angels weep to see the precious truth of heavenly origin cast before swine, to be seized by them and trampled with the mire and dirt. Cast not “your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” [Matthew 7:6.] These are the words of the world’s Redeemer.

God’s ministers should not count the opportunity of engaging in discussion a great privilege. All points of our faith are not to be borne to the front and presented before the prejudiced crowds. Jesus [192] spoke before the Pharisees and Sadducees in parables, hiding the clearness of truth under symbols and figures, because they would make a wrong use of the truths he presented before them; but to his disciples he spoke plainly. We should learn from Christ’s method of teaching, and be careful not to close the ears of the people by presenting truths which, not being fully explained, they are in no way prepared to receive.

The truths that we hold in common should be dwelt upon first, and the confidence of the hearers obtained; then as the people can be brought along, we can advance slowly with the matter presented. Great wisdom is needed to present unpopular truth before a prejudiced people in the most cautious manner, that access may be gained to their hearts. Discussions place before the people, who are unenlightened in regard to our position, and who are ignorant of Bible truth, a set of arguments skillfully gotten up and carefully arranged to cover over the clear points of truth. Some men have made it their business to cover up plain statements of facts in the word of God by their deceptive theories, which they make plausible to those who have not investigated for themselves.

These agents of Satan are hard to meet, and it is difficult to have patience with them. But calmness, patience, and self-control are elements which every minister of Christ should cultivate. The combatants of the truth have educated themselves for intellectual battle. They are prepared to present on the surface sophistry and assertions as the word of God. They confuse unsuspecting minds, and place the truth in obscurity, while pleasing fables are presented to the people in the place of pure Bible truth.

[193] Many choose darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. But there are those who, if the truth could have been presented in a different manner, under different circumstances, giving them a fair chance to weigh the arguments for themselves, and to compare scripture with scripture, would have been charmed by its clearness, and would have taken hold upon it.

It has been very indiscreet for our ministers to publish to the world the wily sophistry of error, furnished by designing men to cover up and make of none effect the solemn, sacred truth of Jehovah. These crafty men who lie in wait to deceive the unwary, give their strength of intellect to perverting the word of God. The inexperienced and unsuspecting are deceived to their ruin. It has been a great error to publish to all the arguments wherewith opponents battle the truth of God; for in so doing minds of every class are furnished with arguments which many of them had never thought of. Some one must render an account for this unwise generalship.

Arguments against the sacred truth, subtle in their influence, affect minds that are not well informed in regard to the strength

of the truth. The moral sensibilities of the community at large are blunted by familiarity with sin. Selfishness, dishonesty, and the varied sins which prevail in this degenerate age, have blunted the senses to eternal things, so that God's truth is not discerned. In giving publicity to the erroneous arguments of our opponents, truth and error are placed upon a level in their minds, when, if they could have the truth before them in its clearness long enough to see and realize its sacredness and importance, they would be convinced of the strong arguments in its favor, and would then be prepared to meet the arguments urged by opposers.

Those who are seeking to know the truth and to understand the will of God, who are faithful to the light, and zealous in the performance of their daily duties, will surely know of the doctrine; for they will be guided into all truth. God does not promise, by the masterly acts of his providence, to irresistibly bring men to the knowledge of his truth, when they do not seek for truth and have no desire to know the truth. Men have the power to quench the Spirit of God; the power of choosing is left with them. They are allowed freedom of action. They may be obedient through the name and grace of our Redeemer, or they may be disobedient, and realize the consequences. Man is responsible for receiving or rejecting sacred and eternal truth. The Spirit of God is continually convicting, and souls are deciding for or against the truth. The deportment, the words, the actions, of the minister of Christ, may balance a soul for or against the truth. How important that every act of the life be such that it need not be repented of! Especially is this important among the ambassadors of Christ, who are acting in the place of Christ.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:424](#).

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Men who bring in these damnable heresies [the teachings of Spiritualism] will dare those who teach the word of God to enter into controversy with them, and some who teach the truth have not had the courage to withstand a challenge from this class, who are marked characters in the word of God. Some of our ministers have not had the moral courage to say to these men, "God has warned us in his word in regard to you. He has given us a faithful description

of your character and of the heresies which you hold.” Some of our ministers, rather than give this class any occasion to triumph or to charge them with cowardice, have met them in open discussion. But in discussing with Spiritualists they do not meet man merely, but Satan and his angels. They place themselves in communication with the powers of darkness, and encourage evil angels about them.

[195] Spiritualists desire to give publicity to their heresies; and ministers who advocate Bible truth help them to do this when they consent to engage in discussion with them. The opportunity to get their heresies before the people is improved, and in every discussion with them some will be deceived. The very best course for us to pursue is to avoid them.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:485](#).

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Whenever it is necessary for the advancement of the cause of truth and the glory of God, that an opponent be met, how carefully, and with what humility should they [the advocates of truth] go into the conflict. With heart-searching, confession of sin, and earnest prayer, and often fasting for a time, they should entreat that God would especially help them, and give his saving, precious truth a glorious victory, that error might appear in its true deformity, and its advocates be completely discomfited....

Never should you enter upon a discussion, where so much is at stake, relying upon your aptness to handle strong arguments. If it cannot be well avoided, enter the conflict, but enter upon it with firm trust in God, and in the spirit of humility, in the spirit of Jesus, who has bidden you learn of him who is meek and lowly in heart.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:624](#).

Engaging in Secular Business

Ministers should have no separate interest aside from the great work of leading souls to the truth. Their energies are all needed here. They should not engage in traffic of any kind, or in any business aside from this one great work. The solemn charge given to Timothy rests will equal weight upon them, laying upon them the most solemn obligations and most fearful responsibilities: “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.” “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” [2 Timothy 4:1, 2, 5.]

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Wrong habits of life have lessened our mental and physical sensibilities, and all the strength we can acquire by right living, and placing ourselves in the best relation to health and life, should be devoted unreservedly to the work which God has assigned us. We cannot afford to use the few enfeebled, crippled energies which we possess, in serving tables, or mingling merchandise with the work God has committed to us. Every faculty of mind and body is now needed. The work of God requires this, and no separate business can be engaged in aside from this great work, without taking time, and strength of mind and body, and thus lessening the vigor and force of our labor in the cause of God. Ministers who do this will not have all that time for meditation and prayer, and all that strength and clearness of mind which they should have to understand the cases of those who need help, and to be prepared to “be instant in season, out of season.” [2 Timothy 4:2.] A word fitly spoken at the right time may save some poor, erring, doubting soul. Paul exhorted Timothy, “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.” [1 Timothy 4:15.]

In Christ’s commission to his disciples, he tells them, “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever

ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” [Matthew 18:18.] If this is the fearfully responsible work of God’s ministers, how important that they give themselves wholly to it, and watch for souls as they that must give an account! Should any separate or selfish interest come in here and divide the heart from the work? Some [197] ministers linger about their homes, and run out on the Sabbath, and then return, and exhaust their energies in farming or in attending to home matters. They labor for themselves through the week, and then spend the remnant of their exhausted energies in laboring for God. But such feeble efforts are not acceptable to him. They have no mental or physical strength to spare. At best their efforts are feeble enough. But after they have been engrossed and entangled all through the laboring days of the week, with the cares and perplexities of this life, they are wholly unfitted for the high, the sacred, the important work of God. The destiny of souls hangs upon the course they pursue and the decisions they make. How important, then, that they should be temperate in *all* things, not only in their eating, but in their labor, that their strength may be unabated and devoted to their sacred calling....

The responsibility of the work rests very lightly upon some. They feel that after they leave the desk, their work is done. It is a burden to visit, a burden to talk; and the people who are really desirous of getting all the good there is for them, and who wish to hear and learn, that they may see all things clearly, are not benefited and satisfied. Ministers excuse themselves because they are weary; and yet some exhaust their precious strength and spend their time in work which another could do just as well as they. They should preserve moral and physical vigor, that as faithful workmen of God they may give full proof of their ministry.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:470](#).

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Ministers cannot carry the burden of the work while at the same time they are carrying the burden of farms or other business enterprises, having their hearts on their earthly treasures. Their spiritual discernment is dimmed. They cannot appreciate the wants of the cause of God, and therefore cannot put forth well-directed efforts to [198] meet its emergencies and to advance its interests. They constantly

seek to shape the work in accordance with their circumstances, in place of shaping circumstances to meet the demands of the cause of God. The want of a full consecration to the work on the part of the minister is soon felt all through the field where he labors. If his own standard is low, he will not bring others to accept a higher one.—**MS.**

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The people will seldom rise higher than their minister. A world-loving spirit in him has a tremendous influence upon others. The people make his deficiencies an excuse to cover their world-loving spirit. They quiet their own consciences, thinking that they may be free to love the things of this life, and be indifferent to spiritual things, because their ministers are so. They deceive their own souls, and remain in friendship with the world, which the apostle declares to be enmity with God. Ministers should be examples to the flock. They should manifest an undying love for souls and the same devotion to the cause which they desire to see in the people.—**Testimonies for the Church 2:645.**

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“No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” [2 Timothy 2:4.]

Principle is always exacting. Our country claims of fathers and mothers, their sons, the brothers, the husbands, to be given up, to leave their homes for the field of carnage and bloodshed. They must endure privation and hunger, weariness and loneliness; they must make long marches, footsore and weary, through summer’s heat and winter’s cold; they must face peril, run the risk of life. They are compelled to follow the commander, even to the death. And all this severe experience is in consequence of sin. There is an enemy to meet, an enemy to be resisted; enemies of our country will destroy her peace and bring disaster and ruin, unless they are overcome. “Conquer or die” is the motto.

Thus it is with the Christian warfare. We have an enemy to meet, who is vigilant, who is not off his guard one moment. The claims of

country are not higher than the claims of God. If hardships are borne and trials endured by soldiers fighting in behalf of their country, how much more willingly should the soldiers of the cross endure privation, self-denial, and any taxation for Christ's sake.—MS.

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The Lord cannot glorify his name through ministers who attempt to serve God and mammon. We are not to urge men to invest in mining stock, or in city lots, holding out the inducement that the money invested will be doubled in a short time. Our message for this time is, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." [Luke 12:33, 34.]

Just before Israel entered the land of Canaan, Satan sought to seduce the people, and lead them to idolatry, thinking to compass their ruin. He works in the same way in our day. There are young men whom God would accept as workers together with him, but they have become absorbed in this real-estate craze, and have sold their interest in the truth for the prospect of worldly advantage. There are many who hold themselves away from the service of God, because they desire worldly gain, and Satan uses those who claim to believe the truth, to seduce souls. The tempter comes to men as he came to Jesus, presenting the glory of the world; and when a measure of success attends the ventures of men, they become greedy for more gain, and their spirituality dies; they lose their love for the truth. The immortal inheritance, the love of Jesus, is eclipsed to their vision by the fleeting prospects of the world.—MS.

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Proper Remuneration for Ministers

“Instead of bringing the expense of the work down to a low figure, it is your duty to bring the minds of the people to understand that the ‘laborer is worthy of his hire.’ [Luke 10:7.]” “The churches need to be impressed with the fact that it is their duty to deal honestly with the cause of God, not allowing the guilt to the worst kind of robbery to rest upon them, that of robbing God in tithes and offerings. When settlements are made with the laborers in his cause, they should not be forced to accept small remuneration because there is a lack of money in the treasury. Many have been defrauded of their just dues in this way, and it is just as criminal in the sight of God as for one to keep back the wages of those who are employed in any other regular business.

“There are men of ability who would like to go out and labor in our several Conferences; but they have no courage, for they must have means to support their families. It is the worst kind of generalship to allow a Conference to stand still, or to fail to settle its honest debts. There is a great deal of this done; and whenever it is done, God is displeased.

“If the presidents and other laborers in our Conferences impress upon the minds of the people the character of the crime of robbing God, and if they have a true spirit of devotion and a burden for the work, God will make their labors a blessing to the people, and fruit will be seen as the result of their efforts. Ministers have failed greatly in their duty to so labor with the churches. There is important work to be done aside from that of preaching. Had this been done, as God designed it should be, there would have been many more laborers in the field than there now are. And had the ministers done their duty in educating every member, whether rich or poor, to give as God has prospered him, there would be a full treasury from which to pay the honest debts to the workers, and this would greatly advance missionary work in all their borders. God has shown me that many souls are in danger of eternal ruin through selfishness and

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worldliness; and the watchmen are guilty, for they have neglected their duty. This is a state of things that Satan exults to see.”

“All branches of the work belong to the ministers. It is not God’s order that some one should follow after them, and bind off their unfinished work. It is not the duty of the Conference to be at the expense of employing other laborers to follow after, and pick up the stitches dropped by negligent workers. It is the duty of the president of the Conference to have an oversight of the laborers and their work, and to teach them to be faithful in these things; for no church can prosper that is robbing God. The spiritual dearth in our churches is frequently the result of an alarming prevalence of selfishness. Selfish, worldly pursuits and schemes interpose between the soul and God. Men cling to the world, seeming to fear that should they let go their hold upon it, God would not care for them. And so they attempt to take care of themselves; they are anxious, troubled, distressed, holding on to their large farms, and adding to their possessions.”

[202] “The word of God speaks of the ‘hire of the laborers, ... which is of you kept back by fraud.’ [[James 5:4](#).] This is generally understood to apply to wealthy men who employ servants and do not pay them for their labor; but it has a broader meaning than this. It applies with great force to those who have been enlightened by the Spirit of God, and yet in any degree work upon the same principle that these men do hiring servants; grinding them down to the lowest price.”—[Testimonies for the Church 5:375](#).

Danger in Self-Confidence

[From a Personal Testimony.]

I have been shown that young men like yourself, who have had but a few years of imperfect experience in the cause of present truth, are not the ones whom God will trust to bear weighty responsibilities, and to lead out in this work. Such should manifest a delicacy in taking positions which will conflict with the judgment and opinions of those of mature experience, whose lives have been interwoven with the cause of God nearly as many years as you have lived, and who have had an active part in this work from its small beginning. God will not select men of but little experience and considerable self-confidence to lead out in this sacred, important work. There is much at stake here. Men who have had but little experience in the sufferings, trials, opposition, and privations that have been endured to bring the work up to its present condition of prosperity, should be very jealous of themselves.

Young men who now engage in the work of preaching the truth should cultivate modesty and humility. They should be careful how they become exalted, lest they be overthrown. They will be accountable for the clear light of truth which now shines upon them. I saw that God is displeased with the disposition that some have to murmur against those who have fought the heaviest battles for them, and who endured so much in the beginning of the message, when the work went hard.

The experienced laborers,—those who toiled under the weight and the oppressive burdens when there were but few to help bear them,—God regards; and he has a jealous care for those who have proved faithful. He is displeased with those who are ready to find fault with and reproach those servants of God who have grown gray in building up the cause of present truth. Your reproaches and murmurings, young men, will surely stand against you in the day of God. As long as God has not laid heavy responsibilities upon you, [203]

do not get out of your place, and rely upon your own independent judgment, and assume responsibilities for which you are not fitted.... You need to cultivate watchfulness and humility, and to be diligent in prayer. The nearer you live to God, the more clearly will you discern your weaknesses and dangers. A practical view of the law of God, and clear discernment of the atonement of Christ, will give you a knowledge of yourselves, and will show you wherein you fail to perfect Christian character....

In a degree you overlook the necessity of having a divine influence constantly with you. This is positively necessary in doing the work of God. If you neglect this, and pass on in self-confidence and self-sufficiency, you will be left to make very great blunders. You need constantly to cherish lowliness of mind and a spirit of dependence. He who feels his own weakness will look higher than himself, and will feel the need of constant strength from above. The grace of God will lead him to exercise and cherish a spirit of constant gratitude. He who is best acquainted with his own weakness will know that it is the matchless grace of God alone that will triumph over the rebellion of the heart.

[204] You need to become acquainted with the weak as well as the strong points in your characters, that you may be constantly guarded lest you engage in enterprises and assume responsibilities for which God has never designed you. You should not compare your actions and measure your lives by any human standard, but with the rule of duty revealed in the Bible....

You are too dependent upon your surroundings. If you have a large congregation, you are elated, and you desire to address them. But sometimes your congregations diminish, your spirits sink, and you have but little courage to labor. Surely, something is wanting. Your hold upon God is not firm enough....

Christ sought for men wherever he could find them,—in the public streets, in private houses, in the synagogues, by the sea-side. He toiled all day, preaching to the multitude, and healing the sick that were brought to him; and frequently, after he had dismissed the people that they might return to their homes to rest and sleep, he spent the entire night in prayer, to come forth and renew his labors in the morning.... You need to bring your soul into close communion with God by earnest prayer mixed with living faith. Every prayer

offered in faith lifts the suppliant above discouraging doubts and human passions. Prayer gives strength to renew the conflict with the powers of darkness, to bear trials patiently, and to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ.

While you take counsel with your doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that you cannot see clearly before you have faith, your perplexities will only increase and deepen. If you come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as you really are, and in humble, trusting prayer make your wants known to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by his will and word, he can and will attend to your cry, and will let light shine into your heart and all around you; for through sincere prayer your soul is brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. You may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of your Redeemer is bending over you in compassion and love; but this is even so. You may not feel his visible touch, but his hand is upon you in love and pitying tenderness....

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Our only safety is in being shielded by the grace of God every moment, and not putting out our own spiritual eyesight so that we call evil good, and good, evil. Without hesitation or argument, we must close and guard the avenues of the soul against evil.

It will cost us an effort to secure eternal life. It is only by long and persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall be overcomers. But if we patiently and determinedly, in the name of the Conqueror who overcame in our behalf in the wilderness of temptation, overcome as he overcame, we shall have the eternal reward. Our efforts, our self-denial, our perseverance, must be proportionate to the infinitive value of the object of which we are in pursuit.... Wrongs cannot be righted, nor reformations in character made, by a few feeble, intermittent efforts. Sanctification is not a work of a day or a year, but of a lifetime. Without continual efforts and constant activity, there can be no advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor's crown.... You have need of constant watchfulness, lest Satan beguile you through his subtlety, corrupt your minds, and lead you into inconsistencies and gross darkness. Your watchfulness should be characterized by a spirit of humble dependence upon God. It should not be carried on with a proud,

self-reliant spirit, but with a deep sense of your personal weakness, and a childlike trust in the promises of God.

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

Frequently, when brought into strait places, the entire night has been spent in earnest, agonizing prayer, with tears, for help from God, and for light to shine upon his word. When the light has come, and the clouds have been driven back, what joy and grateful happiness have rested upon the anxious, earnest seekers! Our gratitude to God was as complete as had been our earnest, hungering cry for light. Some nights we could not sleep, because our hearts were overflowing with love and gratitude to God.

Men who now go forth to preach the truth, have things made ready to their hand. They cannot now experience such privations as the laborers in present truth have endured before them. The truth has been brought out, link after link, till it forms a clear, connected chain. To bring the truth out in such clearness and harmony has required careful research. Opposition, the most bitter and determined, drove the servants of God to the Lord and to their Bibles. Precious indeed to them was the light which came from God.

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I have been shown that the reason why some cannot discern the right is that they have so long cherished the enemy, who has worked side by side with them while they have not discerned his power. It sometimes seems hard to wait patiently till God's time comes to vindicate the right. But I have been shown that if we become impatient, we lose a rich reward. As faithful husbandmen in God's great field, we must sow with tears, and be patient and hopeful. We must meet troubles and sorrows. Temptations and wearisome toil will afflict the soul, but we must patiently wait in faith to reap with joy. In the final victory, God will have no use for those persons who are nowhere to be found in time of peril and

danger, when the strength, courage, and influence of all are required to make a charge upon the enemy. Those who stand like faithful soldiers to battle against wrong, and to vindicate the right, warring against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, will each receive the commendation from the Master, “Well done, *good* and *faithful* servant, ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” [[Matthew 25:23](#).]—[Testimonies for the Church 3:320](#).

Respect for the Sabbath

[From a Personal Testimony.]

When the Sabbath begins, we should place a guard upon ourselves, upon our acts and our words, lest we rob God by appropriating to our own use that time which is strictly the Lord's. We should not do ourselves, nor suffer our children to do any manner of our own work for a livelihood, or anything which could have been done on the six working days. Friday is the day of preparation. Time can then be devoted to making the necessary preparation for the Sabbath, and to thinking and conversing about it. Nothing which will in the sight of Heaven be regarded as a violation of the holy Sabbath should be left unsaid or undone, to be said or done upon the Sabbath. God requires not only that we refrain from physical labor upon the Sabbath, but that the mind be disciplined to dwell upon sacred themes. By conversing upon worldly things, or by engaging in light and trifling conversation, we virtually transgress the fourth commandment. Talking upon anything or everything which may come into the mind, is speaking our own words. Every deviation from right brings us into bondage and condemnation....

Those who are not fully converted to the truth, frequently let their minds run freely upon worldly business, and although they may rest from physical toil upon the Sabbath, their tongues speak out what is in their minds; hence these words concerning cattle, crops, losses, and gains. All this is Sabbath-breaking. If the mind is running upon worldly matters, the tongue will reveal it; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

The example of ministers especially should be circumspect in this respect. Upon the Sabbath they should conscientiously restrict themselves to conversation upon religious themes,—to present truth, present duty, the Christian's hopes and fears, trials, conflicts, and afflictions; to overcoming at last, and the rewards to be received.

Ministers of Jesus should stand as reprovers to those who fail to remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. They should kindly and solemnly reprove those who engage in worldly conversation upon the Sabbath, and at the same time claim to be Sabbath-keepers. They could encourage devotion to God upon his holy day.

None should feel at liberty to spend sanctified time in an unprofitable manner. It is displeasing to God for Sabbath-keepers to sleep during much of the Sabbath. They dishonor their Creator in so doing, and, by their example, say that the six days are too precious for them to spend in resting. They must make money, although it be by robbing themselves of needed sleep, which they make up by sleeping away holy time. They then excuse themselves by saying, "The Sabbath was given for a day of rest. I will not deprive myself of rest to attend meeting; for I need rest." Such make a wrong use of the sanctified day. They should, upon that day especially, interest their families in its observance, and assemble at the house of prayer with the few or with the many, as the case may be. They should devote their time and energies to spiritual exercises, that the divine influence resting upon the Sabbath may attend them through the week. Of all the days in the week, none are so favorable for devotional thoughts and feelings as the Sabbath.

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All heaven was represented to me as beholding and watching upon the Sabbath those who acknowledge the claims of the fourth commandment and are observing the Sabbath. Angels were marking their interest in, and high regard for, this divine institution. Those who sanctified the Lord God in their hearts by a strictly devotional frame of mind, and who sought to improve the sacred hours in keeping the Sabbath to the best of their ability, and to honor God by calling the Sabbath a delight,—these the angels were specially blessing with light and health, and special strength was given them. But, on the other hand, the angels were turning from those who failed to appreciate the sacredness of God's sanctified day, and were removing from them their light and their strength. I saw them overshadowed with a cloud, desponding, and frequently sad. They felt a lack of the Spirit of God.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:702](#).

The Minister's Wife

[210] June 5, 1863, I was shown that Satan is ever at work to dishearten and lead astray ministers whom God has chosen to preach the truth. The most effectual way in which he can work is through home influences, through unconsecrated companions. If he can control the mind of the wife, he can through her the more readily gain access to the husband, who is laboring in word and doctrine to save souls.... Many have disregarded the sacred obligation resting upon them to improve the light and privileges given, and walk as children of the light. If the vail could be parted, and all could see just how their cases are regarded in heaven, there would be an awakening, and each would with fear inquire, "What shall I do to be saved?"

The minister's wife who is not devoted to God is no help to her husband. While he dwells upon the necessity of bearing the cross, and urges the importance of self-denial, the daily example of his wife often contradicts his preaching and destroys its force. In this way she becomes a great hindrance, and often leads her husband away from his duty and from God. She does not realize what a sin she is committing. Instead of seeking to be useful, seeking with true love for souls to help such as need help, she shrinks from the task, and prefers a useless life. She is not constrained by the power of Christ's love, and by unselfish, holy principles. She does not choose to do the will of God, to be a co-worker with her husband, with angels, and with God. When the wife of the minister accompanies her husband in his mission to save souls, it is a great sin for her to hinder him in his work by manifesting unhappy discontent. Yet, instead of entering heartily into his labors, seeking every opportunity to unite her interest and labor with his, she often studies how she can make it more easy or pleasant for herself. If things around them are not as agreeable as she could wish (as they will not always be), she should not indulge homesick feelings, or by lack of cheerfulness and by spoken complaints harass the husband and make his task harder, and perhaps, by her discontent, draw him from the place

where he could do good. She should not divert the interest of her husband from laboring for the salvation of souls, to sympathize with her ailments, and gratify her whimsical, discontented feelings. If she would forget herself, and labor to help others, talk and pray with poor souls, and act as if their salvation was of higher importance than any other consideration, she would have no time to be homesick. She would feel from day to day a sweet satisfaction as a reward for her unselfish labor; I cannot call it sacrifice, for some of our ministers' wives do not know what it is to sacrifice or suffer for the truth's sake. [211]

In former years the wives of ministers endured want and persecution. When their husbands suffered imprisonment, and sometimes death, those noble, self-sacrificing women suffered with them, and their reward will be equal to that bestowed on the husband. Mrs. Boardman and the Mrs. Judsons suffered for the truth,—suffered with their companions. They sacrificed home and friends in every sense of the word, to aid their companions in the work of enlightening those who sat in darkness; to reveal to them the hidden mysteries of the word of God. Their lives were in constant peril. To save souls was their great object, and for this they could suffer cheerfully.

I was shown the life of Christ. When his self-denial and sacrifice is compared with the trials and sufferings of the wives of some of our ministers, it causes anything which they may call sacrifice to sink into insignificance. If the minister's wife speaks words of discontent and discouragement, the influence upon the husband is disheartening, and tends to cripple him in his labor, especially if his success depends upon surrounding influences. Must the minister of God in such cases be crippled or torn from his field of labor to gratify the feelings of his wife, which arise from an unwillingness to yield inclination to duty? The wife should conform her wishes and pleasures to duty, and give up her selfish feelings for the sake of Christ and the truth. Satan has had much to do with controlling the labors of the ministers, through the influence of selfish, ease-loving companions. [212]

If a minister's wife accompanies her husband in his travels, she should not go for her own special enjoyment, to visit and to be waited upon, but to labor with him. She should have a united interest with him to do good. She should be willing to accompany her husband, if home cares do not hinder, and she should aid him in

his efforts to save souls. With meekness and humility, yet with a noble self-reliance, she should have a leading influence upon minds around her, and should act her part, and bear her cross and burden in meeting, and around the family altar, and in conversation at the fireside. The people expect this, and they have a right to expect it. If these expectations are not realized, the husband's influence is more than half destroyed. The wife of a minister can do much, if she will. If she possesses the spirit of self-sacrifice, and has a love for souls, she can with him do almost an equal amount of good.

A sister laborer in the cause of truth can understand and reach some cases, especially among the sisters, that the minister cannot. A responsibility rests upon the minister's wife which she should not and cannot lightly throw off. God will require the talent lent her, with usury. She should work earnestly, faithfully, and unitedly with her husband to save souls. She should never urge her wishes and desires, or express a lack of interest in her husband's labor, or dwell upon homesick, discontented feelings. All these natural feelings must be overcome. She should have a purpose in life which should be unfalteringly carried out. What if this conflicts with the feelings, and pleasures, and natural tastes? These should be cheerfully and readily sacrificed, in order to do good and save souls.

[213] The wives of ministers should live devoted, prayerful lives. But some would enjoy a religion in which there are no crosses, and which calls for no self-denial and exertion on their part. Instead of standing nobly for themselves, leaning upon God for strength, and bearing their individual responsibility, they have much of the time been dependent upon others, deriving their spiritual life from them. If they would only lean confidently, in childlike trust, upon God, and have their affections centered in Jesus, deriving their life from Christ, the living vine, what an amount of good they might do, what a help they might be to others, what a support to their husbands, and what a reward would be theirs in the end! "Well done, good and faithful servants," would fall like sweetest music upon their ears. The words, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," would repay them a thousand times for all suffering and trials endured to save precious souls.

Those who will not improve the talent which God has given them, will fail of everlasting life. Those who have been of but little

use in the world will be rewarded accordingly,—as their works have been. When everything goes smoothly, they are borne along on the wave; but when they need earnestly and untiringly to apply the oar, and row against wind and tide, there seems to be no energy in their Christian character. They will not take the trouble to work, but lay down their oars, and contentedly let the current carry them down stream. Thus they generally remain until some one takes the burden, and labors earnestly and energetically to pull them up stream. Every time they yield to such indolence, they lose strength, and have less inclination to work in the cause of God. It is only the faithful conqueror who wins eternal glory.

A minister's wife should ever have a leading influence on the minds of those with whom she associates, and she will be a help, or a great hindrance. She either gathers with Christ, or scatters abroad. A self-sacrificing missionary spirit is lacking among the companions of our ministers. It is self first, and then Christ secondly, and even thirdly. Never should a minister take his wife with him unless he knows that she can be a spiritual help; that she is one who can endure and suffer, to do good, and to benefit souls for Christ's sake. Those who accompany their husbands should go to labor unitedly with them. They must not expect to be free from trials and disappointments. They should not think too much of pleasant feelings. What have feelings to do with duty?

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I was cited to the case of Abraham. God said to him, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." [Genesis 22:2, 11, 12.] Abraham obeyed God. He did not consult his feelings, but with a noble faith and confidence in God he prepared for his journey. With a heart rent with anguish he beheld the proud, loving mother gazing with fond affection upon the son of promise. But he led that loved son away. Abraham suffered; yet he did not let his will rise in rebellion against the will of God. Duty, stern duty, controlled him. He dared not consult his feelings, or yield to them for one moment. His only son walked by the side of the stern, loving, suffering father, talking engagingly, uttering over and over the fond name of father, and then inquiring, "Where is the sacrifice?" O, what a test for the faithful father! Angels looked with pleased wonder upon the scene.

The faithful servant of God even bound his beloved son and laid him upon the wood. The knife was raised, when an angel cried out, "Abraham, Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad." [[Genesis 22:2, 11, 12.](#)]

[215] I saw that it is no light thing to be a Christian. It is a small matter to profess the Christian name; but it is a great and sacred thing to lead a Christian life. There is but a little time now to secure the immortal crown, to have a record of good acts and fulfilled duties written in heaven. Every tree is judged by its fruit. Every one will be judged according to his deeds, not his profession or his faith. The question will never be asked, How much did he profess? but, What fruit did he bear? If the tree is corrupt, the fruit is evil. If the tree is good, it cannot produce evil fruit.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:449.](#)

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When the truth, the solemn, important truth, gets hold of them, self will die; then the language will not be, "I will go there, I will not stay here;" but the earnest inquiry will be, "Where does God want me to be? Where can I best glorify him, and where can our united labors do the most good?" Their will should be swallowed up in the will of God. The willfulness and lack of consecration that some of the ministers' wives manifest, will stand in the way of sinners; the blood of souls will be upon their garments. Some of the ministers have borne a strong testimony in regard to the duty and the wrongs of the church; but it has not had its designed effect; for their own companions needed all the straight testimony that had been borne, and the reproof came back upon themselves with great weight. They let their companions affect them, and drag them down, prejudicing their minds, and their usefulness and influence are lost; they feel desponding and disheartened, and realize not the true source of the injury. It is close at home.

These sisters are closely connected with the work of God, if he has called their husbands to preach the present truth. These servants, if truly called of God, will feel the importance of the truth. They are standing between the living and the dead, and must watch for souls as they that must give an account. Solemn is their calling, and

their companions can be a great blessing or a great curse to them. They can cheer them when desponding, comfort them when cast down, and encourage them to look up and trust fully in God when their faith fails. Or they can take an opposite course, look upon the dark side, think they have a hard time, exercise no faith in God, talk their trials and unbelief to their companions, indulge a complaining, murmuring spirit, and be a dead weight, and even a curse to them. [216]

I saw that the wives of the ministers should help their husbands in their labors, and be exact and careful what influence they exert; for they are watched, and more is expected of them than of others. Their dress should be an example. Their lives and conversation should be an example, savoring of life rather than of death. I saw that they should take a humble, meek, yet exalted stand, not having their conversation upon things that do not tend to direct the mind heavenward. The great inquiry should be, "How can I save my own soul, and be the means of saving others?" I saw that no half-hearted work in this matter is accepted of God. He wants the whole heart and interest, or he will have none. Their influence tells, decidedly, unmistakably, in favor of the truth or against it. They gather with Jesus or scatter abroad. An unsanctified wife is the greatest curse that a minister can have. Those servants of God that have been and are still so unhappily situated as to have this withering influence at home, should double their prayers and their watchfulness, take a firm, decided stand, and let not this darkness press them down. They should cleave closer to God, be firm and decided, rule well their own house, and live so that they can have the approbation of God and the watch-care of the angels. But if they yield to the wishes of their unconsecrated companions, the frown of God is brought upon the dwelling. The ark of God cannot abide in the house, because they countenance and uphold them in their wrongs.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:138](#).

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If married men go into the work, leaving their wives to care for the children at home, the wife and mother is doing fully as great and important a work as is the husband and father. While one is in the missionary field, the other is a home missionary, whose cares and [217]

anxieties and burdens frequently far exceed those of the husband and father. Her work is a solemn and important one,—to mould the minds and fashion the characters of her children, to train them for usefulness here, and fit them for the future immortal life. The husband in the open missionary field may receive the honors of men, while the home toiler may receive no earthly credit for her labor. But if she works for the best interest of her family, seeking to fashion their characters after the divine Model, the recording angel writes her name as one of the greatest missionaries in the world. God does not see things as man's finite vision views them.—[Testimonies for the Church 5:594](#).

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Those who are trying to purify their souls through obedience to the truth, yet who have had no opportunity of making special efforts and sacrifices for Christ and his cause, should find consolation in the thought that it is not necessarily the self-surrender of the martyr that is the most acceptable to God; it may not be the missionary whose life has been one of trial and endurance, that stands highest in heaven's record; but that the Christian who is such in his private life, in his daily struggle with self, in the control of his passions, in cleanness of purpose, in purity of thought, in patience, meekness, and long-suffering under the test of provocation, in piety, in devotion, in holy faith and trust in God, in faithfulness in little things, representing in the home life the character of Jesus,—that such a one may be more precious in the sight of God than the man who goes as a missionary to heathen lands, or ascends the scaffold to die for his faith.

[218] O, how different are the standards by which God and man measure character! God sees many temptations resisted, of which the world, and even near friends, never know,—temptations in the home, in the heart; he sees the soul's humility in view of its own weakness, the sincere repentance over even a thought that is evil; he sees the whole heart's devotion to the upbuilding of the cause of God; he has noted those hours of hard battle with self—battle that won the victory. All this, God and angels know.

Many will be lost who think themselves Christians, and many will be in heaven who their neighbors supposed would never get there. God judgeth not as man judgeth. Man judgeth from appearance, but God judgeth the heart. The Lord knows the strength of the temptations that he permits. He sees the inward conflicts, the severe struggles of him who gives up the visible on the strength of God's promise that presents before him the invisible.—MS.

Labor at Camp-Meetings

[219] A serious mistake has sometimes been made, in the attempt to hold as many meetings as possible during the camp-meeting season. The forces were divided, and, of course, weakened, and the efforts made were comparatively feeble. The close successions of camp-meetings, with the scarcity of laborers, has brought a heavy tax upon those who bear the burden of the work. They are called to go from camp-meeting to camp-meeting, and endure the strain of continual speaking upon subjects that stir the soul to its depths, and they cannot long pursue this labor without becoming enfeebled. Changes must be made, if our ministers are to be saved to do good work for the Master. If it is necessary to hold fewer general meetings, for want of laborers, let there be a sufficient force where meetings are held. God does not design that any of his servants shall labor to exhaustion.

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The severe and wearing effort required of our leading ministers at every camp-meeting unfits them for important work which demands their attention at the close of the meeting. As they meet and counsel together, they lay their plans for labor; to execute these plans successfully, they need a clear brain, calm nerves, and a heart filled with courage: but they lack all these essential qualifications. They have made a serious mistake in regard to the work resting upon them, and have done much that others should have done, and that would have been a blessing to them, giving them a precious experience in laboring for Jesus. While all cannot be ministers, all can and should act a part in the work.

There has been a failure to call into exercise talent which should be employed, but which needs development and cultivation. We have had but few ministers and but few men to bear responsibilities, because we have had so few educators. We have lost much because we have not had those who were apt to teach, and who could conduct

a training-school for the inexperienced, and press them into the service.

The real workers in this cause are few, yet the work covers much ground; and it is often impossible for the laborers to look after the interest awakened, and they fail to discern that they must enlist the lay members of the church, and teach them to work, that they may hold all that has been gained, and continue to advance. The plan of labor has been such as to lead the people to feel that they could do very little themselves; if anything was to be accomplished, they must have a minister.

At our camp-meetings, tenfold more might be done than is usually accomplished. At the very outset the minister should organize a corps of laborers upon whom they can depend to perform various duties essential to the success of the meeting. There may be several present who have been laboring in the smaller places, testing their own ability, and learning to teach the truth. If these men really desire to learn in the school of Christ, that they may teach others the way of salvation, the camp-meeting is the very place where they can learn most, not by looking on while others do all the work, but by sharing in the labor themselves. Every one should have something to do, some burden to bear. If there is anywhere a field in which they can work, it is at these large gatherings. They should first take heed to themselves, see that their own hearts are softened and subdued by the grace of Christ, and they are prepared to help others. In meekness and love they should labor for the discouraged and backslidden, inviting them to some place of retirement and praying with and for them. There should be many little groups thus earnestly pleading with God in the intervals between preaching services. Such was the course pursued in 1844; at our general meetings, little companies would scatter in every direction to draw near to God and seek his blessing. They did not seek in vain. The rich blessing of the Lord came upon them in answer to their prayers. The same course now pursued would lead to the same results.

Some of our ministers have had so little to do at these general meetings that they have themselves backslidden from God. How different would have been their experience had they been earnestly laboring for others! There is work to do in the family tents. Suitable persons should be appointed to engage, modestly and wisely, in

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religious conversation with the inmates of the various tents. Cases that need special help could be brought before the ministers, who might better understand how to advise. There is work enough to engage every one who can work. Many have been converted through personal effort, and a blessed revival may be expected to follow such labor.

The older ministers should be careful that they do not, by precept or example, give young men to understand that the work of laborers in the field consists mainly in preaching. The education of which young ministers are in greatest need, is that which will enable them to work in the various departments of the cause, and relieve those who are wearing out from overwork.

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There has often been more preaching in our camp-meetings than was really necessary. Ministers should not feel that everything depends on their efforts in presenting doctrinal, or even practical discourses. They must have a firmer reliance on Jesus, our mighty helper; they must encourage in their own hearts a faith that will not falter under any circumstances. They must depend more upon Christ's presence, and less upon their own efforts.

Let the discourses be short and right to the point, and then let other exercises come in. Especially should Bible readings be often held, and both believers and unbelievers should have an opportunity to ask questions upon points which they do not understand. And special meetings should be held for those who are interested in the truth, and who need instruction.

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If our ministers would preach short discourses, and then educate the brethren and sisters to work, and lay the burden upon them, the ministers themselves would be saved from exhaustion, the people would gain spiritual strength by the effort they put forth, and the result would be tenfold greater than is now seen. Too heavy burdens, both in preaching and in the transaction of business, have rested upon the few who labor in word and doctrine. These men should preserve their strength and vigor, and keep their minds staid upon God, that human infirmities may not affect their judgment, or mar

the solemn, dignified, holy character which should mark all their deliberations.

While our leading ministers do too much, our lay brethren and sisters do too little. The rich experience which the latter might gain in earnest, personal labor, is lost to them because they fail to bear the burdens which they can and should bear. They should seek to do all that it is in their power to do, not feeling that they are working for the minister or the conference and that they should receive remuneration, but as working for God, laboring unselfishly to make the meeting a success. In so doing they will bring a blessing to their own souls, and will also become a channel of light and blessing to others.

The people should not depend upon the minister, but upon Christ. Attention should especially be given to teaching them to labor in the meetings held among the tent companies. None who come to the meeting should be content to leave it without a deeper religious experience than they had when they came. Our brethren and sisters come to camp-meeting hoping to receive the blessing of the Lord; yet it is often the case that they do not know just what to do to make the meeting a benefit to themselves or to others. Many do not realize but that the only object for which they came is merely to hear preaching. Therefore they do not strive for the blessing of God, they do not from the very beginning of the meeting feel the necessity of confessing their sins, and striving for the earnest of the Spirit. They do not know that the success of the meeting depends largely upon themselves, and therefore do not feel the burden of the work. The very first effort of ministers should be to set them in the way of working for themselves. Let the minds and hearts of the people be enlisted in the work. Let all be taught what they must do to open the door of the heart to Jesus, that they may receive him gladly.

In our camp-meetings the spiritual interest is far from being what it might be. With the growth of the work there are so many branches that require attention, so many and so varied subjects are crowded into the meetings, that but little room is left for attention to the spiritual interests. Little time is given for meditation, for heart searching, and personal communion with God.

There are many meetings for education in the canvassing work, and in other branches, in which many of the people take no special interest; and others who are interested in them, and who desire to

obtain all the instruction they can, become so wearied, their minds are so crowded, that they fail to obtain that which is of the highest importance to them.

All the branches of the work are important, and the people need instruction upon them. But too often things of a business character have occupied the time that should have been given to earnest labor for souls. It would be better if the matters which relate more directly to business could be brought before the churches in special meetings appointed for the purpose. Instruction relating to Sabbath-school work, also, should be largely given in the several churches. The labor will thus be more effective, and the improvement more permanent.

[224] During the year the people are largely occupied with temporal, earthly things; and when they assemble in the yearly convocations, they need to change the current of their thoughts. Many have a knowledge of the theory of the truth, but know little of its practical bearing upon character and life. And as our camp-meetings have been conducted, the people often return to their homes no better qualified to work for God in their families and churches than before they came. There is a great dearth of the Spirit and power of God because the subject of personal piety, true faith, and heart holiness is not kept before the mind in its real importance. Business activities in a religious line satisfy the consciences of many, while their hearts are destitute of the tender love, the compassion for one another, that dwelt in the bosom of Christ.

That which needs to be especially kept before the mind is the work for the conversion of souls. The people must be led to see what they must be and what they must do in order to be accepted with God. They must be taught how to seek the Lord, how to believe on him, and how to work for others. The great object of these meetings is to secure an advancement in spiritual life, a deeper religious experience.

There is altogether too little effort made for those who come to the meeting who are not of our faith. Never should we manifest a cold indifference to those whom we know to be in ignorance concerning the precious truths that will make men wise unto eternal life. The earnestness of our efforts for others should be in proportion to the value of that which God has given to us to present to the world. All who keep in a prayerful frame of mind, looking to God

for heavenly wisdom, will be able, through the grace of Christ, to speak a word in season to those who are brought within the sphere of their influence.

The necessity of a real heart work for every member of the body must be pressed upon the people. The labor should be directed right to the one end,—a more complete putting away of idols, a deeper consecration, a stronger faith, and more personal effort for the salvation of others.

My brethren, there should be a different kind of labor from what we too often see in our camp-meetings. There should be more prayer and weeping, and more confession of sin to God and to one another. Let the indifference be broken up, let the complaining and faultfinding cease, and the time heretofore worse than wasted in this manner be spent in prayers of living faith for the refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Let us arouse as one man, and unitedly call upon God to send down his grace upon the souls of his people, and to revive his work in the midst of the years.

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Every tent's company should be set to work for themselves; and the people should also be united in larger divisions, with suitable men appointed in each to help, to the utmost of their ability, the ones placed under their charge. Men should not be chosen for this work who have so much sermonizing to do, to exhibit themselves, that they bear no help to the people. The leaders appointed should be carefully taught how to labor in order to secure the best results. The wisest generalship is in seeing, not how much we can do ourselves, but how much we can lead the people to do.

The preacher himself must be alive; he must have the earnestness of the Spirit; he must labor through Christ; he must make direct appeals; he must sound the alarm to careless and world-loving professors, though they should be displeased because their ears tingle with the close application of the truth,—“Thou art the man.” It is too late to daub with untempered mortar. There must be plain and faithful dealing. The people must be aroused to do the work which God enjoins upon them, to take up the stumbling-blocks and clear out the rubbish, that the Spirit of God may come in. The guilt as well as the danger of backsliding must be faithfully pointed out. Follow up the work with personal effort. General appeals are often made with little effect. Come close to hearts, arousing all to act a part.

What we need, what we cannot do without, is the Spirit of God to work with our efforts. All pampering of self must be at an end. There must be an earnest longing, a soul-hunger, for the presence of the Lord. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” [Matthew 5:6.]

[226] It is a case of life or death with us. We have been stricken with spiritual paralysis, and every one needs the help of the Great Physician. He alone can reach our case. He is only waiting to be invited by us with earnest heart, with sincere desire. Nothing is wanting but a preparation of heart, and earnest, believing prayer, to bring Jesus to our side as a mighty helper. He longs to come. If we will but listen to his voice and open the door, he will come in.—MS.

Popular Holiness Meetings

[From a Sermon to the General Conference of 1883.]

Those who would follow Christ must be grounded upon the principles of truth. They need to understand what the Bible teaches in regard to faith, and sanctification through the truth. They must be so established in this knowledge that they cannot be moved to take false positions on the doctrine of holiness, but will be able to illustrate in their lives the practical workings of this heaven-given principle. The people of God must be able to distinguish between the genuine and the spurious.

There are those who profess holiness, who declare that they are wholly the Lord's, who claim a right to the promises of God, while they do not render obedience to his commandments. These transgressors of the law claim everything that is promised to the children of God, but this is simply presumption; for John tells us that "he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Jesus says, "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." [John 15:10.] Obedience is the true sign of discipleship. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." [Matthew 7:21.]

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It is true that there are many who have never had the light of present truth, who, through the grace given them of Christ, are keeping the law as far as they understand it. Those who are thus living up to the best light they have, are not of the class whom the apostle John condemns. His words apply to those who boast of believing in Jesus, who claim holiness, while they lightly regard the requirements of the law of God. While they talk of the love of Jesus, their love is not deep enough to lead to obedience. The fruit

they bear, shows the character of the tree. It proves that their faith is not genuine. Yet this class, though entitled to nothing, though they have no right to the promises of God, boldly claim all his blessings. While they give nothing, they claim everything. They close their ears to the truth, refuse to listen to the plain "Thus saith the Lord," but by professing holiness they deceive many, leading souls away by their pretentious faith that has no foundation.

We as a people have fallen into the opposite error. We acknowledge the claims of God's law, and teach the people the duty of rendering obedience. We believe in giving everything, but we do not see that we must take as well as give. We fail to have that trust, that faith, which keeps the soul abiding in Christ. We claim little, when we might claim much; for there is no limit to the promises of God. Through a lack of faith, many who seek to obey the commandments of God have little peace and joy; they do not correctly represent the sanctification that is to come through obedience to the truth. They are not anchored in Christ. Many feel a lack in their experience; [228] they desire something which they have not; and thus some are led to attend holiness meetings, and are charmed with the sentiments of those who break the law of God.

It is our duty to preach faith, to present the love of Christ in connection with the claims of the law; for neither can be rightly understood without the other. In every discourse the love of God, as manifested in Christ, the sinner's only hope, should be dwelt upon until the people realize something of its power and preciousness. If this is done as it should be, it will not be said of this people that they teach the law but do not believe in repentance, faith, and conversion. We want these subjects to be blended as God has blended them; then will the truth be presented in its completeness, not as a mere theory, but as a power that will transform the character. It will then be preached in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. Then those who have accepted the doctrines of the Bible will not be unfed; they will feel the vivifying influence of the Holy Spirit.

There is no safety, much less benefit, for our people in attending these popular holiness meetings; let us rather search the Scriptures with much carefulness and earnest prayer, that we may understand the ground of our faith. Then we shall not be tempted to mingle with

those who, while making high claims, are in opposition to the law of God.

We must not have a sensational religion, which has no root in truth. Solid instruction must be given to the people upon the reasons of our faith. They must be educated to a far greater extent than they have been in the doctrines of the Bible, and especially in the practical lessons that Jesus gave to his disciples. The believers must be impressed with their great need of Bible knowledge. There must be pains-taking effort to fasten in the minds of all, the solid arguments of the truth; for every one will be tested, and those who are rooted and grounded in the work of God will be unmoved by the heresies that will arise on all sides; but if any neglect to obtain the necessary preparation, they will be swept away by errors that have the appearance of truth. At our camp-meetings, sermons should be delivered of such a character as will prepare the hearers to give a reason of the hope that is in them with meekness and fear. I have been shown that but a small number of the people in our churches know for themselves what constitutes the third angel's message. This fact should enable us to realize the need of Bible classes. At our camp-meetings especially, there should be daily classes for Bible study. Instruction should be given on the subjects of faith and Christian experience, and there should be seasons of earnest prayer. Then the influence of our camp-meetings would not be of so transitory a character, but would leave an abiding impression.—MS.

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Business Meetings

In all our business meetings, as well as our social and religious meetings, we want Jesus by our side as a guide and counselor. There will be no tendency to lightness where the presence of the Saviour is recognized. Self will not be made prominent. There will be a realization of the importance of the work that is to be done. There will be a desire that the plans to be laid may be directed by Him who is mighty in counsel.

[230] Could our eyes but be opened, we would behold the angels of heaven in our assemblies. Could we but realize this, there would be no desire to hold to our own opinions upon unimportant points, which so often retard the progress of the meeting and the work. If there were more real praying done, if there were more solemn consideration given to weighty matters, the tone of our business meetings would be changed, elevated. All would feel that the assembly had met to lay plans for the advancement of the work, and that the object of the work is only to save souls.

There is nothing in this world that is of so much value as the human soul, and in planning for the work, nothing should be done hastily, or in an indifferent manner. Each one of those assembled should feel that he must give careful thought and prayer to the matters discussed. The responsibility of dealing with human minds is not small. The soul of man has been purchased by the infinite price of the blood of the Son of God; then should any one lose sight of the sacredness of every movement that is made for the salvation of souls?

All that we do, and all that we say, is transferred to the books of heaven. Let us not be guilty of bringing down God's work to the level of common business transactions. Our standard must be high; our minds must be elevated. There are always a few who think, when their brethren are pulling forward, that it is their duty to pull back. They object to everything that is proposed, and make war on every plan that they have not themselves originated. Here is an opportunity

for persons to develop inordinate self-confidence. They have never learned in the school of Christ the precious and all-important lesson of becoming meek and lowly of heart. There is nothing harder for those who possess a strong will than to give up their own way, and submit to the judgment of others. It is difficult for such to become teachable, gentle, and easy to be entreated.

In our business meetings, it is important that precious time should not be consumed in debating points that are of small consequence. The habit of petty criticism should not be indulged; for it perplexes and confuses minds, and shrouds in mystery the things that are most plain and simple. How does Jesus, our Counselor, whom we have invited to be present at these meetings, look upon these things? If there is that love among brethren which will lead them to esteem others better than themselves, there will be a giving up of their own ways and wishes to others. It is our duty to study, daily and hourly, how we may answer the prayer of Christ, that his disciples may be one, as he and the Father are one. Precious lessons may be learned by keeping our Saviour's prayer before the mind, and by acting our part to fulfill his desire.

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In our business connection with the work of God, and in handling sacred things, we cannot be too careful to guard against a spirit of irreverence; never, for an instant, should the word of God be used deceitfully, to carry a point which we are anxious to see succeed. Honor, integrity, and truth must be preserved at any cost to self. Our every thought, word, and action should be subject to the will of Christ. Levity is not appropriate in meetings where the solemn work and word of God are under consideration. The prayer has been offered that Christ shall preside in the assembly and impart his wisdom, his grace, and righteousness. Is it consistent to take a course that will be grievous to his Spirit and contrary to his work? Let us bear in mind that Jesus is in our midst. Then an elevating, controlling influence from the Spirit of God, will pervade the assembly. There will be manifested that wisdom which is from above, that is first pure, then peaceable, full of mercy and good fruits, which cannot err. In all the plans and decisions there will be that charity that "seeketh not her own;" which is "not easily provoked," that "thinketh no evil," that "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;" that "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth

all things.” [1 Corinthians 13:5-7.] Self must be hid in Jesus, then the judgment will not be one-sided and warped, so that there can be no dispassionate and righteous decisions.

[232] “I ... beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” [Ephesians 4:1-3.]—MS.

Conference Presidents

[A Sermon delivered at the General Conference of 1883]

Their Qualifications

The Lord has been pleased to present before me many things in regard to the calling and labor of our ministers, especially those who have been appointed as presidents of Conferences. Great care should be exercised in the selection of men for these positions of trust. There should be earnest prayer for divine enlightenment. Those who are thus appointed as overseers of the flock should be men of good repute, men who give evidence that they have not only a knowledge of the Scriptures, but an experience in faith, in patience, that in meekness they may instruct those who oppose the truth. They should be men of thorough integrity; not novices, but intelligent students of the word, able to teach others also, bringing from the treasure-house things new and old,—men who in character, in words, in deportment, will be an honor to the cause of Christ, teaching the truth, living the truth, growing up to the full stature in Christ Jesus. This means the development and strengthening of every faculty by exercise, that the workers may become qualified to bear larger responsibilities as the work increases.

The Lord Jesus connected Judas and Peter with himself, not because they were defective in character, but notwithstanding their defects. He would give them an opportunity to learn in his school, meekness and lowliness of heart, that they might become co-laborers with him. And if they would improve these opportunities, if they would be willing to learn, willing to see their deficiencies, and in the light of a pure example to become all that Christ would have them to be, then they would be a great blessing to the church. Thus the Lord Jesus is still dealing with men. Some who are still imperfect in character, are connected with solemn, sacred interests; and when chosen for a special work, they should not feel that their own wisdom is

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sufficient, that they need not be counseled, reprov'd, and instructed. Brethren, if you feel thus, you will separate from the Source of your strength, and will be in peril; you may be left to your own supposed sufficiency to do as Judas did,—betray your Lord.

The grace of Christ must be an abiding principle in the heart and be exemplified in the life. Self will then be laid at the foot of the cross, and Christ will be accepted as all and in all. There will be no inclination to exalt self, but Christ will be revealed as “the chiefest among ten thousand,” the One “altogether lovely.” [[Song of Solomon 5:10, 16.](#)] There are great possibilities open to every sincere worker, if all the powers of mind and body are consecrated to God, to do his will, and not to serve self. The very thoughts are to be brought into subjection to the will of Christ. Then the affections will be refined and ennobled; those who carry the burden of the work will not be impure in thought or word or act, neither will they be light and trifling. All frivolity, all cheapness of conversation, all jesting and joking, weakens the soul, and weans the heart from prayer. Like Paul, the true followers of Christ will ever bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus; they cannot keep in mind the sufferings of Christ for them, and yet be light and trifling. They will manifest a true, Christ-like dignity and holy solemnity; yet there will be no Phariseism. There will be cheerful faith and courage in the Lord; for they trust the keeping of their souls unto God as

[234] to a faithful Creator. The Sun of Righteousness shines upon them in bright beams, and they keep their souls in the sunshine, and not in the shadow. They talk light, and not darkness. They do not lead souls to forget God, but keep the mind refreshed by speaking of his goodness, his love, and his power.

Christ Their Counselor

Christ said to his disciples before his crucifixion, “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” [[John 14:16, 17.](#)] Thank God we have not to trust alone in human counsel. The Saviour says, “I have set before thee an open door, and no man can

shut it.” [Revelation 3:8.] To this open door we are to go by faith for our sufficiency.

Among our people there has been a trifling with personal responsibilities. I tell you with sorrow that some of our Conferences are weak in Christian experience because their leading men—and the people have followed the example—have sought for the approval of man with far greater anxiety than for the approval of God; they have looked to man for help and counsel more than they have looked to God. They have made men their burden-bearers, and have accepted human wisdom just when and where they should depend upon God. And too often those of whom they seek counsel, need help themselves; for their souls are not right with God.

The presidents of our Conferences have become weak and inefficient by making flesh their arm. Trust in the wisdom of man does not facilitate growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.

Brethren, when perplexities arise in your Conference, when emergencies are to be met, do not let these dark clouds drift into the General Conference if you can possibly avoid it. The president of the General Conference should not be burdened with the affairs of the State Conferences as has been the case in the past. If you, with your associates in the work, cannot adjust the troubles and difficulties that arise in your Conference, how do you think that one man can do this work for all the Conferences? Why should you pour all your perplexities and discouragements into the burdened mind and heart of the president of the General Conference? He cannot understand the situation as well as you do who are on the ground. If you shirk responsibility and crosses and burden-bearing, hard thinking and earnest praying, and look to the president of the General Conference to do your work, and help you out of your difficulties, cannot you see that you lay upon him burdens that will imperil his life? Have you not mind and ability as well as he? You should not neglect any part of the work because it calls for earnest, cross-bearing effort. I repeat, Do not throw your burdens upon the president of the General Conference. Do not expect him to take up your dropped stitches and bind off your work. Resolve that you will bear your own burdens through Christ who strengtheneth you.

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If he is walking in the counsel of God, the president of the General Conference will not encourage his brethren in looking to

him to define their duty, but will direct them to the only Source that is untainted with the errors of humanity. He will refuse to be mind and conscience for others.

[236] Satan exults when men look to and trust in man. The one who is the object of this undue confidence is exposed to strong temptations. Satan will, if possible, lead him to self-confidence, in order that human defects may mar the work. He will be in danger of encouraging his brethren in their dependence upon him, and feeling that all things that pertain to the movements of the cause must be brought to his notice. Thus the work will bear the impress of man instead of the impress of God. But if all will learn to depend upon God for themselves, many dangers that assail the one who stands at the head of the work will be averted. If he errs, if he permits human influence to sway his judgment, or yields to temptation, he can be corrected and helped by his brethren. And those who learn to go to God for themselves for help and counsel are learning lessons that will be of the highest value to them.

But if the officers of a Conference bear successfully the burdens laid upon them, they must pray, they must believe, they must trust God to use them as his agents in keeping the churches of the Conference in good working order. This is their part of the vineyard to cultivate. There must be far more personal responsibility, far more thinking and planning, far more mental power brought into the labor put forth for the Master. This would enlarge the capacity of the mind, and give keener perceptions as to what to do, and how. Brethren, you will have to wrestle with difficulties, carry burdens, give advice, plan and execute, constantly looking to God for help. Pray and labor, labor and pray; as pupils in the school of Christ, learn of Jesus.

The Lord has given us the promise, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." [James 1:5.] It is in the order of God that those who bear responsibilities should often meet together to counsel with one another and to pray earnestly for that wisdom which he alone can impart. Unitedly make known your troubles to God. Talk less; much precious time is lost in talk that brings no light. Let brethren unite in fasting and prayer for the wisdom that God has promised to supply liberally.

[237] Go to God and tell him as did Moses, "I cannot lead this people

unless thy presence shall go with me.” And then ask still more; pray with Moses, “Show me thy glory.” [Exodus 33:18.] What is this glory?—The character of God. This is what he proclaimed to Moses. Let the soul, in living faith, fasten upon God. Let the tongue speak his praise. When you associate together, let the mind be reverently turned to the contemplation of eternal realities. Thus you will be helping one another to be spiritually minded. When your will is in harmony with the divine will, you will be in harmony with one another; you will have Christ by your side as a counselor. Enoch walked with God; so may every one of the laborers for Christ. You may say with the psalmist, “I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.” [Psalm 16:8.] While you feel that you have no sufficiency of yourself, your sufficiency will be in Jesus.

If you expect all your counsel and wisdom to come from men, mortal and finite like yourselves, you will receive only human help. If you go to God for help and wisdom, he will never disappoint your faith. The presidents of the State Conferences have the same God that the president of the General Conference has, and they can go to the Source of wisdom for themselves, instead of depending upon one man, who has to obtain his light from the same source. It may be argued that the Lord gives special wisdom to those entrusted with important responsibilities. True, if they walk humbly with him, he will give them help for their work; and he will give you help for yours, if you seek it in the same spirit. If the Lord in his providence has placed important responsibilities upon you, he will fit you to bear these burdens, if you go to him in faith for strength to do this. When you put your trust in him, and depend upon his counsel, he will not leave you to your own finite judgment, to make imperfect plans and decided failures. [238]

Every one needs a practical experience in trusting God for himself. Let no man become your confessor; open the heart to God; tell him every secret of the soul. Bring to him your difficulties, small and great, and he will show you a way out of them all. He alone can know how to give the very help you need. And when, after a trying season, help comes to you, when the Spirit of God is manifestly at work for you, what a precious experience you have gained. You are obtaining faith and love, the gold that the True

Witness counsels you to buy of him. You are learning to go to God in all your troubles; and as you learn these precious lessons of faith, you will teach the same to others. Thus you may be continually leading the people to a higher plane of experience. The president of a State Conference is, by his manner of dealing, educating the ministers under him, and together they can so educate the churches that it will not be necessary to call the ministers of the Conference from the field to settle difficulties and dissensions in the church. If the officers in the Conference will, as faithful servants, perform their heaven-appointed duties, the work in our Conferences will not be left to become entangled in such perplexities as heretofore. And in laboring thus, the workers will become solid, responsible men, who will not fail nor be discouraged in a hard place.

There is One who is mighty to save to the uttermost all who come unto him. Is not the promise broad and full? “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” [Matthew 11:28.] Why are we so unwilling to come directly to the Source of our strength? Have we not departed from the Lord in this? Should not ministers and the presidents of our Conferences learn whence cometh their help?

[239] The care of souls is too important and solemn a work to be entrusted to men who are unacquainted with God, and who do not have a special, definite experience in seeking him through prayer, and exercising faith in him. All heaven is interested in this work, and how can Heaven’s richest blessings fall upon those who labor in their own finite strength and wisdom, instead of seeking help from him whose grace and power constantly await their demand? The officers of our Conferences have neglected the praying part, and the exercise of that faith which would honor God and bring to them divine aid. There is an absence of soul-earnestness in prayer, a burden of supplication, that the Lord will give you wisdom, and pour upon you his Holy Spirit, that you may indeed be laborers together with him. Open your Bibles before God, and pray for divine enlightenment. Your Redeemer is waiting for you to call upon him in your necessity. He knows the solemn charge he has committed to you in giving you the care of souls. We are in times of peculiar danger from foes without and within, and God would have you alive to everything concerning your specific work. You need not

try to do anything without the special help of your heavenly Father. He is waiting for you to call, that he may say, "Here I am." If you will seek, he says he will be found of you; his strength, his grace, and his righteousness will be given to the humble, contrite one who seeks him with all the heart.

Claim the promises of God. The Lord will do all for you that he did for Daniel, if you will co-operate with him as Daniel did. You may be conquerors through humble, earnest trust in your Redeemer. As delegated messengers to whom is assigned a special work, he wants you to become men of spiritual power. It is the privilege of God's ministers to become men of moral power and efficiency in all the offices they are called to fill. Every day they may praise God for the fresh tokens of his love and blessing.

Removing to New Fields

[240]

The question is asked me if it is not a mistake to remove the president of a State Conference to a new field when many of the people in his present charge are unwilling to give him up. The Lord has been pleased to give me light on this question. I have been shown that ministers should not be retained in the same district year after year, nor should the same man long preside over a Conference. A change of gifts is for the good of our Conferences and churches. Ministers have sometimes felt unwilling to change their field of labor; but if they understood all the reasons for making changes, they would not draw back. Some have pleaded to remain one year longer in the same field, and frequently the request has been respected. They have claimed to have plans for accomplishing a greater work than heretofore. But at the close of the year there was a worse state of things than before. If a minister has been unfaithful in his work, it is not likely that he will mend the matter by remaining. The churches become accustomed to the management of the one man, and think they must look to him instead of looking to God. His ideas and plans have a controlling power in the Conference. The people may see that he errs in judgment, and because of this they learn to place a low estimate upon the ministry. If they would look to God, and depend upon heavenly wisdom, they would be gaining an experience of the highest value, and would themselves be able, in many respects at

least, to supply what is lacking in him who is the overseer of the flock. But too often things are left to drift as they will, the president being held responsible for the healthful condition of the churches in the Conference, while the church members settle down, indifferent, lukewarm, doing nothing to bring things into order.

[241] The president may not feel the importance of sanctifying himself, that others may be sanctified. He may be an unfaithful watchman, preaching to please the people. Many are strong in some points of character, while they are weak and deficient in other things where they should be strong. As the result, a want of efficiency is manifest in some parts of the work. Should the same man continue as president of the Conference year after year, his defects would be reproduced in the churches under his labors. But one laborer may be strong where his brother is weak, and so by exchanging fields of labor, one may, to some extent, supply the deficiencies of another. If all were fully consecrated to God, these marked imperfections of character would not exist; but since the laborers do not meet the divine standard, since they weave self into all their work, the best thing, both for themselves and for the churches, is to make frequent changes. And, on the other hand, if a laborer is spiritually strong, he is, through the grace of Christ, a blessing to the churches, and his labors are needed in different Conferences.

Co-Operation Among the Churches

[From a Sermon preached to the General Conference of 1883.]

There is a great dearth of spirituality in the Conferences of the different States; the churches are suffering, not so much for the want of sermons as for lack of ministry. The members of the churches need personal labor; they need to be instructed as to how they can engage in the work of God. In the winter, special efforts should be put forth. Let the different churches visit one another from time to time. Thus one church may encourage another by the manifestation of friendly, Christ-like interest in the spiritual welfare of the brethren. Those who will engage in active service for the good of others will find that their own souls will be revived and quickened, and those whom they visit will be encouraged and strengthened by the interest of their brethren in their behalf. [242]

When the harvest is gathered and the sowing is over, it is a favorable season for religious work. During the long evenings the lessons of the Scriptures should be carefully studied. Precious opportunities may be improved in conversing and praying together, in relating experiences, in making diligent search of the Bible; by such Christian association we may build up one another in the most holy faith.

Let those who claim to be the sons and daughters of God meet together to bring hope to one another's hearts. We keep apart from God and from one another, but the scripture declares that "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." [Malachi 3:16.] Coldness, formality, and indifference are quenching the vital spark of piety. Wherever we go we should carry an atmosphere of Christian hopefulness and cheer; then those who are out of Christ will see some attractiveness in the religion we profess. We need to get more distinct glimpses of heaven, the land where all is brightness and joy. We need to know more of the fullness of the blessed hope.

Will not the representatives from the different Conferences make arrangements to have meetings in the various churches in their

districts, and see to it that one church shall be a help to another? Some may be called to go twenty, fifty, or one hundred miles from home to attend meeting with those of like precious faith; but they should not count it a sacrifice. If they call upon God to imbue them with the Holy Spirit, to give them words to speak that will be as meat in due season, they will find their own hearts refreshed, and they will be richly repaid. It has often been found that where there [243] was but a limited number, the most precious and profitable seasons have been enjoyed. In such meetings there had been ample time for conversation on religious topics, time for prayer together, time for rejoicing in the love of God. Every member of the church could learn the needs of his brethren and sisters, and by so doing could pray more intelligently for them. It is impossible to do this so fully at large camp-meetings or other gatherings, but at these smaller meetings we have found our hearts knit together in bonds of love and Christian fellowship.

Fragments

Qualifications for the Work

Likeness to Christ

The same Bible that contains the privileges of God's people, and his promises to them, sets forth also the sacred duties and solemn obligations of the shepherd who has charge of the flock of God. By comparing the living preacher with the divine picture, all may see whether he has the credentials from heaven,—likeness of character to him who is the Chief Shepherd. God designs that the teacher of the Bible should in his character and home life be an illustration of the principles of truth which he is teaching to his fellow-men.

What a man is, has greater influence than what he says. The quiet, consistent, godly life is a living epistle, known and read of all men. True character is not something shaped from without, or put on; but it is something radiating from within. If true goodness, purity, meekness, lowliness, and equity are dwelling in the heart, the fact will be manifest in the character; and such a character is full of power.

The officers who were sent to take Jesus reported that never man spake like this man. But the reason of this was that never man lived like this man; for if he had not so lived, he could not so have spoken. His words bore with them a convincing power, because they came from a heart pure and holy, full of love and sympathy, beneficence and truth. There is eloquence beyond that of words, in the quiet, consistent life of a pure, true Christian. We shall have temptations as long as we are in this world, but instead of injuring us, they will only turn to our advantage, if resisted. The bounds are placed where Satan cannot pass. He may prepare the furnace, but instead of working injury, it will only consume the dross, and bring forth the gold of the character, purer than before the trial.

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In order for a man to become a successful minister, something more than book knowledge is essential. The laborer for souls needs integrity, intelligence, industry, energy, and tact. All these are highly essential for the success of a minister of Christ. No man can be inferior with these qualifications, but he will have a commanding influence. Unless the laborer in God's cause can gain the confidence of those for whom he is laboring, he can do but little good.... You must show in your family that kindly consideration, that tenderness, love, gentleness, noble forbearance, and true courtesy, that is becoming to the head of a family, before you can make a success of winning souls to Christ.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:553, 556.](#)

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[245] Why is it that some of our ministers have so little power?— Because they have not made an entire surrender to God. They do not see the sinfulness of clinging to their own way. While they hold the truth, and try to present it to others, they cling tenaciously to their own ideas, which are crude and narrow and without symmetry; and in the minds of the people the precious truth of God is blended with the peculiarities of the minister, and is refused. Let all who preach the truth, and all who profess to believe it, submit themselves fully to the influence of the Spirit of God, that the truth may refine, elevate, and sanctify them.

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It is the absence of the Holy Spirit and of the grace of God that makes the gospel ministry so powerless to convict and convert. After the ascension of Jesus, doctors, lawyers, priests, rulers, scribes, and theologians listened with astonishment to words of wisdom and power from unlearned and humble men. These wise men marveled at the success of the lowly disciples, and finally accounted for it to their own satisfaction from the fact that they had been with Jesus and learned of him. Their character and the simplicity of their teachings were similar to the character and teachings of Christ, in reference to which the apostle uses these words: “God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and

base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.” [1 Corinthians 1:27-29.]—[Testimonies for the Church 4:378](#).

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If God pronounces a woe upon those who are called to preach the truth and refuse to obey, a heavier woe rests upon those who take upon them this sacred work without clean hands and pure hearts. As there are woes for those who preach the truth while they are unsanctified in heart and life, so there are woes for those who receive and maintain the unsanctified in the position which they cannot fill.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:552](#).

Humility

The Saviour has given marked lessons in humility to all, but especially to the gospel ministers. In his humiliation, when his work upon earth was nearly finished, and he was about to return to his Father’s throne whence he had come, with all power in his hands and all glory upon his head, among his last lessons to his disciples was one upon the importance of humility. While his disciples were contending as to who should be greatest in the promised kingdom, he girded himself as a servant, and washed the feet of those who called him Lord and Master. [246]

His ministry was nearly completed; he had only a few more lessons to impart. And that they might never forget the humility of the pure and spotless Lamb of God, the great and efficacious Sacrifice for man humbled himself to wash the feet of his disciples. It will do you good, and our ministers generally, frequently to review the closing scenes in the life of our Redeemer. Here, beset with temptations as he was, we may all learn lessons of the utmost importance to us. It would be well to spend a thoughtful hour each day reviewing the life of Christ from the manger to Calvary. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination vividly grasp each scene, especially the closing ones of his earthly life. By thus contemplating his teachings and sufferings, and the infinite sacrifice made by him for the redemption of the race, we may strengthen our

faith, quicken our love, and become more deeply imbued with the spirit which sustained our Saviour. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and faith at the foot of the cross.... Everything noble and generous in man will respond to the contemplation of Christ upon the cross.

I long to see our ministers dwell more upon the cross of Christ, their own hearts, meanwhile, softened and subdued by the Saviour's matchless love which prompted that infinite sacrifice.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:373](#).

The Cause of Skepticism

[247] The reason why there is so little of the Spirit of God manifested is that ministers learn to do without it. They lack the grace of God, lack forbearance and patience, lack a spirit of consecration and sacrifice; and this is the only reason why some are doubting the evidences of God's word. The trouble is not at all with the word of God, but in themselves. They lack the grace of God; lack devotion, personal piety, and holiness. This leads them to be unstable, and throws them often on Satan's battle-field. I saw that however strongly men may have advocated the truth; however pious they may appear to be; when they begin to talk unbelief in regard to some scriptures, claiming that they cause them to doubt the inspiration of the Bible, we should be afraid of them; for God is at a great distance from them.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:383](#).

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A prevailing skepticism [From a Personal Testimony] is continually increasing in reference to the Testimonies of the Spirit of God; and these youth encourage questionings and doubts instead of removing them, because they are ignorant of the spirit, and power, and force of the Testimonies. While thus unsanctified in heart, their labor can do the people no good. They may apparently convince souls that we have the truth; but where is the Spirit and power of God to impress the heart and awaken conviction of sin? Where is the power to carry the convicted forward to an experimental knowledge of vital godliness? They have not a knowledge of this themselves;

then how can they represent the religion of Christ?—[Testimonies for the Church 4:437](#).

Consecration

Punctuality and decision in the work and cause of God are highly essential. Delays are virtually defeats. Minutes are golden, and should be improved to the very best account. Earthly relations and personal interests should ever be secondary. Never should the cause of God be left to suffer in a single particular, because of our earthly friends or dearest relatives. [248]

“And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” [[Luke 9:59-62](#).]

No earthly ties, no earthly considerations, should weigh one moment in the scale against duty to the cause and work of God. Jesus severed his connection from everything to save a lost world; and he requires of us a full and entire consecration. There are sacrifices to be made for the interests of God’s cause. The sacrifice of feeling is the most keen that is required of us; yet, after all, it is a small sacrifice. You have plenty of friends, and if the feelings are only sanctified, you need not feel that you are making a very great sacrifice. [From a Personal Testimony.] You do not leave your wife among heathen. You are not called to tread the burning African desert, or to face prisons, and encounter trial at every step. Be careful how you appeal to your sympathies, and let human feelings and personal considerations mingle with your efforts and labors for the cause of God. He demands unselfish and willing service. You can render this, and yet do all your duties to your family; but hold this as a secondary matter.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:500](#).

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Some have felt tempted to take themselves from the work, to labor with their hands. I saw that if the hand of God should be

[249] taken from them, and they be left subject to disease and death, then they would know what trouble is. It is a fearful thing to murmur against God. They do not bear in mind that the way which they are traveling is a rugged, self-denying, self-crucifying way, and they must not expect everything to move on as smoothly as though they were traveling in the broad road.

I saw that some of the servants of God, even ministers, are so easily discouraged, self is so quickly hurt, that they imagine themselves slighted and injured when it is not so. They think their lot hard. Such realize not how they would feel should the sustaining hand of God be withdrawn, and they pass through anguish of soul. They would then find their lot tenfold harder than it was before, while they were employed in the work of God, suffering trials and privations, yet withal having the Lord's approbation. Some that are laboring in the cause of God know not when they do have an easy time. They have had so few privations, and know so little of want or wearing labor or burden of soul, that when they have an easy time, when they are favored of God and almost entirely free from anguish of spirit, they know it not, and think their trials great. I saw that unless such have a spirit of self-sacrifice, and are ready to labor cheerfully, not sparing themselves, God will release them. He will not acknowledge them as his self-sacrificing servants, but will raise up those who will labor, not slothfully, but in earnest, and will know when they have an easy time. God's servants must feel the burden of souls, and weep between the porch and the altar, crying, "Spare thy people, Lord."

[250] Some of the servants of God have given up their lives to spend and be spent for the cause of God, until their constitutions are broken down, and they are almost worn out with mental labor, incessant care, toil, and privations. Others have not had and would not take the burden upon them. Yet just such ones think they have a hard time, because they have never experienced hardships. They never have been baptized into the suffering part, and never will be as long as they manifest so much weakness and so little fortitude, and love their ease so well.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:129](#).

“Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent?” [Isaiah 42:19.] God does not wish us to hear all that is to be heard, or to see all that is to be seen. It is a great blessing to close the ears, that we hear not, and the eyes, that we see not. The greatest anxiety should be to have clear eyesight to discern our own shortcomings, and a quick ear to catch all needed reproof and instruction, lest by our inattention and carelessness we let them slip, and become forgetful hearers, and not doers of the work.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:707](#).

Conversation

Good conversation will accompany a good conscience, as surely as good fruit will be produced by a good tree. If a man is unkind and churlish in his family, and to others connected with him, no one need to inquire how he will manage in the church. He will exhibit the same petulant, overbearing disposition which he shows at home. No man can have the spirit and the mind of Christ without being rendered better by it in all the relations and duties of life. Murmuring, complaining, and fretful passion are not the fruit of good principles.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:347](#).

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Jesting, joking, and worldly conversation belong to the world. Christians who have the peace of God in their hearts, will be cheerful and happy without indulging in lightness or frivolity. While watching unto prayer, they will have a serenity and peace which will elevate them above all superfluities. The mystery of godliness, opened to the mind of the minister of Christ, will raise him above earthly and sensual enjoyments. He will be a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. The communication opened between God and his soul will make him fruitful in the knowledge of God’s will, and open before him treasures of practical subjects that he can present to the people, which will not cause levity or the semblance of a smile, but will solemnize the mind, touch the heart, and arouse the moral sensibilities to the sacred claims that God has upon the affections and life. Those who

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labor in word and doctrine should be men of God, pure in heart and life.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:241](#).

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The holy deportment of the minister of Christ should be a rebuke to vain, frothy professors. The love of truth and holiness manifested in your serious, heavenly conversation, will convict others, and lead them to the truth, and those around you will be compelled to say, “God is with this man, of a truth.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:434](#).

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A powerful discourse delivered from the desk may affect minds; but a little imprudence on the part of the minister out of the pulpit, a lack of gravity of speech and true godliness, will counteract his influence, and do away the good impressions made by him. The converts will be his; in many instances they will seek to rise no higher than their preacher. There will be in them no thorough heart work. They are not converted to God. The work is superficial, and their influence will be an injury to those who are really seeking the Lord.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:380](#).

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[252]

When a minister bearing the solemn message of warning to the world, receives the hospitable courtesies of friends and brethren, and neglects the duties of a shepherd of the flock, and is careless in his example and deportment, engaging with the young in trifling conversation, in jesting and joking, and in relating humorous anecdotes to create laughter, he is unworthy of being a gospel minister, and needs to be converted before he should be entrusted with the care of the sheep and lambs. Ministers who are neglectful of the duties devolving on a faithful pastor, give evidence that they are not sanctified by the truths they present to others, and should not be sustained as laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, till they have a high sense of the sacredness of the work of a minister of Christ.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:233](#).

Instructing Parents

Those who have no children of their own to share their thoughts and labor, and to call for the exercise of forbearance, patience, and love, should guard themselves, lest their thoughts and labor center upon themselves. They are poorly qualified to instruct parents as to the training of their children; for they have not had experience in this work. Yet in very many cases, those who have no children are the most ready to instruct those who have, when at the same time, the former make children of themselves in many respects. They cannot be turned out of a certain course, and they require even more patience exercised toward them than children do. It is selfish to have a certain course marked out, and pursue this course to the inconvenience of others.

Health

The position of our ministers calls for health of body and discipline of mind. Good sound sense, strong nerves, and a cheerful temper will recommend the gospel minister anywhere. This should be sought for, and perseveringly cultivated.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:466](#).

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Our preachers are not particular enough in regard to their habits of eating. They partake of too large quantities of food, and of too great a variety at one meal. Some are reformers in name only. They have no rules by which to regulate their diet, but indulge in eating fruits or nuts between their meals, and thus impose too heavy burdens upon the digestive organs. Some eat three meals a day, when two would be more conducive to physical and spiritual health. If the laws which God has made to govern the physical system are violated, the penalty must surely follow.

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Because of imprudence in eating, the senses of some seem to be paralyzed, and they are sluggish and sleepy. These pale-faced ministers who are suffering in consequence of selfish indulgence of the appetite, are no recommendation of health reform. When suffering from overwork, it would be much better to drop out a meal occasionally, and thus give nature a chance to rally. Our

laborers could do more by their example to advance health reform than by preaching it. When elaborate preparations are made for them by well-meaning friends, they are strongly tempted to disregard principle; but by refusing the dainty dishes, the rich condiments, the tea and coffee, they may prove themselves to be true, practical health reformers. Some are now suffering in consequence of transgressing the laws of life, thus causing a stigma to rest on the cause of health reform. Excessive indulgence in eating, drinking, sleeping, or seeing, is sin.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:416](#).

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Overeating prevents the free flow of thought and words, and that intensity of feeling which is so necessary in order to impress the truth upon the heart of the hearer. The indulgence of appetite beclouds and fetters the mind, and blunts the holy emotions of the soul. The mental and moral powers of some of our preachers are enfeebled by improper eating and lack of physical exercise. Those who crave great quantities of food should not indulge their appetite, but should practice self-denial, and retain the blessings of active muscles and unoppressed brains. Overeating stupefies the entire being by diverting the energies from the other organs to do the work of the stomach.

[254] The failure of our ministers to exercise all the organs of the body proportionately, causes some organs to become worn, while others are weak from inaction. If wear is left to come almost exclusively upon one organ or set of muscles, the one most used must become overworn and greatly weakened. Each faculty of the mind, and each muscle has its distinctive office, and all are required to be equally exercised in order to become properly developed and to retain healthful vigor. Each organ has its work to do in the living organism. Every wheel in the machinery must be a living, active, working wheel. All the faculties have a bearing upon one another, and all need to be exercised in order to be properly developed.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:310](#).

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Some ministers maintain a certain dignity not in accordance with the life of Christ, and are unwilling to make themselves useful by engaging in physical labor, as occasion may require, to lighten the burdens of those whose hospitalities they share, and to relieve them of care. Physical exercise would prove a blessing to them, rather than an injury. In helping others, they would advantage themselves. But some go to the other extreme. When their time and strength are all required in the work and cause of God, they are willing to engage in labor, and become servants of all, even in temporal things; and they really rob God of the service he requires of them. Thus trivial matters take up precious time which should be devoted to the interests of God's cause.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:643](#).

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In order to perfect Christian character, we should not cultivate merely a life of quiet, prayerful abstraction, nor a life of all outward zeal and busy excitement, while personal piety is neglected. But the present time requires us to be waiting for the coming of the Lord, and vigilantly working for the salvation of our fellow-men. “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.” [[Romans 12:11](#).] God will not accept the most exalted services, unless they are first consecrated by the surrender of the soul to him and his love. With a certain class of minds, there is danger of systematizing away the Spirit of God and the vitality of the religion of Christ, and preserving an exact round of wearisome duties and ceremonies.

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We are living in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, and our nice and exact plans cannot always be carried out to the advantage of all. If we stand back upon our dignity, we shall fail to help those who need help the most. The servants of Christ should accommodate themselves to the varied conditions of the people. They cannot carry out exact rules, if they meet the cases of all. Labor will have to be varied to meet the people where they are. “Of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” [[Jude 22, 23](#).]

The apostle counsels his Corinthian brethren, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God. Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.” “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.” “To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” [1 Corinthians 10:31-33; 9:19, 22.] “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.” [Romans 15:1-3.]—*Testimonies for the Church* 2:673.

Labor in New Fields

In order to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, laborers must have a varied experience. This will be best acquired in extended labor in new fields, in different localities, where they will come in contact with all classes of people, and all varieties of minds, and where various kinds of labor will be required to meet the wants of many and varied minds. This drives the true laborer to God and the Bible for light, strength, and knowledge, that he may be fully qualified to meet the wants of the people. He should heed the exhortation given to Timothy: “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?” [2 Timothy 2:15; Luke 12:42.]—*Testimonies for the Church* 2:642.

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It will make our young men strong to go into new fields, and break up the fallow ground of men’s hearts. This work will drive them nearer to God. It will help them to see that they are altogether inefficient in themselves. They must be wholly the Lord’s. They must put away their self-esteem and self-importance, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ. When they do this, they will be willing to go without the camp, and bear the burden as good soldiers of the cross.

They will gain efficiency and ability by mastering difficulties and overcoming obstacles. Men are wanted for responsible positions, but they must be men who have given full proof of their ministry, in willingness to wear the yoke of Christ.

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Our ministers in responsible places are men whom God has accepted. No matter what their origin, no matter what their former position, whether they followed the plow, worked at the carpenter's trade, or enjoyed the discipline of a college; if God has accepted them, let every man beware of casting the slightest reflection upon them. Never speak disparagingly of any man; for he may be great in the sight of the Lord, while those who feel great may be lightly esteemed of God because of the perversity of their hearts.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:608](#).

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Not one moment of our precious time should be devoted to bringing others to conform to our personal ideas and opinions. God would educate men engaged as co-laborers in this great work to the highest exercise of faith, and the development of a harmonious character.

Men have varied gifts, and some are better adapted to one branch of the work than another. What one man would fail to do, his brother minister may be strong to accomplish. The work of each in his position is important. One man's mind is not to control another. If one man stands up, feeling that no one shall influence him, that he has judgment and ability to comprehend every branch of the work, that man will fail of the grace of God.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:608](#).

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After you have received counsel from the wise, the judicious, there is yet a Counselor whose wisdom is unerring. Fail not to present your case before him, and entreat his direction. He has promised that if you lack wisdom and ask of him, he will give it to you liberally, and upbraid not.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:152](#).

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Presidents of Conferences should be men who can be fully trusted with God's work. They should be men of integrity, unselfish, devoted, working Christians. If they are deficient in these respects, the churches under their care will not prosper. They, even more than other ministers of Christ, should set an example of holy living, and of unselfish devotion to the interests of God's cause, that those looking to them for an example may not be misled. But in some instances they are trying to serve both God and mammon. They are not self-denying; they do not carry a burden for souls. Their consciences are not sensitive; when the cause of God is wounded, they are not bruised in spirit. In their hearts they question and doubt the Testimonies of the Spirit of God. They do not themselves bear the cross of Christ; they know not the fervent love of Jesus. And they are not faithful shepherds of the flock over which they have been made overseers; their record is not one that they will rejoice to meet in the day of God.—[Testimonies for the Church 5:379](#).

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While the president of a Conference should faithfully perform the duties of his office, it is in his power, through the grace of Christ, to be a kindhearted man. He is not to lord it over God's heritage. But it is a sad fact that our brethren in the ministry are not all humble men. They want praise from the people; they enjoy the sense of authority which their position gives them; they like to dictate, to rule. They seem to feel that office, position, confers greatness; but it is character alone, true goodness, that is true greatness.

Brethren in the ministry, I feel called upon to say to you, Rebuke all who shall flatter or praise you. Lead the people to look to God and have faith in him, instead of attracting them to yourselves. You are in constant danger in this respect. Those who extol and favor you, you will, in your finite judgment, regard as your best friends, when they are the very ones who are subject to temptation, and who will become your tempters. If you are wrong, they will strengthen you in the wrong, and will, through their counsel and influence, lead you to do that which will harm your own soul, and result in

weakness to the church. For Christ's sake teach the people to look to God, and to him alone; teach them to receive light from him, to search the Scriptures for themselves, and know for themselves what is truth. [259]

I have been shown so much of human imperfection in those who have the oversight of churches, that I dare not utter one word of praise of commendation to any man. Let the laborers so live and so work that they can have the approval of God, and they will not be relying upon human sympathy, living upon human praise, that so frequently comes from unsanctified lips. They will be looking unto the Author and Finisher of our faith.

I have been shown the homes of ministers, presidents of Conferences, which are not all they should be. If the wife is not a humble, God-fearing, devoted woman, she will exert a wrong influence over her husband. If she is an unrestrained talker, she may lead him to acts that will do much harm. He may be influenced in his labor by a wisdom that is not from above. If he has not a steadfast purpose, an eye single to the glory of God, his wife's likes and dislikes, her preferences and opinions, will mould his work. Thus her want of self-denial and consecration to God will be felt all through the Conference.

Brotherly Love

There is too much of an independence of spirit indulged in among the messengers. This must be laid aside, and there must be a drawing together of the servants of God. There has been too much of a spirit to ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Said the angel, "Yea, *thou art* thy brother's keeper. Thou shouldst have a watchful care for thy brother, be interested for his welfare, and cherish a kind, loving spirit toward him. Press together, press together," God designed that man should be open-hearted and honest, without affectation, meek, humble, with simplicity. This is the principle of heaven; God ordered it so.—[Testimonies for the Church 1.113](#).

Manner of Labor

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Christ as a Teacher

When Jesus spoke, it was not with hesitating uncertainty; his words came with an earnestness and assurance appropriate to their importance and the momentous consequences involved in their reception or rejection. When his doctrines were opposed, he defended them with so great zeal and certainty as to impress his hearers that he would die, if need be, to sustain the authority of his teachings.

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The world's Redeemer went about doing good. When before the people, speaking to them the words of eternal truth, with what earnestness he watched the changing countenances of his hearers. The faces that expressed deep interest and pleasure as they listened to his words, gave him great satisfaction. But when the truth, plainly uttered, touched some cherished sin or idol, he marked the change of countenance, the cold, stern, forbidding look, which told that the truth was unwelcome. Jesus knew that the plain reproof of sin was the very thing his hearers needed; and the light he shed into the darkened chambers of their minds would have been the greatest blessing to them, had they accepted it. His work was to lay down in simple lines, yet so as to be clearly understood, truths that if obeyed would bring peace and happiness to the soul. He could look beneath the surface, and he saw the cherished sins that were ruining the life and character, that were shutting souls away from God. He pointed out these sins, that all might see them in the true light, and put them away. In some who presented the most hardened exterior, he discerned hopeful subjects. He knew that they would respond to the light, and that they would become his true followers. How grateful we should be to God that he can read every heart as an open book. Human wisdom casts aside many souls that might be saved; for man can judge only by appearance, but God knoweth the heart.

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As the arrows of truth pierced the hearts of Christ's hearers, breaking through the barriers of selfishness, and working humiliation, contrition, and finally gratitude, the Saviour's heart was made glad; for it was just such cases that he came to seek and to save. When his eyes swept over the throng of listeners about him, and he recognized among them the same faces that he had seen on former

occasions, joy was expressed in his countenance, that they were hopeful subjects of his kingdom.

The messengers of Christ, those whom he sends in his stead, will have the same feelings, the same earnest interest. And those who are tempted to think that their labor is not appreciated, and are inclined to be discouraged, should remember that Jesus, the Majesty of heaven, had just as hard hearts to deal with, and he had a more trying experience than we have had or ever can have. He taught the people with patient love, and his deep, searching wisdom knew the wants of every soul among his listeners. And when he saw them refuse the message of peace and love he came to give them, his heart felt anguish to the very depths.

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Our Saviour awed men by his purity and elevated morality, while his love and gentle benignity inspired them with enthusiasm. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach him; even little children were attracted to him. They loved to climb upon his lap and to kiss that pensive face, benignant with love. This loving tenderness you need. You should cultivate love. [From a Personal Testimony.] Expressions of sympathy, and acts of courtesy and respect for others, would not detract from your dignity one particle, but would open to you many hearts that are now closed against you.

Christ was just what every minister should strive to be. We should learn to imitate his character, and combine strict justice, purity, integrity, love, and noble generosity. A pleasant face in which love is reflected, with kind and courteous manners, will do more, [262] aside from pulpit efforts, than labor in the desk can do without these. It becomes us to cultivate a deference to other people's judgment, when, to a greater or less extent, we are absolutely dependent upon them. We should cultivate true Christian courtesy and tender sympathy, even for the roughest, hardest cases of humanity. Jesus came from the pure courts of heaven to save just such.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:422](#).

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Sinners should have a clear impression given them of the nearness and willingness of Christ to give them present salvation. A Saviour should be presented before the people, while the heart of the speaker should be subdued and imbued with his Spirit. The very tones of the voice, the look, the words, should possess an irresistible power to move hearts and control minds. Jesus should be found in the heart of the minister. If Jesus is in the words and in the tones of the voice, if they are mellow with his tender love, it will prove a blessing of more value than all the riches, pleasures, and glories of the earth; for such blessings will not come and go without accomplishing a work. Convictions will be deepened, impressions will be made, and the question will be raised, "What shall I do to be saved?"—[Testimonies for the Church 3:32](#).

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[263] Ministers need to have a more clear, simple manner of presenting the truth as it is in Jesus. They themselves need to comprehend more fully the great plan of salvation. There are many among their hearers who want a plain, clear explanation of the steps requisite in conversion. The great masses of the people are more ignorant on this point than many suppose. Among graduates of colleges, eloquent orators, able statesmen, men in high positions of trust, there are many who have given their powers to other matters, and have neglected the things of greatest importance. When such men form a part of the congregation, the speaker generally strains every power to preach an intellectual discourse; he chooses a subject that will have in it as little of the simplicity of true Bible religion and heart service to God as possible. He does not preach Christ. He does not show that sin is the transgression of the law. He seldom makes plain the plan of salvation. He seldom tells what one must do to be saved. That which would have touched the hearts of the hearers would have been to show them Christ upon the cross of Calvary to bring redemption within their reach. They need to be taught as children how to make Jesus their friend, how to bring him into their life-work.

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Some ministers make a mistake in the preparation of their discourses. They arrange every minutia with such exactness that they give the Lord no room to lead and impress their minds. Every point is fixed, stereotyped as it were, and they cannot depart from the plan marked out. This course, if continued, will cause them to become narrow-minded, circumscribed in their views, and will soon leave them as destitute of life and energy as were the hills of Gilboa of dew and rain. They must throw the soul open, and let the Holy Spirit take possession to impress the mind. When everything is laid out beforehand, and they feel that they cannot vary from these set discourses, the effect is little better than that produced by reading a sermon.

God would have his ministers wholly dependent upon him, but at the same time they should be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. No subject can be treated before all congregations in the same manner. The Spirit of God, if allowed to do its work, will impress the mind with ideas adapted to meet the cases of those who need help. But the tame, formal discourses of many who enter the desk have very little of the vitalizing power of the Holy Spirit in them. The habit of preaching such discourses will effectually destroy a minister's usefulness and ability....

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God's watchmen must not study how they shall please the people nor listen to their words and utter them; but they must listen to hear what saith the Lord, what is his word for the people. If they rely upon discourses prepared years before, they may fail to meet the necessities of the occasion. Their hearts should be laid open, so that the Lord may impress their minds, and then they will be able to give the people the precious truth warm from heaven.—[Testimonies for the Church 5:252](#).

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I have heard some ministers talk of Christ's life and teachings, in a commonplace manner, as though recounting the incidents in the life of some great man of the world. Indeed, it is not unusual for ministers in their discourses to treat of Christ as though he were a man like themselves. When I hear this sacred subject treated in such a manner, I feel a grief that I cannot express; for I know that

although these men are teachers of the truth, they have never had exalted views of Christ; they have never become acquainted with him and learned of him. They have not that elevation of thought which would give them a clear conception of the divine character of the world's Redeemer.

[265] The ministers of Christ, who bear the message of truth to men, will never become self-sufficient or self-exalted if they have correct views of the character and work of Christ, the author of man's salvation. The unworthiness, weakness, and inefficiency of their own efforts, in contrast with those of the Son of God, will make them humble, distrustful of self, and will lead them to rely upon Christ for strength and efficiency in their work. Habitually dwelling upon Christ, his exalted character, and the all-sufficient merits of his sacrifice, increases faith, sharpens the imaginative powers, strengthens the longing desire to be like him, and creates holy earnestness in prayer that makes it efficacious.

Silent Prayer

According to the light that has been given me, it would be pleasing to God for ministers to bow down as soon as they step into the pulpit, and solemnly ask help from God. What impression would that make? There would be solemnity and awe upon the people. Their minister is communing with God; he is committing himself to God before he dares to stand before the people. Solemnity rests upon the people, and angels of God are brought very near. Ministers should look to God the first thing as they come into the desk, thus saying to all, God is the source of my strength—[Testimonies for the Church 2:613](#).

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Many who profess to be ministers of Christ manifest a wonderful submission as they see the unconverted all around them going to perdition. A minister of Christ has no right to be at ease, and sit down submissively, in view of the fact that the truth is powerless, and souls are not stirred by its presentation. He should resort to prayer, and should work and pray without ceasing. Those who submit to

remain destitute of spiritual blessings, without earnest wrestling for those blessings, consent to have Satan triumph.

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You who labor in the cause of God and see no souls brought to the knowledge of the truth, no churches raised up and organized, should change your manner of labor. You should fast and pray. You should lay the matter before your brethren, and solicit their counsel and prayers, lest you be self-deceived, and, what is more, deceive others also.

Our Need of the Holy Spirit

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The efficiency of a discourse depends on the application of the truth to the heart by the Spirit of God. When Elijah sought God in the mountains, a devouring fire swept by; but God was not in the flame. A tempest rose, the thunder rolled, and the lightnings flashed; but God was not in all this. Then there came a still, small voice, and the prophet covered his head before the presence of the Lord. It is the still, small voice of the Spirit of God that has power to convict and convert the soul.

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When the theory of the truth is repeated without its sacred influence being felt upon the soul of the speaker, it has no force upon the hearers, but is rejected as error, the speaker making himself responsible for the loss of souls.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:441](#).

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In order to be a blessing to your people, you need to improve in many things. [From a Personal Testimony.] You should cultivate courtesy, and cherish a tender sympathy for all. You should have the crowning grace of God, which is love. You criticise too much, and are not so forbearing as you must be if you would win souls. You could have much more influence if you were less formal and rigid, and were actuated more by the Holy Spirit. Your fear of being led

by men is too great. God uses men as his instruments, and will use them as long as the world shall stand.

[267] The angels who fell were anxious to become independent of God. They were very beautiful, very glorious, but dependent on God for their happiness, and for the light and intelligence they enjoyed. They fell from their high estate through insubordination. Christ and his church are inseparable. To neglect or despise those whom God has appointed to lead out, and to bear the responsibilities connected with his work and with the advancement and spread of the truth, is to reject the means which God has ordained for the help, encouragement, and strength of his people. To pass these by, and think that your light must come through no other channel than directly from God, places you in a position where you are liable to deception, and to be overthrown....

You frequently talk too long when you do not have the vitalizing influence of the Spirit of heaven. You weary those who hear you. Many make a mistake in their preaching, in not stopping while the interest is up. They go on speechifying until the interest that had risen in the minds of the hearers dies out, and the people are really wearied with words of no special weight or interest. Stop before you get here. Stop when you have nothing of special importance to say. Do not go on with dry words that only excite prejudice and do not soften the heart. You want to be so united to Christ that your words will melt and burn their way to the soul. Mere prosy talk is insufficient for this time. Arguments are good; but there may be too much of the argumentative, and too little of the Spirit and life of God.

Without the special power of God to work with your efforts, your spirit subdued and humbled in God, your hearts softened, your words flowing from a heart of love, your labors will be wearing to yourself, and not productive of blessed results. There is a point which the minister of Christ reaches, beyond which human knowledge and skill are powerless. We are struggling with giant errors, and evils which we are impotent to remedy, or to arouse the people to see and understand; for we cannot change the heart. We cannot quicken the soul to discern the sinfulness of sin, and to feel the need of a Saviour. But if our labors bear the impress of the Spirit of God, if a higher, a divine power attends our efforts to sow the gospel seed, we shall see

fruits of our labor to the glory of God. He alone can water the seed sown.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:418](#).

Small Congregations

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Do not become discouraged or slacken your efforts when there are only a few to listen to a discourse. Even if there are but two or three, or no more than one, how do you know but that there may be one soul with whom the Spirit of God is striving? The Lord may give you a message for that soul, and he, if converted, may be the means of reaching many others. The results of your labor may, all unknown to you, be multiplied a thousand-fold. Do not look at the empty seats, and let your faith and courage sink, but think of what God is doing, in bringing his truth before the world. Remember that you are co-operating with divine agencies,—agencies that can never fail. Speak with as much earnestness, faith, and interest, as if there were thousands present to listen to your words.

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In England a minister went to his church to preach one rainy morning, and found that he had only one man for audience. But he would not disappoint his hearer, and he preached to him with earnestness and interest. As a result the man was converted, and became a missionary, and through his efforts thousands heard the good news of salvation. One discourse did the work for him, and he gathered abundantly for the Master.

Health Reform

One important part of the work of the ministry is to faithfully present to the people the health reform, as it stands connected with the third angel's message, as a part of the same work. They should not fail to adopt it themselves, and should urge it upon all who profess to believe the truth.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:469](#).

Gifts and Offerings

I saw that the cause of God is not to be carried forward by pressed offerings. God does not accept such offerings. This matter is to be

[269] left wholly to the people. They are not to bring a yearly gift merely, but should also freely present a weekly and monthly offering before the Lord. This work is left to the people, for it is to be to them a weekly, monthly, living test. This tithing system, I saw, would develop character, and manifest the true state of the heart....

Ministers should not be severe, and draw upon any one man, and press means from him. If he does not give just as much as another thinks he should, they are not to denounce him and throw him overboard. They should be as patient and forbearing as the angels are. They should work in union with Jesus. Christ and angels are watching the development of character, and weighing moral worth. The Lord bears long with his erring people. The truth will be brought to bear closer and closer, and will cut off one idol after another, until God reigns supreme in the hearts of his consecrated people. I saw that God's people must bring to him a free-will offering; and the responsibility should be left wholly upon the individual, whether he will give much or little. It will be faithfully recorded. Give the people of God time to develop character.

Ministers of God should bear the pointed testimony. The living truths of his word should be brought to bear upon the heart.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:237](#).

Liberality

[270] Never should the laborer who raises up little companies here and there give the impression to those newly come to the faith, that God does not require them to work systematically in helping to sustain the cause by their personal labors and by their means. Frequently those who receive the truth are among the poor of this world; but they should not make this an excuse for neglecting those duties which devolve upon them in view of the precious light they have received. They should not allow poverty to prevent them from laying up a treasure in heaven. The blessings within reach of the rich are also within their reach. If they are faithful in using what little they do possess, their treasure in heaven will increase according to their fidelity. It is the motive with which they work, not the amount they do, that makes their offering valuable in the sight of Heaven.

All should be taught to do what they can for the Master; to render to him according as he has prospered them. He claims as his just due a tenth of their income, be it large or small; and those who withhold this, commit robbery toward him, and cannot expect his prospering hand to be with them. Even if the church is composed mostly of poor brethren, the subject of systematic benevolence should be thoroughly explained, and the plan heartily adopted. God is able to fulfill his promises. His resources are infinite, and he employs them all in accomplishing his will. And when he sees a faithful performance of duty in the payment of the tithe, he often, in his wise providence, opens ways whereby it shall increase.

He who follows God's arrangement in the little that has been given him will receive the same returns as he who bestows of his abundance. The same is true also of those who cheerfully employ their talents of ability in the cause of God, while those who fail to improve that which has been given them will incur the same loss as though that little had been much. It was the man who had only one talent, but who went and hid that talent in the earth, that received the condemnation of the Lord.

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I saw that those who profess to be looking for the coming of the Lord should not have a close, penurious spirit. Some of those who have been called to talk the truth, and to watch for souls as they that must give an account, have wasted much precious time for the sake of saving a little, when their time was worth a great deal more than that which they gained. This is displeasing to God. It is right that economy should be used, but it has by some been stretched into meanness, with no other object than to increase their treasures, which will shortly eat their flesh like fire, unless they, as faithful stewards, make a right disposal of their Lord's goods.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:153](#).

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Respect of Persons

Ministers should not use flattery or be respecters of persons. There ever has been, and still is, great danger of erring here, of making a little difference with the wealthy, of flattering them by

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special attention, if not by words. There is danger of “having men’s persons in admiration” [[Jude 16.](#)] for the sake of gain, but if one does this, he endangers their eternal interests. Some wealthy man may regard the minister as a special favorite, and may be very liberal with him; this gratifies the minister, and he, in turn, lavishes praise upon the benevolence of his donor. His name may be exalted by appearing in print, and yet, that liberal donor may be entirely unworthy of the credit given him. His liberality did not arise from a deep, living principle to do good with his means, to advance the cause of God because he appreciated it, but from some selfish motive, a desire to be thought liberal. He may have given from impulse, and his liberality have no depth of principle. He may have been moved upon by listening to stirring truth, which for the time being loosed his purse-strings; yet, after all, his liberality has no deeper motive. He gives by spasms; his purse opens spasmodically, and closes just as securely, spasmodically. He deserves no commendation, for he is in every sense of the word a stingy man; and unless thoroughly converted, purse and all, will hear the withering denunciation, “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.” [[James 5:1, 2.](#)] Such will awake at last from a horrible self-deception. Those who praised their spasmodic liberalities helped Satan to deceive them, and made them think that they were very liberal, very sacrificing, when they knew not the first principles of liberality or self-sacrifice.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:475.](#)

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The truth should be presented in a manner that will make it attractive to the intelligent mind. We are not understood as a people, but are looked upon as poor, weak-minded, low, and degraded. Then how important for all who teach, and all who believe the truth, to be so affected by its sanctifying influence that their consistent, elevated lives shall show unbelievers that they have been deceived in this people. How important that the cause of truth be stripped of everything like a false and fanatical excitement, that the truth may stand upon its own merits, revealing its native purity and exalted character.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:414.](#)

Department

The minister should never lose sight of the fact that he is a representative of Christ. He should cultivate grace, courtesy, and refinement of manner. Both in and out of the pulpit he should carry himself with a quiet dignity becoming his elevated calling. Solemnity, a certain godly authority, mingled with meekness, should characterize the demeanor of him who is a teacher of God's truth. Ministers should not make a practice of relating anecdotes that will detract from the force and solemnity of the truth presented. The truth should be clothed in chaste and dignified language; and the illustrations should be of a like character.

How to Deal with Faultfinders

There are in our churches those who profess the truth who are only hindrances to the work of reform. This class are frequently in trial. Doubts, jealousies, and suspicion, the fruits of selfishness, seem to be interwoven with their very nature. They are a burden to the church and to the ministers of Christ. Much of the time and labor of the ministers is required to undo their work of evil, and restore harmony and union in the church. This takes from the courage and strength of God's servants, and unfits them for the work that he has for them to do in saving perishing souls from ruin.

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Many that are drifting into darkness and infidelity are picking flaws with the Bible, and bringing in superstitious inventions, unscriptural doctrines, and philosophical speculations; others excite trifling inquiries and disputations, which call off the servants of God from their work, causing them to waste their time and lose their labor. Those who permit themselves to be thus hindered are giving place to Satan, and surrounding their own souls with an atmosphere of doubt and unbelief. While doing this, they might have been bringing gold, silver, and precious stones to lay upon the foundation. The ministers of Christ should not allow themselves to be thus hindered in their work. There will be enough to question, and quibble, and criticise, to keep the ministers of God constantly busy, if they will allow themselves to be detained from the great work of giving the last message of warning to the world.

Brethren, pull away from the shore, launch out into the deep, and cast the gospel net again. In this important period of the work, ministers cannot be detained to prop up men and women who see and have once felt the force of the truth. They should fasten believing Christians to Christ, who is able to hold them up and preserve them blameless unto his appearing, while they go forth to new fields of labor.

Order and Discipline

[274] While the Bible teaching in regard to faith and sanctification should be presented to the people, there is need of guarding every point, so that no place may be given to those demoralizing influences manifest among some classes of people who have much to say in regard to holiness. There are many who are careless in deportment, and low and coarse in their tastes, who grasp at a superficial theory of sanctification, and justify themselves in their commonness, when they should diligently seek to purify themselves by obedience to the truth. They talk of the freedom they feel, the happiness they have; but by their words, deportment, and dress, they fail to recommend their religion. Camp-meetings should never be conducted in such a manner as to encourage this kind of experience. To encourage an unbecoming familiarity in the association of men and women, boys and girls, under the pretext of seeking conversion and sanctification, is to foster an evil whose influence is of the worst character. Christ and his righteousness must be clearly presented to the people; the teacher himself must be circumspect in conduct, having his conversation elevated and holy, that he may teach believers and unbelievers the reasons of his faith from both the law and the gospel. He must show to all that they must do the will of God if they would know of the doctrine.

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“Be instant in season, out of season.” [2 Timothy 4:2.] To be “instant in season,” is to be alert to the privileges of the house and hour of worship and to the time when men are conversing on the topics of religion. And “out of season,” when you are at the fireside, in the field, by the way-side, in the market, seek to be ready to turn

the thoughts of men, in a suitable and wise manner, to the great themes of the Bible. With tender and fervent spirit urge the claims of God upon the soul. Many, many precious opportunities are allowed to slip by unimproved, because men are persuaded that it is out of season. But who knows what might be the effect of a wise appeal to the conscience, by using the word of God that will accomplish that for which God has given it? It is written, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." [Ecclesiastes 11:6.] He who is sowing seeds of eternal truth may bear a burdened heart, and send up prayers with supplication and tears, but he will come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. [275]

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There are in the ministry, men who gain apparent success by swaying minds through a human influence. They play upon the feelings at will, making their hearers weep, and in a few minutes laugh. Under this kind of labor, many are moved by impulse to a profession of Christ, and there is thought to be a wonderful revival. But when the test comes, it is seen that the work is not enduring. When the feelings were stirred, many were borne along by the tide that seemed to be setting heavenward. But in the strong current of temptation they quickly float back as driftwood. The laborer is self-deceived, and thus he misleads his hearers.

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When ministers have success in moving upon minds, if they are conscious that God has wrought with their efforts they will not become self-sufficient and boastful. They will walk as they have Christ for an example. Satan will not let them alone; he will assail them with temptation, and unless with humility and prayer they are continually seeking for divine guidance, they will be overcome.

Danger of Applause

I have been shown that great caution should be used, even when it is necessary to lift a burden of oppression from men and women,

[276] lest they lean to their own wisdom, and fail to make God their only dependence. It is not safe to speak in praise of persons, or to exalt the ability of a minister of Christ. In the day of God, very many will be weighed in the balance and found wanting because of exaltation. I would warn my brethren and sisters never to flatter persons because of their ability; for they cannot bear it. Self is easily exalted, and in consequence, persons lose their balance. I say again to my brethren and sisters, If you would have your souls clean from the blood of all men, never flatter, never praise the efforts of poor mortals; for it may prove their ruin. It is unsafe, by our words and actions, to exalt a brother or sister, however apparently humble may be their deportment. If they really possess the meek and lowly spirit which God so highly esteems, help them to retain it. This will not be done by censuring them, nor by neglecting to properly appreciate their true worth. But there are few who can bear praise without being injured.

Some ministers of ability who are now preaching present truth, love approbation. Applause stimulates them, as the glass of wine does the inebriate. Place these ministers where they have a small congregation, which promises no special excitement, and which provokes no decided opposition, and they will lose their interest and zeal, and appear as languid in the work as the inebriate when he is deprived of his dram. These men will fail to make real, practical laborers until they learn to labor without the excitement of applause.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:185](#).

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[277] A minister of Christ, a teacher of the truth, a true shepherd, is in one sense a servant of all, anticipating the wants of those who need help, and knowing how to be useful here and there in the great work of saving souls. A man who professes to teach the truth, and goes just where he pleases, and works when and how he pleases, yet shuns responsibilities, is not bearing the cross after Christ, nor fulfilling the commission of a true gospel minister.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:650](#).

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Some of our ministers carry too light responsibilities, they shun individual care and burdens; for this reason they do not feel that need of help from God that they would if they lifted the burdens that the work of God and our faith require them to lift. When burdens in this cause have to be borne, and when those who bear them are brought into strait places, they will feel the need of living near to God, that they may have confidence to commit their ways to him, and in faith claim that help which he alone can give. They will then be daily obtaining an experience in faith and trust, which is of the highest value to gospel ministers.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:234](#).

The Shepherd's Work

A true shepherd will have an interest in all that relates to the welfare of the flock, feeding, guiding, and defending them. He will carry himself with great wisdom, and will manifest a tender consideration for all, being courteous and compassionate to all, especially to the tempted, the afflicted, and the desponding.... “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.” “But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.”

It is not the work of a gospel minister to lord it over God's heritage, but in lowliness of mind, with gentleness and long forbearance to exhort, reprove, rebuke, with all long-suffering and doctrine.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:228](#).

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I was shown that the usefulness of young ministers, married or unmarried, is often destroyed by the attachment shown to them by young women. Such do not realize that other eyes are upon them, and that the course pursued by them may have a tendency to very

much injure the influence of the minister to whom they give so much attention. If they would strictly regard the rules of propriety, it would be much better for them, and much better for their minister. It places him in a disagreeable position, and causes others to look upon him in a wrong light. Yet I saw that the burden of the matter rests upon the ministers themselves. They should show a distaste for these things, and if they take the course which God would have them, they will not long be troubled. They should shun every appearance of evil, and when young women are very sociable, it is their duty to let them know that it is not pleasing. They must repulse this forwardness, even if they are thought to be rude. Such things should be rebuked, in order to save the cause from reproach. Young women who have been converted to the truth and to God, will listen to reproof, and will be reformed.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:381](#).

Labor for the Young

[279] Very much has been lost to the cause of God by a lack of attention to the young. Ministers should form an acquaintance with the youth in their congregations. Many are reluctant to do this, but their neglect is a sin in the sight of Heaven. There are among us many who are not ignorant of our faith, yet whose hearts have never been touched by the power of divine grace. Can we who claim to be servants of God pass on day after day, week after week, indifferent to these souls who are out of Christ? If they should die in their sins, unwarned, their blood would be required at the unfaithful watchman's hands.

Why should not this labor for the youth in our borders be regarded as the highest kind of missionary work? It will require the most delicate tact, the most thoughtful consideration, the most earnest prayer that heavenly wisdom may be imparted. The youth are the objects of Satan's special attacks; but kindness, courtesy, that tender sympathy that flows from a heart filled with love to Jesus, will give you access to them. You may win their confidence, so that they will listen to your words, and thus be saved from many a snare of the enemy.

When the youth give their hearts to God, your care for them should not cease. Lay some special responsibility upon them. Make them feel that they are expected to do something. The Lord chooses

them because they are strong. Teach them to labor in a quiet, unpretending way, for their young companions. Let different branches of the missionary work be laid out systematically, and let instruction and help be given, so that the young may learn to act a part. Thus they will grow up to be workers for God.

The Testimonies

There should be no trial, or labor with those who have never seen the individual having visions, and who have had no personal knowledge of the influence of the visions. Such should not be deprived of the benefits and privileges of the church, if their Christian course is otherwise correct, and they have formed a good Christian character.

Some, I was shown, could receive the published visions, judging of the tree by its fruits. Others are like doubting Thomas; they cannot believe the published Testimonies, nor receive evidence through the testimony of others, but must see and have the evidence for themselves. Such must not be set aside, but long patience and brotherly love should be exercised toward them until they find their position and become established for or against. If they fight against the visions, of which they have no knowledge; if they carry their opposition so far as to oppose that in which they have had no experience, and feel annoyed when those who believe that the visions are of God speak of them in meeting and comfort themselves with the instruction given through vision, the church may know that they are not right. God's people should not cringe and yield, and give up their liberty to such disaffected ones. God has placed the gifts in the church that the church may be benefited by them; and when professed believers in the truth oppose these gifts and fight against the visions, souls are in danger through their influence, and it is time then to labor with them, that the weak may not be led astray by their influence.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:328](#).

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Some of our brethren have had long experience in the truth, and have for years been acquainted with me and with the influence of the visions. They have tested the truthfulness of these testimonies, and

asserted their belief in them. They have felt the powerful influence of the Spirit of God resting upon them to witness to the truthfulness of the visions. If such, when reproved through vision, rise up against them, and work secretly to injure our influence, they should be faithfully dealt with, for their influence is endangering those who lack experience.—[Testimonies for the Church 1:382](#).

The Joy of the Lord

[281] As their reward the faithful under-shepherds will hear from the Chief Shepherd, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” He will then place the crown of glory upon their heads, and bid them enter into the joy of their Lord. What is that joy?—It is beholding with Christ the redeemed saints, reviewing with him their travail for souls, their self-denial and self-sacrifice, their giving up of ease, of worldly gain, and every earthly inducement, and choosing the reproach, the suffering, the self-abasement, the wearing labor, and the anguish of spirit as men would oppose the counsel of God against their own souls; it is calling to remembrance the chastening of their souls before God, their weeping between the porch and the altar, and their becoming a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men. All this is then ended, and the fruits of their labors are seen, souls are saved through their efforts in Christ. The ministers who have been co-workers with Christ, enter into the joy of their Lord, and are satisfied.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:709](#).

Section 2—The Missionary

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Education for the Missionary Work

[First published in "Historical Sketches of the S. D. A. Foreign Missions," 1886]

"We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." [1 Corinthians 3:9.]

The work of the Christian laborer is not light or unimportant. He has a high vocation, from which his whole future life must take its mould and coloring. He who gives himself to so sacred a work should bend all his energies to its accomplishment. He should aim high; he will never reach a higher standard than that which he aims to attain. He cannot diffuse light until he has first received it. He must be a learner before he can have sufficient experience and wisdom to become a teacher, able to open the Scriptures to those who are in darkness. If God has called men to be laborers together with him, it is equally certain that he has called them to make the best possible preparation to rightly represent the sacred, elevating truths of his word.

Those who desire to give themselves to the work of God, should receive an education and training for the work, that they may be prepared to engage in it intelligently. No one should feel that he can step at once upon the upper rounds of the ladder; those who would succeed must begin at the first round, and climb upward step by step. Opportunities and privileges are granted them for improvement, and they should make every effort in their power to learn how they may do the work of God acceptably.

[283] Wherever our ministers shall labor, in Europe or in America, they should seek to arouse the youth to prepare for active service in God's great field of battle. All who claim to be the servants of Christ have a work to do for him. The very name of servant conveys the idea of hire, work, responsibility. God has intrusted to every one, powers to be employed in his service. He has given to each his work, and he requires that every faculty shall be improved to his glory.

Just in front of our printing office in Basel, Switzerland, is a large park of many acres, reserved by the government for military drill. Here day after day, at certain seasons of the year, we see the soldiers training. They are drilled in all the duties of the army, so that in case of war they may be ready at the call of the government to engage in actual service. One day a fine tent was brought upon the ground. Then came the discipline of pitching it and taking it down; instruction was given as to setting it up in proper order, every man having his specific work. Several times the tent was erected and taken down. By another company, many small cannon were brought upon the ground, and lessons were given by the officers in the matter of moving these quickly from place to place, in taking apart the cannon wagon, and setting the gun ready for use, and in quickly attaching again the fore wheels so as to be ready at the call to set them in motion in an instant. Ambulances were brought to the ground, and the sanitary corps were taught to take care of the wounded. Men were laid upon stretchers, and their heads and limbs were bandaged as are those of the wounded on the field of battle. Then they were laid in the ambulances and drawn from the ground. For hours, soldiers are drilled to disencumber themselves of their knapsacks, and place them quickly in position again upon the person. They are taught how to stack their arms, and how to seize them quickly. They are drilled in making a charge as against the enemy, and are trained in all kinds of maneuvers. [284]

Thus the drill goes on, preparing men for any emergency. And should those who are fighting the battle for Prince Immanuel be less earnest and painstaking in their preparation for the spiritual warfare? Those who engage in this great work must take part in the drill. They must educate themselves to obey, before they are fitted to command.

Even at this eleventh hour, there should be decided advancement made in the matter of a special preparatory work. In all our Conferences there should be well-organized plans for the instruction and training of those who desire to give themselves to the cause of God. Our city missions afford favorable opportunities for education in missionary labor; but these are not enough. There ought to be connected with our schools the best possible facilities for the preparation of laborers for both home and foreign fields. There should also be in our larger churches special training schools for young men

and women, to fit them to become workers for God. And far more attention should be given by our ministers to the matter of assisting and educating younger laborers.

[285] When an effort is made to introduce the truth in an important place, our ministers should give special attention to the instruction and training of those who are to co-operate with them. Colporteurs and canvassers are needed, and those who are fitted to give Bible readings in families, so that while the ministers are laboring in word and doctrine, these can also be calling minds to the truth. Our ministers who have gone to important places to hold tent-meetings have often made a serious mistake in devoting all their time to sermonizing. There should be less preaching and more teaching,—teaching the people, and also teaching young men how to labor successfully. Ministers should become efficient in teaching others how to study the Bible, and in training the minds and manners of those who would become workers in the cause of God. And they should be ready to counsel and instruct those who have newly come to the faith, and who give promise of possessing ability to work for the Master.

Those who are connected with tent labor should avail themselves of all the advantages thus offered them. They should not be wandering listlessly about while discourses are being given, as though there was nothing in the sermon that they needed. They are not to regard the speaker as merely one who is delivering an oration, but as God's messenger, bearing a message from heaven to men. Personal preferences and prejudices must not come in to influence the hearer. All should imitate the example of Cornelius and his friends, who said, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." [[Acts 10:33.](#)] If the hearers thus listen in faith, expecting a message from God through his delegated messenger, they will receive it and be profited.

The youth who aim to labor in the Master's vineyard must be as apprentices who are to learn the trade. They must learn to be useful in the work by first doing errands for the Lord, improving opportunities for doing missionary labor anywhere and in any capacity. Thus they may give evidence that they possess tact and qualifications for the greatest work ever intrusted to men. They should be constantly improving in mind, in manners, in speech, learning how to become

successful laborers. They should cultivate tact and courtesy, and manifest the spirit of Christ. Let them never cease to learn. Onward and upward should be their constant endeavor.

Both the youth and those of mature age, should, as they continue to labor, be constantly becoming more efficient. To engage successfully in a new branch of the work, the mental powers must be disciplined. The mind must not be permitted to drift with circumstances and follow impulse, but must be resolutely held to the object of the labor. [286]

All who would become efficient workers must give much time to prayer. The communication between God and the soul must be kept open, that the workers may recognize the voice of their Captain. The Bible should be diligently studied. The truth of God, like gold, is not always lying right on the surface; it is to be obtained only by earnest thought and study. This study will not only store the mind with the most valuable knowledge, but it will strengthen and expand the mental powers, and it will give a true estimate of eternal things. Let the divine precepts be brought into the daily life; let the life be fashioned after God's great standard of righteousness, and the whole character will be strengthened and ennobled.

He who is seeking to qualify himself for the sacred work of God should be careful not to place himself on the enemy's ground, but should choose the society of those who will help him to obtain divine knowledge. God suffered John, the beloved disciple, to be exiled to Patmos, where he was separated from the world's bustle and strife, shut away from every outside influence, and even from the work that he loved. Then the Lord could commune with him, opening before him the closing scenes in this world's history. John the Baptist made his home in the wilderness, there to receive of God the message he was to bear to prepare the way for the Coming One. So far as consistent, we should shun every influence which would tend to divert the mind from the work of God. And those especially who are young in faith and experience should beware that they do not in self-confidence place themselves in the way of temptation.

Those who take hold of the work aright will feel the necessity of having Jesus with them at every step, and they will feel that the cultivation of the mind and the manners is a duty due to themselves and required of God,—a duty which is essential to the success of [287]

the work. Some who contemplate becoming missionary workers may think themselves so far advanced that they do not need all this particular drill, but those who feel thus are the very ones who stand in the greatest need of thorough training. When they know much more in regard to the truth and the importance of the work, they will realize their ignorance and inefficiency. When they closely examine their own hearts, they will see themselves in such contrast to the pure character of Christ that they will cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" [2 Corinthians 2:16.] Then they will in deep humility strive daily to place themselves in close connection with Christ. While overcoming the selfish inclinations of the natural heart, they are placing their feet in the path where Christ leads the way. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." [Psalm 119:130.] But those who have a high estimate of their own ability and acquisitions, are so full of self-importance that there is no opportunity for the entrance of the word of God, to instruct and enlighten them.

Many feel that they are fitted for a work that they know scarcely anything about, and if they start in to labor in a self-important manner, they will fail to receive that knowledge which they must obtain in Christ's school. These will be doomed to struggle with many difficulties, for which they are wholly unprepared. They will ever lack experience and wisdom until they learn their great inefficiency.

[288] Very much has been lost to the cause by the defective labors of men who possess ability, but who have not had proper training. They have engaged in a work which they knew not how to manage, and as the result, have accomplished but little. They have not done a tithe of what they could have done had they received the right discipline at the start. They seized upon a few ideas, managed to get a runaway of a few discourses, and here their progress ended. They felt competent to be teachers, when they had scarcely mastered their A B C's in the knowledge of the truth. They have been stumbling along ever since, not doing justice to themselves or to the work. They do not seem to have sufficient interest to arouse their dormant energies, and task their powers to become efficient workers. They have not taken the pains to form thorough and well-devised plans, and their work shows a deficiency in every part. Some have given up in discouragement, and have engaged in other employment. Had these patiently and

humbly placed their feet on the lowest round of the ladder, and then with persevering energy climbed step by step, diligently improving the privileges and opportunities within their reach, they might have become able, useful workmen, who could give full proof of their ministry, and of whom the Master would not be ashamed.

If those who propose to work for the salvation of souls depend on their own finite wisdom, they will certainly fail. If they entertain humble views of self, and rely fully upon the promises of God, he will never fail them. “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” [Proverbs 3:5, 6.] We have the privilege of being directed by a wise Counselor.

God can make humble men mighty in his service. Those who obediently respond to the call of duty, improving their abilities to the very utmost, may be sure of receiving divine assistance. Angels will come as messengers of light to the help of those who will do all that they can do on their part, and then trust in God to work with their efforts. [289]

It should be impressed on all who have decided to become workers for God, that they must give evidence that they are converted men. A young man without a sound, virtuous character will be no honor to the truth. Every worker should be pure in heart; in his mouth should be found no guile. He should bear in mind that in order to be successful he must have Christ by his side, and that every sinful practice, however secret, is open to the view of Him with whom we have to do. Sin has marred the divine image in man, but through Christ this may be restored. But it is only through earnest prayer and the conquest of self that we can become partakers of the divine nature. Many do not rise high enough to meet the standard. Their faith is weak, they expect but little from God, and they receive according to their faith. They need far more faith in God, and far less confidence in self. When they have this, they will be more successful in attaining perfection of character.

The true toilers in the Lord’s vineyard will be men of prayer, of faith, of self-denial,—men who hold in restraint the natural appetites and passions. These will in their lives give evidence of the power of the truth which they present to others; and their labors will not be without effect.

[290] The apostle Paul, in his dying charge to Timothy, says: “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others.” [2 Timothy 2:2.] The instruction given to Timothy contains lessons to be learned by all the servants of Christ. Every one who anticipates engaging in the solemn work of the ministry, should give heed to the apostle’s charge to his son in the gospel, as the latter was entering upon his work; “Let no man despise thy youth.” Timothy might pursue so wise a course that he would gain the confidence of all with whom he should be associated. The ground of this confidence the apostle specifies: “But be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” The work of a student was enjoined upon him. “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.”

These lessons are important, not only to ministers, but to all the workers in the cause of God. Each should give them careful study. “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” [2 Timothy 4:12-16.]

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The third angel is represented as flying in the midst of heaven, showing that the message is to go forth throughout the length and breadth of the earth. It is the most solemn message ever given to mortals, and all who propose to connect themselves with the work should first feel their need of an education and the most thorough training. Plans should be made and efforts put forth for the improvement of all who anticipate entering any branch of the work. Ministerial labor should not be entrusted to boys, neither should the work of giving Bible readings be entrusted to young girls because they offer their services, and are willing to take responsible positions, while they are wanting in religious experience, and lack a thorough education and training. They must be proved; and unless they develop a firm, conscientious principle to be all that God would have them to be,

they would not correctly represent his cause. All who are engaged in the work, in every mission, should have a depth of experience. Those who are young in the work should have the help of such as have had an experience, and understand the manner of working. The missionary operations are constantly embarrassed for the want of workers of the right class of mind,—workers who have devotion and piety that will correctly represent our faith. [291]

There are many who ought to become missionaries, but who never enter the field, because those who are united with them in church capacity or in our colleges do not feel the burden to labor with them, to open before them the claims of God upon all their powers, and do not pray with and for them; the eventful period which decides the course of life passes, their convictions are stifled, other influences and inducements attract them, and temptations to seek positions that will, they think, bring them financial gain, take them into the worldly current. These youth might have been saved to the cause. If our churches do their duty, God will work with their efforts by his Spirit, and will supply faithful laborers for the ministry and the missionary work.

Our schools are to be training-schools; and if men and women come forth from them, fitted in any sense for the missionary field, they must be led to realize the greatness of the work; practical godliness must be brought into their daily experience, if they would be fitted for any place of usefulness in the cause of God.

The missions established in our cities, if conducted by men who have ability to manage them, will be steady lights, shining amid the moral darkness. The opening of the Scriptures by means of Bible readings is an essential part of the work connected with these missions; but persons cannot take hold of this work successfully until they are prepared for it. Many need to be trained in school before they even know how study, how to bring the thoughts under the control of the will, how to use wisely their mental powers. There is much to be learned by us before we are qualified [For an additional article on the education of workers, see test. 33, p. 108.] for the great work of preparing a people to stand in the day of the Lord. [292]

Young Men as Missionaries

Young men who desire to enter the field as ministers, colporteurs, or canvassers, should first receive a suitable degree of mental training, as well as a special preparation for their calling. Those who are uneducated, untrained, and unrefined are not prepared to enter a field in which the powerful influences of talent and education combat the truths of God's word. Neither can they successfully meet the strange forms of error, religious and philosophical combined, to expose which requires a knowledge of scientific as well as Scriptural truth.

Those especially who have the ministry in view, should feel the importance of the Scriptural method of ministerial training. They should enter heartily into the work, and while they study in the schools, they should learn of the Great Teacher the meekness and humility of Christ. A covenant-keeping God has promised that in answer to prayer his Spirit shall be poured out upon these learners in the school of Christ, that they may become ministers of righteousness.

[293] There is hard work to be done in dislodging error and false doctrine from the head, that Bible truth and Bible religion may find a place in the heart. It was as a means ordained of God to educate young men and women for the various departments of missionary labor, that colleges were established among us. It is God's will that they send forth not merely a few, but many laborers. But Satan, determined to overthrow this purpose, has often secured the very ones whom God would qualify for places of usefulness in his work. There are many who would work if urged into service, and who would save their souls by thus working. The church should feel her great responsibility in shutting up the light of truth, and restraining the grace of God within her own narrow limits, when money and influence should be freely employed in bringing competent persons into the missionary field.

Hundreds of young men should have been preparing to act a part in the work of scattering the seeds of truth beside all waters. We want men who will push the triumphs of the cross; men who will persevere under discouragements and privations; who will have the zeal and resolution and faith that are indispensable in the missionary field....

There should be more laborers in the foreign missionary field. There are among us those who, without the toil and delay of learning a foreign language, might qualify themselves to proclaim the truth to other nations. In the primitive church, missionaries were miraculously endowed with a knowledge of the languages in which they were called to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. And if God was willing thus to help his servants then, can we doubt that his blessing will rest upon our efforts to qualify those who naturally possess a knowledge of foreign tongues, and who with proper encouragement would bear to their own countrymen the message of truth? We might have had more laborers in foreign missionary fields, had those who entered these fields availed themselves of every talent within their reach. But some have had a disposition to refuse help if it did not come just according to their ideas and plans. And what is the result? If our missionaries were to be removed by sickness or death from their fields of labor, where are the men whom they have educated to fill their places?

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Not one of our missionaries has secured the cooperation of every available talent. Much time has thus been lost. We rejoice in the good work which has been done in foreign lands; but had different plans of labor been adopted, tenfold, yes, twentyfold more might have been accomplished; an acceptable offering would have been presented to Jesus, in many souls rescued from the bondage of error.

Every one who receives the light of truth should be taught to bear the light to others. Our missionaries in foreign lands should gratefully accept every help, every facility, offered them. They must be willing to run some risk, to venture something. It is not pleasing to God that we defer present opportunities for doing good, in hope of accomplishing a greater work in the future. Each should follow the leadings of Providence, not consulting self-interest, and not trusting wholly to his own judgment. Some may be so constituted as to see failure where God intends success; they may see only giants and

walled cities, where others, with clearer vision, see also God and angels, ready to give victory to his truth.

It may in some cases be necessary that young men learn foreign languages. This they can do with most success by associating with the people, at the same time devoting a portion of each day to studying the language. This should be done, however, only as a necessary step preparatory to educating such as are found in the missionary fields themselves, and who with proper training can become workers. It is essential that those be urged into the service who can speak in their mother tongue to the people of different nations. It is a great undertaking for a man of middle age to learn a foreign language; and with all his efforts it will be next to impossible for him to speak it so readily and correctly as to render him an efficient laborer.

[295] We cannot afford to deprive our home missions of the influence of middle-aged and aged ministers, to send them into distant fields to engage in a work for which they are not qualified, and to which no amount of training will enable them to adapt themselves. The men thus sent out leave vacancies which inexperienced laborers cannot supply.

But the church may inquire whether young men can be trusted with the grave responsibilities involved in establishing and superintending a foreign mission. I answer, God designed that they should be so trained in our colleges and by association in labor with men of experience, that they would be prepared for departments of usefulness in this cause. We must manifest confidence in our young men. They should be pioneers in every enterprise involving toil and sacrifice, while the overtaxed servants of Christ should be cherished as counselors, to encourage and bless those who strike the heaviest blows for God. Providence thrust these experienced fathers into trying, responsible positions at an early age, when neither physical nor intellectual powers were fully developed. The magnitude of the trust committed to them aroused their energies, and their active labor in the work aided both mental and physical development.

Young men are wanted. God calls them to missionary fields. Being comparatively free from care and responsibilities, they are more favorably situated to engage in the work than are those who must provide for the training and support of a large family. Furthermore,

young men can more readily adapt themselves to new climates and new society, and can better endure inconveniences and hardships. By tact and perseverance, they can reach the people where they are.

Strength comes by exercise. All who put to use the ability which God has given them, will have increased ability to devote to his service. Those who do nothing in the cause of God, will fail to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. A man who would lie down and refuse to exercise his limbs, would soon lose all power to use them. Thus the Christian who will not exercise his God-given powers, not only fails to grow up into Christ, but he loses the strength which he already had; he becomes a spiritual paralytic. It is those who, with love for God and their fellow men, are striving to help others, that become stablished, strengthened, settled, in the truth. The true Christian works for God, not from impulse, but from principle; not for a day or a month, but during the entire period of life....

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The Master calls for gospel workers. Who will respond? All who enter the army are not to be generals, captains, sergeants, or even corporals. All have not the care and responsibility of leaders. There is hard work of other kinds to be done. Some must dig trenches and build fortifications; some are to stand as sentinels, some to carry messages. While there are but few officers, it requires many soldiers to form the rank and file of the army; and yet its success depends upon the fidelity of every soldier. One man's cowardice or treachery may bring disaster upon the entire army....

He who has appointed "to every man his work," according to his ability, will never let the faithful performance of duty go unrewarded. Every act of loyalty and faith will be crowned with special tokens of God's favor and approbation. To every worker is given the promise, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." [Psalm 126:6.]—[Testimonies for the Church 5:395](#).

Methods of Labor

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

We are altogether too faithless, and too narrow in our views. Gideon's army prevailed, not because of their numbers, but because in living faith they followed the special directions of God. If we make narrow plans, we shall see very little accomplished.

[298] Many efforts, though made at great expense, have been in a large measure unsuccessful because they did not meet the wants of the time or the place. For years we have sought to impress upon our people the necessity of working more intelligently. God would have us realize constantly that those around us are the purchase of the blood of Christ, and that it depends very much upon our deportment and manner of labor whether these souls are saved or lost.

Many of our ministers will have to be sharpened and polished before they can explain the Scriptures acceptably before those who are educated. The mind will reveal its own deficiencies. But if it is accustomed to dig for the truth as for hid treasures, it will soon become a treasure-house of knowledge; and more than this, the very diligence of the laborer in searching the Scriptures will develop his mind proportionately in the understanding of the word.

While we are to preach the gospel to the poor and unlearned, we should not neglect to present it, in its most attractive light, to those who have ability and talent. But in order to do this, our workers must be men of intelligence. They cannot sink down to a low level, feeling that it does not matter much how they labor, or what they say. We must cherish living faith, and the Spirit of Christ must be in us, to direct our labors. Then our efforts will meet the mind of God. It is because of lack of faith and real courage in the Lord that greater efforts for the more intelligent classes have not been made before. It is not the most wealthy that I refer to; too often they have made this world their god, and it is very difficult for them to see the force of truths that would separate them from the world. Nevertheless, there are men of wealth who will accept the last message, if the right kind of labor is put forth. The Lord has made men his stewards, and has intrusted to them the means to carry forward his work. When the poor have done all they can to advance the cause, the Lord will bring in men of means to carry on the work.

It should ever be manifest that we are reformers, but not bigots. [299] When our laborers enter a new field, they should seek to become acquainted with the pastors of the several churches in the place. Much has been lost by neglecting to do this. If our ministers show themselves friendly and sociable, and do not act as though they were ashamed of the message they bear, it will have an excellent effect, and may give these pastors and their congregations favorable impressions of the truth. At any rate, it is right to give them a chance to be kind and favorable if they will. Our laborers should be very careful not to give the impression that they are wolves stealing in to get the sheep, but should let the ministers understand their position and the object of their mission,—to call the attention of the people to the precious truths of God's word. There are many of these which are dear to all Christians. Here is common ground, upon which we can

meet people of other denominations; and in becoming acquainted with them, we should dwell mostly upon topics in which all feel an interest, and which will not lead directly and pointedly to the subjects of disagreement.

On entering a new place to labor, we should be careful not to create prejudice in the minds of the Catholics, or do anything to lead them to think us their enemies. The Lord has shown to me that there are many among them who will be saved. God will just as surely test this people as he is testing us; and according to their willingness to accept the light he gives them, will be their standing before him. We should sow the seed beside all waters; for it is God that gives the increase.—**MS.**

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[300] The apostle Paul, in describing his manner of labor, says: “Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” [1 [Corinthians 9:19-22.](#)]

Paul did not approach the Jews in a way to excite their prejudices. He did not run the risk of making them his enemies by telling them the first thing that they must believe on Jesus of Nazareth; but he dwelt on the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament Scriptures, which testify of the Messiah, of his mission and his work. He led them on step by step, showing them the importance of honoring the law of God. He also gave due honor to the ceremonial law, showing that Christ was the one who instituted the whole system of sacrificial service. After dwelling upon these things, evincing that he had a clear understanding of them himself, he brought his hearers down to the first advent of Christ, and proved that in the crucified Jesus the specifications of the ceremonial law had been fulfilled. He showed them plainly how the light from the cross of

Calvary gave significance and glory to the whole Jewish economy. He approached the Gentiles, not by exalting the law at first, but by exalting Christ, and then showing the binding claims of the law. Thus he varied his manner of labor, always shaping his message to the circumstances under which he was placed; and yet, though after patient labor he was successful to a large degree, many would not be convinced. There are some who will not be convinced by any method of presenting the special truths for this time. The laborer for God should, nevertheless, study carefully the best methods, in order that he may not needlessly arouse prejudice or stir up combativeness in his hearers.

Christ said to his disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." [John 16:12.] As the result of their early education, their ideas upon many points were incorrect, and they were not then prepared to understand and receive some things which he would otherwise have taught them. His instructions would have confused their minds, and raised questioning and unbelief that would have been difficult to remove.

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Christ drew the hearts of his hearers to him by the manifestation of his love, and then, little by little, as they were able to bear it, he unfolded to them the great truths of the kingdom. We also must learn to adapt our labors to the condition of the people,—to meet men where they are. While the claims of the law of God are to be presented to the world, we should never forget that love—the love of Christ—is the only power that can soften the heart, and lead to obedience. All the great truths of the Scriptures center in Christ; rightly understood, all lead to him. Let Christ be presented as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, of the great plan of redemption. Present to the people such subjects as will strengthen their confidence in God and in his word, and lead them to investigate its teachings for themselves. And as they go forward, step by step, in the study of the Bible, they will be better prepared to appreciate the beauty and harmony of its precious truths.

God's workmen must have breadth of character. They must not be men of one idea, stereotyped in their manner of working. They must be able to vary their efforts, to meet the needs of the people under different circumstances and conditions. God would have his servants, old and young, continually improving, learning

better how to minister to the wants of all. They should not settle down contented, thinking that their ways are perfect, and that others must work just as they do.

[302] Those who are appointed to open the work in new fields should be careful that their defects are not exalted as virtues, thus retarding the work of God. It is testing truths that we are bringing before the people, and in every effort these truths should be presented in their real beauty. The laborer should not throw about the truth the peculiarities of his own character, or manner. Keep self in the background; let it be lost sight of in Jesus. Let the work of God bear the impress of the divine.

Much has been lost by our people through the following such narrow plans that the most intelligent, better-educated classes are not reached. Too often the work has been so conducted as to impress unbelievers that it is of very little consequence,—some stray offshoot of religious enthusiasm, entirely beneath their notice. Much has been lost for want of wise methods of labor. Every effort should be made to give character and dignity to the work. It requires much wisdom to reach ministers and men of influence. But why should they be neglected as they have been by our people? These men are responsible to God just in proportion to the talents intrusted to them. Where much is given, much will be required. Should there not be deeper study and much more prayer for wisdom, that we may learn how to reach these classes? Should not wisdom and tact be used to gain these souls, who, if truly converted, will be polished instruments in the hands of God to reach others?

We would not be actuated by mere worldly policy; but from love to God, and to souls for whom Christ died, we should seek to reach those who in their turn will labor for others. If we can win to Christ and the truth souls to whom God has intrusted large capabilities, our influence will through them be constantly extending, and will become a far-reaching power for good.

[303] God has a work to be done which the workers have not yet fully comprehended. Ministers and the world's wise men are to be tested by the light of present truth. The third angel's message is to be set before them judiciously, in its true dignity. There must be most earnest seeking of God, most thorough study; for the mental powers will be taxed to the utmost in laying plans which will place the work

of God on a more elevated platform. That is where it should always have stood, but men's narrow ideas and restricted plans have limited and lowered it.

After most earnest effort has been made to bring the truth before those whom God has intrusted with large responsibilities, be not discouraged if they reject it. Truth was rejected in the days of Christ.

When the importance of laboring to reach the higher classes is urged, let none receive the idea that the poor and unlearned are to be neglected. Right methods of labor will not in any sense exclude these. It was one of the evidences of Christ's Messiahship that the poor had the gospel preached to them. We should study to give all classes an opportunity to understand the special truths for this time. When our labors are so conducted as to reach only the lower classes, we may fail in benefiting even these. They may be brought to see the truth, but they are, as it were, in the bondage of poverty, and can see before them only starvation should they accept the truth. If our efforts are so conducted as to include the upper classes, we shall be more successful in reaching the lower also.

Be sure to maintain the dignity of the work by a well-ordered life and godly conversation. Never be afraid of raising your standard too high. The families who engage in the missionary work should come close to hearts. The spirit of Jesus should pervade the soul of the worker; it is the pleasant, sympathetic words, the manifestation of disinterested love for their souls, that will break down the barriers of pride and selfishness, and show to unbelievers that we have the love of Christ, and then the truth will find its way to the heart. This is our work, and the fulfilling of God's plan. All coarseness and roughness must be put away from us. Courtesy, refinement, Christian politeness, must be cherished. Guard against being abrupt and blunt. Do not regard such peculiarities as virtues, for God does not so regard them. Endeavor not to offend any unnecessarily.

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There is great danger that young men who are associated with older workers in the cause, will copy even the defects of the older ministers. This should be guarded against by both old and young. All should seek to have the softening, subduing influence of the Spirit of God, Christlike tenderness, and love for souls. Those who are sent out to labor together, should put self away, lay aside their own

peculiarities, and seek to unite, heart and soul, in carrying out God's will. In order to work to advantage, they must work in harmony.

We want more, much more, of the spirit of Christ, and less, much less, of self and the peculiarities of character which keep us apart from our fellow-men. We can do much to break down these barriers by revealing the grace of Christ in our own lives. Jesus has intrusted his goods to the church, age after age. One generation after another for over eighteen hundred years has been gathering up this hereditary trust, until the increasing responsibilities have descended to the people of our time. Do we now realize our responsibility? Do we feel that we are stewards of God's grace? Do we believe that the lowest, humblest service will be accepted, if it is only directed to doing, not our own, but our Master's will, to promote his glory? We must be clothed, not with our own garments, but with the robe of Christ's righteousness.—*MS.* [From a Letter to the Workers in a Foreign Mission.]

[305] When laborers are associated together who decidedly vary, both in natural disposition and character, and in their manner of labor, each will need to keep a careful watch over his own strong traits of character, and to exercise the meekness of Christ, or he will be in danger of drawing apart from the others. Such a separation would retard the work and dishonor God. Brethren, you should make no move independently or in opposition to one another. Pray together; counsel together in humility, willing to be instructed. This will bring you where God will be your counselor. By indulging a stubborn, self-confident spirit, workers can easily place themselves where divine wisdom and power cannot aid them in their labors, where they cannot have help in counsel, in difficulties, and trials.

As laborers together with God, you should come close to one another. Precious lessons of love, confidence, respect for one another, must be given, both in and out of the desk. You must live that which you teach. Remember that the new converts look to you for an example.

Some for whom you labor will wish to have the work done in their own way, thinking that their way is best; but if you have the spirit, the meekness of Christ, if you show respect and love for one another, God will enable you to perfect the work in a manner that will please him. Work for your own souls until self is subdued, until

Christ recognizes his image in you. The most impressive lesson that you can give to those whom you educate, will be that of a Christ-like character.

In foreign fields especially, the work cannot be accomplished, except by well-considered plans. While you should endeavor to labor in harmony with the instructions of those at the head of the work, many unforeseen circumstances will arise for which they could make no provision. There must be something ventured, some risks run, by those on the field of battle. There will be crises in which prompt action is necessary. The workers should not in every movement feel that they should wait to receive directions from head-quarters, but after counseling together, with earnest prayer, they should do the best they can under the circumstances. Wherever in the work of reform we can unite with others, in the countries to which we go, it is advisable to do this; but there are some things we shall have to carry forward by ourselves. While we should adapt ourselves to others wherever this is practicable and consistent, there are many things in which the laborers must work in their own way. Hence the greater necessity for union among themselves.

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When missions are opened in foreign fields, it is of especial importance that the work be started right. The laborers should be careful that they do not restrict it by narrow plans. While the state of the treasury demands that economy should be exercised, there is danger of an economy which results in loss rather than gain. This has actually been the case in some of our missions, where the workers have bent their powers almost wholly to planning how to get along in the least expensive manner. With different management, far more might have been accomplished; and on the whole less means would have been taken from the treasury.

In new fields our growth has been slow, because the special truths which we present are not popular with the world. The observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is a heavy cross for every one who accepts the truth. Many who can see that our doctrines are sustained by the Scriptures, shrink from accepting them, because they do not wish to be peculiar, or because by obedience to the truth they would be cut off from their means of support. Because of these things much wisdom is needed in planning how to bring the truth before the people. In some places the work must begin in a small way,

[307] and advance slowly. This is all that the laborers can do. But in many cases a wider and more decided effort might be made at the outset, with good results. The work in England might now be much farther advanced than it is if our brethren, at the beginning of the work there, had not tried to work in so cheap a way. If they had hired good halls, and carried forward the work as though we had great truths, which would surely be victorious, they would have had greater success. God would have the work started in such a way that the first impressions given shall be, as far as they go, the very best that can be made.

Be careful to maintain the elevated character of the missionary work. Let all, both men and women connected with the missions, be constantly inquiring, "What am I? and what ought I to be and to do?" Let all consider that they cannot give to others what they do not possess themselves; therefore they should not settle down content with their natural ways and habits, seeking to make no change for the better. Paul says he had not attained, but, "I press toward the mark." [[Philippians 3:14.](#)] There must be constant reformation, unceasing advancement, if we would perfect a symmetrical character.

There are none of our workers whose manners and habits do not need much improvement; and unless this is made, unless the workers are constantly seeking for higher attainments, they will greatly hinder one another in the work. Changes will be constantly occurring, new duties will arise, new fields of labor will open, and united, thoroughly organized effort alone can bring success.

In our work heretofore there has been too much of a disposition to put the light under a bushel, or under a bed, rather than on a candlestick, where it might give light to all that are in the house. Let no especial effort be made to exalt the men, but seek to magnify the work. Bring your minds up to appreciate its greatness. Let not
[308] your own narrow plans and limited ideas be allowed to shape your methods of working in God's cause.

Do not show a spirit of littleness in deal. If one stops to haggle over a small sum, those with whom he deals will pronounce him a sharper, and will be on their guard, thinking that he means to cheat them. But if a trifle is yielded in favor of another, he will be likely to work on the same plan. Littleness begets littleness. Those who pursue this course do not see how contemptible it appears to others,

and the precious cause of truth bears the stamp of their defect. We are not to imitate the world's manner of dealing, but to reveal the generous, unselfish spirit of Christ.

God gave the Israelites special directions concerning the arrangement of their camp, that all might be in perfect order. And everything connected with the tabernacle was designed to impress the people with the majesty and holiness of God, and the purity he requires of all who engage in his service. These arrangements were not merely for the benefit of Israel. God designed that the order and harmony, the exalted character of the Jewish economy, should make an impression upon surrounding nations, revealing to them something of the character of the true God, and what he desires his people to be. The same principles apply to the work at this time. Remember that with the world everything is judged by appearances. Study carefully the word of God, the instructions given to ancient Israel, and let all your arrangements be such as rightly to represent Him in whose cause you labor.—**MS.** [From a letter to the workers in a Foreign Mission.]

Christ Our Source of Strength

In every crowd that gathered about Jesus, there were souls hungering and thirsting for light and knowledge. The truths that came from the lips of the Divine Teacher were wholly unlike the traditions and dogmas taught by the rabbis. There was a freshness, a life and vigor, in his sayings; they came home to the mind with a clearness and power that captivated his hearers. God's workers are to learn the same manner of teaching. They are to bring to men truths full of fragrance, like fresh flowers from the garden of God's word.

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Never think that even when you do your best you are of yourself capable of winning souls to Christ. You must cultivate the habit of discerning a power beyond that which you can see with human vision,—a power that is constantly at work upon the hearts and minds of men. When you approach the stranger, when you stand face to face with the impenitent, with the afflicted, the soul-needy, the Lord is by your side, if you have indeed surrendered yourself to him. Through the living agent he makes the impression on the heart. Your words must not be a mere parrot-like speech, but the expression of a personal experience. If you cheer hearts with words of courage and hope, it is because the grace of Christ is to you a living reality. It is God's likeness, not your own, that is to be impressed on the heart. But if the worker has not himself been refined and transformed, he cannot present the truth with a freshness, a power, that awakens responsive feelings in those who hear the word of life.

[310] The advocates of truth must hide in Jesus. He is their greatness, their power and efficiency. They must represent Christ, love souls as he loved them, be obedient as he was, be courteous, full of sympathy. Let Christ appear, and self be hid in him. Now, as in the days of Christ, traditional prejudice, custom and fashion, have barricaded souls against the truth. He who presents the truth to others must in his own character give evidence of its transforming power.

There are some who will accept the truth on its merits, even though the one who presents it to them does not rightly represent it in his own character. One who is unsanctified in heart may, to a certain extent, know the truth, although he fails to practice it; he may bring forward sound evidence in its favor, and those whose hearts the Lord has been moving upon by his Holy Spirit, who have been led to hunger and thirst for truth, will, through the influence of the same Spirit, be impressed with the validity of the truth.

The impression was not made by the power or influence of the man, but by the Comforter, of whom Jesus said, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." [John 16:13.] The Holy Spirit is called both the Comforter and the Spirit of truth, because there is comfort and hope in the truth. A falsehood cannot give genuine peace; but through the truth we become partakers of the peace that passeth understanding.

But although he may appear to win some honest souls to the truth, the unsanctified worker is a false and dangerous guide. The new converts naturally expect that the one who can explain the word of life, who has presented to them the beautiful gems of truth, has right ideas of what constitutes Christian character. When associating with him, they are often led to do as he does. Almost imperceptibly they imbibe his ideas and partake of his narrowness and selfishness. Thus through the unchristian course of him who brought them the truth, their souls are constantly exposed to deception. If those ministers who constantly "hold down the truth in unrighteousness," [Romans 1:18; Rev. Ver.] could know the evil that has been wrought because of their defective characters, they would be filled with horror.

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There are too many who profess to accept the truth, and even to teach others, while they cling to the same old habits, manifest the same self-esteem, the same perverted ideas and motives. Although they claim to have been converted, it is plain to be seen that they have tried to join the truth to their untransformed characters, instead of submitting themselves to be transformed by the truth.

Every one who accepts the present truth should make the fullest possible surrender of himself to God. He should fall upon the Rock, and be broken. Old habits, hereditary and cultivated traits of character, must all be broken up; we must yield ourselves to be moulded by the divine Spirit if we would become vessels unto honor. Do not

seek to conform the truth to your peculiarities and imperfections. But as the Comforter shall come, and reprove you of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, be careful lest you resist the Spirit, and be left in darkness. Be willing to see your errors and yield up your self-will. Submit yourself to God, that he may work in you to will and to do according to his good pleasure.—MS.

Love is Power

Love is power. Intellectual and moral strength are involved in this principle, and cannot be separated from it. The power of wealth has a tendency to corrupt and destroy; the power of force is strong to do hurt; but the excellence and value of pure love consist in its efficiency to do good, and to do nothing else than good. Whatsoever is done out of pure love, be it ever so little or contemptible in the sight of men, is wholly fruitful; for God regards more with how much love one worketh, than the amount he doeth. Love is of God. The unconverted heart cannot originate nor produce this plant of heavenly origin, which lives and flourishes only where Christ reigns. [312]

Love cannot live without action, and every act increases, strengthens, and extends it. Love will gain the victory when argument and authority are powerless. Love works not for profit nor reward; yet God has ordained that great gain shall be the certain result of every labor of love. It is diffusive in its nature, and quiet in its operation, yet strong, mighty, to overcome great evils. It is melting and transforming in its influence, and will take hold of the lives of the sinful and affect their hearts when every other means has proved unsuccessful. Wherever the power of intellect, of authority, or of force is employed, and love is not manifestly present, the affections and will of those whom we seek to reach assume a defensive, repelling position, and their strength of resistance is increased. Jesus was the Prince of Peace. He came into the world to bring resistance and authority into subjection to himself. Wisdom and strength he could command, but the means he employed with which to overcome evil were the wisdom and strength of love....

“Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” [Matthew 7:12, 2.] Blessed results would appear as the fruit of such a course. “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” [Matthew 7:12, 2.] Here are strong motives which should constrain us to love one another with a pure heart, fervently. Christ is our example. He went about doing good. He

lived to bless others. Love beautified and ennobled all his actions.

[313] We are not commanded to do to *ourselves* what we wish others to do unto us; we are to *do unto others* what we wish them to do to us under like circumstances. The measure we mete is always measured to us again. Pure love is simple in its operations, and is distinct from any other principle of action. The love of influence, and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life, and, frequently, a blameless conversation. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions, acknowledge the present truth, and express humility and affection in an outward manner, yet the motives may be deceptive and impure; the actions that flow from such a heart may be destitute of the savor of life and the fruits of true holiness, being destitute of the principles of pure love. Love should be cherished and cultivated; for its influence is divine.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:135](#).

No Respect of Persons With God

The religion of Christ uplifts the receiver to a higher plane of thought and action, while at the same time it presents the whole human race as alike the objects of the love of God, being purchased by the sacrifice of his Son. At the feet of Jesus, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, meet together, with no thought of cast or worldly pre-eminence. All earthly distinctions are forgotten as we look upon Him whom our sins have pierced. The self-denial, the condescension, the infinite compassion of him who was highly exalted in heaven, put to shame human pride, self-esteem, and social caste. Pure and undefiled religion manifests its heaven-born principles in bringing into oneness all who are sanctified through the truth.

All meet as blood-bought souls, alike dependent upon One who hath redeemed them to God. The Lord has lent them talents to improve. Those whom he has intrusted with money, bring their talent of means to the Master. The men and women of influence use that which God has given them. The ones whom he has endowed with wisdom, bring to the cross of Christ this gift to be used to his glory. And the poor have their talent, which perhaps may be larger than any other mentioned. It may be simplicity of character, humility, tried virtue, and confidence in God. Through patient toil, through their entire dependence upon God, they are pointing those with whom they associate to Jesus, their Redeemer. They have a heart full of sympathy for the poor, a home for the needy and oppressed, and their testimony is clear and decided as to what Jesus is to them. They seek for glory, honor, and immortality, and their reward will be eternal life. In the human brotherhood it takes all classes of talents to make a perfect whole; and the church of Christ is composed of all ranks, all classes, and varied talents. God never designed that the pride of men should dissolve that which his own wisdom had ordained,—the combination of all classes of minds, of all the varied talents that make a complete whole. There should

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be no depreciating of any part of God's great work, whether the agencies are higher or lowlier. All have their part to act in diffusing light in different degrees. There should be no monopolizing of what belongs, in a measure, to all, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. Not a ray of light must be undervalued, not a ray shut out, not a gleam unrecognized or acknowledged reluctantly. Let all act their part for truth and righteousness. The interests of the varied classes of society are indissolubly united. We are all woven together in the great web of humanity, and we cannot without loss withdraw our sympathies from one another. It is impossible for a healthful influence to be maintained in the church when this common interest and sympathy does not exist.

God moves in his own way in preparing men to be laborers together with him. The value of men and women is not to be estimated by the class of labor they perform. It is fixed by the Lord Jesus, who paid the same price for every soul. In charity, in simplicity, and integrity, all who have Christ formed within, the hope of glory, are workers together with God. They are God's husbandry; they are God's building. The heart in which the love of Christ abides, will constantly manifest more and more refinement, for the spring of the life is love to God and man. This is Christianity. This is "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." [Luke 2:14.] This is the carrying out of God's purpose. Divine harmony, worthy of the wisdom and mercy which God has manifested to men! True Christian growth tends upward to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. True culture, real refinement of thought and manners, is better obtained through the lessons in the school of Christ, than through the most labored, pains-taking effort to observe forms and set rules, when the heart is not under the holy discipline of the Spirit of God.

The follower of Jesus should be constantly improving in manners, in habits, in spirit, and labor. But this is done by keeping the eye, not on mere outward, superficial attainments, but on Jesus, the model. A transformation takes place in mind, in spirit, in character. The Christian is educated in the school of Christ to cherish the graces of his Spirit in all meekness and lowliness of mind. He is fitting for the society of heavenly angels.

There is no caste with God. He ignores everything of the kind. All souls are of value with him. Laboring for the salvation of the soul is employment worthy of the highest honor. It matters not what may be the form of our labor, or among what class, whether high or low. In God's sight these distinctions will not affect its true worth. The sincere, earnest, contrite soul, however ignorant, is precious in the sight of the Lord. He places his own signet upon men, not by their rank, not by their wealth, not by intellectual greatness, but by their oneness with Christ. The unlearned, the outcast, the slave, if he has made the most of his opportunities and privileges, if he has cherished the light given him of God, has done all that is required. The world may call him ignorant, but God calls him wise and good, and thus his name stands registered in the books of heaven. God will fit him up to do him honor, not only in heaven, but on the earth. The princes of this world, the honored and great men, would be glad to exchange places with him when the Lord comes to make up his jewels; for in the kingdom of heaven he is greater than the great men of the world. The great and worldly honored would then consider it an honor to be in his company. The divine rebuke is upon him who refuses the companionship of those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, simply because they are not rich, learned, and honored in this world. Christ, the Lord of glory, is satisfied with those who are meek and lowly in heart, however humble may be their calling, whatever their rank or degree of intelligence. To drink deeply of the waters of life is essential for all. The Spirit of Christ will beget sentiments of the highest order. [316]

How many useful and honored workers in God's cause have received a training amid the humble duties of the most lowly positions in life. Moses was the prospective ruler of Egypt, but God could not take him from the king's court to do the work appointed him. Only when he had been for forty years a faithful shepherd was he sent to be the deliverer of his people. Gideon was taken from the threshing of wheat to be the instrument in the hands of God for delivering the armies of Israel. Elisha was called to leave the plow and do the bidding of God. Amos was husbandman, a tiller of the soil, when God gave him a message to proclaim. [317]

These lessons should be kept in view by those who have to do with the training of workers for the cause of God. All who become

co-workers with Christ will have a great deal of hard, uncongenial labor to perform, and their lessons of instruction should be wisely chosen, and adapted to their peculiarities of character, and the work which they are to pursue.

The Lord has presented to me in many ways, and at various times, how carefully we should deal with the young,—that it requires the finest discrimination to deal with minds. Every one who has to do with the education and training of youth, needs to live very close to the Great Teacher, to catch his spirit and manner of work. Lessons are to be given which will affect their character and life-work.

They should be taught that the gospel of Christ tolerates no spirit of caste, that it gives no place to unkind judgment of others, which tends directly to self-exaltation. The religion of Jesus never degrades the receiver, nor makes him coarse and rough; nor does it make him unkind in thought and feeling toward those for whom Christ died.

There is danger of attaching too much importance to the matter of etiquette, and diverting much time to education upon the subject of manner and form, that can never be of any great use to many youth. Some are in danger of making the externals all-important, of over-estimating the value of mere conventionalities. The results will not warrant the expenditure of time and thought given to these matters. Some who are trained to give much attention to these things, will manifest little true respect or sympathy for anything, however excellent, that in any way fails to meet their standard of conventionality. Anything that would encourage ungenerous criticism, a disposition to notice and expose every defect or error, is wrong. It fosters distrust and suspicion, which are contrary to the character of Christ, and detrimental to the mind thus exercised. Those who are engaged in this work, gradually depart from the true spirit of Christianity. While the gospel constantly sanctifies and ennobles the receiver, it will never lead us to cherish selfish and exalted ideas of our own ability or merit in contrast with that of others. It never nurtures pride and self-esteem. Every soul who sees Christ as he is, will abase self. He will exalt the Saviour as the “chiefest among ten thousand,” the One “altogether lovely.” [[Song of Solomon 5:10, 16.](#)]

The most essential, enduring education is that which will develop the nobler qualities, which will encourage a spirit of universal kindness, leading the youth to think no evil of any one lest they

shall misjudge motives and misinterpret words and actions. The time devoted to this kind of instruction will yield fruit to everlasting life.

The young people among us should be preparing to work for the Master in the saving of souls for whom Christ died. Attention to mere conventionalities, or even to mental and social improvement, should be regarded as of secondary importance. These things have their place in the formation of character, but we should remember that the world is in gross darkness; irreligion, vice, and depravity are steadily strengthening and increasing; every teacher should feel in his very soul that the great needs of those under his care, are the regenerating power of God's Spirit in the heart, the living practice, the preparation for higher Christian attainments. This education will give to the character those softening, refining touches that proceed from Christ himself. These graces will give a sweetness of character, a gentleness of manner, which can never be equaled by the superficial polish of fashionable society. [319]

Let every worker for Christ make it his highest aim to win souls to God, rather than to be looking at and teaching mere superficial acquirements. Direct your energies to the fitting of living stones for the building of God's temple.—MS.

Christ's Example a Rebuke to Bigotry and Exclusiveness

In every age since Christ was among men, there have been some who choose to seclude themselves from others, manifesting a Pharisaical desire for pre-eminence. Shutting themselves away from the world, they have not lived to bless their fellow-men. There is no example in the life of Christ for this self-righteous bigotry; his character was genial and beneficent. There is not a monastic order upon earth from which he would not have been excluded for overstepping the prescribed rules. In every religious denomination, and in almost every church, are to be found erratics who would have blamed him for his liberal mercies. They would have found fault with him because he ate with publicans and sinners; they would have accused him of worldly conformity in attending a wedding feast, and would have censured him unmercifully for permitting his friends to make a supper in honor of him and his disciples. But on these very occasions, by his precious teachings, as well as by his generous conduct, he was enshrining himself in the hearts of those whom he honored with his presence. He was giving them an opportunity to become acquainted with him, and to see the marked contrast between his life and teachings and those of the Pharisees. As professed followers of Christ, we have much to learn. There is with many an icy chilliness, a reserve like that of the Pharisees, that must be broken down. They are not willing to become learners, but, like the Pharisees, desire to be dictators, teachers. God sent his Son to give his people a better knowledge of the truth, to show them the best way to help their fellow-men. But the Pharisees refused to receive the divine instruction. They thought that Christ was too liberal. His ways did not agree with theirs; and instead of seeking to come into harmony with Christ, they sought to bring Christ into harmony with them. While he differed from them so widely, his influence would, they thought, lessen theirs, and would counteract their teachings. In order to carry out their own purposes, they set

themselves in opposition to Christ, and thus brought darkness upon themselves.

Those with whom God has intrusted his truth, must possess the same beneficent spirit that Christ manifested. They must adopt the same broad plans of action. They should have a kind, generous spirit toward the poor, and in a special sense feel that we are God's stewards. They must hold all they have—property, mental powers, spiritual strength—as not their own, but only lent them to advance the cause of Christ in the earth. Like Christ they should not shun the society of their fellow-men, but should seek it with the purpose of bestowing upon others the heavenly benefits they have received from God.—MS.

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Opportunities for Christian Work

As wise generalship is needed in the service of Christ as over the battalions of an army that protects the life and liberty of the people. It is not every one who can labor judiciously for the salvation of souls. There is much close thinking to be done. We must not enter into the Lord's work hap-hazard, and expect success. The Lord needs men of mind, men of thought. Jesus calls for co-workers, not blunderers. God wants right thinking and intelligent men to do the great work necessary to the salvation of souls.

Mechanics, merchants, lawyers, men of all trades and professions, educate themselves that they may become masters of their business. Should the followers of Christ be less intelligent, and while professedly engaged in his service, be ignorant of the ways and means to be employed? The enterprise of gaining everlasting life is above every earthly consideration. In order to lead souls to Jesus, there must be a knowledge of human nature and a study of the human mind. Much careful thought and fervent prayer are required to know how to approach men and women upon the great subject of truth. Some rash, impulsive, yet honest souls, after a pointed discourse has been given, will accost those who are not with us in a very abrupt manner, and make the truth, which we desire them to receive, repulsive to them. "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Business men and politicians study courtesy. It is their policy to make themselves as attractive as possible. They study to render their address and manners such that they may have the greatest influence over the minds of those about them. They use their knowledge and abilities as skillfully as possible in order to gain this object.

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There is a vast amount of rubbish brought forward by professed believers in Christ, which blocks up the way to the cross. Notwithstanding all this, there are some who are so deeply convicted that they will come through every discouragement, and will surmount every obstacle in order to gain the truth. But had the believers in the

truth purified their minds by obeying it, had they felt the importance of knowledge and of refinement of manners in Christ's work, where one soul has been saved there might have been twenty.

Caring for New Converts

Again, after individuals have been converted to the truth, they need to be looked after. The zeal of many ministers seems to fail as soon as a measure of success attends their efforts. They do not realize that these newly converted ones need nursing,—watchful attention, help, and encouragement. These should not be left alone, a prey of Satan's most powerful temptations; they need to be educated in regard to their duties, to be kindly dealt with, to be led along, and to be visited and prayed with. These souls need the meat apportioned to every man in due season.

No wonder that some become discouraged, linger by the way, and are left for wolves to devour. Satan is upon the track of all. He sends his agents forth to gather back to his ranks the souls he has lost. There should be more fathers and mothers to take these babes in the truth to their hearts, and to encourage them and pray for them that their faith be not confused.

Preaching is a small part of the work to be done for the salvation of souls. God's Spirit convicts sinners of the truth, and he places them in the arms of the church. The ministers may do their part, but they can never perform the work that the church should do. God requires his church to nurse those who are young in faith and experience, to go to them, not for the purpose of gossiping with them, but to pray, to speak unto them words that are "like apples of gold in pictures of silver." [[Proverbs 25:11.](#)]

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We all need to study character and manner, that we may know how to deal judiciously with different minds, that we may use our best endeavors to help them to a correct understanding of the word of God, and to a true Christian life. We should read the Bible with them, and draw their minds away from temporal things to their eternal interests. It is the duty of God's children to be missionaries for him, to become acquainted with those who need help. If one is staggering under temptation, his case should be taken up carefully and managed wisely; for his eternal interest is at stake, and the words

and acts of those laboring for him may be a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death.

Sometimes a case presents itself that should be made a prayerful study. The person must be shown his true character, understand his own peculiarities of disposition and temperament, and see his infirmities. He should be judiciously treated. If he can be reached, if his heart can be touched by this wise and patient labor, he can be bound with strong cords to Christ and led to trust in God. O, when a work like this is done, all the heavenly court look and rejoice; for a precious soul has been rescued from Satan's snare and saved from death! O, will it not pay to work intelligently for the salvation of souls? Christ paid the price of his own life for them, and shall his followers ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Shall we not work in unison with the Master? Shall we not appreciate the worth of souls for whom our Saviour died?

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The Sabbath-School

Some efforts have been made to interest children in the cause, but not enough. Our Sabbath-schools should be made more interesting. The public schools have of late years greatly improved their methods of teaching. Object lessons, pictures, and blackboards are used to make difficult lessons clear to the youthful mind. Just so may present truth be simplified, and made intensely interesting to the active minds of the children.

Parents who can be approached in no other way are frequently reached through their children. Sabbath-school teachers can instruct the children in the truth, and they will, in turn, take it into the home circle. But few teachers seem to understand the importance of this branch of the work. The modes of teaching which have been adopted with such success in the public schools could be employed with similar results in the Sabbath-schools, and be the means of bringing children to Jesus and educating them in Bible truth. This will do far more good than religious excitement of an emotional character, that passes off as rapidly as it comes.

The love of Christ should be cherished. More faith is needed in the work which we believe is to be done before the coming of Christ. There should be more self-denying, self-sacrificing labor in the right

direction. There should be thoughtful, prayerful study how to work to the best advantage. Careful plans should be matured. There are minds among us that can invent and carry out if they are only put to use. Great results would follow well-directed and intelligent efforts.

The Prayer-Meeting

The prayer-meetings should be the most interesting gatherings that are held; but these are frequently poorly managed. Many attend preaching, but neglect the prayer-meeting. Here, again, thought is required. Wisdom should be sought of God, and plans should be laid to conduct the meetings so that they will be interesting and attractive. The people hunger for the bread of life. If they find it at prayer-meeting, they will go there to receive it.

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Long, prosy talks and prayers are out of place anywhere, and especially in the social meeting. Those who are forward and ever ready to speak, are allowed to crowd out the testimony of the timid and retiring. Those who are most superficial generally have the most to say. Their prayers are long and mechanical. They weary the angels and the people who listen to them. Our prayers should be short and right to the point. Let the long, tiresome petitions be left for the closet, if any have such to offer. Let the Spirit of God into your hearts, and it will sweep away all dry formality.

Music can be a great power for good; yet we do not make the most of this branch of worship. The singing is generally done from impulse or to meet special cases, and at other times those who sing are left to blunder along, and the music loses its proper effect upon the minds of those present. Music should have beauty, pathos, and power. Let the voices be lifted in songs of praise and devotion. Call to your aid, if practicable, instrumental music, and let the glorious harmony ascend to God, an acceptable offering.

But it is sometimes more difficult to discipline the singers and keep them in working order, than to improve the habits of praying and exhorting. Many want to do things after their own style; they object to consultation, and are impatient under leadership. Well-matured plans are needed in the service of God. Common sense is an excellent thing in the worship of the Lord. The thinking powers should be consecrated to Christ, and ways and means should be

[326] devised to serve him best. The church of God, who are trying to do good by living out the truth and seeking to save souls, can be a power in the world if they will be disciplined by the Spirit of the Lord. They must not feel that they can work carelessly for eternity.

Social Intercourse

As a people, we lose much by lack of sympathy and sociability with one another. He who talks of independence and shuts himself up to himself, is not filling the position that God designed he should. We are children of God, mutually dependent upon one another for happiness. The claims of God and of humanity are upon us. We must all act our part in this life. It is the proper cultivation of the social elements of our nature that brings us into sympathy with our brethren, and affords us happiness in our efforts to bless others. The happiness of heaven will consist in the pure communion of holy beings,—the harmonious social life with the blessed angels, and with the redeemed who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. We cannot be happy while we are wrapped up in our interest for ourselves. We should live in this world to win souls to the Saviour. If we injure others, we injure ourselves also. If we bless others, we also bless ourselves; for the influence of every good deed is reflected upon our own hearts.

[327] We are in duty bound to help one another. It is not always that we are brought in contact with social Christians, those who are amiable and mild. Many have not received a proper education; their characters are warped, they are hard and gnarled, and seem to be crooked in every way. While we help these to see and correct their defects, we must be careful not to become impatient and irritable over our neighbor's faults. There are disagreeable ones who profess Christ; but the beauty of Christian grace will transform them, if they will set diligently about the work of obtaining the meekness and gentleness of Him whom they follow, remembering that "none of us liveth to himself." [[Romans 14:7.](#)] Co-workers with Christ! What an exalted position! Where are to be found the self-sacrificing missionaries in these large cities? The Lord needs workers in his vineyard. We should fear to rob him of the time he claims from us; we should fear to spend it in idleness or in the adornment of the

body, appropriating to foolish purposes the precious hours God has given us to be devoted to prayer, to becoming conversant with our Bibles, and to laboring for the good of our fellow-beings, thus fitting ourselves and them for the great work devolving upon us.

Mothers spend unnecessary labor upon garments with which to beautify the persons of themselves and their children. It is our duty to dress ourselves plainly and to clothe our children neatly, without useless ornamentation, embroidery, or display, taking care not to foster in them a love of dress that will prove their ruin, but seeking rather to cultivate the Christian graces. None of us can be excused from our responsibilities, and in no case can we stand clear before the throne of God unless we do the work the Master has left for us to do.

Missionaries for God are wanted, faithful men and women who will not shirk responsibility. Judicious labor will accomplish good results. There is real work to be done. The truth should be brought before people in a careful manner by those who unite meekness with wisdom. We should not hold ourselves aloof from our fellow-men, but come close to them; for their souls are as precious as our own. We can carry the light into their homes, with a softened and subdued spirit plead with them to come up to the exalted privilege offered them, pray with them when it seems proper, and show them that there are higher attainments that they may reach, and then guardedly speak to them of the sacred truths for these last days. [328]

There are more gatherings for singing than for prayer among our people; but even these gatherings can be conducted in so reverential yet cheerful a manner that they may exert a good influence. There is, however, too much jesting, idle conversation, and gossiping to make these seasons beneficial, to elevate the thoughts and refine the manners.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:67](#).

Gathering the Fruit

A Dream

In a dream given me September 29, 1886, I was walking with a large company who were looking for berries. There were many young men and women in the company who were to help in gathering the fruit. We seemed to be in a city, for there was very little vacant ground; but around the city there were open fields, beautiful groves, and cultivated gardens. A large wagon laden with provisions for our company went before us.

Soon the wagon halted, and the party scattered in every direction to look for fruit. All around the wagon were both high and low bushes, bearing large, beautiful whortleberries; but the company were all looking too far away to see them. I began to gather the fruit near by, but very carefully, for fear of picking the green berries, which were so mingled with the ripe fruit that I could pick only one or two berries from a cluster.

[329] Some of the nice large berries had fallen to the ground, and were half consumed by worms and insects. "O!" thought I, "if this field had only been entered before, all this precious fruit might have been saved. But it is too late now. I will, however, pick these from the ground, and see if there is any good in them. Even if the whole berry is spoiled, I can at least show the brethren what they might have found if they had not been too late.

Just then two or three of the party came sauntering around where I was. They were chatting, and seemed to be much occupied with each other's company. Seeing me, they said, "We have looked everywhere, and can find no fruit." They looked with astonishment at the quantity I had. I said, "There are more to be gathered from these bushes." They began picking, but soon stopped, saying, "It is not fair for us to pick here; you found this spot, and the fruit is yours." But I replied, "That makes no difference. Gather wherever

you can find anything. This is God's field, and these are his berries; it is your privilege to pick them."

But soon I seemed to be alone again. Every little while I heard talking and laughing at the wagon. I called out to those who were there, "What are you doing?" They answered, "We could not find any berries, and as we were tired and hungry, we thought we would come to the wagon and take a lunch. After we have rested awhile, we will go out again." "But," said I, "you have brought in nothing as yet. You are eating up all our supplies, without giving us any more. I cannot eat now; there is too much fruit to be picked. You did not find it, because you did not look close enough. It does not hang on the outside of the bushes; you must search for it. True, you cannot pick it by handfuls; but by looking carefully among the green berries, you will find very choice fruit." My small pail was soon full of berries, and I took them to the wagon. Said I, "This is the nicest fruit that I ever picked, and I gathered it near by, while you have wearied yourselves by searching at a distance without success." Then all came to see my fruit. They said, "These are high-bush berries, firm and good. We did not think we could find anything on the high bushes, so we hunted for low-bush berries only, and found but few of these." I then said, "Will you take care of these berries, and then go with me to look for more fruit on the high bushes?" But they had made no preparation to care for the fruit. There were dishes and sacks in abundance, but they had been used to hold food. I became tired of waiting, and finally asked, "Did you not come to gather fruit? Then why are you not prepared to take care of it?" One responded, "Sister White, we did not really expect to find any fruit where there were so many houses, and so much going on; but as you seemed so anxious to gather fruit, we decided to come with you. We thought we would bring enough to eat, and would enjoy the recreation, if we did not gather any fruit." I answered, "I cannot understand this kind of work. I shall go to the bushes again at once. The day is already far spent, soon the night will be here, in which we can gather no fruit." Some went with me, but others remained by the wagon to eat.

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In one place a little company had collected, and were busily talking about something in which they seemed much interested. I drew near and found that a little child in a woman's arms had

attracted their attention. I said, "You have but a little time, and might better work while you can." The attention of many was attracted by a young man and a young woman who were running a race to the wagon. On reaching it they were so tired that they had to sit down and rest. Others also had thrown themselves down on the grass to rest.

[331] Thus the day wore on, and very little was accomplished. At last I said, "Brethren, you call this an unsuccessful expedition. If this is the way you work, I do not wonder at your lack of success. Your success or failure depends upon the way you take hold of the work. There are berries here; for I have found them. Some of you have been searching the low bushes in vain, others have found a few berries; but the high bushes have been passed by, simply because you did not *expect* to find fruit on them. You see that the fruit which I have gathered is large and ripe. In a little while other berries will ripen, and we can go over the bushes again. This is the way in which I was taught to gather fruit. If you had searched near the wagon, you might have found fruit as well as I.

"The lesson that you have this day given to those who are just learning how to do this kind of work, will be copied by them. The Lord has placed these fruit-bearing bushes right in the midst of these thickly settled places, and he expects you to find them. But you have been altogether too much engaged in eating, and amusing yourselves. You did not come to the field with an earnest determination to find fruit. You must hereafter work with more zeal and earnestness, and with an altogether different object in view, or your labors will never be successful. By working in the right way, you will teach the younger workers that such matters as eating and recreation are of minor importance. It has been hard work to bring the wagon of supplies to the ground, but you have thought more of the supplies than of the fruit you ought to carry home as the result of your labors. You should be diligent, first to pick the berries nearest you, and then to search for those farther away; after that you can return and work near by again, and thus you will be successful."—MS.

The Danger of Formalism

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There is a great work to be done in the day of God's preparation, in devising and executing plans for the advancement of his cause. Our publications should have a wide circulation; for they are doing a great work. There is much missionary work to be done. But I have been shown that there is danger of having this work too mechanical, so intricate and complicated that less will be accomplished than if it were more simple, direct, plain, and decided. We have neither time nor means to keep all parts of this machinery in harmonious action.

Our brethren who bear responsibilities in devising plans for carrying forward this part of the work, must keep in mind that while a certain amount of education and training is essential in order to work intelligently, there is danger of making this too great a matter. By obtaining a most thorough education in all the minutiae, and leaving vital principles out of the question, we become dry and formal workers. The hearts that God has made willing by the operations of his grace, are fitted for the work.

God wants heart-work. The unselfish purpose, the pure, elevated principle, the high and holy motive, he will accept. His grace and power will work with these efforts. All who realize that it is the work of God to prepare a people for his coming, will find in their disinterested efforts opportunities where they can do tract and missionary work. But there may be too much means expended and too much time occupied in making matters so exact and minute that the heart-work is neglected, and a dry form preserved.

I tell you frankly that Jesus and the power of his grace are being left out of the question. Result will show that mechanical working has taken the place of piety, humility, and holiness of heart and life. The more spiritual, devoted, and humble workers find no place where they can take hold, and therefore they stand back. The young and inexperienced learn the form, and do their work mechanically; but true love, the burden for souls, is not felt. Less dwelling upon set

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forms, less of the mechanical and more of the power of godliness, are essential in this solemn, fearful day of responsibilities.

There is order in heaven; and there should be system and order upon the earth, that the work may move forward without confusion and fanaticism. Our brethren have been working to this end; but while some of our ministers continually bear the burden of souls, and ever seek to bring the people up in spiritual attainments, those who are not so conscientious, and who have not carried the cross of Christ nor felt the value of souls as reflected from Calvary, will, in teaching and educating others in the mechanical working, become formal and powerless themselves, and bring no Saviour to the people.

Satan is ever working to have the service of God degenerate into dull form, and become powerless to save souls. While the energy, earnestness, and efficiency of the workers become deadened by the efforts to have everything so systematic, the taxing labor that must be done by our ministers to keep this complicated machinery in motion, engrosses so much time that the spiritual work is neglected. And with so many things to run, this work requires so large an amount of means that other branches of the work will wither and die for want of due attention.

[334] While the silent messengers of truth should be scattered like the leaves of autumn, our ministers should not make this work a form, and leave devotion and true piety out of the question. Then truly converted, willing-minded, unselfish workers can do more in the missionary field than one hundred who confine their efforts to set forms, and preserve mechanical rules, working without deep love for souls.

Vigilant missionary work must in no case be neglected. It has done much for the salvation of souls. The success of God's work depends very much upon this; but those who do this work are to be those who are spiritual, whose letters will breathe the light and love of Jesus, and who feel the burden of the work. They should be men and women who can pray, who have a close connection with God. The ready mind, the sanctified will and sound judgment, are needed. They will have learned of the heavenly Teacher the most successful manner of appealing to souls. They will have learned their lessons in the school of Christ. They will do their work with an eye single to the glory of God.

Without this education, all the teachings received from your instructors in regard to forms and rules, however thorough the lessons may be, will leave you still novices in the work. You must learn of Christ. You should deny self for Christ. You should put your neck under the yoke of Christ. You must carry the burden of Christ. You must feel that you are not your own, but servants of Christ, doing a work that he has enjoined upon you, not for any praise or honor or glory that you shall receive, but for his own dear sake. Into all your work you should weave his grace, his love, his devotion, his zeal, his untiring perseverance, his indomitable energy, that will tell for time and for eternity.

The tract and missionary work is a good work. It is God's work. It should be in no way belittled; but there is continual danger of perverting it from its true object. Canvassers are wanted to labor in the missionary field. Persons of uncouth manners are not fitted for this work. Men and women who possess tact, good address, keen foresight, and discriminating minds, and who feel the value of souls, are the ones who can be successful.

The work of the colporteur is elevated, and will prove a success, if he is honest, earnest, and patient, steadily pursuing the work he has undertaken. His heart must be in the work. He must rise early, and work industriously, putting to proper use the faculties God has given him. Difficulties must be met. If confronted with unceasing perseverance, they will be overcome. Much is gained by courtesy. The worker may continually be forming a symmetrical character. Great characters are formed by little acts and efforts.

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There is danger of not giving sufficient encouragement to our ministers. I was shown some men whom God was calling to the work of the ministry, entering the field as canvassers. This is an excellent preparation, if their object is to disseminate light, to bring the truth revealed in God's word directly to the home circle. In conversation, the way will frequently be opened to speak of the religion of the Bible. If the work is taken hold of as it should be, families will be visited, the workers will carry with them tender hearts and love for souls, and will bear, in words and deportment, the fragrance of the grace of Christ, and great good will be the result. This would be an excellent experience for any who have the ministry in view.

But many are attracted into the canvassing field to sell books and pictures that do not express our faith, and do not give light to the purchaser. They are induced to do this because the financial prospects are more flattering than can be offered them as licentiates. These persons are obtaining no special fitness for the gospel ministry. They are not gaining that experience which would fit them for the work. They are losing time and opportunities by this kind of labor. They are not learning to bear the burden of souls, and daily obtaining a knowledge of the most successful way of winning people to the truth. These men are frequently turned aside from the convictions of the Spirit of God, and receive a worldly stamp of character, forgetting how much they owe to the Lord, who gave his life for them. They use their powers for their own selfish interests, and refuse to labor in the vineyard of the Lord.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:600](#).

Personal Effort

There is need of systematic labor; but where some of you are so long in devising, and planning, and getting ready for the work, Satan preoccupies the field with bewitching fables, and the attention of men becomes absorbed in the delusions of the master-deceiver. These very minds were unsettled and inquiring in regard to the Bible truth, and had the opportunity been improved, they would have given unprejudiced attention to the message; but after receiving error, it is doubly hard to induce them to give a candid investigation to the evidences of our faith.

Take up the work anywhere and everywhere. Do that which is the nearest you, right at your own doors, however humble and uncommended it may seem. Work only for the glory of God and the good of men. Let self sink out of sight, while with earnest purpose and solemn prayers of faith you work for Him who has died that you might live. Go to your neighbors one by one, and come close to them till their hearts are warmed by your unselfish interest and love. Sympathize with them, pray for them, watch for opportunities to do them good, and as you can, gather a few together and open the word of God to their darkened minds. Keep watching, as he who must render an account for the souls of men, and make the most of the privileges that God gives you of laboring with him in his vineyard. Do not neglect speaking to your neighbors, and doing them all the kindness in your power, that you may “by all means save some.” [1 [Corinthians 9:22](#).] We need to seek for the spirit that constrained the apostle Paul to go from house to house, pleading with tears, and teaching “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” [Acts 20:21.]

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When churches are revived, it is because some individual seeks earnestly for the blessing of God. He hungers and thirsts after God, and asks in faith, and receives accordingly. He goes to work in earnest, feeling his great dependence upon the Lord, and souls are aroused to seek for a like blessing, and a season of refreshing falls

on the hearts of men. The extensive work will not be neglected. The larger plans will be laid at the right time; but personal, individual effort and interest for your friends and neighbors, will accomplish much more than can be estimated. It is for the want of this kind of labor that souls for whom Christ died, are perishing. One soul is of infinite value; for Calvary speaks its worth. One soul, won to the Saviour, will be instrumental in winning others, and there will be an ever-increasing result of blessing and salvation. Your work may accomplish more real good than the more extensive meetings, if they lack in personal effort. When both are combined, with the blessing of God, a more perfect and thorough work may be wrought; but if we can have but one part done, let it be the individual labor of opening the Scriptures in households, making personal appeals, and talking familiarly with the members of the family, not about things of little importance, but of the great themes of redemption. Let them see that your heart is burdened for the salvation of souls.

[338] Those who have been most successful in winning souls, were men and women who did not pride themselves in their ability, but who went in humility and faith, and the power of God worked with their efforts in convicting and converting the hearts of those to whom they appealed. Jesus did this very work. He came close to those whom he desired to benefit. How often, with a few gathered about him, he began the precious lessons, and one by one the passers-by paused to listen, until a great multitude heard with wonder and awe the words of God through the heaven-sent Teacher. He did not wait for congregations to assemble. The grandest truths were spoken to single individuals. The woman at the well in Samaria heard the wonderful words, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." [John 4:14.]

The interview with the humble Samaritan was not in vain. The words that fell from the lips of the divine Teacher stirred the heart of the listener. She gladly acknowledged him. She felt the power of his holy character and the heavenly influence that went with his words of truth. Perfect trust filled her heart. Forgetful of her errand to the well, she hastened to publish his fame to her townsmen. Many left their employment to come to the stranger at Jacob's well. They plied him with questions, and eagerly received the explanation of many

things that had been dark to their understanding. The perplexity of their minds began to clear away. They were like people in darkness tracing up a sudden ray till they had found the day; and the result of the work of Jesus, as he sat weary and hungry at the well, was wide-spread in blessing. The one soul for whom he had labored became a means of reaching others, and bringing them to the Saviour of the world.

This is ever the way the work of God has made progress in the earth. Let your light shine, and others will be kindled. Jesus said, [339] “Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” [Luke 14:23.]—MS.

Bible Readings with Families

The plan of holding Bible readings was a heaven-born idea. There are many, both men and women, who can engage in this branch of missionary labor. Workers may thus be developed who will become mighty men of God. By this means the word of God has been given to thousands; and the workers will be brought into personal contact with people of all nations and tongues. The Bible is brought into families, and its sacred truths come home to the conscience. Men are entreated to read, examine, and judge for themselves, and they must abide the responsibility of receiving or rejecting the divine enlightenment. God will not permit this precious work for him to go unrewarded. He will crown with success every humble effort made in his name.—MS.

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[340] I cannot see that much is accomplished by open-air meetings. These may be held at times, and on special occasions will be the best means of reaching the people; but to make this a regular manner of labor will not at present secure the desired results. The laborer cannot make full proof of his ministry. A chance speech or discourse may set minds on a train of thought which will, through other influences that may be brought to bear upon them, result in their conversion; but these cases are rare. There is so great dearth of both men and means at this time that our brethren are not justified in doing this kind of work.

In every new field, patience and perseverance must be exercised. Be not disheartened at small beginnings. It is often the humblest work that yields the greatest results. The more direct our labor for our fellow-men, the greater good will be accomplished. Personal influence is a power. The minds of those with whom we are closely associated, are impressed through unseen influences. One cannot speak to a multitude and move them as he could if he were brought

into closer relationship with them. Jesus left heaven, and came to our world to save souls. You must come close to those for whom you labor, that they may not only hear your voice, but shake your hand, learn your principles, feel your sympathy.

My ministering brethren, do not think that the only work you can do, the only way you can labor for souls, is to give discourses. The best work you can do is to teach, to educate. Whenever you can find an opportunity to do so, sit down with some family, and let them ask questions. Then answer them patiently, humbly. Continue this work in connection with your more public efforts. Preach less, and educate more by holding Bible readings, and by praying with families and little companies.

To all who are working for Christ, I would say, Wherever you can get access to the fireside, urge your way there. Take your Bible and open before the people its great truths. Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the heart. By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourses. The presentation of Christ, in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses, is often more successful in securing souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches. [341]

All who engage in this personal labor should be just as careful not to become mechanical in their manner of work as should the minister who preaches the word. They should be constantly learning. They should have a conscientious zeal to obtain the highest qualifications, to become able men in the Scriptures. They should not accumulate expensive furniture and become fixtures in any one place; for they know not how soon they may be called to other fields. They should not gather burdens about them so that their thoughts and time will be occupied in serving tables; and they should cultivate habits of earnest study, of mental activity, especially giving themselves to prayer, and to the diligent study of the Scriptures.—MS.

The Work of the Colporteur

[342] Missionaries are wanted everywhere. In all parts of the field colporteurs and canvassers should be selected, not from the floating element in society, not from among men and women who are good for nothing else, and have made a success of nothing, but from among those who have good address, tact, keen foresight, and ability.... Men suited to this work undertake it; but some injudicious minister will flatter them that their gift should be employed in the desk instead of simply in the work of the colporteur. Thus this work is belittled. They are influenced to get a license to preach; and the very ones who might have been trained to make good missionaries to visit families at their homes and talk and pray with them, are caught up to make poor ministers; and the field where so much labor is needed, and where so much good might be accomplished for the cause, is neglected. The efficient colporteur as well as the minister should have a sufficient remuneration for his services if his work is faithfully done.

If there is one work more important than another, it is that of getting our publications before the public, thus leading them to search the Scriptures. Missionary work—introducing our publications into families, conversing, and praying with and for them—is a good work, and one which will educate men and women to do pastoral labor.

Not every one is fitted for this work. Those of the best talent and ability, who will take hold of the work understandingly and systematically, and carry it forward with persevering energy, are the ones who should be selected. There should be a most thoroughly organized plan; and this should be faithfully carried out. Churches in every place should feel the deepest interest in the tract and missionary work....

Men should be at work who are willing to be taught as to the best way of approaching individuals and families. Their dress should be neat, but not foppish, and their manners such as not to disgust the

people. There is a great want of true politeness among us as a people. This should be cultivated by all who take hold of the missionary work.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:389](#).

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There are some who are adapted to the work of the colporteur and who can accomplish far more in this line than in preaching. If the Spirit of Christ dwells in their own hearts, they will find opportunity to present his love to others, and to direct their minds to the special truths for this time. But they will need wisdom to know what to say, and what to leave unsaid. All points of our faith are not to be introduced indiscriminately. We should be careful not to arouse a combative spirit. There is enough to talk about that will not excite opposition, and that will open the heart to desire a deeper knowledge of God's word.—[MS](#).

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Importance of the Canvassing Work

Very much more efficient work can be done in the canvassing field than has yet been done. The canvasser should not rest satisfied unless he is constantly improving. He should make thorough preparation, but should not be content with a set form of words; he should give the Lord a chance to work with his efforts and impress his mind. The love of Jesus abiding in his heart will enable him to devise means to gain access to individuals and families.

Canvassers need self-culture and polished manners, not the affected and artificial manners of the world, but the agreeable manners that are the natural result of kindness of heart and a desire to copy the example of Christ. They should cultivate thoughtful, care-taking habits,—habits of industry and discretion,—and should seek to honor God by making of themselves all that it is possible for them to become. Jesus made an infinite sacrifice to place them in right relations to God and to their fellowmen, and divine aid combined with human effort will enable them to reach a high standard of excellence. The canvasser should be chaste like Joseph, meek like Moses, and temperate like Daniel; then a power will attend him wherever he goes.

[344] If the canvasser pursues a wrong course, if he utters falsehood or practices deception, he loses his own self-respect. He may not be conscious that God sees him, and is acquainted with every business transaction, that holy angels are weighing his motives and listening to his words, and that his reward will be according to his works; but if it were possible to conceal his wrong-doing from human and divine inspection, the fact that he himself knows it, is degrading to his mind and character. One act does not determine the character, but it breaks down the barrier, and the next temptation is more readily entertained, until finally a habit of prevarication and dishonesty in business is formed, and the man cannot be trusted.

There are too many in families and in the church who make little account of glaring inconsistencies. There are young men who

appear what they are not. They seem honest and true; but they are like whited sepulchers, fair without, but corrupt to the core. The heart is spotted, stained with sin; and thus the record stands in the heavenly courts. A process has been going on in the mind that has made them callous, past feeling. But if their characters, weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, are pronounced wanting in the great day of God, it will be a calamity that they do not now comprehend. Truth, precious, untarnished truth, is to be a part of the character.

Whatever way is chosen, the path of life is beset with perils. If the workers in any branch of the cause become careless and inattentive to their eternal interests, they are meeting with great loss. The tempter will find access to them. He will spread nets for their feet, and will lead them in uncertain paths. Those only are safe whose hearts are garrisoned with pure principles. Like David they will pray, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." [Psalm 17:5.] A constant battle must be kept up with the selfishness and corruption of the human heart. Often the wicked seem to be prospered in their way; but those who forget God, even for an hour or a moment, are in a dangerous path. They may not realize its perils; but ere they are aware, habit, like an iron band, holds them in subjection to the evil with which they have tampered. God despises their course, and his blessing will not attend them.

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I have seen that young men undertake this work without connecting themselves with Heaven. They place themselves in the way of temptation to show their bravery. They laugh at the folly of others. They know the right away; they know how to conduct themselves. How easily they can resist temptation! How vain to think of their falling! But they make not God their defense. Satan has an insidious snare prepared for them, and they themselves become the sport of fools....

One safeguard removed from conscience, the indulgence of one evil habit, a single neglect of the high claims of duty, may be the beginning of a course of deception that will pass you into the ranks of those who are serving Satan, while you are all the time professing to love God and his cause. A moment of thoughtlessness, a single misstep, may turn the whole current of your lives in the wrong direction....

No one whose hands are defiled with sin or whose heart is not right with God should have any part in the work of the canvasser or colporteur; for such persons will surely dishonor the cause of truth. Those who are workers in the missionary field need God to guide them. They should be careful to start right, and then keep quietly and firmly on in the path of rectitude. They should be decided; for Satan is determined and persevering in his efforts to overthrow them.

[346] A mistake has been made in soliciting subscriptions for our periodicals for only a few weeks, when by a proper effort much longer subscriptions might have been obtained. One yearly subscription is of more value than many for a short time. When the paper is taken for only a few months, the interest often ends with the short subscription. Few renew their subscriptions for a longer period, and thus there is a large outlay of time that brings small returns, when with a little more tact and perseverance, yearly subscriptions might have been obtained. You strike too low, brethren; you are too narrow in your plans. You do not put into your work all the tact and perseverance that it deserves. There are more difficulties in this work than in some other branches of business; but the lessons that will be learned, the tact and discipline that will be acquired, will fit you for other fields of usefulness, where you may minister to souls. Those who poorly learn their lesson, and are careless and abrupt in approaching persons, would show the same defects of manner, the same want of tact and skill, in dealing with minds, should they enter the ministry.

While short subscriptions are accepted, some will not make the effort necessary to obtain them for a longer time. Canvassers should not go over the ground in a careless, unconcerned manner. They should feel that they are God's workmen, and the love of souls should lead them to make every effort to enlighten men and women in regard to the truth. Providence and grace, means and ends, are closely connected. When his laborers do the very best they can, God does for them that which they cannot do themselves; but no one need expect to succeed independently and by his own exertions. There must be activity united with firm trust in God.

Economy is needed in every department of the Lord's work. The natural turn of youth in this age is to neglect and despise economy, and to confound it with stinginess and narrowness. But economy is

consistent with the most broad and liberal views and feelings; there can be no true generosity where it is not practiced. No one should think it beneath him to study economy, and the best means of taking care of the fragments. Said Christ, after he had performed a notable miracle, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." [John 6:12.]

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Quite a sum may be expended in hotel bills that are not at all necessary. The cause of God lay so near the heart of the pioneers in this message, that they seldom took a meal at a hotel, even though the cost was but twenty-five cents each. But young men and women generally are not educated to economize, and waste follows waste everywhere. In some families there is a wicked waste of enough to support another family if reasonable economy were used. If, while traveling, our youth will keep an exact account of the money they expend, item by item, their eyes will be opened to see the leaks. While they may not be called upon to deprive themselves of warm meals, as the early workers did in their itinerant life, they may learn to supply their real wants with less expense than they now think necessary. There are persons who practice self-denial in order to give means to the cause of God; then let the workers in the cause also practice self-denial by limiting their expenses as far as possible. It would be well for all our workers to study the history of the Waldensian missionaries, and to imitate their example of sacrifice and self-denial.

We have a grand work to do for the Master, to open the word of God to those who are in the darkness of error. Young friends, act as though you had a sacred charge. You should be Bible students, ever ready to give to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you. By your true Christian dignity, give evidence that you know you have a truth that it is for the interest of the people to hear. If this truth is inwrought in the soul, it will manifest itself in the countenance and demeanor, in a calm, noble self-possession and peace which the Christian alone can possess....

In this age the trivial is praised and magnified. There is a call for anything that will create a sensation and make sales. The country is flooded with utterly worthless publications, which were written for the sake of making money, while really valuable books are unsold and unread. Those who handle this sensational literature because

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by so doing they can make higher wages, are missing a precious opportunity of doing good. There are battles to be fought to arrest the attention of men and women, and interest them in really valuable books that have the Bible for their foundation, and it will be a still greater task to find conscientious, God-fearing workers who will enter the field to canvass for these books for the purpose of diffusing light.

The worker who has the cause of God at heart will not insist on receiving the highest wages. He will not plead, as some of our youth have done, that unless he can make a stylish and elegant appearance, and board at the best hotels, he will not be patronized. What the canvasser needs is not the faultless apparel, or the address of the dandy or the clown, but that honesty and integrity of character which is reflected in the countenance. Kindness and gentleness leave their impress upon the face, and the practiced eye sees no deception, detects no pomposity of manner....

Our brethren should show discretion in selecting canvassers and colporteurs, unless they have made up their minds to have the truth misapprehended and misrepresented. They should give all real workers good wages; but the sum should not be increased to buy canvassers, for this course hurts them. It makes them selfish, and spendthrifts. Seek to impress them with the spirit of true missionary work, and with the qualifications necessary to insure success. The love of Jesus in the soul will lead the canvasser to feel it a privilege to labor to diffuse light. He will study, plan, and pray over the matter.

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Young men are wanted who are men in understanding, who appreciate the intellectual faculties that God has given them, and cultivate them with the utmost care. Exercise enlarges these faculties, and if heart-culture is not neglected, the character will be well balanced. The means of improvement are within the reach of all. Then let none disappoint the Master, when he comes seeking for fruit, by presenting nothing but leaves. A resolute purpose, sanctified by the grace of Christ, will do wonders. Jesus and holy angels will give success to the efforts of intelligent, God-fearing men, who do all in their power to save souls. Quietly, modestly, with a heart overflowing with love, let them seek to win minds to investigate the truth, engaging in Bible readings when they can. By so doing they will be sowing the seed of truth beside all waters, showing forth

the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. Those who are doing this work from right motives are doing an important work of ministering. They will manifest no feeble, undecided character. Their minds are enlarging, their manners are becoming more refined. They should place no bounds to their improvement, but every day be better fitted to do good work.

Many of the workers in the canvassing field are making no sacrifices. As a class, they have less of the missionary spirit than the workers in any other denomination. When the way is all prepared for them, when they can command the highest wages, then they are willing to enter the field. Many inducements are presented to canvassers to handle popular books; large wages are offered them; and many refuse to work for less wages to circulate books treating on present truth. Therefore the inducements have been increased to correspond to those offered by other publishers, and as a consequence the expense of getting our publications before the people is large; many of the canvassers obtain their money easily, and spend it freely. [350]

Among the people professing present truth there is not a missionary spirit corresponding to our faith. The ring of the true gold in character is wanting. Christian life is more than they take it to be. It does not consist in mere gentleness, patience, meekness, and kindness. These graces are essential; but there is need of courage, force, energy, and perseverance also. Many who engage in the work of canvassing are weak, nerveless, spiritless, easily discouraged. They lack push. They have not those positive traits of character that give men power to do something—the spirit and energy that kindle enthusiasm. The canvasser is engaged in an honorable business, and he should not act as though he were ashamed of it. If he would have success attend his efforts, he must be courageous and hopeful.

The active virtues must be cultivated as well as the passive. The Christian, while he is ever ready to give the soft answer that turneth away wrath, must possess the courage of a hero to resist evil. With the charity that endureth all things, he must have the force of character which will make his influence a positive power for good. Faith must be wrought into his character. His principles must be firm; he must be noble-spirited, above all suspicion of meanness. The canvasser must not be self-inflated. As he associates with men, he

[351] must not make himself conspicuous, talking of himself in a boastful way; for by this course he would disgust intelligent, sensible people. He must not be selfish in his habits, nor overbearing and domineering in his manners. Very many have settled it in their minds that they cannot find time to read one in ten thousand of the books that are published and put upon the market. And in many cases when the canvasser makes known his business, the door of the heart closes firmly; hence the great need of doing his work with tact, and in a humble, prayerful spirit. He should be familiar with the word of God, and have words at his command to unfold the precious truth, and to show the great value of the pure reading matter he carries.

Well may every one feel an individual responsibility in this work. Well may he consider how he may best arrest the attention; for his manner of presenting the truth may decide the destiny of a soul. If he makes a favorable impression, his influence may be to that soul a savor of life unto life; and that one person, enlightened in regard to the truth, may enlighten many others. Therefore it is dangerous to do careless work in dealing with minds.

The canvassing work is God's means of reaching many that would not otherwise be impressed with the truth. The work is a good one, the object high and elevating; and there should be a corresponding dignity of deportment. The canvasser will meet men of varied minds. He will meet those who are ignorant and debased, and can appreciate nothing that does not bring them money. These will be abusive; but he should not heed them. His good nature should never fail; he should take a cheerful, hopeful view of every perplexity. He will meet those who are bereaved, disheartened, and sore and wounded in spirit. He will have many opportunities of speaking to these, kind words, and words of courage, hope, and faith. He may be a well-spring to refresh others if he will; but in order to do this, he must himself draw from the Fountain of living truth.

[352] The canvassing work is more important than many have regarded it, and as much care and wisdom must be used in selecting the workers as in selecting men for the ministry. Young men can be trained to do much better work than has been done, and on much less pay than many have received. Lift up the standard; and let the self-denying and the self-sacrificing, the lovers of God and of humanity,

join the army of workers. Let them come, not expecting ease, but to be brave and of good courage under rebuffs and hardships. Let those come who can give a good report of our publications, because they themselves appreciate their value.

May the Lord help every one to improve to the utmost the talents committed to his trust. Those who work in this cause do not study their Bibles as they should. If they did, its practical teachings would have a positive bearing upon their lives. Whatever your work may be, dear brethren and sisters, do it as for the Master, and do your best. Do not overlook present golden opportunities, and let your life prove a failure, while you sit idly dreaming of ease and success in a work for which God has never fitted you. Do the work that is nearest you. Do it, even though it may be amid perils and hardships in the missionary field; but do not, I beg of you, complain of hardships and self-sacrifices. Look at the Waldenses. See what plans they devised that the light of the gospel might shine into benighted minds. We should not labor with the expectation of receiving our reward in this life, but with our eyes fixed steadfastly upon the prize at the end of the race. Men and women are wanted now who are as true to duty as the needle to the pole,—men and women who will work without having their way smoothed and every obstacle removed.

I have described what canvassers ought to be; and may the Lord open their minds to comprehend this subject in its length and breadth, and may they realize their duty to represent the character of Christ by their patience, courage, and steadfast integrity. Let them remember that they can deny him by a loose, lax, undecided character. Young men, if you take these principles with you into the canvassing field, you will be respected, and many will believe the truth you advocate, because you live your faith,—because your daily life is as a bright light set upon a candlestick, which giveth light to all that are in the house. Even your enemies, as much as they war against your doctrines, will respect you; and when you have gained this much, your simple words will have a power, and will carry conviction to hearts.—[Testimonies for the Church 5:406](#).

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Cautions to Canvassers

No canvasser should exalt the book for which he is working, above others that set forth the truth for this time. Should our canvassers drop all but one book, and concentrate their energies on that, the work would not be carried on as God would have it. It is necessary that a variety of books should be in the field, as minds are not constituted alike, and what would be food to one might fail to interest another. Some classes would be more benefited by papers and tracts than by books, and it will be necessary for the canvasser to make a wise selection of his books. Let no one doing the work of God become one-sided and short-sighted. The Lord has many instrumentalities through which he designs to work. When one book is exalted above another, there is danger that the very work best adapted to give light to the people will be crowded out. There is no need of contrasting different books, and judging as to which will do most good, and then pushing to the wall the one deemed weakest, for the advancement of another. God has a place for all the voices and all the pens that he has inspired to utterance for him. It will be difficult for some minds to fathom our most profound works, and a simpler way of putting the truth will reach them more readily. Let the leading workers encourage the weaker ones, and show an equal interest in every one of the instrumentalities set in operation to prepare a people for the day of the Lord. I think I have discerned in some, a feeling of contempt in regard to obtaining subscriptions for the *Signs of the Times*. Be careful, brethren; has not God spoken in regard to this journal? Has he not repeatedly shown that this is his instrumentality, that is to do an important work in these last days? Has he not shown that it is to be a pioneer to go forth to the people, laden with the precious treasures of truth? Papers and pamphlets and tracts all need attention in the canvassing work, for they are as little wedges that open the way for larger works. [From an Address to the General Conference in 1883.]—MS.

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My heart aches as I see those who profess to be looking for Christ's coming, devoting their time and talents to circulating books that contain nothing concerning the special truths for our time,—books of narrative, books of biography, books of men's theories and speculations. The world is full of such books; they can be had anywhere; but can the followers of Christ engage in so common a work when there is crying need for God's truth on every hand? It is not our mission to circulate such works. There are thousands of others to do this, who have as yet no knowledge of anything better. We have a definite mission, and we ought not to turn from it to side issues, employing men and means to bring to the attention of the people books that have no bearing upon the present truth.—MS.

Economy in Mission Work

We are all laborers under God; and we must work with intelligence, frugality, and humility. There are those who undertake too much, and by so doing accomplish little. Our efforts must be more concentrated. Every stroke must tell. The work in Europe, as in America, has had to begin small; but even there it can be managed so as to be largely self-sustaining. One great means by which this can be accomplished will be by the well-directed efforts of those already in the truth to bring in others who will be a strength and support to the work. A few souls brought out and fully established on the truth, will, like the first disciples, be laborers for others.

There must be a firm determination on the part of our laborers to break away from the established customs of the people whenever this is essential to the advancement of the work of God. The work might be much farther advanced in Europe if some of those who have accepted the truth were not so wedded to national habits and customs. They plead that the efforts of the ministers must be made to conform to those customs and prejudices, or nothing will be accomplished. This has had a binding influence upon the work from its beginning.

The laborers should counsel together. No one is to strike out on his independent judgment, and work according to his own mind, regardless of the counsel of those connected with him. If we think ourselves sufficient to manage the work of God, and depend for success on our own wisdom to plan and execute, we may expect defeats and losses; for they will surely come. It has been shown me that the planning of the work must not be trusted to inexperienced men. Those who have not had full breadth of experience are not the ones to take large responsibilities, although they may think themselves qualified to do so. Their brethren may see defects where they see only perfection. Too much is at stake now to allow any great risks to be run in investing means from the Lord's treasury. If any one wishes to try experiments which his brethren do not sanction,

let him sustain himself from his own funds, so that if losses occur, he alone will be the loser. The workers are not many; the means are not abundant; and the work must be fashioned accordingly. It is not God's plan that large draughts should be made upon the treasury to support workers who labor in such a way that no special results can be seen.

The mind must be active to discern the best ways and means of reaching the people next us. We often let opportunities within our reach slip away, in order to do a work at a distance from us which is less hopeful, and thus our time and means may be lost in both places. At this point in the history of our work we may spread over a great deal of territory, scatter our efforts, use up our time and money, and yet have little fruit to show for our labors,—few souls who will help to sustain the work by their efforts and their means.

Our missionary workers must learn to economize. The largest reservoir, though fed by abundant and living springs, will fail to supply the demand if there are leakages which drain off the supply. It must not be left for one man to decide whether a certain field will warrant large efforts. If the workers in one field so fashion the work as to incur large expenses, they are barring the way so that other important fields—fields which perhaps would better warrant the outlay—cannot be entered. Our younger laborers must be content to work their way among the people slowly and surely, under the advice of those who have had more experience. The ideas of many are too high. A more humble manner of working would show good results. It is encouraging to see the young enter the missionary field, enlisting all their ardor and zeal in the work; but they must not be left to manage for themselves, and keep the cause of God weighed down with debt. All should strive by wise management and earnest labor to gather enough to pay their own expenses. They should labor to make the cause self-sustaining, and should teach the people to rely upon themselves.

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Our ministers should not feel at liberty to pay large sums for halls in which to hold meetings, when they do not feel the burden of following up the interest by personal labor. The results are too uncertain to warrant the using up of means so rapidly. If churches and halls are opened to any of the laborers, and there is a desire to hear, they should embrace the opportunity and do the best they can;

but it is not wisdom for a single individual to strike out as though he had some great talent, as though he were a Moody or a Sankey, and make a lavish outlay of means.

In sending missionaries to foreign countries, we should select those who know how to economize, who have not large families, and who, realizing the shortness of time and the great work to be accomplished, will keep themselves as free as possible from everything that would divert their minds from their one great work. The wife, if devoted, and left free to do so, can, by standing by the side of her husband, accomplish as much as he. We want missionaries who are missionaries in the fullest sense of the word; who will put aside selfish considerations, and let the cause of God come first; and who, working with an eye single to his glory, will keep themselves as minutemen, to go where he shall bid, and to work in any capacity to spread the knowledge of the truth. Men who have wives that love and fear God, and that can help them in the work, are needed in the missionary field.

[358] Our laborers must learn to exercise economy, not only in their efforts to advance the cause of truth, but in their own home expenses. They should locate their families where they can be cared for at as little expense as possible. Donations and bequests do not come to our people as they do to other denominations; and those who have not educated themselves to live within their means, will surely have to do this now, or engage in some other employment. Habits of self-indulgence, or a want of tact and skill on the part of the wife and mother, may be a constant drain upon the treasury; and yet that mother may think she is doing her best, because she has never been taught to restrict her wants or the wants of her children, and has never acquired skill and tact in household matters. Hence one family may require for its support twice the amount that would suffice for another family of the same size.

Those who have not habits of economy should learn the lesson at once. All should learn how to keep accounts. Some neglect this work as nonessential; but this is wrong. All expenses should be accurately stated. This is something that many of our laborers will have to learn.

We should not become loose and dilatory in our habits while we are engaged in God's work. All should be prompt, wide-awake

business men in his cause. The Lord is not pleased with the present lack of order and accuracy among those who do business in connection with his work. Even in the business meetings of the Conference much time could be saved, and many mistakes avoided, by a little more study and punctuality. Everything that bears any relation to the work of God should be as near perfect as human brains and hands can make it.—MS.

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Encouraging Words to the Workers

The divine command to deliver Israel, found Moses self-distrustful, slow of speech, and timid. He was overwhelmed with a sense of his incapacity to be a mouth-piece for God. But he accepted the work, putting all his trust in the Lord. The greatness of his mission called into exercise the best powers of his mind. God blessed his ready obedience, and he became eloquent, hopeful, self-possessed, and well fitted for the greatest work ever given to man. This is an example of what God does to strengthen the character of those who trust him implicitly, and give themselves unreservedly to his commands.

The humble, efficient worker, who obediently responds to the call of God, may be sure of receiving divine assistance. To feel so great and holy a responsibility is of itself elevating to the character. It calls into action the highest mental qualities, and their continued exercise strengthens and purifies mind and heart. The influence upon one's own life, as well as upon the life of others, is incalculable.

It is wonderful how strong a weak man may become through faith in the power of God, how decided his efforts, how prolific of great results. The hesitating and irresolute, through exercising his abilities in the cause of God, becomes firm and decided. Taking in the great fact that he is called by the Redeemer of the world to work with him for the salvation of men, he dedicates his life to the work. His nature becomes exalted; the mission of Christ opens before him with new importance and glory, and with deep humility he recognizes in himself a co-laborer with the Saviour. No higher office is given to man. No joy can equal the assurance of being an instrument in the hand of God for saving souls. It is a grand thing to look back upon a course of labor all marked with glorious results; to see precious souls progressing in the light through your efforts; to feel that God has worked with and through you in the harvest-field of the world.

Careless spectators may not appreciate your work or see its importance. They may think it a losing business, a life of thankless labor and self-sacrifice. But the servant of Jesus sees it in the light shining from the cross. His sacrifices appear small in comparison with those of the blessed Master, and he is glad to follow in his steps. The success of his labor affords him the purest joy, and is the richest recompense for a life of patient toil.

In reviewing the past, the trials and difficulties that have beset him are not magnified in his mind. The consciousness of duty performed amply compensates for all his sufferings, and the glory of his coming reward clothes the future with the light of heaven. Glancing over the well-fought field of life, he says with Paul, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." [Romans 8:38, 39.]

He who is called of God to so sacred a work should put all his energies to its accomplishment. Every other consideration should become secondary to this great object. He should feel the solemn obligations resting upon him, one whom God has honored by choosing to unite him with the angels in the work of ministering to souls and enlightening them with the divine truth. The history of our Saviour's conflict in the wilderness of temptation, his life of self-sacrificing love, his soul agony in Gethsemane, the cruelty of the judgment hall, and the agony upon the cross, all combine to teach a lesson of self-sacrifice, of patience under affliction, of solemn consecration to God, and of fitting preparation for his holy work. [361]

Laborer for God, when weary and heavy laden, flee to Christ, who has promised you rest. He is the burdenbearer; he is your strength. Never allow yourself to believe that you are in yourself sufficient for the exigency of the times; never regard yourself as a graduated Christian. Your work is to discipline the mind, to store up knowledge, to perfect character while life lasts. Only thus can you be able to wage successfully the great warfare of life.

Keep the spirit humble as that of a little child. Envy, pride, worldly ambition, cupidity, and love of ease must be sacrificed upon the altar of duty. In the simplicity of love, be like those little ones whose angels do always behold the face of our heavenly Father. But

unite with these virtues the courage of a tried warrior. We want faithful Calebs who will raise their voices fearlessly in defense of the right, who are the first to press into the front of the battle, and plant the banner of truth in the heart of the enemy's camp.

Jesus calls for young men who will volunteer to carry the truth to the world. Men of spiritual stamina are wanted, men who are able to find work close at hand, because they are looking for it. The church needs new men to give energy to the ranks, men for the times, able to cope with its errors, men who will inspire with fresh zeal the flagging efforts of the few laborers, men whose hearts are warm with Christian love, and whose hands are eager to go about their Master's work.

The unsearchable riches of Christ are to be presented to the world in contrast with the poverty of sin, and the delusive pleasures of the world. Only a heart brimming with the love of God, only a mind active by constant study of eternal interests, can properly set forth the beauties of the truth of God.

[362] Those who unreservedly give themselves to this work, who faithfully reflect the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, fulfilling their mission with fidelity and love, will be recompensed on earth by the sweet consciousness of duty performed, and in the bright hereafter, when the saints shall come into their inheritance, the devoted worker for Christ will be welcomed into the joy of his Lord, hearing from the Master's lips, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."—**MS.**

Fragments

Personal Experience

God's Willingness to Save

God is very pitiful, for he understands our weakness and our temptations; and when we come to him with broken hearts and contrite spirits, he accepts our repentance, and promises that, as we take hold of his strength to make peace with him, we shall make peace with him. O what gratitude, what joy, should we feel that God is merciful!—[Testimonies for the Church 3:239](#).

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We may expect great things of God. It is not as though *we* were making the sacrifice for men, and Jesus was reluctant to save. The cross of Calvary expresses his estimate of the worth of the soul, and his love for the fallen race. He is bending over the purchase of his blood, asking with inexpressible tenderness, pity, and love, “Wilt thou be made whole?” He invites, “Come unto me, and be ye saved. I have borne thy iniquities; by the stripes laid on me, thou mayest be healed.” He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask than parents are to give good gifts to their children. But we must yield ourselves wholly to him. He cannot reveal himself to us as a sin-pardoning Saviour until we feel that without him we are hopelessly lost, that to live in sin, is misery, despair, and death.

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Jesus, precious Redeemer! You cannot trust him too fully or too soon. Wait no longer for better opportunities or holier dispositions, lest you wait too long, and Satan fasten his delusions upon you. Our necessities touch the Saviour's heart of love. The argument that we may plead now and ever is our great need, our utterly hopeless state, that makes him and his redeeming power a necessity. When we confidently take his proffered hand, and walk where he leads the way, he will lead us into the light; he will guide us into all truth, and will clothe our lives with the beauty of holiness. But the holiness

he is prepared to give us is not an exaltation of self, a Pharisaical self-righteousness; it is a principle in the heart that leads to a life of loving, trusting obedience.

The Life of Faith

True piety begins when all compromise with sin is at an end. When the soul has surrendered itself to do the will of God, there is no feeling of self-security. And if we live under the guidance of the Spirit of God, day by day, and hour by hour, we shall not fail nor be discouraged.

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The command, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” [Matthew 5:48.] would never have been given if every provision had not been made whereby we could obey the requirement,—be as perfect in our sphere as God is in his.

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[364] I beseech you to keep reaching out after God, to keep drinking of the fountain of living water. You may be as a tree planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf does not wither. You may be full of moisture, and be able to refresh others, and to give them grace and comfort.

As the palm-tree, drawing nourishment from fountains of living water, is green and flourishing in the midst of the desert, so the Christian may draw rich supplies of grace from the fountain of God’s love, and may guide weary souls, that are full of unrest, and ready to perish in the desert of sin, to those waters of which they may drink and live. He is ever pointing his fellow-men to Jesus, who invites, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” [John 7:37.] This fountain never fails us; we may draw, and draw again.

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The Holy Spirit operates the same the world over. When it is received into the heart, the whole character is changed. “If any man

be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” [2 [Corinthians 5:17](#).] Old habits and customs and national pride and prejudice are broken down. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” [[Galatians 5:22, 23](#).] When these are abiding in the soul, there will be unity of thought and action.

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Jesus says, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world;” [[John 16:33](#).] therefore the world shall not overcome you while you abide in me. It is a world which I have conquered, over which I have the mastery; because I have overcome, you also shall overcome if you believe in me.

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The precious pearls of truth contained in the Scriptures can be discerned only by the eye of faith. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” [[Matthew 5:8](#).]

The very best work you can do is to come as close to the people [365] as possible, and reveal in life and character the work wrought upon your own souls by the Spirit of God.

Humility

I saw that the strength of the children of God is in their humility. When they are little in their own eyes, Jesus will be to them their strength and their righteousness, and God will prosper their labors.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:307](#).

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It is painful to learn lessons of humility, yet nothing is more beneficial in the end. The pain attendant upon learning lessons of humility is in consequence of our being elated by a false estimate of ourselves, so that we are unable to see our great need.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:378](#).

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He who loses sight of his entire dependence upon God, is sure to fall. We are contending with those who are stronger than we. Satan and his hosts are constantly watching to assail us with temptations, and in our own strength and wisdom it is impossible for us to withstand them. Hence, whenever we permit our hearts to be drawn away from God, whenever we indulge self-exaltation or self-dependence, we are sure to be overthrown.

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Man is too often placed where God should be; man is praised and exalted until he loses sight of his dependence upon divine power; and in order to save him from ruin, God is compelled to let him see his own weakness, by withdrawing, in a great measure, the Holy Spirit from him.

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[366] O how many are being deluded by their own supposed goodness! When Peter said he would follow Christ to prison and to death, he meant it, every word of it; but he was not conscious that slumbering in his soul were elements which circumstances would fan into life, and which would prove his eternal ruin, unless he was made conscious of his danger. His compassionate Saviour saw in him a self-love, self-assurance that would overbear even his love for Christ; and unless he could be brought to see this, he would be lost.

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Do not seek to exalt self, but learn in the school of Christ meekness and lowliness of heart. You know what Peter's character was, how strikingly his peculiar traits were developed. Before his great fall he was always dictatorial and forward, speaking unadvisedly, from the impulse of the moment. He was always ready to correct others, and to express his mind before he had a clear comprehension of himself or of what he had to say. But Peter was converted, and the converted Peter was very different from the rash, impetuous Peter.

He retained his former fervor, but now the grace of Christ regulated his zeal. Instead of being impetuous, self-confident, and self-exalted, he was calm, self-possessed, and teachable. He could then feed the lambs as well as the sheep of Christ's flock.—[Testimonies for the Church 5:334](#).

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The world will never know the work secretly going on between the soul and God, nor the inward bitterness of spirit, the self-loathing, and the constant efforts to control self; but many of the world will be able to appreciate the result of these efforts.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:376](#).

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Christ will not undertake to teach the self-righteous, self-conceited, and self-willed. If such come to him with the inquiry, "What is truth?" he gives them no answer. It is only the meek that he will guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way. Solomon was naturally endowed with good judgment and large reasoning powers; but he acknowledged himself before God as a little child. He sought for wisdom from God with humility, and he sought not in vain.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:449](#).

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Those who have the deepest experience in the things of God, are the farthest removed from pride or self-exaltation. It is when men have the most exalted conceptions of the glory and excellence of Christ, that self is abased, and they feel that the lowest place in his service is too honorable for them.

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The reason why you fail to appreciate that which comes to you in warnings and reproofs from the word of God, is chiefly owing to your own self. You are inclined to self-importance, and your pride is wounded frequently, because you have not the meekness of character

to bow at the foot of the cross. If you call to mind the Author and Finisher of your faith, and realize what he has suffered,—that he went without the camp, bearing reproach that you might be saved,—then you will think that you are suffering nothing. What you want is the spirit of Jesus. You need to cherish it continually; and then when difficulties shall arise, you will be hid in Christ, and will manifest his spirit. You should not encourage a feeling of sympathy and pity for yourself. Self should be hid in Jesus, and then you will feel such sincere sorrow and pity for the souls who do not know what is for their best good, that you will forget all about your being misused.

We must bear in mind continually this fact: the hand of Jesus reaches over every one of his sincere followers, and every blow that is aimed to injure you, wounds the hand of Jesus that covers you.

[368] We should learn to honor those whom God honors. Those who have toiled long and unselfishly for his cause should ever be treated with respect and tenderness, even though it may be evident that they cannot perform the work which they once could, or that they sometimes err in judgment. Notwithstanding their imperfections, these very men may be far more useful in the work of God, than those who would criticise and reject them.

Let the younger men keep a warm place in their hearts, and room in their councils, for those whose heads have grown gray in the service of Christ.

Unconsecrated Workers

Young men are arising to engage in the work of God, some of whom have scarcely any sense of the sacredness and responsibility of the work. They have but little experience in exercising faith, and in earnest soul-hunger for the Spirit of God, which ever brings returns. Some men of good capabilities, who might fill important positions, do not know what spirit they are of. They run in a jovial mood as naturally as water flows down hill. They talk nonsense, and sport with young girls, while almost daily listening to the most solemn, soul-stirring truths. These men have a religion of the head, but their hearts are not sanctified by the truths they hear. Such can never lead others to the Fountain of living waters until they have drunk of the stream themselves.

It is no time now for lightness, vanity, or trifling. The scenes of this earth's history are soon to close. Minds that have been left to loose thought, need change. The apostle Peter says, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye [369] holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." [1 Peter 1:13-16.]

Loose thoughts must be gathered up and centered on God. The very thoughts should be in obedience to the will of God. Praise should not be given or expected; for this will have a tendency to foster self-confidence rather than to increase humility, to corrupt rather than to purify. Men who are really qualified, and who feel that they have a part to act in connection with the work of God, will feel pressed beneath a sense of the sacredness of the work, as a cart beneath sheaves. Now is the time to make the most earnest efforts to overcome the natural feelings of the carnal heart.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:473](#).

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Brethren, we must have less of self, and more of God. We are not to trust for success to what we can do, but to what Christ can do through our efforts. The efficiency of our labor depends upon our hold on God.

The Holy Spirit is grieved and driven away by the self-sufficiency, the unchristlike spirit, that is cherished. You have no time to spend in contention. Draw near to God, and go to work for Christ and the souls he died to save. If mistakes are made, as they will be, do not fall back, content to make no further effort, but try again. With agony of desire, in humility, with wrestling faith, come to One who is too wise to err, and who will make no mistake in your case; one who knows your every weakness, and who will hear your heart-felt prayers. May God make his servants wise through the divine illumination, that the impress of man may not be seen on any of the great and important enterprises before us.

[370] The Lord wants us to come up into the mount,—more directly into his presence. We are coming to a crisis which, more than any previous time since the world began, will demand the entire consecration of every one who has named the name of Christ.

A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. We must have the holy unction from God, the baptism of his Spirit; for this is the only efficient agent in the promulgation of sacred truth. It is the Spirit of God that quickens the lifeless faculties of the soul to appreciate heavenly things, and attracts the affections toward God and the truth.

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

It is our privilege to take God at his word. As Jesus was about to leave his disciples, to ascend into heaven, he commissioned them to bear the gospel message to all nations, tongues, and peoples. He told them to tarry in Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high. This was essential to their success. The holy unction must come upon the servants of God. All who were fully identified as disciples of Christ and associated with the apostles as evangelists, assembled together at Jerusalem. They put away all differences. They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, that they might receive the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit; for they were to preach the gospel in the demonstration of the Spirit and in the power of God. It was a time of great danger to the followers of Christ. They were as sheep in the midst of wolves, yet they were of good courage, because Christ had risen from the dead, and had revealed himself to them, and had promised them a special blessing which would qualify them to go forth to preach his gospel to the world. They were waiting in expectation of the fulfillment of his promise, and were praying with special fervency.

[371] This is the very course that should be pursued by those who act a part in the work of proclaiming the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven; for a people are to be prepared to stand in the great day of God. Although Christ had given the promise to his disciples that they should receive the Holy Spirit, this did not remove the necessity of prayer. They prayed all the more earnestly; they continued in prayer with one accord. Those who are now engaged in the solemn

work of preparing a people for the coming of the Lord, should also continue in prayer. The early disciples were of one accord. They had no speculations, no curious theory to advance as to how the promised blessing was to come. They were one in faith and spirit. They were agreed.

Put away all doubt. Dismiss your fears, obtain the experience that Paul had when he exclaimed, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." [[Galatians 2:20](#).] Surrender everything to Christ, and let your life be hid with Christ in God. Then you will be a power for good. One shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.

Venturing into Temptation

He who understands well his own character, who is acquainted with the sin that most easily besets him and the temptations that will be most likely to overcome him, should not expose himself needlessly, and invite temptation by placing himself upon the enemy's ground. If duty calls him where circumstances are not favorable, he will have special help from God, and can thus go fully girded for a conflict with the enemy. Self-knowledge will save many from falling into grievous temptations, and prevent many an inglorious defeat. In order to become acquainted with ourselves, it is essential that we faithfully investigate the motives and principles of our conduct, comparing our actions with the standard of duty revealed in God's word.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:517](#).

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Trials

The work of pruning and purifying to fit us for heaven, is a great work, and will cost us much suffering and trial, because our will is not subjected to the will of Christ. We must go through the furnace till the fires have consumed the dross, and we are purified, and reflect the divine image. Those who follow their inclinations and are governed by appearances, are not good judges of what God is doing. They are filled with discontent. They see failure where there is indeed triumph, a great loss where there is gain; and, like

Jacob, they are ready to exclaim, “All these things are against me,” [[Genesis 42:36.](#)] when the very things whereof they complain are all working together for their good.

No cross, no crown! How can one be strong in the Lord without trials? To have strength, we must have exercise. To have strong faith, we must be placed in circumstances where our faith will be tried. The apostle Paul, just before his martyrdom, exhorted Timothy, “Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.” [[2 Timothy 1:8.](#)] It is through much tribulation that we are to enter the kingdom. Our Saviour was tried in every possible way, and yet he triumphed in God continually. It is our privilege to be strong in the strength of God under all circumstances, and to glory in the cross of Christ.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:67.](#)

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The very trials that test our faith most severely, and make it seem that God has forsaken us, are designed to lead us nearer to Christ, that we may lay all our burdens at his feet, and receive the peace he will give us in exchange.... When you surrender yourself entirely to God, when you fall all broken upon Jesus, you will be rewarded by a victory the joy of which you have never yet realized. As you review the past with a clear vision, you will see that at the very time when life seemed to you only a perplexity and a burden, Jesus himself was near you, seeking to lead you into the light. Your Father was by your side, bending over you with unutterable love, afflicting you for your good, as the refiner purifies the precious ore. When you have thought yourself forsaken, he has been near you to comfort and sustain. We seldom view Jesus as he is, and are never so ready to receive his help as he is to help us.

What a victory you will gain when you learn to follow the opening providences of God with a grateful heart, and a determination to live with an eye single to his glory, in sickness or health, in abundance or want. Self is alive, and quivering at every touch. Self must be crucified before you can overcome in the name of Jesus, and receive the reward of the faithful.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:220.](#)

Christians Character

To have fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, is to be ennobled and elevated, and made a partaker of joys unspeakable and full of glory. Food, clothing, station, and wealth may have their value, but to have a connection with God and to be a partaker of his divine nature, is of priceless value. Our life should be hid with Christ in God; and although it “doth not yet appear what we shall be,” “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear,” “we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” [1 John 3:2; Colossians 3:4.] The princely dignity of the Christian character will shine forth as the sun, and the beams of light from the face of Christ will be shed upon those who have purified themselves even as he is pure. The privilege of becoming sons of God is cheaply purchased, even at the sacrifice of everything we possess, be it life itself.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:357](#).

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The most persistent attacks of the enemy of souls are made upon the truth we profess; and any deviation from the right reflects dishonor upon it. Our chief danger is in having the mind diverted from Christ. The name of Jesus has power to drive back the temptations of Satan, and lift up for us a standard against him. So long as the soul rests with unshaken confidence in the virtue and power of the atonement, it will stand firm as a rock to principle, and all the power of Satan and his angels cannot sway it from its integrity. The truth as it is in Jesus is a wall of fire around the soul that clings to him. Temptations will pour in upon us; for by them we are to be tried during our probation upon earth. This is the proving of God, a revelation of our own hearts. There is no sin in having temptations; but sin comes in when temptation is yielded to.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:357](#).

Our Unfailing Helper

Great things are before us, and we want to call the people from their indifference to get ready. Things that are eternal crowd upon my vision day and night; the things that are temporal fade from my sight. We are not now to cast away our confidence, but to have firm

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assurance, firmer than ever before. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us, and he will help us to the end. We will look to the monumental pillars, reminders of what the Lord has done, to comfort us and to save us from the hand of the destroyer. We want to have fresh in our memory every tear the Lord has wiped from our eyes, every pain he has soothed, every anxiety removed, every fear dispelled, every want supplied, every mercy bestowed, and thus strengthen ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage. We cannot but look onward to new perplexities in the coming conflict, but we may look on what is past as well as what is to come, and say, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” [[Deuteronomy 33:25](#).] The trial will not exceed the strength which shall be given us to bear it. Then let us take up our work just where we find it, believing that nothing can come but that strength will come proportionate to the trial.

Consecration to the Work

Paul said, “I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.” [[Romans 1:14](#).] God had revealed to Paul his truth, and in so doing made him a debtor to those who were in darkness, to enlighten them.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:52](#).

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The work of the apostles of Christ was to educate and train men and women to publish the good tidings of a crucified and risen Saviour. Every soul converted to the gospel felt under solemn obligation to the Lord Jesus, to teach others the way of salvation. This is the spirit that should animate us.

Value of the Soul

Until we have clear ideas of what those will enjoy who are saved in the kingdom of glory; until we can fully comprehend the value of that life which measures with the life of God; until we can fully realize the riches of the reward which is laid up for those who overcome,—we cannot know the inestimable value of the soul.

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The followers of Christ have one leading object in view, one great work,—the salvation of their fellow-men. Every other interest should be inferior to this; it should engage the most earnest effort and the deepest interest.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:168](#). [376]

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When the spirit of holiness and perfect love abounds in the heart, working in those who profess the name of Christ, it will be like a refining fire, consuming the dross and scattering the darkness,—[Testimonies for the Church 1:232](#).

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The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, and being clothed with humility, possessing that love that is pure, peaceable, and easy to be entreated, full of gentleness and good fruits, is not an easy attainment.... The soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in knowledge and true holiness. The holy life and character of Christ is a faithful example. His confidence in his heavenly Father was unlimited. His obedience and submission were unreserved and perfect. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister to others. He came not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him. In all things he submitted himself to Him that judgeth righteously. From the lips of the Saviour of the world were heard these words, “I can of mine own self do nothing.” [[John 5:30](#).]

He became poor, and made himself of no reputation. He was hungry, and frequently thirsty, and many times weary in his labors; but he had not where to lay his head. When the cold, damp shades of night gathered about him, the earth was frequently his bed. Yet he blessed those who hated him. What a life! what an experience! Can we, the professed followers of Christ, cheerfully endure privation and suffering as did our Lord, without murmuring? Can we drink of the cup, and be baptized with the baptism? If so, we may share with him his glory in his heavenly kingdom. If not, we shall have no part with him.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:106](#).

[377] No one can appreciate the blessings of redemption unless he feels that he can joyfully afford to make any and every sacrifice for the love of Christ. Every sacrifice made for Christ enriches the giver, and every suffering and privation endured for his dear sake increases the overcomer's final joy in heaven.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:219](#).

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God wants minute-men. He will have men who, when important decisions are to be made, are as true as the needle to the pole; men whose special and personal interests are swallowed up, as were our Saviour's, in the one great general interest for the salvation of souls. Satan plays upon the human mind wherever a chance has been left for him to do so; and he seizes upon the very time and place where he can do the most service to himself, and the greatest injury to the cause of God. A neglect to do what we might do, and what God requires us to do in his cause, is a sin which cannot be palliated with excuses of circumstances or conditions; for Jesus has made provision for all in every emergency.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:505](#).

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The enemy will seek in every way possible to obstruct the course of those who take hold of any branch of the work of God, that they may not have success. But instead of their interpreting this as an evidence that the Lord would not have them engage in labor, they should take it in altogether a different light, and see in the difficulties a vigilant foe; because the enemy is watching to block the way. And especially will this be the case with young men and women who would give themselves to the work of God. Satan will use every means to divert them from it. He attacks those who are doing errands for God, that they may be defeated. But those very ones who have had this difficulty to contend with, and have carried the matter to
 [378] God, and persevered under discouragements, will say that it is the most valuable part of their experience.

The new and inexperienced workers frequently have had an idea that they could do the work themselves, and thus they have

failed to seek God most earnestly for that help which they so much needed, that they might see their own weakness and insufficiency, and cling to the Arm mighty in power. These things should be no discouragement to those who would take hold of the work; for God often brings into strait places those whom he would have engage in labor for him, so that they may learn lessons of dependence and trust, and know the Source of their strength. Should he make the path very easy before them, they would be liable to feel that they were sufficient and powerful, and able to do the work themselves, and not seek God or give him the glory.

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Would that every one of you could have a view that was presented to me years ago. In my very girlhood the Lord saw fit to open before me the glories of heaven. I was in vision taken to heaven, and the angel said to me, "Look!" I looked to the world as it was in dense darkness. The agony that came over me was indescribable as I saw this darkness. Again the word came, "Look ye." And again I looked intensely over the world, and I began to see jets of light like stars dotted all through this darkness; and then I saw another and another added light, and so all through this moral darkness the star-like lights were increasing. And the angel said, "These are they that believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and are obeying the words of Christ. These are the light of the world; and if it were not for these lights, the judgments of God would immediately fall upon the transgressors of God's law." I saw then these little jets of light growing brighter, shining forth from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and lighting the whole world. Occasionally one of these lights would begin to grow dim, and others would go out, and every time this occurred there was sadness and weeping in heaven. And some of the lights would grow brighter and brighter, and their brightness was far-reaching, and many more lights were added to it. Then there was rejoicing in heaven. I saw that the rays of light came directly from Jesus, to form these precious jets of light in the world.

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Angels of God are all astir, ascending to heaven, and descending to earth again with messages of mercy and warning. These heavenly messengers are moving upon minds and hearts. There are men and women everywhere whose hearts are susceptible of being inspired with the truth. If those who have a knowledge of the truth would now work in unison with the Spirit of God, we should see a great work accomplished.

New fields are open in which all can test their calling by experimental effort in bringing souls out from darkness and error, and establishing them upon the platform of eternal truth.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:64](#).

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[380] The humblest and poorest of the disciples of Jesus can be a blessing to others. They may not realize that they are doing any special good, but by their unconscious influence they may start waves of blessing which will widen and deepen, and the happy result of their words and consistent deportment they may never know until the final distribution of rewards. They do not feel or know that they are doing anything great. They are not required to weary themselves with anxieties about success. They have only to go forward, not with many words, and vain-glorious, and boasting, but quietly, faithfully doing the work which God's providence has assigned them, and they will not lose their reward.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:246](#).

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We have only a little while to wage the warfare; then Christ will come, and this scene of conflict will close. Then our last efforts will have been made to work with Christ, and advance his kingdom. Some who have stood in the fore-front of the battle, zealously resisting incoming evil, fall at the post of duty; the living gaze sorrowfully at the fallen heroes, but there is no time to cease work. They must close up the ranks, seize the banner from the hand palsied by death, and with renewed energy vindicate the truth and the honor of Christ. As never before, resistance must be made against sin—against the powers of darkness. The time demands energetic and determined

activity on the part of those who believe present truth. If the time seems long, wait for our Deliverer to come; if, bowed by affliction and worn with toil, we feel impatient to receive an honorable release from the warfare, let us remember—and let the remembrance check every murmur—that we are left on earth to encounter storms and conflicts, to perfect Christian character, to become better acquainted with God our Father, and Christ our elder Brother, and to work for the Master in winning many souls to Christ. “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.” [Daniel 12:3.]—[Testimonies for the Church 1:111](#).

Qualifications for the Work

There are men who never gave a discourse in their lives who ought to be laboring to save souls. Neither great talent nor high position is required. But there is urgent need of men and women who are acquainted with Jesus, and familiar with the story of his life and death. [381]

Talent is too much idolized, and station too much coveted, even among Seventh-day Adventists. There is too eager a desire to ride upon the high places of the earth, and too little willingness to follow the Saviour in the path of cross-bearing and humility. There are too many who will do nothing unless they can be leaders; too many who must be praised and petted, or they have no interest to labor. To work in a humble way for Jesus, and, though unnoticed, to still work on, sowing the seeds of truth, appears to them an unattractive and unwelcome task.

All this springs from mistaken conceptions of usefulness and honor. The wide, deep rivers are admired and valued, while the hundreds of little rills that help to form these broad and noble streams, are unnoticed. Yet the humble brook that makes its noiseless way through grove and meadow, bringing health and fertility and beauty, is as useful in its way as the broad river.

We do not need eminent men so much as good, true, and humble men. God calls for those of all classes and all trades to work in his cause. Those are wanted who will begin at the lower rounds of the ladder, who will, if need be, eat their own bread and quietly

perform their duty; men who will not shrink from diligent labor to acquire means, or from rigid economy in its expenditure, and who will devote both time and means to work for the Master in their own families and their own neighborhoods.

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[382] The work of God calls for young men who are not self-sufficient and boastful,—young men who study their Bibles and are honest and God-fearing. Volunteers are needed who will respect gray hairs, and honor those whom God honors, and who will not feel insulted when counseled by men of experience. Such men will be earnest workers; for they are actuated by love to God, and interest in their fellow-men. They approach the Lord's standard of manhood, and with the divine blessing on their capabilities they may reach a high degree of mental and moral excellence. To be a man that God can approve and use in his cause, is honor enough for any human being. Office, wealth, position, sink into insignificance in comparison.

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Some men have no firmness of character. They are like a ball of putty, and can be pressed into any conceivable shape. They are of no definite form and consistency, and are of no practical use in the world. This weakness, indecision, and inefficiency must be overcome. In true Christian character there is an indomitableness which cannot be molded or subdued by adverse circumstances. Men must have moral backbone, an integrity which cannot be flattered, bribed, or terrified.—[Testimonies for the Church 5:297](#).

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Christ is pleased with his followers when they show that, though human, they are partakers of the divine nature. They are not statues, but living men and women, whose warm hearts, invigorated by the dews of divine grace, open and expand as the beams of the Sun of Righteousness fall upon them. The light which is shed upon them they reflect upon others in works luminous with the love of Christ. There are some professed Christians who are like icebergs; they

seem to freeze up the cheerfulness of all who are connected with them. Their influence upon the cause of Christ is always deleterious.

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The lives of those who are connected with God are fragrant with deeds of love and goodness. 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.

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Enoch was a marked character. Many look upon his life as 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 what the lives and characters of all must be, if, like Enoch, they are subjects to be translated when Christ shall come. His life was what the life of every one may be who closely connects with God.

Women as Christian Workers

Who can have so deep a love for the souls of men and women for whom Christ has died, as those who are partakers of his grace? Who can represent the truth and the example of Christ better than Christian women who are practicing the truth in their earnest efforts to bring souls to the light? Who are so well adapted to be teachers in the Sabbath-school? With a heart imbued with the love of Christ, teaching the children of her class, praying with them and for them, she may see souls converted. The true mother is adapted to be the teacher of children. I do not recommend that woman should become a voter or an office-holder; but as a missionary, teaching the truth by epistolary correspondence, distributing tracts and soliciting subscribers for periodicals containing the solemn truth for this time, she may do very much. In conversing with families, in praying with the mother and children, she will be a blessing. Women can be instruments of righteousness, rendering holy service to God. It was Mary who first preached a risen Saviour.

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[384] John says, "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." [[Revelation 18:1.](#)] Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue. God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve him, and can touch the lips with a live coal from off the altar, and cause them to become eloquent with his praise. Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the wonderful truths of God's word. The stammering tongue will be loosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth. May the Lord help his people to cleanse the soul-temple from every defilement, and to maintain so close a connection with him that they may be partakers of the latter rain when it shall be poured out.

Education

The agency of the Spirit of God does not remove from us the necessity of exercising our faculties and talents, but teaches us how to use every power to the glory of God. The human faculties, when under the special direction of the grace of God, are capable of being used to the best purpose on earth, and will be exercised in the future, immortal life.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:372.](#)

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Ignorance will not increase the humility or spirituality of any professed follower of Christ. The truths of the divine word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can be best glorified by those who serve him intelligently. The great object of education is to enable us to use the powers which God has given us in such a manner as will best represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God.

[385] We are indebted to him who gave us existence, for all the talents which have been intrusted to us; and it is a duty we owe to our Creator to cultivate and improve upon the talents he has committed to our trust. Education will discipline the mind, develop its powers, and understandingly direct them, that we may be useful in advancing

the glory of God.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:160](#).

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It is true that the world's men of learning are not easily reached by the practical truths of God's word. The reason is, they trust to human wisdom, and pride themselves upon their intellectual superiority, and are unwilling to become humble learners in the school of Christ. Our Saviour did not ignore learning or despise education; yet he chose unlearned fishermen for the work of the gospel, because they had not been schooled in the false customs and traditions of the world. They were men of good natural ability, and of a humble, teachable spirit; men whom he could educate for his great work. In the ordinary walks of life there is many a man patiently treading the round of daily toil, all unconscious that he possesses powers, which, if called into action, would raise him to an equality with the world's most honored men. The touch of a skillful hand is needed to arouse and develop those dormant faculties. It was such men whom Jesus connected with himself; and he gave them the advantages of three years' training under his own care. No course of study in the schools of the rabbis or the halls of philosophy could have equaled this in value.

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Any young man is wanting in his duty to himself if he fails to meet the purposes of God by improving and enlarging his faculties. The mind is the best possession we have; but it must be trained by study, by reflection, by learning in the school of Christ, the best and truest educator the world has ever known.

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Chasing through books superficially, clogs the mind, and causes you to become a mental dyspeptic. You cannot digest and use one half that you read. If you should read with the one object in view, to improve the mind, and should read only as much as the mind can comprehend and digest, and would patiently persevere in such a course of reading, good results would be obtained.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:465](#).

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The same zeal and energy, tact and order, that are exercised in counting-rooms and shops, and in the fine arts, should be brought into the religious life, and exercised in the work of God.

Bible Study

The perusal of works upon our faith, the reading of arguments from the pen of others, while an excellent and important practice, is not that which will give the mind the greatest strength. The Bible is the best book in the world for intellectual culture. The subjects treated upon in the word of God, the dignified simplicity of its utterances, the grand themes which it presents to the mind, tend to develop in man faculties which cannot otherwise be developed. The student will come from a contemplation of these elevating themes, from associations with these lofty thoughts, more pure and elevated in mind than if he had been occupied in the contemplation of any subject of a merely human origin.

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The exhortation that Paul gave to Timothy, was, "Take heed," [1 Timothy 4:16.] first to yourself, and then to the doctrine. Do not let your heart become hardened with sin. It is very important that our youth should begin the work right. You need wisdom from heaven to read the Scriptures aright. The youth should decide the aim, the purpose of their life, and set their standard high; if they have a low standard, they will not rise above that at which they aim. Closely examine your manners and habits. Compare them with the word of God, and then separate from you every wrong habit and indulgence; for God will not hear your prayers if you regard iniquity in your heart. Christ has said, "Without me ye can do nothing." [John 15:5.] Every one of you wants to be sure that Christ is in you and abiding with you. Then you can do all things.

With your Bibles you should go before God, and plead with him for an understanding of his word. You want your understanding quickened; you want to know that you *know* the real principles of the truth; and then when you meet opponents, you will not have

to meet them in your own strength. The angel of God will stand right by your side, to help in answering every question that may be asked. But one passionate word will give Satan the advantage, and often wound your own soul and turn others away from the light. You want to be walled in, as it were, with Jesus; and as you hold yourself in this position, it will have a telling influence upon the people. Remember that the work is to present the truth as it is in Jesus, and you will have success. Although many will not hear you, yet there are those who will hear. There are honest inquirers after truth, who are far from being satisfied with the spiritual declension in the churches at the present time, and are hungry for the bread of life.

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Above all other people upon the earth, the man whose mind is enlightened by the opening of God's word to his understanding, will feel that he must give himself to diligence in the perusal of the word of God, and to a diligent study of the sciences; for his hope and calling are greater than any other. The more closely connected man is with the Source of all knowledge and wisdom, the more he can be advantaged intellectually, as well as spiritually, through his relation to God.

The opening of God's word is followed by remarkable strengthening of man's faculties; for the entrance of God's word is the application of divine truth to the heart, purifying and refining the soul through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

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All resistance of God, all departures from virtue and truth, pervert the faith as well as the morals, while conformity to God's revealed will always increases faith and knowledge. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." [John 7:17.]

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The mind devoted unreservedly to God, under the guidance of the divine Spirit develops generally and harmoniously. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed through the power of God to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion and piety establish so close a relation between Jesus and his disciple that the Christian becomes like him in mind and character. After association with the Son of God, the humble follower of Christ is found to be a person of sound principle, clear perception, and reliable judgment. He has a connection with God, the source of light and understanding. He who longed to be of service to the cause of Christ, has been so quickened by the life-giving rays of the Sun of Righteousness, that he has been enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God.

Men of the highest education and accomplishments have learned the most precious lessons from the precept and example of the humble follower of Christ, who is designated as “unlearned” by the world. But could men look with deeper insight, they would see that these humble men had obtained an education in the highest of all schools, even in the school of the divine Teacher, who spake as never man spake.

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We would not discourage education, or put a low estimate upon mental culture and discipline. God would have us students as long as we remain in this world. But no one should set himself as a critic to measure the usefulness and influence of his brother who has had few advantages of book knowledge. He may be rich in a rarer wisdom. Through a connection with God, the Christian will have clearer and broader views, unbiased by his own preconceived opinions. His discernment will be more penetrative and far-seeing, his judgment better balanced.

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There is little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Bible. One may read the whole Bible through, and yet fail to see its beauty, or to comprehend its deep and hidden meaning. One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind, and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view, and no positive instruction gained.

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When persons meet together for the investigation of points of faith concerning which there is a difference of opinion, the spirit which controls them will be manifested. Those who are standing in defense of truth should be calm and self-possessed. If they have the mind of Christ, they will be kind and courteous. They will not be betrayed into the use of harsh language. They will not regard themselves as infallible, nor look with contempt upon those who differ with them. They will not regard them as enemies, nor meet them with ridicule or jesting.

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Paul speaks of the riches of the glory of the mystery that is to be made known to the Gentiles. There are many mysteries in the word of God that we do not comprehend, and many of us are content to stop our investigation when we have just begun to receive a little knowledge concerning Christ. When there begins to be a little unfolding of the divine purposes to the mind, and we begin to obtain a slight knowledge of the character of God, we become satisfied, and think that we have received about all the light that there is for us in the word of God. But the truth of God is infinite. With painstaking effort, we should work in the mines of truth, discovering the precious jewels that have been hidden. It is the laborer's privilege to have a constant supply of fresh truth for the people. He should be in such a position that he can bring from the treasure house of God, not the same thing over and over, but new beauty and new truth.

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We must not for a moment think that there is no more light, no more truth to be given us. We are in danger of becoming careless, by our indifference losing the sanctifying power of truth, and composing ourselves with the thought, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." [[Revelation 3:17.](#)] While we must hold fast to the truths which we have already received, we must not look with suspicion upon any new light that God may send.

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It has been shown me that there is a fault with us, of honoring the human, flattering men, accepting their ideas, their judgment, as the voice of God, and advocating their cause. Many have such confidence in those whom they have been accustomed to regard as leaders, that they seem incapable of discerning when these persons are in error, and they are ready to cling to and defend erroneous positions, because others do so. This spirit is displeasing to God, and is dangerous to all who indulge in it; for if leading men allow themselves to be controlled by prejudice, evil surmisings, or envy, those who look to them for an example are led astray. Brethren, trust not in man; look to God; trust in his infallible wisdom. Shun as a sin the practice, so common even among Seventh-day Adventists, of becoming the echo of any man, whatever his position. Listen to the voice of the True Shepherd, and you will never be led astray.

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Jesus prayed for his disciples, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” [John 17:21.] Just before, he said, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” [John 17:17.] And he had given them the promise, “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” [John 16:13.] Through the Holy Spirit, Christ will open more clearly to those who will believe on him that which he has inspired holy men to write concerning the truth. And it is thus that the unity for which Christ prayed is to be effected. We are to receive sanctification through obedience to the word and the Spirit of truth.

We cannot surrender the truth in order to accomplish this union; for the very means by which it is to be gained is sanctification through the truth. Human wisdom would change all this, thinking this basis of union too narrow. Men would effect a union through conformity to popular opinions, through a compromise with the world. But truth is God’s basis for the unity of his people.

Manner of Labor

The Saviour's Example

Jesus never suppressed one word of the truth; but he uttered it always in love. He exercised the greatest tact, and thoughtful, kind attention in his intercourse with the people. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. He fearlessly denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity, but tears were in his voice as he uttered his scathing rebukes. He wept over Jerusalem, the city he loved, that refused to receive him, the way, the truth, and the life. They had rejected him, the Saviour; but he regarded them with pitying tenderness, and sorrow so deep that it broke his heart. His life was one of self-denial and thoughtful care for others. He never made truth cruel, but manifested a wonderful tenderness for humanity. Every soul was precious in his eyes. He always bore himself with divine dignity; yet he bowed with the tenderest compassion and regard to every member of the family of God. He saw in all, fallen souls whom it was his mission to save.

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O, how many fail through acting out their own peculiar temperament! They arouse in others a spirit of antagonism, and the worst feelings of opposition and enmity. As workers for Christ, we want sanctified tact. Study to be skillful when there are no rules to meet the case. Win hearts, not repulse them. In this kind of work more than in any other that can be undertaken, you need wisdom from above. Many souls have been turned in the wrong direction, and thus lost to the cause of God, by want of skill and wisdom in the worker. Tact, wisdom, and good judgment in the laborer in the cause of God increase his usefulness a hundredfold. If he can only speak the right words at the right time, and manifest the right spirit, it will exert a melting power on the heart of the needy one.

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The world's Redeemer did not come with outward display, or a show of worldly wisdom. Men could not see beneath the guise of humility, the glory of the Son of God. He was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." [Isaiah 53:3.] He was to them as a root out of dry ground, with no form or comeliness that they should desire him. But he declared,

[393] “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” [Isaiah 61:1.]

Christ reached the people where they were. He presented the plain truth to their minds in the most forcible and simple language. The humble poor, the most unlearned, could comprehend, through faith in him, the most exalted truths of God. No one needed to consult the learned doctors as to his meaning. He did not perplex the ignorant with mysterious inferences, or use unaccustomed and learned words, of which they had no knowledge. The greatest Teacher the world has ever known, was the most definite, simple, and practical in his instruction.

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Jesus labored constantly for one object; all his powers were employed for the salvation of men, and every act of his life tended to that end. He traveled on foot, teaching his followers as he went. His garments were dusty and travel-stained, and his appearance was uninviting. But the simple, pointed truths which fell from his divine lips soon caused his hearers to forget his appearance, and to be charmed, not with the man, but with the doctrine he taught.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:373](#).

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[394] When thrown into the society of unbelievers, whether walking, working, riding, trading, or visiting, we should, as we have opportunity, introduce the subject of religion, and speak of the things which concern their eternal interest. We should not do this abruptly, but with tact. This was the way in which our Saviour taught concerning the kingdom of God. Everything in nature, and the incidents passing under their notice, were to him texts for impressive sermons. He thus bound up his sacred lessons with the flowers, with the recurring seasons, with the rocks, the hills, and the mountains, and with the every-day occurrences of life. Thus it is the duty of every follower of Jesus to sow beside all waters.

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God employs men to carry on his work, but there is constant danger that they will place their own impress upon it. Too often the messenger that God has used, come to be depended upon, and to be placed were God should be, by the people. Therefore from time to time the Lord calls others to aid in carrying forward the message. The work must not become circumscribed by the influence of man; the truth should not be crippled and dwarfed by the imperfect experience of the workers. God does not set the earlier laborers aside, for their capabilities are all needed for the perfection of the work; and if they submit themselves to God, they may still aid in its upbuilding; but if they become jealous, and imagine evil, they will stand directly in the way of its advancement.

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The Lord does not apportion to any one man some special territory in which he alone is to labor. This is contrary to his plan. He designs that in every place where the truth is introduced, different minds, different gifts, shall be brought in to exert an influence upon the work. No one man has sufficient wisdom to manage an interest without helpers, and no one should think himself competent to do so. The fact that a person has ability in one direction, is no evidence that his judgment on all other subjects is perfect, and that the wisdom of some other mind does not need to be united with his.

Those who do labor together should seek to be in perfect harmony. And yet no one should feel that he cannot labor with those who do not see just as he sees, and who do not in their labors follow just his plans. If all manifest a humble, teachable spirit, there need be no difficulty. God has set in the church different gifts. These are precious in their proper places, and all may act a part in the work of preparing a people for Christ's soon coming.

[395]

How to Visit

Much depends upon the manner in which you meet those whom you visit. We should manifest cheerfulness in our work. You can take hold of the hand in such a way as at once to gain the confidence,

or in a cold, unimpressive manner, as though you were an iceberg, and had no interest in the person. Such a manner will repulse, and you will find no warmth of feeling. We should not act as though it were a condescension to come in contact with the poor. They are as good by nature as we, and we must talk to them as though we thought them so. We should clothe ourselves in plain, simple attire, so that none may be needlessly embarrassed. The joy which comes into the homes of the poor is often very limited, and why not carry rays of light to shine in upon them and fill their hearts! What we need is the tender sympathy of Jesus; then we can win our way to the hardest heart.

Courtesy

It is a very nice work to win souls to Christ. It is the greatest work ever given to mortal man, to deal with human minds. If you find access to the hearts of men bearing almost every stamp of character, you must heed the injunction of the apostle to be courteous. Love will do that which argument will fail to accomplish. Love is power. The workers need to bring the love of Jesus into their labors. Those who are young are much more easily impressed than those who have reached mature age; and if young men and women understood their capabilities, if the grace of Christ ruled in their hearts, they might be a power for good in the hand of the Lord.

Duty to Give Reproof

[396] God's plan is not to send messengers who will please and flatter sinners: he delivers no messages of peace to lull the unsanctified into carnal security. But he lays heavy burdens upon the conscience of the wrong-doer, and pierces his soul with sharp arrows of conviction. The ministering angels present to him the fearful judgments of God to deepen the sense of his great need and prompt the agonizing cry. "What shall I do to be saved?" The very hand that humbles to the dust, rebukes sin, and puts pride and ambition to shame, lifts up the penitent, stricken one, and inquires with deepest sympathy, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?"

When man has sinned against a holy and merciful God, there is no course for him to pursue so noble as to sincerely repent and

confess his errors in tears and bitterness of soul. This God requires of him; he will accept of nothing less than a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

The Spirit of Christ

You must feel your utter helplessness without Christ, and be much with God in prayer. The more ignorant of Bible truth the people are, and the lower they have sunk in ignorance and superstition, the more they need the arm of infinite power to lift them up. Pity rather than censure them. Recall your own sins and how long the Lord bore with your neglect of his great salvation, and walk with fear and trembling before him. Christ has said, "Without me ye can do nothing." You need to be imbued with his Spirit. The human heart, uncontrolled by the Spirit of God, is void of the meekness of Christ, but loves to battle for the truth. Those who are proclaiming God's message to the world must not be captious or overbearing. They should not be too free to criticise or condemn others. They should be careful not to let their words wound, but should let pure Bible truth cut its way to the heart. When tempted to speak impatiently, remember, brethren, that when Jesus was reviled, he reviled not again. Give the reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. With fear lest you have not the truth?—No; but with fear lest by some unwise, impatient word, you may close hearts against the truth. If you cannot be calm in answering the accusations of enemies, it is better to keep silent. [397]

God wants you to testify to the world that you have a special message for them, by presenting it in the Spirit of Christ. They will then see the difference between those who teach it and those who oppose. But if you have exalted views of your own ability, your spirit will rise in self-justification at the least provocation. What all the workers need is to make an entire surrender to God, and, putting self out of sight, lift up the Man of Calvary. When you have placed yourselves in the right relation to God, if you are compelled to go among the warring elements, Christ will give you his Spirit, and will work with your efforts. When brought in contact with the powers of darkness, angels of God will be right by your side, and will preserve you from the wrath of man.

How to Treat the Erring

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” [Galatians 6:1.] Here is a special direction to deal tenderly with those overtaken in a fault. This word “overtaken” must have its full significance. It describes something different from deliberate sin; it applies to one who is led into sin unawares through want of watchfulness and prayer, not discerning the temptation of Satan, and so falling into his snare. There is a difference to be made in the case of one who deliberately enters into temptation, who marks out an evil course, covering his sins skillfully, that he may not be detected. More decisive measures are needed to check the premeditated sin; but the apostle directs the treatment to be given to those who are “overtaken” or surprised, or overcome by temptation. [398] “Ye which are spiritual,” you who have a connection with God, “restore such a one in the spirit of meekness,”—do not crush all hope and courage out of the soul, but restore him in meekness, “considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Faithful reproofs will be needed, and kindly counsel and supplications to God to bring him to see his sin and danger.

The original word translated “restore,” means to *set in joint*, as a dislocated bone. Efforts should be made to bring him to himself, by convincing him of his sin and error, that he may not, like a limb hopelessly diseased, be severed from the body. He is to be loved, because Christ loved us in our weakness and errors. There should be no triumphing in a brother’s fall; but in meekness, in the fear of God, in love for his soul, we should seek to save him from ruin.

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Jesus pities them [the erring]; he loves them, and bears with their infirmities even as he does with yours. You do wrong to exalt yourself above those who are not so strong as you are. You do wrong to shut yourself up in a self-righteous spirit, thanking God that you are not like other men, but that your faith and zeal exceed those of the poor, feeble ones striving to do right under discouragements and darkness.

Angels from a pure and holy Heaven come to this polluted world to sympathize with the weakest, the most helpless and needy, while Christ himself descended from his throne to help just such as these. You have no right to hold yourself aloof from these faltering ones, nor to assert your marked superiority over them. Come more in unison with Christ, pity the erring, lift up the hands that hang down, strengthen the feeble knees, and bid the fearful hearts be strong. Pity and help them, even as Christ has pitied you.... You may feel that your work in this direction is not rightly appreciated; but remember that our Saviour's work was also lightly considered by those whom he benefited. He came to save those who were lost; but the very ones whom he sought to rescue, refused his help, and finally put him to death.

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If you fail ninety-nine times in a hundred, but succeed in saving the one soul from ruin, you have done a noble deed for the Master's cause. But to be a co-worker with Jesus, you should have all patience with those for whom you labor, not scorning the simplicity of the work, but looking to the blessed result. When those for whom you labor do not exactly meet your mind, you often say in your heart "Let them go; they are not worth saving." What if Christ had treated poor outcasts in a similar manner? He died to save miserable sinners, and if you work in the same spirit and in the same manner indicated by the example of Him whom you follow, leaving the results with God, you can never in this life measure the amount of good you have accomplished.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:131](#).

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Mild measures, soft answers, and pleasant words are much better fitted to reform and save, than severity and harshness. A little too much unkindness may place persons beyond your reach, while a conciliatory spirit would be the means of binding them to you, and you might then establish them in the right way. You should be actuated by a forgiving spirit also, and give due credit to every good purpose and action of those around you....

Do not reproach the Christian religion by jealousy and intolerance toward others. This will but poorly recommend your belief to them. No one has ever been reclaimed from a wrong position

[400] by censure and reproach; but many have thus been driven from the truth, and have steeled their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle and winning deportment, may save the erring, and hide a multitude of sins. God requires us to have that charity that “suffereth long, and is kind.” [1 [Corinthians 13:4](#).]

The religion of Christ does not require us to lose our identity of character, but merely to adapt ourselves, in some measure, to the feelings and ways of others. Many people may be brought together in a unity of religious faith whose opinions, habits, and tastes in temporal matters are not in harmony; but if they have the love of Christ glowing in their hearts, and are looking forward to the same heaven as their eternal home, they may have the sweetest and most intelligent communion together, and a unity the most wonderful. There are scarcely two whose experience is alike in every particular. The trials of one may not be the trials of another, and our hearts should ever be open to kindly sympathy, and all aglow with the love that Jesus had for all his brethren....

Christ sometimes reproveth with severity, and in some cases it may be necessary for us to do so; but we should consider that while Christ knew the exact condition of the ones he rebuked, and just the amount of reproof they could bear, and what was necessary to correct their course of wrong, he also knew just how to pity the erring, comfort the unfortunate, and encourage the weak. He knew just how to keep souls from despondency and to inspire them with hope, because he was acquainted with the exact motives and peculiar trials of every mind. He could not make a mistake.

[401] But *we* may misjudge motives; *we* may be deceived by appearances; we may think we are doing right to reprove wrong, and go too far, censure too severely, and wound where we wished to heal; or we may exercise sympathy unwisely, and counteract, in our ignorance, reproof that is merited and timely. *Our* judgment may be wrong; but Jesus was too wise to err. He reproveth with pity, and loved with a divine love those whom he rebuked.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:65](#).

Peter denied the Man of sorrows in his acquaintance with grief in the hour of his humiliation. But he afterward repented and was reconverted. He had true contrition of soul, and gave himself afresh to his Saviour. With blinding tears he makes his way to the solitudes of the garden of Gethsemane, and there prostrates himself where he saw his Saviour's prostrate form, when the bloody sweat was forced from his pores by his great agony. Peter remembers with remorse that he was asleep when Jesus prayed during those fearful hours. His proud heart breaks, and penitential tears moisten the sods so recently stained with the bloody sweat-drops of God's dear Son. He left that garden a converted man. He was ready then to pity the tempted. He was humbled, and could sympathize with the weak and erring. He could caution and warn the presumptuous, and was fully fitted to strengthen his brethren.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:416](#).

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Do not be exclusive. Do not seek out a few with whom you delight to associate, and leave others to take care of themselves. Suppose you do see weakness in one and folly in another; do not stand aloof from them, and associate with those only who, you think, are about perfect. The very souls you despise need your love and sympathy. Do not leave a weak soul to struggle alone, to wrestle with the passions of his own heart without your help and prayers, but consider yourself, lest you also be tempted. If you do this, God will not leave you to your own weakness. You may have sins greater in his sight than the sins of those you condemn. Do not stand off, and say, "I am holier than thou." Christ has thrown his divine arm around the human race. He has brought his divine power to man that he might encourage the poor, sin-sick, discouraged soul to reach up for a higher life. O, we need more of Christ's spirit, and much less of self! We need the converting power of God upon our hearts daily. We need the mellowing spirit of Christ to subdue and soften our souls. The only way for those to do who feel that they are whole, is to fall upon the Rock and be broken. Christ can change you into his likeness, if you will submit yourself to him.

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The world is indeed full of hurry, and of pride, selfishness, avarice, and violence; and it may seem to us that it is a waste of time and breath to be ever in season and out of season, and on all occasions to hold ourselves in readiness to speak words that are gentle, pure, elevating, chaste, and holy, in the face of the whirlwind of confusion, bustle, and strife. And yet, words fitly spoken, coming from sanctified hearts and lips, and sustained by a godly, consistent Christian deportment, will be as apples of gold in pictures of silver...

You are not to wait for great occasions, or to expect extraordinary abilities, before you work in earnest for God. You need not have a thought of what the world will think of you. If your intercourse with them, and your godly conversation, are a living testimony to them of the purity and sincerity of your faith, and they are convinced that you desire to benefit them, your words will not be wholly lost upon them, but will be productive of good.

[403] A servant of Christ, in any department of the Christian service, will, by precept and example, have a saving influence upon others. The good seed sown may lie some time in a cold, worldly, selfish heart, without evidencing that it has taken root; but frequently the Spirit of God operates upon that heart, and waters it with the dew of heaven, and the long-hidden seed springs up and finally bears fruit to the glory of God. We know not in our life-work which shall prosper, this or that. These are not questions for us poor mortals to settle. We are to do our work, leaving the result with God.—[Testimonies for the Church 3:247](#).

Ministering to the Sick

During the life of Christ, the sick and afflicted were objects of his special care, When he sent out his disciples, he commissioned them to heal the sick, as well as to preach the gospel. When he sent forth the seventy, he commanded them to heal the sick, and next, to preach that the kingdom of God had come nigh unto them. Their physical health was to be first cared for, in order to prepare the way for their minds to be reached by those truths which the apostles were to preach.

The Saviour of the world devoted more time and labor to healing the afflicted of their maladies than to preaching. His last injunction

to his apostles, his representatives upon the earth, was to lay hands on the sick that they might recover.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:225](#).

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The tender sympathies of our Saviour were aroused for fallen and suffering humanity. If you would be his followers, you must cultivate compassion and sympathy. Indifference to human woes must give place to lively interest in the sufferings of others. The widow, the orphan, the sick and dying, will always need help. Here is an opportunity to proclaim the gospel,—to hold up Jesus, the hope and consolation of all men. When the suffering body has been relieved, and you have shown a lively interest in the afflicted, the heart is opened, and you can pour in the heavenly balm. If you are looking to Jesus and drawing from him knowledge and strength and grace, you can impart his consolation to others, because the Comforter is with you.

You will meet with much prejudice, a great deal of false zeal and miscalled piety; but in both the home and foreign field you will find more hearts that God has been preparing for the seed of truth than you imagine, and they will hail with joy the divine message when it is presented to them.

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Many are suffering from maladies of the soul far more than from diseases of the body, and they will find no relief until they shall come to Christ, the well-spring of life. Complaints of weariness, loneliness, and dissatisfaction, will then cease. Satisfying joys will give vigor to the mind, and health and vital energy to the body.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:579](#).

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The burden of sin, with its unrest and unsatisfied desires, lies at the foundation of a large share of the maladies the sinner suffers. Christ is the mighty healer of the sin-sick soul. These poor afflicted ones need to have a clearer knowledge of Him whom to know aright

is life eternal. They need to be patiently and kindly yet earnestly taught how to throw open the windows of the soul and let the sunlight of God's love come in to illuminate the darkened chambers of the mind.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:579](#).

The Children

Christ identified himself with the lowly, the needy, and the afflicted. He took little children in his arms, and descended to the level of the young. His large heart of love could comprehend their trials and necessities, and he enjoyed their happiness. His spirit, wearied with the bustle and confusion of the crowded city, tired of association with crafty and hypocritical men, found rest and peace in the society of innocent children. His presence never repulsed them. The Majesty of heaven condescended to answer their questions, and simplified his important lessons to meet their childish understanding. He planted in their young, expanding minds the seeds of truth that would spring up and produce a plentiful harvest in their riper years.

[405] In these children, who were brought to him that he might bless them, he saw the future men and women who should be heirs of his grace and subjects of his kingdom, and some of whom would become martyrs for his name's sake. Certain unsympathizing disciples commanded that the children be taken away, lest they should trouble the Master; but as they were turning away in sadness, Christ rebuked his followers, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." [[Luke 18:16](#).]

He knew that these children would listen to his counsel and accept him as their Redeemer, while those who were worldly-wise and hard-hearted would be less likely to follow him and find a place in the kingdom of God. These little ones, by coming to Christ and receiving his advice and benediction, had his image and his gracious words stamped upon their plastic minds, never to be effaced. We should learn a lesson from this act of Christ, that the hearts of the young are most susceptible to the teachings of Christianity, easy to influence toward piety and virtue, and strong to retain the impressions received. But these tender, youthful ones should be approached with kindness, and taught with love and patience.—[Testimonies for the Church 4:141](#).

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In his charge to Peter, the Saviour first bade him, "Feed my lambs," [John 21:15.] and afterward commanded, "Feed my sheep." In addressing the apostle, Christ says to all his servants, "Feed my lambs." When Jesus admonished his disciples not to despise the little ones, he addressed all disciples in all ages. His own love and care for children is a precious example for his followers. If teachers in the Sabbath-school felt the love which they should feel for these lambs of the flock, many more would be won to the fold of Christ. At every suitable opportunity, let the story of Jesus' love be repeated to the children. In every sermon let a little corner be left for their benefit. The servant of Christ may have lasting friends in these little ones, and his words may be to them as apples of gold in pictures of silver.

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Lose no opportunity of helping the children to become intelligent in the understanding of the Scriptures. This will do more to bar the way against Satan's devices than we can now imagine. If they early become familiar with the truths of God's word, a barrier against ungodliness will be erected, and they will be able to meet the foe with Christ's words, "It is written." There is a great work to be done for the youth and children; and every son and daughter of God may act a part in it, and thus be partakers of the reward that will be given to the faithful workers.

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The work of the Lord is a great work, and wise men are needed to engage in it. Men are needed who can adapt themselves to the wants of the people. If you expect to help the people, you must not take your position above them, but right down among them.... Those who instruct children should avoid tedious remarks. Short remarks and to the point will have a happy influence. If much is to be said, make up for briefness by frequency. A few words of interest, now and then, will be more beneficial than to have it all at once. Long speeches burden the small minds of children. Too

[407] much talk will lead them even to loathe spiritual instruction, just as overeating burdens the stomach and lessens the appetite, leading even to a loathing of food. The minds of the people may be glutted with too much speechifying. Labor for the church, but especially for the youth, should be line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little. Give minds time to digest the truths you feed them. Children must be drawn toward heaven, not rashly, but very gently.—[Testimonies for the Church 2:419](#).

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We should seek to enter into the feelings of the youth, to sympathize with them in their joys and sorrows, their conflicts and victories. Jesus did not remain in heaven, away from the sorrowing and sinful, but he came down to this world that he might become acquainted with the weakness, the suffering and temptations, of the fallen race. He reached us where we were, that he might lift us up. Such should be our work. We must come to the youth where they are, and make their case our own, if we would benefit them. If these youthful disciples are overcome by temptation, I hope that you who are older in experience will not deal with them harshly, or regard their efforts with indifference. Remember that you, yourselves, have shown but little strength to resist the tempter's power. Be as patient with these lambs of the flock as you wish others to be with you. God has so constituted us that even the strongest desire sympathy. How much more, then, do children need it. Even a look of compassion will often soothe and strengthen the tried and tempted child.

[408] Jesus calls to every wanderer, "My son, give me thine heart;" "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." The youth cannot be happy without the love of Jesus. He is waiting with pitying tenderness to hear the confessions of the wayward, and to accept their penitence. He watches for some return of gratitude from us, as the mother watches for the smile of recognition from her beloved child. The great God teaches us to call him Father. He would have us understand how earnestly and tenderly his heart yearns over us, in all our trials and temptations. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." [[Psalm](#)

103:13.] The mother might sooner forget her child, than God could forget one soul that trusts him.

The Sabbath-School

Do not let the Sabbath-schools degenerate into a mere mechanical routine. We should not seek to imitate Sunday-schools, nor keep up the interest by offering prizes. The offering of rewards will create rivalry, envy, and jealousy; and some who are the most diligent and worthy, will receive little credit. Pupils should not try to see how many verses they can learn to repeat; for this brings too great a strain upon the ambitious child, while the rest become discouraged.

Try none of these methods in your Sabbath-schools; but let the superintendent and teachers make every effort to have life and interest in the school. What a blessing it would be if all would teach as Christ taught! His language was plain, and his thoughts were expressed with the greatest simplicity; but he spoke with loving earnestness. In your teaching be as near like him as possible. Make your exercises interesting. Let the teachers show that they have thoroughly learned the lesson, and are intensely interested in it.

The teachers should be earnest in their work; they should watch for souls as they that must give an account. Their efforts should tend to lead the minds of those under their care to the contemplation of heavenly things; their instruction should be of a character to deepen the force of every lesson. They should be co-laborers with the parents for the salvation of the children; and Jesus will help them, and there will be a harvest of souls.

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It is not alone the large camp-meetings or conventions and councils that will have the special favor of God; the humblest effort of unselfish love will be crowned with his blessing, and receive its great reward.

[409]

Influence of our Publications

But few realize what can be done in reaching the people by personal, interested efforts in a wise distribution of our publications.

Many who will not be induced to listen to the truth presented by the living preacher, will take up a tract or a paper and peruse it; many things they read meet their ideas exactly, and they become interested to read all it contains. Impressions are thus made upon their minds which they cannot readily forget. The seed of truth has in some cases been buried for years beneath the rubbish of the world, and the pleasing fables that deceived ones have enjoyed. After a time some earthly sorrow or affliction softens their hearts, and the seed springs up and bears fruit to the glory of God.

Again, many read these papers and tracts, and their combativeness is aroused, and they throw the silent messengers from them in a passion. But ideas all new to them have, although unwelcome, made their impression. Again the hand takes up the neglected paper or tract, and the eye is tracing the truthful lines, and again in passion it is thrown from them as their path is crossed. But the mind is not at rest; the abused paper is at last perused, and thus point after point of truth begins its convicting work; step by step the reformation is wrought, self dies, and the warfare against the truth is ended. The despised paper or tract is henceforth honored as the means of converting the stubborn heart and subduing the perverse will, bringing it into subjection to Christ. Had the living preacher spoken as pointedly, these persons might have turned from him, and refused to entertain the new and strange ideas brought before them. The papers and tracts can go where the living preacher cannot, and where, if he could go, he would have no access to the people, because of their prejudice against the truth.

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Few have any adequate idea of what the distribution of tracts and papers is doing. The missionary work, in circulating the publications upon present truth, is opening doors everywhere, and preparing minds to receive the truth, when the living preacher shall come among them. The success which attends the efforts of ministers in the field is not due alone to their efforts, but in a great degree to the influence of the reading matter which has enlightened the minds of the people and removed prejudice. Thus many are made susceptible to the influence of the truth when it is presented before them.

The Bible

It is the privilege and the duty of all to closely investigate the doctrine presented to them before they receive it. And the most effectual way to find access to those whom we wish to educate in the truth, is to have them bring their Bibles, and point them to the chapter and verse, that they may see for themselves that these things are so. The people are so utterly deceived in regard to what the Bible does teach, that they will say, "It does not read so in my Bible." But ask them to bring their Bibles and show them the very chapter and verse you wish to impress upon their minds, and they will be surprised at the plain statements of revealed truth which they read out of their own Bibles.

Section 3—Morning Talks

[411]

To the Ministers Assembled at the General Conference, Battle
Creek, Mich., November, 1883.

Christ Our Righteousness

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

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

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

We must learn in the school of Christ. Nothing but his righteousness can entitle us to one of the blessings of the covenant of grace. We have long desired and tried to obtain these blessings, but have not received them, because we have cherished the idea that we could do something to make ourselves worthy of them. We have not looked away from ourselves, believing that Jesus is a living Saviour. We must not think that our own grace and merits will save us; the grace of Christ is our only hope of salvation. Through his prophet the Lord promises, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” [Isaiah 55:7.] We must believe the naked promise, and not accept

feeling for faith. When we trust God fully, when we rely upon the merits of Jesus as a sin-pardoning, Saviour, we shall receive all the help that we can desire.

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

My brethren, are you expecting that your merit will recommend you to the favor of God, thinking that you must be free from sin before you trust his power to save? If this is the struggle going on in your mind, I fear you will gain no strength, and will finally become discouraged. [413]

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

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,” even so was “the Son of man lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” [John 3:14, 15.] If you are conscious of your sins, do not devote all your powers to mourning over them, but look and live. Jesus is our only Saviour; and although millions who need to be healed will reject his offered mercy, not one who trusts in his merits will be left to perish. While we realize our helpless condition without Christ, we must not be discouraged; we must rely upon a crucified and risen Saviour. Poor, sin-sick, discouraged soul, look and live. Jesus has pledged his word; he will save all who come unto him.

[414]

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

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

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

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

bondage, and they find no rest until their burdens are laid at the feet of Jesus. [415]

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

Christian Deportment and Influence

[416] There is a great and solemn work devolving upon ministers; but many have not felt its weight sufficiently to balance them, and lead them to walk circumspectly. Out of the desk, their ministerial labors cease almost entirely, and their example is not worthy of imitation. Their light, jesting conversation may entertain and provoke mirth; but both believers and unbelievers lose confidence in them as Christ's ambassadors. Such ministers may present a theory of truth to the people; but they have not felt its sanctifying power on their own souls, and the word spoken has but little effect.

Having laid off the armor of righteousness, they are exposed to the darts of Satan, and often fall under the power of his temptations. They do not remember that a single thoughtless act, a light and trifling word, may balance a soul in the wrong direction, and effect decisions that are made for eternity.

A spirit of jesting and joking, of lightness and trifling, is not only a stumbling-block to sinners, but a worse stumbling-block to those who thus give way to the inclination of an unsanctified heart. The fact that some have allowed this trait to develop and strengthen until jesting is as natural as their breath, does not lessen its evil effects. When any one can point to one trifling word spoken by our Lord, or to any lightness seen in his character, he may feel that lightness and jesting are excusable in himself. This spirit is unchristian; for to be a Christian is to be Christ-like. Jesus is a perfect pattern, and we must imitate his example. A Christian is the highest type of man, a representative of Christ.

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

condemned, their minds are confused; and they are unfitted to enter upon the contemplation of heavenly themes, and preach Christ and him crucified.

The disposition to say witty things that will create a laugh, when the wants of the cause are under consideration, whether in a committee meeting, a board meeting, or any other meeting for business, is not of Christ. This untimely mirth has a demoralizing tendency. God is not honored when we turn everything to ridicule one day, and the next day are discouraged and almost hopeless, having no light from Christ, and ready to find fault and murmur. He is pleased when his people manifest strength and firmness of character, and when they have happy, hopeful dispositions. [417]

We should be cheerful; for there is nothing gloomy in the religion of Jesus. While all lightness, trifling, and jesting, which the apostle says are not convenient, are to be studiously avoided, there is sweet rest and peace in Jesus, that will be expressed in the countenance. Christians will not be mournful, depressed, despairing. They will be sober-minded; yet they will show to the world a cheerfulness which only grace can impart.

Peter says, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." [1 Peter 1:13.] Here is a lesson for us to learn; here is a work for us to do to control the mind, not letting it drift on forbidden themes, or spend its energies on trifling subjects.

There are many who are really troubled because low, debasing thoughts come into the mind, and are not easily banished. Satan has his evil angels around us; and though they cannot read men's thoughts, they closely watch their words and actions. Satan takes advantage of the weakness and defects of character that are thus revealed, and presses his temptations where there is least power of resistance. He makes evil suggestions, and inspires worldly thoughts, knowing that he can thus bring the soul into condemnation and bondage. To those who are selfish, worldly, avaricious, proud, fault-finding, or given to detraction,—to all who are cherishing errors and defects of character,—Satan presents the indulgence of self, and leads the soul off upon a track that the Bible condemns, but which he makes appear attractive. [418]

For every class of temptations there is a remedy. We are not left to ourselves to fight the battle against self and our sinful natures in our own finite strength. Jesus is a mighty helper, a never-failing support. His followers should develop symmetrical characters by strengthening weak traits. They must become Christ-like in disposition and pure and holy in life. None can do this in their own strength, but Jesus can give the daily grace needed to do this work. None need fail or become discouraged, when such ample provision has been made for us.

The mind must be restrained, and not allowed to wander. It should be trained to dwell upon the Scriptures; even whole chapters may be committed to memory, to be repeated when Satan comes in with his temptations. The fifty-eighth of Isaiah is a profitable chapter for this purpose. Wall the soul in with the restrictions and instructions given by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. When Satan would lead the mind to dwell upon earthly and sensual things, he is most effectually resisted with "It is written." When he suggests doubts as to whether we are really the people whom God is leading, whom by tests and provings he is preparing to stand in the great day, be ready to meet his insinuations by presenting the clear evidence from the word of God that we are keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

[419] It is natural for us to have much self-confidence and to follow our own ideas, and in so doing we separate from God; and we do not realize how far we are from him until the sense of self-security is so firmly established that we are not afraid of failure. We should be much in prayer. We need Jesus as our counselor; at every step we need him as our guide and protector. If there was more praying, more pleading with God to work for us, there would be greater dependence upon him, and faith would be strengthened to take him at his word. This faith would honor our Redeemer. It would be easier to believe that if we ask for grace or wisdom, we shall receive it, because his word says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." [[Matthew 7:7](#); [James 1:5](#).]

"The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." [[1 Peter 4:7](#).] We are not only required to pray, but

to guard the words and actions, and even the thoughts,—to “watch unto prayer.” If the mind is centered upon heavenly things, the conversation will run in the same channel. The heart will overflow at the contemplation of the Christian’s hope, the exceeding great and precious promises left on record for our encouragement; and our rejoicing in view of the mercy and goodness of God need not be repressed; it is a joy that no man can take from us. During the waking hours, the mind will be constantly employed. If it dwells upon unimportant matters, the intellect is dwarfed and weakened. There may be some spasmodic flashes of thought, but the mind is not disciplined to steady, sober reflection. There are themes that demand serious consideration. They are those of the great plan of redemption, which is soon to be finished. Jesus is about to be revealed in the clouds of heaven, and what manner of characters must we have, to enable us to stand in that day?

Well would it be for us if we could always remember Calvary, where Jesus bore the terrible burden of the sins of the world. In his expiring agony hear him exclaim, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!” [[Matthew 27:46](#).] and remember that he endured the hiding of his Father’s face, that it might not be forever hidden from fallen man. He endured shame, cruel scourging, insult, and mockery, that we might be reconciled to God and rescued from endless death. If our minds dwell upon these themes, our conversation will be in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, and even vain thoughts will seem out of place.

[420]

He who died for us loves us with a love that is infinite. He wants us to be happy; but he would not have us find our happiness in foolish jesting and joking, which disgrace the holy cause we profess to love.

By dwelling upon the themes of eternal interest, the mind is strengthened, and the character developed. Here is the foundation of that firm, unswerving principle which Joseph possessed. Here is the secret of growth in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

The religion of Christ is not what many think it is, nor what their lives represent it to be. The love of God in the soul will have a direct influence upon the life, and will call the intellect and the affections into active, healthful exercise. The child of God will not rest satisfied until he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and sustained

by his life-giving power. When he sees a weakness in his character, it is not enough to confess it again and again; he must go to work with determination and energy to overcome his defects by building up opposite traits of character. He will not shun this work because it is difficult. Untiring energy is required of the *Christian*; but he is not obliged to work in his own strength; divine power awaits his demand. Every one who is sincerely striving for the victory over self, will appropriate the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee." [2 Corinthians 12:9.]

[421] Through personal effort, joined with the prayer of faith, the soul is trained. Day by day the character grows into the likeness of Christ, and finally, instead of being the sport of circumstances, instead of indulging selfishness, and being carried away by light and trifling conversation, the man is master of his thoughts and words. It may cost a severe conflict to overcome habits which have been long indulged, but we may triumph through the grace of Christ. He invites us to learn of him. He would have us practice self-control, and be perfect in character, working that which is well-pleasing in his sight. "By their fruits ye shall know them," [Matthew 7:20.] is his own standard of judging character.

If we are true to the promptings of the Spirit of God, we shall go from grace to grace, and from glory to glory, until we have received the finishing touch of immortality. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." [1 John 3:2, 3.] Can any earthly promotion confer honor equal to this,—to be sons of God, children of the heavenly King, members of the royal family? Man may be ambitious of the honor that his finite fellow-man may bestow; but what will it avail? The nobility of earth are but men; they die, and return to dust; and there is no lasting satisfaction in their praise and honor. But the honor that comes from God is lasting. To be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, is to be entitled to unsearchable riches,—treasures of such value that in comparison with them the gold and silver, the gems and precious stones of earth, sink into insignificance. Through Christ we are offered joy unspeakable, an eternal weight of glory. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart

of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” [1 [Corinthians 2:9, 10.](#)]

We are wanting in simple faith; we need to learn the art of trusting our very best Friend. Although we see him not, Jesus is watching over us with tender compassion; and he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. No one in his great need ever looked to him in faith and was disappointed. Brethren, do not express doubt; do not let your lips utter one complaining, repining word. Begin now to fix your minds more firmly upon Jesus and heavenly things, remembering that by beholding we become changed into the same image. [422]

Trust in God

What a sacred trust God has committed to us, in making us his servants to aid in the work of saving souls! He has intrusted to us great truths, a most solemn, testing message for the world. Our duty is not simply to preach, but to minister, to come close to hearts. We should use our intrusted talents with skill and wisdom, that we may present the precious light of truth in the most pleasing manner, the way best adapted to win souls.

[423] Paul thus speaks of the ministry of the new covenant: “Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.” [[Colossians 1:25-29](#).] What a responsibility is this! A work is here brought to view that is more laborious than merely preaching the word; it is to represent Christ in our character, to be living epistles, known and read of all men.

“The love of Christ constraineth us.” [[2 Corinthians 5:14](#).] We must cherish love; and if those for whom we labor do not appreciate our efforts, we must not allow discontent or wrong feelings to rule in our hearts. Murmuring thoughts; jealousies, and evil surmisings imbitter the life and mar the labors. It is the Lord who has called us to this work, and we should have an eye single to his glory. We cannot trust to our own efforts, as though we could do the work of converting souls. God alone can convict and convert. Jesus invites sinners to come to him with all their burdens, and he will give them rest and peace.

Let us never forget that Jesus loves us. He died for us, and now he lives to make intercession in our behalf. And the Father also loves us, and desires our happiness. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" [[Romans 8:32.](#)] Brethren, you should set an example of faith, confidence, and love, to the churches over which the Lord has made you overseers. Will you do your work with fidelity, in the fear of God? Will you feel that you must avail yourselves of every opportunity to obtain grace and power from on high, that you may render to God the very best service possible?

If, as laborers in the cause of God, you feel that you have borne greater cares and trials than have fallen to the lot of others, remember that for you there is a peace unknown to those who shun these burdens. But do not force your trials upon others; do not groan over them. There is comfort and joy in the service of Christ. The Christian gives the Lord his entire affections, but he takes as well as gives; and his language is not that of a murmurer or a constant backslider. He makes no effort to appear righteous, but his life shows that he is led by the Holy Spirit. He can speak with assurance of his hope in Christ; for has he not the promise of God? If he has complied with the conditions upon which these promises are based, God's word is pledged that he will do for him more than he asks. [424]

We honor God most when we trust him most. Anxiety and worryment in his service, talking fears and doubts as to whether we shall be saved, savors of selfishness and unbelief. True faith is more solicitous to know what can be done today. As we take up our duties one by one, each will come in its proper place; and the faithful discharge of these duties, however small, opens a field where all the powers of the mind can be employed in the service of God. We shall know and obey his will.

Brethren in the faith, express no doubts. Follow closely your Guide. You must dispense with him before you can lose your way; for the Lord has hedged you in on every side. In the darkest hour, Jesus will be our light. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." [[Proverbs 4:18.](#)] It is an exalted privilege to be connected with Jesus. In every condition of trial, we may have the consolation of his presence. We may live in the very atmosphere of heaven. Our enemies may thrust us into

prison, but prison walls cannot cut off the communication between Christ and our souls. One who sees our every weakness, who is acquainted with every trial, is above all earthly powers; and angels can come to us in lonely cells, bringing light and peace from heaven. The prison will be as a palace, for the rich in faith dwell there; and the gloomy walls will be lighted up with heavenly light, as when Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises at midnight in the Philippian [425] dungeon. Bunyan was confined in Bedford jail; and thence issued a light that has illuminated the pathway to the celestial city.

God is the “Rock of our salvation,” a present help in every time of need. Then let us be no longer babes in Christ, but bold and firm soldiers of the cross, rejoicing in suffering the will of God.

Effectual Prayer

Many prayers are offered without faith. A set form of words is used, but there is no real importunity. These prayers are doubtful, hesitating; they bring no relief to those who offer them, and no comfort or hope to others. The form of prayer is used, but the spirit is wanting, showing that the petitioner does not feel his need, and is not hungering and thirsting after righteousness. These long, cold prayers are untimely and wearisome; they are too much like preaching the Lord a sermon.

Learn to pray short, and right to the point, asking for just what you need. Learn to pray aloud where only God can hear you. Do not offer make-believe prayers, but earnest, feeling petitions, expressing the hunger of the soul for the Bread of Life. If we prayed more in secret, we should be able to pray more intelligently in public. These doubtful, hesitating prayers would cease. And when engaged with our brethren in public worship, we could add to the interest of the meeting; for we should bring with us some of the atmosphere of heaven, and our worship would be a reality, and not a mere form. Those about us can soon tell whether we are in the habit of praying or not. If the soul is not drawn out in prayer in the closet, and while engaged in the business of the day, the lack will be manifest in the prayer-meeting. The public prayers will be dry and formal, consisting of repetitions and customary phrases, and they will bring darkness rather than light into the meeting.

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The life of the soul depends upon habitual communion with God. Its wants are made known, and the heart is open to receive fresh blessings. Gratitude flows from unfeigned lips; and the refreshing that is received from Jesus is manifested in words, in deeds of active benevolence, and in public devotion. There is love to Jesus in the heart; and where love exists, it will not be repressed, but will express itself. Secret prayer sustains the inner life. The heart that loves God will desire to commune with him, and will lean on him in holy confidence.

Let us learn to pray intelligently, expressing our requests with clearness and precision. Let us put away the listless, sluggish habit into which we have fallen, and pray as though we meant it. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." [[James 5:16](#).] Faith takes a firm hold of the promises of God, and urges her petitions with fervor; but when the life of the soul stagnates, the outward devotions become formal and powerless.

Jesus is our Saviour today. He is pleading for us in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, and he will forgive our sins. It makes all the difference in the world with us spiritually whether we rely upon God without doubt, as upon a sure foundation, or whether we are seeking to find some righteousness in ourselves before we come to him. Look away from self to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. It is a sin to doubt. The least unbelief, if cherished, involves the soul in guilt, and brings great darkness and discouragement. It is saying that the Lord is false, that he will not do as he has promised; and he is greatly dishonored.

[427] Some have cherished doubts, discontent, and a disposition to be on the wrong side, until they are in an atmosphere of doubt, and seem to think it praise-worthy to be on the side of the doubting. But when the believing ones shall receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls, the doubting ones, who have sowed unbelief, will reap that which they have sown, and an undesirable harvest it will be.

Some obtain answers to prayer, a little freedom, and they become elated. They do not increase in faith, do not grow in strength and courage, but they depend on feeling. If they happen to feel well, they think they are in favor with God. How many stumble here! how many are overcome! Feeling is no criterion for any of us. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." [[Hebrews 11:1](#).] We are to examine our character in God's mirror, his holy law, to detect our errors and imperfections, and then to remove them by the precious blood of Christ.

We may commit the keeping of our souls to God as unto a faithful Creator, not because we are sinless, but because Jesus died to save just such erring, faulty creatures as we are. We may rest upon God, not because of our own merit, but because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. We must look away from self to the spotless Lamb

of God, who did no sin; and by looking to him in faith we shall become like him.

There are rich promises for us in the word of God. It is no narrow, limited provision that has been made for us. The plan of salvation is ample. We are not obliged to trust in the evidences that we had a year or a month ago, but we may have the assurance today that Jesus lives, and is making intercession for us. We cannot do good to those around us while our own souls are destitute of spiritual life.

Our brethren do not wrestle all night in prayer as many godly men before us have done. They sit up bent over tables, writing lessons, or preparing articles to be read by thousands; they arrange facts in shape to convince the mind in regard to doctrine. All these things are essential; but how much God can do for us in sending light and power to convict hearts in answer to the prayer of faith! The empty seats in our prayer-meetings testify that Christians do not realize the claims of God upon them; they do not realize their duty to make these meetings interesting and successful. They go over a monotonous, wearisome round, and return home unrefreshed, unblest.

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If we would refresh others, we must ourselves drink of the Fountain that never becomes dry. It is our privilege to become acquainted with the Source of our strength, to have hold of the arm of God. If we would have spiritual life and energy, we must commune with God. We can speak to him of our real wants; and our earnest petitions will show that we realize our needs, and will do what we can to answer our own prayers. We must obey the injunction of Paul, "Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," [[Ephesians 5:14.](#)]

Luther was a man of prayer. He worked and prayed as though something must be done, and that at once, and it was done. His prayers were followed up by venturing something on the promises of God; and through divine aid he was enabled to shake the vast power of Rome, so that in every country the foundation of the papacy trembled.

The Spirit of God co-operates with the humble worker who abides in Christ and communes with him. Pray when you are faint-hearted. When you are desponding, close the lips firmly to men; keep all the darkness within, lest you shadow the path of another; but tell it to Jesus. Ask for humility, wisdom, courage, increase of

faith, that you may see light in his light, and rejoice in his love. Only believe, and you shall surely see the salvation of God.

Are We in the Faith?

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“We love him, because he first loved us.” [1 John 4:19.] It is impossible for us to believe that Jesus endured the untold agonies of the cross for us, without having our hearts melted in love for him. And if we love him, we shall be solicitous to please him, to obey him. The heart stirred by the love of Christ will earnestly inquire, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

Dear brethren, “examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.” [2 Corinthians 13:5.] Many may respond, “Why, yes, I am in the faith; I believe every point of the truth.” But do you practice what you believe? Are you at peace with God and with your brethren? Can you pray with sincerity, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”? [Matthew 6:12.] Or are you estranged from your brother, because you think he has injured you? Are there no heart-burnings among you? Is there no bitterness in your hearts, no envying, no jealousy, no evil surmising, no misjudging of your brethren? Is there no emulation, no desire for special favor or honors, no wish to have the supremacy? These feelings should not exist among Christians.

Jesus, who died for us, loves us with a love that is infinite; and we must love one another. We must put away all selfishness, and work together in love and unity. We have loved and petted ourselves, and excused ourselves in waywardness; but we have been unmerciful toward our brethren, who may not be as faulty as ourselves. The Lord loves us, and bears with us, even when we are ungrateful to him, forgetful of his mercies, wickedly unbelieving; but consider, brethren, how relentless we are to one another, how pitiless; how we hurt and wound one another, when we should love as Christ has loved us. Let us make a complete change. Let us cultivate the precious plant of love, and delight to help one another. We must be kind, forbearing, patient with one another’s errors; we must keep our sharp criticisms for ourselves, but hope all things, believe all things, of our brethren.

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Some of you seem to be earnestly seeking for forgiveness of sins, for freedom in God. Do you deserve the pardon that you are seeking?—No, you do not; nevertheless, God is willing to grant it freely. And dare you withhold from your brethren the forgiveness and affection of which you do not think them worthy? Would you have God deal thus with you? Deal with your brethren as you wish God to deal with you. If we expect our prayers for forgiveness to be heard, we must offer them in a forgiving spirit. We must forgive others in the same manner, and to the same extent, that we ourselves hope to be forgiven. The hard-heartedness that professed Christians manifest toward one another is not Christ-like, but savors of the satanic. We must every one of us open our hearts wide to the love of Jesus, and encourage pity and affection for our brethren.

It was “while we were yet sinners,” that “Christ died for us.” [Romans 5:8.] In view of his unmerited love and mercy toward us, how can we cherish malice, or even one feeling of unkindness toward our brethren, the purchase of his blood? Let us put away all suspicion and hatred, and all feelings of bitterness, even toward our worst enemies, those who seek to do us harm. But, brethren, do not wait till the heart is in harmony with your brother before you come to Jesus; for it is his Spirit and power working in you that will give you the victory.

[431] Many are filled with self-importance, and esteem themselves above their brethren. Such should let self die; let the carnal mind be crucified. If you have enmity, suspicion, envy, and jealousy in your hearts, you have a work to do. Confess your sins; come into harmony with your brethren. Speak well of them. Throw out no unfavorable hints, no suggestions that will awaken distrust in the minds of others. Guard their reputation as sacredly as you would have them guard yours; love them as you would be loved of Jesus. Work for their interest, instead of seeking to tear them down, that you may build up self on their ruins. Satan is an accuser of the brethren, and he loves to have you help him. But disappoint him; do not let him triumph over you.

Some pride themselves on being outspoken, blunt, and rough, and they call this frankness; but it is not rightly named. It is selfishness of the deepest dye. These persons may have virtues; they may be liberal and have kind impulses; but their discourteous man-

ners render them almost insupportable. They criticise, they wound, they say disagreeable things. Does the character they are cultivating represent Jesus? Will it fit them for the society of heaven? We shall do well to examine ourselves, to see what manner of spirit we are cherishing. Let us learn to speak gently, quietly, even under circumstances the most trying. Let us control not only our words, but our thoughts and imagination. Let us be kind, courteous, in our words and deportment. There is a great neglect in this respect. We do not adorn the doctrines we profess. We are not what we might be, nor what God would have us to be. Those who hope to be the companions of holy angels, should possess refined manners. If the principles of the Christian religion are carried out in the daily life, there will be a kind thoughtfulness for others, for this was characteristic of Christ. Then, although a man may be poor, he will have true dignity; for he is God's nobleman.

Christianity will make a man a gentleman. Christ was courteous, even to his persecutors; and his true followers will manifest the same mild, self-sacrificing spirit. Look at Paul when brought before rulers. His speech before Agrippa is a model of dignified courtesy as well as persuasive eloquence. We should not encourage the formal politeness current with the world, which is destitute of the spirit of true courtesy, but the politeness that springs from real kindness of heart. [432]

We profess a great and holy faith; and our character must be in accordance with that faith, with God's great moral standard. Let us shun every mean action, all dishonesty, all overreaching; and if any one is guilty of wrong in this respect, let him confess his sin, and make restitution to the one whom he has wronged, and in addition bring a trespass offering to God, that when the times of refreshing shall come, his sins may be blotted out, and his name retained in the book of life.

Let us examine our hearts in the light of the great principle of the law of God as defined by Christ: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." [Luke 10:27, 28.] Here the conditions of eternal life are specified. The promise is, "This do, and thou shalt live." Are you, my brethren, carrying out these principles in your every-day life? Are there not reasons why

you do not come to the light, why you have no freedom in Christ, why you do not find that rest that he has promised to all who come unto him with their burdens?

[433] Jesus invites, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” [Matthew 11:28, 29.] Have you found this rest? If not, there is something for you to do. Do not rely on an experience that you had years in the past, it is your privilege to have a living connection with Christ now. Come to him with brokenness of heart and contrition of spirit, praying for his grace. The melting power of God can do wonders in subduing the heart, and making it tender and impressible. You may come with full assurance of faith, and he will fill your heart with rest, and peace, and love.

Christ's Followers the Light of the World

“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.” [Matthew 5:14-16.]

In all ages the people of God have been the light of the world. Joseph was a light in Egypt. He represented Jehovah in the midst of a nation of idolaters. While the Israelites were on the way from Egypt to the promised land, they were a light to the surrounding nations. Through them God was revealed to the world. Satan sought to extinguish their light; but by the power of God it was kept alive through successive generations while Israel maintained a national existence; and even during the captivity there were faithful witnesses for God. From Daniel and his companions, and Mordecai, a bright light shone amid the moral darkness of the kingly courts of Babylon. In holy vision, God revealed to Daniel light and truth that he had concealed from other men, and through his chosen servant this light has shone down through the ages, and will continue to shine to the end of time.

We who are living in this age have greater light and privileges than were given to Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and other ancient worthies, and we are under correspondingly greater obligation to let our light shine to the world. God has made us the depositaries of his law. We have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and we are to follow in his footsteps, to represent him before the world. But are we faithful depositaries of the truth, correctly representing it amid the spiritual declension and moral corruption that now exist? Are we doing all that we might and should do to diffuse the precious light of truth? Brethren, you see the truth, you understand the claims of God's law; you know that no willful transgressor will enter into life, and yet you see that law made void in the world. What is your duty? You are not to ask,

“What is convenient for me? what is agreeable?” but, “What can I do to save souls?”

There is a great work before us. The world is to be warned. This work calls for the exercise of all the talents that God has intrusted to our keeping. He has given us abilities that enable us to exert an influence on other minds. We have talents in the pen, the press, the voice, the purse, and the sanctified affections of the soul. All these talents are the Lord’s. He has lent them to us, and he holds us responsible for the use we make of them,—for the faithful discharge of our duty to the world. We may come very near to Jesus; we may commune with him, and having found rest and peace to our own souls, we may show forth to others the beauties of true holiness.

We shall meet with conflicts to test our faith and courage, but they will make us strong if we conquer through the grace which Jesus is willing to give. But we must believe; we must grasp the promises without a doubt. They are ample and rich, even during the perils and trials of the last days. Hear the assurance given by the prophet of the Lord: “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, ... he will make me to walk upon mine high places.” [[Habakkuk 3:17-19](#).] As we exercise faith, talk faith, and act faith, the promises of God will be verified to us. And as we walk consistently with our profession of faith, we are also teaching others to walk circumspectly.

Do not choose darkness. Come out of the cold, dark caverns of unbelief into the upper chamber, where you may bask in the sunshine of God’s love, and enjoy peace and rest in the presence of Jesus. The Saviour said: “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](#).] When you constantly complain of darkness, you represent to the world that you are not following Jesus, or else that he has deceived you. But, dear brethren, have you not been in the habit of talking darkness and unbelief? Have you not, by so doing, greatly shadowed the path of others, and led them to think that there could be nothing attractive in the truth, nothing satisfying in the religion and service of Christ? Your words, your life, and your

character have represented your religion; and how many souls have you discouraged, and balanced in the wrong direction?

Do not consult feeling; for feeling is not to be our guide. We are to walk by faith, not by sight. Do not let unbelief separate you from God. Do not let one word of unbelief or discouragement escape your lips. Satan is pleased at every such expression, because it is dishonoring to Jesus. Seek earnestly to remedy every defect of character. Put away murmuring and fretfulness. In the indulgence of these traits you represent Satan, the prince of darkness, and not Christ, the Prince of light. Cast no shadow to darken the pathway of others. Walk in the light, and the peace and joy that shine in the face of Jesus will be reflected in you. Jesus lives; and his promise is, "According to your faith be it unto you." [[Matthew 9:29](#).]

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Those who talk unbelief may have a little enthusiasm when the sky is bright, and everything encouraging; but when the battle goes hard, when we have to hope against hope, and urge our petitions to the throne of grace through deep darkness, then the unbelieving ones will not talk of the good land of Canaan, but will make prominent the dangers to be encountered. They will dwell on the strong walls, and the giants we shall meet, when the language of faithful Caleb should be heard: "The land ... is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us." [[Numbers 14:7, 8](#).]

Men of courage are wanted now; men who will venture something for the truth's sake; men who will be sober, but not gloomy and desponding; men who will watch unto prayer, and whose prayers will be mingled with living, active faith. We may be cheerful and even joyful. Even under temptation, our language may be that of faith and hope and courage. But no lightness, no trifling, should be indulged in; no low witticism should escape our lips, for these things give Satan great advantage. And we are living in the solemn hour of the Judgment, when we should afflict our souls, confess our errors, repent of our sins, and pray for one another that we may be healed.

If we are converted, we shall no longer represent Satan by warped, one-sided characters; but in character, in words, and in actions, we shall conform to the perfect character given us in the life of Christ. Unless we follow this perfect example, evil practices will confirm us in Satan's snare. We cannot afford to dally with the

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tempter,—to persist in one wrong habit, to cherish one darling sin. If we confess and forsake our sin; if we come to Jesus in penitence and humility of soul, acknowledging our inability to remove one spot or stain of sin, and relying wholly on the merits of a crucified Saviour, we may expect forgiveness; for his word is pledged. He has said that he will pardon our transgressions, and blot out our sins. We must dwell upon the matchless love and compassion of Jesus, and not upon our own unworthiness and sinfulness. If we look to ourselves, all will be darkness; but Jesus is all light and life, and we have only to “look and live.” We may look “unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.” [[Hebrews 12:2.](#)] What tenderness, what mercy, what love, are here manifested!

Through constant watchfulness and prayer we may grow in grace, and perfect Christian characters. But prayer will be no task to the soul that loves God; it will be a pleasure, a source of strength. Our hearts will be stayed upon God, and we shall say by our daily life, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” [[John 1:29.](#)] In view of what Jesus has done to redeem us from the power of Satan, how can we allow evil traits of character to gain the ascendancy, thus giving Satan cause to exult, and bring grief to Him who died for us?

[438] The Lord is waiting to bestow rich blessing upon us if we will only comply with the conditions. We cannot glorify him while we cherish doubt. We must believe that he will do just what he has said he would. Remember that we have a living Saviour. If you do not feel light-hearted and joyous, do not dishonor God by talking of your feelings. Talk of the promises, talk of Jesus’ willingness to bless; and before you are aware of it, the cloud will lift, light will come into the soul, and you will find peace and rest in Jesus. Cherish love. “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.” [[Romans 12:10.](#)] Form a habit of speaking words of cheerful hope and courage, words of love and appreciation, that will bind hearts together. “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” [[1 John 1:7.](#)]

Courage in the Lord

Some are teaching the truth to others, when they themselves need to be taught the first principles of the Christian religion. They are at war with God through his providence. They watch for something to feel bad about; and they never fail to find it, for the faultfinding spirit is in their hearts and controls their lives. They are always dissatisfied. Their work is too hard, they are not appreciated, or they do not receive sufficient compensation. If anything crosses their track, they draw back like pettish children, forgetting that as Christ's servants they should not be affected by the course of any man. This spirit savors of Satan, and those who manifest it are thereby yielding to his control.

Ministers of this class are a sore affliction to their brethren in the ministry and to the church. They are a constant source of anxiety and care, and the harm they do the cause of God, eternity alone will reveal. You never know where to find them; for they are like the weather-vane, and change with every change of circumstances. One day they appear to be humble and affected by the Spirit of God, and our hopes are awakened; but the next day something occurs which drifts them into another current, and they are harder to get along with than a willful child; for while they are children in self-control, they are men in years and stature, and cannot be corrected like a child. They do not know what harm they do by their want of self-control. While they feel under no obligations to restrain the natural impulses of the heart, what right have they to take the position of guides to the flock? The Lord has said through his apostle, "Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." [Hebrews 12:13.] Any crooked path the leader may take, prepares the way for the weak to be turned aside from the path of safety.

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These men do not see themselves; for they look through Satan's deceptive glasses. They do not know that they are contending with God by resisting the efforts of his servants in their behalf. They may once have known the love of Christ, but they have not kept faith in

exercise, and it is harder to reach their hearts than it is to move those who have never been converted. They do not so readily yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit, for they have stifled conviction, and have not been obedient hearers of the word.

Some are in great peril through self-esteem. If they have a measure of success, Satan suggests to them that they are men of talent; and there are men and women professing godliness who help him in his work by repeating his suggestion. The man who is praised for his ability learns to rely on his own understanding, and does not feel his need of help from above. Selfishness becomes a ruling principle with him, his soul is spotted and marred by self-exaltation, and the weakness of his character is made manifest. The Lord leaves such persons to go on in their self-sufficiency, to work without his grace and special help; and they congratulate themselves that they have his blessing, when they are walking in the sparks of their own kindling. All this labor is a positive injury; for it blocks the way against the efficient labor of devoted men. These persons need humble, pure religion, which is not tainted with self-exaltation. Jesus says to them, as he said to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." [Luke 22:32.]

The part we have to act is to return to the Lord by confessing our sins to him and to one another. A broken and contrite heart he will not despise; but our self-righteousness is in his sight as filthy rags. With many, self is whole; but when they fall upon the Rock, and are broken, then the arms of Jesus will encircle them, and draw them close to his great heart of love. God will not do for us that which we can do for ourselves; but he has said, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." And when we comply with the conditions, he will fulfill his word.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." We do not see ourselves as God sees us; therefore we do not see the necessity of repentance, of humility, and of continual reliance upon him. There are efforts made in our own strength, but there is not a dying to self; the soul is not surrendered to God. Many are making a mistake here. They are hoping to overcome

through their own efforts, and by their goodness gain the assurance of the love of God. They do not exercise faith; they do not believe that Jesus accepts their repentance and contrition, and so they toil on day after day without finding rest or peace. When the heart is fully surrendered to God, love springs up in the soul, and the yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden light. The will is swallowed up in God's will, and that which was a cross, becomes a pleasure.

When, in well doing, the keeping of the soul is committed to God as unto a faithful Creator, the light will shine upon our pathway, and it will grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. But it must be in well doing. We may profess Christ, and yet deny him in our lives. If our words and acts are not in accordance with his character, if we manifest selfishness, if we have a complaining spirit, if we indulge in light and trifling conversation, if we love worldly amusements more than we love God, if we take no pleasure in self-denial for Christ's sake, can we suppose that God is our guide and counselor? There must be entire obedience to God; then our hearts will be in harmony with the spirit that pervades heaven, and benevolence and brotherly love will be in active exercise.

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Trials and temptations may come; but the child of God, whether minister or layman, knows that Jesus is his helper. Although we may be weak and helpless in ourselves, all the forces of heaven are at the command of the believing child of God, and the hosts of hell cannot make him depart from the right course if he will cling to God by living faith. Temptation is no sin; the sin is in yielding to temptation. "Count it all joy," says the apostle James, "when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." God permits us to be placed under circumstances that will test us, to increase our love and to perfect our trust in him. Through self-denial and suffering with Christ, we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. Trials will come, but they are an evidence that we are children of God. Paul passed through great trials, but he did not despair as though his Father in heaven were dead. He rejoiced in tribulation; for he desired, through participations in the sufferings of Christ, to be conformed to his image. Let this hero of faith speak for himself. He

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says, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake." [2 Corinthians 12:10.]

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.... No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." [Matthew 6:22-24.] Those who have an eye single to the glory of God, will manifest in their lives the loveliness and purity of Christ's character. The enemy will not be able to pervert their understanding, causing them to view things in a false light, and misjudge the words and motives of their brethren. They will not plan how they may gain approbation; neither will they be so deeply affected by any course that may be pursued toward them that they will give up in discouragement. Shall they forsake their post of duty because they are slighted, or imagine that they are not appreciated? No; they will seek to honor him whose servants they are. They have the Captain of their salvation to please, his orders to obey, and they will leave the result with him.

Brethren, if the eye be single, you will have well-balanced minds, and in principle you will be firm as a rock. You will remember that the eye of God is upon you, overseeing your labor; and you will move on from strength to strength, from grace to grace, gathering rays of light to reflect upon the pathway of others. Be strong in the grace of Christ, and let your hearts be filled with love to God and to one another. Remember that if you are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, you shall be also of the consolation. Though sorrowful, you may be "alway rejoicing." [2 Corinthians 6:10.] Brethren, have courage in the Lord.

Love Among Brethren

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“Finally, brethren, 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.”
[[Philippians 4:8.](#)]

The dealings of God with his people often appear mysterious. His ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts. Many times his way of dealing is so contrary to our plans and expectations that we are amazed and confounded. We do not understand our perverse natures; and often when we are gratifying self, following our own inclinations, we flatter ourselves that we are carrying out the mind of God. And so we need to search the Scriptures, and be much in prayer, that, according to his promise, the Lord may give us wisdom.

Though we have an individual work and an individual responsibility before God, we are not to follow our own judgment, regardless of the opinions and feelings of our brethren; for this course would lead to disorder in the church. It is the duty of ministers to respect the judgment of their brethren; but their relations to one another, as well as the doctrines they teach, should be brought to the test of the law and the testimony; then, if hearts are teachable, there will be no divisions among us. Some are inclined to be disorderly, and are drifting away from the great landmarks of the faith; but God is moving upon his ministers to be one in doctrine and in spirit.

Brethren sometimes associate together for years, and think they can trust those they know so well, just as they would trust members of their own family. There is a freedom and confidence in this association which could not exist among those not of the same faith. This is very pleasant while brotherly love continues; but let the “accuser of the brethren” gain admittance to the heart of one of these men, controlling the mind and the imagination, and jealousies are created, suspicion and envy are harbored; and he who supposed

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himself secure in the love and friendship of his brother, finds himself mistrusted, and his motives misjudged. The false brother forgets his own human frailties, forgets his obligation to think and speak no evil lest he dishonor God and wound Christ in the person of his saints; and every defect that can be thought of or imagined is commented upon unmercifully, and the character of a brother is represented as dark and questionable.

There is a betrayal of sacred trust. The things spoken in brotherly confidence are repeated and misrepresented; and every word, every action, however innocent and well-meaning, is scrutinized by the cold, jealous criticism of those who were thought too noble, too honorable, to take the least advantage of friendly association or brotherly trust. Hearts are closed to mercy, judgment, and the love of God; and the cold, sneering, contemptuous spirit which Satan manifests toward his victim is revealed.

If Satan can employ professed believers to act as accusers of the brethren, he is greatly pleased; for those who do this are just as truly serving him as was Judas when he betrayed Christ, although they may be doing it ignorantly. Satan is no less active now than in Christ's day, and those who lend themselves to do his work will manifest his spirit.

[445] Floating rumors are often the destroyers of unity among brethren. There are some who watch with open mind and ears to catch flying scandal. They gather up little incidents which may be trifling in themselves, but which are repeated and exaggerated until a man is made an offender for a word. Their motto seems to be, "Report, and we will report it." These tale-bearers are doing Satan's work with surprising fidelity, little knowing how offensive their course is to God. If they would spend half the energy and zeal that is given to this unholy work in examining their own hearts, they would find so much to do to cleanse their souls from impurity that they would have no time or disposition to criticise their brethren, and they would not fall under the power of this temptation. The door of the mind should be closed against "They say" or "I have heard." Why should we not, instead of allowing jealousy or evil surmising to come into our hearts, go to our brethren, and after frankly but kindly setting before them the things we have heard detrimental to their character and influence, pray with and for them? While we cannot fellowship

those who are the bitter enemies of Christ, we should cultivate that spirit of meekness and love that characterized our Master,—a love that thinketh no evil, and is not easily provoked.

We are living amid the perils of the last days, and we should guard every avenue by which Satan can approach us with his temptations. A fatal delusion seizes those who have had great light and precious opportunities, but who have not walked in the light nor improved the opportunities which God has given them. Darkness comes upon them; and they fail to make Christ their strength, and fall an easy prey to the snares of the deceiver. A mere assent to the truth will never save a soul from death. We must be sanctified through the truth; every defect of character must be overcome, or it will overcome us and become a controlling power for evil.

Cultivate whatever in your character is in harmony with the character of Christ. Cherish those things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; but put away whatever is unlike our Redeemer. Selfishness is cherished to an extent that few realize; guard against it at all times and in all places. Do not excuse yourself in any error. If you have one objectionable trait, which you find it difficult to subdue, do not talk of your weakness as something that others must bear with. Do not soothe your conscience with the thought that you cannot overcome the peculiarities that deform your character, nor listen to Satan's suggestion that they are not very grievous. There is no way by which you may be saved in sin. Every soul that gains eternal life must be like Christ, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." [[Hebrews 7:26](#).] The followers of Christ must shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. [446]

Some seek to control their surroundings, thinking that if they are placed in favorable positions, the bad traits in their character will not be developed. But God orders our surroundings, and he will place us where we shall have test after test, to prove us and to reveal what is in our hearts. Again and again we shall be brought into strait places, that it may be known whether we are indeed crucified with Christ or full of self-love. How will this testing process end with each of us? The prince of darkness will put forth all his power to retain us in his possession; but we have a mighty Helper.

Self-love will prompt to a much better opinion of self than the word of God will warrant; for “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” [Jeremiah 17:9.] God’s word is the standard that we must all reach. It is unsafe to consult feeling or to trust to our own heart; the wise man declares, “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.” [Proverbs 28:26.]

[447] Church membership will not guarantee us heaven. We must abide in Christ, and his love must abide in us. We must every day make advancement in the formation of symmetrical character. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” [Matthew 5:48.] As God is perfect in his sphere, so are we required to be perfect in ours. There is a great work before us individually, to reach this high standard. Our attainments will be just in accordance with the effort we make, our character just what we choose to make it; for through the divine aid promised us, we can overcome. Jesus “knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” [Psalm 103:14.] In pitying tenderness he will give us the help and strength we need.

Let us diligently cultivate the pure principles of the gospel of Christ,—the religion, not of self-esteem, but of love, meekness, and lowliness of heart. Then we shall love our brethren, and esteem them better than ourselves. Our minds will not dwell on the dark side of their character; we shall not feast on scandal and flying reports. But “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,” we shall “think on these things.” [Philippians 4:8.]

Humility and Faithfulness in Laborers

Ministers should live close to Jesus, that they may rightly represent him to others. He has set them an example in his own ministry. They should labor for souls with the same unselfish love that characterized his labors. They have something more to do than merely to preach in the desk. This is only the beginning of their work. They are overseers of the flock; and it is their duty to “feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” [Acts 20:28.] They are required to watch for souls “as they that must give account;” [Hebrews 13:17.] and they need clear discernment, that no wrong influence may pervert their work.

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Those who are convicted of sin by the Spirit of God, need the assistance of loving, kindly labor, that the work of grace may be carried forward to completion. This labor for souls is a part of the ministry that God requires of his servants; but it is a part that is sadly neglected by some. They do not realize their responsibility, nor know how to deal with souls.

Some ministers choose for their sermons subjects that will please the people and offend none. This is shunning the cross of Christ. You see one man selfish; another controlled by pride or passion; another robbing God in tithes and offerings; and another doubting and unbelieving. Do not leave these deceived ones to remain blinded by the enemy in regard to their own spiritual standing. For each of these there is a special message in the word of God. Pray for wisdom that you may be able so to present the instructions of that sacred word that all may see wherein their characters are defective, and what is required of them in order to conform to the true standard. Win their confidence and affection. Bring the truth as it is in Jesus to bear upon their hearts; for there is no other power that can keep the soul steadfast. The truth, planted in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and nourished by divine grace, is our only safeguard against Satan’s devices. Thus you are labor till you can present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

[449] This personal labor is not the most agreeable work; it involves a cross. Nevertheless, ministers have no right to shun the responsibilities laid upon them. To deal wisely and truly with souls is a work that calls for special help from God. A faithful performance of the duties assigned to his servants would drive every worker in the vineyard of the Lord to his closet in earnest intercession for divine aid. The love of God in the heart will lead them to make earnest appeals,—to warn, entreat, and reprove. If this work is neglected, souls will continue in sin, confirmed in a wrong course by those who have spoken to them only smooth things.

The apostle Paul felt the importance of faithfulness. He says of his own ministry in Christ, “whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.” [[Colossians 1:28, 29.](#)] And he exhorts Timothy, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.” [[2 Timothy 4:2.](#)] This is in accordance with the word which through the prophet Isaiah the Lord has spoken to the watchmen on the walls of Zion: “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” [[Isaiah 58:1.](#)]

[450] Ministers would be more successful in their labor if they would talk less of self and more of Christ. Of ourselves, we have no power to reach hearts; it is only by divine aid that we can find access to them. Brethren, teach the people to rely upon Jesus; lead them to feel that they are not dependent upon the minister, but must have an experience for themselves. The minister is not infallible. He may err; ambition and unhallowed passion may burn in his heart; envy may mar his work; he may defraud God of the glory due to his name, by so laboring that the credit of success will be given to the poor, erring, finite instrument. The true laborer will take care that his hearers understand the leading points of our faith, and that they keep distinctly in mind the old landmarks, the way by which the Lord has led his people. He will teach them to look to God for themselves, expecting the outpouring of his Spirit. If those who profess to be teachers of the truth teach their own ideas independent of the opinions of their brethren, they should be labored with as

unfaithful in their work. One who feels at liberty to advance what he chooses and keep back what he chooses, should not be encouraged to labor in the ministry; for he is failing to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord.

It is not the best way to have one or two ministers go over the same ground again and again. There should be an interchange of laborers. They should not be confined to one field, but should labor in different Conferences, that the churches may have the benefit of their differing gifts. When this was done in the past, greater success attended the laborers.

Brethren, the Lord will help you, if you seek his help; but do not exalt self, do not call the attention of the people to self. There is a spirit of worldliness coming into the church, and it must be firmly met and rebuked. Unless we humble our hearts before God, unless we seek him earnestly, we shall be overcome by the temptations of Satan; and those whom we neglect to warn, to reprove, to exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine, will be ensnared by his devices, and we shall not be guiltless.

We shall none of us be saved for our own merits; the rewards of eternity are purchased by Christ, and in no case merited by man; yet ministers should remember that every man will receive according as his works have been. The trials of the great assize will proceed most accurately on the basis of works, and our listlessness and want of zeal will tell on its decisions. The parable of the talents illustrates this subject. One man becomes ruler over ten cities, another over five, another over two. Each receives in exact proportion to his work,—to the improvement he has made on the talents lent him of God; and it is the privilege of each to strive for the highest recompense.

The thought should be ever present with us that we must meet the record of our lives, that we are building character for eternity. The influence of our words and acts will live, and will decide the destiny of souls. Angels of God are writing the history of our lives; let us be careful that the record is such as we shall not be ashamed to meet when the Judgment shall sit, and we shall receive according to the deeds done in the body. [451]

If we are living branches of the True Vine, we shall bear fruit to the glory of God. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” [[Matthew 7:20.](#)]

Diligence and Consecration Needed

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” [Psalm 51:10-13.]

This is one of the most earnest and contrite prayers on record, and the Lord’s response is, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” [Ezekiel 36:26.]

[452] “Create in me a clean heart.” This is beginning right, at the very foundation of Christian character; for out of the heart are the issues of life. If all, ministers and people, would see to it that their hearts are right with God, we should see much larger results from the labor put forth. The more important and responsible your work, the greater the necessity that you have clean hearts. The needed grace is provided, and the power of the Holy Spirit will work with every effort you make in this direction. If every child of God would seek him earnestly and perseveringly, there would be a greater growth in grace. Dissensions would cease; believers would be of one heart and one mind; purity and love would prevail in the churches. By beholding, we become changed. The more you contemplate the character of Christ, the more you will become conformed to his image. Come to Jesus just as you are, and he will receive you, and put a new song in your mouth, even praise to God.

God will hear the prayer of faith; but the sincerity of our prayers will be made manifest in our harmony with the great moral standard which will test every man’s character. We need to open our hearts to the influence of the Spirit, and to realize its transforming power. The reason why you do not receive more of the saving help of God is that the channel of communication between Heaven and your own souls is clogged by worldliness, love of display, and desire for supremacy. While some are conforming more and more to the world’s customs and maxims, we should be moulding our lives after the divine model.

And our covenant-keeping God will restore unto us the joys of his salvation, and uphold us by his free Spirit.

“Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” The nearer we live to God, the more we shall be able to accomplish for our fellow-men; for the Lord will work with our efforts. Your hearts are too cold and unimpressible; they should be all aglow with the love of Jesus. While hungering and thirsting after salvation yourselves, you will have a longing desire to aid in saving precious souls; and your humble, pathetic appeals to those out of Christ will move hearts. You should carry the truth to homes. Show those in error that you love them. Indifference here is sin. There should be fewer long sermons, and more time spent in visiting, in making personal effort for souls. Self-denying labor is needed, and will result in great good, but it has been sadly neglected.

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How can you associate with the young, and yet have so little desire for their salvation? Let them see that you care for their souls. As far as possible, break down every barrier that keeps them from Christ. Labor for them at their homes. Pray with and for them. Point them to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, and urge them to come and be healed.

Let labor for souls become a part of your life. Go to the homes of those even who manifest no interest. While mercy's sweet voice invites the sinner, work with every energy of heart and brain, as did Paul, who “ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.” [Acts 20:31.] In the day of God, how many will confront us, and say “I am lost! I am lost! And you never warned me; you never entreated me to come to Jesus. Had I believed as you did, I would have followed every Judgment-bound soul within my reach with prayers and tears and warnings.”

Ministers, teach the people how to work. Tell them that their usefulness does not depend so much on wealth or learning or power as on a willing mind, their consecration to Christ and his cause. In times past, God has used humble men, and because of their faith and devotion, they have often accomplished more than many more pretentious laborers. They realized their weakness and dependence upon God; and by letters, by tracts, by personal effort in appeals and warnings, by a well-ordered life and godly conversation, they turned many from error to truth, from the path of transgression to obedience

[454] to God's law. The mighty power of grace worked with them, and success attended their efforts. "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." [1 [Corinthians 1:27-29](#).]

Two men start out to labor in the cause of God. One has had every advantage of education. His mind is cultivated, his powers are developed, and he is prepared to become an efficient worker. But we look in vain to see the good results of all the advantages he has enjoyed. Instead of increasing his usefulness, his education fosters a feeling of power and self-importance; he esteems himself above his less fortunate brethren. He does not continue to store his mind with useful knowledge, to fit himself for greater responsibilities. While he boasts of learning, he does not labor to the utmost of his ability, with an eye single to the glory of God. The other has good natural abilities, but a limited education. He is a constant learner in the school of Christ. The love of Jesus is in his heart, and he walks humbly with God. He is unselfish in thought and purpose, and tries to do all the good he can. As he uses the ability he has, his mind expands. The psalmist said, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." [[Psalm 119:130](#).]

The educated man may exalt himself over his unlearned brother, but he is like the man in the parable who hid his talent in the earth. He has shunned the trouble and exertion necessary to trade with his intrusted talent, that he may be able to return it with increase; and he will be condemned as a slothful servant, and dismissed from the presence of his Lord. But the one who is faithful in the improvement of his talents will return both principal and interest, and will hear the "Well done, good and faithful servant." [[Matthew 25:23](#).] The man who blesses society and makes a success of life, is the one, whether [455] educated or uneducated, who uses all his powers in the service of God and his fellow-men.

In all our churches there are persons who might be educated to become workers for Christ. There is certainly a fault among us, or there would be more talent developed to unite with us in our efforts for souls. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." [[Matthew 9:38](#).] Have special

meetings for the education of workers. Souls for whom Christ died are perishing all around us, and what excuse can we give that they have never been warned?

If you would preach fewer sermons, and do more personal labor in visiting and praying with individuals, your ministry would be more like that of Jesus. We must have a knowledge of the truth; but we have certainly made a mistake in supposing that so much depends on long, argumentative discourses. If one part of your work must be limited, let it be the discourses; for unless your sermons are followed by personal effort, Satan will often snatch away the seed of truth sown in the heart, and the good effect will be lost.

I charge you, Do not do half-hearted work. Some of you who in the beginning of your ministry were earnest and persevering, have grown weary of protracted effort and ceaseless turmoil, and you sigh for repose, and dream of leisure and fireside comfort. Some are greatly overworked, and are suffering in consequence; and others, by doing their work negligently, have brought double work upon these unselfish, thorough, God-fearing workers. Some are not willing to bear reproach for Christ's sake. Think what mighty truths God has intrusted to our keeping, and let earnest work follow your thoughts. Do mighty strokes for God. There are no compromises to be made with sin, nor any with timidity and cowardice. The Christian laborer knows no drudgery in his Heaven-appointed work. He enters into the joy of his Lord in seeing souls emancipated from the slavery of sin; and this joy more than repays him for every self-denial. [456]

Our faith is weak, our sense of God's requirements feeble. We must awake to duty. We must be endowed with power from on high. Instead of resting satisfied with our present attainments, let us cherish a longing desire that our lips may be purified, and touched with a live coal from off the altar. The words of God to us must come to the people, not in a hesitating, doubting manner, but with earnestness and power. We must pray more fervently, more perseveringly, that God may work in us and by us. In these days of multiplied popular fables, there is no way to reach the people only as God works through our efforts. Angels are commissioned to be our helpers. They are passing between earth and heaven, bearing upward the record of the doings of all the children of men.

We can never be saved in inactivity. The life of Jesus rebukes every idler. In his strength we may do much greater and more perfect work. The promises of God are rich, and full, and free, and we may have the power of his salvation with us. Then why do we not believe him and work for him? It is because threads of unbelief are woven into all the woof of life; but shall we not now begin to weave in the precious golden threads of faith? Remember, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” [1 [John 5:4](#).] If clouds hide the sun from sight, we do not mourn as though it would never appear again. God’s dear face of brightness is not always seen; but we are not to despond. It is our duty to trust him in the darkness, knowing that his love is changeless. Then let us put all our powers into our work; let us devote our voice and pen to the service of God, not laboring in our own strength or to please ourselves; and we shall see sinners converted, and God will give us a rich reward.

Our Mighty Helper

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It is our privilege to say with Paul, “I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” [Galatians 2:20.] And yet how many are making laborious work of walking in the narrow way of holiness. To many the peace and rest of this blessed way seems no nearer today than it did years in the past. They look afar off for that which is nigh; they make intricate that which Jesus made very plain. He is “the way, the truth, and the life.” The plan of salvation has been plainly revealed in the word of God, but the wisdom of the world has been sought too much, and the wisdom of Christ’s righteousness too little. And souls that might have rested in the love of Jesus, have been doubting, and troubled about many things.

You must trust Jesus for yourselves, appropriate the promises of God to yourselves, or how can you teach others to have humble, holy confidence in him? You feel that you have neglected duties, that you have not prayed as you should. You seem at a distance from God, and think that he has withdrawn from you; but it is you who have separated from him. He is waiting for you to return. He will accept the contrite heart. He has assured us that he is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. We are polluted with sin; but it is possible for us to be healed from its leprosy. We are to look to the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

The important future is before us; and to meet its trials and temptations, and to perform its duties, will require great faith, energy, and perseverance. But we may triumph gloriously. Not one waiting, watching, praying, believing soul will be ensnared by the devices of the enemy. All heaven is interested in our welfare, and awaits our demand upon its wisdom and strength. If any of us are not saved, it will be because we have chosen the service of Christ’s great adversary and the companionship of those who are his followers.

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The Lord is willing to do great things for us. We shall not gain the victory through numbers, but through the full surrender of the soul to Jesus. We are to go forward in his strength, trusting in the mighty God of Israel.

You should never be surprised, you should never be without your armor on. Be prepared for any emergency, for any call of duty. Act promptly. God would have you minute men. Many times workers are too precise, too calculating. While they are getting ready to do a great work, the opportunity for doing a good work passes unimproved. The worker moves on as though the whole burden rested upon himself, a poor, finite man, when Jesus is ready to carry him and his burden too. Brethren, trust self less, and Jesus more. He is willing to save the souls for whom we labor. Because he lives to intercede for us, we shall see of his great power. He “is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” [[Ephesians 3:20](#).] Jesus wants us to ask for help; he wants us to cast our helpless souls on him; and he will give us according to our faith.

People who are self-sufficient, and feel that so much depends upon themselves, give Jesus no room to work, and but little credit when he does work. They trust in their own ability, forgetting the words of Christ, “Without me ye can do nothing.” [[John 15:5](#).] The man that is self-righteous, and wise in his own eyes,—rich and increased in goods, having need of nothing,—cannot ask in faith, and receive, because he trusts in himself, and feels no lack. His works testify that he labors out of Christ. It is those who feel themselves [459] sinful before God, poor and helpless, that Jesus loves to help; for they will appreciate his aid. They have a longing desire to do the Master’s work, and, knowing that the power is not of themselves, they take hold of the mighty arm of God, and by faith claim his promises.

God is not pleased when his servants remain weak, wanting in courage, in faith, in hope, in love, and consequently inefficient laborers in his cause. God has given men reasoning powers, not to remain inactive or to be perverted to earthly and sordid pursuits, but that these powers may be developed to the utmost, and used in his service, to advance the interests of his kingdom.

A high standard of purity and nobility of character is set before the Christian, and he can attain to this excellence only through the

aid of Christ. But many suffer grief, pain, and disappointment, because they are unwilling to fill the humble place which God's providence assigns them, where they will remain unnoticed and unknown. They love the supremacy, and their anxiety leads them to work against their brethren, fearing that others will be preferred above themselves. Envy, malice, jealousy, and distrust are cherished, and Jesus cannot dwell where these traits are entertained. He invites those who are ambitious of preferment to come to him, and at the foot of the cross of Calvary learn his meekness and lowliness of heart. If any are qualified for high positions of trust, the Lord will lay the burden, not on them, but on those who have tested them, and can understandingly urge them forward.

The followers of Christ should not praise and flatter one another; for Satan will do a plenty of this work, and if persons have a high opinion of their own ability, it will prevent them from learning in the school of Christ. Let none censure and condemn others; for in doing this they are co-laborers with him who is the accuser of the brethren, who would steal from their hearts every particle of love for one another. Christians will not seek to tear one another down in order to build up self, but all will endeavor to strengthen and encourage one another. [460]

We should make it our daily care to cultivate sympathy and affection for one another. This is the fruit that grows on the Christian tree; it does not produce the briars and thorns of hatred and strife. The harsh, unsympathetic words we sometimes hear spoken, and the hardheartedness we see manifested, are wholly satanic, and this spirit must be supplanted by the spirit of Christ. Jesus bids us, "Love one another, as I have loved you.... By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." [John 13:34, 35.] He is our mighty Helper; and if he abides in our hearts, we shall manifest his spirit. We shall love one another; we cannot help it; for he is love.

Consistency in the Christian Life

We have every evidence that Jesus is waiting to bless us. It is not his will that we should go forth to labor in his cause, and yet have no special help, no power from on high, to attend our labors. God has never bidden us hold up the standard of his law in these days of general apostasy, without the aid of divine power. We may have help from heaven, and we should not feel free to go to battle without the evidence that God's presence will attend us.

[461] We need to have a deeper experience. We must pray more, believing that we have a living Saviour. Ministers, you who have had years of experience, never let the hand of faith tremble in grasping the promises of God; your unbelief is a stumbling-block to the young and inexperienced, and gives the powers of darkness occasion to triumph.

You want to do a great work, but many do not work in the right spirit. You carry heavy burdens, and groan under the load, when Jesus invites you to lay your burdens at the foot of the cross, and find rest to your souls. When we see you working so hard, and almost ready to faint, when we see you grieve and mourn at almost every step, we know that you have lessons to learn in the school of Christ before you can successfully teach others. Without Jesus by your side you will find the way and the work hard. You have much to learn, dear brethren, before you will accept the rest that he invites you to find in him. If you look to yourselves, and deplore your weakness and sinfulness, and continue to do this, you will make no advancement, but will remain spiritual dwarfs. You should be intelligent, growing Christians; for how else can you labor with the zeal, energy, and devotion necessary to insure success?

Do not cultivate a pride for consistency in petty matters. Such a course lends no strength to the cause of truth. We are none of us required to make ourselves singular, or to be martyrs in a small way all through life, by contending for little things when there is really nothing to contend about. Those who take this course

pity themselves, thinking they have so much trouble on account of being conscientious, upright, and straight-forward in everything. But instead of being influenced by conscientiousness, they are indulging a wicked, selfish pride of notions. That life that is thought so straight-forward, is full of crookedness, and no one can live at peace with them, except by humoring their whims, and ever studying to avoid a collision.

If these persons could only know how much trouble and grief they bring upon themselves by imagining that they are having a hard time and are great sufferers, they would change the current of their thoughts. We need not keep our own record of trials and difficulties, griefs and sorrows. All these things are written in the books, and Heaven will take care of them. While we are carefully counting up these disagreeable things, many things that are pleasant to reflect upon are passing from the memory; such as the merciful kindness of God surrounding us every moment, and the love over which angels marvel, that God gave his Son to die for us.

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The path of uprightness is the path of peace. Those who have the meekness and lowliness of Christ can walk this humble path calmly, restfully, trustfully. No matter what may be our temperament, we may walk this path if we will. It is plain, and there is no need of constant anxiety and fear, fretting and worry, lest we shall lose the way. This path is the highway of holiness, cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. It is the glorious path of the just, which “shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” [Proverbs 4:18.] Those who walk in this way will wear a cheerful, happy countenance; for it is lighted up by bright beams from the Sun of Righteousness.

Do not be unreliable in your Christian course. Sin must not be cherished. This is a time when the love of many is waxing cold, and any defection on your part may encourage others in a wrong course, and lead to many and grievous transgressions. Do not set an example of lukewarmness; do not turn away from testimonies of the Spirit of God. We are intrusted with a solemn message to give to the world, and there is much at stake. We cannot be safe amid the temptations that surround us in these times of peril, without constantly watching unto prayer. We must guard against accepting a low standard of our own instead of the high Bible standard of character. Satan works through faults of character to gain control of the whole mind, and he

[463] knows that if these faults are cherished, he will succeed. Often he gains the advantage, and betrays into sin those who should represent Christ to the world; and our Saviour is more deeply afflicted by this ingratitude and disobedience than is a tender, loving mother by the misconduct of a wayward child.

You may forget childish things, and grow in grace day by day. As you make advancement, set your face like a flint against all falsehood, all pretense. You will sometimes be flattered by men, but more frequently by women. Especially when you present the truth in new fields, you will meet persons who will engage in this wicked flattery. As a servant of Christ, despise this flattery; shun it as you would a venomous serpent. Rebuke the woman who will praise your smartness, holding your hand as long as she can retain it in her own. Have little to say to persons of this class; for they are the agents of Satan, and carry out his plans by laying bewitching snares to beguile you from the path of holiness. Every sensible Christian lady will act a modest part; she will understand the devices of Satan, and will not be his co-laborer.

Shun the society of those who by their arts would weaken in the least your purpose to do right, or bring a stain upon the purity of your conscience. Do not give them your time or your confidence; for they will leave you feeling bereft of your spiritual strength. Do nothing among strangers, on the cars, in the home, in the street, that would have the least appearance of evil.

Remember that your works must stand the test of the Judgment. Let the eye be single to the glory of God, the heart pure, the thoughts brought into obedience to the will of God. Do something every day to improve, beautify, and ennoble the life that Christ has purchased with his own blood.

[464] It was the joy of Christ to save souls. Let this be your work and your joy. Perform all duties and make all sacrifices for Christ's sake, and he will be your constant helper. Go straight forward when the voice of duty calls; let no seeming difficulties obstruct your path. Take up your God-given responsibilities; and as you bear your sometimes heavy burdens, do not ask, "Why idle stands my brother, no yoke upon him laid?" Do the duty nearest you thoroughly and well, not coveting praise, but working for the Master because you belong to him.

Duties and Privileges of the Christian Laborer

It is a privilege to express my gratitude to God for these meetings now in the past. We know that we have had the presence and blessing of God. He has breathed upon us his Holy Spirit. To me and to many others, heaven has seemed very near; and we have been led to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Through the Bible readings the truth has been brought out with clearness and power. Deeper, broader views have been taken of divine truth and of our responsibility to God. Hearts have been subdued and softened by the love of God. Through grace the capacity to understand and appreciate the truth has been enlarged; and as we continue to advance in grace, our ability will still further increase, and we shall better understand the ways of God and the plan of redemption.

The morning meetings have been most precious. To me they have been a continual feast,—like heavenly manna to my soul. We have met Jesus in the assembly of his people. We have learned of him, and of his willingness to receive all who come to him in humble faith, taking God at his word. We have learned that if we would receive the dew of divine grace, we must allow nothing to come between God and our souls. We have seen many obtaining such a knowledge as they never had before of the true Source of spiritual strength, of moral power. [465]

But we are now about to separate and to be widely scattered. Our ministers go to their several fields of labor refreshed and strengthened, with broader views of the love of God, and of his willingness to work with their efforts, than they have heretofore had. Sensitive persons, as they view the conflicts and trials before them, shrink from the responsibility they must bear in warning the world of the judgments that are about to come. They fear that this rude touch will stain their souls. But we are none of us to be shut up as precious perfumes lest the fragrance shall escape. We have enjoyed a Pentecostal season; we have been warmed by the love of Jesus, invigorated by

the clear, firm truths of the word of God, and refreshed by the dews of divine grace, all for a purpose, that we may shed forth to the world a sweet fragrance from Eden. We have gathered rays of divine light that they may be reflected to others in good works.

[466] There are souls to be won to Christ. There is a great and solemn work before us to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord. We have but little time here, and the best use we can make of our faculties is to consecrate them to the work of God. It is the duty of all, not only of those who occupy the position of watchmen on the walls of Zion, but of the laymen also, to do their utmost to advance the cause of God and save their fellow-men. Opposition must be met. We shall be hated of all men for Christ's sake, and by Satan, because he knows that this work is attended by divine power, which will undermine his influence. But heaven is open before us; we may take hold of divine strength. As children of God it is our privilege and duty to come directly to him, and claim a Father's blessing. He will give it. Iniquity abounds, and for this very reason, God is willing to give more grace, and reveal himself to his people.

I beseech you, do not withhold yourselves from God. The moment you surrender yourselves wholly to him, in simple faith, Jesus accepts you, and encircles you in his arms of love. He holds you more firmly than you can grasp him. Come to the light, and triumph in God. Then shall your peace be as a river, and your "righteousness as the waves of the sea." [Isaiah 48:18.]

Cease to cherish and excuse sin; for sin caused the death of the Son of God. Let your conversation be in heaven, "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." [Philippians 3:20.] Never forget, wherever your lot may be cast, that you are pilgrims and strangers here, journeying to a better country, even a heavenly. The talents you possess, the property God has lent you, must be used in doing good, in laying up treasure in heaven. The work which you are doing with your hand or your brain, must stand the test of the Judgment. How will it then appear? Are you acting well your part in preparing yourselves and others for glory, honor, and immortality? Are you doing anything that you will wish undone when the books shall be opened, and you meet your deeds as they stand registered in heaven?

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” “The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” [1 John 3:2, 1.] We are not understood by the world, we shall never be; but we must not let this discourage us. We are not to look at present appearances, nor be angry when we are misjudged, but we should improve every opportunity of doing good.

It is wise to seek humility and meekness, and carefully to avoid raising a combative spirit, which will close hearts and ears to the truth. Hold your mouth as with a bridle when the wicked are before you. When tempted to say sarcastic things, refrain. Censure no one; condemn no one. Let the life argue for Jesus, and the lips be opened with wisdom to defend the truth. The consistent life, the long forbearance, the spirit unruffled under provocation, is always the most conclusive argument and the most solemn appeal. We are often brought into positions that are trying, where human nature longs to break forth, but in such cases, be still, do not retaliate.

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We must drink deeper draughts from the well of salvation. How can we possibly enter into the spirit of Christ’s teachings unless we are partakers of the divine nature? We are seeking to vindicate the law of God. We need the energy of the Holy Spirit to accompany our efforts. Never venture to enter the pulpit until you have wrestled with God in prayer, and come forth as seeing Him who is invisible, with your faces lighted up with beams from the Sun of Righteousness. You will then have no tame words to offer. The divine truths which glow in your own breast will kindle the hearts of others. The men who would teach others the secret of success in the sacred ministry should understand that secret themselves. The best way to teach youthful laborers is to do yourselves what you expect them to do.

In every prayer, let the hand of living faith lay hold upon infinite help. Faith is the medium by which the renewed heart is drawn close to the great heart of love. Faith elevates the sinking soul. Faith lightens every burden and relieves every weariness, by the anticipation of the mansions Jesus has gone to prepare for them that love him.

Jesus is the foundation, the author and the finisher, of our faith. Why are we so powerless? Jesus lives; and because he lives, we

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shall live also. He is to us a risen Saviour; not a shrouded Saviour in Joseph's new tomb, which was closed with a great stone and sealed with the Roman seal. Mourn not as those who are hopeless and helpless; never, under any circumstances, give way to despair; but from grateful hearts, from lips touched with holy fire, let the glad song ring out, "Jesus is risen; he lives to make intercession for us." Grasp this hope, and it will hold the soul like a sure, tried anchor. Believe, and thou shalt "see the glory of God." [John 11:40.]

Will it make you sad to be buffeted, despised, derided, maligned by the world? It ought not; for Jesus told us just how it would be. "If the world hate you," he says, "ye know that it hated me before it hated you." The apostle Paul, the great hero of faith, testifies, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." [John 15:18; Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17.] Look up, my brethren, look up. Let the love of God into your souls. Through Jesus the treasures of heaven are at our command, and what is there that he will not do for us? The Father also loves us, and is waiting to be gracious. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" [Romans 8:32.]

Are we working to proclaim truth, righteousness, and the love of God? This is the work that is assigned us. Even in bereavement we should not stop to grieve; but let us show our love for the faithful workers who have gone to their rest, by doing the work they would have done had they lived. While we do our own work, we may also take up theirs where they left it, and firmly and courageously carry forward the banner of truth to final victory.

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Brethren, your aims are altogether too low. You have not used the great moral faculties of the soul,—faith, hope, and love. These powers are not given us to lie dormant, but that through their exercise the soul may be brought into harmony with heaven. With many of you they are paralyzed through inaction, and, as a consequence, you are weak and helpless; but do not let your great need discourage you. The Saviour of sinners, the Friend of the friendless, with compassion infinitely greater than that of a tender mother for a loved and afflicted child, is inviting, "Look unto me, and be ye saved."

“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” [Isaiah 45:22; 53:5.] We may take hold of his strength, and make peace with God. Jesus will quicken all the faculties of the soul, and implant new life and energy.

While you should make every effort to reach the highest standard of intellectual excellence, you should avoid self-sufficiency and dependence on your own ability. Learn of Jesus. He was the greatest teacher the world ever knew; yet he spoke in the language of common life. He met the necessities of all. He adapted his instruction to all times and places, to both the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant. He ever dwelt upon the grandest themes than can engage the attention; and he presented them in such a form, and used such illustrations, that the feeblest minds could grasp his meaning, while the most intelligent were attracted and instructed.

Let us beware lest we lose the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. We must become as little children in humility, in consciousness of our own weakness. We must learn from the Divine Teacher lessons of higher wisdom than were ever taught in the most exalted schools of human institution.

There is danger of not making Christ’s teachings a personal matter, of not receiving them as though they were addressed to us personally. In his words of instruction, Jesus means me. I may appropriate to myself his merits, his death, his cleansing blood, as fully as though there were not another sinner in the world for whom Christ died. In listening to his teachings, with understanding open to receive his words, we display the highest wisdom. In being doers of the word,—obeying Christ by leading self-denying lives and forming pure and holy characters,—we shall secure the life which measures with the life of God.

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There are toils and conflicts and self-denials for us all. Not one will escape them. We must tread the path where Jesus leads the way, it may be in tears, in trials, in bereavement, in sorrow for sins, or in seeking for the mastery over depraved desires, unbalanced characters, and unholy tempers. It requires earnest efforts to present ourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. It takes the entire being, complete consecration, entire submission. There must be no chamber of the mind where Satan can hold sway, and carry

out his devices. Self must be crucified. Sacrifices must be made that will seem like taking the very life-blood from the heart.

When self dies, there will be awakened an intense desire for the salvation of others,—a desire which will lead to persevering efforts to do good. There will be a sowing beside all waters; and earnest supplication, importunate prayers, will enter heaven in behalf of perishing souls. There will be an earnestness, a persistency, that will not let go. Love to Jesus will lead to ardent love for the souls of our fellow-men.

[471] Now, as we are about to separate, the question arises, Shall we all meet again in General Conference? Probably we shall not; but where, then, will be our next grand meeting? When shall we again greet each other? We have wept and rejoiced together here; but if we never meet again on earth, shall we unite our voices in songs of triumph around the great white throne? Shall we each prove worthy of the precious boon of eternal life? God grant that not one face may be missing, not one voice wanting, when the hallelujahs are sung in the courts of heaven.