

Adult
Sabbath School
Bible Study Guide
Apr | May | Jun 2024

Name

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY



LESSON
STUDY HELPS

OVERVIEW

General Introduction for the 2nd Quarter, 2024

“Before the entrance of sin, Adam enjoyed open communion with his Maker; but since man separated himself from God by transgression, the human race has been cut off from this high privilege. By the plan of redemption, however, a way has been opened whereby the inhabitants of the earth may still have connection with heaven. God has communicated with men by His Spirit, and divine light has been imparted to the world by revelations to His chosen servants. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21.

During the first twenty-five hundred years of human history, there was no written revelation. Those who had been taught of God, communicated their knowledge to others, and it was handed down from father to son, through successive generations. The preparation of the written word began in the time of Moses. Inspired revelations were then embodied in an inspired book. This work continued during the long period of sixteen hundred years--from Moses, the historian of creation and the law, to John, the recorder of the most sublime truths of the gospel.

The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all "given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed have themselves embodied the thought in human language.

The Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. They are of divine, and not of human composition. But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14.

In harmony with the word of God, His Spirit was to continue its work throughout the period of the gospel dispensation. During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. The Bible itself relates how, through the Holy Spirit, men received warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, in matters in no way relating to the giving of the Scriptures. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of the Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God." *Great Controversy 1888 Edition, Author's Preface.*

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LESSON 1

“HOW GOD COMMUNICATES WITH MAN”

March 30 — April 5

? STUDY HELPS :

- ✓ The Great Controversy, Introduction, pages v-vii, trade ed.;
- * The Great Controversy, pages 7-9 missionary ed.;
- * A.G. Daniells, The Abiding Gift of Prophecy, pages 15-21;
- * S.D.A. Bible Commentary on Bible References.

*E. G. W. Study Help 1**Sabbath, March 30th, 2024*

The Great Controversy
Chapters V-Vii, pp. 79-144
“John Wycliffe”
“Huss and Jerome”
“Luther’s Separation from Rome”

Chapter V - John Wycliffe

Before the Reformation there were at times but very few copies of the Bible in existence; but God had not suffered his Word to be wholly destroyed. Its truths were not to be forever hidden. He could as easily unchain the words of life as he could open prison doors and unbolt iron gates to set his servants free. In the different countries of Europe, men were moved by the Spirit of God to search for the truth as for hid treasures. Providentially guided to the Holy Scriptures, they studied the sacred pages with intense interest. They were willing to accept the light, at any cost to themselves. Though they did not see all things clearly, they were enabled to perceive many long-buried truths. As Heaven-sent messengers they went forth, rending asunder the chains of error and superstition, and calling upon those who had been so long enslaved to arise and assert their liberty. {GC88 79.1}

Except among the Waldenses, the Word of God had for ages been locked up in languages known only to the learned; but the time had come for the Scriptures to be translated, and given to the people of different lands in their native tongue. The world had passed its midnight. The hours of darkness were wearing away, and in many lands appeared tokens of the coming dawn. {GC88 79.2}

In the fourteenth century arose in England the “morning-star of the Reformation.” John Wycliffe was the herald of reform, not for England alone, but for all Christendom. The great protest against Rome which it was permitted him to utter, was never to be silenced. That protest opened the struggle which was to result in the emancipation of individuals, of churches, and of nations. {GC88 79.3}

Wycliffe received a liberal education, and with him the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom. He was noted at college for his fervent piety as well as for his remarkable talents and sound scholarship. In his thirst for knowledge he sought to become acquainted with every branch of learning. He was educated in the scholastic philosophy, in the canons of the church, and in the civil law, especially that of his own country. In his after-labours the value of this early training was apparent. A thorough acquaintance with the speculative philosophy of his time enabled him to expose its errors; and by his study of national and ecclesiastical law he was prepared to engage in the great struggle for civil and religious liberty. While he could wield the weapons drawn from the Word of God, he had acquired the intellectual discipline of the schools, and he understood the tactics of the schoolmen. The power of his genius and the extent and thoroughness of his knowledge commanded the respect of both friends and foes. His adherents saw with satisfaction that their champion stood foremost among the leading minds of the nation; and his enemies were prevented from casting contempt upon the cause of reform by exposing the ignorance or weakness of its supporter. {GC88 80.1}

While Wycliffe was still at college, he entered upon the study of the Scriptures. In those early times, when the Bible existed only in the ancient languages, scholars were enabled to find their way to the fountain of truth, which was closed to the uneducated classes. Thus already the way had been prepared for Wycliffe's future work as a reformer. Men of learning had studied the Word of God, and had found the great truth of his free grace there revealed. In their teachings they had spread a knowledge of this truth, and had led others to turn to the Living Oracles. {GC88 80.2}

When Wycliffe's attention was directed to the Scriptures, he entered upon their investigation with the same thoroughness which had enabled him to master the learning of the schools. Heretofore he had felt a great want, which neither his scholastic studies nor the teaching of the church could satisfy. In the Word of God he found that which he had before sought in vain. Here he saw the plan of salvation revealed, and Christ set forth as the only

advocate for man. He gave himself to the service of Christ, and determined to proclaim the truths he had discovered. {GC88 80.3}

Like after-reformers, Wycliffe did not, at the opening of his work, foresee whither it would lead him. He did not set himself deliberately in opposition to Rome. But devotion to truth could not but bring him in conflict with falsehood. The more clearly he discerned the errors of the papacy, the more earnestly he presented the teaching of the Bible. He saw that Rome had forsaken the Word of God for human tradition; he fearlessly accused the priesthood of having banished the Scriptures, and demanded that the Bible be restored to the people, and that its authority be again established in the church. He was an able and earnest teacher, and an eloquent preacher, and his daily life was a demonstration of the truths he preached. His knowledge of the Scriptures, the force of his reasoning, the purity of his life, and his unbending courage and integrity, won for him general esteem and confidence. Many of the people had become dissatisfied with their former faith, as they saw the iniquity that prevailed in the Roman Church, and they hailed with unconcealed joy the truths brought to view by Wycliffe; but the papist leaders were filled with rage when they perceived that this reformer was gaining an influence greater than their own. {GC88 81.1}

Wycliffe was a keen detector of error, and he struck fearlessly against many of the abuses sanctioned by the authority of Rome. While acting as chaplain for the king, he took a bold stand against the payment of tribute claimed by the pope from the English monarch, and showed that the papal assumption of authority over secular rulers was contrary to both reason and revelation. The demands of the pope had excited great indignation, and Wycliffe's teachings exerted an influence upon the leading minds of the nation. The king and the nobles united in denying the pontiff's claim to temporal authority, and in refusing the payment of the tribute. Thus an effectual blow was struck against the papal supremacy in England. {GC88 81.2}

Another evil against which the reformer waged long and resolute battle, was the institution of the orders of mendicant friars. These friars swarmed in England, casting a blight upon the greatness and prosperity of the nation. Industry, education, morals, all felt the withering influence. The monks' life of idleness and beggary was not only a heavy drain upon the resources of the people, but it brought useful labour into contempt. The youth were demoralized and corrupted. By the influence of the friars many were induced to enter a cloister and devote themselves to a monastic life, and this not only without the consent of their parents, but even without their knowledge, and contrary to their commands. One of the early fathers of the Romish Church, urging the claims of monasticism above the obligations of filial love and duty, had declared: "Though thy father should lie before thy door, weeping and lamenting, and thy mother should show thee the body that bare thee and the breasts that nursed thee, see that thou trample them under foot, and go onward straightway to Christ." "By this monstrous inhumanity," as Luther afterward styled it, "savouring more of the wolf and the tyrant than of the Christian and the man," were the hearts of children steeled against their parents. Thus did the papal leaders, like the Pharisees of old, make the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition. Thus homes were made desolate, and parents were deprived of the society of their sons and daughters. {GC88 82.1}

Even the students in the universities were deceived by the false representations of the monks, and induced to join their orders. Many afterward repented this step, seeing that they had blighted their own lives, and had brought sorrow upon their parents; but once fast in the snare, it was impossible for them to obtain their freedom. Many parents, fearing the influence of the monks, refused to send their sons to the universities. There was a marked falling off in the number of students in attendance at the great centres of learning. The schools languished, and ignorance prevailed. {GC88 82.2}

The pope had bestowed on these monks the power to hear confessions and to grant pardon. This became a source of great evil. Bent on enhancing their gains, the friars were so ready to grant absolution that criminals of all descriptions resorted to them, and as a result, the worst vices rapidly increased. The sick and the poor were left to suffer, while the gifts that should have relieved their wants went to the monks, who with threats demanded the alms of the people, denouncing the impiety of those who should withhold gifts from their orders. Notwithstanding their profession of poverty, the wealth of the friars was constantly increasing, and their magnificent edifices and luxurious tables made more apparent the growing poverty of the nation. And while spending their time in luxury and pleasure, they sent out in their stead ignorant men, who could only recount marvellous tales, legends, and jests to amuse the people, and make them still more completely the dupes of the monks. Yet the friars continued to maintain their hold on the superstitious multitudes, and led them to believe that all religious duty was comprised in acknowledging the supremacy of the pope, adoring the saints, and making gifts to the monks, and that this was sufficient to secure them a place in Heaven. {GC88 83.1}

Men of learning and piety had laboured in vain to bring about a reform in these monastic orders; but Wycliffe, with clearer insight, struck at the root of the evil, declaring that the system itself was false, and that it should be abolished. Discussion and inquiry were awakening. As the monks traversed the country, vending the pope's pardons, many were led to doubt the possibility of purchasing forgiveness with money, and they questioned whether they should not seek pardon from God rather than from the pontiff of Rome. Not a few were alarmed at the rapacity of the friars, whose greed seemed never to be satisfied. "The monks and priests of Rome," said they, "are eating us away like a cancer. God must deliver us, or the people will perish." To cover their avarice, these begging monks claimed that they were following the Saviour's example, declaring that Jesus and his disciples had been supported by the charities of the people. This claim resulted in injury to their cause, for it led many to the Bible to learn the truth for themselves, —a result which of all others was least desired by Rome. The minds of men were directed to the Source of truth, which it was her object to conceal. {GC88 83.2}

Wycliffe began to write and publish tracts against the friars, not, however, seeking so much to enter into dispute with them as to call the minds of the people to the teachings of the Bible and its Author. He declared that the power of pardon or of excommunication is possessed by the pope in no greater degree than by common priests, and that no man can be truly excommunicated unless he has first brought upon himself the condemnation of God. In no more effectual way could he have undertaken the overthrow of that mammoth fabric of spiritual and temporal dominion which the pope had erected, and in which the souls and bodies of millions were held captive. {GC88 84.1}

Again Wycliffe was called to defend the rights of the English crown against the encroachments of Rome; and being appointed a royal ambassador, he spent two years in the Netherlands, in conference with the commissioners of the pope. Here he was brought into communication with ecclesiastics from France, Italy, and Spain, and he had an opportunity to look behind the scenes, and gain a knowledge of many things which would have remained hidden from him in England. He learned much that was to give point to his after-labours. In these representatives from the papal court he read the true character and aims of the hierarchy. He returned to England to repeat his former teachings more openly and with greater zeal, declaring that covetousness, pride, and deception were the gods of Rome. {GC88 84.2}

In one of his tracts he said, speaking of the pope and his collectors: "They draw out of our land poor men's livelihood, and many thousand marks by the year, of the king's money, for sacraments and spiritual things, that is cursed heresy of simony, and makes all Christendom assert and maintain his heresy. And certes though our realm had a huge hill of gold, and never other man took thereof but only this proud, worldly priest's collector, by process of time this hill must be spent; for he takes ever money out of our land, and sends naught again but God's curse for his simony." {GC88 85.1}

Soon after his return to England, Wycliffe received from the king the appointment to the rectory of Lutterworth. This was an assurance that the monarch at least had not been displeased by his plain speaking. Wycliffe's influence was felt in shaping the action of the court, as well as in moulding the belief of the nation. {GC88 85.2}

The papal thunders were soon hurled against him. Three bulls were dispatched to England,—to the university, to the king, and to the prelates,—all commanding immediate and decisive measures to silence the teacher of heresy. Before the arrival of the bulls, however, the bishops, in their zeal, had summoned Wycliffe before them for trial. But two of the most powerful princes in the kingdom accompanied him to the tribunal; and the people, surrounding the building and rushing in, so intimidated the judges that the proceedings were for the time suspended, and he was allowed to go his way in peace. A little later, Edward III., whom in his old age the prelates were seeking to influence against the reformer, died, and Wycliffe's former protector became regent of the kingdom. {GC88 85.3}

But the arrival of the papal bulls laid upon all England a peremptory command for the arrest and imprisonment of the heretic. These measures pointed directly to the stake. It appeared certain that Wycliffe must soon fall a prey to the vengeance of Rome. But He who declared to one of old, "Fear not; I am thy shield," [Genesis 15:1.] again stretched out his hand to protect his servant. Death came, not to the reformer, but to the pontiff who had decreed his destruction. Gregory XI. died, and the ecclesiastics who had assembled for Wycliffe's trial, dispersed. {GC88 86.1}

God's providence still further overruled events to give opportunity for the growth of the Reformation. The death of Gregory was followed by the election of two rival popes. Two conflicting powers, each professedly infallible, now claimed obedience. Each called upon the faithful to assist him in making war upon the other, enforcing his demands by terrible anathemas against his adversaries, and promises of rewards in Heaven to his supporters. This

occurrence greatly weakened the power of the papacy. The rival factions had all they could do to attack each other, and Wycliffe for a time had rest. Anathemas and recriminations were flying from pope to pope, and torrents of blood were poured out to support their conflicting claims. Crimes and scandals flooded the church. Meanwhile the reformer, in the quiet retirement of his parish of Lutterworth, was labouring diligently to point men from the contending popes to Jesus, the Prince of peace. {GC88 86.2}

The schism, with all the strife and corruption which it caused, prepared the way for the Reformation, by enabling the people to see what the papacy really was. In a tract which he published, "On the Schism of the Popes," Wycliffe called upon the people to consider whether these two priests were not speaking the truth in condemning each other as the antichrist. "The fiend," said he, "no longer reigns in one but in two priests, that men may the more easily, in Christ's name, overcome them both." {GC88 86.3}

Wycliffe, like his Master, preached the gospel to the poor. Not content with spreading the light in their humble homes in his own parish of Lutterworth, he determined that it should be carried to every part of England. To accomplish this he organized a body of preachers, simple, devout men, who loved the truth and desired nothing so much as to extend it. These men went everywhere, teaching in the market-places, in the streets of the great cities, and in the country lanes. They sought out the aged, the sick, and the poor, and opened to them the glad tidings of the grace of God. {GC88 87.1}

As a professor of theology at Oxford, Wycliffe preached the Word of God in the halls of the university. So faithfully did he present the truth to the students under his instruction, that he received the title of "The Gospel Doctor." But the greatest work of his life was to be the translation of the Scriptures into the English language. In a work on "The Truth and Meaning of Scripture," he expressed his intention to translate the Bible, so that every man in England might read, in the language in which he was born, the wonderful works of God. {GC88 87.2}

But suddenly his labours were stopped. Though not yet sixty years of age, unceasing toil, study, and the assaults of his enemies, had told upon his strength, and made him prematurely old. He was attacked by a dangerous illness. The tidings brought great joy to the friars. Now they thought he would bitterly repent the evil he had done the church, and they hurried to his chamber to listen to his confession. Representatives from the four religious orders, with four civil officers, gathered about the supposed dying man. "You have death on your lips," they said; "be touched by your faults, and retract in our presence all you have said to our injury." The reformer listened in silence; then he bade his attendant raise him in his bed, and gazing steadily upon them as they stood waiting for his recantation, he said, in the firm, strong voice which had so often caused them to tremble, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the evil deeds of the friars." Astonished and abashed, the monks hurried from the room. {GC88 87.3}

Wycliffe's words were fulfilled. He lived to place in the hands of his countrymen the most powerful of all weapons against Rome; to give them the Bible, the Heaven-appointed agent to liberate, enlighten, and evangelize the people. There were many and great obstacles to surmount in the accomplishment of this work. Wycliffe was weighed down with infirmities, he knew that only a few years for labour remained for him, he saw the opposition which he must meet; but, encouraged by the promises of God's Word, he went forward nothing daunted. In the full vigour of his intellectual powers, rich in experience, he had been preserved and prepared by God's special providence for this, the greatest of his labours. While all Christendom was filled with tumult, the reformer, in his rectory at Lutterworth, unheeding the storm that raged without, applied himself to his chosen task. {GC88 88.1}

At last the work was completed,—the first English translation of the Bible ever made. The Word of God was opened to England. The reformer feared not now the prison or the stake. He had placed in the hands of the English people a light which should never be extinguished. In giving the Bible to his countrymen, he had done more to break the fetters of ignorance and vice, more to liberate and elevate his country, than was ever achieved by the most brilliant victories on fields of battle. {GC88 88.2}

The art of printing being still unknown, it was only by slow and wearisome labour that copies of the Bible could be multiplied. So great was the interest to obtain the book, that many willingly engaged in the work of transcribing it, but it was with difficulty that the copyists could supply the demand. Some of the more wealthy purchasers desired the whole Bible. Others bought only a portion. In many cases, several families united to purchase a copy. Thus Wycliffe's Bible soon found its way to the homes of the people. {GC88 88.3}

The appeal to men's reason aroused them from their passive submission to papal dogmas. Wycliffe now taught the distinctive doctrines of Protestantism,—salvation through faith in Christ, and the sole infallibility of the Scriptures. The preachers whom he had sent out circulated the Bible, together with the reformer's writings, and with such success that the new faith was accepted by nearly one-half of the people of England. {GC88 88.4}

The appearance of the Scriptures brought dismay to the authorities of the church. They had now to meet an agency more powerful than Wycliffe,—an agency against which their weapons would avail little. There was at this time no law in England prohibiting the Bible, for it had never before been published in the language of the people. Such laws were afterward enacted and rigorously enforced. Meanwhile, notwithstanding the efforts of the priest, there was for a season opportunity for the circulation of the Word of God. {GC88 89.1}

Again the papist leaders plotted to silence the reformer's voice. Before three tribunals he was successively summoned for trial, but without avail. First a synod of bishops declared his writings heretical, and, winning the young king, Richard II., to their side, they obtained a royal decree consigning to prison all who should hold the condemned doctrines. {GC88 89.2}

Wycliffe appealed from the synod to Parliament; he fearlessly arraigned the hierarchy before the national council, and demanded a reform of the enormous abuses sanctioned by the church. With convincing power he portrayed the usurpations and corruptions of the papal see. His enemies were brought to confusion. The friends and supporters of Wycliffe had been forced to yield, and it had been confidently expected that the reformer himself, in his old age, alone and friendless, would bow to the combined authority of the crown and the mitre. But instead of this the papists saw themselves defeated. Parliament, roused by the stirring appeals of Wycliffe, repealed the persecuting edict, and the reformer was again at liberty. {GC88 89.3}

A third time he was brought to trial, and now before the highest ecclesiastical tribunal in the kingdom. Here no favour would be shown to heresy. Here at last Rome would triumph, and the reformer's work would be stopped. So thought the papists. If they could but accomplish their purpose, Wycliffe would be forced to abjure his doctrines, or would leave the court only for the flames. {GC88 90.1}

But Wycliffe did not retract; he would not dissemble. He fearlessly maintained his teachings, and repelled the accusations of his persecutors. Losing sight of himself, of his position, of the occasion, he summoned his hearers before the divine tribunal, and weighed their sophistries and deceptions in the balances of eternal truth. The power of the Holy Spirit was felt in the council room. A spell from God was upon the hearers. They seemed to have no power to leave the place. As arrows from the Lord's quiver, the reformer's words pierced their hearts. The charge of heresy, which they had brought against him, he with convincing power threw back upon themselves. Why, he demanded, did they dare to spread their errors?—For the sake of gain, to make merchandise of the grace of God. {GC88 90.2}

“With whom, think you,” he finally said, “are you contending? With an old man on the brink of the grave?—No! with truth,—truth which is stronger than you, and will overcome you.” So saying, he withdrew from the assembly, and not one of his adversaries attempted to prevent him. {GC88 90.3}

Wycliffe's work was almost done, the banner of truth which he had so long borne was soon to fall from his hand; but once more he was to bear witness for the gospel. The truth was to be proclaimed from the very stronghold of the kingdom of error. Wycliffe was summoned for trial before the papal tribunal at Rome, which had so often shed the blood of the saints. He was not blind to the danger that threatened him, yet he would have obeyed the summons, had not a shock of palsy made it impossible for him to perform the journey. But though his voice was not to be heard at Rome, he could speak by letter, and this he determined to do. {GC88 90.4}

From his rectory the reformer wrote to the pope a letter, which, while respectful in tone and Christian in spirit, was a keen rebuke to the pomp and pride of the papal see. “Verily I do rejoice,” he said, “to open and declare unto every man the faith which I do hold, and specially unto the bishop of Rome; the which forasmuch as I do suppose to be sound and true, he will most willingly confirm my said faith, or if it be erroneous, amend the same. First, I believe that the gospel of Christ is the whole body of God's law. . . . I do give and hold the bishop of Rome, forasmuch as he be the vicar of Christ here on earth, to be bound most of all men unto that law of the gospel. For the greatness among Christ's disciples did not consist in worldly dignity or honours, but in the near and exact following of Christ in his life and manners. . . . Christ for the time of his pilgrimage here was a most poor man, abjecting and casting off all worldly rule and honour. {GC88 91.1}

“No faithful man ought to follow either the pope himself, or any of the holy men, but in such points as he hath followed the Lord Jesus Christ. For Peter and the sons of Zebedee, by desiring worldly honour, contrary to the following of Christ's steps, did offend, and therefore in those errors they are not to be followed. {GC88 91.2}

“The pope ought to leave unto the secular power all temporal dominion and rule, and thereunto effectually move and exhort his whole clergy; for so did Christ, and especially by his apostles. {GC88 91.3}

"If I have erred in any of these points, I will most humbly submit myself unto correction even by death, if necessity so require. If I could labour according to my will and desire in mine own person, I would surely present myself before the bishop of Rome. But the Lord hath otherwise visited me to the contrary, and hath taught me to obey God rather than men." {GC88 91.4}

In closing he said: "Let us pray unto our God, that he will so stir up our pope, Urban the Sixth, as he began, that he with his clergy may follow the Lord Jesus Christ in life and manners, and that they may teach the people effectually, and that they likewise may faithfully follow them in the same." {GC88 91.5}

Thus Wycliffe presented to the pope and his cardinals the meekness and humility of Christ, exhibiting not only to themselves but to all Christendom the contrast between them and the Master whose representatives they professed to be. {GC88 92.1}

Wycliffe fully expected that his life would be the price of his fidelity. The king, the pope, and the bishops were united to accomplish his ruin, and it seemed certain that a few months at most would bring him to the stake. But his courage was unshaken. "Why do you talk of seeking the crown of martyrdom afar?" he said. "Preach the gospel of Christ to haughty prelates, and martyrdom will not fail you. What! I should live and be silent? . . . Never! Let the blow fall. I await its coming." {GC88 92.2}

But God's providence still shielded his servant. The man who for a whole lifetime had stood boldly in defence of the truth, in daily peril of his life, was not to fall a victim to the hatred of its foes. Wycliffe had never sought to shield himself, but the Lord had been his protector; and now, when his enemies felt sure of their prey, God's hand removed him beyond their reach. In his church at Lutterworth, as he was about to dispense the communion, he fell stricken with palsy, and in a short time yielded up his life. {GC88 92.3}

God had appointed to Wycliffe his work. He had put the word of truth in his mouth, and he set a guard about him that this word might come to the people. His life was protected, and his labours prolonged, until a foundation was laid for the great work of the Reformation. {GC88 92.4}

Wycliffe came from the obscurity of the Dark Ages. There were none who went before him from whose work he could shape his system of reform. Raised up like John the Baptist to accomplish a special mission, he was the herald of a new era. Yet in the system of truth which he presented there was a unity and completeness which reformers who followed him did not exceed, and which some did not reach, even a hundred years later. So broad and deep was laid the foundation, so firm and true was the framework, that it needed not to be reconstructed by those who came after him. {GC88 92.5}

The great movement which Wycliffe inaugurated, which was to liberate the conscience and the intellect, and set free the nations so long bound to the triumphal car of Rome, had its spring in the Bible. Here was the source of that stream of blessing, which, like the water of life, has flowed down the ages since the fourteenth century. Wycliffe accepted the Holy Scriptures with implicit faith as the inspired revelation of God's will, a sufficient rule of faith and practice. He had been educated to regard the Church of Rome as the divine, infallible authority, and to accept with unquestioning reverence the established teachings and customs of a thousand years; but he turned away from all these to listen to God's holy Word. This was the authority which he urged the people to acknowledge. Instead of the church speaking through the pope, he declared the only true authority to be the voice of God speaking through his Word. And he taught not only that the Bible is a perfect revelation of God's will, but that the Holy Spirit is its only interpreter, and that every man is, by the study of its teachings, to learn his duty for himself. Thus he turned the minds of men from the pope and the Church of Rome to the Word of God. {GC88 93.1}

Wycliffe was one of the greatest of the reformers. In breadth of intellect, in clearness of thought, in firmness to maintain the truth, and boldness to defend it, he was equalled by few who came after him. Purity of life, unwearying diligence in study and in labour, incorruptible integrity, and Christ-like love and faithfulness in his ministry, characterized the first of the reformers. And this notwithstanding the intellectual darkness and moral corruption of the age from which he emerged. {GC88 93.2}

The character of Wycliffe is a testimony to the educating, transforming power of the Holy Scriptures. It was the Bible that made him what he was. The effort to grasp the great truths of revelation imparts freshness and vigour to all the faculties. It expands the mind, sharpens the perceptions, and ripens the judgment. The study of the Bible will ennoble every thought, feeling, and aspiration as no other study can. It gives stability of purpose, patience, courage, and fortitude; it refines the character, and sanctifies the soul. An earnest, reverent study of the Scriptures—bringing the mind of the student in direct contact with the infinite mind—would give to the world men of stronger and more

active intellect, as well as of nobler principle, than has ever resulted from the ablest training that human philosophy affords. "The entrance of Thy words," says the psalmist, "giveth light; it giveth understanding." [Psalm 119:130.] {GC88 93.3}

The doctrines which had been taught by Wycliffe continued for a time to spread; his followers, known as Wycliffites and Lollards, not only traversed England, but scattered to other lands, carrying the knowledge of the gospel. Now that their leader was removed, the preachers laboured with even greater zeal than before, and multitudes flocked to listen to their teachings. Some of the nobility, and even the wife of the king, were among the converts. In many places there was a marked reform in the manners of the people, and the idolatrous symbols of Romanism were removed from the churches. But soon the pitiless storm of persecution burst upon those who had dared to accept the Bible as their guide. The English monarchs, eager to strengthen their power by securing the support of Rome, did not hesitate to sacrifice the reformers. For the first time in the history of England, the stake was decreed against the disciples of the gospel. Martyrdom succeeded martyrdom. The advocates of truth, proscribed and tortured, could only pour their cries into the ear of the Lord of Sabaoth. Hunted as foes of the church and traitors to the realm, they continued to preach in secret places, finding shelter as best they could in the humble homes of the poor, and often hiding away even in dens and caves. {GC88 94.1}

Notwithstanding the rage of persecution, a calm, devout, earnest, patient protest against the prevailing corruption of religious faith continued for centuries to be uttered. The Christians of that early time had only a partial knowledge of the truth, but they had learned to love and obey God's Word, and they patiently suffered for its sake. Like the disciples in apostolic days, many sacrificed their worldly possessions for the cause of Christ. Those who were permitted to dwell in their homes, gladly sheltered their banished brethren, and when they too were driven forth, they cheerfully accepted the lot of the outcast. Thousands, it is true, terrified by the fury of their persecutors, purchased their freedom at the sacrifice of their faith, and went out of their prisons, clothed in penitents' robes, to publish their recantation. But the number was not small—and among them were men of noble birth as well as the humble and lowly—who bore fearless testimony to the truth in dungeon cells, in "Lollard towers," and in the midst of torture and flame, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to know "the fellowship of His sufferings." {GC88 95.1}

The papists had failed to work their will with Wycliffe during his life, and their hatred could not be satisfied while his body rested quietly in the grave. By the decree of the Council of Constance, more than forty years after his death his bones were exhumed and publicly burned, and the ashes were thrown into a neighbouring brook. "The brook," says an old writer, "did convey his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, and they into the main ocean; and thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over." Little did his enemies realize the significance of their malicious act. {GC88 95.2}

It was through the writings of Wycliffe that John Huss, of Bohemia, was led to renounce many of the errors of Romanism, and to enter upon the work of reform. Thus in these two countries, so widely separated, the seed of truth was sown. From Bohemia the work extended to other lands. The minds of men were directed to the long-forgotten Word of God. A divine hand was preparing the way for the Great Reformation. {GC88 95.3}

Chapter VI - Huss and Jerome

The gospel had been planted in Bohemia as early as the ninth century. The Bible was translated, and public worship was conducted in the language of the people. But as the power of the pope increased, so the Word of God was obscured. Gregory VII., who had taken it upon him "to pull down the pride of kings," was no less intent upon enslaving the people, and accordingly a bull was issued forbidding public worship to be conducted in the Bohemian tongue. The pope declared that "God was pleased that his worship should be celebrated in an unknown tongue, and that a neglect of this rule had given rise to many evils and heresies." Thus Rome decreed that the light of God's Word should be extinguished, and the people should be shut up in darkness. But Heaven had provided other agencies for the preservation of the church. Many of the Waldenses and Albigenses, driven by persecution from their homes in France and Italy, came to Bohemia. Though they dared not teach openly, they laboured zealously in secret. Thus the true faith was preserved from century to century. {GC88 97.1}

Before the days of Huss, there were men in Bohemia who rose up to condemn openly the corruption in the church and the profligacy of the people. Their labours excited widespread interest. The fears of the hierarchy were roused, and persecution was opened against the disciples of the gospel. Driven to worship in the forests and the mountains, they were hunted by soldiers, and many were put to death. After a time it was decreed that all who

departed from the Romish worship should be burned. But while the Christians yielded up their lives, they looked forward to the triumph of their cause. One of those who taught that “salvation was only to be found by faith in the crucified Saviour,” declared when dying, “The rage of the enemies of truth now prevails against us, but it will not be forever; there shall arise one from among the common people, without sword or authority, and against him they shall not be able to prevail.” Luther's time was yet far distant; but already one was rising, whose testimony against Rome would stir the nations. {GC88 97.2}

John Huss was of humble birth, and was early left an orphan by the death of his father. His pious mother, regarding education and the fear of God as the most valuable of possessions, sought to secure this heritage for her son. Huss studied at the provincial school, and then repaired to the university at Prague, receiving admission as a charity scholar. He was accompanied on the journey to Prague by his mother; widowed and poor, she had no gift of worldly wealth to bestow upon her son, but as they drew near to the great city, she kneeled down beside the fatherless youth, and invoked for him the blessing of their Father in Heaven. Little did that mother realize how her prayer was to be answered. {GC88 98.1}

At the university, Huss soon distinguished himself by his untiring application and rapid progress, while his blameless life and gentle, winning deportment gained him universal esteem. He was a sincere adherent of the Romish Church, and an earnest seeker for the spiritual blessings which it professes to bestow. On the occasion of a jubilee, he went to confession, paid the last few coins in his scanty store, and joined in the processions, that he might share in the absolution promised. After completing his college course, he entered the priesthood, and, rapidly attaining to eminence, he soon became attached to the court of the king. He was also made professor and afterward rector of the university where he had received his education. In a few years the humble charity scholar had become the pride of his country, and his name was renowned throughout Europe. {GC88 98.2}

But it was in another field that Huss began the work of reform. Several years after taking priest's orders he was appointed preacher of the chapel of Bethlehem. The founder of this chapel had advocated, as a matter of great importance, the preaching of the Scriptures in the language of the people. Notwithstanding Rome's opposition to this practice, it had not been wholly discontinued in Bohemia. But there was great ignorance of the Bible, and the worst vices prevailed among the people of all ranks. These evils Huss unsparingly denounced, appealing to the Word of God to enforce the principles of truth and purity which he inculcated. {GC88 99.1}

A citizen of Prague, Jerome, who afterward became so closely associated with Huss, had, on returning from England, brought with him the writings of Wycliffe. The queen of England, who had been a convert to Wycliffe's teachings, was a Bohemian princess, and through her influence also the reformer's works were widely circulated in her native country. These works Huss read with interest; he believed their author to be a sincere Christian, and was inclined to regard with favour the reforms which he advocated. Already, though he knew it not, Huss had entered upon a path which was to lead him far away from Rome. {GC88 99.2}

About this time there arrived in Prague two strangers from England, men of learning, who had received the light, and had come to spread it in this distant land. Beginning with an open attack on the pope's supremacy, they were soon silenced by the authorities; but being unwilling to relinquish their purpose, they had recourse to other measures. Being artists as well as preachers, they proceeded to exercise their skill. In a place open to the public they drew two pictures. One represented the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, “meek, and sitting upon an ass” [Matthew 21:5.] and followed by his disciples in travel-worn garments and with naked feet. The other picture portrayed a pontifical procession,—the pope arrayed in his rich robes and triple crown, mounted upon a horse magnificently adorned, preceded by trumpeters, and followed by cardinals and prelates in dazzling array. {GC88 99.3}

Here was a sermon which arrested the attention of all classes. Crowds came to gaze upon the drawings. None could fail to read the moral, and many were deeply impressed by the contrast between the meekness and humility of Christ the Master, and the pride and arrogance of the pope, his professed servant. There was great commotion in Prague, and the strangers after a time found it necessary, for their own safety, to depart. But the lesson they had taught was not forgotten. The pictures made a deep impression on the mind of Huss, and led him to a closer study of the Bible and of Wycliffe's writings. Though he was not prepared, even yet, to accept all the reforms advocated by Wycliffe, he saw more clearly the true character of the papacy, and with greater zeal denounced the pride, the ambition, and the corruption of the hierarchy. {GC88 100.1}

From Bohemia the light extended to Germany; for disturbances in the University of Prague caused the withdrawal of hundreds of German students. Many of them had received from Huss their first knowledge of the

Bible, and on their return they spread the gospel in their fatherland. {GC88 100.2}

Tidings of the work at Prague were carried to Rome, and Huss was soon summoned to appear before the pope. To obey would be to expose himself to certain death. The king and queen of Bohemia, the university, members of the nobility, and officers of the government, united in an appeal to the pontiff that Huss be permitted to remain at Prague, and to answer at Rome by deputy. Instead of granting this request, the pope proceeded to the trial and condemnation of Huss, and then declared the city of Prague to be under interdict. {GC88 100.3}

In that age this sentence, whenever pronounced, created widespread alarm. The ceremonies by which it was accompanied were well adapted to strike terror to a people who looked upon the pope as the representative of God himself, holding the keys of Heaven and hell, and possessing power to invoke temporal as well as spiritual judgments. It was believed that the gates of Heaven were closed against the region smitten with interdict; that until it should please the pope to remove the ban, the dead were shut out from the abodes of bliss. In token of this terrible calamity, all the services of religion were suspended. The churches were closed. Marriages were solemnized in the church-yard. The dead, denied burial in consecrated ground, were interred, without the rites of sepulture, in the ditches or the fields. Thus by measures which appealed to the imagination, Rome essayed to control the consciences of men. {GC88 100.4}

The city of Prague was filled with tumult. A large class denounced Huss as the cause of all their calamities, and demanded that he be given up to the vengeance of Rome. To quiet the storm, the reformer withdrew for a time to his native village. Writing to the friends whom he had left at Prague, he said: "If I have withdrawn from the midst of you, it is to follow the precept and example of Jesus Christ, in order not to give room to the ill-minded to draw on themselves eternal condemnation, and in order not to be to the pious a cause of affliction and persecution. I have retired also through an apprehension that impious priests might continue for a longer time to prohibit the preaching of the Word of God amongst you; but I have not quitted you to deny the divine truth, for which, with God's assistance, I am willing to die." Huss did not cease his labours, but travelled through the surrounding country, preaching to eager crowds. Thus the measures to which the pope resorted to suppress the gospel, were causing it to be the more widely extended. "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." [2 Corinthians 13:8.] {GC88 101.1}

"The mind of Huss, at this stage of his career, would seem to have been the scene of a painful conflict. Although the church was seeking to overwhelm him by her thunder-bolts, he had not renounced her authority. The Roman Church was still to him the spouse of Christ, and the pope was the representative and vicar of God. What Huss was warring against was the abuse of authority, not the principle itself. This brought on a terrible conflict between the convictions of his understanding and the claims of his conscience. If the authority was just and infallible, as he believed it to be, how came it that he felt compelled to disobey it? To obey, he saw, was to sin; but why should obedience to an infallible church lead to such an issue? This was the problem he could not solve; this was the doubt that tortured him from hour to hour. The nearest approximation to a solution, which he was able to make, was that it had happened again, as once before in the days of the Saviour, that the priests of the church had become wicked persons, and were using their lawful authority for unlawful ends. This led him to adopt for his own guidance, and to preach to others for theirs, the maxim that the precepts of Scripture, conveyed through the understanding, are to rule the conscience; in other words, that God speaking in the Bible, and not the church speaking through the priesthood, is the one infallible guide." {GC88 101.2}

When after a time the excitement in Prague subsided, Huss returned to his chapel of Bethlehem, to continue with greater zeal and courage the preaching of the Word of God. His enemies were active and powerful, but the queen and many of the nobles were his friends, and the people in great numbers sided with him. Comparing his pure and elevating teachings and holy life with the degrading dogmas which the Romanists preached, and the avarice and debauchery which they practiced, many regarded it an honour to be on his side. {GC88 102.1}

Hitherto Huss had stood alone in his labours; but now Jerome, who while in England had accepted the teachings of Wycliffe, joined in the work of reform. The two were hereafter united in their lives, and in death they were not to be divided. {GC88 102.2}

Brilliancy of genius, eloquence and learning—gifts that win popular favour—were possessed in a pre-eminent degree by Jerome; but in those qualities which constitute real strength of character, Huss was the greater. His calm judgment served as a restraint upon the impulsive spirit of Jerome, who, with true humility, perceived his worth, and yielded to his counsels. Under their united labours the reform was more rapidly extended. {GC88 103.1}

God permitted great light to shine upon the minds of these chosen men, revealing to them many of the errors of

Rome; but they did not receive all the light that was to be given to the world. Through these, his servants, God was leading the people out of the darkness of Romanism; but there were many and great obstacles for them to meet, and he led them on, step by step, as they could bear it. They were not prepared to receive all the light at once. Like the full glory of the noontide sun to those who have long dwelt in darkness, it would, if presented, have caused them to turn away. Therefore he revealed it to the leaders, little by little, as it could be received by the people. From century to century other faithful workers were to follow, to lead the people on still farther in the path of reform. {GC88 103.2}

The schism in the church still continued. Three popes were now contending for the supremacy, and their strife filled Christendom with crime and tumult. Not content with hurling anathemas, they resorted to temporal weapons. Each cast about him to purchase arms and to obtain soldiers. Of course money must be had; and to procure this, all the gifts, offices, and blessings of the church were offered for sale. The priests also, imitating their superiors, resorted to simony and war to humble their rivals, and strengthen their own power. With daily increasing boldness, Huss thundered against the abominations which were tolerated in the name of religion; and the people openly accused the Romish leaders as the cause of the miseries that overwhelmed Christendom. {GC88 103.3}

Again the city of Prague seemed on the verge of a bloody conflict. As in former ages, God's servant was accused as "he that troubles Israel" [1 Kings 18:17.] The city was again placed under interdict, and Huss withdrew to his native village. The testimony so faithfully borne from his loved chapel of Bethlehem was ended. He was to speak from a wider stage, to all Christendom, before laying down his life as a witness for the truth. {GC88 103.4}

To cure the evils that were distracting Europe, a general council was summoned to meet at Constance. The council was called, at the desire of the emperor Sigismund, by one of the three rival popes, John XXIII. The demand for a council had been far from welcome to Pope John, whose character and policy could ill bear investigation, even by prelates as lax in morals as were the churchmen of those times. He dared not, however, oppose the will of Sigismund. {GC88 104.1}

The chief objects to be accomplished by the council were to heal the schism in the church, and to root out heresy. Hence the two anti-popes were summoned to appear before it, as well as the leading propagator of the new opinions, John Huss. The former, having regard to their own safety, did not attend in person, but were represented by their delegates. Pope John, while ostensibly the convoker of the council, came to it with many misgivings, suspecting the emperor's secret purpose to depose him, and fearing to be brought to account for the vices which had disgraced the tiara, as well as for the crimes which had secured it. Yet he made his entry into the city of Constance with great pomp, attended by ecclesiastics of the highest rank, and followed by a train of courtiers. All the clergy and dignitaries of the city, with an immense crowd of citizens, went out to welcome him. Above his head was a golden canopy, borne by four of the chief magistrates. The host was carried before him, and the rich dresses of the cardinals and nobles made an imposing display. {GC88 104.2}

Meanwhile another traveller was approaching Constance. Huss was conscious of the dangers which threatened him. He parted from his friends as if he were never to meet them again, and went on his journey feeling that it was leading him to the stake. Notwithstanding he had obtained a safe-conduct from the king of Bohemia, and received one also from the emperor Sigismund while on his journey, he made all his arrangements in view of the probability of his death. {GC88 104.3}

In a letter addressed to his friends at Prague he said: "I am departing, my brethren, with a safe-conduct from the king, to meet my numerous and mortal enemies. . . . I confide altogether in the all-powerful God, in my Saviour; I trust that he will listen to your ardent prayers, that he will infuse his prudence and his wisdom into my mouth, in order that I may resist them; and that he will accord me his Holy Spirit to fortify me in his truth, so that I may face with courage, temptations, prison, and, if necessary, a cruel death. Jesus Christ suffered for his well-beloved; and therefore ought we to be astonished that he has left us his example, in order that we may ourselves endure with patience all things for our own salvation? He is God, and we are his creatures; he is the Lord, and we are his servants; he is Master of the world, and we are contemptible mortals;—yet he suffered! Why, then, should we not suffer, also, particularly when suffering is for us a purification? Therefore, beloved, if my death ought to contribute to his glory, pray that it may come quickly, and that he may enable me to support all my calamities with constancy. But if it be better that I return amongst you, let us pray to God that I may return without stain,—that is, that I may not suppress one title of the truth of the gospel, in order to leave my brethren an excellent example to follow. Probably, therefore, you will never more behold my face at Prague; but should the will of the all-powerful God deign to restore me to you, let us then advance with a firmer heart in the knowledge and the love of his law." {GC88 105.1}

In another letter, to a priest who had become a disciple of the gospel, Huss spoke with deep humility of his own errors, accusing himself of having felt pleasure in wearing rich apparel, and of having wasted hours in trifling occupations. He then added these touching admonitions: “May the glory of God and the salvation of souls occupy thy mind, and not the possession of benefices and estates. Beware of adorning thy house more than thy soul; and above all, give thy care to the spiritual edifice. Be pious and humble with the poor, and consume not thy substance in feasting. Should thou not amend thy life and refrain from superfluities, I fear that thou wilt be severely chastened, as I am myself. . . . Thou know my doctrine, for thou hast received my instructions from thy childhood; it is therefore useless for me to write to thee any further. But I conjure thee, by the mercy of our Lord, not to imitate me in any of the vanities into which thou hast seen me fall.” On the cover of the letter he added: “I conjure thee, my friend, not to break this seal, until thou shalt have acquired the certitude that I am dead,” {GC88 105.2}

On his journey, Huss everywhere beheld indications of the spread of his doctrines, and the favour with which his cause was regarded. The people thronged to meet him, and in some towns the magistrates attended him through their streets. {GC88 106.1}

Upon arriving at Constance, Huss was granted full liberty. To the emperor's safe-conduct was added a personal assurance of protection by the pope. But in violation of these solemn and repeated declarations, the reformer was in a short time arrested, by order of the pope and cardinals, and thrust into a loathsome dungeon. {GC88 106.2}

The pope, however, profiting little by his perfidy, was soon after committed to the same prison. He had been proved before the council to be guilty of the basest crimes, besides murder, simony, and adultery, “sins not fit to be named.” So the council itself declared; and he was finally deprived of the tiara, and thrown into prison. The anti-popes also were deposed, and a new pontiff was chosen. {GC88 106.3}

Though the pope himself had been guilty of greater crimes than Huss had ever charged upon the priests, and for which he had demanded a reformation, yet the same council which degraded the pontiff proceeded to crush the reformer. The imprisonment of Huss excited great indignation in Bohemia. Powerful noblemen addressed to the council earnest protests against this outrage. The emperor, who was loth to permit the violation of a safe-conduct, opposed the proceedings against him. But the enemies of the reformer were malignant and determined. They appealed to the emperor's prejudices, to his fears, to his zeal for the church. They brought forward arguments of great length to prove that he was “perfectly at liberty not to keep faith with a heretic,” and that the council, being above the emperor, “could free him from his word.” Thus they prevailed. {GC88 107.1}

Enfeebled by illness and imprisonment—for the damp, foul air of his dungeon had brought on a fever which nearly ended his life—Huss was at last brought before the council. Loaded with chains he stood in the presence of the emperor, whose honour and good faith had been pledged to protect him. During his long trial he firmly maintained the truth, and in the presence of the assembled dignitaries of Church and State, he uttered a solemn and faithful protest against the corruptions of the hierarchy. When required to choose whether he would recant his doctrines or suffer death, he accepted the martyr's fate. {GC88 107.2}

The grace of God sustained him. During the weeks of suffering that passed before his final sentence, Heaven's peace filled his soul. “I write this letter,” he said to a friend, “in prison, and with my fettered hand, expecting my sentence of death tomorrow. . . . When, with the assistance of Jesus Christ, we shall meet again in the delicious peace of the future life, you will learn how merciful God has shown himself toward me—how effectually he has supported me in the midst of my temptations and trials.” {GC88 107.3}

In the gloom of his dungeon he foresaw the triumph of the true faith. Returning in his dreams to the chapel at Prague where he had preached the gospel, he saw the pope and his bishops effacing the pictures of Christ which he had painted on its walls. He was deeply troubled at the sight; but the next day his grief was changed to joy, as he beheld many artists come to replace the figures in greater numbers and brighter colours. Their work ended, the painters exclaimed to the crowd gathered eagerly about them, “Now let the popes and bishops come! They shall never efface them more!” Said the reformer, as he related his dream, “I am certain that the image of Christ will never be effaced. They have wished to destroy it, but it will be imprinted anew on the hearts of men by much better preachers than myself.” {GC88 107.4}

For the last time, Huss was brought before the council. It was a vast and brilliant assembly,—the emperor, the princes of the empire, the royal deputies, the cardinals, bishops, and priests, and an immense crowd who had come as spectators of the events of the day. From all parts of Christendom had been gathered the witnesses of this first great sacrifice in the long struggle by which liberty of conscience was to be secured. {GC88 108.1}

Being called upon for his final decision, Huss declared his refusal to abjure, and fixing his penetrating glance upon the monarch whose plighted word had been so shamelessly violated, he declared that of his own free will he had appeared before the council, “under the public faith and protection of the emperor here present.” A deep flush crimsoned the face of Sigismund as the eyes of all in the assembly turned upon him. {GC88 108.2}

Sentence having been pronounced, the ceremony of degradation began. The bishops clothed their prisoner in the sacerdotal habit, and as he took the priestly robe, he said, “Our Lord Jesus Christ was covered with a white robe by way of insult, when Herod had him conducted before Pilate.” Being again exhorted to retract, he replied, turning toward the people, “With what face, then, should I behold the heavens? How should I look on those multitudes of men to whom I have preached the pure gospel? No; I esteem their salvation more than this poor body, now appointed unto death.” The vestments were removed one by one, each bishop pronouncing a curse as he performed his part of the ceremony. Finally a crown or mitre, on which were painted frightful figures of demons, and bearing the inscription, “The Arch-Heretic,” was placed upon his head. “Most joyfully,” he said, “will I wear this crown of shame for thy sake, O Lord Jesus, who for me didst wear a crown of thorns.” {GC88 108.3}

When he was thus arrayed, the prelates devoted his soul to Satan. Huss, looking heavenward, exclaimed, “I do commend my spirit into thy hands, O Lord Jesus, for thou hast redeemed me.” {GC88 109.1}

He was now delivered up to the secular authorities, and led away to the place of execution. An immense procession followed, hundreds of men at arms, priests and bishops in their costly robes, and the inhabitants of Constance. When he had been fastened to the stake, and all was ready for the fire to be lighted, the martyr was once more exhorted to save himself by renouncing his errors. “What errors,” said Huss, “shall I renounce? I know myself guilty of none. I call God to witness that all that I have written or preached has been with the view of rescuing souls from sin and perdition; and, therefore, most joyfully will I confirm with my blood that truth which I have written and preached.” {GC88 109.2}

When the flames kindled about him, he began to sing, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me,” and so continued till his voice was silenced forever. {GC88 109.3}

Even his enemies were struck with his heroic bearing. A zealous papist, describing the martyrdom of Huss, and of Jerome, who died soon after, said: “Both bore themselves with constant mind when their last hour approached. They prepared for the fire as if they were going to a marriage feast. They uttered no cry of pain. When the flames rose, they began to sing hymns; and scarce could the vehemence of the fire stop their singing.” {GC88 109.4}

When the body of Huss had been wholly consumed, his ashes, with the soil upon which they rested, were gathered up and cast into the Rhine, and thus borne onward to the ocean. His persecutors vainly imagined that they had rooted out the truths he preached. Little did they dream that the ashes that day borne away to the sea were to be as seed scattered in all the countries of the earth; that in lands yet unknown it would yield abundant fruit in witnesses for the truth. The voice which had spoken in the council hall of Constance had wakened echoes that would be heard through all coming ages. Huss was no more, but the truths for which he died could never perish. His example of faith and constancy would encourage multitudes to stand firm for the truth, in the face of torture and death. His execution had exhibited to the whole world the perfidious cruelty of Rome. The enemies of truth, though they knew it not, had been furthering the cause which they vainly sought to destroy. {GC88 110.1}

Yet another stake was to be set up at Constance. The blood of another witness must testify for the truth. Jerome, upon bidding farewell to Huss on his departure for the council, had exhorted him to courage and firmness, declaring that if he should fall into any peril, he himself would fly to his assistance. Upon hearing of the reformer's imprisonment, the faithful disciple immediately prepared to fulfill his promise. Without a safe-conduct he set out, with a single companion, for Constance. On arriving there he was convinced that he had only exposed himself to peril, without the possibility of doing anything for the deliverance of Huss. He fled from the city, but was arrested on the homeward journey, and brought back loaded with fetters, and under the custody of a band of soldiers. At his first appearance before the council, his attempts to reply to the accusations brought against him were met with shouts, “To the flames with him! to the flames!” He was thrown into a dungeon, chained in a position which caused him great suffering, and fed on bread and water. {GC88 110.2}

After some months the cruelties of his imprisonment brought upon Jerome an illness that threatened his life, and his enemies, fearing that he might escape them, treated him with less severity, though he remained in prison for one year. The death of Huss had not resulted as the papists had hoped. The violation of his safe-conduct had roused a storm of indignation, and as the safer course the council determined, instead of burning Jerome, to force him, if possible, to retract. He was brought before the assembly, and offered the alternative to recant or to die at the stake.

Death at the beginning of his imprisonment would have been a mercy, in comparison with the terrible sufferings which he had undergone; but now, weakened by illness, by the rigors of his prison-house, and the torture of anxiety and suspense, separated from his friends, and disheartened by the death of Huss, Jerome's fortitude gave way, and he consented to submit to the council. He pledged himself to adhere to the Catholic faith, and accepted the action of the council in condemning the doctrines of Wycliffe and Huss, excepting, however, the "holy truths" which they had taught. {GC88 111.1}

By this expedient, Jerome endeavoured to silence the voice of conscience and escape his doom. But in the solitude of his dungeon he saw more clearly what he had done. He thought of the courage and fidelity of Huss, and in contrast pondered upon his own denial of the truth. He thought of the divine Master whom he had pledged himself to serve, and who for his sake endured the death of the cross. Before his retraction he had found comfort, amid all his sufferings, in the assurance of God's favour; but now remorse and doubt tortured his soul. He knew that still other retractions must be made before he could be at peace with Rome. The path upon which he was entering could end only in complete apostasy. His resolution was taken: to escape a brief period of suffering he would not deny his Lord. {GC88 111.2}

Soon he was again brought before the council. His submission had not satisfied his judges. Their thirst for blood, whetted by the death of Huss, clamoured for fresh victims. Only by an unreserved surrender of the truth could Jerome preserve his life. But he had determined to avow his faith, and follow his brother martyr to the flames. {GC88 112.1}

He renounced his former recantation, and, as a dying man, solemnly required an opportunity to make his defence. Fearing the effect of his words, the prelates insisted that he should merely affirm or deny the truth of the charges brought against him. Jerome protested against such cruelty and injustice. "You have held me shut up three hundred and forty days in a frightful prison," he said, "in the midst of filth, noisomeness, stench, and the utmost want of everything. You then bring me out before you, and lending an ear to my mortal enemies, you refuse to hear me. If you be really wise men, and the lights of the world, take care not to sin against justice. As for me, I am only a feeble mortal; my life is but of little importance; and when I exhort you not to deliver an unjust sentence, I speak less for myself than for you." {GC88 112.2}

His request was finally granted. In the presence of his judges, Jerome kneeled down and prayed that the Divine Spirit might control his thoughts and words, that he might speak nothing contrary to the truth or unworthy of his Master. To him that day was fulfilled the promise of God to the first disciples: "Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake; . . . but when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you." [Matthew 10:18-20.] The words of Jerome excited astonishment and admiration, even in his enemies. For a whole year he had been immured in a dungeon, unable to read or even to see, in great physical suffering and mental anxiety. Yet his arguments were presented with as much clearness and power as if he had had undisturbed opportunity for study. He pointed his hearers to the long line of holy men who had been condemned by unjust judges. In almost every generation have been those who, while seeking to elevate the people of their time, have been reproached and cast out, but who in later times have been shown to be deserving of honour. Christ himself was condemned as a malefactor at an unrighteous tribunal. {GC88 112.3}

At his retraction, Jerome has assented to the justice of the sentence condemning Huss; he now declared his repentance, and bore witness to the innocence and holiness of the martyr. "I knew John Huss from his childhood," he said. "He was a most excellent man, just and holy; he was condemned, notwithstanding his innocence. . . . I also—I am ready to die. I will not recoil before the torments that are prepared for me by my enemies and false witnesses, who will one day have to render an account of their impostures before the great God, whom nothing can deceive." {GC88 113.1}

In self-reproach for his own denial of the truth, Jerome continued: "Of all the sins that I have committed since my youth, none weigh so heavily upon my mind, and cause me such poignant remorse, as that which I committed in this fatal place, when I approved of the iniquitous sentence rendered against Wycliffe, and the holy martyr, John Huss, my master. Yes, I confess it from my heart; and declare with horror that I disgracefully quailed, when, through a dread of death, I condemned their doctrines. I therefore supplicate Almighty God to deign to pardon me my sins, and this one in particular, the most heinous of all." Pointing to his judges, he said firmly: "You condemned Wycliffe and Huss, not for having shaken the doctrine of the church, but simply because they branded with reprobation the scandals of the clergy,—their pomp, their pride, and all the vices of the prelates and priests. The things that they have affirmed, and which are irrefutable, I also think and declare like them." {GC88 113.2}

His words were interrupted. The prelates, trembling with rage, cried out, "What need have we of further proof?" "Away with the most obstinate of heretics!" {GC88 114.1}

Unmoved by the tempest, Jerome exclaimed: "What! do you suppose that I fear to die? You have held me a whole year in a frightful dungeon, more horrible than death itself. You have treated me more cruelly than a Turk, Jew, or pagan, and my flesh has literally rotted off my bones alive; and yet I make no complaint, for lamentation ill becomes a man of heart and spirit; but I cannot but express my astonishment at such great barbarity toward a Christian." {GC88 114.2}

Again the storm of rage burst out; and Jerome was hurried away to prison. Yet there were some in the assembly upon whom his words had made a deep impression, and who desired to save his life. He was visited by dignitaries of the church, and urged to submit himself to the council. The most brilliant prospects were presented before him as the reward of renouncing his opposition to Rome. But like his Master, when offered the glory of the world, Jerome remained steadfast. {GC88 114.3}

"Prove to me from the Holy Writings that I am in error," he said, "and I will abjure it." {GC88 114.4}

"The Holy Writings!" exclaimed one of his tempters, "is everything to be judged by them? Who can understand them until the church has interpreted them?" {GC88 114.5}

"Are the traditions of men more worthy of faith than the gospel of our Saviour?" replied Jerome. "Paul did not exhort those to whom he wrote to listen to the traditions of men, but said, 'Search the Scriptures.'" {GC88 114.6}

"Heretic," was the response, "I repent having pleaded so long with you. I see that you are urged on by the devil." {GC88 114.7}

Ere long sentence of condemnation was passed upon him. He was led out to the same spot upon which Huss had yielded up his life. He went singing on his way, his countenance lighted up with joy and peace. His gaze was fixed upon Christ, and to him death had lost its terrors. When the executioner, about to kindle the pile, stepped behind him, the martyr exclaimed, "Come forward boldly; apply the fire before my face. Had I been afraid, I should not be here." {GC88 114.8}

His last words, uttered as the flames rose about him, were a prayer. "Lord, Almighty Father," he cried, "have pity on me, and pardon me my sins, for thou know that I have always loved thy truth." His voice ceased, but his lips continued to move in prayer. {GC88 115.1}

When the fire had done its work, the ashes of the martyr, with the earth upon which they rested, were gathered up, and, like those of Huss, were thrown into the Rhine. So perished God's faithful light-bearers. But the light of the truths which they proclaimed,—the light of their heroic example,—could not be extinguished. As well might men attempt to turn back the sun in its course as to prevent the dawning of that day which was even then breaking upon the world. {GC88 115.2}

The execution of Huss had kindled a flame of indignation and horror in Bohemia. It was felt by the whole nation that he had fallen a prey to the malice of the priests and the treachery of the emperor. He was declared to have been a faithful teacher of the truth, and the council that decreed his death was charged with the guilt of murder. His doctrines now attracted greater attention than ever before. By the papal edicts the writings of Wycliffe had been condemned to the flames. But those that had escaped destruction were now brought out from their hiding-places, and studied in connection with the Bible, or such parts of it as the people could obtain, and many were thus led to accept the reformed faith. {GC88 115.3}

The murderers of Huss did not stand quietly by and witness the triumph of his cause. The pope and the emperor united to crush out the movement, and the armies of Sigismund were hurled upon Bohemia. {GC88 115.4}

But a deliverer was raised up. Ziska, who soon after the opening of the war became totally blind, yet who was one of the ablest generals of his age, was the leader of the Bohemians. Trusting in the help of God and the righteousness of their cause, that people withstood the mightiest armies that could be brought against them. Again and again the emperor, raising fresh armies, invaded Bohemia, to be ignominiously repulsed. The Hussites were raised above the fear of death, and nothing could stand against them. A few years after the opening of the war, the brave Ziska died; but his place was filled by Procopius, who was an equally brave and skilful general, and in some respects a more able leader. {GC88 115.5}

The enemies of the Bohemians, knowing that the blind warrior was dead, deemed the opportunity favourable for

recovering all that they had lost. The pope now proclaimed a crusade against the Hussites, and again an immense force was precipitated upon Bohemia, but only to suffer terrible defeat. Another crusade was proclaimed. In all the papal countries of Europe, men, money, and munitions of war were raised. Multitudes flocked to the papal standard, assured that at last an end would be made of the Hussite heretics. Confident of victory, the vast force entered Bohemia. The people rallied to repel them. The two armies approached each other, until only a river lay between them. The allies were greatly superior in numbers, yet instead of advancing boldly to attack the Hussites, they stood as if spell-bound, silently gazing upon them. Then suddenly a mysterious terror fell upon the host. Without striking a blow that mighty force broke and scattered, as if dispelled by an unseen power. Great numbers were slaughtered by the Hussite army, which pursued the fugitives, and an immense booty fell into the hands of the victors, so that the war, instead of impoverishing, enriched the Bohemians. {GC88 116.1}

A few years later, under a new pope, still another crusade was set on foot. As before, men and means were drawn from all the papist countries of Europe. Great were the inducements held out to those who should engage in this perilous enterprise. Full forgiveness of the most heinous crimes was insured to every crusader. All who died in the war were promised a rich reward in Heaven, and those who survived were to reap honour and riches on the field of battle. Again a vast army was collected, and crossing the frontier they entered Bohemia. The Hussite forces fell back before them, thus drawing the invaders farther and farther into the country, and leading them to count the victory already won. At last the army of Procopius made a stand, and, turning upon the foe, advanced to give them battle. The crusaders, now discovering their mistake, lay in their encampment awaiting the onset. As the sound of the approaching force was heard, even before the Hussites were in sight, a panic again fell upon the crusaders. Princes, generals, and common soldiers, casting away their Armor, fled in all directions. In vain the papal legate, who was the leader of the invasion, endeavoured to rally his terrified and disorganized forces. Despite his utmost endeavours, he himself was swept along in the tide of fugitives. The rout was complete, and again an immense booty fell into the hands of the victors. {GC88 116.2}

Thus the second time a vast army, sent forth by the most powerful nations of Europe, a host of brave, warlike men, trained and equipped for battle, fled without a blow, before the defenders of a small and hitherto feeble nation. Here was a manifestation of divine power. The invaders were smitten with a supernatural terror. He who overthrew the hosts of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, who put to flight the armies of Midian before Gideon and his three hundred, who in one night laid low the forces of the proud Assyrian, had again stretched out his hand to wither the power of the oppressor. "There were they in great fear, where no fear was; for God hath scattered the bones of him that encamps against thee; thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them." [Psalm 53:5.] {GC88 117.1}

The papal leaders, despairing of conquering by force, at last resorted to diplomacy. A compromise was entered into, that while professing to grant to the Bohemians freedom of conscience, really betrayed them into the power of Rome. The Bohemians had specified four points as the condition of peace with Rome: The free preaching of the Bible; the right of the whole church to both the bread and the wine in the communion, and the use of the mother-tongue in divine worship; the exclusion of the clergy from all secular offices and authority; and in cases of crime, the jurisdiction of the civil courts over clergy and laity alike. The papal authorities at last agreed to accept the four articles, stipulating, however, that the right of explaining them, of deciding upon their exact meaning, should belong to the church. On this basis a treaty was entered into, and Rome gained by dissimulation and fraud what she had failed to gain by conflict; for, placing her own interpretation upon the Hussite articles, as upon the Bible, she could pervert their meaning to suit her own purposes. {GC88 117.2}

A large class in Bohemia, seeing that it betrayed their liberties, could not consent to the compact. Dissensions and divisions arose, leading to strife and bloodshed among themselves. In this strife the noble Procopius fell, and the liberties of Bohemia perished. {GC88 118.1}

Sigismund, the betrayer of Huss and Jerome, now became king of Bohemia, and, regardless of his oath to support the rights of the Bohemians, he proceeded to establish popery. But he had gained little by his subservience to Rome. For twenty years his life had been filled with labours and perils. His armies had been wasted and his treasuries drained by a long and fruitless struggle; and now, after reigning one year, he died, leaving his kingdom on the brink of civil war, and bequeathing to posterity a name branded with infamy. {GC88 118.2}

Tumults, strife, and bloodshed were protracted. Again foreign armies invaded Bohemia, and internal dissension continued to distract the nation. Those who remained faithful to the gospel were subjected to a bloody persecution. As their former brethren, entering into compact with Rome, imbibed her errors, those who adhered to the ancient faith had formed themselves into a distinct church, taking the name of "United Brethren." This act drew upon them

maledictions from all classes. Yet their firmness was unshaken. Forced to find refuge in the woods and caves, they still assembled to read God's Word and unite in his worship. {GC88 118.3}

Through messengers secretly sent out into different countries, they learned that here and there were isolated confessors of the truth—a few in this city and a few in that, the object, like themselves, of persecution; and that amid the mountains of the Alps was an ancient church, resting on the foundations of Scripture. This intelligence was received with great joy, and a correspondence was opened with the Waldensian Christians. {GC88 119.1}

Steadfast to the gospel, the Bohemians waited through the night of their persecution, in the darkest hour still turning their eyes toward the horizon like men who watch for the morning. “Their lot was cast in evil days, but they remembered the words first uttered by Huss, and repeated by Jerome, that a century must revolve before the day should break. These were to the Hussites what the words of Joseph were to the tribes in the house of bondage: ‘I die, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out.’” About the year 1470 persecution ceased, and there followed a period of comparative prosperity. When “the end of the century arrived, it found two hundred churches of the ‘United Brethren’ in Bohemia and Moravia. So goodly was the remnant which, escaping the destructive fury of fire and sword, was permitted to see the dawning of that day which Huss had foretold.” {GC88 119.2}

Chapter VII - Luther's Separation from Rome

Foremost among those who were called to lead the church from the darkness of popery into the light of a purer faith, stood Martin Luther. Zealous, ardent, and devoted, knowing no fear but the fear of God, and acknowledging no foundation for religious faith but the Holy Scriptures, Luther was the man for his time; through him, God accomplished a great work for the reformation of the church and the enlightenment of the world. {GC88 120.1}

Like the first heralds of the gospel, Luther sprung from the ranks of poverty. His early years were spent in the humble home of a German peasant. By daily toil as a miner, his father earned the means for his education. He intended him for a lawyer; but God purposed to make him a builder in the great temple that was rising so slowly through the centuries. Hardship, privation, and severe discipline were the school in which Infinite Wisdom prepared Luther for the important mission of his life. {GC88 120.2}

Luther's father was a man of strong and active mind, and great force of character, honest, resolute, and straightforward. He was true to his convictions of duty, let the consequences be what they might. His sterling good sense led him to regard the monastic system with distrust. He was highly displeased when Luther, without his consent, entered a monastery; and it was two years before the father was reconciled to his son, and even then his opinions remained the same. {GC88 120.3}

Luther's parents bestowed great care upon the education and training of their children. They endeavoured to instruct them in the knowledge of God and the practice of Christian virtues. The father's prayer often ascended in the hearing of his son, that the child might remember the name of the Lord, and one day aid in the advancement of his truth. Every advantage for moral or intellectual culture which their life of toil permitted them to enjoy, was eagerly improved by these parents. Their efforts were earnest and persevering to prepare their children for a life of piety and usefulness. With their firmness and strength of character they sometimes exercised too great severity; but the reformer himself, though conscious that in some respects they had erred, found in their discipline more to approve than to condemn. {GC88 120.4}

At school, where he was sent at an early age, Luther was treated with harshness and even violence. So great was the poverty of his parents, that upon going from home to school in another town he was for a time obliged to obtain his food by singing from door to door, and he often suffered from hunger. The gloomy, superstitious ideas of religion then prevailing filled him with fear. He would lie down at night with a sorrowful heart, looking forward with trembling to the dark future, and in constant terror at the thought of God as a stern, unrelenting judge, a cruel tyrant, rather than a kind heavenly Father. Yet under so many and so great discouragements, Luther pressed resolutely forward toward the high standard of moral and intellectual excellence which attracted his soul. {GC88 121.1}

He thirsted for knowledge, and the earnest and practical character of his mind led him to desire the solid and useful rather than the showy and superficial. When, at the age of eighteen, he entered the University of Erfurt, his situation was more favourable and his prospects brighter than in his earlier years. His parents having by thrift and industry acquired a competence, they were able to render him all needed assistance. And the influence of judicious friends had somewhat lessened the gloomy effects of his former training. He applied himself to the study of the

best authors, diligently treasuring their most weighty thoughts, and making the wisdom of the wise his own. Even under the harsh discipline of his former instructors, he had early given promise of distinction; and with favourable influences his mind rapidly developed. A retentive memory, a lively imagination, strong reasoning powers, and untiring application, soon placed him in the foremost rank among his associates. Intellectual discipline ripened his understanding, and aroused an activity of mind and a keenness of perception that were preparing him for the conflicts of his life. {GC88 121.2}

The fear of the Lord dwelt in the heart of Luther, enabling him to maintain his steadfastness of purpose, and leading him to deep humility before God. He had an abiding sense of his dependence upon divine aid, and he did not fail to begin each day with prayer, while his heart was continually breathing a petition for guidance and support. "To pray well," he often said, "is the better half of study." {GC88 122.1}

While one day examining the books in the library of the university, Luther discovered a Latin Bible. Such a book he had never before seen. He was ignorant even of its existence. He had heard portions of the Gospels and Epistles, which were read to the people at public worship, and he supposed that these were the entire Bible. Now, for the first time, he looked upon the whole of God's Word. With mingled awe and wonder he turned the sacred pages; with quickened pulse and throbbing heart he read for himself the words of life, pausing now and then to exclaim, "Oh, if God would give me such a book for my own!" Angels of Heaven were by his side, and rays of light from the throne of God revealed the treasures of truth to his understanding. He had ever feared to offend God, but now the deep conviction of his condition as a sinner took hold upon him as never before. {GC88 122.2}

An earnest desire to be free from sin and to find peace with God, led him at last to enter a cloister, and devote himself to a monastic life. Here he was required to perform the lowest drudgery, and to beg from house to house. He was at an age when respect and appreciation are most eagerly craved, and these menial offices were deeply mortifying to his natural feelings; but he patiently endured this humiliation, believing that it was necessary because of his sins. {GC88 122.3}

Every moment that could be spared from his daily duties he employed in study, robbing himself of sleep, and grudging even the time spent at his scanty meals. Above everything else he delighted in the study of God's Word. He had found a Bible chained to the convent wall, and to this he often repaired. As his convictions of sin deepened, he sought by his own works to obtain pardon and peace. He led a most rigorous life, endeavouring, by fasting, vigils, and scourgings, to subdue the evils of his nature, from which the monastic life had brought no release. He shrank from no sacrifice by which he might attain to that purity of heart which would enable him to stand approved before God. "I was indeed a pious monk," he afterward said, "and followed the rules of my order more strictly than I can express. If ever monk could attain Heaven by his monkish works, I should certainly have been entitled to it. If I had continued much longer, I should have carried my mortifications even to death." As the result of this painful discipline, he lost strength, and suffered from fainting spasms, from the effects of which he never fully recovered. But with all his efforts, his burdened soul found no relief. He was at last driven to the verge of despair. {GC88 123.1}

When it appeared to Luther that all was lost, God raised up a friend and helper for him. The pious Staupitz opened the Word of God to Luther's mind, and bade him look away from himself, cease the contemplation of infinite punishment for the violation of God's law, and look to Jesus, his sin-pardoning Saviour. "Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, cast yourself into the arms of your Redeemer. Trust in him,—in the righteousness of his life,—in the atonement of his death. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to give you the assurance of divine favour." "Love him who has first loved you." Thus spoke this messenger of mercy. His words made a deep impression upon Luther's mind. After many a struggle with long-cherished errors, he was enabled to grasp the truth, and peace came to his troubled soul. {GC88 123.2}

Luther was ordained a priest, and was called from the cloister to a professorship in the University of Wittenberg. Here he applied himself to the study of the Scriptures in the original tongues. He began to lecture upon the Bible; and the book of Psalm, the Gospels, and the Epistles were opened to the understanding of crowds of delighted listeners. Staupitz, his friend and superior, urged him to ascend the pulpit, and preach the Word of God. Luther hesitated, feeling himself unworthy to speak to the people in Christ's stead. It was only after a long struggle that he yielded to the solicitations of his friends. Already he was mighty in the Scriptures, and the grace of God rested upon him. His eloquence captivated his hearers, the clearness and power with which he presented the truth convinced their understanding, and his fervour touched their hearts. {GC88 124.1}

Luther was still a true son of the papal church, and had no thought that he would ever be anything else. In the

providence of God he was led to visit Rome. He pursued his journey on foot, lodging at the monasteries on the way. At a convent in Italy he was filled with wonder at the wealth, magnificence, and luxury that he witnessed. Endowed with a princely revenue, the monks dwelt in splendid apartments, attired themselves in the richest and most costly robes, and feasted at a sumptuous table. With painful misgivings Luther contrasted this scene with the self-denial and hardship of his own life. His mind was becoming perplexed. {GC88 124.2}

At last he beheld in the distance the seven-hilled city. With deep emotion he prostrated himself upon the earth, exclaiming, "Holy Rome, I salute thee!" He entered the city, visited the churches, listened to the marvellous tales repeated by priests and monks, and performed all the ceremonies required. Everywhere he looked upon scenes that filled him with astonishment and horror. He saw that iniquity existed among all classes of the clergy. He heard indecent jokes from prelates, and was filled with horror at their awful profanity, even during mass. As he mingled with the monks and citizens, he met dissipation, debauchery. Turn where he would, in the place of sanctity he found profanation. "It is incredible," he wrote, "what sins and atrocities are committed in Rome; they must be seen and heard to be believed. So that it is usual to say, 'If there be a hell, Rome is built above it. It is an abyss whence all sins proceed.'" {GC88 124.3}

By a recent decretal, an indulgence had been promised by the pope to all who should ascend upon their knees "Pilate's staircase," said to have been descended by our Saviour on leaving the Roman judgment-hall, and to have been miraculously conveyed from Jerusalem to Rome. Luther was one day devoutly climbing these steps, when suddenly a voice like thunder seemed to say to him, "The just shall live by faith." [Romans 1:17.] He sprung upon his feet, and hastened from the place, in shame and horror. That text never lost its power upon his soul. From that time he saw more clearly than ever before the fallacy of trusting to human works for salvation, and the necessity of constant faith in the merits of Christ. His eyes had been opened, and were never again to be closed, to the delusions of the papacy. When he turned his face from Rome, he had turned away also in heart, and from that time the separation grew wider, until he severed all connection with the papal church. {GC88 125.1}

After his return from Rome, Luther received at the University of Wittenberg the degree of doctor of divinity. Now he was at liberty to devote himself, as never before, to the Scriptures that he loved. He had taken a solemn vow to study carefully and to preach with fidelity the Word of God, not the sayings and doctrines of the popes, all the days of his life. He was no longer the mere monk or professor, but the authorized herald of the Bible. He had been called as a shepherd to feed the flock of God, that were hungering and thirsting for the truth. He firmly declared that Christians should receive no other doctrines than those which rest on the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. These words struck at the very foundation of papal supremacy. They contained the vital principle of the Reformation. {GC88 125.2}

Luther saw the danger of exalting human theories above the Word of God. He fearlessly attacked the speculative infidelity of the schoolmen, and opposed the philosophy and theology which had so long held a controlling influence upon the people. He denounced such studies as not only worthless but pernicious, and sought to turn the minds of his hearers from the sophistries of philosophers and theologians to the eternal truths set forth by prophets and apostles. {GC88 126.1}

Precious was the message which he bore to the eager crowds that hung upon his words. Never before had such teaching fallen upon their ears. The glad tidings of a Saviour's love, the assurance of pardon and peace through his atoning blood, rejoiced their hearts, and inspired within them an immortal hope. At Wittenberg a light was kindled whose rays should extend to the uttermost parts of the earth, and which was to increase in brightness to the close of time. {GC88 126.2}

But light and darkness cannot harmonize. Between truth and error there is an irrepressible conflict. To uphold and defend the one is to attack and overthrow the other. Our Saviour himself declared, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." [Matthew 10:34.] Said Luther, a few years after the opening of the Reformation, "God does not conduct, but drives me forward. I am not master of my own actions. I would gladly live in repose, but I am thrown into the midst of tumults and revolutions." He was now about to be urged into the contest. {GC88 126.3}

The Roman Church had made merchandise of the grace of God. The tables of the money-changers [Matthew 21:12.] were set up beside her altars, and the air resounded with the shouts of buyers and sellers. Under the plea of raising funds for the erection of St. Peter's church at Rome, indulgences for sin were publicly offered for sale by the authority of the pope. By the price of crime a temple was to be built up for God's worship,—the corner-stone laid with the wages of iniquity. But the very means adopted for Rome's aggrandizement provoked the deadliest blow to her power and greatness. It was this that aroused the most determined and successful of the enemies of popery, and

led to the battle which shook the papal throne, and jostled the triple crown upon the pontiff's head. {GC88 126.4}

The official appointed to conduct the sale of indulgences in Germany—Tetzel by name—had been convicted of the basest offenses against society and against the law of God; but having escaped the punishment due to his crimes, he was employed to further the mercenary and unscrupulous projects of the pope. With great effrontery he repeated the most glaring falsehoods, and related marvellous tales to deceive an ignorant, credulous, and superstitious people. Had they possessed the Word of God, they would not have been thus deceived. It was to keep them under the control of the papacy, in order to swell the power and wealth of her ambitious leaders, that the Bible had been withheld from them. {GC88 127.1}

As Tetzel entered a town, a messenger went before him, announcing, “The grace of God and of the holy father is at your gates.” And the people welcomed the blasphemous pretender as if he were God himself come down from Heaven to them. The infamous traffic was set up in the church, and Tetzel, ascending the pulpit, extolled indulgences as the most precious gift of God. He declared that by virtue of his certificates of pardon, all the sins which the purchaser should afterward desire to commit would be forgiven him, and that “even repentance was not indispensable.” More than this, he assured his hearers that the indulgences had power to save not only the living but the dead; that the very moment the money should clink against the bottom of his chest, the soul in whose behalf it had been paid would escape from purgatory and make its way to Heaven. {GC88 127.2}

When Simon Magus offered to purchase of the apostles the power to work miracles, Peter answered him, “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.” [Acts 8:20.] But Tetzel's offer was grasped by eager thousands. Gold and silver flowed into his treasury. A salvation that could be bought with money was more easily obtained than that which requires repentance, faith, and diligent effort to resist and overcome sin. {GC88 128.1}

The doctrine of indulgences had been opposed by men of learning and piety in the Romish Church, and there were many who had no faith in pretensions so contrary to both reason and revelation. No prelate dared lift his voice against this iniquitous traffic, but the minds of men were becoming disturbed and uneasy, and many eagerly inquired if God would not work through some instrumentality for the purification of his church. {GC88 128.2}

Luther, though still a papist of the straightest sort, was filled with horror at the blasphemous assumptions of the indulgence-mongers. Many of his own congregation had purchased certificates of pardon, and they soon began to come to their pastor, confessing their various sins, and expecting absolution, not because they were penitent and wished to reform, but on the ground of the indulgence. Luther refused them absolution, and warned them that unless they should repent and reform their lives, they must perish in their sins. In great perplexity they repaired to Tetzel with the complaint that their confessor had refused his certificates; and some boldly demanded that their money be returned to them. The friar was filled with rage. He uttered the most terrible curses, caused fires to be lighted in the public squares, and declared that he had orders from the pope “to burn the heretics who dared oppose his most holy indulgences.” {GC88 128.3}

Luther now entered boldly upon his work as a champion of the truth. His voice was heard from the pulpit in earnest, solemn warning. He set before the people the offensive character of sin, and taught them that it is impossible for man, by his own works, to lessen its guilt or evade its punishment. Nothing but repentance toward God and faith in Christ can save the sinner. The grace of Christ cannot be purchased; it is a free gift. He counselled the people not to buy the indulgences, but to look in faith to a crucified Redeemer. He related his own painful experience on vainly seeking by humiliation and penance to secure salvation, and assured his hearers that it was by looking away from himself and believing in Christ that he found peace and joy. {GC88 129.1}

As Tetzel continued his traffic and his impious pretensions, Luther determined upon a more effectual protest against these crying abuses. An occasion soon offered. The castle church of Wittenberg possessed many relics, which on certain holy days were exhibited to the people, and full remission of sins was granted to all who then visited the church and made confession. According on these days the people in great numbers resorted thither. One of the most important of these occasions, the festival of “All-Saints,” was approaching. On the preceding day, Luther, joining the crowds that were already making their way to the church, posted on its door a paper containing ninety-five propositions against the doctrine of indulgences. He declared his willingness to defend these theses next day at the university, against all who should see fit to attack them. {GC88 129.2}

His propositions attracted universal attention. They were read and re-read and repeated in every direction. Great excitement was created in the university and in the whole city. By these theses it was shown that the power to grant the pardon of sin, and to remit its penalty, had never been committed to the pope or to any other man. The whole

scheme was a farce,—an artifice to extort money by playing upon the superstitions of the people,—a device of Satan to destroy the souls of all who should trust to its lying pretensions. It was also clearly shown that the gospel of Christ is the most valuable treasure of the church, and that the grace of God, therein revealed, is freely bestowed upon all who seek it by repentance and faith. {GC88 129.3}

Luther's theses challenged discussion; but no one dared accept the challenge. The questions which he proposed had in a few days spread through all Germany, and in a few weeks they had sounded throughout Christendom. Many devoted Romanists, who had seen and lamented the terrible iniquity prevailing in the church, but had to know how to arrest its progress, read the propositions with great joy, recognizing in them the voice of God. They felt that the Lord had graciously set his hand to arrest the rapidly swelling tide of corruption that was issuing from the see of Rome. Princes and magistrates secretly rejoiced that a check was to be put upon the arrogant power which denied the right of appeal from its decisions. {GC88 130.1}

But the sin-loving and superstitious multitudes were terrified as the sophistries that had soothed their fears were swept away. Crafty ecclesiastics, interrupted in their work of sanctioning crime, and seeing their gains endangered, were enraged, and rallied to uphold their pretensions. The reformer had bitter accusers to meet. Some charged him with acting hastily and from impulse. Others accused him of presumption, declaring that he was not directed of God, but was acting from pride and forwardness. "Who does not know," he responded, "that one can seldom advance a new idea without having some appearance of pride, and without being accused of exciting quarrels? Why were Christ and all the martyrs put to death?—Because they appeared proud despisers of the wisdom of the times in which they lived, and because they brought forward new truths without having first consulted the oracles of the old opinions." {GC88 130.2}

Again he declared: "What I am doing will not be effected by the prudence of man, but by the counsel of God. If the work be of God, who shall stop it? If it be not, who shall forward it? Not my will, not theirs, not ours, but thy will, holy Father who art in Heaven!" {GC88 131.1}

Though Luther had been moved by the Spirit of God to begin his work, he was not to carry it forward without severe conflicts. The reproaches of his enemies, their misrepresentation of his purposes, and their unjust and malicious reflections upon his character and motives, came in upon him like an overwhelming flood; and they were not without effect. He had felt confident that the leaders of the people, both in the church and in the schools, would gladly unite with him in efforts for reform. Words of encouragement from those on high position had inspired him with joy and hope. Already in anticipation he had seen a brighter day dawning for the church. But encouragement had changed to reproach and condemnation. Many dignitaries, both of Church and State, were convicted of the truthfulness of his theses; but they soon saw that the acceptance of these truths would involve great changes. To enlighten and reform the people would be virtually to undermine the authority of Rome, to stop thousands of streams now flowing into her treasury, and thus greatly to curtail the extravagance and luxury of the papal leaders. Furthermore, to teach the people to think and act as responsible beings, looking to Christ alone for salvation, would overthrow the pontiff's throne, and eventually destroy their own authority. For this reason they refused the knowledge tendered them of God, and arrayed themselves against Christ and the truth by their opposition to the man whom he had sent to enlighten them. {GC88 131.2}

Luther trembled as he looked upon himself,—one man opposed to the mightiest powers of earth. He sometimes doubted whether he had indeed been led of God to set himself against the authority of the church. "Who was I," he writes, "to oppose the majesty of the pope, before whom the kings of the earth and the whole world trembled?" "No one can know what I suffered in those first two years, and into what dejection and even despair I was often plunged." But he was not left to become utterly disheartened. When human support failed, he looked to God alone, and learned that he could lean in perfect safety upon that all-powerful arm. {GC88 131.3}

To a friend of the Reformation Luther wrote: "We cannot attain to the understanding of Scripture either by study or by strength of intellect. Therefore your first duty must be to begin with prayer. Entreat the Lord to deign to grant you, in his rich mercy, rightly to understand his Word. There is no other interpreter of the Word but the Author of that Word himself. Even as he has said, 'They shall all be taught of God.' Hope nothing from your study and the strength of your intellect; but simply put your trust in God, and in the guidance of his Spirit. Believe one who has made trial of this matter." Here is a lesson of vital importance to those who feel that God has called them to present to others the solemn truths for this time. These truths will stir the enmity of Satan, and of men who love the fables that he has advised. In the conflict with the powers of evil, there is need of something more than strength of intellect and human wisdom. {GC88 132.1}

When enemies appealed to custom and tradition, or to the assertions and authority of the pope, Luther met them with the Bible, and the Bible only. Here were arguments which they could not answer; therefore the slaves of formalism and superstition clamoured for his blood, as the Jews had clamoured for the blood of Christ. "He is a heretic," cried the Roman zealots; "it is a sin to allow him to live an hour longer! Away with him at once to the scaffold!" But Luther did not fall a prey to their fury. God had a work for him to do, and angels of Heaven were sent to protect him. Many, however, who had received from Luther the precious light, were made the objects of Satan's wrath, and for the truth's sake fearlessly suffered torture and death. {GC88 132.2}

Luther's teachings attracted the attention of thoughtful minds throughout all Germany. From his sermons and writings issued beams of light which awakened and illuminated thousands. A living faith was taking the place of the dead formalism in which the church had so long been held. The people were daily losing confidence in the superstitions of Romanism. The barriers of prejudice were giving way. The Word of God, by which Luther tested every doctrine and every claim, was like a two-edged sword, cutting its way to the hearts of the people. Everywhere there was awakening a desire for spiritual progress. Everywhere was such a hungering and thirsting after righteousness as had not been known for ages. The eyes of the people, so long directed to human rights and earthly mediators, were now turning, in penitence and faith, to Christ and him crucified. {GC88 133.1}

This widespread interest aroused still further the fears of the papal authorities. Luther received a summons to appear at Rome to answer to the charge of heresy. The command filled his friends with terror. They knew full well the danger that threatened him in that corrupt city, already drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. They protested against his going to Rome, and requested that he receive his examination in Germany. {GC88 133.2}

This arrangement was finally effected, and the pope's legate was appointed to hear the case. In the instructions communicated by the pontiff to this official, it was stated that Luther had already been declared a heretic. The legate was therefore charged to "prosecute and reduce him to submission without delay." If he should remain steadfast, and the legate should fail to gain possession of his person, he was empowered to "proscribe him in all places in Germany, to put away, curse, and excommunicate all who were attached to him." And further, the pope directed his legate, in order entirely to root out the pestilent heresy, to excommunicate all, of whatever dignity in Church or State, except the emperor, who should neglect to seize Luther and his adherents, and deliver them up to the vengeance of Rome. {GC88 133.3}

Here is displayed the true spirit of popery. Not a trace of Christian principle, or even of common justice, is to be seen in the whole document. Luther was at a great distance from Rome; he had had no opportunity to explain or defend his position; yet before his case had been investigated, he was summarily pronounced a heretic, and, in the same day, exhorted, accused, judged, and condemned; and all this by the self-styled holy father, the only supreme, infallible authority in Church or State! {GC88 134.1}

At this time, when Luther so much needed the sympathy and counsel of a true friend, God's providence sent Melancthon to Wittenberg. Young in years, modest and diffident in his manners, Melancthon's sound judgment, extensive knowledge, and winning eloquence, combined with the purity and uprightness of his character, won universal admiration and esteem. The brilliancy of his talents was not more marked than his gentleness of disposition. He soon became an earnest disciple of the gospel, and Luther's most trusted friend and valued supporter; his gentleness, caution, and exactness serving as a complement to Luther's courage and energy. Their union in the work added strength to the Reformation, and was a source of great encouragement to Luther. {GC88 134.2}

Augsburg had been fixed upon as the place of trial, and the reformer set out on foot to perform the journey thither. Serious fears were entertained in his behalf. Threats had been made openly that he would be seized and murdered on the way, and his friends begged him not to venture. They even entreated him to leave Wittenberg for a time, and find safety with those who would gladly protect him. But he would not leave the position where God had placed him. He must continue faithfully to maintain the truth, notwithstanding the storms that were beating upon him. His language was: "I am like Jeremiah, a man of strife and contention; but the more they increase their threatenings, the more they multiply my joy. . . . They have already torn to pieces my honour and my good name. All I have left is my wretched body; let them have it; they will then shorten my life by a few hours. But as to my soul, they shall not have that. He who resolves to bear the word of Christ to the world, must expect death at every hour." {GC88 134.3}

The tidings of Luther's arrival at Augsburg gave great satisfaction to the papal legate. The troublesome heretic who was exciting the attention of the whole world seemed now in the power of Rome, and the legate determined

that he should not escape. The reformer had failed to provide himself with a safe-conduct. His friends urged him not to appear before the legate without one, and they themselves undertook to procure it from the emperor. The legate intended to force Luther, if possible, to retract, or, failing in this, to cause him to be conveyed to Rome, to share the fate of Huss and Jerome. Therefore through his agents he endeavoured to induce Luther to appear without a safe-conduct, trusting himself to his mercy. This the reformer firmly declined to do. Not until he had received the document pledging him the emperor's protection, did he appear in the presence of the papal ambassador. {GC88 135.1}

As a matter of policy, the Romanists had decided to attempt to win Luther by an appearance of gentleness. The legate, in his interviews with him, professed great friendliness; but he demanded that Luther submit implicitly to the authority of the church, and yield every point, without argument or question. He had not rightly estimated the character of the man with whom he had to deal. Luther, in reply, expressed his regard for the church, his desire for the truth, his readiness to answer all objections to what he had taught, and to submit his doctrines to the decision of certain leading universities. But at the same time he protested against the cardinal's course in requiring him to retract without having proved him in error. {GC88 135.2}

The only response was, "Recant, recant." The reformer showed that his position was sustained by the Scriptures, and firmly declared that he could not renounce the truth. The legate, unable to reply to Luther's arguments, overwhelmed him with a storm of reproaches, gibes, and flattery, interspersed with quotations from tradition and the sayings of the Fathers, granting the reformer no opportunity to speak. Seeing that the conference, thus continued, would be utterly futile, Luther finally obtained a reluctant permission to present his answer in writing. {GC88 136.1}

"In so doing," said he, writing to a friend, "the oppressed find double gain; first, what is written may be submitted to the judgment of others; and second, one has a better chance of working on the fears, if not on the conscience, of an arrogant and babbling despot, who would otherwise overpower by his imperious language." At the next interview, Luther presented a clear, concise, and forcible exposition of his views, fully supported by many quotations from Scripture. This paper, after reading aloud, he handed to the cardinal, who, however, cast it contemptuously aside, declaring it to be a mass of idle words and irrelevant quotations. Luther, fully roused, now met the haughty prelate on his own ground, —the traditions and teachings of the church —and utterly overthrew his assumptions. {GC88 136.2}

When the prelate saw that Luther's reasoning was unanswerable, he lost all self-control, and in a rage cried out: "Retract, or I will send you to Rome, there to appear before the judges commissioned to take cognizance of your case. I will excommunicate you and all your partisans, and all who shall at any time countenance you, and will cast them out of the church." And he finally declared, in a haughty and angry tone, "Retract, or return no more." {GC88 136.3}

The reformer promptly withdrew with his friends, thus declaring plainly that no retraction was to be expected from him. This was not what the cardinal had purposed. He had flattered himself that by violence he could awe Luther to submission. Now, left alone with his supporters, he looked from one to another, in utter chagrin at the unexpected failure of his schemes. {GC88 136.4}

Luther's efforts on this occasion were not without good results. The large assembly present had opportunity to compare the two men, and to judge for themselves of the spirit manifested by them, as well as of the strength and truthfulness of their positions. How marked the contrast! The reformer, simple, humble, firm, stood up in the strength of God, having truth on his side; the pope's representative, self-important, overbearing, haughty, and unreasonable, was without a single argument from the Scriptures, yet vehemently crying, "Retract, or be sent to Rome for punishment." {GC88 137.1}

Notwithstanding Luther had secured a safe-conduct, the Romanists were plotting to seize and imprison him. His friends urged that as it was useless for him to prolong his stay, he should return to Wittenberg without delay, and that the utmost caution should be observed in order to conceal his intentions. He accordingly left Augsburg before daybreak, on horseback, accompanied only by a guide furnished him by the magistrate. With many forebodings he secretly made his way through the dark and silent streets of the city. Enemies, vigilant and cruel, were plotting his destruction. Would he escape the snares prepared for him? Those were moments of anxiety and earnest prayer. He reached a small gate in the wall of the city. It was opened for him, and with his guide he passed through without hindrance. Once safely outside, the fugitives hastened their flight, and before the legate learned of Luther's departure, he was beyond the reach of his persecutors. Satan and his emissaries were defeated. The man whom they

had thought in their power was gone, escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler. {GC88 137.2}

At the news of Luther's escape, the legate was overwhelmed with surprise and anger. He had expected to receive great honour for his wisdom and firmness in dealing with this disturber of the church; but his hope was disappointed. He gave expression to his wrath in a letter to Frederick, the Elector of Saxony, bitterly denouncing Luther, and demanding that Frederick send the reformer to Rome or banish him from Saxony. {GC88 137.3}

In defence, Luther urged that the legate or the pope show him his errors from the Scriptures, and pledged himself in the most solemn manner to renounce his doctrines if they could be shown to contradict the Word of God. And he expressed his gratitude to God that he had been counted worthy to suffer in so holy a cause. {GC88 138.1}

The elector had, as yet, little knowledge of the reformed doctrines, but he was deeply impressed by the candour, force, and clearness of Luther's words; and, until the reformer should be proved to be in error, Frederick resolved to stand as his protector. In reply to the legate's demand he wrote: "Since Doctor Martin has appeared before you at Augsburg, you should be satisfied. We did not expect that you would endeavour to make him retract without having convinced him of his errors. None of the learned men in our principality have informed us that Martin's doctrine is impious, antichristian, or heretical. We must refuse, therefore, either to send Luther to Rome or to expel him from our States." {GC88 138.2}

The elector saw that there was a general breaking down of the moral restraints of society. A great work of reform was needed. The complicated and expensive arrangements to restrain and punish crime would be unnecessary if men but acknowledged and obeyed the requirements of God and the dictates of an enlightened conscience. He saw that Luther was labouring to secure this object, and he secretly rejoiced that a better influence was making itself felt in the church. {GC88 138.3}

He saw also that as a professor in the university Luther was eminently successful. Only a year had passed since the reformer posted his theses on the castle church, yet there was already a great falling off in the number of pilgrims that visited the church at the festival of All-Saints. Rome had been deprived of worshipers and offerings, but their place was filled by another class, who now came to Wittenberg,—not pilgrims to adore her relics, but students to fill her halls of learning. The writings of Luther had kindled everywhere a new interest in the Holy Scriptures, and not only from all parts of Germany, but from other lands, students flocked to the university. Young men, coming in sight of Wittenberg for the first time, would "raise their hands to heaven, and bless God for having caused the light of truth to shine forth from Wittenberg, as in former ages from Mount Zion, that it might penetrate to the most distant lands." {GC88 138.4}

Luther was as yet but partially converted from the errors of Romanism. But as he compared the Holy Oracles with the papal decrees and constitutions, he was filled with wonder. "I am reading," he wrote, "the decretals of the popes, and . . . I know not whether the pope is antichrist himself, or whether he is his apostle; so misrepresented and even crucified does Christ appear in them." Yet at this time Luther was still a supporter of the Roman Church, and had no thought that he would ever separate from her communion. {GC88 139.1}

The reformer's writings and his doctrine were extending to every nation in Christendom. The work spread to Switzerland and Holland. Copies of his writings found their way to France and Spain. In England his teachings were received as the word of life. To Belgium and Italy also the truth had extended. Thousands were awakening from their death-like stupor to the joy and hope of a life of faith. {GC88 139.2}

Rome became more and more exasperated by the attacks of Luther, and it was declared by some of his fanatical opponents, even by doctors in Catholic universities, that he who should kill the rebellious monk would be without sin. One day a stranger, with a pistol hidden under his cloak, approached the reformer, and inquired why he went thus alone. "I am in the hands of God," answered Luther. "He is my help and my shield. What can man do unto me?" Upon hearing these words, the stranger turned pale, and fled away, as from the presence of the angels of Heaven. {GC88 139.3}

Rome was bent upon the destruction of Luther; but God was his defence. His doctrines were heard everywhere,—in convents, in cottages, in the castles of the nobles, in the universities, in the palaces of kings; and noble men were rising on every hand to sustain his efforts. {GC88 140.1}

It was about this time that Luther, reading the works of Huss, found that the great truth of justification by faith, which he himself was seeking to uphold and teach, had been held by the Bohemian reformer. "We have all," said Luther, "Paul, Augustine, and myself, been Hussites without knowing it." "God will surely visit it upon the world," he continued, "that the truth was preached to it a century ago, and burned." {GC88 140.2}

In an appeal to the emperor and nobility of Germany in behalf of the Reformation of Christianity, Luther wrote concerning the pope: "It is monstrous to see him who is called the vicar of Christ, displaying a magnificence unrivalled by that of any emperor. Is this to represent the poor and lowly Jesus or the humble St. Peter? The pope, say they, is the lord of the world! But Christ, whose vicar he boasts of being, said, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' Can the dominions of a vicar extend beyond those of his superior?" {GC88 140.3}

He wrote thus of the universities: "I fear much that the universities will be found to be great gates leading down to hell, unless they take diligent care to explain the Holy Scriptures, and to engrave them in the hearts of our youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Holy Scriptures are not regarded as the rule of life. Every institution where the Word of God is not diligently studied, must become corrupt." {GC88 140.4}

This appeal was rapidly circulated throughout Germany, and exerted a powerful influence upon the people. The whole nation was stirred, and multitudes were roused to rally around the standard of reform. Luther's opponents, burning with a desire for revenge, urged the pope to take decisive measures against him. It was decreed that his doctrines should be immediately condemned. Sixty days were granted the reformer and his adherents, after which, if they did not recant, they were all to be excommunicated. {GC88 140.5}

That was a terrible crisis for the Reformation. For centuries Rome's sentence of excommunication had struck terror to powerful monarchs; it had filled mighty empires with woe and desolation. Those upon whom its condemnation fell, were universally regarded with dread and horror; they were cut off from intercourse with their fellows, and treated as outlaws, to be hunted to extermination. Luther was not blind to the tempest about to burst upon him; but he stood firm, trusting in Christ to be his support and shield. With a martyr's faith and courage he wrote: "What is about to happen I know not, and I care not to know." "Wherever the blow may reach me. I fear not. Not so much as a leaf falls without the will of our Father; how much rather will he care for us! It is a light matter to die for the Word, since this Word, that was made flesh for us, hath himself died. If we die with him, we shall live with him; and, passing through that which he has passed through before us, we shall be where he is, and dwell with him forever." {GC88 141.1}

When the papal bull reached Luther, he said: "I despise it, and resist it, as impious and false. . . . It is Christ himself who is condemned therein." "I glory in the prospect of suffering for the best of causes. Already I feel greater liberty; for I know now that the pope is antichrist, and that his throne is that of Satan himself." {GC88 141.2}

Yet the mandate of Rome was not without effect. Prison, torture, and sword were weapons potent to enforce obedience. The weak and superstitious trembled before the decree of the pope, and while there was general sympathy for Luther, many felt that life was too dear to be risked in the cause of reform. Everything seemed to indicate that the reformer's work was about to close. {GC88 141.3}

But Luther was fearless still. Rome had hurled her anathemas against him, and the world looked on, nothing doubting that he would perish or be forced to yield. But with terrible power he flung back upon herself the sentence of condemnation, and publicly declared his determination to abandon her forever. In the presence of a crowd of students, doctors, and citizens of all ranks, Luther burned the pope's bull, with the canon laws, the decretals, and certain writings sustaining the papal power. "My enemies have been able by burning my books," he said, "to injure the cause of truth in the minds of some, and to destroy souls; for this reason I consume their books in return. A serious struggle has just commenced. Hitherto I have been playing with the pope; now I wage open war. I began this work in God's name; it will be ended without me, and by his might." {GC88 142.1}

To the reproaches of his enemies, who taunted him with the weakness of his cause, Luther answered: "Who knows if God has not chosen and called me to perform this needed work, and if these babblers ought not to fear that by despising me, they despise God himself? They say I am alone; no, for Jehovah is with me. In their sense, Moses was alone at the departure from Egypt; Elijah was alone in the reign of King Ahab; Isaiah was alone in Jerusalem; Ezekiel was alone in Babylon. Hear this, O Rome: God never selected as a prophet either the high priest or any great personage; but rather, he chose low and despised men, once even the shepherd Amos. In every age the saints have been compelled to rebuke kings, princes, recreant priests, and wise men at the peril of their lives." "I do not say that I also am a prophet; but I do say that they ought to fear precisely because I am alone, while on the side of the oppressor are numbers, caste, wealth, and mocking letters. Yes, I am alone; but I stand serene, because side by side with me is the Word of God; and with all their boasted numbers, this, the greatest of powers, is not with them." {GC88 142.2}

Yet it was not without a terrible struggle with himself that Luther decided upon a final separation from the

church. It was about this time that he wrote: “I feel more and more every day how difficult it is to lay aside the scruples which one has imbibed in childhood. Oh, how much pain it cost me, though I had the Scriptures on my side, to justify it to myself that I should dare to make a stand alone against the pope, and hold him forth as antichrist! What have the tribulations of my heart not been! How many times have I asked myself with bitterness that question which was so frequent on the lips of the papist: “Art thou alone wise? Can everyone else be mistaken? How will it be, if, after all, it is thyself who art wrong, and who art involving in thy error so many souls, who will then be eternally damned?” “’Twas so I fought with myself and with Satan, till Christ, by his infallible Word, fortified my heart against these doubts.” {GC88 143.1}

The pope had threatened Luther with excommunication if he did not recant, and the threat was now fulfilled. A new bull appeared, declaring the reformer's final separation from the Romish Church, denouncing him as accursed of Heaven, and including in the same condemnation all who should receive his doctrines. The great contest had been fully entered upon. {GC88 143.2}

Opposition is the lot of all whom God employs to present truths specially applicable to their time. There was a present truth in the days of Luther,—a truth at that time of special importance; there is a present truth for the church today. He who does all things according to the counsel of his will, has been pleased to place men under various circumstances, and to enjoin upon them duties peculiar to the times in which they live, and the conditions under which they are placed. If they would prize the light given them, broader views of truth would be opened before them. But truth is no more desired by the majority today than it was by the papists who opposed Luther. There is the same disposition to accept the theories and traditions of men instead of the Word of God as in former ages. Those who present the truth for this time should not expect to be received with greater favour than were earlier reformers. The great controversy between truth and error, between Christ and Satan, is to increase in intensity to the close of this world's history. {GC88 143.3}

Said Jesus to his disciples: “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.” [John 15:19, 20.] And on the other hand our Lord declared plainly: “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets. [Luke 6:26.] The spirit of the world is no more in harmony with the Spirit of Christ today than in earlier times; and those who preach the Word of God in its purity will be received with no greater favour now than then. The forms of opposition to the truth may change, the enmity may be less open because it is more subtle; but the same antagonism still exists, and will be manifested to the end of time. {GC88 144.1}

LESSON 2

“THE CALL TO PROPHETIC OFFICE”

April 6 — April 12

? STUDY HELPS :

- * Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary, article “Prophet,” pages 879-883;
- ✓ Selected Messages, Book 1, pages 34-37;
- * A.G. Daniels, The Abiding Gift of Prophecy, 5 pages 22-29, 36-45;
- * The SDA Bible Commentary, on Scripture references.

E. G. W. Study Help 1***Sabbath, April 6th, 2024*****Selected Messages Book 1, p. 36-37****The Work of a Prophet and More**

During the discourse, I said that I did not claim to be a prophetess. Some were surprised at this statement, and as much is being said in regard to it, I will make an explanation. Others have called me a prophetess, but I have never assumed that title. I have not felt that it was my duty thus to designate myself. Those who boldly assume that they are prophets in this our day are often a reproach to the cause of Christ. {1SM 35.6}

My work includes much more than this name signifies. I regard myself as a messenger, entrusted by the Lord with messages for His people.--Letter 55, 1905. {1SM 36.1}

I am now instructed that I am not to be hindered in my work by those who engage in suppositions regarding its nature, whose minds are struggling with so many intricate problems connected with the supposed work of a prophet. My commission embraces the work of a prophet, but it does not end there. It embraces much more than the minds of those who have been sowing the seeds of unbelief can comprehend.--Letter 244, 1906. (Addressed to elders of Battle Creek church.) {1SM 36.2}

Receiving and Imparting the Light

As inquiries are frequently made as to my state in vision, and after I come out, I would say that when the Lord sees fit to give a vision, I am taken into the presence of Jesus and angels, and am entirely lost to earthly things. I can see no farther than the angel directs me. My attention is often directed to scenes transpiring upon earth. {1SM 36.3}

At times I am carried far ahead into the future and shown what is to take place. Then again I am shown things as they have occurred in the past. After I come out of vision I do not at once remember all that I have seen, and the matter is not so clear before me until I write, then the scene rises before me as was presented in vision, and I can write with freedom. Sometimes the things which I have seen are hid from me after I come out of vision, and I cannot call them to mind until I am brought before a company where that vision applies, then the things which I have seen come to my mind with force. I am just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in relating or writing a vision, as in having the vision. It is impossible for me to call up things which have been shown me unless the Lord brings them before me at the time that He is pleased to have me relate or write them.--Spiritual Gifts (1860), vol. 2, pp. 292, 293. {1SM 36.4}

Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation.--The Review and Herald, Oct. 8, 1867. {1SM 37.1}

The question is asked, How does Sister White know in regard to the matters of which she speaks so decidedly, as if she had authority to say these things? I speak thus because they flash upon my mind when in perplexity like lightning out of a dark cloud in the fury of a storm. Some scenes presented before me years ago have not been retained in my memory, but when the instruction then given is needed, sometimes even when I am standing before the people, the remembrance comes sharp and clear, like a flash of lightning, bringing to mind distinctly that particular instruction. At such times I cannot refrain from saying the things that flash into my mind, not because I have had a new vision, but because that which was presented to me perhaps years in the past has been recalled to my mind forcibly.--The Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies, p. 24. {1SM 37.2}

No Claim to Infallibility

We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.--The Review and Herald, July 26, 1892. {1SM 37.3}

In regard to infallibility, I never claimed it; God alone is infallible. His word is true, and in Him is no variableness, or shadow of turning.--Letter 10, 1895. {1SM 37.4}

LESSON 3

“THE PROPHETIC VISION”

April 13 — April 19

? STUDY HELP :

- ✓ Selected Messages, Book 1, pages 33-34
- ✓ Education, pages 45-50
- * The S.D.A. Bible Commentary, on Scripture references

*E. G. W. Study Help 1**Sabbath, March 30th, 2024***Selected Messages, Book 1, pages 33-34****A Work of Many Features**

God has made plain to me the various ways in which He would use me to carry forward a special work. Visions have been given me, with the promise, "If you deliver the messages faithfully and endure to the end, you shall eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and drink of the water of the river of life." {1SM 33.1}

The Lord gave me great light on health reform. In connection with my husband, I was to be a medical missionary worker. I was to set an example to the church by taking the sick to my home and caring for them. This I have done, giving the women and children vigorous treatment. I was also to speak on the subject of Christian temperance, as the Lord's appointed messenger. I engaged heartily in this work, and spoke to large assemblies on temperance in its broadest and truest sense. {1SM 33.2}

I was instructed that I must ever urge upon those who profess to believe the truth, the necessity of practicing the truth. This means sanctification, and sanctification means the culture and training of every capability for the Lord's service. {1SM 33.3}

I was charged not to neglect or pass by those who were being wronged. I was specially charged to protest against any arbitrary or overbearing action toward the ministers of the gospel by those having official authority. Disagreeable though the duty may be, I am to reprove the oppressor, and plead for justice. I am to present the necessity of maintaining justice and equity in all our institutions. {1SM 33.4}

If I see those in positions of trust neglecting aged ministers, I am to present the matter to those whose duty it is to care for them. Ministers who have faithfully done their work are not to be forgotten or neglected when they have become feeble in health. Our conferences are not to disregard the needs of those who have borne the burdens of the work. It was after John had grown old in the service of the Lord that he was exiled to Patmos. And on that lonely isle he received more communications from heaven than he had received during the rest of his lifetime. {1SM 33.5}

After my marriage I was instructed that I must show a special interest in motherless and fatherless children, taking some under my own charge for a time, and then finding homes for them. Thus I would be giving others an example of what they could do. {1SM 34.1}

Although called to travel often, and having much writing to do, I have taken children of three and five years of age, and have cared for them, educated them, and trained them for responsible positions. I have taken into my home from time to time boys from ten to sixteen years of age, giving them motherly care, and a training for service. I have felt it my duty to bring before our people that work for which those in every church should feel a responsibility. {1SM 34.2}

While in Australia I carried on this same line of work, taking into my home orphan children, who were in danger of being exposed to temptations that might cause the loss of their souls. {1SM 34.3}

In Australia we [REFERENCE HERE IS TO HER ASSOCIATE WORKERS. JAMES WHITE DIED IN 1881.] also worked as Christian medical missionaries. At times I made my home in Cooranbong an asylum for the sick and afflicted. My secretary, who had received a training in the Battle Creek Sanitarium, stood by my side, and did the work of a missionary nurse. No charge was made for her services, and we won the confidence of the people by the interest that we manifested in the sick and suffering. After a time the Health Retreat at Cooranbong was built, and then we were relieved of this burden. {1SM 34.4}

No Boastful Claims

To claim to be a prophetess is something that I have never done. If others call me by that name, I have no controversy with them. But my work has covered so many lines that I cannot call myself other than a messenger, sent to bear a message from the Lord to His people, and to take up work in any line that He points out. {1SM 34.5}

*E. G. W. Study Help 2**Sabbath, March 30th, 2024***Education, pages 45-50****Chapter 6 - The Schools of the Prophets**

Wherever in Israel God's plan of education was carried into effect, its results testified of its Author. But in very many households the training appointed by Heaven, and the characters thus developed, were alike rare. God's plan was but partially and imperfectly fulfilled. By unbelief and by disregard of the Lord's directions, the Israelites surrounded themselves with temptations that few had power to resist. At their settlement in Canaan "they did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them: but were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them." Their heart was not right with God, "neither were they steadfast in His covenant. But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned He His anger away. . . . For He remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passes away, and cometh not again." Psalm 106:34-36; 78:37-39. Fathers and mothers in Israel became indifferent to their obligation to God, indifferent to their obligation to their children. Through unfaithfulness in the home, and idolatrous influences without, many of the Hebrew youth received an education differing widely from that which God had planned for them. They learned the ways of the heathen. {Ed 45.1}

To meet this growing evil, God provided other agencies as an aid to parents in the work of education. From the earliest times, prophets had been recognized as teachers divinely appointed. In the highest sense the prophet was one who spoke by direct inspiration, communicating to the people the messages he had received from God. But the name was given also to those who, though not so directly inspired, were divinely called to instruct the people in the works and ways of God. For the training of such a class of teachers, Samuel, by the Lord's direction, established the schools of the prophets. {Ed 46.1}

These schools were intended to serve as a barrier against the wide-spreading corruption, to provide for the mental and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counsellors. To this end, Samuel gathered companies of young men who were pious, intelligent, and studious. These were called the sons of the prophets. As they studied the word and the works of God, His life-giving power quickened the energies of mind and soul, and the students received wisdom from above. The instructors were not only versed in divine truth, but had themselves enjoyed communion with God, and had received the special endowment of His Spirit. They had the respect and confidence of the people, both for learning and for piety. In Samuel's day there were two of these schools--one at Ramah, the home of the prophet, and the other at Kirjath-jearim. In later times others were established. {Ed 46.2}

The pupils of these schools sustained themselves by their own labour in tilling the soil or in some mechanical employment. In Israel this was not thought strange or degrading; indeed, it was regarded as a sin to allow children to grow up in ignorance of useful labour. Every youth, whether his parents were rich or poor, was taught some trade. Even though he was to be educated for holy office, a knowledge of practical life was regarded as essential to the greatest usefulness. Many, also, of the teachers supported themselves by manual labour. {Ed 47.1}

In both the school and the home much of the teaching was oral; but the youth also learned to read the Hebrew writings, and the parchment rolls of the Old Testament Scriptures were open to their study. The chief subjects of study in these schools were the law of God, with the instruction given to Moses, sacred history, sacred music, and poetry. In the records of sacred history were traced the footsteps of Jehovah. The great truths set forth by the types in the service of the sanctuary were brought to view, and faith grasped the central object of all that system--the Lamb of God, that was to take away the sin of the world. A spirit of devotion was cherished. Not only were the students taught the duty of prayer, but they were taught how to pray, how to approach their Creator, how to exercise faith in Him, and how to understand and obey the teachings of His Spirit. Sanctified intellect brought forth from the treasure house of God things new and old, and the Spirit of God was manifested in prophecy and sacred song. {Ed 47.2}

These schools proved to be one of the means most effective in promoting that righteousness which "exalts a nation." Proverbs 14:34. In no small degree they aided in laying the foundation of that marvellous prosperity which distinguished the reigns of David and Solomon. {Ed 47.3}

The principles taught in the schools of the prophets were the same that molded David's character and shaped his life. The word of God was his instructor. "Through Thy precepts," he said, "I get understanding. . . . I have inclined mine heart to perform Thy statutes." Psalm 119:104-112. It was this that caused the Lord to pronounce David, when in his youth He called him to the throne, "a man after Mine own heart." Acts 13:22. {Ed 48.1}

In the early life of Solomon also are seen the results of God's method of education. Solomon in his youth made David's choice his own. Above every earthly good he asked of God a wise and understanding heart. And the Lord gave him not only that which he sought, but that also for which he had not sought--both riches and honour. The power of his understanding, the extent of his knowledge, the glory of his reign, became the wonder of the world. {Ed 48.2}

In the reigns of David and Solomon, Israel reached the height of her greatness. The promise given to Abraham and repeated through Moses was fulfilled: "If ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to cleave unto Him; then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be. There shall no man be able to stand before you." Deuteronomy 11:22-25. {Ed 48.3}

But in the midst of prosperity lurked danger. The sin of David's later years, though sincerely repented of and sorely punished, emboldened the people in transgression of God's commandments. And Solomon's life, after a morning of so great promise, was darkened with apostasy. Desire for political power and self-aggrandizement led to alliance with heathen nations. The silver of Tarshish and the gold of Ophir were procured by the sacrifice of integrity, the betrayal of sacred trusts. Association with idolaters, marriage with heathen wives, corrupted his faith. The barriers that God had erected for the safety of His people were thus broken down, and Solomon gave himself up to the worship of false gods. On the summit of the Mount of Olives, confronting the temple of Jehovah, were erected gigantic images and altars for the service of heathen deities. As he cast off his allegiance to God, Solomon lost the mastery of himself. His fine sensibilities became blunted. The conscientious, considerate spirit of his early reign was changed. Pride, ambition, prodigality, and indulgence bore fruit in cruelty and exaction. He who had been a just, compassionate, and God-fearing ruler, became tyrannical and oppressive. He who at the dedication of the temple had prayed for his people that their hearts might be undividedly given to the Lord, became their seducer. Solomon dishonoured himself, dishonoured Israel, and dishonoured God. {Ed 48.4}

The nation, of which he had been the pride, followed his leading. Though he afterward repented, his repentance did not prevent the fruition of the evil he had sown. The discipline and training that God appointed for Israel would cause them, in all their ways of life, to differ from the people of other nations. This peculiarity, which should have been regarded as a special privilege and blessing, was to them unwelcome. The simplicity and self-restraint essential to the highest development they sought to exchange for the pomp and self-indulgence of heathen peoples. To be "like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5) was their ambition. God's plan of education was set aside, His authority disowned. {Ed 49.1}

In the rejection of the ways of God for the ways of men, the downfall of Israel began. Thus also it continued, until the Jewish people became a prey to the very nations whose practices they had chosen to follow. {Ed 50.1}

As a nation the children of Israel failed of receiving the benefits that God desired to give them. They did not appreciate His purpose or co-operate in its execution. But though individuals and peoples may thus separate themselves from Him, His purpose for those who trust Him is unchanged. "Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever." Ecclesiastes 3:14. {Ed 50.2}

While there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power to meet the wants of men in the different ages, God's work in all time is the same. The Teacher is the same. God's character and His plan are the same. With Him "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17. {Ed 50.3}

The experiences of Israel were recorded for our instruction. "All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Corinthians 10:11. With us, as with Israel of old, success in education depends on fidelity in carrying out the Creator's plan. Adherence to the principles of God's word will bring as great blessings to us as it would have brought to the Hebrew people. {Ed 50.4}

LESSON 4

“THE PROPHETIC VISION”

April 20 — April 26

? STUDY HELP :

- ✓ Early Writings, pages 13-20;
- ✓ Testimonies, Vol. 1, pages 58-61, 21-35;
- * S.D.A. Bible Commentary on Scripture references.

*E. G. W. Study Help 1**Sabbath, April 20th, 2024***Early Writings, pages 13-20****My First Vision**

[THIS VIEW WAS GIVEN SOON AFTER THE GREAT ADVENT DISAPPOINTMENT IN 1844, AND WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1846. ONLY A FEW OF THE EVENTS OF THE FUTURE WERE SEEN AT THAT TIME. LATER VIEWS HAVE BEEN MORE FULL. SEE ALSO APPENDIX.]

As God has shown me the travels of the Advent people to the Holy City and the rich reward to be given those who wait the return of their Lord from the wedding, it may be my duty to give you a short sketch of what God has revealed to me. The dear saints have many trials to pass through. But our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory--while we look not at the things which are seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. I have tried to bring back a good report and a few grapes from the heavenly Canaan, for which many would stone me, as the congregation bade stone Caleb and Joshua for their report. (Numbers 14:10.) But I declare to you, my brethren and sisters in the Lord, it is a goodly land, and we are well able to go up and possess it. {EW 13.3}

While I was praying at the family altar, the Holy Ghost fell upon me, and I seemed to be rising higher and higher, far above the dark world. I turned to look for the Advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me, "Look again, and look a little higher." At this I raised my eyes, and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the Advent people were traveling to the city, which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the midnight cry. This light shone all along the path and gave light for their feet so that they might not stumble. If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe. But soon some grew weary, and said the city was a great way off, and they expected to have entered it before. Then Jesus would encourage them by raising His glorious right arm, and from His arm came a light which waved over the Advent band, and they shouted, "Alleluia!" Others rashly denied the light behind them and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below. Soon we [SEE APPENDIX.] heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spoke the time, He poured upon us the Holy Ghost, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses' did when he came down from Mount Sinai. {EW 14.1}

The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads was written, God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us who could wash one another's feet and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet. {EW 15.1}

Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders; and upon His head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle; in His left, a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, "Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?" Then the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke: "Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you." At this our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sang again, while the cloud drew still nearer the earth. {EW 15.2}

Then Jesus' silver trumpet sounded, as He descended on the cloud, wrapped in flames of fire. He gazed on the graves of the sleeping saints, then raised His eyes and hands to heaven, and cried, "Awake! awake! awake! ye that sleep in the dust, and arise." Then there was a mighty earthquake. The graves opened, and the dead came up clothed with immortality. The 144,000 shouted, "Alleluia!" as they recognized their friends who had been torn from them by death, and in the same moment we were changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. {EW 16.1}

We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns, and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square. Some of them had very bright crowns, others not so bright. Some crowns appeared heavy with stars, while others had but few. All were perfectly satisfied with their crowns. And they were all clothed with a glorious white mantle from their shoulders to their feet. Angels were all about us as we marched over the sea of glass to the gate of the city. Jesus raised His mighty, glorious arm, laid hold of the pearly gate, swung it back on its glittering hinges, and said to us, "You have washed your robes in My blood, stood stiffly for My truth, enter in." We all marched in and felt that we had a perfect right in the city. {EW 16.2}

Here we saw the tree of life and the throne of God. Out of the throne came a pure river of water, and on either side of the river was the tree of life. On one side of the river was a trunk of a tree, and a trunk on the other side of the river, both of pure, transparent gold. At first I thought I saw two trees. I looked again, and saw that they were united at the top in one tree. So it was the tree of life on either side of the river of life. Its branches bowed to the place where we stood, and the fruit was glorious; it looked like gold mixed with silver. {EW 17.1}

We all went under the tree and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when Brethren Fitch and Stockman, [SEE APPENDIX.] who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping. We tried to call up our greatest trials, but they looked so small compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that surrounded us that we could not speak them out, and we all cried out, "Alleluia, heaven is cheap enough!" and we touched our glorious harps and made heaven's arches ring. {EW 17.2}

With Jesus at our head we all descended from the city down to this earth, on a great and mighty mountain, which could not bear Jesus up, and it parted asunder, and there was a mighty plain. Then we looked up and saw the great city, with twelve foundations, and twelve gates, three on each side, and an angel at each gate. We all cried out, "The city, the great city, it's coming, it's coming down from God out of heaven," and it came and settled on the place where we stood. Then we began to look at the glorious things outside of the city. There I saw most glorious houses, that had the appearance of silver, supported by four pillars set with pearls most glorious to behold. These were to be inhabited by the saints. In each was a golden shelf. I saw many of the saints go into the houses, take off their glittering crowns and lay them on the shelf, then go out into the field by the houses to do something with the earth; not as we have to do with the earth here; no, no. A glorious light shone all about their heads, and they were continually shouting and offering praises to God. {EW 17.3}

I saw another field full of all kinds of flowers, and as I plucked them, I cried out, "They will never fade." Next I saw a field of tall grass, most glorious to behold; it was living green and had a reflection of silver and gold, as it waved proudly to the glory of King Jesus. Then we entered a field full of all kinds of beasts--the lion, the lamb, the leopard, and the wolf, all together in perfect union. We passed through the midst of them, and they followed on peaceably after. Then we entered a wood, not like the dark woods we have here; no, no; but light, and all over glorious; the branches of the trees moved to and fro, and we all cried out, "We will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods." We passed through the woods, for we were on our way to Mount Zion. {EW 18.1}

As we were traveling along, we met a company who also were gazing at the glories of the place. I noticed red as a border on their garments; their crowns were brilliant; their robes were pure white. As we greeted them, I asked Jesus who they were. He said they were martyrs that had been slain for Him. With them was an innumerable company of little ones; they also had a hem of red on their garments. Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple, and about it were seven other mountains, on which grew roses and lilies. And I saw the little ones climb, or, if they chose, use their little wings and fly, to the top of the mountains and pluck the never-fading flowers. There were all kinds of trees around the temple to beautify the place: the box, the pine, the fir, the oil, the myrtle, the pomegranate, and the fig tree bowed down with the weight of its timely figs--these made the place all over glorious. And as we were about to enter the holy temple, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said, "Only the 144,000 enter this place," and we shouted, "Alleluia." {EW 18.2}

This temple was supported by seven pillars, all of transparent gold, set with pearls most glorious. The wonderful things I there saw I cannot describe. Oh, that I could talk in the language of Canaan, then could I tell a little of the glory of the better world. There I saw tables of stone in which the names of the 144,000 were engraved in letters of gold. After we beheld the glory of the temple, we went out, and Jesus left us and went to the city. Soon we heard His lovely voice again, saying, "Come, My people, you have come out of great tribulation, and done My will; suffered for Me; come in to supper, for I will gird Myself, and serve you." We shouted, "Alleluia! glory!" and entered into the city. And I saw a table of pure silver; it was many miles in length, yet our eyes could extend over it. I saw the fruit of the tree of life, the manna, almonds, figs, pomegranates, grapes, and many other kinds of fruit. I asked Jesus to let me eat of the fruit. He said, "Not now. Those who eat of the fruit of this land go back to earth no more. But in a little while, if faithful, you shall both eat of the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of the fountain." And He said, "You must go back to the earth again and relate to others what I have revealed to you." Then an angel bore me gently down to this dark world. Sometimes I think I can stay here no longer; all things of earth look so dreary. I feel very lonely here, for I have seen a better land. Oh, that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest! - {EW 19.1}

After I came out of vision, everything looked changed; a gloom was spread over all that I beheld. Oh, how dark this world looked to me. I wept when I found myself here, and felt homesick. I had seen a better world, and it had spoiled this for me. I told the view to our little band in Portland, who then fully believed it to be of God. That was a powerful time. The solemnity of eternity rested upon us. About one week after this the Lord gave me another view and showed me the trials I must pass through, and that I must go and relate to others what He had revealed to me, and that I should meet with great opposition and suffer anguish of spirit by going. But said the angel, "The grace of God is sufficient for you; He will hold you up." {EW 20.1}

After I came out of this vision, I was exceedingly troubled. My health was very poor, and I was but seventeen years old. I knew that many had fallen through exaltation, and I knew that if I in any way became exalted, God would leave me, and I should surely be lost. I went to the Lord in prayer and begged Him to lay the burden on someone else. It seemed to me that I could not bear it. I lay upon my face a long time, and all the light I could get was, "Make known to others what I have revealed to you." {EW 20.2}

E. G. W. Study Help 2*Sabbath, April 20th, 2024***Testimonies for the Church,
Volume 1, Chapter VII, My First Vision, p. 58-61, 21-35**

Yet Christ was true to His promises. Sweet was the consolation He gave His people, rich the reward of the true and faithful. {1T 58.1}

Mr. Miller and those who were in union with him supposed that the cleansing of the sanctuary spoken of in Daniel 8:14 meant the purifying of the earth by fire prior to its becoming the abode of the saints. This was to take place at the advent of Christ; therefore we looked for that event at the end of the 2300 days, or years. But after our disappointment the Scriptures were carefully searched with prayer and earnest thought, and after a period of suspense, light poured in upon our darkness; doubt and uncertainty were swept away. {1T 58.2}

Instead of the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 referring to the purifying of the earth, it was now plain that it pointed to the closing work of our High Priest in heaven, the finishing of the atonement, and the preparing of the people to abide the day of His coming. - {1T 58.3}

Chapter VII - My First Vision

It was not long after the passing of the time in 1844 that my first vision was given me. I was visiting a dear sister in Christ, whose heart was knit with mine; five of us, all women, were kneeling quietly at the family altar. While we were praying, the power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before. I seemed to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher from the earth. I turned to look for the advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me: "Look again, and look a little higher." At this I raised my eyes and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the advent people were traveling toward the city. Behind them, at the beginning of the path, was a bright light which an angel told me was the midnight cry. This light shone all along the path, that their feet might not stumble. Jesus Himself went just before His people to lead them forward, and as long as they kept their eyes fixed on Him, they were safe. But soon some grew weary, and said the city was a great way off, and they expected to have entered it before. Then Jesus would encourage them by raising His glorious right arm, from which came a light that waved over the advent band; and they shouted: "Alleluia!" Others rashly denied the light behind them, and said it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below. {1T 58.4}

Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. When God spake the time, He poured upon us the Holy Spirit, and our faces began to light up and shine with the glory of God, as Moses' did when he came down from Mount Sinai. {1T 59.1}

The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads were the words God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us, who could wash one another's feet, and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet. {1T 59.2}

Soon our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. In solemn silence we all gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer, and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders, and upon His head were many crowns. His

feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle, in His left a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. {1T 60.1}

Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out: "Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?" The angels ceased to sing, and there was a time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke: "Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you." At this, our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sang again, while the cloud drew still nearer the earth. Then Jesus' silver trumpet sounded, as He descended on the cloud, wrapped in flames of fire. He gazed on the graves of the sleeping saints, then raised His eyes and hands to heaven, and cried: "Awake! Awake! Awake! ye that sleep in the dust, and arise." Then there was a mighty earthquake. The graves opened, and the dead came up clothed with immortality. The 144,000 shouted, "Alleluia!" as they recognized their friends who had been torn from them by death, and in the same moment we were changed, and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. {1T 60.2}

We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass, when Jesus brought the crowns, and with His own right hand placed them on our heads. He gave us harps of gold and palms of victory. Here on the sea of glass the 144,000 stood in a perfect square. Some had very bright crowns, others not so bright. Some crowns appeared heavy with stars, while others had but few. All were perfectly satisfied with their crowns. And they were all clothed with a glorious white mantle from their shoulders to their feet. Angels were all about us as we marched over the sea of glass to the gate of the city. Jesus raised His mighty, glorious arm, laid hold of the pearly gate, swung it back on its glittering hinges, and said to us: "You have washed your robes in My blood, stood stiffly for My truth, enter in." We all marched in and felt we had a perfect right there. {1T 60.3}

Within the city we saw the tree of life and the throne of God. Out of the throne came a pure river of water, and on either side of the river was the tree of life. On one side of the river was a trunk of a tree, and a trunk on the other side of the river, both of pure, transparent gold. At first I thought I saw two trees; I looked again, and saw that they were united at the top in one tree. So it was the tree of life on either side of the river of life. Its branches bowed to the place where we stood; and the fruit was glorious, which looked like gold mixed with silver. {1T 61.1}

We all went under the tree, and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when Brethren Fitch and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us, and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping. We tried to call up our greatest trials, but they looked so small compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that surrounded us, that we could not speak them out, and we all cried out, "Alleluia! Heaven is cheap enough," and we touched our golden harps and made heaven's arches ring. {1T 61.2}

Chapter III - Feelings of Despair

In June, 1842, Mr. Miller gave his second course of lectures in Portland. I felt it a great privilege to attend these lectures, for I had fallen under discouragements and did not feel prepared to meet my Saviour. This second course created much more excitement in the city than the first. With few exceptions the different denominations closed the doors of their churches against Mr. Miller. Many discourses from the various pulpits sought to expose the alleged fanatical errors of the lecturer; but crowds of anxious listeners attended his meetings, while many were unable to enter the house. {1T 21.1}

The congregations were unusually quiet and attentive. His manner of preaching was not flowery or oratorical, but he dealt in plain and startling facts that roused his hearers from their careless indifference. He supported his statements and theories by Scripture proof as he progressed. A convincing power attended his words that seemed to stamp them as the language of truth. {1T 21.2}

He was courteous and sympathetic. When every seat in the house was full, and the platform and places about the pulpit seemed crowded, I have seen him leave the desk and walk down the aisle, and take some feeble old man or woman by the hand and find a seat for them, then return and resume his discourse. He was indeed rightly called Father Miller, for he had a watchful care over those who came under his ministrations, was affectionate in his manner, of a genial disposition and tender heart. {1T 21.3}

He was an interesting speaker, and his exhortations, both to professed Christians and the impenitent, were appropriate and powerful. Sometimes a solemnity so marked as to be painful, pervaded his meetings. Many yielded to the conviction of the Spirit of God. Grey-haired men and aged women with trembling steps sought the anxious seats. Those in the strength of maturity, the youth and children, were deeply stirred. Groans and the voice of weeping and of praise to God were mingled at the altar of prayer. {1T 22.1}

I believed the solemn words spoken by the servant of God, and my heart was pained when they were opposed or made the subject of jest. I frequently attended the meetings, and believed that Jesus was soon to come in the clouds of heaven; but my great anxiety was to be ready to meet Him. My mind constantly dwelt upon the subject of holiness of heart. I longed above all things to obtain this great blessing and feel that I was entirely accepted of God. {1T 22.2}

Among the Methodists I had heard much in regard to sanctification. I had seen persons lose their physical strength under the influence of strong mental excitement, and had heard this pronounced the evidence of sanctification. But I could not comprehend what was necessary in order to be fully consecrated to God. My Christian friends said to me: "Believe in Jesus now! Believe that He accepts you now!" This I tried to do, but found it impossible to believe that I had received a blessing which, it seemed to me, should electrify my whole being. I wondered at my own hardness of heart in being unable to experience the exaltation of spirit that others manifested. It seemed to me that I was different from them and forever shut out from the perfect joy of holiness of heart. {1T 22.3}

My ideas concerning justification and sanctification were confused. These two states were presented to my mind as separate and distinct from each other; yet I failed to comprehend the difference or understand the meaning of the terms, and all the explanations of the preachers increased my difficulties. I was unable to claim the blessing for myself, and wondered if it was to be found only among the Methodists, and if, in attending the advent meetings, I was not shutting myself away from that which I desired above all else, the sanctifying Spirit of God. {1T 23.1}

Still, I observed that some of those who claimed to be sanctified, manifested a bitter spirit when the subject of the soon coming of Christ was introduced; this did not seem to me a manifestation of the holiness which they professed. I could not understand why ministers from the pulpit should so oppose the doctrine that Christ's second coming was near. Reformation had followed the preaching of this belief, and many of the most devoted ministers and laymen had received it as the truth. It seemed to me that those who sincerely loved Jesus would be ready to accept the tidings of His coming and rejoice that it was at hand. {1T 23.2}

I felt that I could claim only what they called justification. In the word of God I read that without holiness no man should see God. Then there was some higher attainment that I must reach before I could be sure of eternal life. I studied over the subject continually; for I believed that Christ was soon to come, and feared He would find me unprepared to meet Him. Words of condemnation rang in my ears day and night, and my constant cry to God was, What shall I do to be saved? {1T 23.3}

In my mind the justice of God eclipsed His mercy and love. I had been taught to believe in an eternally burning hell, and the horrifying thought was ever before me that my sins were too great to be forgiven, and that I should be forever lost. The frightful descriptions that I had heard of souls in perdition sank deep into my mind. Ministers in the pulpit drew vivid pictures of the condition of the lost. They taught that God proposed to save none but the sanctified. The eye of God was upon us always; every sin was registered and would meet its just punishment. God Himself was keeping the books with the exactness of infinite wisdom, and every sin we committed was faithfully recorded against us. {1T 23.4}

Satan was represented as eager to seize upon his prey and bear us to the lowest depths of anguish, there to exult over our sufferings in the horrors of an eternally burning hell, where, after the tortures of thousands upon thousands of years, the fiery billows would roll to the surface the writhing victims, who would shriek: "How long, O Lord, how long?" Then the answer would thunder down the abyss: "Through all eternity!" Again the molten waves would engulf the lost, carrying them down into the depths of an ever-restless sea of fire. {1T 24.1}

While listening to these terrible descriptions, my imagination would be so wrought upon that the perspiration would start, and it was difficult to suppress a cry of anguish, for I seemed to already feel the pains of perdition.

Then the minister would dwell upon the uncertainty of life. One moment we might be here, and the next in hell, or one moment on earth, and the next in heaven. Would we choose the lake of fire and the company of demons, or the bliss of heaven with angels for our companions? Would we hear the voice of wailing and the cursing of lost souls through all eternity, or sing the songs of Jesus before the throne? {1T 24.2}

Our heavenly Father was presented before my mind as a tyrant, who delighted in the agonies of the condemned; not the tender, pitying Friend of sinners, who loves His creatures with a love past all understanding and desires them to be saved in His kingdom. {1T 24.3}

My feelings were very sensitive. I dreaded giving pain to any living creature. When I saw animals ill-treated, my heart ached for them. Perhaps my sympathies were more easily excited by suffering because I myself had been the victim of thoughtless cruelty, resulting in the injury that had darkened my childhood. But when the thought took possession of my mind that God delighted in the torture of His creatures, who were formed in His image, a wall of darkness seemed to separate me from Him. When I reflected that the Creator of the universe would plunge the wicked into hell, there to burn through the ceaseless rounds of eternity, my heart sank with fear, and I despaired that so cruel and tyrannical a being would ever condescend to save me from the doom of sin. {1T 25.1}

I thought that the fate of the condemned sinner would be mine, to endure the flames of hell forever, even as long as God Himself existed. This impression deepened upon my mind until I feared that I would lose my reason. I would look upon the dumb beasts with envy, because they had no soul to be punished after death. Many times the wish arose that I had never been born. {1T 25.2}

Total darkness settled upon me, and there seemed no way out of the shadows. Could the truth have been presented to me as I now understand it, much perplexity and sorrow would have been spared me. If the love of God had been dwelt upon more, and His stern justice less, the beauty and glory of His character would have inspired me with a deep and earnest love for my Creator. {1T 25.3}

I have since thought that many inmates of insane asylums were brought there by experiences similar to my own. Their consciences were stricken with a sense of sin, and their trembling faith dared not claim the promised pardon of God. They listened to descriptions of the orthodox hell until it seemed to curdle the very blood in their veins, and burned an impression upon the tablets of their memory. Waking or sleeping, the frightful picture was ever before them, until reality became lost in imagination, and they saw only the wreathing flames of a fabulous hell, and heard only the shrieking of the doomed. Reason became dethroned, and the brain was filled with the wild phantasy of a terrible dream. Those who teach the doctrine of an eternal hell would do well to look more closely after their authority for so cruel a belief. {1T 25.4}

I had never prayed in public and had only spoken a few timid words in prayer meeting. It was now impressed upon me that I should seek God in prayer at our small social meetings. This I dared not do, fearful of becoming confused and failing to express my thoughts. But the duty was impressed upon my mind so forcibly that when I attempted to pray in secret I seemed to be mocking God because I had failed to obey His will. Despair overwhelmed me, and for three long weeks no ray of light pierced the gloom that encompassed me. {1T 26.1}

My sufferings of mind were intense. Sometimes for a whole night I would not dare to close my eyes, but would wait until my twin sister was fast asleep, then quietly leave my bed and kneel upon the floor, praying silently with a dumb agony that cannot be described. The horrors of an eternally burning hell were ever before me. I knew that it was impossible for me to live long in this state, and I dared not die and meet the terrible fate of the sinner. With what envy did I regard those who realized their acceptance with God! How precious did the Christian's hope seem to my agonized soul! {1T 26.2}

I frequently remained bowed in prayer nearly all night, groaning and trembling with inexpressible anguish and a hopelessness that passes all description. Lord, have mercy! was my plea, and, like the poor publican, I dared not lift my eyes to heaven, but bowed my face upon the floor. I became very much reduced in flesh and strength, yet kept my suffering and despair to myself. {1T 26.3}

While in this state of despondency I had a dream that made a deep impression upon my mind. I dreamed of seeing a temple, to which many persons were flocking. Only those who took refuge in that temple would be saved

when time should close. All who remained outside would be forever lost. The multitudes without who were going about their various ways, derided and ridiculed those who were entering the temple, and told them that this plan of safety was a cunning deception, that in fact there was no danger whatever to avoid. They even laid hold of some to prevent them from hastening within the walls. {1T 27.1}

Fearing to be ridiculed, I thought best to wait until the multitude dispersed, or until I could enter unobserved by them. But the numbers increased instead of diminishing, and fearful of being too late, I hastily left my home and pressed through the crowd. In my anxiety to reach the temple I did not notice or care for the throng that surrounded me. On entering the building, I saw that the vast temple was supported by one immense pillar, and to this was tied a lamb all mangled and bleeding. We who were present seemed to know that this lamb had been torn and bruised on our account. All who entered the temple must come before it and confess their sins. {1T 27.2}

Just before the lamb were elevated seats, upon which sat a company looking very happy. The light of heaven seemed to shine upon their faces, and they praised God and sang songs of glad thanksgiving that seemed like the music of the angels. These were they who had come before the lamb, confessed their sins, received pardon, and were now waiting in glad expectation of some joyful event. {1T 27.3}

Even after I had entered the building, a fear came over me, and a sense of shame that I must humble myself before these people. But I seemed compelled to move forward, and was slowly making my way around the pillar in order to face the lamb, when a trumpet sounded, the temple shook, shouts of triumph arose from the assembled saints, an awful brightness illuminated the building, then all was intense darkness. The happy people had all disappeared with the brightness, and I was left alone in the silent horror of night. I awoke in agony of mind and could hardly convince myself that I had been dreaming. It seemed to me that my doom was fixed, that the Spirit of the Lord had left me, never to return. {1T 27.4}

Soon after this I had another dream. I seemed to be sitting in abject despair with my face in my hands, reflecting like this: If Jesus were upon earth, I would go to Him, throw myself at His feet, and tell Him all my sufferings. He would not turn away from me, He would have mercy upon me, and I would love and serve Him always. Just then the door opened, and a person of beautiful form and countenance entered. He looked upon me pitifully and said: "Do you wish to see Jesus? He is here, and you can see Him if you desire it. Take everything you possess and follow me." {1T 28.1}

I heard this with unspeakable joy, and gladly gathered up all my little possessions, every treasured trinket, and followed my guide. He led me to a steep and apparently frail stairway. As I commenced to ascend the steps, he cautioned me to keep my eyes fixed upward, lest I should grow dizzy and fall. Many others who were climbing the steep ascent fell before gaining the top. {1T 28.2}

Finally we reached the last step, and stood before a door. Here my guide directed me to leave all the things that I had brought with me. I cheerfully laid them down; he then opened the door and bade me enter. In a moment I stood before Jesus. There was no mistaking that beautiful countenance. That expression of benevolence and majesty could belong to no other. As His gaze rested upon me, I knew at once that He was acquainted with every circumstance of my life and all my inner thoughts and feelings. {1T 28.3}

I tried to shield myself from His gaze, feeling unable to endure His searching eyes, but He drew near with a smile, and, laying His hand upon my head, said: "Fear not." The sound of His sweet voice thrilled my heart with a happiness it had never before experienced. I was too joyful to utter a word, but, overcome with emotion, sank prostrate at His feet. While I was lying helpless there, scenes of beauty and glory passed before me, and I seemed to have reached the safety and peace of heaven. At length my strength returned, and I arose. The loving eyes of Jesus were still upon me, and His smile filled my soul with gladness. His presence filled me with a holy reverence and an inexpressible love. {1T 28.4}

My guide now opened the door, and we both passed out. He bade me take up again all the things I had left without. This done, he handed me a green cord coiled up closely. This he directed me to place next my heart, and when I wished to see Jesus, take it from my bosom and stretch it to the utmost. He cautioned me not to let it remain coiled for any length of time, lest it should become knotted and difficult to straighten. I placed the cord near my heart and joyfully descended the narrow stairs, praising the Lord and telling all whom I met where they could find

Jesus. This dream gave me hope. The green cord represented faith to my mind, and the beauty and simplicity of trusting in God began to dawn upon my soul. {1T 29.1}

I now confided all my sorrows and perplexities to my mother. She tenderly sympathized with and encouraged me, advising me to go for counsel to Elder Stockman, who then preached the advent doctrine in Portland. I had great confidence in him, for he was a devoted servant of Christ. Upon hearing my story, he placed his hand affectionately upon my head, saying with tears in his eyes: "Ellen, you are only a child. Yours is a most singular experience for one of your tender age. Jesus must be preparing you for some special work." {1T 29.2}

He then told me that even if I were a person of mature years and thus harassed by doubt and despair, he should tell me that he knew there was hope for me through the love of Jesus. The very agony of mind I had suffered was positive evidence that the Spirit of the Lord was striving with me. He said that when the sinner becomes hardened in guilt, he does not realize the enormity of his transgression, but flatters himself that he is about right and in no particular danger. The Spirit of the Lord leaves him, and he becomes careless and indifferent or recklessly defiant. This good man told me of the love of God for His erring children, that instead of rejoicing in their destruction, He longed to draw them to Himself in simple faith and trust. He dwelt upon the great love of Christ and the plan of redemption. {1T 29.3}

He spoke of my early misfortune and said it was indeed a grievous affliction, but he bade me believe that the hand of a loving Father had not been withdrawn from me; that in the future life, when the mist that then darkened my mind had vanished, I would discern the wisdom of the providence which had seemed so cruel and mysterious. Jesus said to His disciples: "What I do thou knows not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." In the great future we should no longer see as through a glass darkly, but come face to face with the mysteries of divine love. {1T 30.1}

"Go free, Ellen," said he; "return to your home trusting in Jesus, for He will not withhold His love from any true seeker." He then prayed earnestly for me, and it seemed that God would certainly regard the prayer of His saint, even if my humble petitions were unheard. I left his presence comforted and encouraged. {1T 30.2}

During the few minutes in which I received instruction from Elder Stockman, I had obtained more knowledge on the subject of God's love and pitying tenderness than from all the sermons and exhortations to which I had ever listened. I returned home and again went before the Lord, promising to do and suffer anything He might require of me, if only the smiles of Jesus might cheer my heart. The same duty was presented to me that had troubled my mind before--to take up my cross among the assembled people of God. An opportunity was not long wanting; there was a prayer meeting that evening, which I attended. {1T 30.3}

I bowed trembling during the prayers that were offered. After a few had prayed, I lifted up my voice in prayer before I was aware of it. The promises of God appeared to me like so many precious pearls that were to be received only for the asking. As I prayed, the burden and agony of soul that I had so long endured left me, and the blessing of the Lord descended upon me like the gentle dew. I praised God from the depths of my heart. Everything seemed shut out from me but Jesus and His glory, and I lost consciousness of what was passing around me. {1T 31.1}

The Spirit of God rested upon me with such power that I was unable to go home that night. When I did return, on the following day, a great change had taken place in my mind. It seemed to me that I could hardly be the same person that left my father's house the previous evening. This passage was continually in my thoughts: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." My heart was full of happiness as I softly repeated these words. {1T 31.2}

My views of the Father were changed. I now looked upon Him as a kind and tender parent, rather than a stern tyrant compelling men to a blind obedience. My heart went out toward Him in a deep and fervent love. Obedience to His will seemed a joy; it was a pleasure to be in His service. No shadow clouded the light that revealed to me the perfect will of God. I felt the assurance of an indwelling Saviour, and realized the truth of what Christ had said: "He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." {1T 31.3}

My peace and happiness was in such marked contrast with my former gloom and anguish that it seemed to me as if I had been rescued from hell and transported to heaven. I could even praise God for the misfortune that had been the trial of my life, for it had been the means of fixing my thoughts upon eternity. Naturally proud and

ambitious, I might not have been inclined to give my heart to Jesus had it not been for the sore affliction that had cut me off, in a manner, from the triumphs and vanities of the world. {1T 31.4}

For six months not a shadow clouded my mind, nor did I neglect one known duty. My whole endeavour was to do the will of God and keep Jesus and heaven continually in mind. I was surprised and enraptured with the clear views now presented to me of the atonement and the work of Christ. I will not attempt to further explain the exercises of my mind; suffice it to say that old things had passed away, all things had become new. There was not a cloud to mar my perfect bliss. I longed to tell the story of Jesus' love, but felt no disposition to engage in common conversation with anyone. My heart was so filled with love to God and the peace that passes understanding that I loved to meditate and to pray. {1T 32.1}

The night after receiving so great a blessing, I attended the advent meeting. When the time came for the followers of Christ to speak in His favour, I could not remain silent, but rose and related my experience. Not a thought had entered my mind of what I should say; but the simple story of Jesus' love to me fell from my lips with perfect freedom, and my heart was so happy to be liberated from its bondage of dark despair that I lost sight of the people about me and seemed to be alone with God. I found no difficulty in expressing my peace and happiness, except for the tears of gratitude that choked my utterance as I told of the wondrous love that Jesus had shown for me. {1T 32.2}

Elder Stockman was present. He had recently seen me in deep despair, and the remarkable change in my appearance and feelings touched his heart; he wept aloud, rejoicing with me and praising God for this proof of His tender mercy and loving-kindness. {1T 32.3}

Not long after receiving this great blessing, I attended a conference meeting at the Christian church, where Elder Brown was pastor. I was invited to relate my experience, and I felt not only great freedom of expression, but happiness, in telling my simple story of the love of Jesus and the joy of being accepted of God. As I spoke, with subdued heart and tearful eyes, my soul seemed drawn toward heaven in thanksgiving. The melting power of the Lord came upon the assembled people. Many were weeping and others praising God. {1T 33.1}

Sinners were invited to arise for prayers, and many responded to the call. My heart was so thankful to God for the blessing He had given me that I longed to have others participate in this sacred joy. My mind was deeply interested for those who might be suffering under a sense of the Lord's displeasure and the burden of sin. While relating my experience, I felt that no one could resist the evidence of God's pardoning love that had wrought so wonderful a change in me. The reality of true conversion seemed so plain to me that I felt like helping my young friends into the light, and at every opportunity exerted my influence toward this end. {1T 33.2}

I arranged meetings with my young friends, some of whom were considerably older than myself, and a few were married persons. A number of them were vain and thoughtless; my experience sounded to them like an idle tale, and they did not heed my entreaties. But I determined that my efforts should never cease till these dear souls, for whom I had so great an interest, yielded to God. Several entire nights were spent by me in earnest prayer for those whom I had sought out and brought together for the purpose of labouring and praying with them. {1T 33.3}

Some of these had met with us from curiosity to hear what I had to say; others thought me beside myself to be so persistent in my efforts, especially when they manifested no concern on their own part. But at every one of our little meetings I continued to exhort and pray for each one separately, until everyone had yielded to Jesus, acknowledging the merits of His pardoning love. Everyone was converted to God. {1T 33.4}

Night after night in my dreams I seemed to be labouring for the salvation of souls. At such times special cases were presented to my mind; these I afterward sought out and prayed with. In every instance but one these persons yielded themselves to the Lord. Some of our more formal brethren feared that I was too zealous for the conversion of souls, but time seemed to me so short that it behoved all who had a hope of a blessed immortality and looked for the soon coming of Christ, to labour without ceasing for those who were still in their sins and standing on the awful brink of ruin. {1T 34.1}

Though I was very young, the plan of salvation was so clear to my mind, and my personal experience had been so marked, that, upon considering the matter, I knew it was my duty to continue my efforts for the salvation of precious souls and to pray and confess Christ at every opportunity. My entire being was offered to the service of

my Master. Let come what would, I determined to please God, and live as one who expected the Saviour to come and reward the faithful. I felt like a little child coming to God as to my father, and asking Him what He would have me to do. Then as my duty was made plain to me, it was my greatest happiness to perform it. Peculiar trials sometimes beset me. Those older in experience than myself endeavoured to hold me back and cool the ardour of my faith; but with the smiles of Jesus brightening my life, and the love of God in my heart, I went on my way with a joyful spirit. {1T 34.2}

As often as I recall the experience of my early life, my brother, the confidant of my hopes and fears, the earnest sympathizer with me in my Christian experience, comes to my mind with a flood of tender memories. He was one of those to whom sin presents but few temptations. Naturally devotional, he never sought the society of the young and gay, but chose rather the company of Christians whose conversation would instruct him in the way of life. His manner was serious beyond his years; he was gentle and peaceful, and his mind was almost constantly filled with religious thoughts. His life was pointed to, by those who knew him, as a pattern to the youth, a living example of the grace and beauty of true Christianity. - {1T 34.3}

Chapter IV - Leaving the Methodist Church

My father's family still occasionally attended the Methodist church, and also the class meetings held in private houses. One evening my brother Robert and myself went to class meeting. The presiding elder was present. When it came my brother's turn, he spoke with great humility, yet with clearness, of the necessity for a complete fitness to meet our Saviour, when He should come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. While my brother was speaking, a heavenly light glowed upon his usually pale countenance. He seemed to be carried in spirit above present surroundings, and spoke as if in the presence of Jesus. When I was called upon to speak, I arose, free in spirit, with a heart full of love and peace. I told the story of my great suffering under the conviction of sin, how I had at length received the blessing so long sought, an entire conformity to the will of God, and expressed my joy in the tidings of the soon coming of my Redeemer to take His children home. {1T 35.1}

In my simplicity I expected that my Methodist brethren and sisters would understand my feelings and rejoice with me. But I was disappointed; several sisters groaned and moved their chairs noisily, turning their backs upon me. I could not think what had been said to offend them, and spoke very briefly, feeling the chilling influence of their disapprobation. When I had ceased speaking, Elder B. asked me if it would not be more pleasant to live a long life of usefulness, doing others good, than to have Jesus come speedily and destroy poor sinners. I replied that I longed for the coming of Jesus. Then sin would have an end, and we would enjoy sanctification forever, with no devil to tempt and lead us astray. {1T 35.2}

LESSON 5

“THE PROPHET DELIVERS GOD’S MESSAGE”

April 27 — May 3

? STUDY HELP :

- ✓ Selected Messages, Book 1, pages 49-58;
- ✓ Testimonies, Vol. 5, pages 654-660;
- * S.D.A. Bible Commentary, on Scripture references.

*E. G. W. Study Help 1**Sabbath, April 27th, 2024***Selected Messages, Book 1, p. 49-58****Chapter 4, The Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies to the Church
[THE MATERIAL COMPRISING THIS CHAPTER APPEARED IN A LEAFLET IN 1913.]****A Review of the Work****Sanitarium, California, July 8, 1906**

Dear Brother:

There are some who think they are able to measure the character and to estimate the importance of the work the Lord has given me to do. Their own mind and judgment is the standard by which they would weigh the testimonies. {1SM 49.1}

My Instructor said to me, Tell these men that God has not committed to them the work of measuring, classifying, and defining the character of the testimonies. Those who attempt this are sure to err in their conclusions. The Lord would have men adhere to their appointed work. If they will keep the way of the Lord, they will be able to discern clearly that the work which He has appointed me to do is not a work of human devising. {1SM 49.2}

Those who carefully read the testimonies as they have appeared from the early days, need not be perplexed as to their origin. The many books, written by the help of the Spirit of God, bear a living witness to the character of the testimonies. {1SM 49.3}

In the early days of our experience in the message, the Spirit of God often came upon a few of us as we were assembled, and I was taken away in vision. The Lord gave such light and evidence, such comfort and hope and joy, that His praises were upon our lips. {1SM 50.1}

Assisted by Literary Helpers

While my husband lived, he acted as a helper and counsellor in the sending out of the messages that were given to me. We travelled extensively. Sometimes light would be given to me in the night season, sometimes in the daytime before large congregations. The instruction I received in vision was faithfully written out by me, as I had time and strength for the work. Afterward we examined the matter together, my husband correcting grammatical errors and eliminating needless repetition. Then it was carefully copied for the persons addressed, or for the printer. {1SM 50.2}

As the work grew, others assisted me in the preparation of matter for publication. After my husband's death, faithful helpers joined me, who laboured untiringly in the work of copying the testimonies and preparing articles for publication. {1SM 50.3}

But the reports that are circulated, that any of my helpers are permitted to add matter or change the meaning of the messages I write out, are not true. {1SM 50.4}

While we were in Australia the Lord instructed me that W. C. White should be relieved from the many burdens his brethren would lay upon him, that he might be more free to assist me in the work the Lord has laid upon me. The promise had been given, "I will put My Spirit upon him, and give him wisdom." {1SM 50.5}

Since my return to America I have several times received instruction that the Lord has given me W. C. White to be my helper, and that in this work the Lord will give him of His Spirit. {1SM 50.6}

Proper Time and Manner of Presentation

It requires much wisdom and sound judgment, quickened by the Spirit of God, to know the proper time and manner to present the instruction that has been given. When the minds of persons reprov'd are under a strong deception, they naturally resist the testimony; and having taken an attitude of resistance, it is difficult for them afterward to acknowledge that they have been wrong. {1SM 51.1}

In the early days of this cause, if some of the leading brethren were present when messages from the Lord were given, we would consult with them as to the best manner of bringing the instruction before the people. Sometimes it was decided that certain portions would better not be read before a congregation. Sometimes those whose course was reprov'd would request that the matters pointing out their wrongs and dangers should be read before others, that they, too, might be benefited. {1SM 51.2}

Often after testimonies of reproof were read, hearty confessions were made. Then we would unite in a season of prayer, and the Lord would manifest His pardoning grace to those who had confessed their sins. The acceptance of the testimonies brought the rich blessing of God into our assemblies. {1SM 51.3}

Faithfully I endeavour to write out that which is given me from time to time by the divine Counsellor. Some portions of that which I write are sent out immediately to meet the present necessities of the work. Other portions are held until the development of circumstances makes it evident to me that the time has come for their use. Sometimes in ministers and physicians bearing responsibilities there has developed a disposition to discard the testimonies, and I have been instructed not to place testimonies in their hands; for having yielded to the spirit that tempted and overcame Adam and Eve, they have opened mind and heart to the control of the enemy. Being on a false track, and labouring under deceptive imaginings, they will read into the testimonies things that are not there, but which are in agreement with the false statements that they have listened to. By reading the testimonies in the light of their own kindling, they are deceived, and will deceive others. {1SM 51.4}

Sometimes, after very clear-cut, decided reproofs have been written out, they are held for a time until by personal correspondence I have endeavoured to change the spirit of those to whom they are addressed. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the messages, with all their strength of rebuke or reproof, are sent to them, whether they will hear, or whether they will deny the truthfulness of the message. {1SM 52.1}

If those whose errors are pointed out make confession of their wrongdoing, the spell of the enemy may be broken. If they will repent and forsake their sins, God is faithful and just to forgive their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer, will remove the filthy garments from them, give them change of raiment, and set a fair mitre upon their head. But so long as they refuse to turn from iniquity they cannot develop a character that will stand in the great day of judgment. {1SM 52.2}

Often concealed wrongs in the life of individuals are opened before me, and I am bidden to bear a message of reproof and warning. {1SM 52.3}

I have been told that many who give heed to the false science of the enemy would denounce my work as that of a false prophet, and would place upon the testimony such interpretations as tend to change the truth of God into a lie. Satan is on the alert; and some who in the past have been used by the Lord in doing His work, but who have permitted themselves to be deceived, will be stirred up to make an improper use of the messages given. Because they do not wish to listen to the words of reproof, because they will not hear counsel, and improve their course of action, and do their appointed work, they will misconstrue the messages to the church, and confuse many minds. {1SM 52.4}

Nevertheless, I am to bear the message that is given me to bear, so long as the Lord shall choose. He has not given me the work of settling all the misunderstandings that are cherished in hearts of unbelief. Just as long as a

door is open to receive the tempter's suggestions, difficulties will multiply. The hearts of those who will not come to the light are open to unbelief. If my time and strength are consumed upon such matters, this serves Satan's purposes. The Lord has said to me: "Bear the testimonies. Your work is not to settle difficulties; your work is to reprove, and to present the righteousness of Christ." {1SM 52.5}

An Incident

At one time in the early days of the message, Father Butler and Elder Hart became confused in regard to the testimonies. In great distress they groaned and wept, but for some time they would not give the reasons for their perplexity. However, being pressed to give a reason for their faithless speech and manner, Elder Hart referred to a small pamphlet that had been published as the visions of Sister White, and said that to his certain knowledge, some visions were not included. Before a large audience, these brethren both talked strongly about their losing confidence in the work. {1SM 53.1}

My husband handed the little pamphlet to Elder Hart, and requested him to read what was printed on the title page. "A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Mrs. E. G. White," he read. {1SM 53.2}

For a moment there was silence, and then my husband explained that we had been very short of means, and were able to print at first only a small pamphlet, and he promised the brethren that when sufficient means was raised, the visions should be published more fully in book form. {1SM 53.3}

Elder Butler was deeply moved, and after the explanation had been made, he said, "Let us bow before God." Prayers, weeping, and confessions followed, such as we have seldom heard. {1SM 53.4}

Father Butler said: "Brother White, forgive me; I was afraid you were concealing from us some of the light we ought to have. Forgive me, Sister White." Then the power of God came into the meeting in a wonderful manner.-- The Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies to the Church, pp. 3-9. {1SM 53.5}

The Work and the Helpers

Sanitarium, California, October 23, 1907

Dear Brother [F. M.] Wilcox:

I received and read your recent letter. Regarding the sister who thinks that she has been chosen to fill the position that Sister White has occupied, I have this to say: She may be honest, but she is certainly deceived. {1SM 54.1}

About a year after the death of my husband, I was very feeble, and it was feared that I might live but a short time. At the Healdsburg camp meeting, I was taken into the tent where there was a large gathering of our people. I asked to be raised up from the lounged on which I was lying, and assisted to the speaker's platform, that I might say a few words of farewell to the people. As I tried to speak, the power of God came upon me, and thrilled me through and through. Many in the congregation observed that I was weak, and that my face and hands seemed bloodless; but as I began speaking they saw the colour coming into my lips and face, and knew that a miracle was being wrought in my behalf. I stood before the people healed, and spoke with freedom. {1SM 54.2}

After this experience, light was given me that the Lord had raised me up to bear testimony for Him in many countries, and that He would give me grace and strength for the work. It was also shown me that my son, W. C. White, should be my helper and counsellor, and that the Lord would place on him the spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind. I was shown that the Lord would guide him, and that he would not be led away, because he would recognize the leadings and guidance of the Holy Spirit. {1SM 54.3}

The assurance was given me: "You are not alone in the work the Lord has chosen you to do. You will be taught of God how to bring the truth in its simplicity before the people. The God of truth will sustain you, and convincing

proof will be given that He is leading you. God will give you of His Holy Spirit, and His grace and wisdom and keeping power will be with you. . . . {1SM 54.4}

"The Lord will be your instructor. You will meet with deceptive influences; they will come in many forms, in pantheism and other forms of infidelity; but follow where I shall guide you, and you will be safe. I will put My Spirit upon your son, and will strengthen him to do his work. He has the grace of humility. The Lord has selected him to act an important part in His work. For this purpose was he born." {1SM 55.1}

This word was given me in 1882, and since that time I have been assured that the grace of wisdom was given to him. More recently, in a time of perplexity, the Lord said: "I have given you My servant, W. C. White, and I will give him judgment to be your helper. I will give him skill and understanding to manage wisely." {1SM 55.2}

The Lord has given me other faithful helpers in my work. Many of my discourses have been reported, and have been put before the people in printed form. Through nearly the whole of my long experience I have endeavoured, day by day, to write out that which was revealed to me in visions of the night. Many messages of counsel and reproof and encouragement have been sent out to individuals, and much of the instruction that I have received for the church has been published in periodicals and books, and circulated in many lands.... {1SM 55.3}

The work is constantly moving forward. We are making earnest efforts to place my writings before the people. We hope that several new books will go to press shortly. If I am incapacitated for labour, my faithful workers are prepared to carry forward the work. {1SM 55.4}

My Writings Will Constantly Speak

Abundant light has been given to our people in these last days. Whether or not my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last. My writings are kept on file in the office, and even though I should not live, these words that have been given to me by the Lord will still have life and will speak to the people. But my strength is yet spared, and I hope to continue to do much useful work. I may live until the coming of the Lord; but if I should not, I trust it may be said of me, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13).... {1SM 55.5}

I thank God for the assurance of His love, and that I have daily His leading and guidance. I am very busy with my writing. Early and late, I am writing out the matters that the Lord opens before me. The burden of my work is to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord. The promise of Christ is sure. The time is not long. We must work and watch and wait for the Lord Jesus. We are called upon to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. All our hopes have their foundation in Christ. {1SM 56.1}

Are our people reviewing the past and the present and the future, as it is unfolding before the world? Are they heeding the messages of warning given them? Is it our greatest concern today that our lives shall be refined and purified, and that we shall reflect the similitude of the divine? This must be the experience of all who join that company who are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. They must be arrayed in the righteousness of Christ. His name must be written in their foreheads. They must rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Christ has engraved the names of His people on the palms of His hands. He will never lose His interest in any dependent soul. {1SM 56.2}

Say to the church members that there is need of thorough consecration to God. Let all understand that they must make a covenant with God by sacrifice. We need the blessings of the gospel every day and every hour. Every proof of the Lord's power, His presence, and His love, is to be recognized with grateful thanks. Happiness is to be achieved by the right action of the soul toward God. I thank the Lord for this precious thought. Let Him be glorified by the sentiments expressed and by the actions performed. . . . Never have testimonies been more clearly brought before the people than those that have recently been traced by my pen. God bids me urge upon the attention of our people the importance of their study. Let this work begin now. Then, whether I am permitted to labour or am laid away to rest until Jesus comes, these messages are immortalized. {1SM 56.3}

To my brethren I now say: Speak words that will draw souls to Christ. Bring forth fruit in good works. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). Every conceivable thing will be brought in to deceive, if

possible, the very elect; but the Lord will certainly take care of His work.--The Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies to the Church, pp. 10-16. {1SM 57.1}

The Use of the Testimonies

Time and Place to be Considered

Regarding the testimonies, nothing is ignored; nothing is cast aside; but time and place must be considered. Nothing must be done untimely. Some matters must be withheld because some persons would make an improper use of the light given. Every jot and tittle is essential and must appear at an opportune time. In the past, the testimonies were carefully prepared before they were sent out for publication. And all matter is still carefully studied after the first writing. {1SM 57.2}

Tell them to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God. Place His Word before them. There will be those who will misinterpret and misrepresent. Their eyes have been blinded, and they set forth the figures and interpretations that Satan has worked out for them, and an entirely wrong meaning will be placed upon the words that Sister White has spoken. Satan is just as verily claiming to be Christ's child as did Judas, who was on the accusing side. They have educated themselves in Satan's school of misstating. A description of them is given in the third chapter of Zechariah. Nothing in the world is so dear to God as His church. Satan has worked upon human minds, and will continue to betray sacred trust in a spurious way. {1SM 57.3}

The Publishing of Compilations

I can see plainly that should everyone who thinks he is qualified to write books, follow his imagination and have his productions published, insisting that they be recommended by our publishing houses, there would be plenty of tares sown broadcast in our world. Many from among our own people are writing to me, asking with earnest determination the privilege of using my writings to give force to certain subjects which they wish to present to the people in such a way as to leave a deep impression upon them. {1SM 58.1}

It is true that there is a reason why some of these matters should be presented: but I would not venture to give my approval in using the testimonies in this way, or to sanction the placing of matter which is good in itself in the way which they propose. {1SM 58.2}

The persons who make these propositions, for aught I know, may be able to conduct the enterprise of which they write in a wise manner; but nevertheless I dare not give the least license for using my writings in the manner which they propose. In taking account of such an enterprise, there are many things that must come into consideration; for in using the testimonies to bolster up some subject which may impress the mind of the author, the extracts may give a different impression than that which they would were they read in their original connection.-- The Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies to the Church, pp. 25, 26. {1SM 58.3}

E. G. W. Study Help 2*Sabbath, April 27th, 2024***Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 654-660****Chap. 82 - The Nature and Influence of the "Testimonies"**

As the end draws near and the work of giving the last warning to the world extends, it becomes more important for those who accept present truth to have a clear understanding of the nature and influence of the Testimonies, which God in His providence has linked with the work of the third angel's message from its very rise. In the following pages are given extracts from what I have written during the last forty years, relating to my own early experience in this special work, and also presenting what God has shown me concerning the nature and importance of the Testimonies, the manner in which they are given, and how they should be regarded. {5T 654.2}

"It was not long after the passing of the time in 1844 that my first vision was given me. I was visiting a dear sister in Christ, whose heart was knit with mine; five of us, all women, were kneeling quietly at the family altar. While we were praying, the power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before. I seemed to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher from the earth." [TESTIMONIES FOR THE CHURCH, VOL. 1, P. 58.] At this time I had a view of the experience of the advent believers, the coming of Christ, and the reward to be given to the faithful. {5T 654.3}

"In a second vision, which soon followed the first, I was shown the trials through which I must pass, and that it was my duty to go and relate to others what God had revealed to me. It was shown me that my labours would meet with great opposition and that my heart would be rent with anguish, but that the grace of God would be sufficient to sustain me through all. The teaching of this vision troubled me exceedingly, for it pointed out my duty to go out among the people and present the truth." {5T 655.1}

"One great fear that oppressed me was that if I obeyed the call of duty and went out declaring myself to be one favoured of the Most High with visions and revelations for the people, I might yield to sinful exaltation and be lifted above the station that was right for me to occupy, bring upon myself the displeasure of God, and lose my own soul. I had before me several cases such as I have here described, and my heart shrank from the trying ordeal. {5T 655.2}

"I now entreated that if I must go and relate what the Lord had shown me, I should be preserved from undue exaltation. Said the angel: 'Your prayers are heard and shall be answered. If this evil that you dread threatens you, the hand of God will be stretched out to save you; by affliction He will draw you to Himself and preserve your humility. Deliver the message faithfully. Endure unto the end, and you shall eat the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of life.'" [VOL. 1, PP. 62, 64, 65.] {5T 655.3}

At this time there was fanaticism among some of those who had been believers in the first message. Serious errors in doctrine and practice were cherished, and some were ready to condemn all who would not accept their views. God revealed these errors to me in vision and sent me to His erring children to declare them; but in performing this duty I met with bitter opposition and reproach. {5T 655.4}

"It was a great cross for me to relate to the erring what had been shown me concerning them. It caused me great distress to see others troubled or grieved. And when obliged to declare the messages I would often soften them down and make them appear as favourable for the individual as I could and then would go by myself and weep in agony of spirit. I looked upon those who had only their own souls to care for and thought if I were in their condition I would not murmur. It was hard to relate the plain, cutting testimonies given me of God. I anxiously watched the result, and if the persons reprov'd rose up against the reproof, and afterward opposed the truth, these queries would arise in my mind: Did I deliver the message just as I should? Could there not have been some way to save them? And then such distress pressed upon my soul that I often felt that death would be a welcome messenger, and the grave a sweet resting place. {5T 656.1}

"I did not realize the danger and sin of such a course until in vision I was taken into the presence of Jesus. He looked upon me with a frown and turned His face from me. It is not possible to describe the terror and agony I then felt. I fell upon my face before Him, but had no power to utter a word. Oh, how I longed to be covered and hid from that dreadful frown! Then could I realize, in some degree, what the feelings of the lost will be when they cry: 'Mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.' {5T 656.2}

"Presently an angel bade me rise, and the sight that met my eyes can hardly be described. Before me was a company whose hair and garments were torn, and whose countenances were the very picture of despair and horror. They came close to me and rubbed their garments upon mine. As I looked at my garments I saw that they were stained with blood. Again I fell like one dead at the feet of my accompanying angel. I could not plead one excuse and longed to be away from that holy place. The angel raised me to my feet and said: 'This is not your case now, but this scene has passed before you to let you know what your situation must be if you neglect to declare to others what the Lord has revealed to you.'" [VOL. 1, PP. 73, 74.] With this solemn warning before me I went out to speak to the people the words of reproof and instruction given me of God. {5T 656.3}

Personal Testimonies

The messages given me for different individuals I often wrote out for them, in many cases doing this at their urgent request. As my work extended, this became an important and taxing part of my labours. Before the publication of Testimony 15 many requests for written testimonies were sent me by those whom I had counselled or reproved; but I was in a state of great exhaustion from wearing labour, and I shrank from the task, especially since I knew that many of these persons were very unworthy, and there seemed little hope that the warnings given would work any decided change in them. At that time I was greatly encouraged by the following dream: {5T 657.1}

"A person brought to me a web of white cloth, and bade me cut it into garments for persons of all sizes and all descriptions of character and circumstances in life. I was told to cut them out and hang them up all ready to be made when called for. I had the impression that many for whom I was required to cut garments were unworthy. I inquired if that was the last piece of cloth I should have to cut and was told that it was not; that as soon as I had finished this one, there were others for me to take hold of. I felt discouraged at the amount of work before me and stated that I had been engaged in cutting garments for others for more than twenty years, and my labours had not been appreciated, neither did I see that my work had accomplished much good. I spoke to the person who brought the cloth to me, of one woman in particular, for whom he had told me to cut a garment. I stated that she would not prize the garment and that it would be a loss of time and material to present it to her. She was very poor, of inferior intellect, and untidy in her habits, and would soon soil it. {5T 657.2}

"The person replied: 'Cut out the garments. That is your duty. The loss is not yours, but mine. God sees not as man sees. He lays out the work that He would have done, and you do not know which will prosper, this or that.' . . . {5T 658.1}

"I then held up my hands, calloused as they were with long use of the shears, and stated that I could but shrink at the thought of pursuing this kind of labour. The person again repeated: {5T 658.2}

"'Cut out the garments. Your release has not yet come.' {5T 658.3}

"With feelings of great weariness I arose to engage in the work. Before me lay new, polished shears, which I commenced using. At once my feelings of weariness and discouragement left me, the shears seemed to cut with hardly an effort on my part, and I cut out garment after garment with comparative ease." [VOL. 2, PP. 10-12 (FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1868).] {5T 658.4}

There are many dreams arising from the common things of life with which the Spirit of God has nothing to do. "There are also false dreams, as well as false visions, which are inspired by the spirit of Satan. But dreams from the Lord are classed in the word of God with visions and are as truly the fruits of the spirit of prophecy as visions. Such dreams, taking into the account the persons who have them, and the circumstances under which they are given, contain their own proofs of their genuineness." [VOL. 1, P. 569 (1867).] {5T 658.5}

Since the warning and instruction given in testimony for individual cases applied with equal force to many others who had not been specially pointed out in this manner, it seemed to be my duty to publish the personal testimonies for the benefit of the church. In Testimony 15, speaking of the necessity for doing this, I said: "I know of no better way to present my views of general dangers and errors, and the duty of all who love God and keep His commandments, than by giving these testimonies. Perhaps there is no more direct and forcible way of presenting what the Lord has shown me." [VOL. 2, P. 9 (1868).] {5T 658.6}

In a vision given me June 12, 1868, I was shown that which fully justified my course in publishing personal testimonies. "When the Lord singles out individual cases and specifies their wrongs, others, who have not been shown in vision, frequently take it for granted that they are right, or nearly so. If one is reproved for a special wrong, brethren and sisters should carefully examine themselves to see wherein they have failed and wherein they have been guilty of the same sin. They should possess the spirit of humble confession. If others think them right, it does not make them so. God looks at the heart. He is proving and testing souls in this manner. In rebuking the wrongs of one, He designs to correct many. But if they fail to take the reproof to themselves, and flatter themselves that God passes over their errors because He does not especially single them out, they deceive their own souls and will be shut up in darkness and be left to their own ways to follow the imagination of their own hearts. {5T 659.1}

"Many are dealing falsely with their own souls and are in a great deception in regard to their true condition before God. He employs ways and means to best serve His purpose and to prove what is in the hearts of His professed followers. He makes plain the wrongs of some that others may thus be warned and fear and shun those errors. By self-examination they may find that they are doing the same things which God condemns in others. If they really desire to serve God, and fear to offend Him, they will not wait for their sins to be specified before they make confession and with humble repentance return unto the Lord. They will forsake the things which have displeased God, according to the light given to others. If, on the contrary, those who are not right see that they are guilty of the very sins that have been reproved in others, yet continue in the same unconsecrated course because they have not been specially named, they endanger their own souls, and will be led captive by Satan at his will." [VOL. 2, PP. 112, 113 (1868).] {5T 659.2}

"I was shown that in the wisdom of God the sins and errors of all would not be revealed. . . . All who are guilty are addressed in these individual testimonies, although their names may not be attached to the special testimony borne; and if individuals pass over and cover up their own sins because their names are not especially called, they will not be prospered of God. They cannot advance in the divine life, but will become darker and darker, until the light of heaven will be entirely withdrawn." [VOL. 2, P. 447 (1870).] {5T 660.1}

In a view given me about twenty years ago, "I was then directed to bring out general principles, in speaking and in writing, and at the same time specify the dangers, errors, and sins of some individuals, that all might be warned, reproved, and counselled. I saw that all should search their own hearts and lives closely to see if they had not made the same mistakes for which others were corrected and if the warnings given for others did not apply to their own cases. If so, they should feel that the counsel and reproofs were given especially for them and should make as practical an application of them as though they were especially addressed to themselves. . . . God designs to test the faith of all who claim to be followers of Christ. He will test the sincerity of the prayers of all those who claim to earnestly desire to know their duty. He will make duty plain. He will give all an ample opportunity to develop what is in their hearts." [VOL. 2, P. 687 (1871).] {5T 660.2}

LESSON 6

“TESTING THE CLAIMS OF THE PROPHET”

May 4 — May 10

? STUDY HELP :

- ✓ Testimonies, Vol. 5, pages 671-676;
- ✓ Selected Messages, Book 2, pages 63-100;
- * A.G. Daniels, The Abiding Gift of Prophecy, pages 277-307;
- * S.D.A. Bible Commentary on Scripture references.

*E. G. W. Study Help 1**Sabbath, May 4th, 2024***Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 671-676****The Nature and the Influence of the Testimonies****To be Judged by their Fruits**

Let the Testimonies be judged by their fruits. What is the spirit of their teaching? What has been the result of their influence? "All who desire to do so can acquaint themselves with the fruits of these visions. For seventeen years God has seen fit to let them survive and strengthen against the opposition of Satan's forces and the influence of human agencies that have aided Satan in his work." [VOL. 1, P. 330 (1862).] {5T 671.1}

"God is either teaching His church, reproofing their wrongs and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work . . . bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter. The Testimonies are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil." [VOL. 4, P. 230.] {5T 671.2}

As the Lord has manifested Himself through the spirit of prophecy, past, present, and future have passed before me. I have been shown faces that I had never seen, and years afterward I knew them when I saw them. I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind; and I have written, at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent and, arriving at a crisis, have saved great disaster to the cause of God. This has been my work for many years. A power has impelled me to reprove and rebuke wrongs that I had not thought of. Is this work of the last thirty-six years from above or from beneath?" [VOL. 5, PP. 64, 65 (1882).] {5T 671.3}

Christ warned His disciples: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Here is a test, and all can apply it if they will. Those who really desire to know the truth will find sufficient evidence for belief. {5T 671.4}

Doubting the "Testimonies"

"It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the Testimonies." "Satan knows how to make his attacks. He works upon minds to excite jealousy and dissatisfaction toward those at the head of the work. The gifts are next questioned; then, of course, they have but little weight, and instruction given through vision is disregarded." "Next follows scepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the Testimonies, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction." [VOL. 4, P. 211; VOL. 1, P. 236] "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." [VOL. 3, P. 328.] {5T 672.1}

A testimony for certain young men, first published in 1880, speaks of this point as follows: "A prevailing scepticism 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." [VOL. 4, P. 437.] {5T 672.2}

I was shown that many had so little spirituality that they did not understand the value of the Testimonies or their real object. They talked flippantly of the Testimonies given by God for the benefit of His people, and passed judgment upon them, giving their opinion and criticizing this and that, when they would better have placed their hands upon their lips, and prostrated themselves in the dust; for they could not appreciate the spirit of the Testimonies, because they knew so little of the Spirit of God. [VOL. 4, P. 443.] {5T 672.3}

"There are some in ----- who have never fully submitted to reproof. They have taken a course of their own choosing. They have ever, to a greater or less degree, exerted an influence against those who have stood up to defend the right and reprove the wrong. The influence of these persons upon individuals who come here and who are brought in contact with them . . . is very bad. They fill the minds of these newcomers with questionings and doubts in regard to the Testimonies of the Spirit of God. They put false constructions upon the Testimonies; and instead of leading persons to become consecrated to God and to listen to the voice of the church, they teach them to be independent and not to mind the opinions and judgment of others. The influence of this class has been secretly at work. Some are unconscious of the harm they are doing; but, unconsecrated, proud, and rebellious themselves, they lead others in the wrong track. A poisonous atmosphere is inhaled from these unconsecrated ones. The blood of souls is in the garments of such, and Christ will say to them in the day of final settlement: 'Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.' Astonished they will be, but their professedly Christian lives were a deception, a fraud." [VOL. 4, PP. 513, 514 (1880).] {5T 673.1}

"Some express their views that the testimony of Sister White cannot be reliable. This is all that many unconsecrated ones want. The testimonies of reproof have checked their vanity and pride; but if they dared, they would go to almost any length in fashion and pride. God will give all such an opportunity to prove themselves and to develop their true characters." [VOL. 3, P. 313 (1873).] {5T 673.2}

"I saw that the reason why visions had not been more frequent of late is, they have not been appreciated by the church. The church have nearly lost their spirituality and faith, and the reproofs and warnings have had but little effect upon them. Many of those who have professed faith in them have not heeded them." [VOL. 1, P. 119 (1855).] {5T 674.1}

"If you lose confidence in the Testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth. I have been fearful that many would take a questioning, doubting position, and in my distress for your souls I would warn you. How many will heed the warning? As you now hold the Testimonies, should one be given crossing your track, correcting your errors, would you feel at perfect liberty to accept or reject any part or the whole? That which you will be least inclined to receive is the very part most needed." [VOL. 5, P. 98 (1882).] {5T 674.2}

"My brethren, beware of the evil heart of unbelief. The word of God is plain and close in its restrictions; it interferes with your selfish indulgence; therefore you do not obey it. The Testimonies of His Spirit call your attention to the Scriptures, point out your defects of character, and rebuke your sins; therefore you do not heed them. And to justify your carnal, ease-loving course you begin to doubt whether the Testimonies are from God. If you would obey their teachings you would be assured of their divine origin. Remember, your unbelief does not affect their truthfulness. If they are from God they will stand." [VOL. 5, P. 234.] {5T 674.3}

"I have been shown that unbelief in the testimonies of warning, encouragement, and reproof is shutting away the light from God's people. Unbelief is closing their eyes so that they are ignorant of their true condition." "They think the testimony of the Spirit of God in reproof is uncalled for or that it does not mean them. Such are in the greatest need of the grace of God and spiritual discernment, that they may discover their deficiency in spiritual knowledge." [VOL. 3, PP. 255, 253, 254 (1873).] {5T 674.4}

"Many who have backslidden from the truth assign as a reason for their course that they do not have faith in the Testimonies. . . . The question now is: Will they yield their idol which God condemns, or will they continue in their wrong course of indulgence and reject the light God has given them reproving the very things in which they delight? The question to be settled with them is: Shall I deny myself and receive as of God the Testimonies which reprove my sins, or shall I reject the Testimonies because they reprove my sins? {5T 675.1}

"In many cases the Testimonies are fully received, the sin and indulgence broken off, and reformation at once commences in harmony with the light God has given. In other instances sinful indulgences are cherished, the

Testimonies are rejected, and many excuses which are untrue are offered to others as the reason for refusing to receive them. The true reason is not given. It is a lack of moral courage--a will, strengthened and controlled by the Spirit of God, to renounce hurtful habits." [VOL. 4, P. 32 (1876).] {5T 675.2}

"Satan has ability to suggest doubts and to devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue, a mark of intelligence in them, to be unbelieving and to question and quibble. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit, and all should decide from the weight of evidence." [VOL. 3, P. 255 (1873).] "God gives sufficient evidence for the candid mind to believe; but he who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things which he cannot make plain to his finite understanding will be left in the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and questioning doubts, and will make shipwreck of faith." [VOL. 4, PP. 232, 233 (1876).] {5T 675.3}

Duty to Give Reproof

"If wrongs are apparent among His people, and if the servants of God pass on indifferent to them, they virtually sustain and justify the sinner, and are alike guilty and will just as surely receive the displeasure of God; for they will be made responsible for the sins of the guilty. In vision I have been pointed to many instances where the displeasure of God has been incurred by a neglect on the part of His servants to deal with the wrongs and sins existing among them. Those who have excused these wrongs have been thought by the people to be very amiable and lovely in disposition, simply because they shunned to discharge a plain, Scriptural duty. The task was not agreeable to their feelings; therefore they avoided it." [VOL. 3, P. 266 (1873).] {5T 676.1}

The searching testimony of the Spirit of God "will separate those from Israel who have ever been at war with the means that God has ordained to keep corruptions out of the church. Wrongs must be called wrongs. Grievous sins must be called by their right name. All of God's people should come nearer to Him. . . . Then will they see sin in the true light and will realize how offensive it is in the sight of God." [VOL. 3, P. 324 (1873).] "The plain, straight testimony must live in the church, or the curse of God will rest upon His people as surely as it did upon ancient Israel because of their sins." [VOL. 3, P. 269 (1873).] {5T 676.2}

"Never was there greater need of faithful warnings and reproofs . . . 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. . . . I was shown that God's people must make more firm, determined efforts to press back the incoming darkness. The close work of the Spirit of God is needed now as never before." [VOL. 3, PP. 327, 328 (1873).] {5T 676.3}

E. G. W. Study Help 2*Sabbath, May 4th, 2024***Selected Messages, Book 2, p. 63-100****The Divine Credentials**

Your letter addressed to me was received at the beginning of the Sabbath.... I should advise you to attend the school, and not to leave this country until you become thoroughly settled in your mind as to what is truth. I sincerely hope that you will attend this term of school and learn all you can in regard to this message of truth that is to go to the world. {2SM 63.1}

The Lord has not given you a message to call the Seventh-day Adventists Babylon, and to call the people of God to come out of her. All the reasons you may present cannot have weight with me on this subject, because the Lord has given me decided light that is opposed to such a message. {2SM 63.2}

I do not doubt your sincerity or honesty. I have written long letters at different times to those who were accusing the church of Seventh-day Adventists of being Babylon, that they were not handling the truth. You think individuals have prejudiced my mind. If I am in this state, I am not fitted to be entrusted with the work of God. But this matter has been brought before my mind in other cases where individuals have claimed to have messages for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, of a similar character, and the word has been given me, "Believe them not." "I have not sent them, and yet they ran." {2SM 63.3}

A Few Cases Recalled

Elder K, [SEE P. 96, ALSO SELECTED MESSAGES, BK. I, PP. 176-184.] a dying man, had his room filled with interested people, while he was at the hospital at Battle Creek. Many were deceived. The man seemed to be inspired. But the light that was given me was, "This work is not of God. Believe not the message." {2SM 64.1}

A few years since, a man named N, of Red Bluff, California, came to me to deliver his message. He said it was the loud cry of the third angel which was to lighten the earth with his glory. He thought God had passed all the leading workers and given him the message. I attempted to show him that he was mistaken. He said Seventh-day Adventists were Babylon, and when we told him our reasons and set the matter before him, that he was in error, he had great power come upon him, and he certainly gave a loud cry.... We had much trouble with him; his mind became unbalanced, and he had to be placed in the insane asylum. {2SM 64.2}

One, Garmire, [SEE CH. 9.] advocated and published a message in regard to the loud cry of the third angel; he accused the church in a similar manner to what you are now doing. He said the leaders in the church would all fall through self-exaltation, and another class of humble men would come to the front, who would do wonderful things. This man had daughters who claimed to have visions. {2SM 64.3}

This delusion was opened to me. This is an intelligent man, of an acceptable address, and self-denying and full of zeal and earnestness, and carrying an appearance of consecration and devotion. But the word of God came from God to me, "Believe them not, I have not sent them!" {2SM 64.4}

He claimed to believe the testimonies. He claimed them to be true, and used them in the same manner you have used them to give force and appearance of truth to his claims. I told them this message was not of God; but it was deceiving the unwary. He would not be convinced. I told them the visions of his daughter [Anna] were spurious, yet these visions, he claimed, were like the visions of Sister White, testifying to the same things. This daughter was deceiving the family and several others who believed these false messages. I was shown that the young girl was not virtuous; but was corrupt.... {2SM 65.1}

If ever a man that I looked upon was inspired, this man certainly was; but I told him plainly his inspiration was of Satan, not of God. His message bore not the divine credentials. {2SM 65.2}

In order for him to give this message broadcast to the world, he made an honest, conscientious young man believe it to be his duty to steal the Review and Herald list. This is a State-prison crime, and the young man ran away from Battle Creek. He did not dare return to Battle Creek for some time. The time was set [by this fanatical teacher] for probation to close, and as every prediction failed, the young man saw he had been deceived, and he confessed his sin and is now an honourable member of the Battle Creek church. {2SM 65.3}

Only two years since another man, by the name of O, from Connecticut, came out with a message which he called new light in regard to the message of the third angel. This intelligent family have, through this delusion, separated from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Because I had borne a decided testimony against this new light, so-called, in _____, Connecticut, where he lived, he opposed me and my work and testimonies. {2SM 65.4}

The father of the O children attended the Conference and Ministers' Bible Institute held in Battle Creek; but he held himself aloof and did not harmonize with the spirit of the meeting. He left for his home, and began to leaven the little church in _____. If I had not laboured in that place they might have broken up the whole church with their repudiating the truth and position of Seventh-day Adventists, and Mrs. White in particular. {2SM 65.5}

At this same time, one, Mrs. P, came from Washington, D.C., claiming to be wholly sanctified and to have the power of healing. This spirit led many to become bewildered. The same accusing spirit was with them--that is, that the church was all wrong and God was calling out a people who would work miracles. A large class of our people in Battle Creek were being severed. I was moved upon by the Spirit of God, in the night season, to write to our people in Battle Creek. {2SM 66.1}

The Message to the Laodiceans

God is leading out a people. He has a chosen people, a church on the earth, whom He has made the depositaries of His law. He has committed to them sacred trust and eternal truth to be given to the world. He would reprove and correct them. The message to the Laodiceans is applicable to Seventh-day Adventists who have had great light and have not walked in the light. It is those who have made great profession, but have not kept in step with their Leader, that will be spewed out of His mouth unless they repent. The message to pronounce the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Babylon, and call the people of God out of her, does not come from any heavenly messenger, or any human agent inspired by the Spirit of God. {2SM 66.2}

The True Witness says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou may be rich; and white raiment, that thou may be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:18-21). {2SM 66.3}

"I Rebuke and Chasten"

Jesus is coming in to give the individual members of the church the richest blessings, if they will open the door to Him. He does not once call them Babylon, nor ask them to come out. But He says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (with messages of reproof and warning) (Revelation 3:19). These reproofs I am not ignorant of. I have given warnings because the Spirit of the Lord has constrained me to do so, and have uttered reproofs because the Lord has given me words of reproof. I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, which has been given me for the church. {2SM 67.1}

I will say in the fear and love of God, I know the Lord has thoughts of love and mercy to restore and heal them of all their backslidings. He has a work for His church to do. They are not to be pronounced Babylon, but to be as the salt of the earth, the light of the world. They are to be the living messengers to proclaim a living message in these last days. {2SM 67.2}

Babylon of Revelation 18

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she says in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judges her" (Revelation 18:1-8). {2SM 67.3}

The whole chapter shows that Babylon that has fallen is the churches who will not receive the messages of warning the Lord has given in the first, second, and third angels' messages. They refused the truth and accepted a lie. They refused the messages of truth. See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. The message in the eighteenth chapter of Revelation is plain and clearly defined. "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (verse 3). Anyone who reads this chapter need not be deceived. {2SM 68.1}

How Satan would exult to have a message go broadcast that the only people whom God has made the repositories of His law are the ones to whom this message applies. The wine of Babylon is the exalting of the false and spurious sabbath above the Sabbath which the Lord Jehovah hath blessed and sanctified for the use of man, also [it is] the immortality of the soul. These kindred heresies, and the rejection of the truth, convert the church into Babylon. Kings, merchants, rulers, and religious teachers are all in corrupt harmony. {2SM 68.2}

The Church Not to Be Broken Up

Again I say, The Lord hath not spoken by any messenger who calls the church that keeps the commandments of God, Babylon. True, there are tares with the wheat; but Christ said He would send His angels to first gather the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into the garner. I know that the Lord loves His church. It is not to be disorganized or broken up into independent atoms. There is not the least consistency in this; there is not the least evidence that such a thing will be. Those who shall heed this false message and try to leaven others will be deceived and prepared to receive advanced delusions, and they will come to nought. {2SM 68.3}

There is in some of the members of the church, pride, self-sufficiency, stubborn unbelief, and a refusing to yield their ideas, although evidence may be piled upon evidence which makes the message to the Laodicean church applicable. But that will not blot out the church that it will not exist. Let both tares and wheat grow together until the harvest. Then it is the angels that do the work of separation. {2SM 69.1}

I warn the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be careful how you receive every new notion and those who claim to have great light. The character of their work seems to be to accuse and to tear down. {2SM 69.2}

My brother, I would say to you, Be careful. Go not one step farther in the path you have entered upon. Walk in the light "while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you" (John 12:35). {2SM 69.3}

You complain of being treated coldly in Battle Creek. Did you go with a humble spirit to those who are spiritual and say, "Will you examine the Scriptures with me? Shall we pray over this matter? I have not the light, I want it; for error will never sanctify the soul." Can you be surprised that they would not give you all that confidence you might think they should, after the experience they have passed through? Should not the words of Christ have any weight? "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). "Lo here and lo there is Christ" will be multiplied. Let the believers heed the voice of the angel

who has said to the church, "Press together." In unity is your strength. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. God hath a church, and Christ hath declared, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). The messengers the Lord sends bear the divine credentials. I have tender feelings toward you, but come to the light, I beseech of you.--Letter 16, 1893. {2SM 69.4}

The Fruitage of an Underhanded Work

It is essential that all shall know what atmosphere surrounds their own souls, whether they are in co-partnership with the enemy of righteousness, and unconsciously doing his work, or whether they are linked up with Christ, doing His work, and seeking to establish souls more firmly in the truth. {2SM 70.1}

Satan would be pleased to have anyone and everyone become his allies to weaken the confidence of brother in brother, and to sow discord among those who profess to believe the truth. Satan can accomplish his purposes most successfully through professed friends of Christ who are not walking and working in Christ's lines. Those who in mind and heart are turning away from the Lord's special work for this time, those who do not cooperate with Him in establishing souls in the faith by leading them to heed His words of warning, are doing the work of the enemy of Christ. {2SM 70.2}

It is a most serious matter to go from house to house, and under pretence of doing missionary work, cast in the seed of mistrust and suspicion. Each one speedily germinates, and there is created a distrust of God's servants, who have His message to bear to the people. When God speaks through His servants, the seed [of mistrust and suspicion] sown has developed into a root of bitterness. The word falls upon hearts that will not hear, on hearts that will not respond. No earthly or heavenly power can find access to the soul. {2SM 70.3}

Who is accountable for these souls? Who shall eradicate that poisonous root of bitterness that has prevented them from receiving the word of the Lord? A good sister or a brother planted the evil seed, but how can that one restore the soul thus imperilled? The tongue that should have been used to the glory of God in speaking words of hope and faith and confidence in God's workmen has turned away a soul from Jesus Christ. Those who themselves despised the words of Christ, and refused to hear His voice and to be converted, have leavened other minds with the leaven of evil surmisings and evil speaking. {2SM 70.4}

This is the day of the Lord's preparation. We have no time now to talk unbelief and to gossip, no time now to do the devil's work. Let everyone beware of unsettling the faith of others by sowing seeds of envy, jealousy, disunion; for God hears the words, and judges, not by assertions, which are yea and nay, but by the fruit one's course of action produces. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). The seed sown will determine the character of the harvest."--Manuscript 32a, 1896. {2SM 71.1}

Convincing Evidence Accompanies the Message Inspired by God

When the Lord gives a man a message, He gives with it something whereby His people may know that the message is from Him. God does not ask his people to believe everyone who comes to them with a message. {2SM 71.2}

The Lord sends warnings to His people, not to destroy them, but to correct their errors.... {2SM 71.3}

We are living in perilous times. From the light I have, I know that Satan is trying to bring in that which will make people think they have a wonderful work to do. But when God gives a man a message, that man, by his meekness and lowliness, will give evidence that God is working through him. God lives and reigns, and He desires us to walk before Him in humility. He does not wish this man N to force himself before a congregation.... {2SM 71.4}

We are not going to be interrupted in meeting after meeting by those who claim they have a message to deliver. He who presses himself forward into a place where he is not wanted is not doing the work of God. We are to work like soldiers in an army. We are not to step out of the ranks, and begin to work on our own account.--Manuscript 30, 1901. {2SM 71.5}

Chap. 8 - Meeting the Claims of False Prophets

What We May Expect

I have been shown many who will claim to be especially taught of God, and will attempt to lead others, and from mistaken ideas of duty they will undertake a work that God has never laid upon them. Confusion will be the result. Let everyone seek God most earnestly for himself that he may individually understand His will.--Letter 54, 1893. {2SM 72.1}

There will be those who will claim to have visions. When God gives you clear evidence that the vision is from Him, you may accept it, but do not accept it on any other evidence; for people are going to be led more and more astray in foreign countries and in America.--The Review and Herald, May 25, 1905. {2SM 72.2}

The Visions of a Misled Child [IN COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT, OR TO, THE MR. GARMIRE REFERRED TO IN CHAPTER 7, IS COUNSEL AND INFORMATION WHICH MAY SERVE IN DEALING WITH THOSE WHO CLAIM TO HAVE SPECIAL LIGHT.--COMPILERS.]

I am compelled to state that I have not had the least faith in Mr. [J. M.] Garmire or his work. The pamphlet that was issued last fall at the time of our Jackson camp meeting had not the least sanction of our people. They were sent broadcast by stealing the Review and Herald list. {2SM 72.3}

The daughter of Mr. Garmire claims, or he claims for her, to have visions; but they bear not the stamp of God. They are of the same character as many such things we have met in our experience--a delusion of Satan. {2SM 73.1}

I plainly stated at the Jackson camp meeting to these fanatical parties that they were doing the work of the adversary of souls; they were in darkness. They claimed to have great light that probation would close in October, 1884. {2SM 73.2}

I there stated in public that the Lord had been pleased to show me that there would be no definite time in the message given of God since 1844; and that I knew that this message, which four or five were engaged in advocating with great zeal, was heresy. The visions of this poor child were not of God. This light came not from heaven. Time was short; but the end was not yet. A great work was to be accomplished to prepare a people to be sealed with the seal of the living God.--An Exposure of Fanaticism and Wickedness (Pamphlet), pp. 9, 10 (1885). {2SM 73.3}

A Message to J. M. Garmire

Satan has arranged things so that you should be ensnared. Fanaticism, deception, and strong delusion hold you captive. You have talked your ideas in your family, misinterpreting scripture, wresting the Word of God from its true interpretation, and have thus led them to believe that the views held and advocated by our people are not correct. Your interpretations of scripture are not in harmony with the positions taken by Seventh-day Adventists.... {2SM 73.4}

The mould you have given to your children's minds savours of the errors that have corrupted your own mind. You have educated them to see spots and stains in others, and to criticize them. By your words and example in thus talking against your brethren and picking up their faults, you have set in motion a train of circumstances that, through your own power combined with satanic agencies, has resulted in the visions of your daughter. All this fault-finding, this accusing of your brethren, is satanic.... {2SM 73.5}

The Divine Credentials

Your expressing so much faith in the testimonies, and making them so prominent, is no help to me or my work, because you place the false visions of your daughter on the same level with those the Lord gives to me, and thus lower the sacredness and exalted character of the work God has given me to do. {2SM 74.1}

The Lord has plainly shown me that what you regard as communications from God to you and others through your child Anna, are not from Him. They do not bear the divine credentials. It is another spirit that controls the child. It is the enemy that works in her. Such manifestations will be more and more common in these last days. They do not lead to unity, into all truth, but away from the truth. {2SM 74.2}

One decided evidence we have that these exercises are not of God, is that they concur with your views, which we know to be erroneous. Things she says she sees in vision are not sustained by the Word of God, but are contrary to it. Satan is constantly at work to imbue her with his own spirit, that through her, under a cloak of righteousness, he may bring in commonness, heresies, and defilement. As you regard her utterances as from God, your faith in the true testimonies is valueless; and thus Satan hopes to disconnect you, and all who have any confidence in your ideas, from the agencies that God has ordained, that you may be left to believe a lie. The Scriptures speak of those who are deceived and are being deceived. This is your case. You deceive your daughter; she deceives you--the blind leading the blind. The enemy seeks to accomplish his purposes by various means, as shall best meet the circumstances and situation of those whom he sees he can allure by temptation. {2SM 74.3}

I tell you plainly, the messages of your daughter Anna are not from God. This the Lord has shown me, and He will not lie. She may say many good things, may speak much that is truth, but so does the enemy of souls. The counterfeit will in many respects resemble the true. It is the fruit borne that testifies of the character.... {2SM 74.4}

History Repeated

In the work in which my husband and I were called by the providence of God to act a part, even from its very beginning in 1843 and 1844, we have had the Lord to devise and plan for us, and He has worked out His plans through His living agents. False paths have been so often pointed out to us, and the true and safe paths so clearly defined in all the enterprises connected with the work given us to do, that I can say of a truth I am not ignorant of Satan's devices, nor of the ways and works of God. We have had to tax every power of mind, relying upon wisdom from God to guide us in our investigations, as we have had to review the different theories brought to our attention, weighing their merits and defects in the light shining from the Word of God and the things God has revealed to me through His Word and the testimonies, in order that we might not be deceived nor deceive others. We surrendered our will and way to God, and most earnestly supplicated His aid; and we never sought in vain. Many years of painful experience in connection with the work of God have made me acquainted with all kinds of false movements. Many times I have been sent to different places with the message, "I have a work for you to do in that place; I will be with you." When the occasion came, the Lord gave me a message for those who were having false dreams and visions, and in the strength of Christ I bore my testimony at the Lord's bidding. The most terrible denunciations were hurled against me, which they said were from the Lord, because I was opposing His work. They said that terrible calamities would come upon me, just as your Anna has prophesied; but I passed along perfectly conscious of the guardianship of heavenly angels. {2SM 75.1}

During the past forty-five years, I have had to meet persons claiming to have from God messages of reproof to others. This phase of religious fanaticism has sprung up again and again since 1844. Satan has worked in many ways to establish error. Some things spoken in these visions came to pass; but many things--in regard to the time of Christ's coming, the end of probation, and the events to take place--proved utterly false, as your prophesyings and Anna's have done. Yet they would try to excuse the blunders by twisting the statements about, and giving them another meaning, and go on in the same way, deceiving and being deceived. {2SM 75.2}

When I was first wrought upon by the Spirit of the Lord, I was shown that I would be brought in contact with those who claimed to see visions, but that the Lord would not permit me to be deceived. My work was to unveil this falsehood, and to rebuke it in the name of the Lord. As the end drew near, I was to see more of these manifestations. {2SM 76.1}

"I Have Not Sent Them"

Letters have come to me from different ones, relating visions that they said God had given them; but the Lord Jesus tells me, "Believe them not; I have not sent them." Some write to me, saying that God has revealed to them that Sister White is in error, that she is influenced by the leaders to believe some things that are not true, and to reject some things that are true. But the word comes again, "Heed them not; I have not spoken by them, nor given them any word or message. They have spun lying words, from the suggestions of Satan." {2SM 76.2}

Some have come to me claiming to be Christ, and have apparently worked miracles. They have said that the Lord led me in many things, but the Sabbath was not a test question; that the law of God was not binding upon men; all we had to do was to accept Christ, and they themselves were Christ. I have had experience with all these pretentious claims, and I have no faith in them. "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). {2SM 76.3}

In one place, four in one family professed to have communications from the Lord, reproving wrong, and they predicted things that actually did take place. This inspired confidence in them. But the things that did not take place were kept in the dark, or were treated as something mysterious, which would be understood later. Whence did these receive their inspiration?--From satanic agencies, which are many. The Lord laid it upon me to meet these things, and bear a decided testimony against them.... {2SM 76.4}

I have seen several fall in vision; but when I rebuked the spirit which controlled them, they immediately came out of vision, and were in great distress of mind. {2SM 77.1}

Cheap, Common, Earthly Matters

Such experiences as these came to be very common. Several in one family were under this species of deception. . . . Messages would be given for different members of the church, telling some poor trembling soul, "You are proud"; another, "You are unbelieving; you will be lost." The Lord gave me light in this instance to speak words of comfort and encouragement. I bore my testimony to those deceived ones, whether they would hear, or reject it. Their visions were Satan's work. The things revealed were often common, earthly matters, such as, who should get breakfast the next morning, who should prepare the dinner, who should wash the dishes. Mingled with these frivolous things were sacred truths, which they had found in the Bible and testimonies. Satan's hand was in all this, to disgust people, and cause them to spurn everything in the nature of visions. Thus the false and the true would be rejected together. And even those who were engaged in the deception, when they should become weary of it, would be inclined to doubt all visions. {2SM 77.2}

After a very solemn meeting with these deceived ones, confessions were made that they threw themselves into attitudes resembling Sister White, as nearly as they could. It was all a farce, a deception. Yet many things they told came to pass as they predicted. {2SM 77.3}

I was asked how this could be if the visions were all false. I told them that it was Satan's purpose to mingle truth with error, that through these deceptive exercises he might make of none effect the genuine work of God. From that time all their many visions ceased. What has become of those who had the visions, and those who encouraged them? Several now living are sceptics, have no belief in the gifts of the church, no faith in the truth, no religion at all. Such, I have been shown, is the sure result of spurious visions. {2SM 77.4}

The manifestations of your daughter are a similar deception. And your encouraging these things in her will prove her ruin, and the ruin of others, unless something breaks the deception. You called these false visions and meaningless dreams the wonderful light of God, but it is like the chaff to the wheat. This is a serious matter. It will have a decided influence upon your family. While you regard your daughter's words as spoken under the influence of the Spirit of God, it will be the same to you as though they were true. You are under strong delusion of Satan. You will claim to credit them, and thus your confidence in the veritable, genuine messages from God will be uprooted. And so will it be with all who believe as you do. This is why Satan is so constantly pressing in the spurious-- to lead away from the truth. {2SM 78.1}

The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. He will bring in spurious visions to mislead, and will mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions as a species of fanaticism; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish between them.... {2SM 78.2}

Take Heed How Ye Hear

Oh, how deceptive is the human heart! How easy it is to harmonize with that which is evil! There is nothing more detrimental to the soul's interest, its purity, its true and holy conceptions of God, and of sacred and eternal things, than constantly giving heed to and exalting that which is not from God. It poisons the heart, and degrades the understanding. Pure truth can be traced to its divine Source, by its elevating, refining, sanctifying influence upon the character of the receiver. The Author of all truth prayed to His Father, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20, 21). Things will be constantly arising to cause disunion, to draw away from the truth. This questioning, criticizing, denouncing, passing judgment on others, is not an evidence of the grace of Christ in the heart. It does not produce unity. Such work has been carried on in the past by persons claiming to have wonderful light, when they were deep in sin. Heresy, dishonesty, and falsehood were all blended in them. {2SM 78.3}

The present is a time of great peril to the people of God. God is leading out a people, not an individual here and there. He has a church on the earth, that abide in the truth; and when we see, not only men, but young girls, crying out against the church, we are afraid of them. We know God has not sent them, yet they ran, and all who do not accept their erratic ideas are denounced as warring against the Spirit of the Lord. All such things are in Satan's line, but the work of God will go forward while there are now and ever will be those who work directly against the prayer of Christ. The work will advance, leaving them with their satanic inventions far behind. . . . {2SM 79.1}

"Take heed, therefore, how ye hear" (Luke 8:18), is an admonition of Christ. We are to hear for the sake of learning the truth, that we may walk in it. And again: "Take heed what ye hear" (Mark 4:24). Examine closely, "prove all things" (1 Thessalonians 5:21), "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). This is the counsel of God; shall we heed it?-- Letter 12, 1890. {2SM 79.2}

Chap. 9 - Earmarks of Erroneous Teaching

Further Communications to Mr. Garmire

Since visiting your house Sabbath afternoon, August 23, some things have rested on my mind to say to you. I have no hesitancy in saying that Anna's visions are not of God. The dreams that the members of your family have had are a deception of Satan. . . . {2SM 80.1}

Satan saw that he could work upon your fruitful imagination, and lead you, with others, into his net. Did God give you that time message? No; for no such message comes from the true Source of light. . . . Time has proved you to be a false prophet, and Anna's visions false exercises. God never works in this way. {2SM 80.2}

Satan has other and stronger delusions prepared for you. You will claim, if you have not already done so, that you have a work to do in connection with Anna's visions, corresponding to that of the mighty angel that came down from heaven, whose glory lightened the earth. Satan sees that your mind is all ready to be impressed with his suggestions, and he will use you to your own ruin, unless in the name of the Lord you break the shackles that bind you. . . . {2SM 80.3}

Several times, during our conversation, in which you became very much in earnest, you repeated the sentence, "O consistency, thou art a jewel!" I repeat the same with decided force to you. You say that Anna's visions place the forming of the image of the beast after probation closes. This is not so. You claim to believe the testimonies; let

them set you right on this point. The Lord has shown me clearly that the image of the beast will be formed before probation closes; for it is to be the great test for the people of God, by which their eternal destiny will be decided. {2SM 80.4}

Your position is such a jumble of inconsistencies that but few will be deceived. . . . {2SM 81.1}

You have taken the history of the disobedient prophet, as given in the Old Testament, and applied it to Sister White. You say she is perfectly honest, but the deceived prophet. For this reason the testimonies of the Spirit of God can have no effect on you. Has the Lord opened to you or your daughter, your wife or your children, the disobedience of Sister White? If she has walked contrary to God, will you show in what? My duty is to make plain statements of my position; for you misinterpret my testimony, wrench it from its true meaning, and ring in my name whenever you think it will enforce whatever you have to say. But when the testimonies do not harmonize with your theories, I am excused, because I am the false prophet! There are many ways of evading the truth. {2SM 81.2}

You seem to have special bitterness against Elder [Uriah] Smith, and some others of our brethren, and you have talked out these feelings in your family, thus leavening them. The Lord has seen fit to counsel Elder Smith, to give him words of reproof because he had erred; but is this an evidence that God has forsaken him?--No. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19). The Lord reproves wrongs in His people, but is this an evidence that He has rejected them?--No. There are errors in the church, and the Lord points them out by His own ordained agencies, not always through the testimonies. Now shall we seize these reproofs and make capital of them, and say that God is not imparting to them His light and love?--No. The very work that God is trying to do for them shows that He loves them, and wants to draw them away from paths of danger. {2SM 81.3}

God has spoken in reference to yourself. That which you term light from heaven, He has pronounced darkness, and the visions born of this error, He calls a delusion. Will you believe this testimony? Will you heed what the Lord has spoken through Sister White, or will you cast the word of the Lord behind you? Will you quote this testimony as readily, and make capital of it, as you have of testimonies of reproof given your brethren who have erred in some things? "O consistency, thou art a jewel!"--Letter 11, 1890. {2SM 82.1}

A Wrong and Right Use of Inspired Counsel [ADDRESSED TO MR. GARMIRE.--COMPILERS.]

My brother, you have been deceived yourself, and have deceived others. You have not searched the Scriptures in the right way. You must search them to learn the mind of God, not to prove your theory. You read the Word of God in the light of your own views. You build up a false structure, and then barricade it with texts which you claim prove it to be true; but you pass over those passages which prove it to be untrue. You say, "The Bible is my foundation of faith." But is it? I answer, The Bible does not sustain your position. Again you say, "Show me by the Bible that I am wrong, and I will give up my views." But how can you be convinced by the Bible as long as you wrest and misapply its utterances? By so doing you cut off the only source by which God might reach and convict you. {2SM 82.2}

The only true way to search the Scriptures is to lay down every prejudice, every preconceived opinion, at the very door of investigation, and then enter into the work with an eye single to the glory of God, with an understanding open to conviction, and a heart softened to believe what the Lord says to you. {2SM 82.3}

The opinions of men in regard to the interpretation of Scripture are many and varied; but the Scriptures are not changed to suit men's ideas. The blessed Book is yea and amen; it remains firm, eternal. The commentaries of men do not all agree, but the great and blessed facts remain the same. God's Word is immutable; "it is written." {2SM 82.4}

You have also taken from their connection portions of the testimonies which the Lord has given for the benefit of His people, and have misapplied them to the support of your erroneous theories--borrowing or stealing the light of Heaven to teach that which the testimonies have no harmony with, and have ever condemned. Thus you place both scripture and testimony in the framework of error. All who are in error do as you have done. . . . You do not

have real faith in the testimonies. If you did, you would have received those which pointed out your delusion. You have been drinking at polluted streams. . . . {2SM 83.1}

You have been prepared to accept Satan's suggestions to give to the world something new and strange and startling, something in opposition to the positions that have been so long held as truth by our people. Your daughter's false productions have exalted you to do a great work. You have been flattered and have made yourself an agent of the enemy in bringing about results which it is impossible for you to estimate. You have published heresies and theories which could only excite animosity. The result is lamentable to your family and to all who are in sympathy with the false theories you have advanced. Brother Garmire, there is a work for you to do for yourself which no one can do for you, which is to humble your heart before God, confess your sins, and be converted. {2SM 83.2}

Criticism and its Fruitage

The Lord has a people, and He is leading them. Though there certainly are things existing in the church which are not right, Jesus has not placed you at the helm, to guide the church. Unless you change your attitude, you cannot be saved. "Repent, and do the first works" (Revelation 2:5), is the only condition upon which God can restore you to favour. Those whom the Lord pardons, He first makes penitent. The genuine work of the Spirit of God in the heart is necessary in your case, if you are ever recovered from the snare of the enemy. I have but little hope in your case, for your principles are tainted. You are a man of deceptive character; yet you claim great things for yourself. {2SM 83.3}

Satan has succeeded in making you think that you are selected by God to act a special part as a representative man in connection with the third angel's message, as it goes forth with power. But you are not right with God, and God cannot administer to error. You make the most of the errors you see in the responsible men of the church, and make capital of the reproofs given them, because these men do not harmonize with you, or regard as correct the religious experience which you hold as superior to the light God has let shine upon the church. Who placed you on the judgment seat, to condemn others?--Not God, but yourself. . . . {2SM 84.1}

The words you have spoken in condemnation of your brethren, have not been few. It seems to be your meat and drink to condemn. Your spiritual experience is composed of that which you give it to feed upon. You also love to present your false ideas before your family, and before anyone who will hear you. Can you be surprised, then, that the unholy leaven has worked? You may call this blasphemy, if you will, but it is what the Lord has shown me. Anna's visions come in to confirm you in your wrong views. You are deceiving and being deceived. Satan has so arranged matters that you have barricaded your soul with falsehood.--Letter 12, 1890. {2SM 84.2}

There Will Always be False and Fanatical Movements

There will always be false and fanatical movements made by persons in the church who claim to be led of God - those who will run before they are sent, and will give day and date for the occurrence of unfulfilled prophecy. The enemy is pleased to have them do this, for their successive failures and leading into false lines cause confusion and unbelief.--Letter 28, 1897. {2SM 84.3}

Chap. 10 - The Visions of Anna Phillips

[IN 1893 ANNA PHILLIPS, A YOUNG WOMAN RESIDING IN BATTLE CREEK, WAS LED TO BELIEVE THAT HER IMPRESSIONS AND DREAMS WERE THE INTIMATIONS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. SHE WAS ENCOURAGED IN HER WORK WHEN HER SO-CALLE TESTIMONIES, PLACED IN THE HANDS OF A LEADING WORKER, WERE READ BY HIM BEFORE THE BATTLE CREEK CHURCH AS DIVINELY INSPIRED COMMUNICATIONS. THE NEXT MORNING THIS WORKER RECEIVED THE COMMUNICATION HERE PRESENTED. ON HEARING THIS READ, ANNA PHILLIPS DISCERNED AND ACKNOWLEDGED THE DELUSION, REPUDIATED HER PAST WORK, AND BECAME A TRUSTED, FRUITFUL BIBLE INSTRUCTOR IN THE WORK OF THE CHURCH.--COMPILERS.]

Does Not Bear Signature of Heaven

I know that we are living near the close of this earth's history; startling events are preparing for development. I am fully in harmony with you in your work when you present the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the foundation of our faith. Satan is an artful foe, and he will work where he is by many least expected. I have a message for you. Did you suppose that God had commissioned you to take the burden of presenting the visions of Anna Phillips, reading them in public, and uniting them with the testimonies the Lord has been pleased to give me? No, the Lord has not laid upon you this burden. He has not given you this work to do. . . . Do not belittle the work by mingling with it productions that you have no positive evidence are from the Lord of life and glory. . . . {2SM 85.1}

My dear brother, I wish to present before you some things concerning the dangers that threaten the work at the present time. The work of Anna Phillips does not bear the signature of Heaven. I know what I am talking about. In our first experience in the infancy of this cause we had to meet similar manifestations. Many such revelations were given, and we had a most disagreeable work in meeting this element and giving it no place. Some things stated in these revelations were fulfilled, and this led some to accept them as genuine. . . . {2SM 86.1}

God has not called Anna Phillips to follow on after the testimonies He has given to His people, and repeat their purport. But such her work is and has been. Persons did exactly the same thing in the first experience in this cause. We had every phase of these false revelations to meet. {2SM 86.2}

How is it, my brother, that you have taken up these communications, and presented them before the people, weaving them in with the testimonies God has given Sister White? Where is your evidence that these are of God? You cannot be too careful how you hear, how you receive, how you believe. You cannot be too careful how you talk of the gift of prophesying, and state that I have said this and that in reference to this matter. Such statements, I well know, encourage men and women and children to imagine that they have special light in revelations from God, when they have not received such light. This, I have been shown, would be one of Satan's masterpieces of deception. You are giving to the work a mould which it will take precious time and wearing soul labour to correct, to save the cause of God from another spasm of fanaticism. . . . {2SM 86.3}

Much Good and Just a Little Seed of Error

Do you not think I know something about these matters? All along our pathway to the heavenly Canaan we see many souls that have made shipwreck of faith, and in their false movements have led others astray through the supposition that they were led of God in special revelations. I have had to write many, many pages to correct these errors. I have been burdened and oppressed night after night, unable to sleep because of the agony of my soul for God's heritage, His people, who are in danger of being misled. Many things in these visions and dreams seem to be all straight, a repetition of that which has been in the field for many years; but soon they introduce a jot here, a tittle of error there, just a little seed which takes root and flourishes, and many are defiled therewith. {2SM 86.4}

Oh, I wish that we had far greater wisdom in all things than we now have! One thing every worker in the vineyard of the Lord must learn, that is, to practice the prayer of Christ, to move as one in Christ Jesus. Jesus prayed that His disciples might be one, as He is one with the Father. The enemy is at work, to divide, to scatter. Now as never before he will make determined efforts to scatter our forces. Above every other period it is unsafe now for us to move out in lines of our own. The truth for this time is broad in its outlines, far reaching, embracing many doctrines; but these doctrines are not detached items, which mean little; they are united by golden threads, forming a complete whole, with Christ as the living centre. The truths we present from the Bible are as firm and immovable as the throne of God. {2SM 87.1}

My brother, why should Elder R and yourself pursue the course you have taken in regard to Anna Phillips without a greater certainty that the Lord has chosen her as His mouthpiece to the people, His channel through which to communicate light? If you accept everything of this order that shall come up purporting to be a revelation from God, if you continue to encourage these supposed prophets as you have done, giving the influence of your testimony to sustain their work, you will not be a safe keeper of the Lord's heritage. The warnings Christ has given mean something to us. See Matthew 24:21-23. {2SM 87.2}

Satan will work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness to personate Jesus Christ; if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect. Now if the counterfeit bears so close a resemblance to the genuine, is it not essential to be on your guard, that no man deceive you? Christ enforces His warnings, saying, "Behold, I have told you before" (Matthew 24:25). Brethren, preach the Word, call not the people to rest their faith upon uncertain things or to place confidence in the human agent. I have the word from the Lord. I was shown Elder R before a number of persons reading from the professed revelations of Anna Phillips. A noble, dignified Person was present, and with a grieved expression upon His countenance He removed the written document, placed in Brother R's hand the Bible, and said, "Take the Word of God as your textbook, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works'" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). {2SM 87.3}

Those who search the Scriptures will find explicit instruction as to what God requires of them on points of practical religious life. You are making a mistake in calling the attention of the flock of God from the Word, the unerring word of prophecy. Take heed what you hear, and be cautious what you receive. There is need of caution lest the minds of the little flock shall be found accrediting that which is not the genuine work of the Holy Spirit. There is very great danger here. Satan is ever seeking to introduce spurious material into the work, in order that he may mar the testimony, and bring discredit upon the truth. He would mingle with it an element that would be a stumbling block in the pathway of God's people. {2SM 88.1}

The commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus is the message we have to bear to the world. The Word of God is not one-sided, it is truth to be practiced. It is light extending on every side like the rays of the sun. It is light to lighten every man who will read and understand and practice its teachings. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).--Letter 103, 1894. {2SM 88.2}

"Believe Them Not"

I have a message to you from the Lord. Brother R is not engaged in the work which the Lord would have him
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do. God has given to every man his work, and Brother R is stepping out of the lines to which the Lord has appointed him. He cannot see the outcome of this work which he has taken up. Anna Phillips is being injured, she is led on, encouraged in a work which will not bear the test of God. {2SM 88.3}

Anna Garmire was thus injured. Her father and mother made her believe that her childish dreams were revelations from God. Her father talked to the child as one chosen of God; all her fancies and dreams were written down as Anna's visions. She had figures and symbols presented to her, and had reproofs for her mother and for her father. After a scathing reproof, there followed the most flattering representations of the wonderful things the Lord would do for them. These things I was pointed to as spurious, a deception. They descended to the most minute and trifling matters, commingled common, cheap things with important subjects. The imagination was largely developed, there was a mingling of the sacred and the common. The truth of God was belittled, and yet some received these pretended revelations, and carried out their teaching. A little party was formed who were apparently inspired by them, and the visions were declared to be more spiritual than the visions of Sister White.... {2SM 89.1}

The Mingling of the Sublime and the Ridiculous

I have received from God the warning which I now send to you. Anna Phillips should not have been given the encouragement she has had; it has been a great injury to her--fastened her in a deception. I am sorry that any of our brethren and sisters are ready to take up with these supposed revelations, and imagine they see in them the divine credentials. These things are not of the right character to accomplish the work essential for this time. Childish figures and illustrations are employed in describing sacred, heavenly things, and there is a mingling of the sublime and the ridiculous. While the work has an appearance of great sanctity, it is calculated to ensnare and mislead souls.... {2SM 89.2}

Various things will appear claiming to be revelations from God, but which flow from the imagination of a conceited and deceived mind. We had to meet these things in our early experience. There were youth and children as well as those of mature age who claimed to be led and taught of God, having a special message to declare. They were springing up on every side, having the truth on some points, and error upon other points. For years the message from God came to me, "Believe them not, for they lead into false paths. God hath not sent them." --Letter 4, 1893. {2SM 90.1}

Test All So-Called Visions

As the report has been quite widely circulated that Sister White has endorsed what has been written and circulated as revelations from God to Miss Anna Phillips, I feel that it is my duty to speak. I have not endorsed these productions. Warnings have been given to me in reference to them, that they will most certainly mislead. Woven in them will be statements that will lead to extremes, and to wrong actions on the part of those who accept them. It would be well for our brethren and sisters to move more cautiously, in accordance with the light given them. They should test these so-called visions before accepting them, and presenting them in connection with the light God has given me. I see that our people are in danger of making grave blunders and premature movements. God says of these prophets that are springing up, "I have not sent them, and yet they ran. Believe them not." {2SM 90.2}

But that which grieves me is that some of our brethren have associated the exercise of Anna Phillips with the testimonies of Sister White, and have presented the two to the people as one and the same thing. Many have accepted the whole as proceeding from me. And when the result of such productions shall be seen in their true character, when falsehoods are presented as truths from God, and individuals act upon these things, believing them to be a message from the Lord, movements will be made that bear not the divine credentials, doubt will be cast upon the true work of the Spirit of prophecy. And the testimonies that God sends to the people will bear the stigma of these false utterances. These revelations are largely a repetition of that which has been before the people in publication for years; and yet mingled with this are some things that will lead astray.... {2SM 90.3}

I have a warning to give to our brethren, that they shall follow their Leader and not run ahead of Christ. Let there be no haphazard work in these times. Beware of making strong expressions which will lead unbalanced minds to think that they have wonderful light from God. The one who bears a message to the people from God must exercise perfect control. He should ever bear in mind that the path of presumption lies close beside the path of faith. In no case should he make use of extravagant expressions, for a certain class are sure to be affected, and influences are set in motion that can no more be controlled than can an impetuous horse. Once let impulse and emotion get the mastery over calm judgment, and there may be altogether too much speed, even in traveling a right road. He who travels too fast, will find it perilous in more ways than one. It may not be long before he will branch off from the right road into a wrong path. {2SM 91.1}

Not once should feeling be allowed to get the mastery over judgment. There is danger of excess in that which is lawful, and that which is not lawful will surely lead into false paths. If there is not careful, earnest, sensible work, solid as a rock, in the advancement of every idea and principle, and in every representation given, souls will be ruined.... The greatest care should be exercised concerning those who claim to receive revelations from God. There needs to be much close watching and much praying. Those who are acting a part in the great work for these last days need to counsel together in regard to every new thing that shall be introduced, for no one man's mind is to be left to judge of, or to place before the public, important matters which have a relation to the cause of God.--Letter 6a, 1894. {2SM 91.2}

Without Sufficient Evidence

I want to say just as little as possible in regard to Anna Phillips. The less this matter is talked over and agitated, the better. There is a "dead fly in the ointment." Before this reaches you, you will have received a letter giving a more complete statement in regard to what we may expect in the case. I am more sorry than I can express to you that the matter has been handled unwisely. We shall have scores of just such developments, and if our leading brethren shall catch up things of this character and endorse them as they have done in this case, we shall have one of the most sweeping tidal waves of fanaticism that has been seen in our experience. There will be the wildest

performances. Satan has already begun his work. To give ready credence to these things, and make loose, unguarded statements endorsing them without sufficient evidence of their genuine character, is one of Satan's devices. The Lord Jesus has certainly given cautions sufficient in regard to this matter, so that none need be deceived. {2SM 92.1}

In such cases as these, it is essential that we let our moderation be seen. The Lord is at hand. We cannot afford to work in such a way as those have done who have given the productions of Anna Phillips to our churches without clear and certain evidence that God is speaking to His people through her. For our ministers to rush a thing before the people as bearing the divine credentials, unless they know for a surety that it is of God, will do a work that God has told them not to do. Many things intended to deceive will come, bearing some of the marks of truth. Just as soon as these shall be set forth as the great power of God, Satan is all ready to weave in that which he has prepared to lead souls from the truth for this time.... {2SM 92.2}

Error Bears Inscription of Truth

Every conceivable message is coming to counterfeit the work of God, and always bearing the inscription of truth upon its banner.... {2SM 92.3}

It is no light matter to substitute for God's revealed will, opinions and assertions, dreams, symbols, and figures from human, finite beings. Our actions, words, spirit, and influence are watched and criticized. Those whom God has chosen to be His ministers are to settle solidly into His Word, and let the Word of God be their authority.... {2SM 93.1}

At this time above all others, hasty judgment, opinions formed carelessly, without sufficient evidence, may lead to most disastrous results. When we trace from cause to effect, we shall find that harm has thus been done which in some cases can never be remedied. Oh, what wisdom and fine spiritual perceptions are needed in giving food to the flock of God, that it be pure provender, thoroughly winnowed. The natural, hereditary traits of the character need a firm curb, else earnest zeal, good purposes, will run into evil, and the excess of feeling will produce such impressions upon human hearts that they will be carried away by impulse and will allow impressions to become their guide. {2SM 93.2}

A curb must be kept upon the spiritual impulse, that no injudicious words shall be spoken, no overwrought ideas expressed, that shall cause impulsive persons to lose their bearings. There are some whose feelings are quickly stirred by strong assertions, and their imagination magnifies the statement to large dimensions; it all appears real to them, and they become fanatical. The spiritual experience is fevered, diseased. When persons yield their will in perfect submission to the will of God, and the spirit is humble and teachable, the Lord will correct them by His Holy Spirit, and lead them into safe paths.--Letter 66, 1894. {2SM 93.3}

"Nothing Objectionable" an Unsound Basis for Acceptance

You may be perplexed to know just what is the best course to pursue in reference to the writings of Anna Phillips. I would suggest that nothing should be done rashly. I feel very tenderly toward this sister. I would not say or do anything to harm her. And as the writings have been so eagerly grasped and scattered broadcast with so little test and proving, let there be no abrupt moves to call them in and destroy them as if they were poison. Where they have already been sent out with the sanction of our responsible men, let them remain. To make abrupt moves now would do harm. {2SM 93.4}

The great wonder to me is that our brethren should accept these writings because they could see nothing objectionable in them. Why did they not consider what there is in them that is of a character to be endorsed and sent forth with the power of influence which gives them their force? {2SM 94.1}

There are many things I shall not say now, which it will be necessary to say hereafter. While I would do nothing to hurt this sister, I would not dare to keep silent.... I am placed in a peculiar position, and this matter should never have been so treated as to make it necessary for me to speak on such a subject. It hurts my heart to do it, and were it not that I see the future dangers, I would not utter one word in regard to the matter, but would let it develop, and

leave my brethren and sisters to pursue their own course in regard to these manifestations, which are not at all peculiar.... I fail to see in the writings of Sister Phillips anything of a character that should create such movements as have been made. And if things of this nature are to be so eagerly grasped, you will have plenty of them, varied in some respects, yet such as you could treat with as much confidence. I am so sorry, so sorry. {2SM 94.2}

You seem to think I should be able to point out just where the particularly objectionable sentiments lie. There is nothing so very apparent in that which has been written; you have been able to discover nothing objectionable; but this is no reason for using these writings as you have done. Your course in this matter is decidedly objectionable. Is it necessary that you should discern at once something that would produce harm to the people of God, to make you cautious? If nothing of this kind appears, is this a sufficient reason for you to set your endorsement to these writings? ... {2SM 94.3}

Do not spread abroad writings of this character without more consideration and deep insight as to the after consequences of your course of action. . . . {2SM 94.4}

Fanaticism will appear in the very midst of us. Deceptions will come, and of such a character that if it were possible they would mislead the very elect. If marked inconsistencies and untruthful utterances were apparent in these manifestations, the words from the lips of the Great Teacher would not be needed. It is because of the many and varied dangers that would arise, that this warning is given. The reason why I hang out the danger signal is that through the enlightenment of the Spirit of God I can see that which my brethren do not discern. It may not be a positive necessity for me to point out all these peculiar phases of deception that they will need to guard against. It is enough for me to tell you, Be on your guard; and as faithful sentinels keep the flock of God from accepting indiscriminately all that professes to be communicated to them from the Lord. {2SM 95.1}

If we work to create an excitement of feeling, we shall have all we want, and more than we can possibly know how to manage. Calmly and clearly "preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2). We must not regard it as our work to create an excitement. The Holy Spirit of God alone can create a healthy enthusiasm. Let God work, and let the human agent walk softly before Him, watching, waiting, praying, looking unto Jesus every moment, led and controlled by the precious Spirit which is light and life. {2SM 95.2}

The people want a sign, as in the days of Christ. Then the Lord told them that no sign should be given them. The sign that should be manifest now and always is the working of the Holy Spirit upon the mind of the teacher, to make the Word as impressive as possible. The Word of God is not a dead, dry theory, but spirit and life. Satan would like nothing better than to call minds away from the Word, to look for and expect something outside of the Word to make them feel. They should not have their attention called to dreams and visions. If they would have eternal life, they must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God.--Letter 68, 1894. {2SM 95.3}

Chap. 11 - To Be on Guard In God's Work All Is Quiet, Calm

The enemy is preparing to deceive the whole world by his miracle-working power. He will assume to personate the angels of light, to personate Jesus Christ. Everyone who teaches the truth for this time is to preach the Word. Those who cling to the Word will not throw open the doors for Satan by making unguarded statements in reference to prophesying or to dreams and visions. To a greater or less degree, false manifestations have been coming in, here and there, since 1844, after the time when we looked for the second coming of Christ. We have had them in the Garmire case, in the statements of K, and in the Stanton movement. [SEE TESTIMONIES TO MINISTERS, PP. 32 TO 62.] We shall have them more and more, and like faithful sentinels we must be on guard. Letters are coming to me from many persons concerning visions which they have had and feel it their duty to relate. May the Lord help His servants to be cautious. {2SM 96.1}

When the Lord has a genuine channel of light, there are always plenty of counterfeits. Satan will surely enter any door thrown open for him. He will give messages of truth, mingling with the truth ideas of his own, prepared to mislead souls, to draw the mind to human beings and their sayings, and prevent it from holding firmly to a "Thus says the Lord." In God's dealings with His people, all is quiet; with those who trust in Him, all is calm and unpretending. There will be simple, true, earnest believers in the Bible, and there will be doers of the Word as well

as hearers. There will be sound, earnest, sensible waiting upon God. The believer will hang his helpless soul on Jesus Christ. Christ will be exalted. Working and praying, watching and waiting, is our position.--Letter 102, 1894. {2SM 96.2}

A Message to One Claiming to have Visions [WRITTEN FROM WASHINGTON, D.C., MAY 24, 1905.]

A question has been brought to me concerning the attitude that we should take toward the work of a sister in Germany, who claims to have visions. {2SM 97.1}

The word given me by the Lord during the past night is that God does not direct His people to look to this sister for counsel. If we should encourage this sister in the work she thinks she is called to do and in the messages she bears, much confusion would be caused. The Lord has not given her the work of saying what this one shall do, and what that one shall do. He says to His people, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord" (James 1:5-7). {2SM 97.2}

Teach the people to seek God individually for guidance, to study the Scriptures, and to counsel together, humbly, prayerfully, and with living faith. But do not encourage this sister to think that the Lord has given her messages for the people. The light given me regarding this case is that should this sister be encouraged to think that she has been given messages for others, the result would be disastrous, and the sister would be in danger of losing her own soul. {2SM 97.3}

My message to the sister is, Walk humbly with God, and look to Him for yourself. God has not given you the work of pointing out the duty of others; but you can be a helper if you are a sincere Christian, seeking to encourage others, and not claiming supernatural revelations.--Manuscript 64, 1905. {2SM 98.1}

Tested by "The Law and the Testimony"

In these days of delusion, everyone who is established in the truth will have to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Every variety of error will be brought out in the mysterious working of Satan, which would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect, and turn them from the truth. There will be human wisdom to meet--the wisdom of learned men, who, as were the Pharisees, are teachers of the law of God, but do not obey the law themselves. There will be human ignorance and folly to meet in disconnected theories arrayed in new and fantastic dress--theories that it will be all the more difficult to meet because there is no reason in them. {2SM 98.2}

There will be false dreams and false visions, which have some truth, but lead away from the original faith. The Lord has given men a rule by which to detect them: "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). If they belittle the law of God, if they pay no heed to His will as revealed in the testimonies of His Spirit, they are deceivers. They are controlled by impulse and impressions, which they believe to be from the Holy Spirit, and consider more reliable than the Inspired Word. They claim that every thought and feeling is an impression of the Spirit; and when they are reasoned with out of the Scriptures, they declare that they have something more reliable. But while they think that they are led by the Spirit of God, they are in reality following an imagination wrought upon by Satan.--Bible Echo, September, 1886. {2SM 98.3}

Tested "By their Fruits"

In these days of peril we are not to accept everything that men bring to us as truth. As professed teachers from God come to us declaring that they have a message from God, it is proper to inquire carefully, How do we know that this is truth? Jesus has told us that "false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:11). But we need not be deceived; for the Word of God gives us a test whereby we may know what is truth. The prophet says,

"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). {2SM 99.1}

From this statement it is evident that it becomes us to be diligent Bible students, that we may know what is according to the law and the testimony. We are safe in no other course of action. Jesus says, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matthew 7:15-19).--The Review and Herald, Feb. 23, 1892. {2SM 99.2}

Voluntary Exhibition Evidence of Spurious Work

As this brother and his wife outlined their experiences, which they claim have come to them as the result of receiving the Holy Ghost with apostolic power, it seemed to be a facsimile of that which we were called to meet and correct in our early experience. {2SM 99.3}

Toward the close of our interview, Brother L proposed that we unite in prayer, with the thought that possibly while in prayer his wife would be exercised as they had described to me, and that then I might be able to discern whether this was of the Lord or not. To this I could not consent, because I have been instructed that when one offers to exhibit these peculiar manifestations, this is a decided evidence that it is not the work of God.--Letter 338, 1908. {2SM 99.4}

Bible Not Superseded by Miracles

Let none cherish the idea that special providences or miraculous manifestations are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate. If we keep these things before the people, they will produce an evil effect, an unhealthful emotion. The genuine working of the Holy Spirit on human hearts is promised, to give efficiency through the Word. Christ has declared the Word to be spirit and life. "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14, A.R.V.). {2SM 100.1}

Satan will work in a most subtle manner to introduce human inventions clothed with angel garments. But the light from the Word is shining amid the moral darkness; and the Bible will never be superseded by miraculous manifestations. The truth must be studied, it must be searched for as hidden treasure. Wonderful illuminations will not be given aside from the Word, or to take the place of it. Cling to the Word, receive the engrafted Word, which will make men wise unto salvation. [SEE FULLER CONTEXT ON PAGES 48, 49.] {2SM 100.2}

LESSON 7

“INTEGRITY OF THE PROPHETIC MESSAGE”

May 11 — May 17

? STUDY HELP :

- ✓ Acts of the Apostles, pages 534-536
- * S.D.A. Bible Commentary on Scripture references.

*E. G. W. Study Help 1**Sabbath, May 11th, 2024***Acts of the Apostles,
Chapter 52, p. 534-536****Steadfast to The End**

"I will not be negligent," the apostle continued, "to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." {AA 534.1}

The apostle was well qualified to speak of the purposes of God concerning the human race; for during the earthly ministry of Christ he had seen and heard much that pertained to the kingdom of God. "We have not followed cunningly devised fables," he reminded the believers, "when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount." {AA 534.2}

Yet convincing as was this evidence of the certainty of the believers' hope, there was another still more convincing in the witness of prophecy, through which the faith of all might be confirmed and securely anchored. "We have also," Peter declared, "a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." {AA 534.3}

While exalting the "sure word of prophecy" as a safe guide in times of peril, the apostle solemnly warned the church against the torch of false prophecy, which would be uplifted by "false teachers," who would privily bring in "damnable heresies, even denying the Lord." These false teachers, arising in the church and accounted true by many of their brethren in the faith, the apostle compared to "wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever." "The latter end is worse with them," he declared, "than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." {AA 535.1}

Looking down through the ages to the close of time, Peter was inspired to outline conditions that would exist in the world just prior to the second coming of Christ. "There shall come in the last days scoffers," he wrote, "walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But "when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them." 1 Thessalonians 5:3. Not all, however, would be ensnared by the enemy's devices. As the end of all things earthly should approach, there would be faithful ones able to discern the signs of the times. While a large number of professing believers would deny their faith by their works, there would be a remnant who would endure to the end. {AA 535.2}

Peter kept alive in his heart the hope of Christ's return, and he assured the church of the certain fulfillment of the Saviour's promise, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." John 14:3. To the tried and faithful ones the coming might seem long delayed, but the apostle assured them: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." {AA 536.1}

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. {AA 536.2}

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you. . . . Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." {AA 536.3}

LESSON 8

“THE PRIMACY OF THE BIBLE”

May 18 — May 24

? STUDY HELP :

- ✓ 1 Selected Messages, p. 15-23
- ✓ Great Controversy, chap. 37
- * SDA Bible Commentary on Scripture references.

*E. G. W. Study Help 1**Sabbath, May 18th, 2024***Selected Messages, Book 1,
Chapter 1, p. 15-23****The Inspiration of the Word of God**

This is a time when the question with all propriety may be asked, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). {1SM 15.1}

Spiritual darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness the people. There are in many churches scepticism and infidelity in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Many, very many, are questioning the verity and truth of the Scriptures. Human reasoning and the imaginings of the human heart are undermining the inspiration of the Word of God, and that which should be received as granted, is surrounded with a cloud of mysticism. Nothing stands out in clear and distinct lines, upon rock bottom. This is one of the marked signs of the last days. {1SM 15.2}

This Holy Book has withstood the assaults of Satan, who has united with evil men to make everything of divine character shrouded in clouds and darkness. But the Lord has preserved this Holy Book by His own miraculous power in its present shape--a chart or guidebook to the human family to show them the way to heaven. {1SM 15.3}

But the oracles of God have been so manifestly neglected that there are but few in our world, even of those who profess to explain it to others, who have the divine knowledge of the Scriptures. There are learned men who have a college education, but these shepherds do not feed the flock of God. They do not consider that the excellencies of the Scriptures will be continually unfolding their hidden treasures as precious jewels are discovered by digging for them. {1SM 15.4}

There are men who strive to be original, who are wise above what is written; therefore, their wisdom is foolishness. They discover wonderful things in advance, ideas which reveal that they are far behind in the comprehension of the divine will and purposes of God. In seeking to make plain or to unravel mysteries hid from ages from mortal man, they are like a man floundering about in the mud, unable to extricate himself and yet telling others how to get out of the muddy sea they themselves are in. This is a fit representation of the men who set themselves to correct the errors of the Bible. No man can improve the Bible by suggesting what the Lord meant to say or ought to have said. {1SM 16.1}

Some look to us gravely and say, "Don't you think there might have been some mistake in the copyist or in the translators?" This is all probable, and the mind that is so narrow that it will hesitate and stumble over this possibility or probability would be just as ready to stumble over the mysteries of the Inspired Word, because their feeble minds cannot see through the purposes of God. Yes, they would just as easily stumble over plain facts that the common mind will accept, and discern the Divine, and to which God's utterance is plain and beautiful, full of marrow and fatness. All the mistakes will not cause trouble to one soul, or cause any feet to stumble, that would not manufacture difficulties from the plainest revealed truth. {1SM 16.2}

God committed the preparation of His divinely inspired Word to finite man. This Word, arranged into books, the Old and New Testaments, is the guidebook to the inhabitants of a fallen world, bequeathed to them that, by studying and obeying the directions, not one soul would lose its way to heaven. {1SM 16.3}

Those who think to make the supposed difficulties of Scripture plain, in measuring by their finite rule that which is inspired and that which is not inspired, had better cover their faces, as Elijah when the still small voice spoke to him; for they are in the presence of God and holy angels, who for ages have communicated to men light and knowledge, telling them what to do and what not to do, unfolding before them scenes of thrilling interest, waymark by waymark in symbols and signs and illustrations. {1SM 17.1}

And He [God] has not, while presenting the perils clustering about the last days, qualified any finite man to unravel hidden mysteries or inspired one man or any class of men to pronounce judgment as to that which is inspired or is not. When men, in their finite judgment, find it necessary to go into an examination of scriptures to define that which is inspired and that which is not, they have stepped before Jesus to show Him a better way than He has led us. {1SM 17.2}

I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word. I believe its utterances in an entire Bible. Men arise who think they find something to criticize in God's Word. They lay it bare before others as evidence of superior wisdom. These men are, many of them, smart men, learned men, they have eloquence and talent, the whole lifework [of whom] is to unsettle minds in regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures. They influence many to see as they do. And the same work is passed on from one to another, just as Satan designed it should be, until we may see the full meaning of the words of Christ, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). {1SM 17.3}

Brethren, let not a mind or hand be engaged in criticizing the Bible. It is a work that Satan delights to have any of you do, but it is not a work the Lord has pointed out for you to do. {1SM 17.4}

Men should let God take care of His own Book, His living oracles, as He has done for ages. They begin to question some parts of revelation, and pick flaws in the apparent inconsistencies of this statement and that statement. Beginning at Genesis, they give up that which they deem questionable, and their minds lead on, for Satan will lead to any length they may follow in their criticism, and they see something to doubt in the whole Scriptures. Their faculties of criticism become sharpened by exercise, and they can rest on nothing with a certainty. You try to reason with these men, but your time is lost. They will exercise their power of ridicule even upon the Bible. They even become mockers, and they would be astonished if you put it to them in that light. {1SM 17.5}

Brethren, cling to your Bible, as it reads, and stop your criticisms in regard to its validity, and obey the Word, and not one of you will be lost. The ingenuity of men has been exercised for ages to measure the Word of God by their finite minds and limited comprehension. If the Lord, the Author of the living oracles, would throw back the curtain and reveal His wisdom and His glory before them, they would shrink into nothingness and exclaim as did Isaiah, "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). {1SM 18.1}

Simplicity and plain utterance are comprehended by the illiterate, by the peasant, and the child as well as by the full-grown man or the giant in intellect. If the individual is possessed of large talents of mental powers, he will find in the oracles of God treasures of truth, beautiful and valuable, which he can appropriate. He will also find difficulties, and secrets and wonders which will give him the highest satisfaction to study during a long lifetime, and yet there is an infinity beyond. {1SM 18.2}

Men of humble acquirements, possessing but limited capabilities and opportunities to become conversant in the Scriptures, find in the living oracles comfort, guidance, counsel, and the plan of salvation as clear as a sunbeam. No one need be lost for want of knowledge, unless he is wilfully blind. {1SM 18.3}

We thank God that the Bible is prepared for the poor man as well as for the learned man. It is fitted for all ages and all classes.--Manuscript 16, 1888 (written at Minneapolis, Minn., in autumn of 1888). {1SM 18.4}

Objections to the Bible

Human minds vary. The minds of different education and thought receive different impressions of the same words, and it is difficult for one mind to give to one of a different temperament, education, and habits of thought by language exactly the same idea as that which is clear and distinct in his own mind. Yet to honest men, right-minded men, he can be so simple and plain as to convey his meaning for all practical purposes. If the man he communicates with is not honest and will not want to see and understand the truth, he will turn his words and language in everything to suit his own purposes. He will misconstrue his words, play upon his imagination, wrest them from their true meaning, and then entrench himself in unbelief, claiming that the sentiments are all wrong. {1SM 19.1}

This is the way my writings are treated by those who wish to misunderstand and pervert them. They turn the truth of God into a lie. In the very same way that they treat the writings in my published articles and in my books, so do sceptics and infidels treat the Bible. They read it according to their desire to pervert, to misapply, to wilfully wrest the utterances from their true meaning. They declare that the Bible can prove anything and everything, that every sect proves their doctrines right, and that the most diverse doctrines are proved from the Bible. {1SM 19.2}

The writers of the Bible had to express their ideas in human language. It was written by human men. These men were inspired of the Holy Spirit. Because of the imperfections of human understanding of language, or the perversity of the human mind, ingenious in evading truth, many read and understand the Bible to please themselves. It is not that the difficulty is in the Bible. Opposing politicians argue points of law in the statute book, and take opposite views in their application and in these laws. {1SM 19.3}

The Scriptures were given to men, not in a continuous chain of unbroken utterances, but piece by piece through successive generations, as God in His providence saw a fitting opportunity to impress man at sundry times and divers places. Men wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost. There is "first the bud, then the blossom, and next the fruit," "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." This is exactly what the Bible utterances are to us. {1SM 19.4}

There is not always perfect order or apparent unity in the Scriptures. The miracles of Christ are not given in exact order, but are given just as the circumstances occurred, which called for this divine revealing of the power of Christ. The truths of the Bible are as pearls hidden. They must be searched, dug out by painstaking effort. Those who take only a surface view of the Scriptures will, with their superficial knowledge, which they think is very deep, talk of the contradictions of the Bible, and question the authority of the Scriptures. But those whose hearts are in harmony with truth and duty will search the Scriptures with a heart prepared to receive divine impressions. The illuminated soul sees a spiritual unity, one grand golden thread running through the whole, but it requires patience, thought, and prayer to trace out the precious golden thread. Sharp contentions over the Bible have led to investigation and revealed the precious jewels of truth. Many tears have been shed, many prayers offered, that the Lord would open the understanding to His Word. {1SM 20.1}

The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes. {1SM 20.2}

The stamps of minds are different. All do not understand expressions and statements alike. Some understand the statements of the Scriptures to suit their own particular minds and cases. Prepossessions, prejudices, and passions have a strong influence to darken the understanding and confuse the mind even in reading the words of Holy Writ. {1SM 20.3}

The disciples traveling to Emmaus needed to be disentangled in their interpretation of the Scriptures. Jesus walked with them disguised, and as a man He talked with them. Beginning at Moses and the prophets He taught them in all things concerning Himself, that His life, His mission, His sufferings, His death were just as the Word of God had foretold. He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. How quickly He straightened out the tangled ends and showed the unity and divine verity of the Scriptures. How much men in these times need their understanding opened. {1SM 20.4}

The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers. {1SM 21.1}

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.-- Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886). {1SM 21.2}

Unity in Diversity

There is variety in a tree, there are scarcely two leaves just alike. Yet this variety adds to the perfection of the tree as a whole. {1SM 21.3}

In our Bible, we might ask, Why need Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Gospels, why need the Acts of the Apostles, and the variety of writers in the Epistles, go over the same thing? {1SM 21.4}

The Lord gave His word in just the way He wanted it to come. He gave it through different writers, each having his own individuality, though going over the same history. Their testimonies are brought together in one Book, and are like the testimonies in a social meeting. They do not represent things in just the same style. Each has an experience of his own, and this diversity broadens and deepens the knowledge that is brought out to meet the necessities of varied minds. The thoughts expressed have not a set uniformity, as if cast in an iron mould, making the very hearing monotonous. In such uniformity there would be a loss of grace and distinctive beauty. . . . {1SM 21.5}

The Creator of all ideas may impress different minds with the same thought, but each may express it in a different way, yet without contradiction. The fact that this difference exists should not perplex or confuse us. It is seldom that two persons will view and express truth in the very same way. Each dwells on particular points which his constitution and education have fitted him to appreciate. The sunlight falling upon the different objects gives those objects a different hue. {1SM 22.1}

Through the inspiration of His Spirit the Lord gave His apostles truth, to be expressed according to the development of their minds by the Holy Spirit. But the mind is not cramped, as if forced into a certain mould.--Letter 53, 1900. {1SM 22.2}

The Lord Speaks in Imperfect Speech

The Lord speaks to human beings in imperfect speech, in order that the degenerate senses, the dull, earthly perception, of earthly beings may comprehend His words. Thus is shown God's condescension. He meets fallen human beings where they are. The Bible, perfect as it is in its simplicity, does not answer to the great ideas of God; for infinite ideas cannot be perfectly embodied in finite vehicles of thought. Instead of the expressions of the Bible being exaggerated, as many people suppose, the strong expressions break down before the magnificence of the thought, though the penman selected the most expressive language through which to convey the truths of higher education. Sinful beings can only bear to look upon a shadow of the brightness of heaven's glory.--Letter 121, 1901. {1SM 22.3}

No Man to Pronounce Judgment on God's Word

Both in the [Battle Creek] Tabernacle and in the college the subject of inspiration has been taught, and finite men have taken it upon themselves to say that some things in the Scriptures were inspired and some were not. I was shown that the Lord did not inspire the articles on inspiration published in the Review, [REFERENCE HERE IS TO A SERIES OF ARTICLES THE WRITER OF WHICH ADVOCATED THAT THERE WERE "DIFFERENCES IN DEGREES" OF INSPIRATION. SEE THE REVIEW AND HERALD, JAN. 15, 1884.--COMPILERS.] neither did He approve their endorsement before our youth in the college. When men venture to criticize the Word of God, they venture on sacred, holy ground, and had better fear and tremble and hide their wisdom as foolishness. God sets no man to pronounce judgment on His Word, selecting some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired. The testimonies have been treated in the same way; but God is not in this.--Letter 22, 1889. {1SM 23.1}

E. G. W. Study Help 2*Sabbath, May 18th, 2024***The Great Controversy,
Chapter 37, p. 593-602****The Scriptures a Safeguard**

“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.] The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. At every revival of God's work, the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and his followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvellous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true, that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested. {GC88 593.1}

Those who endeavour to obey all the commandments of God will be opposed and derided. They can stand only in God. In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in his Word; they can honour him only as they have a right conception of his character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test, Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the rock of God's immutable Word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defence of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus? {GC88 593.2}

Before his crucifixion, the Saviour explained to his disciples that he was to be put to death, and to rise again from the tomb; and angels were present to impress his words on minds and hearts. But the disciples were looking for temporal deliverance from the Roman yoke, and they could not tolerate the thought that He in whom all their hopes centered should suffer an ignominious death. The words which they needed to remember were banished from their minds; and when the time of trial came, it found them unprepared. The death of Jesus as fully destroyed their hopes as if he had not forewarned them. So in the prophecies the future is opened before us as plainly as it was opened to the disciples by the words of Christ. The events connected with the close of probation and the work of preparation for the time of trouble, are clearly presented. But multitudes have no more understanding of these important truths than if they had never been revealed. Satan watches to catch away every impression that would make them wise unto salvation, and the time of trouble will find them unready. {GC88 594.1}

When God sends to men warnings so important that they are represented as proclaimed by holy angels flying in the midst of heaven, he requires every person endowed with reasoning powers to heed the message. The fearful judgments denounced against the worship of the beast and his image, [Revelation 14:9-11.] should lead all to a diligent study of the prophecies to learn what the mark of the beast is, and how they are to avoid receiving it. But the masses of the people turn away their ears from hearing the truth, and are turned unto fables. The apostle Paul declared, looking down to the last days, “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.” [2 Timothy 4:3.] That time has fully come. The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love. {GC88 594.2}

But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines, and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority,—not one or all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain “Thus says the Lord” in its support. {GC88 595.1}

Satan is constantly endeavouring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. Then, by controlling the minds of these leaders, he can influence the multitudes according to his will. {GC88 595.2}

When Christ came to speak the words of life, the common people heard him gladly; and many, even of the priests and rulers, believed on him. But the chief of the priesthood and the leading men of the nation were determined to condemn and repudiate his teachings. Though they were baffled in all their efforts to find accusations against him, though they could not but feel the influence of the divine power and wisdom attending his words, yet they encased themselves in prejudice; they rejected the clearest evidence of his Messiahship, lest they should be forced to become his disciples. These opponents of Jesus were men whom the people had been taught from infancy to reverence, to whose authority they had been accustomed implicitly to bow. "How is it," they asked, "that our rulers and learned scribes do not believe on Jesus? Would not these pious men receive him if he were the Christ?" It was the influence of such teachers that led the Jewish nation to reject their Redeemer. {GC88 595.3}

The spirit which actuated those priests and rulers is still manifested by many who make a high profession of piety. They refuse to examine the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the special truths for this time. They point to their own numbers, wealth, and popularity, and look with contempt upon the advocates of truth as few, poor, and unpopular having a faith that separates them from the world. {GC88 595.4}

Christ foresaw that the undue assumption of authority indulged by the scribes and Pharisees would not cease with the dispersion of the Jews. He had a prophetic view of the work of exalting human authority to rule the conscience, which has been so terrible a curse to the church in all ages. And his fearful denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees, and his warnings to the people not to follow these blind leaders, were placed on record as an admonition to future generations. {GC88 596.1}

The Romish Church reserves to the clergy the right to interpret the Scriptures. On the ground that ecclesiastics alone are competent to explain God's Word, it is withheld from the common people. Though the Reformation gave the Scriptures to all, yet the self-same principle which was maintained by Rome prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for themselves. They are taught to accept its teachings as interpreted by the church; and there are thousands who dare receive nothing, however plainly revealed in Scripture, that is contrary to their creed, or the established teaching of their church. {GC88 596.2}

Notwithstanding the Bible is full of warnings against false teachers, many are ready thus to commit the keeping of their souls to the clergy. There are today thousands of professors of religion who can give no other reason for points of faith which they hold than that they were so instructed by their religious leaders. They pass by the Saviour's teachings almost unnoticed, and place implicit confidence in the words of the ministers. But are ministers infallible? How can we trust our souls to their guidance unless we know from God's Word that they are light-bearers? A lack of moral courage to step aside from the beaten track of the world, leads many to follow in the steps of learned men; and by their reluctance to investigate for themselves, they are becoming hopelessly fastened in the chains of error. They see that the truth for this time is plainly brought to view in the Bible, and they feel the power of the Holy Spirit attending its proclamation; yet they allow the opposition of the clergy to turn them from the light. Though reason and conscience are convinced, these deluded souls dare not think differently from the minister; and their individual judgment, their eternal interests, are sacrificed to the unbelief, the pride and prejudice, of another. {GC88 596.3}

Many are the ways by which Satan works through human influence to bind his captives. He secures multitudes to himself by attaching them by the silken cords of affection to those who are enemies of the cross of Christ. Whatever this attachment may be, parental, filial, conjugal, or social, the effect is the same; the opposers of truth exert their power to control the conscience, and the souls held under their sway have not sufficient courage or independence to obey their own convictions of duty. {GC88 597.1}

The truth and the glory of God are inseparable; it is impossible for us, with the Bible within our reach, to honour God by erroneous opinions. Many claim that it matters not what one believes, if his life is only right. But the life is moulded by the faith. If light and truth are within our reach, and we neglect to improve the privilege of hearing and seeing it, we virtually reject it; we are choosing darkness rather than light. {GC88 597.2}

“There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” [Proverbs 16:25.] Ignorance is no excuse for error or sin, when there is every opportunity to know the will of God. A man is travelling, and comes to a place where there are several roads, and a guide-board indicating where each one leads. If he disregards the guide-board, and takes whichever road seems to him to be right, he may be ever so sincere, but will in all probability find himself on the wrong road. {GC88 597.3}

God has given us his Word that we may become acquainted with its teachings, and know for ourselves what he requires of us. When the lawyer came to Jesus with the inquiry, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” the Saviour referred him to the Scriptures, saying, “What is written in the law? how read thou?” Ignorance will not excuse young or old, or release them from the punishment due for the transgression of God's law, because there is in their hands a faithful presentation of that law and of its principles and its claims. It is not enough to have good intentions; it is not enough to do what a man thinks is right, or what the minister tells him is right. His soul's salvation is at stake, and he should search the Scriptures for himself. However strong may be his convictions, however confident he may be that the minister knows what is truth, this is not his foundation. He has a chart pointing out every way-mark on the heavenward journey, and he ought not to guess at anything. {GC88 598.1}

It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light, and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought, and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help, we are to form our opinions for ourselves, as we are to answer for ourselves before God. {GC88 598.2}

The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretence of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared, “Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God.” [Mark 12:24.] The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed. Christ has given the promise, “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” [John 7:17.] If men would but take the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad, and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error. {GC88 598.3}

We should exert all the powers of the mind in the study of the Scriptures, and should task the understanding to comprehend, as far as mortals can, the deep things of God; yet we must not forget that the docility and submission of a child is the true spirit of the learner. Scriptural difficulties can never be mastered by the same methods that are employed in grappling with philosophical problems. We should not engage in the study of the Bible with that self-reliance with which so many enter the domains of science, but with a prayerful dependence upon God, and a sincere desire to learn his will. We must come with a humble and teachable spirit to obtain knowledge from the great I AM. Otherwise, evil angels will so blind our minds and harden our hearts that we shall not be impressed by the truth. {GC88 599.1}

Many a portion of Scripture which learned men pronounce a mystery, or pass over as unimportant, is full of comfort and instruction to him who has been taught in the school of Christ. One reason why many theologians have no clearer understanding of God's Word is, they close their eyes to truths which they do not wish to practice. An understanding of Bible truth depends not so much on the power of intellect brought to the search as on the singleness of purpose, the earnest longing after righteousness. {GC88 599.2}

The Bible should never be studied without prayer. The Holy Spirit alone can cause us to feel the importance of those things easy to be understood, or prevent us from wrestling truths difficult of comprehension. It is the office of heavenly angels to prepare the heart to so comprehend God's Word that we shall be charmed with its beauty, admonished by its warnings, or animated and strengthened by its promises. We should make the psalmist's petition our own: “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” [Psalm 119:18.] Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God's promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons. But angels are round about those who are willing to be taught in divine things; and in the time of great necessity, they will bring to their remembrance the very truths which are needed. Thus “when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.” [Isaiah 59:19.] {GC88 599.3}

Jesus promised his disciples, “The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” [John 14:26.] But the teachings of Christ must previously have been stored in the mind, in order for the Spirit of God to bring them to our remembrance in the time of peril. “Thy Word have I hid in mine heart,” said David, “that I might not sin against thee.” [Psalm 119:11.] {GC88 600.1}

All who value their eternal interests should be on their guard against the inroads of scepticism. The very pillars of truth will be assailed. It is impossible to keep beyond the reach of the sarcasms and sophisms, the insidious and pestilent teachings, of modern infidelity. Satan adapts his temptations to all classes. He assails the illiterate with a jest or sneer, while he meets the educated with scientific objections and philosophical reasoning, alike calculated to excite distrust or contempt of the Scriptures. Even youth of little experience presume to insinuate doubts concerning the fundamental principles of Christianity. And this youthful infidelity, shallow as it is, has its influence. Many are thus led to jest at the faith of their fathers, and to do despite to the Spirit of grace. [Hebrews 10:29.] Many a life that promised to be an honour to God and a blessing to the world, has been blighted by the foul breath of infidelity. All who trust to the boastful decisions of human reason, and imagine that they can explain divine mysteries, and arrive at truth unaided by the wisdom of God, are entangled in the snare of Satan. {GC88 600.2}

We are living in the most solemn period of this world's history. The destiny of earth's teeming multitudes is about to be decided. Our own future well-being, and also the salvation of other souls, depends upon the course which we now pursue. We need to be guided by the Spirit of truth. Every follower of Christ should earnestly inquire, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” We need to humble ourselves before the Lord, with fasting and prayer, and to meditate much upon his Word, especially upon the scenes of the Judgment. We should now seek a deep and living experience in the things of God. We have not a moment to lose. Events of vital importance are taking place around us; we are on Satan's enchanted ground. Sleep not, sentinels of God; the foe is lurking near, ready at any moment, should you become lax and drowsy, to spring upon you and make you his prey. {GC88 601.1}

Many are deceived as to their true condition before God. They congratulate themselves upon the wrong acts which they do not commit, and forget to enumerate the good and noble deeds which God requires of them, but which they have neglected to perform. It is not enough that they are trees in the garden of God. They are to answer his expectation by bearing fruit. He holds them accountable for their failure to accomplish all the good which they could have done, through his grace strengthening them. In the books of Heaven they are registered as cumberers of the ground. Yet the case of even this class is not utterly hopeless. With those who have slighted God's mercy and abused his grace, the heart of long-suffering love yet pleads. “Wherefore he says, Awake, thou that sleeps, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, . . . redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” [Ephesians 5:14-16.] {GC88 601.2}

When the testing time shall come, those who have made God's Word their rule of life will be revealed. In summer there is no noticeable difference between evergreens and other trees; but when the blasts of winter come, the evergreens remain unchanged, while other trees are stripped of their foliage. So the false-hearted professor may not now be distinguished from the real Christian, but the time is just upon us when the difference will be apparent. Let opposition arise, let bigotry and intolerance again bear sway, let persecution be kindled, and the half-hearted and hypocritical will waver and yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm as a rock, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, than in days of prosperity. {GC88 602.1}

Says the psalmist: “Thy testimonies are my meditation.” “Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.” [Psalm 119:99, 104.] {GC88 602.2}

“Happy is the man that finds wisdom.” “He shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.” [Proverbs 3:13; Jeremiah 17:8.] {GC88 602.3}

LESSON 9

“THE PLACE AND WORK OF THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY”

May 25 — May 31

? STUDY HELP :

- ✓ The Great Controversy, Introduction, pages vii-xii, trade ed.
- * The Great Controversy, Missionary ed. pages 9-14
- ✓ 1 Selected Messages, pages 24-39
- ✓ Patriarchs and Prophets, Introduction, by Uriah Smith, pages 13-22
- * S.D.A. Bible Commentary on Scripture references.

*E. G. W. Study Help 1**Sabbath, May 25th, 2024***The Great Controversy,
Introduction, Chapters VII-XII (120-236)****Chapter VII - Luther's Separation from Rome**

Foremost among those who were called to lead the church from the darkness of popery into the light of a purer faith, stood Martin Luther. Zealous, ardent, and devoted, knowing no fear but the fear of God, and acknowledging no foundation for religious faith but the Holy Scriptures, Luther was the man for his time; through him, God accomplished a great work for the reformation of the church and the enlightenment of the world. {GC88 120.1}

Like the first heralds of the gospel, Luther sprung from the ranks of poverty. His early years were spent in the humble home of a German peasant. By daily toil as a miner, his father earned the means for his education. He intended him for a lawyer; but God purposed to make him a builder in the great temple that was rising so slowly through the centuries. Hardship, privation, and severe discipline were the school in which Infinite Wisdom prepared Luther for the important mission of his life. {GC88 120.2}

Luther's father was a man of strong and active mind, and great force of character, honest, resolute, and straightforward. He was true to his convictions of duty, let the consequences be what they might. His sterling good sense led him to regard the monastic system with distrust. He was highly displeased when Luther, without his consent, entered a monastery; and it was two years before the father was reconciled to his son, and even then his opinions remained the same. {GC88 120.3}

Luther's parents bestowed great care upon the education and training of their children. They endeavoured to instruct them in the knowledge of God and the practice of Christian virtues. The father's prayer often ascended in the hearing of his son, that the child might remember the name of the Lord, and one day aid in the advancement of his truth. Every advantage for moral or intellectual culture which their life of toil permitted them to enjoy, was eagerly improved by these parents. Their efforts were earnest and persevering to prepare their children for a life of piety and usefulness. With their firmness and strength of character they sometimes exercised too great severity; but the reformer himself, though conscious that in some respects they had erred, found in their discipline more to approve than to condemn. {GC88 120.4}

At school, where he was sent at an early age, Luther was treated with harshness and even violence. So great was the poverty of his parents, that upon going from home to school in another town he was for a time obliged to obtain his food by singing from door to door, and he often suffered from hunger. The gloomy, superstitious ideas of religion then prevailing filled him with fear. He would lie down at night with a sorrowful heart, looking forward with trembling to the dark future, and in constant terror at the thought of God as a stern, unrelenting judge, a cruel tyrant, rather than a kind heavenly Father. Yet under so many and so great discouragements, Luther pressed resolutely forward toward the high standard of moral and intellectual excellence which attracted his soul. {GC88 121.1}

He thirsted for knowledge, and the earnest and practical character of his mind led him to desire the solid and useful rather than the showy and superficial. When, at the age of eighteen, he entered the University of Erfurt, his situation was more favourable and his prospects brighter than in his earlier years. His parents having by thrift and industry acquired a competence, they were able to render him all needed assistance. And the influence of judicious friends had somewhat lessened the gloomy effects of his former training. He applied himself to the study of the best authors, diligently treasuring their most weighty thoughts, and making the wisdom of the wise his own. Even under the harsh discipline of his former instructors, he had early given promise of distinction; and with favourable influences his mind rapidly developed. A retentive memory, a lively imagination, strong reasoning powers, and untiring application, soon placed him in the foremost rank among his associates. Intellectual discipline ripened his understanding, and aroused an activity of mind and a keenness of perception that were preparing him for the conflicts of his life. {GC88 121.2}

The fear of the Lord dwelt in the heart of Luther, enabling him to maintain his steadfastness of purpose, and leading him to deep humility before God. He had an abiding sense of his dependence upon divine aid, and he did not fail to begin each day with prayer, while his heart was continually breathing a petition for guidance and support. "To pray well," he often said, "is the better half of study." {GC88 122.1}

While one day examining the books in the library of the university, Luther discovered a Latin Bible. Such a book he had never before seen. He was ignorant even of its existence. He had heard portions of the Gospels and Epistles, which were read to the people at public worship, and he supposed that these were the entire Bible. Now, for the first time, he looked upon the whole of God's Word. With mingled awe and wonder he turned the sacred pages; with quickened pulse and throbbing heart he read for himself the words of life, pausing now and then to exclaim, "Oh, if God would give me such a book for my own!" Angels of Heaven were by his side, and rays of light from the throne of God revealed the treasures of truth to his understanding. He had ever feared to offend God, but now the deep conviction of his condition as a sinner took hold upon him as never before. {GC88 122.2}

An earnest desire to be free from sin and to find peace with God, led him at last to enter a cloister, and devote himself to a monastic life. Here he was required to perform the lowest drudgery, and to beg from house to house. He was at an age when respect and appreciation are most eagerly craved, and these menial offices were deeply mortifying to his natural feelings; but he patiently endured this humiliation, believing that it was necessary because of his sins. {GC88 122.3}

Every moment that could be spared from his daily duties he employed in study, robbing himself of sleep, and grudging even the time spent at his scanty meals. Above everything else he delighted in the study of God's Word. He had found a Bible chained to the convent wall, and to this he often repaired. As his convictions of sin deepened, he sought by his own works to obtain pardon and peace. He led a most rigorous life, endeavouring, by fasting, vigils, and scourgings, to subdue the evils of his nature, from which the monastic life had brought no release. He shrank from no sacrifice by which he might attain to that purity of heart which would enable him to stand approved before God. "I was indeed a pious monk," he afterward said, "and followed the rules of my order more strictly than I can express. If ever monk could attain Heaven by his monkish works, I should certainly have been entitled to it. If I had continued much longer, I should have carried my mortifications even to death." As the result of this painful discipline, he lost strength, and suffered from fainting spasms, from the effects of which he never fully recovered. But with all his efforts, his burdened soul found no relief. He was at last driven to the verge of despair. {GC88 123.1}

When it appeared to Luther that all was lost, God raised up a friend and helper for him. The pious Staupitz opened the Word of God to Luther's mind, and bade him look away from himself, cease the contemplation of infinite punishment for the violation of God's law, and look to Jesus, his sin-pardoning Saviour. "Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, cast yourself into the arms of your Redeemer. Trust in him,—in the righteousness of his life,—in the atonement of his death. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to give you the assurance of divine favour." "Love him who has first loved you." Thus spoke this messenger of mercy. His words made a deep impression upon Luther's mind. After many a struggle with long-cherished errors, he was enabled to grasp the truth, and peace came to his troubled soul. {GC88 123.2}

Luther was ordained a priest, and was called from the cloister to a professorship in the University of Wittenberg. Here he applied himself to the study of the Scriptures in the original tongues. He began to lecture upon the Bible; and the book of Psalm, the Gospels, and the Epistles were opened to the understanding of crowds of delighted listeners. Staupitz, his friend and superior, urged him to ascend the pulpit, and preach the Word of God. Luther hesitated, feeling himself unworthy to speak to the people in Christ's stead. It was only after a long struggle that he yielded to the solicitations of his friends. Already he was mighty in the Scriptures, and the grace of God rested upon him. His eloquence captivated his hearers, the clearness and power with which he presented the truth convinced their understanding, and his fervour touched their hearts. {GC88 124.1}

Luther was still a true son of the papal church, and had no thought that he would ever be anything else. In the providence of God he was led to visit Rome. He pursued his journey on foot, lodging at the monasteries on the way. At a convent in Italy he was filled with wonder at the wealth, magnificence, and luxury that he witnessed. Endowed with a princely revenue, the monks dwelt in splendid apartments, attired themselves in the richest and

most costly robes, and feasted at a sumptuous table. With painful misgivings Luther contrasted this scene with the self-denial and hardship of his own life. His mind was becoming perplexed. {GC88 124.2}

At last he beheld in the distance the seven-hilled city. With deep emotion he prostrated himself upon the earth, exclaiming, "Holy Rome, I salute thee!" He entered the city, visited the churches, listened to the marvellous tales repeated by priests and monks, and performed all the ceremonies required. Everywhere he looked upon scenes that filled him with astonishment and horror. He saw that iniquity existed among all classes of the clergy. He heard indecent jokes from prelates, and was filled with horror at their awful profanity, even during mass. As he mingled with the monks and citizens, he met dissipation, debauchery. Turn where he would, in the place of sanctity he found profanation. "It is incredible," he wrote, "what sins and atrocities are committed in Rome; they must be seen and heard to be believed. So that it is usual to say, 'If there be a hell, Rome is built above it. It is an abyss whence all sins proceed.'" {GC88 124.3}

By a recent decretal, an indulgence had been promised by the pope to all who should ascend upon their knees "Pilate's staircase," said to have been descended by our Saviour on leaving the Roman judgment-hall, and to have been miraculously conveyed from Jerusalem to Rome. Luther was one day devoutly climbing these steps, when suddenly a voice like thunder seemed to say to him, "The just shall live by faith." [Romans 1:17.] He sprung upon his feet, and hastened from the place, in shame and horror. That text never lost its power upon his soul. From that time he saw more clearly than ever before the fallacy of trusting to human works for salvation, and the necessity of constant faith in the merits of Christ. His eyes had been opened, and were never again to be closed, to the delusions of the papacy. When he turned his face from Rome, he had turned away also in heart, and from that time the separation grew wider, until he severed all connection with the papal church. {GC88 125.1}

After his return from Rome, Luther received at the University of Wittenberg the degree of doctor of divinity. Now he was at liberty to devote himself, as never before, to the Scriptures that he loved. He had taken a solemn vow to study carefully and to preach with fidelity the Word of God, not the sayings and doctrines of the popes, all the days of his life. He was no longer the mere monk or professor, but the authorized herald of the Bible. He had been called as a shepherd to feed the flock of God, that were hungering and thirsting for the truth. He firmly declared that Christians should receive no other doctrines than those which rest on the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. These words struck at the very foundation of papal supremacy. They contained the vital principle of the Reformation. {GC88 125.2}

Luther saw the danger of exalting human theories above the Word of God. He fearlessly attacked the speculative infidelity of the schoolmen, and opposed the philosophy and theology which had so long held a controlling influence upon the people. He denounced such studies as not only worthless but pernicious, and sought to turn the minds of his hearers from the sophistries of philosophers and theologians to the eternal truths set forth by prophets and apostles. {GC88 126.1}

Precious was the message which he bore to the eager crowds that hung upon his words. Never before had such teaching fallen upon their ears. The glad tidings of a Saviour's love, the assurance of pardon and peace through his atoning blood, rejoiced their hearts, and inspired within them an immortal hope. At Wittenberg a light was kindled whose rays should extend to the uttermost parts of the earth, and which was to increase in brightness to the close of time. {GC88 126.2}

But light and darkness cannot harmonize. Between truth and error there is an irrepressible conflict. To uphold and defend the one is to attack and overthrow the other. Our Saviour himself declared, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." [Matthew 10:34.] Said Luther, a few years after the opening of the Reformation, "God does not conduct, but drives me forward. I am not master of my own actions. I would gladly live in repose, but I am thrown into the midst of tumults and revolutions." He was now about to be urged into the contest. {GC88 126.3}

The Roman Church had made merchandise of the grace of God. The tables of the money-changers [Matthew 21:12.] were set up beside her altars, and the air resounded with the shouts of buyers and sellers. Under the plea of raising funds for the erection of St. Peter's church at Rome, indulgences for sin were publicly offered for sale by the authority of the pope. By the price of crime a temple was to be built up for God's worship,—the corner-stone laid with the wages of iniquity. But the very means adopted for Rome's aggrandizement provoked the deadliest blow to

her power and greatness. It was this that aroused the most determined and successful of the enemies of popery, and led to the battle which shook the papal throne, and jostled the triple crown upon the pontiff's head. {GC88 126.4}

The official appointed to conduct the sale of indulgences in Germany—Tetzel by name—had been convicted of the basest offenses against society and against the law of God; but having escaped the punishment due to his crimes, he was employed to further the mercenary and unscrupulous projects of the pope. With great effrontery he repeated the most glaring falsehoods, and related marvellous tales to deceive an ignorant, credulous, and superstitious people. Had they possessed the Word of God, they would not have been thus deceived. It was to keep them under the control of the papacy, in order to swell the power and wealth of her ambitious leaders, that the Bible had been withheld from them. {GC88 127.1}

As Tetzel entered a town, a messenger went before him, announcing, “The grace of God and of the holy father is at your gates.” And the people welcomed the blasphemous pretender as if he were God himself come down from Heaven to them. The infamous traffic was set up in the church, and Tetzel, ascending the pulpit, extolled indulgences as the most precious gift of God. He declared that by virtue of his certificates of pardon, all the sins which the purchaser should afterward desire to commit would be forgiven him, and that “even repentance was not indispensable.” More than this, he assured his hearers that the indulgences had power to save not only the living but the dead; that the very moment the money should clink against the bottom of his chest, the soul in whose behalf it had been paid would escape from purgatory and make its way to Heaven. {GC88 127.2}

When Simon Magus offered to purchase of the apostles the power to work miracles, Peter answered him, “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.” [Acts 8:20.] But Tetzel's offer was grasped by eager thousands. Gold and silver flowed into his treasury. A salvation that could be bought with money was more easily obtained than that which requires repentance, faith, and diligent effort to resist and overcome sin. {GC88 128.1}

The doctrine of indulgences had been opposed by men of learning and piety in the Romish Church, and there were many who had no faith in pretensions so contrary to both reason and revelation. No prelate dared lift his voice against this iniquitous traffic, but the minds of men were becoming disturbed and uneasy, and many eagerly inquired if God would not work through some instrumentality for the purification of his church. {GC88 128.2}

Luther, though still a papist of the straightest sort, was filled with horror at the blasphemous assumptions of the indulgence-mongers. Many of his own congregation had purchased certificates of pardon, and they soon began to come to their pastor, confessing their various sins, and expecting absolution, not because they were penitent and wished to reform, but on the ground of the indulgence. Luther refused them absolution, and warned them that unless they should repent and reform their lives, they must perish in their sins. In great perplexity they repaired to Tetzel with the complaint that their confessor had refused his certificates; and some boldly demanded that their money be returned to them. The friar was filled with rage. He uttered the most terrible curses, caused fires to be lighted in the public squares, and declared that he had orders from the pope “to burn the heretics who dared oppose his most holy indulgences.” {GC88 128.3}

Luther now entered boldly upon his work as a champion of the truth. His voice was heard from the pulpit in earnest, solemn warning. He set before the people the offensive character of sin, and taught them that it is impossible for man, by his own works, to lessen its guilt or evade its punishment. Nothing but repentance toward God and faith in Christ can save the sinner. The grace of Christ cannot be purchased; it is a free gift. He counselled the people not to buy the indulgences, but to look in faith to a crucified Redeemer. He related his own painful experience on vainly seeking by humiliation and penance to secure salvation, and assured his hearers that it was by looking away from himself and believing in Christ that he found peace and joy. {GC88 129.1}

As Tetzel continued his traffic and his impious pretensions, Luther determined upon a more effectual protest against these crying abuses. An occasion soon offered. The castle church of Wittenberg possessed many relics, which on certain holy days were exhibited to the people, and full remission of sins was granted to all who then visited the church and made confession. According on these days the people in great numbers resorted thither. One of the most important of these occasions, the festival of “All-Saints,” was approaching. On the preceding day, Luther, joining the crowds that were already making their way to the church, posted on its door a paper containing

ninety-five propositions against the doctrine of indulgences. He declared his willingness to defend these theses next day at the university, against all who should see fit to attack them. {GC88 129.2}

His propositions attracted universal attention. They were read and re-read and repeated in every direction. Great excitement was created in the university and in the whole city. By these theses it was shown that the power to grant the pardon of sin, and to remit its penalty, had never been committed to the pope or to any other man. The whole scheme was a farce,—an artifice to extort money by playing upon the superstitions of the people,—a device of Satan to destroy the souls of all who should trust to its lying pretensions. It was also clearly shown that the gospel of Christ is the most valuable treasure of the church, and that the grace of God, therein revealed, is freely bestowed upon all who seek it by repentance and faith. {GC88 129.3}

Luther's theses challenged discussion; but no one dared accept the challenge. The questions which he proposed had in a few days spread through all Germany, and in a few weeks they had sounded throughout Christendom. Many devoted Romanists, who had seen and lamented the terrible iniquity prevailing in the church, but had to know how to arrest its progress, read the propositions with great joy, recognizing in them the voice of God. They felt that the Lord had graciously set his hand to arrest the rapidly swelling tide of corruption that was issuing from the see of Rome. Princes and magistrates secretly rejoiced that a check was to be put upon the arrogant power which denied the right of appeal from its decisions. {GC88 130.1}

But the sin-loving and superstitious multitudes were terrified as the sophistries that had soothed their fears were swept away. Crafty ecclesiastics, interrupted in their work of sanctioning crime, and seeing their gains endangered, were enraged, and rallied to uphold their pretensions. The reformer had bitter accusers to meet. Some charged him with acting hastily and from impulse. Others accused him of presumption, declaring that he was not directed of God, but was acting from pride and forwardness. “Who does not know,” he responded, “that one can seldom advance a new idea without having some appearance of pride, and without being accused of exciting quarrels? Why were Christ and all the martyrs put to death?—Because they appeared proud despisers of the wisdom of the times in which they lived, and because they brought forward new truths without having first consulted the oracles of the old opinions.” {GC88 130.2}

Again he declared: “What I am doing will not be effected by the prudence of man, but by the counsel of God. If the work be of God, who shall stop it? If it be not, who shall forward it? Not my will, not theirs, not ours, but thy will, holy Father who art in Heaven!” {GC88 131.1}

Though Luther had been moved by the Spirit of God to begin his work, he was not to carry it forward without severe conflicts. The reproaches of his enemies, their misrepresentation of his purposes, and their unjust and malicious reflections upon his character and motives, came in upon him like an overwhelming flood; and they were not without effect. He had felt confident that the leaders of the people, both in the church and in the schools, would gladly unite with him in efforts for reform. Words of encouragement from those on high position had inspired him with joy and hope. Already in anticipation he had seen a brighter day dawning for the church. But encouragement had changed to reproach and condemnation. Many dignitaries, both of Church and State, were convicted of the truthfulness of his theses; but they soon saw that the acceptance of these truths would involve great changes. To enlighten and reform the people would be virtually to undermine the authority of Rome, to stop thousands of streams now flowing into her treasury, and thus greatly to curtail the extravagance and luxury of the papal leaders. Furthermore, to teach the people to think and act as responsible beings, looking to Christ alone for salvation, would overthrow the pontiff's throne, and eventually destroy their own authority. For this reason they refused the knowledge tendered them of God, and arrayed themselves against Christ and the truth by their opposition to the man whom he had sent to enlighten them. {GC88 131.2}

Luther trembled as he looked upon himself,—one man opposed to the mightiest powers of earth. He sometimes doubted whether he had indeed been led of God to set himself against the authority of the church. “Who was I,” he writes, “to oppose the majesty of the pope, before whom the kings of the earth and the whole world trembled?” “No one can know what I suffered in those first two years, and into what dejection and even despair I was often plunged.” But he was not left to become utterly disheartened. When human support failed, he looked to God alone, and learned that he could lean in perfect safety upon that all-powerful arm. {GC88 131.3}

To a friend of the Reformation Luther wrote: "We cannot attain to the understanding of Scripture either by study or by strength of intellect. Therefore your first duty must be to begin with prayer. Entreat the Lord to deign to grant you, in his rich mercy, rightly to understand his Word. There is no other interpreter of the Word but the Author of that Word himself. Even as he has said, 'They shall all be taught of God.' Hope nothing from your study and the strength of your intellect; but simply put your trust in God, and in the guidance of his Spirit. Believe one who has made trial of this matter." Here is a lesson of vital importance to those who feel that God has called them to present to others the solemn truths for this time. These truths will stir the enmity of Satan, and of men who love the fables that he has advised. In the conflict with the powers of evil, there is need of something more than strength of intellect and human wisdom. {GC88 132.1}

When enemies appealed to custom and tradition, or to the assertions and authority of the pope, Luther met them with the Bible, and the Bible only. Here were arguments which they could not answer; therefore the slaves of formalism and superstition clamoured for his blood, as the Jews had clamoured for the blood of Christ. "He is a heretic," cried the Roman zealots; "it is a sin to allow him to live an hour longer! Away with him at once to the scaffold!" But Luther did not fall a prey to their fury. God had a work for him to do, and angels of Heaven were sent to protect him. Many, however, who had received from Luther the precious light, were made the objects of Satan's wrath, and for the truth's sake fearlessly suffered torture and death. {GC88 132.2}

Luther's teachings attracted the attention of thoughtful minds throughout all Germany. From his sermons and writings issued beams of light which awakened and illuminated thousands. A living faith was taking the place of the dead formalism in which the church had so long been held. The people were daily losing confidence in the superstitions of Romanism. The barriers of prejudice were giving way. The Word of God, by which Luther tested every doctrine and every claim, was like a two-edged sword, cutting its way to the hearts of the people. Everywhere there was awakening a desire for spiritual progress. Everywhere was such a hungering and thirsting after righteousness as had not been known for ages. The eyes of the people, so long directed to human rights and earthly mediators, were now turning, in penitence and faith, to Christ and him crucified. {GC88 133.1}

This widespread interest aroused still further the fears of the papal authorities. Luther received a summons to appear at Rome to answer to the charge of heresy. The command filled his friends with terror. They knew full well the danger that threatened him in that corrupt city, already drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. They protested against his going to Rome, and requested that he receive his examination in Germany. {GC88 133.2}

This arrangement was finally effected, and the pope's legate was appointed to hear the case. In the instructions communicated by the pontiff to this official, it was stated that Luther had already been declared a heretic. The legate was therefore charged to "prosecute and reduce him to submission without delay." If he should remain steadfast, and the legate should fail to gain possession of his person, he was empowered to "proscribe him in all places in Germany, to put away, curse, and excommunicate all who were attached to him." And further, the pope directed his legate, in order entirely to root out the pestilent heresy, to excommunicate all, of whatever dignity in Church or State, except the emperor, who should neglect to seize Luther and his adherents, and deliver them up to the vengeance of Rome. {GC88 133.3}

Here is displayed the true spirit of popery. Not a trace of Christian principle, or even of common justice, is to be seen in the whole document. Luther was at a great distance from Rome; he had had no opportunity to explain or defend his position; yet before his case had been investigated, he was summarily pronounced a heretic, and, in the same day, exhorted, accused, judged, and condemned; and all this by the self-styled holy father, the only supreme, infallible authority in Church or State! {GC88 134.1}

At this time, when Luther so much needed the sympathy and counsel of a true friend, God's providence sent Melancthon to Wittenberg. Young in years, modest and diffident in his manners, Melancthon's sound judgment, extensive knowledge, and winning eloquence, combined with the purity and uprightness of his character, won universal admiration and esteem. The brilliancy of his talents was not more marked than his gentleness of disposition. He soon became an earnest disciple of the gospel, and Luther's most trusted friend and valued supporter; his gentleness, caution, and exactness serving as a complement to Luther's courage and energy. Their union in the work added strength to the Reformation, and was a source of great encouragement to Luther. {GC88 134.2}

Augsburg had been fixed upon as the place of trial, and the reformer set out on foot to perform the journey thither. Serious fears were entertained in his behalf. Threats had been made openly that he would be seized and murdered on the way, and his friends begged him not to venture. They even entreated him to leave Wittenberg for a time, and find safety with those who would gladly protect him. But he would not leave the position where God had placed him. He must continue faithfully to maintain the truth, notwithstanding the storms that were beating upon him. His language was: "I am like Jeremiah, a man of strife and contention; but the more they increase their threatenings, the more they multiply my joy. . . . They have already torn to pieces my honour and my good name. All I have left is my wretched body; let them have it; they will then shorten my life by a few hours. But as to my soul, they shall not have that. He who resolves to bear the word of Christ to the world, must expect death at every hour." {GC88 134.3}

The tidings of Luther's arrival at Augsburg gave great satisfaction to the papal legate. The troublesome heretic who was exciting the attention of the whole world seemed now in the power of Rome, and the legate determined that he should not escape. The reformer had failed to provide himself with a safe-conduct. His friends urged him not to appear before the legate without one, and they themselves undertook to procure it from the emperor. The legate intended to force Luther, if possible, to retract, or, failing in this, to cause him to be conveyed to Rome, to share the fate of Huss and Jerome. Therefore through his agents he endeavoured to induce Luther to appear without a safe-conduct, trusting himself to his mercy. This the reformer firmly declined to do. Not until he had received the document pledging him the emperor's protection, did he appear in the presence of the papal ambassador. {GC88 135.1}

As a matter of policy, the Romanists had decided to attempt to win Luther by an appearance of gentleness. The legate, in his interviews with him, professed great friendliness; but he demanded that Luther submit implicitly to the authority of the church, and yield every point, without argument or question. He had not rightly estimated the character of the man with whom he had to deal. Luther, in reply, expressed his regard for the church, his desire for the truth, his readiness to answer all objections to what he had taught, and to submit his doctrines to the decision of certain leading universities. But at the same time he protested against the cardinal's course in requiring him to retract without having proved him in error. {GC88 135.2}

The only response was, "Recant, recant." The reformer showed that his position was sustained by the Scriptures, and firmly declared that he could not renounce the truth. The legate, unable to reply to Luther's arguments, overwhelmed him with a storm of reproaches, gibes, and flattery, interspersed with quotations from tradition and the sayings of the Fathers, granting the reformer no opportunity to speak. Seeing that the conference, thus continued, would be utterly futile, Luther finally obtained a reluctant permission to present his answer in writing. {GC88 136.1}

"In so doing," said he, writing to a friend, "the oppressed find double gain; first, what is written may be submitted to the judgment of others; and second, one has a better chance of working on the fears, if not on the conscience, of an arrogant and babbling despot, who would otherwise overpower by his imperious language." At the next interview, Luther presented a clear, concise, and forcible exposition of his views, fully supported by many quotations from Scripture. This paper, after reading aloud, he handed to the cardinal, who, however, cast it contemptuously aside, declaring it to be a mass of idle words and irrelevant quotations. Luther, fully roused, now met the haughty prelate on his own ground, —the traditions and teachings of the church —and utterly overthrew his assumptions. {GC88 136.2}

When the prelate saw that Luther's reasoning was unanswerable, he lost all self-control, and in a rage cried out: "Retract, or I will send you to Rome, there to appear before the judges commissioned to take cognizance of your case. I will excommunicate you and all your partisans, and all who shall at any time countenance you, and will cast them out of the church." And he finally declared, in a haughty and angry tone, "Retract, or return no more." {GC88 136.3}

The reformer promptly withdrew with his friends, thus declaring plainly that no retraction was to be expected from him. This was not what the cardinal had purposed. He had flattered himself that by violence he could awe Luther to submission. Now, left alone with his supporters, he looked from one to another, in utter chagrin at the unexpected failure of his schemes. {GC88 136.4}

Luther's efforts on this occasion were not without good results. The large assembly present had opportunity to compare the two men, and to judge for themselves of the spirit manifested by them, as well as of the strength and truthfulness of their positions. How marked the contrast! The reformer, simple, humble, firm, stood up in the strength of God, having truth on his side; the pope's representative, self-important, overbearing, haughty, and unreasonable, was without a single argument from the Scriptures, yet vehemently crying, "Retract, or be sent to Rome for punishment." {GC88 137.1}

Notwithstanding Luther had secured a safe-conduct, the Romanists were plotting to seize and imprison him. His friends urged that as it was useless for him to prolong his stay, he should return to Wittenberg without delay, and that the utmost caution should be observed in order to conceal his intentions. He accordingly left Augsburg before daybreak, on horseback, accompanied only by a guide furnished him by the magistrate. With many forebodings he secretly made his way through the dark and silent streets of the city. Enemies, vigilant and cruel, were plotting his destruction. Would he escape the snares prepared for him? Those were moments of anxiety and earnest prayer. He reached a small gate in the wall of the city. It was opened for him, and with his guide he passed through without hindrance. Once safely outside, the fugitives hastened their flight, and before the legate learned of Luther's departure, he was beyond the reach of his persecutors. Satan and his emissaries were defeated. The man whom they had thought in their power was gone, escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler. {GC88 137.2}

At the news of Luther's escape, the legate was overwhelmed with surprise and anger. He had expected to receive great honour for his wisdom and firmness in dealing with this disturber of the church; but his hope was
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disappointed. He gave expression to his wrath in a letter to Frederick, the Elector of Saxony, bitterly denouncing Luther, and demanding that Frederick send the reformer to Rome or banish him from Saxony. {GC88 137.3}

In defence, Luther urged that the legate or the pope show him his errors from the Scriptures, and pledged himself in the most solemn manner to renounce his doctrines if they could be shown to contradict the Word of God. And he expressed his gratitude to God that he had been counted worthy to suffer in so holy a cause. {GC88 138.1}

The elector had, as yet, little knowledge of the reformed doctrines, but he was deeply impressed by the candour, force, and clearness of Luther's words; and, until the reformer should be proved to be in error, Frederick resolved to stand as his protector. In reply to the legate's demand he wrote: "Since Doctor Martin has appeared before you at Augsburg, you should be satisfied. We did not expect that you would endeavour to make him retract without having convinced him of his errors. None of the learned men in our principality have informed us that Martin's doctrine is impious, antichristian, or heretical. We must refuse, therefore, either to send Luther to Rome or to expel him from our States." {GC88 138.2}

The elector saw that there was a general breaking down of the moral restraints of society. A great work of reform was needed. The complicated and expensive arrangements to restrain and punish crime would be unnecessary if men but acknowledged and obeyed the requirements of God and the dictates of an enlightened conscience. He saw that Luther was labouring to secure this object, and he secretly rejoiced that a better influence was making itself felt in the church. {GC88 138.3}

He saw also that as a professor in the university Luther was eminently successful. Only a year had passed since the reformer posted his theses on the castle church, yet there was already a great falling off in the number of pilgrims that visited the church at the festival of All-Saints. Rome had been deprived of worshipers and offerings, but their place was filled by another class, who now came to Wittenberg,—not pilgrims to adore her relics, but students to fill her halls of learning. The writings of Luther had kindled everywhere a new interest in the Holy Scriptures, and not only from all parts of Germany, but from other lands, students flocked to the university. Young men, coming in sight of Wittenberg for the first time, would "raise their hands to heaven, and bless God for having caused the light of truth to shine forth from Wittenberg, as in former ages from Mount Zion, that it might penetrate to the most distant lands." {GC88 138.4}

Luther was as yet but partially converted from the errors of Romanism. But as he compared the Holy Oracles with the papal decrees and constitutions, he was filled with wonder. "I am reading," he wrote, "the decretals of the popes, and . . . I know not whether the pope is antichrist himself, or whether he is his apostle; so misrepresented

and even crucified does Christ appear in them.” Yet at this time Luther was still a supporter of the Roman Church, and had no thought that he would ever separate from her communion. {GC88 139.1}

The reformer's writings and his doctrine were extending to every nation in Christendom. The work spread to Switzerland and Holland. Copies of his writings found their way to France and Spain. In England his teachings were received as the word of life. To Belgium and Italy also the truth had extended. Thousands were awakening from their death-like stupor to the joy and hope of a life of faith. {GC88 139.2}

Rome became more and more exasperated by the attacks of Luther, and it was declared by some of his fanatical opponents, even by doctors in Catholic universities, that he who should kill the rebellious monk would be without sin. One day a stranger, with a pistol hidden under his cloak, approached the reformer, and inquired why he went thus alone. “I am in the hands of God,” answered Luther. “He is my help and my shield. What can man do unto me?” Upon hearing these words, the stranger turned pale, and fled away, as from the presence of the angels of Heaven. {GC88 139.3}

Rome was bent upon the destruction of Luther; but God was his defence. His doctrines were heard everywhere,—in convents, in cottages, in the castles of the nobles, in the universities, in the palaces of kings; and noble men were rising on every hand to sustain his efforts. {GC88 140.1}

It was about this time that Luther, reading the works of Huss, found that the great truth of justification by faith, which he himself was seeking to uphold and teach, had been held by the Bohemian reformer. “We have all,” said Luther, “Paul, Augustine, and myself, been Hussites without knowing it.” “God will surely visit it upon the world,” he continued, “that the truth was preached to it a century ago, and burned.” {GC88 140.2}

In an appeal to the emperor and nobility of Germany in behalf of the Reformation of Christianity, Luther wrote concerning the pope: “It is monstrous to see him who is called the vicar of Christ, displaying a magnificence unrivalled by that of any emperor. Is this to represent the poor and lowly Jesus or the humble St. Peter? The pope, say they, is the lord of the world! But Christ, whose vicar he boasts of being, said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world.’ Can the dominions of a vicar extend beyond those of his superior?” {GC88 140.3}

He wrote thus of the universities: “I fear much that the universities will be found to be great gates leading down to hell, unless they take diligent care to explain the Holy Scriptures, and to engrave them in the hearts of our youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Holy Scriptures are not regarded as the rule of life. Every institution where the Word of God is not diligently studied, must become corrupt.” {GC88 140.4}

This appeal was rapidly circulated throughout Germany, and exerted a powerful influence upon the people. The whole nation was stirred, and multitudes were roused to rally around the standard of reform. Luther's opponents, burning with a desire for revenge, urged the pope to take decisive measures against him. It was decreed that his doctrines should be immediately condemned. Sixty days were granted the reformer and his adherents, after which, if they did not recant, they were all to be excommunicated. {GC88 140.5}

That was a terrible crisis for the Reformation. For centuries Rome's sentence of excommunication had struck terror to powerful monarchs; it had filled mighty empires with woe and desolation. Those upon whom its condemnation fell, were universally regarded with dread and horror; they were cut off from intercourse with their fellows, and treated as outlaws, to be hunted to extermination. Luther was not blind to the tempest about to burst upon him; but he stood firm, trusting in Christ to be his support and shield. With a martyr's faith and courage he wrote: “What is about to happen I know not, and I care not to know.” “Wherever the blow may reach me. I fear not. Not so much as a leaf falls without the will of our Father; how much rather will he care for us! It is a light matter to die for the Word, since this Word, that was made flesh for us, hath himself died. If we die with him, we shall live with him; and, passing through that which he has passed through before us, we shall be where he is, and dwell with him forever.” {GC88 141.1}

When the papal bull reached Luther, he said: “I despise it, and resist it, as impious and false. . . . It is Christ himself who is condemned therein.” “I glory in the prospect of suffering for the best of causes. Already I feel greater liberty; for I know now that the pope is antichrist, and that his throne is that of Satan himself.” {GC88 141.2}

Yet the mandate of Rome was not without effect. Prison, torture, and sword were weapons potent to enforce obedience. The weak and superstitious trembled before the decree of the pope, and while there was general sympathy for Luther, many felt that life was too dear to be risked in the cause of reform. Everything seemed to indicate that the reformer's work was about to close. {GC88 141.3}

But Luther was fearless still. Rome had hurled her anathemas against him, and the world looked on, nothing doubting that he would perish or be forced to yield. But with terrible power he flung back upon herself the sentence of condemnation, and publicly declared his determination to abandon her forever. In the presence of a crowd of students, doctors, and citizens of all ranks, Luther burned the pope's bull, with the canon laws, the decretals, and certain writings sustaining the papal power. "My enemies have been able by burning my books," he said, "to injure the cause of truth in the minds of some, and to destroy souls; for this reason I consume their books in return. A serious struggle has just commenced. Hitherto I have been playing with the pope; now I wage open war. I began this work in God's name; it will be ended without me, and by his might." {GC88 142.1}

To the reproaches of his enemies, who taunted him with the weakness of his cause, Luther answered: "Who knows if God has not chosen and called me to perform this needed work, and if these babblers ought not to fear that by despising me, they despise God himself? They say I am alone; no, for Jehovah is with me. In their sense, Moses was alone at the departure from Egypt; Elijah was alone in the reign of King Ahab; Isaiah was alone in Jerusalem; Ezekiel was alone in Babylon. Hear this, O Rome: God never selected as a prophet either the high priest or any great personage; but rather, he chose low and despised men, once even the shepherd Amos. In every age the saints have been compelled to rebuke kings, princes, recreant priests, and wise men at the peril of their lives." "I do not say that I also am a prophet; but I do say that they ought to fear precisely because I am alone, while on the side of the oppressor are numbers, caste, wealth, and mocking letters. Yes, I am alone; but I stand serene, because side by side with me is the Word of God; and with all their boasted numbers, this, the greatest of powers, is not with them." {GC88 142.2}

Yet it was not without a terrible struggle with himself that Luther decided upon a final separation from the church. It was about this time that he wrote: "I feel more and more every day how difficult it is to lay aside the scruples which one has imbibed in childhood. Oh, how much pain it cost me, though I had the Scriptures on my side, to justify it to myself that I should dare to make a stand alone against the pope, and hold him forth as antichrist! What have the tribulations of my heart not been! How many times have I asked myself with bitterness that question which was so frequent on the lips of the papist: "Art thou alone wise? Can everyone else be mistaken? How will it be, if, after all, it is thyself who art wrong, and who art involving in thy error so many souls, who will then be eternally damned?" "Twas so I fought with myself and with Satan, till Christ, by his infallible Word, fortified my heart against these doubts." {GC88 143.1}

The pope had threatened Luther with excommunication if he did not recant, and the threat was now fulfilled. A new bull appeared, declaring the reformer's final separation from the Romish Church, denouncing him as accursed of Heaven, and including in the same condemnation all who should receive his doctrines. The great contest had been fully entered upon. {GC88 143.2}

Opposition is the lot of all whom God employs to present truths specially applicable to their time. There was a present truth in the days of Luther,—a truth at that time of special importance; there is a present truth for the church today. He who does all things according to the counsel of his will, has been pleased to place men under various circumstances, and to enjoin upon them duties peculiar to the times in which they live, and the conditions under which they are placed. If they would prize the light given them, broader views of truth would be opened before them. But truth is no more desired by the majority today than it was by the papists who opposed Luther. There is the same disposition to accept the theories and traditions of men instead of the Word of God as in former ages. Those who present the truth for this time should not expect to be received with greater favour than were earlier reformers. The great controversy between truth and error, between Christ and Satan, is to increase in intensity to the close of this world's history. {GC88 143.3}

Said Jesus to his disciples: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have

kept my saying, they will keep yours also.” [John 15:19, 20.] And on the other hand our Lord declared plainly: “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets. [Luke 6:26.] The spirit of the world is no more in harmony with the Spirit of Christ today than in earlier times; and those who preach the Word of God in its purity will be received with no greater favour now than then. The forms of opposition to the truth may change, the enmity may be less open because it is more subtle; but the same antagonism still exists, and will be manifested to the end of time. {GC88 144.1}

Chapter VIII - Luther Before the Diet

A new emperor, Charles V., had ascended the throne of Germany, and the emissaries of Rome hastened to present their congratulations, and induce the monarch to employ his power against the Reformation. On the other hand, the Elector of Saxony, to whom Charles was in great degree indebted for his crown, entreated him to take no step against Luther until he should have granted him a hearing. The emperor was thus placed in a position of great perplexity and embarrassment. The papists would be satisfied with nothing short of an imperial edict sentencing Luther to death. The elector had declared firmly that “neither his imperial majesty nor anyone else had yet made it appear to him that the reformer's writings had been refuted; “therefore he requested “that Doctor Luther be furnished with a safe-conduct, so that he might answer for himself before a tribunal of learned, pious, and impartial judges.” {GC88 145.1}

The attention of all parties was now directed to the assembly of the German States which convened at Worms soon after the accession of Charles to the empire. There were important political questions and interests to be considered by this national council; for the first time the princes of Germany were to meet their youthful monarch in deliberative assembly. From all parts of the Fatherland had come the dignitaries of Church and State. Secular lords, highborn powerful, and jealous of their hereditary rights; princely ecclesiastics, flushed with their conscious superiority in rank and power; courtly knights and their armed retainers; and ambassadors from foreign and distant lands—all gathered at Worms. Yet in that vast assembly the subject that excited the deepest interest, was the cause of the Saxon reformer. {GC88 145.2}

Charles had previously directed the elector to bring Luther with him to the Diet, assuring him of protection, and promising a free discussion, with competent persons, of the questions in dispute. Luther was anxious to appear before the emperor. His health was at this time much impaired; yet he wrote to the elector: “If I cannot perform the journey to Worms in good health, I will be carried there, sick as I am. For, since the emperor has summoned me, I cannot doubt that it is the call of God himself. If they intend to use violence against me, as they probably do, for assuredly it is with no view of gaining information that they require me to appear before them, I place the matter in the Lord's hands. He still lives and reigns who preserved the three Israelites in the fiery furnace. If it be not his will to save me, my life is of little consequence. Let us only take care that the gospel be not exposed to the scorn of the ungodly, and let us shed our blood in its defence rather than allow them to triumph. Who shall say whether my life or my death would contribute most to the salvation of my brethren?” “Expect anything from me but flight or recantation. Fly I cannot; still less can I recant.” {GC88 146.1}

As the news was circulated at Worms that Luther was to appear before the Diet, a general excitement was created. Aleander, the papal legate to whom the case had been specially intrusted, was alarmed and enraged. He saw that the result would be disastrous to the papal cause. To institute inquiry into a case in which the pope had already pronounced sentence of condemnation, would be to cast contempt upon the authority of the sovereign pontiff. Furthermore, he was apprehensive that the eloquent and powerful arguments of this man might turn away many of the princes from the cause of the pope. He therefore, in the most urgent manner remonstrated with Charles against Luther's appearance at Worms. About this time the bull declaring Luther's excommunication was published; and this, coupled with the representations of the legate, induced the emperor to yield. He wrote to the elector that if Luther would not retract, he must remain at Wittenberg. {GC88 146.2}

Not content with this victory, Aleander laboured with all the power and cunning at his command to secure Luther's condemnation. With a persistence worthy of a better cause, he urged the matter upon the attention of princes, prelates, and other members of the assembly, accusing the reformer of sedition, rebellion, impiety, and blasphemy. But the vehemence and passion manifested by the legate revealed too plainly the spirit by which he was actuated. “Hatred and thirst for vengeance,” said a papist writer, “are his motives, rather than true zeal for

religion.” The majority of the Diet were more than ever inclined to regard Luther's cause with favour. {GC88 147.1}

With redoubled zeal, Aleander urged upon the emperor the duty of executing the papal edicts. But under the laws of Germany this could not be done without the concurrence of the princes, and, overcome at last by the legate's importunity, Charles bade him present his case to the Diet. “It was a proud day for the nuncio. The assembly was a great one; the cause was even greater. Aleander was to plead for Rome, the mother and mistress of all churches; he was to vindicate the principedom of Peter before the assembled principalities of Christendom. He had the gift of eloquence, and he rose to the greatness of the occasion. Providence ordered it that Rome should appear and plead by the ablest of her orators in the presence of the most august of tribunals, before she was condemned.” With some misgivings those who favoured the reformer looked forward to the effect of Aleander's speech. The Elector of Saxony was not present, but by his direction some of his councillors attended, to take notes of the nuncio's address. {GC88 147.2}

With all the power of learning and eloquence, Aleander set himself to overthrow the truth. Charge after charge he hurled against Luther as an enemy of the Church and the State, the living and the dead, clergy and laity, councils and private Christians. “There is enough in the errors of Luther,” he declared, “to warrant the burning of a hundred thousand heretics. {GC88 147.3}

In conclusion, he endeavoured to cast contempt upon the adherents of the reformed faith: “What are all these Lutherans? —A motley rabble of insolent grammarians, corrupt priests, dissolute monks, ignorant lawyers, and degraded nobles, with the common people whom they have misled and perverted. How greatly superior is the Catholic party in numbers, intelligence, and power! A unanimous decree from this illustrious assembly will open the eyes of the simple, show the unwary their danger, determine the wavering, and strengthen the weak-hearted.” {GC88 148.1}

With such weapons the advocates of truth in every age have been attacked. The same arguments are still urged against all who dare to present, in opposition to established errors, the plain and direct teachings of God's Word. “Who are these preachers of new doctrines?” exclaim those who desire a popular religion. “They are unlearned, few in numbers, and of the poorer class. Yet they claim to have the truth, and to be the chosen people of God. They are ignorant and deceived. How greatly superior in numbers and influence is our church! How many great and learned men are among us! How much more power is on our side!” These are the arguments that have a telling influence upon the world, but they are no more conclusive now than in the days of the reformer. {GC88 148.2}

The Reformation did not, as many suppose, end with Luther. It is to be continued to the close of this world's history. Luther had a great work to do in reflecting to others the light which God had permitted to shine upon him; yet he did not receive all the light which was to be given to the world. From that time to this, new light has
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been continually shining upon the Scriptures, and new truths have been constantly unfolding. {GC88 148.3}

The legate's address made a deep impression upon the Diet. There was no Luther present, with the clear and convincing truths of God's Word, to vanquish the papal champion. No attempt was made to defend the reformer. There was manifest a general disposition not only to condemn him and the doctrines which he taught, but if possible to uproot the heresy. Rome had enjoyed the most favourable opportunity to defend her cause. All that she could say in her own vindication had been said. But the apparent victory was the signal of defeat. Henceforth the contrast between truth and error would be more clearly seen, as they should take the field in open warfare. Never from that day would Rome stand as secure as she had stood. {GC88 149.1}

While most of the members of the Diet would not have hesitated to yield up Luther to the vengeance of Rome, many of them saw and deplored the existing depravity in the church, and desired a suppression of the abuses suffered by the German people in consequence of the corruption and greed of the hierarchy. The legate had presented the papal rule in the most favourable light. Now the Lord moved upon a member of the Diet to give a true delineation of the effects of papal tyranny. With noble firmness, Duke George of Saxony stood up in that princely assembly, and specified with terrible exactness the deceptions and abominations of popery, and their dire results. In closing he said:— {GC88 149.2}

“These are but a few of the abuses which cry out against Rome for redress. All shame is laid aside, and one object alone incessantly pursued: money! evermore money! so that the very men whose duty it is to teach the truth, utter nothing but falsehoods, and are not only tolerated but rewarded; because the greater their lies, the greater are their gains. This is the foul source from which so many corrupt streams flow out on every side. Profligacy and avarice go hand in hand.” “Alas! it is the scandal caused by the clergy that plunges so many poor souls into everlasting perdition. A thorough reform must be effected.” {GC88 149.3}

A more able and forcible denunciation of the papal abuses could not have been presented by Luther himself; and the fact that the speaker was a determined enemy of the reformer, gave greater influence to his words. {GC88 150.1}

Had the eyes of the assembly been opened, they would have beheld angels of God in the midst of them, shedding beams of light athwart the darkness of error, and opening minds and hearts to the reception of truth. It was the power of the God of truth and wisdom that controlled even the adversaries of the Reformation, and thus prepared the way for the great work about to be accomplished. Martin Luther was not present; but the voice of One greater than Luther had been heard in that assembly. {GC88 150.2}

A committee was at once appointed by the Diet to prepare an enumeration of the papal oppressions that weighed so heavily on the German people. This list, containing a hundred and one specifications, was presented to the emperor, with a request that he would take immediate measures for the correction of these abuses. “What a loss of Christian souls,” said the petitioners, “what injustice, what extortion, are the daily fruits of those scandalous practices to which the spiritual head of Christendom affords his countenance. The ruin and dishonour of our nation must be averted. We therefore very humbly, but very urgently, beseech you to sanction a general Reformation, to undertake the work, and to carry it through.” {GC88 150.3}

The council now demanded the reformer's appearance before them. Notwithstanding the entreaties, protests, and threats of Aleander, the emperor at last consented, and Luther was summoned to appear before the Diet. With the summons was issued a safe-conduct, insuring his return to a place of security. These were borne to Wittenberg by a herald, who was commissioned to conduct him to Worms. {GC88 150.4}

The friends of Luther were terrified and distressed. Knowing the prejudice and enmity against him, they feared that even his safe-conduct would not be respected, and they entreated him not to imperil his life. He replied: “The papists have little desire to see me at Worms, but they long for my condemnation and death. It matters not. Pray not for me, but for the Word of God. . . . Christ will give me his Spirit to overcome these ministers of Satan. I despise them while I live; I will triumph over them by my death. They are busy at Worms about compelling me to recant. My recantation shall be this: I said formerly that the pope was Christ's vicar; now I say that he is the adversary of the Lord, and the apostle of the devil.” {GC88 150.5}

Luther was not to make his perilous journey alone. Besides the imperial messenger, three of his firmest friends determined to accompany him. Melancthon earnestly desired to join them. His heart was knit to Luther's, and he yearned to follow him, if need be, to prison or to death. But his entreaties were denied. Should Luther perish, the hopes of the Reformation must center upon his youthful co-labourer. Said the reformer as he parted from Melancthon, “If I do not return, and my enemies put me to death, continue to teach; stand fast in the truth. Labour in my stead; . . . if thy life be spared, my death will matter little.” Students and citizens who had gathered to witness Luther's departure were deeply moved. A multitude whose hearts had been touched by the gospel, bade him farewell with weeping. Thus the reformer and his companions set out from Wittenberg. {GC88 151.1}

On the journey they saw that the minds of the people were oppressed by gloomy forebodings. At some towns no honours were proffered them. As they stopped for the night, a friendly priest expressed his fears by holding up before Luther the portrait of an Italian reformer who had suffered martyrdom. The next day they learned that Luther's writings had been condemned at Worms. Imperial messengers were proclaiming the emperor's decree, and calling upon the people to bring the proscribed works to the magistrates. The herald, fearing for Luther's safety at the council, and thinking that already his resolution might be shaken, asked if he still wished to go forward. He answered, “I will go on, though I should be put under interdict in every town.” {GC88 151.2}

At Erfurt, Luther was received with honour. Surrounded by admiring crowds, he passed through the streets that he had often traversed with his beggar's wallet. He visited his convent cell, and thought upon the struggles through which the light now flooding Germany had been shed upon his soul. He was urged to preach. This he had been forbidden to do, but the herald granted him permission, and the friar who had once been made the drudge of the convent, now entered the pulpit. {GC88 152.1}

To a crowded assembly he spoke from the words of Christ, "Peace be unto you." "Philosophers, doctors, and writers," he said, "have endeavoured to teach men the way to obtain everlasting life, and they have not succeeded. I will now tell it to you." "God has raised one Man from the dead, the Lord Jesus Christ, that he might destroy death, expiate sin, and shut the gates of hell. This is the work of salvation. Christ has vanquished! This is the joyful news! And we are saved by his work, and not by our own. . . . Our Lord Jesus Christ said, 'Peace be unto you! behold my hands'—that is to say, Behold, O man! it is I, I alone, who have taken away thy sins, and ransomed thee; and now thou hast peace, says the Lord." {GC88 152.2}

He continued, showing that true faith will be manifested by a holy life. "Since God has saved us, let us so order our works that he may take pleasure in them. Art thou rich?—let thy riches be the supply of other men's poverty. Art thou poor?—let thy service minister to the rich. If thy labour is for thyself alone, the service thou offer to God is a mere pretence." {GC88 152.3}

The people listened as if spell-bound. The bread of life was broken to those starving souls. Christ was lifted up
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before them as above popes, legates, emperors, and kings. Luther made no reference to his own perilous position. He did not seek to make himself the object of thought or sympathy. In the contemplation of Christ, he had lost sight of self. He hid behind the Man of Calvary, seeking only to present Jesus as the sinner's Redeemer. {GC88 152.4}

As the reformer proceeded on his journey, he was everywhere regarded with great interest. An eager multitude thronged about him; and friendly voices warned him of the purpose of the Romanists. "You will be burned alive," said they, "and your body reduced to ashes, as was that of John Huss." Luther answered, "Though they should kindle a fire all the way from Worms to Wittenberg, whose flames should rise up to heaven, I would go through it in the name of the Lord, and stand before them; I would enter the jaws of this behemoth, and break his teeth, confessing the Lord Jesus Christ." {GC88 153.1}

The news of his approach to Worms created great commotion. His friends trembled for his safety; his enemies feared for the success of their cause. Strenuous efforts were made to dissuade him from entering the city. At the instigation of the papists he was urged to repair to the castle of a friendly knight, where, it was declared, all difficulties could be amicably adjusted. Friends endeavoured to excite his fears by describing the dangers that threatened him. All their efforts failed. Luther, still unshaken, declared, "Though there should be as many devils at Worms as there are tiles on its roofs, I would enter." {GC88 153.2}

Upon his arrival at Worms, a vast crowd flocked to the gates to welcome him. So great a concourse had not assembled to greet the emperor himself. The excitement was intense, and from the midst of the throng a shrill and plaintive voice chanted a funeral dirge, as a warning to Luther of the fate that awaited him. "God will be my defence," said he, as he alighted from his carriage. {GC88 153.3}

The papists had not believed that Luther would really venture to appear at Worms, and his arrival filled them with consternation. The emperor immediately summoned his councillors to consider what course should be pursued. One of the bishops, a rigid papist, declared: "We have long consulted on this matter. Let your majesty rid yourself of this man at once. Did not Sigismund bring John Huss to the stake? We are under no obligation either to give or to observe the safe-conduct of a heretic." "Not so," said the emperor; "we must keep our promise." It was therefore decided that the reformer should be heard. {GC88 153.4}

All the city were eager to see this remarkable man, and a throng of visitors soon filled his lodgings. Luther had scarcely recovered from his recent illness; he was wearied from the journey, which had occupied two full weeks; he must prepare to meet the momentous events of the morrow, and he needed quiet and repose. But so great was the desire to see him, that he had enjoyed only a few hours' rest, when noblemen, knights, priests, and citizens gathered eagerly about him. Among these were many of the nobles who had so boldly demanded of the emperor a

reform of ecclesiastical abuses, and who, says Luther, “had all been freed by my gospel.” Enemies, as well as friends, came to look upon the dauntless monk, but he received them with unshaken calmness, replying to all with dignity and wisdom. His bearing was firm and courageous. His pale, thin face, marked with the traces of toil and illness, wore a kindly and even joyous expression. The solemnity and deep earnestness of his words gave him a power that even his enemies could not wholly withstand. Both friends and foes were filled with wonder. Some were convinced that a divine influence attended him; others declared, as had the Pharisees concerning Christ, “He hath a devil.” {GC88 154.1}

On the following day, Luther was summoned to attend the Diet. An imperial officer was appointed to conduct him to the hall of audience; yet it was with difficulty that he reached the place. Every avenue was crowded with spectators, eager to look upon the monk who had dared resist the authority of the pope. {GC88 154.2}

As he was about to enter the presence of his judges, an old general, the hero of many battles, said to him kindly, “Poor monk! poor monk! thou hast a march and a struggle to go through, such as neither I nor many other captains have ever known in our most bloody battles. But if thy cause be just, and thou art sure of it, go forward in God's name, and fear nothing! He will not forsake thee.” {GC88 155.1}

At length Luther stood before the council. The emperor occupied the throne. He was surrounded by the most illustrious personages in the empire. Never had any man appeared in the presence of a more imposing assembly than that before which Martin Luther was to answer for his faith. “This appearance was of itself a signal victory over the papacy. The pope had condemned the man, and he was now standing before a tribunal which, by this very act, set itself above the pope. The pope had laid him under an interdict, and cut him off from all human society, and yet he was summoned in respectful language, and received before the most august assembly in the world. The pope had condemned him to perpetual silence, and he was now about to speak before thousands of attentive hearers drawn together from the furthest parts of Christendom. An immense revolution had thus been effected by Luther's instrumentality. Rome was already descending from her throne, and it was the voice of a monk that caused this humiliation.” {GC88 155.2}

In the presence of that powerful and titled assembly, the lowly-born reformer seemed awed and embarrassed. Several of the princes, observing his emotion, approached him, and one of them whispered, “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.” Another said, “When ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, it shall be given you, by the Spirit of your Father, what ye shall say.” Thus the words of Christ were brought by the world's great men to strengthen his servant in the hour of trial. {GC88 155.3}

Luther was conducted to a position directly in front of the emperor's throne. A deep silence fell upon the crowded assembly. Then an imperial officer arose, and, pointing to a collection of Luther's writings, demanded that the reformer answer two questions,—whether he acknowledged them as his, and whether he proposed to retract the opinions which he had therein advanced. The titles of the books having been read, Luther replied that as to the first question, he acknowledged the books to be his. “As to the second,” he said, “seeing it is a question which concerns faith, the salvation of souls, and the Word of God, which is the greatest and most precious treasure either in Heaven or earth, it would be rash and perilous for me to reply without reflection. I might affirm less than the circumstances demand, or more than truth requires; in either case I should fall under the sentence of Christ: ‘Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven.’ [Matthew 10:33] For this reason I entreat your imperial majesty, with all humility, to allow me time, that I may answer without offending against the Word of God.” {GC88 156.1}

In making this request, Luther moved wisely. His course convinced the assembly that he did not act from passion or impulse. Such calmness and self-command, unexpected in one who had shown himself bold and uncompromising, added to his power, and enabled him afterward to answer with a prudence, decision, wisdom, and dignity, that surprised and disappointed his adversaries, and rebuked their insolence and pride. {GC88 156.2}

The next day he was to appear to render his final answer. For a time his heart sunk within him as he contemplated the forces that were combined against the truth. His faith faltered; fearfulness and trembling came upon him, and horror overwhelmed him. Dangers multiplied before him, his enemies seemed about to triumph, and the powers of darkness to prevail. Clouds gathered about him, and seemed to separate him from God. He longed for

the assurance that the Lord of hosts would be with him. In anguish of spirit he threw himself with his face upon the earth, and poured out those broken, heart-rending cries, which none but God can fully understand. {GC88 156.3}

“O God,” he pleaded, “Almighty God everlasting! How dreadful is the world! Behold how it opens its mouth to swallow me up, and how small is my faith in thee! . . . If I am to depend upon any strength of this world—all is over. . . . The knell is struck. . . . Sentence is gone forth. . . . O thou my God! help me against all the wisdom of this world. Do this, I beseech thee . . . by thine own mighty power. . . . The work is not mine, but thine. I have no business here. . . . I have nothing to contend for with the great men of the world. . . . But the cause is thine, . . . and it is righteous and everlasting. . . . O faithful and unchangeable God! I lean not upon man. . . . Whatever is from man is tottering, whatever proceeds from him must fall. . . . Thou hast chosen me for this work. . . . Therefore, O God, accomplish thine own will; forsake me not, for the sake of thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, my defence, my buckler, and my stronghold.” {GC88 157.1}

An all-wise Providence had permitted Luther to realize his peril, that he might not trust to his own strength, and rush presumptuously into danger. Yet it was not the fear of personal suffering, a dread of torture or death, which seemed immediately impending, that overwhelmed him with its terror. He had come to the crisis, and he felt his insufficiency to meet it. Through his weakness the cause of truth might suffer loss. Not for his own safety, but for the triumph of the gospel, did he wrestle with God. Like Israel's, in that night struggle beside the lonely stream, was the anguish and conflict of his soul. Like Israel, he prevailed with God. In his utter helplessness his faith fastened upon Christ, the mighty deliverer. He was strengthened with the assurance that he would not appear alone before the council. Peace returned to his soul, and he rejoiced that he was permitted to uplift the Word of God before the rulers of the nation. {GC88 157.2}

With his mind stayed upon God, Luther prepared for the struggle before him. He thought upon the plan of his answer, examined passages in his own writings, and drew from the Holy Scriptures suitable proofs to sustain his positions. Then, laying his left hand on the sacred volume, which was open before him, he lifted his right hand to heaven, and vowed “to adhere constantly to the gospel, and to confess his faith freely, even though he should be called to seal his testimony with his blood.” {GC88 158.1}

When he was again ushered into the presence of the Diet, his countenance bore no trace of fear or embarrassment. Calm and peaceful, yet grandly brave and noble, he stood as God's witness among the great ones of the earth. The imperial officer now demanded his decision as to whether he desired to retract his doctrines. Luther made his answer in a subdued and humble tone, without violence or passion. His demeanour was diffident and respectful; yet he manifested a confidence and joy that surprised the assembly. {GC88 158.2}

“Most serene emperor, illustrious princes, most clement lords,” said Luther, “I this day appear before you in all humility, according to your command; and I implore your majesty, and your august highnesses, by the mercies of God, to listen with favour to the defence of a cause which I am well assured is just and right. If in my reply I do not use the just ceremonial of a court, pardon me, for I am not familiar with its usages. I am but a poor monk, a child of the cell, and I have laboured only for the glory of God.” {GC88 158.3}

Then, proceeding to the question, he stated that his published works were not all of the same character. In some he had treated of faith and good works, and even his enemies declared them not only harmless but profitable. To retract these would be to condemn truths which all parties confessed. The second class consisted of writings exposing the corruptions and abuses of the papacy. To revoke these works would strengthen the tyranny of Rome, and open a wider door to many and great impieties. In the third class of his books he had attacked individuals who had defended existing evils. Concerning these he freely confessed that he had been more violent than was becoming. He did not claim to be free from fault; but even these books he could not revoke, for such a course would embolden the enemies of truth, and they would then take occasion to crush God's people with still greater cruelty. {GC88 158.4}

“But as I am a mere man, and not God,” he continued, “I will defend myself as did Christ, who said, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil.’ By the mercy of God, I implore your imperial majesty, or anyone else who can, whoever he may be, to prove to me from the writings of the prophets and apostles that I am in error. As soon as I shall be convinced, I will instantly retract all my errors, and will be the first to cast my books into the fire. What I have just said, will show that I have considered and weighed the dangers to which I am exposing myself;

but far from being dismayed by them, I rejoice exceedingly to see the gospel this day, as of old, a cause of trouble and dissension. This is the character, the destiny, of God's Word. Said Christ, 'I came not to send peace, but a sword.' [Matthew 10:34.] God is wonderful and terrible in his counsels. Let us have a care lest in our endeavours to arrest discords we be found to fight against the holy Word of God, and bring down upon our heads a frightful deluge of inextricable dangers, present disaster, and everlasting desolation. . . . I might cite examples drawn from the oracles of God. I might speak of Pharaohs, of kings of Babylon, or of Israel, who were never more contributing to their own ruin than when, by measures in appearance most prudent, they thought to establish their authority. God 'removes the mountains, and they know not.'" [Job 9:5.] {GC88 159.1}

Luther had spoken in German; he was now requested to repeat the same words in Latin. Though exhausted by the previous effort, he complied, and again delivered his speech, with the same clearness and energy as at the first. God's providence directed in this matter. The minds of many of the princes were so blinded by error and superstition that at the first delivery they did not see the force of Luther's reasoning; but the repetition enabled them to perceive clearly the points presented. {GC88 159.2}

Those who stubbornly closed their eyes to the light, and determined not to be convinced of the truth, were enraged at the power of Luther's words. As he ceased speaking, the spokesman of the Diet said angrily, "You have not answered the question. A clear and express reply is demanded. Will you or will you not retract?" {GC88 160.1}

The reformer answered: "Since your most serene majesty and the princes require a simple, clear, and direct answer, I will give one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is as clear as noonday that they have often fallen into error, and even into glaring inconsistency with themselves. If, then, I am not convinced by proof from Holy Scripture, or by cogent reasons; if I am not satisfied by the very texts that I have cited, and if my judgment is not in this way brought into subjection to God's Word, I neither can nor will retract anything; for it cannot be right for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I take my stand; I cannot do otherwise. God be my help! Amen." {GC88 160.2}

Thus stood this righteous man, upon the sure foundation of the Word of God. The light of Heaven illuminated his countenance. His greatness and purity of character, his peace and joy of heart, were manifest to all as he testified against the power of error, and witnessed to the superiority of that faith that overcomes the world. {GC88 160.3}

The whole assembly were for a time speechless with amazement. At his first answer, Luther had spoken in a low tone, with a respectful, almost submissive bearing. The Romanists had interpreted this as evidence that his courage was beginning to fail. They regarded the request for delay as merely the prelude to his recantation. Charles himself, noting, half contemptuously, the monk's worn frame, his plain attire, and the simplicity of his address, had declared, "This man will never make a heretic of me." The courage and firmness which he now displayed, as well as the power and clearness of his reasoning, filled all parties with surprise. The emperor, moved to admiration, exclaimed, "The monk speaks with intrepid heart and unshaken courage." Many of the German princes looked with pride and joy upon this representative of their nation. {GC88 160.4}

The partisans of Rome had been worsted; their cause appeared in a most unfavourable light. They sought to maintain their power, not by appealing to the Scriptures, but by a resort to threats, Rome's unfailing argument. Said the spokesman of the Diet, "If you do not retract, the emperor and the States of the empire will proceed to consider how to deal with an obstinate heretic." {GC88 161.1}

Luther's friends, who had with great joy listened to his noble defence, trembled at these words; but the doctor himself said calmly, "May God be my helper! for I can retract nothing." {GC88 161.2}

He was directed to withdraw from the Diet, while the princes consulted together. It was felt that a great crisis had come. Luther's persistent refusal to submit, might affect the history of the church for ages. It was decided to give him one more opportunity to retract. For the last time he was brought into the assembly. Again the question was put, whether he would renounce his doctrines. "I have no other answer to give," he said, "than I have already given." It was evident that he could not be induced, either by promises or threats, to yield to the mandate of Rome. {GC88 161.3}

The papist leaders were chagrined that their power, which had caused kings and nobles to tremble, should be thus despised by a humble monk; they longed to make him feel their wrath by torturing his life away. But Luther, understanding his danger, had spoken to all with Christian dignity and calmness. His words had been free from pride, passion, and misrepresentation. He had lost sight of himself, and of the great men surrounding him, and felt only that he was in the presence of One infinitely superior to popes, prelates, kings, and emperors. Christ had spoken through Luther's testimony with a power and grandeur that for the time inspired both friends and foes with awe and wonder. The Spirit of God had been present in that council, impressing the hearts of the chiefs of the empire. Several of the princes boldly acknowledged the justice of Luther's cause. Many were convinced of the truth; but with some the impressions received were not lasting. There was another class who did not at the time express their convictions, but who, having searched the Scriptures for themselves, at a future time became fearless supporters of the Reformation. {GC88 161.4}

The elector Frederick had looked forward anxiously to Luther's appearance before the Diet, and with deep emotion he listened to his speech. With joy and pride he witnessed the doctor's courage, firmness, and self-possession, and determined to stand more firmly in his defence. He contrasted the parties in contest, and saw that the wisdom of popes, kings, and prelates had been brought to naught by the power of truth. The papacy had sustained a defeat which would be felt among all nations and in all ages. {GC88 162.1}

As the legate perceived the effect produced by Luther's speech, he feared, as never before, for the security of the Romish power, and resolved to employ every means at his command to effect the reformer's overthrow. With all the eloquence and diplomatic skill for which he was so eminently distinguished, he represented to the youthful emperor the folly and danger of sacrificing, in the cause of an insignificant monk, the friendship and support of the powerful see of Rome. {GC88 162.2}

His words were not without effect. On the day following Luther's answer, Charles caused a message to be presented to the Diet, announcing his determination to carry out the policy of his predecessors to maintain and protect the Catholic religion. Since Luther had refused to renounce his errors, the most vigorous measures should be employed against him and the heresies he taught. "A single monk, led astray by his own madness, erects himself against the faith of Christendom. I will sacrifice my kingdoms, my power, my friends, my treasure, my body and blood, my thoughts, and my life, to stay the further progress of this impiety. I am about to dismiss the Augustine Luther, forbidding him to cause the least disturbance among the people. I will then take measures against him and his adherents, as open heretics, by excommunication, interdict, and every means necessary to their destruction. I call on the members of the States to comport themselves like faithful Christians." Nevertheless the emperor declared that Luther's safe-conduct must be respected, and that before proceedings against him could be instituted, he must be allowed to reach his home in safety. {GC88 162.3}

Two conflicting opinions were now urged by the members of the Diet. The emissaries and representatives of the pope again demanded that the reformer's safe-conduct should be disregarded. "The Rhine," they said, "should receive his ashes, as it received those of John Huss a century ago." But princes of Germany, though themselves papists and avowed enemies to Luther, protested against such a breach of public faith, as a stain upon the honour of the nation. They pointed to the calamities which had followed the death of Huss, and declared that they dared not call down upon Germany, and upon the head of their youthful emperor, a repetition of these terrible evils. {GC88 163.1}

Charles himself, in answer to the base proposal, said that though faith should be banished from all the earth, it ought to find refuge with princes. He was still further urged by the most bitter of Luther's popish enemies to deal with the reformer as Sigismund had dealt with Huss—abandon him to the mercies of the church; but, recalling the scene when Huss in public assembly had pointed to his chains and reminded the monarch of his plighted faith, Charles V. declared, "I would not like to blush like Sigismund." {GC88 163.2}

Yet Charles had deliberately rejected the truths presented by Luther. "I am firmly resolved to tread in the footsteps of my ancestors," wrote the monarch. He had decided that he would not step out of the path of custom, even to walk in the ways of truth and righteousness. Because his fathers did, he would uphold the papacy, with all its cruelty and corruption. Thus he took his position, refusing to accept any light in advance of what his fathers had received, or to perform any duty that they had not performed. {GC88 164.1}

There are many at the present day thus clinging to the customs and traditions of their fathers. When the Lord sends them additional light, they refuse to accept it, because, not having been granted to their fathers, it was not received by them. We are not placed where our fathers were; consequently our duties and responsibilities are not the same as theirs. We shall not be approved of God in looking to the example of our fathers to determine our duty instead of searching the Word of truth for ourselves. Our responsibility is greater than was that of our ancestors. We are accountable for the light which they received, and which was handed down as an inheritance for us, and we are accountable also for the additional light which is now shining upon us from the Word of God. {GC88 164.2}

Said Christ of the unbelieving Jews, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." [John 15:22.] The same divine power had spoken through Luther to the emperor and princes of Germany. And as the light shone forth from God's Word, his Spirit pleaded for the last time with many in that assembly. As Pilate, centuries before, permitted pride and popularity to close his heart against the world's Redeemer; as the trembling Felix bade the messenger of truth, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee;" [Acts 24:25.] as the proud Agrippa confessed, "Almost thou persuades me to be a Christian," [Acts 26:28.] yet turned away from the Heaven-sent message,—so had Charles V., yielding to the dictates of worldly pride and policy, decided to reject the light of truth. {GC88 164.3}

Rumours of the designs against Luther were widely circulated, causing great excitement throughout the city. The reformer had made many friends, who, knowing the treacherous cruelty of Rome toward all that dared expose her corruptions, resolved that he should not be sacrificed. Hundreds of nobles pledged themselves to protect him. Not a few openly denounced the royal message as evincing a weak submission to the controlling power of Rome. On the gates of houses and in public places, placards were posted, some condemning and others sustaining Luther. On one of these were written merely the significant words of the wise man, "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child." [Ecclesiastes 10:16.] The popular enthusiasm in Luther's favour throughout all Germany convinced both the emperor and the Diet that any injustice shown him would endanger the peace of the empire, and even the stability of the throne. {GC88 165.1}

Frederick of Saxony maintained a studied reserve, carefully concealing his real feelings toward the reformer, while at the same time he guarded him with tireless vigilance, watching all his movements and all those of his enemies. But there were many who made no attempt to conceal their sympathy with Luther. He was visited by princes, counts, barons, and other persons of distinction, both lay and ecclesiastical. "The doctor's little room," wrote Spalatin, "could not contain all who presented themselves." The people gazed upon him as if he were more than human. Even those who had no faith in his doctrines, could not but admire that lofty integrity which led him to brave death rather than violate his conscience. {GC88 165.2}

Earnest efforts were made to obtain Luther's consent to a compromise with Rome. Nobles and princes represented to him that if he persisted in setting up his own judgment against that of the church and the councils, he would soon be banished from the empire, and then would have no defence. To this appeal Luther answered: "It is impossible to preach the gospel of Christ without offense. Why, then, should the fear of danger separate me from the Lord and that divine Word which alone is truth? No; I would rather give up my body, my blood, and my life." {GC88 166.1}

Again he was urged to submit to the judgment of the emperor, and then he would have nothing to fear. "I consent," said he in reply, "with all my heart, that the emperor, the princes, and even the humblest Christian, should examine and judge my writings; but on one condition, that they take God's Word for their guide. Men have nothing to do but to render obedience to that. My conscience is in dependence upon that Word, and I am the bounden subject of its authority." {GC88 166.2}

To another appeal he said, "I consent to forego my safe-conduct, and resign my person and my life to the emperor's disposal; but as to the Word of God—never!" He stated his willingness to submit to the decision of a general council, but only on condition that the council be required to decide according to the Scriptures. "In what concerns the Word of God and the faith," he added, "every Christian is as good a judge as the pope, though supported by a million councils, can be for him." Both friends and foes were at last convinced that further effort for reconciliation would be useless. {GC88 166.3}

Had the reformer yielded a single point, Satan and his hosts would have gained the victory. But his unwavering firmness was the means of emancipating the church, and beginning a new and better era. The influence of this one man, who dared to think and act for himself in religious matters, was to affect the church and the world, not only in his own time, but in all future generations. His firmness and fidelity would strengthen all, to the close of time, who should pass through a similar experience. The power and majesty of God stood forth above the counsel of men, above the mighty power of Satan. {GC88 166.4}

Luther was soon commanded by the authority of the emperor to return home, and he knew that this notice would be speedily followed by his condemnation. Threatening clouds overhung his path; but as he departed from Worms, his heart was filled with joy and praise. "Satan himself," said he, "kept the pope's citadel; but Christ has made a wide breach in it, and the devil has been compelled to confess that Christ is mightier than he." {GC88 167.1}

After his departure, still desirous that his firmness should not be mistaken for rebellion, Luther wrote to the emperor. "God is my witness, who knows the thoughts," he said, "that I am ready with all my heart to obey your majesty through good or evil report, in life or death, with no one exception, save the Word of God, by which man lives. In all the affairs of this life my fidelity shall be unshaken; for, in these, loss or gain has nothing to do with salvation. But it is contrary to the will of God, that man should be subject to man in that which pertains to eternal life. Subjection in spirituals is a real worship, and should be rendered only to the Creator." {GC88 167.2}

On the journey from Worms, Luther's reception was even more flattering than during his progress thither. Princely ecclesiastics welcomed the excommunicated monk, and civil rulers honoured the man whom the emperor had denounced. He was urged to preach, and, notwithstanding the imperial prohibition, he again entered the pulpit. "I have never pledged myself to chain up the Word of God," he said, "nor will I." {GC88 167.3}

He had not been long absent from Worms, when the papists prevailed upon the emperor to issue an edict against him. In this decree Luther was denounced as "Satan himself under the semblance of a man in a monk's hood." It was commanded that as soon as his safe-conduct should expire, measures be taken to stop his work. All persons were forbidden to harbor him, to give him food or drink, or by word or act, in public or private, to aid or abet him. He was to be seized wherever he might be, and delivered to the authorities. His adherents also were to be imprisoned, and their property confiscated. His writings were to be destroyed, and finally, all who should dare to act contrary to this decree were included in its condemnation. The Elector of Saxony, and the princes most friendly to Luther, had left Worms soon after his departure, and the emperor's decree received the sanction of the Diet. Now the Romanists were jubilant. They considered the fate of the Reformation sealed. {GC88 167.4}

God had provided a way of escape for his servant in this hour of peril. A vigilant eye had followed Luther's movements, and a true and noble heart had resolved upon his rescue. It was plain that Rome would be satisfied with nothing short of his death; only by concealment could he be preserved from the jaws of the lion. God gave wisdom to Frederick of Saxony to devise a plan for the reformer's preservation. With the co-operation of true friends, the elector's purpose was carried out, and Luther was effectually hidden from friends and foes. Upon his homeward journey, he was seized, separated from his attendants, and hurriedly conveyed through the forest to the castle of Wartburg, an isolated mountain fortress. Both his seizure and his concealment were so involved in mystery that even Frederick himself for a long time knew not whither he had been conducted. This ignorance was not without design; so long as the elector knew nothing of Luther's whereabouts, he could reveal nothing. He satisfied himself that the reformer was safe, and with this knowledge he was content. {GC88 168.1}

Spring, summer, and autumn passed, and winter came, and Luther still remained a prisoner. Aleander and his partisans exulted as the light of the gospel seemed about to be extinguished. But instead of this, the reformer was filling his lamp from the store-house of truth; and its light was to shine forth with brighter radiance. {GC88 168.2}

In the friendly security of the Wartburg, Luther for a time rejoiced in his release from the heat and turmoil of battle. But he could not long find satisfaction in quiet and repose. Accustomed to a life of activity and stern conflict, he could ill endure to remain inactive. In those solitary days, the condition of the church rose up before him, and he cried in despair, "Alas! there is no one, in this latter day of His anger, to stand like a wall before the Lord, and save Israel!" Again, his thoughts returned to himself, and he feared being charged with cowardice in withdrawing from the contest. Then he reproached himself for his indolence and self-indulgence. Yet at the same time he was daily accomplishing more than it seemed possible for one man to do. His pen was never idle. While his

enemies flattered themselves that he was silenced, they were astonished and confused by tangible proof that he was still active. A host of tracts, issuing from his pen, circulated throughout Germany. He also performed a most important service for his countrymen by translating the New Testament into the German tongue. From his rocky Patmos he continued for nearly a whole year to proclaim the gospel, and rebuke the sins and errors of the times. {GC88 169.1}

But it was not merely to preserve Luther from the wrath of his enemies, nor even to afford him a season of quiet for these important labours, that God had withdrawn his servant from the stage of public life. There were results more precious than these to be secured. In the solitude and obscurity of his mountain retreat, Luther was removed from earthly supports, and shut out from human praise. He was thus saved from the pride and self-confidence that are so often caused by success. By suffering and humiliation he was prepared again to walk safely upon the dizzy heights to which he had been so suddenly exalted. {GC88 169.2}

As men rejoice in the freedom which the truth brings them, they are inclined to extol those whom God has employed to break the chains of error and superstition. Satan seeks to divert men's thoughts and affections from God, and to fix them upon human agencies; he leads them to honour the mere instrument, and to ignore the Hand that directs all the events of providence. Too often, religious leaders who are thus praised and revered lose sight of their dependence upon God, and are led to trust in themselves. As a result, they seek to control the minds and consciences of the people, who are disposed to look to them for guidance instead of looking to the Word of God. The work of reform is often retarded because of this spirit indulged by its supporters. From this danger, God would guard the cause of the Reformation. He desired that work to receive, not the impress of man, but that of God. The eyes of men had been turned to Luther as the expounder of the truth; he was removed that all eyes might be directed to the eternal Author of truth. {GC88 170.1}

Chapter IX - The Swiss Reformer

In the choice of instrumentalities for the reforming of the church, the same divine plan is seen as in that for the planting of the church. The heavenly Teacher passed by the great men of earth, the titled and wealthy, who were accustomed to receive praise and homage as leaders of the people. They were so proud and self-confident in their boasted superiority that they could not be moulded to sympathize with their fellow-men, and to become co-labourers with the humble Man of Nazareth. To the unlearned, toiling fishermen of Galilee was the call addressed, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." [Matthew 4:19.] These disciples were humble and teachable. The less they had been influenced by the false teaching of their time, the more successfully could Christ instruct and train them for his service. So in the days of the Great Reformation. The leading reformers were men from humble life,—men who were most free of any of their time from pride of rank, and from the influence of bigotry and priestcraft. It is God's plan to employ humble instruments to accomplish great results. Then the glory will not be given to men, but to Him who works through them to will and to do of his own good pleasure. {GC88 171.1}

A few weeks after the birth of Luther in a miner's cabin in Saxony, Ulric Zwingle was born in a herdsman's cottage among the Alps. Zwingle's surroundings in childhood, and his early training, were such as to prepare him for his future mission. Reared amid scenes of natural grandeur, beauty, and awful sublimity, his mind was early impressed with a sense of the greatness, the power, and the majesty of God. The history of the brave deeds achieved upon his native mountains, kindled his youthful aspirations. And at the side of his pious grandmother he listened to the few precious Bible stories which she had gleaned from amid the legends and traditions of the church. With eager interest he heard of the grand deeds of patriarchs and prophets, of the shepherds who watched their flocks on the hills of Palestine where angels talked with them, of the Babe of Bethlehem and the Man of Calvary. {GC88 171.2}

Like John Luther, Zwingle's father desired an education for his son, and the boy was early sent from his native valley. His mind rapidly developed, and it soon became a question where to find teachers competent to instruct him. At the age of thirteen he went to Bern, which then possessed the most distinguished school in Switzerland. Here, however, a danger arose which threatened to blight the promise of his life. Determined efforts were put forth by the friars to allure him into a monastery. The Dominican and Franciscan monks were in rivalry for popular favour. This they endeavoured to secure by the showy adornments of their churches, the pomp of their ceremonials, and the attractions of famous relics and miracle-working images. The Dominicans of Bern saw that if they could win this talented young scholar, they would secure both gain and honour. His extreme youth, his natural ability as a

speaker and a writer, and his genius for music and poetry, would be more effective than all their pomp and display, in attracting the people to their services and increasing the revenues of their order. By deceit and flattery they endeavoured to induce Zwingle to enter their convent. Luther while a student at school had buried himself in a convent cell, and he would have been lost to the world had not God's providence released him. Zwingle was not permitted to encounter the same peril. Providentially his father received information of the designs of the friars. He had no intention of allowing his son to follow the idle and worthless life of the monks. He saw that his future usefulness was at stake, and directed him to return home without delay. {GC88 172.1}

The command was obeyed; but the youth could not be long content in his native valley, and he soon resumed his studies, repairing, after a time, to Basel. It was here that Zwingle first heard the gospel of God's free grace. Wittembach, a teacher of the ancient languages, had, while studying Greek and Hebrew, been led to the Holy Scriptures, and thus rays of divine light were shed into the minds of the students under his instruction. He declared that there was a truth more ancient, and of infinitely greater worth, than the theories taught by schoolmen and philosophers. This ancient truth was that the death of Christ is the sinner's only ransom. To Zwingle these words were as the first ray of light that precedes the dawn. {GC88 173.1}

Zwingle was soon called from Basel, to enter upon his life-work. His first field of labour was in an Alpine parish, not far distant from his native valley. Having received ordination as a priest, "he devoted himself with his whole soul to the search after divine truth; for he was well aware," says a fellow-reformer, "how much he must know to whom the flock of Christ is intrusted." The more he searched the Scriptures, the clearer appeared the contrast between their truths and the heresies of Rome. He submitted himself to the Bible as the word of God, the only sufficient, infallible rule. He saw that it must be its own interpreter. He dared not attempt to explain Scripture to sustain a preconceived theory or doctrine, but held it his duty to learn what is its direct and obvious teaching. He sought to avail himself of every help to obtain a full and correct understanding of its meaning, and he invoked the aid of the Holy Spirit, which would, he declared, reveal it to all who sought it in sincerity and with prayer. {GC88 173.2}

"The Scriptures," said Zwingle, "come from God, not from man. Even that God who enlightens will give thee to understand that the speech comes from God. The Word of God . . . cannot fail. It is bright, it teaches itself, discloses itself, it illumines the soul with all salvation and grace, comforts it in God, humbles it, so that it loses and even forfeits itself, and embraces God." The truth of these words Zwingle himself had proved. Speaking of his experience at this time, he afterward wrote: "When I began to give myself wholly up to the Holy Scriptures, philosophy and theology (scholastic) would always keep suggesting quarrels to me. At last I came to this, that I thought, 'Thou must let all that lie, and learn the meaning of God purely out of his own simple Word.' Then I began to ask God for his light, and the Scriptures began to be much easier to me." {GC88 173.3}

The doctrine preached by Zwingle was not received from Luther. It was the doctrine of Christ. "If Luther preaches Christ," said the Swiss reformer, "he does what I do. He has led to Christ many more souls than I;—be it so. Yet will I bear no other name than that of Christ, whose soldier I am, and who alone is my head. Never has a single line been addressed by me to Luther, or by Luther to me. And why?—That it might be manifest to all how uniform is the testimony of the Spirit of God, since we, who have had no communication with each other, agree so closely in the doctrine of Jesus Christ." {GC88 174.1}

In 1516 Zwingle was invited to become a preacher in the convent at Einsiedeln. Here he was to have a closer view of the corruptions of Rome, and was to exert an influence as a reformer that would be felt far beyond his native Alps. Among the chief attractions of Einsiedeln was an image of the virgin which was said to have the power of working miracles. Above the gateway of the convent was the inscription, "Here may be obtained complete remission of sins." Pilgrims at all seasons resorted to the shrine of the virgin, but at the great yearly festival of its consecration, multitudes came from all parts of Switzerland, and even from France and Germany. Zwingle, greatly afflicted at the sight, seized the opportunity to proclaim liberty through the gospel to these bond-slaves of superstition. {GC88 174.2}

"Think not," he said, "that God is in this temple more than in any other part of creation. Wherever he has fixed your dwelling he encompasses you, and hears you. . . . What power can there be in unprofitable works, weary pilgrimages, offerings, prayers to the virgin and the saints, to secure you the favour of God? What signify the multiplying of words in prayer? What efficacy in the cowl or shaven crown, or priestly garments falling, and

adorned with gold? God looks upon the heart—and our heart is far off from God.” “Christ,” he said, “who offered himself on the cross once for all, is the sacrifice and victim that satisfies for all eternity, for the sins of all believers.” {GC88 175.1}

To many listeners these teachings were unwelcome. It was a bitter disappointment to them to be told that their toilsome journey had been made in vain. The pardon freely offered to them through Christ they could not comprehend. They were satisfied with the old way to Heaven which Rome had marked out for them. They shrank from the perplexity of searching for anything better. It was easier to trust their salvation to the priests and the pope than to seek for purity of heart. {GC88 175.2}

But another class received with gladness the tidings of redemption through Christ. The observances enjoined by Rome had failed to bring peace of soul, and in faith they accepted the Saviour's blood as their propitiation. These returned to their homes to reveal to others the precious light which they had received. The truth was thus carried from hamlet to hamlet, from town to town, and the number of pilgrims to the virgin's shrine greatly lessened. There was a falling off in the offerings, and consequently in the salary of Zwingle, which was drawn from them. But this caused him only joy as he saw that the power of fanaticism and superstition was being broken. {GC88 175.3}

The authorities of the church were not blind to the work which Zwingle was accomplishing; but for the present they forbore to interfere. Hoping yet to secure him to their cause, they endeavoured to win him by flatteries; and meanwhile the truth was gaining a hold upon the hearts of the people. {GC88 175.4}

Zwingle's labours at Einsiedeln had prepared him for a wider field, and this he was soon to enter. After three years here, he was called to the office of preacher in the cathedral at Zurich. This was then the most important town of the Swiss confederacy, and the influence exerted here would be widely felt. The ecclesiastics by whose invitation he came to Zurich were, however, desirous of preventing any innovations, and they accordingly proceeded to instruct him as to his duties. {GC88 176.1}

“You will use your utmost diligence,” they said, “in collecting the revenues of the chapter—not overlooking the smallest item. You will exhort the faithful, both from the pulpit and in the confessional, to pay all dues and tithes, and to testify by their offerings the love which they bear to the church. You will be careful to increase the income that arises from the sick, from masses, and in general from all ecclesiastical ordinances.” “As to the administration of the sacraments, preaching, and personally watching over the flock,” added his instructors, “these also are among the duties of the priest. But for the performance of these, you may employ a vicar to act in your stead,—especially in preaching. You are to administer the sacraments only to persons of distinction, and when especially called upon; you are not allowed to administer them indiscriminately to people of all ranks.” {GC88 176.2}

Zwingle listened in silence to this charge, and in reply, after expressing his gratitude for the honour of a call to this important station, he proceeded to explain the course which he proposed to adopt. “The history of Jesus,” he said, “has been too long kept out of the people's view. It is my purpose to lecture upon the whole of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, drawing from the fountains of Scripture alone, sounding all its depths, comparing text with text, and putting up earnest and unceasing prayers, that I may be permitted to discover what is the mind of the Holy Spirit. It is to the glory of God, to the praise of his only Son, to the salvation of souls, and their instruction in the true faith, that I desire to consecrate my ministry.” Though some of the ecclesiastics disapproved his plan, and endeavoured to dissuade him from it, Zwingle remained steadfast. He declared that he was about to introduce no new method, but the old method employed by the church in earlier and purer times. {GC88 176.3}

Already an interest had been awakened in the truths he taught; and the people flocked in great numbers to listen to his preaching. Many who had long since ceased to attend service were among his hearers. He began his ministry by opening the Gospels, and reading and explaining to his hearers the inspired narrative of the life, teachings, and death of Christ. Here, as at Einsiedeln, he presented the Word of God as the only infallible authority, and the death of Christ as the only complete sacrifice. “It is to Christ,” he said, “that I wish to guide you,—to Christ, the true spring of salvation.” Around the preacher crowded the people of all classes, from statesmen and scholars to the artisan and the peasant. With deep interest they listened to his words. He not only proclaimed the offer of a free salvation, but fearlessly rebuked the evils and corruptions of the times. Many returned from the cathedral praising God. “This man,” they said, “is a preacher of the truth. He will be our Moses, to lead us forth from this Egyptian darkness.” {GC88 177.1}

But though at first his labours were received with great enthusiasm, after a time opposition arose. The monks set themselves to hinder his work and condemn his teachings. Many assailed him with gibes and sneers; others resorted to insolence and threats. But Zwingli bore all with patience, saying, "If we would win souls to Christ, we must learn to shut our eyes against many things that meet us in our way." {GC88 177.2}

About this time a new agency came in to advance the work of reform. One Lucian was sent to Zurich with some of Luther's writings by a friend of the reformed faith at Basel, who suggested that the sale of these books might be a powerful means of scattering the light. "Ascertain," he wrote to Zwingli, "whether this Lucian possesses a sufficient share of discretion and address; if it shall appear that he does, let him go from city to city, from town to town, from village to village, nay, from house to house, all over Switzerland, carrying with him the writings of Luther, and especially the exposition of the Lord's prayer written for the laity. The more it is known, the more purchasers will it find." Thus the light found entrance. {GC88 178.1}

At the time when God is preparing to break the shackles of ignorance and superstition, then it is that Satan works with greatest power to enshroud men in darkness, and to bind their fetters still more firmly. As men were rising up in different lands to present to the people forgiveness and justification through the blood of Christ, Rome proceeded with renewed energy to open her market throughout Christendom, offering pardon for money. {GC88 178.2}

Every sin had its price, and men were granted free license for crime, if the treasury of the church was kept well filled. Thus the two movements advanced,—one offering forgiveness of sin for money, the other forgiveness through Christ; Rome licensing sin, and making it her source of revenue; the reformers condemning sin, and pointing to Christ as the propitiation and deliverer. {GC88 178.3}

In Germany the sale of indulgences had been committed to the Dominican friars, and was conducted by the infamous Tetzl. In Switzerland the traffic was put into the hands of the Franciscans, under the control of Sampson, an Italian monk. Sampson had already done good service to the church, having secured immense sums from Germany and Switzerland to fill the papal treasury. Now he traversed Switzerland, attracting great crowds, despoiling the poor peasants of their scanty earnings, and exacting rich gifts from the wealthy classes. But the influence of the reform already made itself felt in curtailing, though it could not stop, the traffic. Zwingli was still at Einsiedeln when Sampson, soon after entering Switzerland, arrived with his wares at a neighbouring town. Being apprised of his mission, the reformer immediately set out to oppose him. The two did not meet, but such was Zwingli's success in exposing the friar's pretensions that he was obliged to leave for other quarters. {GC88 178.4}

At Zurich, Zwingli preached zealously against the pardon-mongers, and when Sampson approached the place he was met by a messenger from the council, with an intimation that he was expected to pass on. He finally secured an entrance by stratagem, but was sent away without the sale of a single pardon, and he soon after left Switzerland. {GC88 179.1}

A strong impetus was given to the reform, by the appearance of the plague, or the "great death," which swept over Switzerland in the year 1519. As men were thus brought face to face with the destroyer, many were led to feel how vain and worthless were the pardons which they had so lately purchased; and they longed for a surer foundation for their faith. Zwingli at Zurich was smitten down; he was brought so low that all hope of his recovery was relinquished, and the report was widely circulated that he was dead. In that trying hour his hope and courage were unshaken. He looked in faith to the cross of Calvary, trusting in the all-sufficient propitiation for sin. When he came back from the gates of death, it was to preach the gospel with greater fervour than ever before; and his words exerted an unwonted power. The people welcomed with joy their beloved pastor, returned to them from the brink of the grave. They themselves had come from attending upon the sick and the dying, and they felt, as never before, the value of the gospel. {GC88 179.2}

Zwingli had arrived at a clearer understanding of its truths, and had more fully experienced in himself its renewing power. The fall of man and the plan of redemption were the subjects upon which he dwelt. "In Adam," he said, "we are all dead, sunk in corruption and condemnation." "But Christ has purchased for us an everlasting deliverance." "His passion is an eternal sacrifice, and has a perpetual efficacy; it satisfies the divine justice forever upon behalf of all who rely upon it with a firm, unshaken faith." Yet he clearly taught that men are not, because of

the grace of Christ, free to continue in sin. “Wheresoever there is faith in God, there God himself abides; and wheresoever God is, there is awakened a zeal which urges and constrains men to good works.” {GC88 179.3}

Such was the interest in Zwingli's preaching that the cathedral was filled to overflowing with the crowds that came to listen to him. Little by little, as they could bear it, he opened the truth to his hearers. He was careful not to introduce, at first, points which would startle them and create prejudice. His first work was to win their hearts to the teachings of Christ, to soften them by his love, and keep before them his example; and as they should receive the principles of the gospel, their superstitious beliefs and practices would inevitably be overthrown. {GC88 180.1}

Step by step the Reformation advanced in Zurich. In alarm its enemies aroused to active opposition. One year before, the monk of Wittenberg had uttered his “No” to the pope and the emperor at Worms, and now everything seemed to indicate a similar withstanding of the papal claims at Zurich. Repeated attacks were made upon Zwingli. In the popish cantons, from time to time, disciples of the gospel were brought to the stake, but this was not enough; the teacher of heresy must be silenced. Accordingly the Bishop of Constance dispatched three deputies to the Council of Zurich, accusing Zwingli of teaching the people to transgress the laws of the church, thus endangering the peace and good order of society. If the authority of the church were to be set aside, he urged, universal anarchy would result. Zwingli replied that he had been for four years teaching the gospel in Zurich, “which was more quiet and peaceful than any other town in the confederacy.” “Is not then,” he said, “Christianity the best safeguard of the general security?” {GC88 180.2}

The deputies had admonished the councillors to continue in the church, out of which, they declared, there was no salvation. Zwingli responded: “Let not this accusation move you. The foundation of the church is the same Rock, the same Christ, that gave Peter his name because he confessed him faithfully. In every nation whoever believes with all his heart in the Lord Jesus is accepted of God. Here, truly, is the church, out of which no one can be saved.” As a result of the conference, one of the bishop's deputies accepted the reformed faith. {GC88 181.1}

The council declined to take action against Zwingli, and Rome prepared for a fresh attack. The reformer, when apprised of the plots of his enemies, exclaimed, “Let them come on; I fear them as the beetling cliff fears the waves that thunder at its feet.” The efforts of the ecclesiastics only furthered the cause which they sought to overthrow. The truth continued to spread. In Germany its adherents, cast down by Luther's disappearance, took heart again, as they saw the progress of the gospel in Switzerland. {GC88 181.2}

As the Reformation became established in Zurich, its fruits were more fully seen in the suppression of vice, and the promotion of order and harmony. “Peace has her habitation in our town,” wrote Zwingli; “no quarrel, no hypocrisy, no envy, no strife. Whence can such union come but from the Lord, and our doctrine, which fills us with the fruits of peace and piety?” {GC88 181.3}

The victories gained by the Reformation stirred the Romanists to still more determined efforts for its overthrow. Seeing how little had been accomplished by persecution in suppressing Luther's work in Germany, they decided to meet the reform with its own weapons. They would hold a disputation with Zwingli, and having the arrangement of matters, they would make sure of victory by choosing, themselves, not only the place of the combat, but the judges that should decide between the disputants. And if they could once get Zwingli into their power, they would take care that he did not escape them. The leader silenced, the movement could speedily be crushed. This purpose, however, was carefully concealed. {GC88 181.4}

The disputation was appointed to be held at Baden; but Zwingli was not present. The Council of Zurich, suspecting the designs of the papists, and warned by the burning piles kindled in the popish cantons for confessors of the gospel, forbade their pastor to expose himself to this peril. At Zurich he was ready to meet all the partisans that Rome might send; but to go to Baden, where the blood of martyrs for the truth had just been shed, was to go to certain death. Oecolampadius and Haller were chosen to represent the reformers, while the famous Doctor Eck, supported by a host of learned doctors and prelates, was the champion of Rome. {GC88 182.1}

Though Zwingli was not present at the conference, his influence was felt. The secretaries were all chosen by the papists, and others were forbidden to take notes, on pain of death. Notwithstanding this, Zwingli received daily a faithful account of what was said at Baden. A student in attendance at the disputation, made a record each evening

of the arguments that day presented. These papers two other students undertook to deliver, with the daily letters of Oecolampadius, to Zwingli at Zurich. The reformer answered, giving counsel and suggestions. His letters were written by night, and the students returned with them to Baden in the morning. To elude the vigilance of the guard stationed at the city gates, these messengers brought baskets of poultry on their heads, and they were permitted to pass without hindrance. {GC88 182.2}

Thus Zwingli maintained the battle with his wily antagonists. "He has laboured more," said Myconius, "in meditating upon and watching the contest, and transmitting his advice to Baden, than he could have done by disputing in the midst of his enemies." {GC88 182.3}

The Romanists, flushed with anticipated triumph, had come to Baden attired in their richest robes, and glittering with jewels. They fared luxuriously, their tables spread with the most costly delicacies and the choicest wines. The burden of their ecclesiastical duties was lightened by gayety and revelling. In marked contrast appeared the reformers, who were looked upon by the people as little better than a company of beggars, and whose frugal fare kept them but short time at table. Oecolampadius' landlord, taking occasion to watch him in his room, found him always engaged in study or at prayer, and, greatly wondering, reported that "the heretic was at least very pious." {GC88 183.1}

At the conference, "Eck haughtily ascended a pulpit superbly decorated, while the humble Oecolampadius, meanly clad, sat facing his adversary, upon a rudely constructed platform." Eck's stentorian voice and unbounded assurance never failed him. His zeal was stimulated by the hope of gold as well as fame; for the defender of the faith was to be rewarded by a handsome fee. When better arguments failed, he had resort to insults, and even to oaths. {GC88 183.2}

Oecolampadius, modest and self-distrustful, had shrunk from the combat, and he entered upon it with the solemn avowal, "I recognize no other rule of judgment than the Word of God." Though gentle and courteous in demeanour, he proved himself able and unflinching. While the Romanists, according to their wont, appealed for authority to the customs of the church, the reformer adhered steadfastly to the Holy Scriptures. "In our Switzerland," he said, "custom is of no force unless it be according to the constitution; now in all matters of faith, the Bible is our constitution." {GC88 183.3}

The contrast between the two disputants was not without effect. The calm, clear reasoning of the reformer, so gently and modestly presented, appealed to minds that turned in disgust from Eck's boastful and boisterous assumptions. {GC88 183.4}

The discussion continued eighteen days. At its close, the papists with great confidence claimed the victory. Most of the deputies sided with Rome, and the Diet pronounced the reformers vanquished, and declared that they, together with Zwingli, their leader, were cut off from the church. But the fruits of the conference revealed on which side the advantage lay. The contest resulted in a strong impetus to the Protestant cause, and it was not long afterward that the important cities of Bern and Basel declared for the Reformation. {GC88 184.1}

Chapter X - Progress of Reform in Germany

Luther's mysterious disappearance excited consternation throughout all Germany. Inquiries concerning him were heard everywhere. The wildest rumours were circulated, and many believed that he had been murdered. There was great lamentation, not only by his avowed friends, but by thousands who had not openly taken their stand with the Reformation. Many bound themselves by a solemn oath to avenge his death. {GC88 185.1}

The Romish leaders saw with terror to what a pitch had risen the feeling against them. Though at first exultant at the supposed death of Luther, they soon desired to hide from the wrath of the people. His enemies had not been so troubled by his most daring acts while among them as they were at his removal. Those who in their rage had sought to destroy the bold reformer, were filled with fear now that he had become a helpless captive. "The only way of extricating ourselves," said one, "is to light our torches, and go searching through the earth for Luther, till we can restore him to the nation that will have him." The edict of the emperor seemed to fall powerless. The papal legates were filled with indignation as they saw that it commanded far less attention than did the fate of Luther. {GC88 185.2}

The tidings that he was safe, though a prisoner, calmed the fears of the people, while it still further aroused their enthusiasm in his favour. His writings were read with greater eagerness than ever before. Increasing numbers joined the cause of the heroic man who had, at such fearful odds, defended the Word of God. The Reformation was constantly gaining in strength. The seed which Luther had sown sprung up everywhere. His absence accomplished a work which his presence would have failed to do. Other labourers felt a new responsibility, now that their great leader was removed. With new faith and earnestness they pressed forward to do all in their power, that the work so nobly begun might not be hindered. {GC88 185.3}

But Satan was not idle. He now attempted what he has attempted in every other reformatory movement,—to deceive and destroy the people by palming off upon them a counterfeit in place of the true work. As there were false Christ's in the first century of the Christian church, so there arose false prophets in the sixteenth century. {GC88 186.1}

A few men, deeply affected by the excitement in the religious world, imagined themselves to have received special revelations from Heaven, and claimed to have been divinely commissioned to carry forward to its completion the Reformation which, they declared, had been but feebly begun by Luther. In truth, they were undoing the very work which he had accomplished. They rejected the great principle which was the very foundation of the Reformation,— that the Word of God is the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice; and for that unerring guide they substituted the changeable, uncertain standard of their own feelings and impressions. By this act of setting aside the great detector of error and falsehood, the way was opened for Satan to control minds as best pleased himself. {GC88 186.2}

One of these prophets claimed to have been instructed by the angel Gabriel. A student who united with him forsook his studies, declaring that he had been endowed by God himself with wisdom to expound his Word. Others who were naturally inclined to fanaticism united with them. The proceedings of these enthusiasts created no little excitement. The preaching of Luther had aroused the people everywhere to feel the necessity of reform, and now some really honest persons were misled by the pretensions of the new prophets. {GC88 186.3}

The leaders of the movement proceeded to Wittenberg, and urged their claims upon Melancthon and his co-labourers. Said they: "We are sent by God to teach the people. We have received special revelations from God himself, and therefore know what is coming to pass. We are apostles and prophets, and appeal to Doctor Luther as to the truth of what we say." {GC88 187.1}

The reformers were astonished and perplexed. This was such an element as they had never before encountered, and they knew not what course to pursue. Said Melancthon: "There are indeed spirits of no ordinary kind in these men; but what spirits?" "On the one hand, let us beware of quenching the Spirit of God, and on the other, of being seduced by the spirit of Satan." {GC88 187.2}

The fruit of the new teaching soon became apparent. The people were led to neglect the Bible or to wholly cast it aside. The schools were thrown into confusion. Students, spurning all restraint, abandoned their studies, and withdrew from the university. The men who thought themselves competent to revive and control the work of the Reformation, succeeded only in bringing it to the verge of ruin. The Romanists now regained their confidence, and exclaimed exultingly, "One more effort, and all will be ours." {GC88 187.3}

Luther at the Wartburg, hearing of what had occurred, said with deep concern, "I always expected that Satan would send us this plague." He perceived the true character of those pretended prophets, and saw the danger that threatened the cause of truth. The opposition of the pope and the emperor had not caused him so great perplexity and distress as he now experienced. From the professed friends of the Reformation had risen its worst enemies. The very truths which had brought him so great joy and consolation were being employed to stir up strife and create confusion in the church. {GC88 187.4}

In the work of reform, Luther had been urged forward by the Spirit of God, and had been carried beyond himself. He had not purposed to take such positions as he did, or to make so radical changes. He had been but the instrument in the hand of infinite power. Yet he often trembled for the result of his work. He had once said, "If I

knew that my doctrine had injured one human being, however poor and unknown,—which it could not, for it is the very gospel,—I would rather face death ten times over than not retract it.” {GC88 187.5}

And now Wittenberg itself, the very center of the Reformation, was fast falling under the power of fanaticism and lawlessness. This terrible condition had not resulted from the teachings of Luther; but throughout Germany his enemies were charging it upon him. In bitterness of soul he sometimes asked, “Can such be the end of this great work of the Reformation?” Again, as he wrestled with God in prayer, peace flowed into his heart. “The work is not mine, but thine own,” he said; “thou wilt not suffer it to be corrupted by superstition or fanaticism.” But the thought of remaining longer from the conflict in such a crisis, became insupportable. He determined to return to Wittenberg. {GC88 188.1}

Without delay he set out on his perilous journey. He was under the ban of the empire. Enemies were at liberty to take his life; friends were forbidden to aid or shelter him. The imperial government was adopting the most stringent measures against his adherents. But he saw that the work of the gospel was imperilled, and in the name of the Lord he went out fearlessly to battle for the truth. {GC88 188.2}

In a letter to the elector, after stating his purpose to leave the Wartburg, Luther said: “Be it known to your highness that I am repairing to Wittenberg under a protection more powerful than that of an elector. I have no thought of soliciting the aid of your highness; and am so far from desiring your protection that it is rather my purpose to protect your highness. If I knew that your highness could or would take up my defence, I would not come to Wittenberg. No secular sword can advance this cause; God must do all, without the aid or co-operation of man. He who has most faith is the most availing defence.” {GC88 188.3}

In a second letter, written on the way to Wittenberg, Luther added: “Behold me ready to bear your highness’ disapprobation, and the anger of the whole world. Are not the Wittenbergers my own sheep? Has not God committed them to my care? and ought I not, if need be, to lay down my life for them? Besides, I dread lest we should see, throughout Germany, a revolt by which God shall punish our nation.” {GC88 189.1}

With great caution and humility, yet with decision and firmness, he entered upon his work. “By the Word,” said he, “we must refute and expel what has gained a place and influence by violence. I would not resort to force against the superstitious and unbelieving.” “Let there be no compulsion. I have been labouring for liberty of conscience. Liberty is of the very essence of faith.” {GC88 189.2}

It was soon noised through Wittenberg that Luther had returned, and that he was to preach. The people flocked from all directions, and the church was filled to overflowing. Ascending the pulpit he with great wisdom and gentleness instructed, exhorted, and reproved. Touching the course of some who had resorted to violent measures in abolishing the mass, he said:— {GC88 189.3}

“The mass is a bad thing. God is opposed to it. It ought to be abolished, and I would that everywhere the supper of the gospel were established in its stead. But let none be torn from it by force. We must leave results to God. It is not we that must work, but his Word. ‘And why so?’ you will ask. Because the hearts of men are not in my hand as clay in the hand of the potter. We have a right to speak, but none whatever to compel. Let us preach; the rest belongs to God. If I resort to force, what shall I gain? Grimace, fair appearances, cramped uniformity, and hypocrisy. But there will be no hearty sincerity, no faith, no love. Where these are wanting, all is wanting, and I would not give a straw for such a victory. God does more by the simple power of his Word than you and I and the whole world could effect by all our efforts put together. God arrests the heart, and that once taken, all is won.” {GC88 189.4}

“I am ready to preach, argue, write; but I will not constrain any one, for faith is but a voluntary act. Call to mind what I have already done. I stood up against pope, indulgences, and papists; but without violence or tumult. I brought forward God’s Word; I preached and wrote, and then I stopped. And while I laid me down and slept, . . . the Word I had preached brought down the power of the pope to the ground, so that never prince or emperor had dealt it such a blow. For my part I did next to nothing; the power of the Word did the whole business. Had I appealed to force, Germany might have been deluged with blood. But what would have been the consequence? Ruin and destruction of soul and body. Accordingly I kept quiet, and let the Word run through the length and breadth of the land.” {GC88 190.1}

Day after day, for a whole week, Luther continued to preach to eager crowds. The Word of God broke the spell of fanatical excitement. The power of the gospel brought back the misguided people into the way of truth. {GC88 190.2}

Luther had no desire to encounter the fanatics whose course had been productive of so great evil. He knew them to be men of unsound judgment and undisciplined passions, who, while claiming to be especially illuminated from Heaven, would not endure the slightest contradiction, or even the kindest reproof or counsel. Arrogating to themselves supreme authority, they required every one, without a question, to acknowledge their claims. But as they demanded an interview with him, he consented to meet them; and so successfully did he expose their pretensions, that the impostors at once departed from Wittenberg. {GC88 190.3}

The fanaticism was checked for a time; but several years later it broke out with greater violence and more terrible results. Said Luther, concerning the leaders in this movement: "To them the Holy Scriptures were but a dead letter, and they all began to cry, 'The Spirit! the Spirit!' But most assuredly I will not follow where their spirit leads them. May God in his mercy preserve me from a church in which there are none but such saints. I wish to be in fellowship with the humble, the feeble, the sick, who know and feel their sins, and who sigh and cry continually to God from the bottom of their hearts to obtain his consolation and support." {GC88 190.4}

Thomas Munzer, the most active of the fanatics, was a man of considerable ability, which, rightly directed, would have enabled him to do good; but he had not learned the first principles of true religion. He imagined himself ordained of God to reform the world, forgetting, like many other enthusiasts, that the reform should begin with himself. He was ambitious to obtain position and influence, and was unwilling to be second, even to Luther. He declared that the reformers, in substituting the authority of Scripture for that of the pope, were only establishing a different form of popery. He himself, he claimed, had been divinely commissioned to introduce the true reform. "He who hath the Spirit," said Munzer, "hath true faith, although he should never once in all his life see the Holy Scriptures." {GC88 191.1}

The fanatical teachers gave themselves up to be governed by impressions, regarding every thought and impulse as the voice of God; consequently they went to great extremes. Some even burned their Bibles, exclaiming, "The letter kills, but the Spirit giveth life." Munzer's teaching appealed to men's desire for the marvellous, while it gratified their pride by virtually placing human ideas and opinions above the Word of God. His doctrines were received by thousands. He soon denounced all order in public worship, and declared that to obey princes was to attempt to serve both God and Belial. {GC88 191.2}

The minds of the people, already beginning to throw off the yoke of the papacy, were also becoming impatient under the restraints of civil authority. Munzer's revolutionary teachings, claiming divine sanction, led them to break away from all control, and give the rein to their prejudices and passions. The most terrible scenes of sedition and strife followed, and the fields of Germany were drenched with blood. {GC88 191.3}

The agony of soul which Luther had so long before experienced at Erfurt, now pressed upon him with redoubled power as he saw the results of fanaticism charged upon the Reformation. The papist princes declared—and many were ready to credit the statement—that the rebellion was the legitimate fruit of Luther's doctrines. Although this charge was without the slightest foundation, it could not but cause the reformer great distress. That the cause of truth should be thus disgraced by being ranked with the basest fanaticism, seemed more than he could endure. On the other hand, the leaders in the revolt hated Luther because he had not only opposed their doctrines and denied their claims to divine inspiration, but had pronounced them rebels against the civil authority. In retaliation they denounced him as a base pretender. He seemed to have brought upon himself the enmity of both princes and people. {GC88 192.1}

The Romanists exulted, expecting to witness the speedy downfall of the Reformation; and they blamed Luther, even for the errors which he had been most earnestly endeavouring to correct. The fanatical party, by falsely claiming to have been treated with great injustice, succeeded in gaining the sympathies of a large class of the people, and, is often the case with those who take the wrong side, they came to be regarded as martyrs. Thus the ones who were exerting every energy in opposition to the Reformation were pitied and lauded as the victims of

cruelty and oppression. This was the work of Satan, prompted by the same spirit of rebellion which was first manifested in Heaven. {GC88 192.2}

Satan is constantly seeking to deceive men, and lead them to call sin righteousness, and righteousness sin. How successful has been his work! How often censure and reproach are cast upon God's faithful servants because they will stand fearlessly in defence of the truth! Men who are but agents of Satan are praised and flattered, and even looked upon as martyrs, while those who should be respected and sustained for their fidelity to God, are left to stand alone, under suspicion and distrust. {GC88 192.3}

Counterfeit holiness, spurious sanctification, is still doing its work of deception. Under various forms it exhibits the same spirit as in the days of Luther, diverting minds from the Scriptures, and leading men to follow their own feelings and impressions rather than to yield obedience to the law of God. This is one of Satan's most successful devices to cast reproach upon purity and truth. {GC88 193.1}

Fearlessly did Luther defend the gospel from the attacks which came from every quarter. The Word of God proved itself a weapon mighty in every conflict. With that Word he warred against the usurped authority of the pope, and the rationalistic philosophy of the schoolmen, while he stood firm as a rock against the fanaticism that sought to ally itself with the Reformation. {GC88 193.2}

Each of these opposing elements was in its own way setting aside the Holy Scriptures, and exalting human wisdom as the source of religious truth and knowledge. Rationalism idolizes reason, and makes this the criterion for religion. Romanism, claiming for her sovereign pontiff an inspiration descended in unbroken line from the apostles, and unchangeable through all time, gives ample opportunity for every species of extravagance and corruption to be concealed under the sanctity of the apostolic commission. The inspiration claimed by Munzer and his associates proceeded from no higher source than the vagaries of the imagination, and its influence was subversive of all authority, human or divine. True Christianity receives the Word of God as the great treasure-house of inspired truth, and the test of all inspiration. {GC88 193.3}

Upon his return from the Wartburg, Luther completed his translation of the New Testament, and the gospel was soon after given to the people of Germany in their own language. This translation was received with great joy by all who loved the truth; but it was scornfully rejected by those who chose human traditions and the commandments of men. {GC88 193.4}

The priests were alarmed at the thought that the common people would now be able to discuss with them the precepts of God's Word, and that their own ignorance would thus be exposed. The weapons of their carnal reasoning were powerless against the sword of the Spirit. Rome summoned all her authority to prevent the circulation of the Scriptures; but decrees, anathemas, and tortures were alike in vain. The more she condemned and prohibited the Bible, the greater was the anxiety of the people to know what it really taught. All who could read were eager to study the Word of God for themselves. They carried it about with them, and read and re-read, and could not be satisfied until they had committed large portions to memory. Seeing the favour with which the New Testament was received, Luther immediately began the translation of the Old, and published it in parts as fast as completed. {GC88 194.1}

Luther's writings were welcomed alike in city and in hamlet. "Whatever Luther and his friends composed, others disseminated far and wide. Monks who had been led to see the unlawfulness of the monastic obligations, desirous of exchanging a life of indolence for one of activity, but too ignorant to be able themselves to proclaim the Word of God, traversed the provinces, selling the writings of the reformer and his friends. Germany was ere long overrun with these enterprising colporteurs." {GC88 194.2}

These writings were studied with deep interest by rich and poor, the learned and the ignorant. At night the teachers of the village schools read them aloud to little groups gathered at the fireside. With every effort, some souls would be convicted of the truth, and, receiving the word with gladness, would in their turn tell the good news to others. {GC88 194.3}

The words of inspiration were verified: "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." [Psalm 119:130.] The study of the Scriptures was working a mighty change in the minds and hearts of the

people. The papal rule had placed upon its subjects an iron yoke which held them in ignorance and degradation. A superstitious observance of forms had been scrupulously maintained; but in all their service the heart and intellect had had little part. The preaching of Luther, setting forth the plain truths of God's Word, and then the Word itself, placed in the hands of the common people, had aroused their dormant powers, not only purifying and ennobling the spiritual nature, but imparting new strength and vigour to the intellect. {GC88 195.1}

Persons of all ranks were to be seen with the Bible in their hands, defending the doctrines of the Reformation. The papists who had left the study of the Scriptures to the priests and monks, now called upon them to come forward and refute the new teachings. But, ignorant alike of the Scriptures and of the power of God, priests and friars were totally defeated by those whom they had denounced as unlearned and heretical. "Unhappily," said a Catholic writer. "Luther had persuaded his followers that their faith ought only to be founded on the oracles of Holy Writ." Crowds would gather to hear the truth advocated by men of little education, and even discussed by them with learned and eloquent theologians. The shameful ignorance of these great men was made apparent as their arguments were met by the simple teachings of God's Word. Labourers, soldiers, women, and even children, were better acquainted with the Bible teachings than were the priests and learned doctors. {GC88 195.2}

The contrast between the disciples of the gospel and the upholders of popish superstition was no less manifest in the ranks of scholars than among the common people. "Opposed to the old defenders of the hierarchy, who had neglected the acquirement of the languages and the cultivation of literature, were generous-minded youths, most of them devoted to study and the investigation of the Scriptures, and acquainted with the literary treasures of antiquity. Gifted with quickness of apprehension, elevation of soul, and intrepidity of heart, these youths soon attained such proficiency that none could compete with them." "So that on public occasions, on which these youthful defenders of the Reformation encountered the Romish doctors, their assaults were carried on with an ease and confidence that embarrassed the dullness of their adversaries, and exposed them before all to deserved contempt." {GC88 195.3}

As the Romish clergy saw their congregations diminishing, they invoked the aid of the magistrates, and by every means in their power endeavoured to bring back their hearers. But the people had found in the new teachings that which supplied the wants of their souls, and they turned away from those who had so long fed them with the worthless husks of superstitious rites and human traditions. {GC88 196.1}

When persecution was kindled against the teachers of the truth, they gave heed to the words of Christ, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." [Matthew 10:23.] The light penetrated everywhere. The fugitives would find somewhere a hospitable door opened to them, and there abiding, they would preach Christ, sometimes in the church, or, if denied that privilege, in private houses or in the open air. Wherever they could obtain a hearing was a consecrated temple. The truth, proclaimed with such energy and assurance, spread with irresistible power. {GC88 196.2}

In vain both ecclesiastical and civil authorities were invoked to crush the heresy. In vain they resorted to imprisonment, torture, fire, and sword. Thousands of believers sealed their faith with their blood, and yet the work went on. Persecution served only to extend the truth; and the fanaticism which Satan endeavoured to unite with it, resulted in making more clear the contrast between the work of Satan and the work of God. {GC88 196.3}

Chapter XI - Protest of the Princes

One of the noblest testimonies ever uttered for the Reformation, was the Protest offered by the Christian princes of Germany at the Diet of Spires in 1529. The courage, faith, and firmness of those men of God, gained for succeeding ages liberty of thought and of conscience. Their Protest gave to the reformed church the name of Protestant; its principles are the very essence of Protestantism. {GC88 197.1}

A dark and threatening day had come for the Reformation. Notwithstanding the edict of Worms, declaring Luther to be an outlaw, and forbidding the teaching or belief of his doctrines, religious toleration had thus far prevailed in the empire. God's providence had held in check the forces that opposed the truth. Charles V. was bent on crushing the Reformation, but often as he raised his hand to strike, he had been forced to turn aside the blow. Again and again the immediate destruction of all who dared to oppose themselves to Rome appeared inevitable; but

at the critical moment the armies of the Turk appeared on the eastern frontier, or the king of France, or even the pope himself, jealous of the increasing greatness of the emperor, made war upon him; and thus, amid the strife and tumult of nations, the Reformation had been left to strengthen and extend. {GC88 197.2}

At last, however, the papal sovereigns had stifled their feuds, that they might make common cause against the reformers. The Diet of Spires in 1526 had given each State full liberty in matters of religion until the meeting of a general council; but no sooner had the dangers passed which secured this concession, than the emperor summoned a second Diet to convene at Spires in 1529 for the purpose of crushing heresy. The princes were to be induced, by peaceable means if possible, to side against the Reformation; but if these failed, Charles was prepared to resort to the sword. {GC88 197.3}

The papists were exultant. They appeared at Spires in great numbers, and openly manifested their hostility toward the reformers and all who favoured them. Said Melancthon, "We are the execration and the sweepings of the earth; but Christ will look down on his poor people, and will preserve them." The evangelical princes in attendance at the Diet were forbidden even to have the gospel preached in their dwellings. But the people of Spires thirsted for the Word of God, and, notwithstanding the prohibition, thousands flocked to the services held in the chapel of the Elector of Saxony. {GC88 198.1}

This hastened the crisis. And imperial message announced to the Diet that as the resolution granting liberty of conscience had given rise to great disorders, the emperor required that it be annulled. This arbitrary act excited the indignation and alarm of the evangelical Christians. Said one, "Christ has again fallen into the hands of Caiaphas and Pilate." The Romanists became more violent. A bigoted papist declared, "The Turks are better than the Lutherans; for the Turks observe fast-days, and the Lutherans violate them. If we must choose between the Holy Scriptures of God and the old errors of the church, we should reject the former." Said Melancthon, "Every day, in full assembly, Faber casts some new stone against the Gospellers." {GC88 198.2}

Religious toleration had been legally established, and the evangelical States were resolved to oppose the infringement of their rights. Luther, being still under the ban imposed by the edict of Worms, was not permitted to be present at Spires; but his place was supplied by his co-labourers and the princes whom God had raised up to defend his cause in this emergency. The noble Frederick of Saxony, Luther's former protector, had been removed by death; but Duke John, his brother and successor, had joyfully welcomed the Reformation, and while a friend of peace, he displayed great energy and courage in all matters relating to the interests of the faith. {GC88 198.3}

The priests demanded that the States which had accepted the Reformation submit implicitly to Romish jurisdiction. The reformers, on the other hand, claimed the liberty which had previously been granted. They could not consent that Rome should again bring under her control those States that had with so great joy received the Word of God. {GC88 199.1}

As a compromise it was finally proposed that where the Reformation had not become established, the edict of Worms should be rigorously enforced; and that in the evangelical States, where there would be danger of revolt, no new reform should be introduced, there should be no preaching upon disputed points, the celebration of the mass should not be opposed, and no Roman Catholic should be permitted to embrace Lutheranism. This measure passed the Diet, to the great satisfaction of the popish priests and prelates. {GC88 199.2}

If this edict were enforced, the Reformation could neither be extended where as yet it had not reached, nor be established on a firm foundation where it already existed. Liberty of speech would be prohibited. No conversions would be allowed. And to these restrictions and prohibitions the friends of the Reformation were required at once to submit. The hopes of the world seemed about to be extinguished. The re-establishment of the papal worship would inevitably cause a revival of the ancient abuses; and an occasion would readily be found for completing the destruction of a work that had already been shaken by fanaticism and dissension. {GC88 199.3}

As the evangelical party met for consultation, one looked to another in blank dismay. From one to another passed the inquiry, "What is to be done?" Mighty issues for the world were at stake. "Should the chiefs of the Reformation submit, and accept the edict? How easily might the reformers at this crisis, which was truly a tremendous one, have argued themselves into a wrong course! How many plausible pretexts and fair reasons might they have found for submission! The Lutheran princes were guaranteed the free exercise of their religion. The same

boon was extended to all those of their subjects who, prior to the passing of the measure, had embraced the reformed views. Ought not this to content them? How many perils would submission avoid! On what unknown hazards and conflicts would opposition launch them! Who knows what opportunities the future may bring? Let us embrace peace; let us seize the olive-branch Rome holds out, and close the wounds of Germany. With arguments like these might the reformers have justified their adoption of a course which would have assuredly issued in no long time in the overthrow of their cause. {GC88 199.4}

“Happily they looked at the principle on which this arrangement was based, and they acted in faith. What was that principle?—It was the right of Rome to coerce conscience and forbid free inquiry. But were not themselves and their Protestant subjects to enjoy religious freedom?—Yes, as a favour, specially stipulated for in the arrangement, but not as a right. As to all outside that arrangement, the great principle of authority was to rule; conscience was out of court, Rome was infallible judge, and must be obeyed. The acceptance of the proposed arrangement would have been a virtual admission that religious liberty ought to be confined to reformed Saxony; and as to all the rest of Christendom, free inquiry and the profession of the reformed faith were crimes, and must be visited with the dungeon and the stake. Could they consent to localize religious liberty? to have it proclaimed that the Reformation had made its last convert, had subjugated its last acre? and that wherever Rome bore sway at this hour, there her dominion was to be perpetuated? Could the reformers have pleaded that they were innocent of the blood of those hundreds and thousands who, in pursuance of this arrangement, would have to yield up their lives in popish lands? This would have been to betray at that supreme hour, the cause of the gospel, and the liberties of Christendom.” Rather would they sacrifice their dominions, their titles, and their own lives. {GC88 200.1}

“Let us reject this decree,” said the princes. “In matters of conscience the majority has no power.” The deputies declared that Germany was indebted to the decree of toleration for the peace which she enjoyed, and that its abolition would fill the empire with troubles and divisions. “The Diet is incompetent,” said they, “to do more than preserve religious liberty until a council meets.” To protect liberty of conscience is the duty of the State, and this is the limit of its authority in matters of religion. Every secular government that attempts to regulate or enforce religious observances by civil authority is sacrificing the very principle for which the evangelical Christians so nobly struggled. {GC88 201.1}

The papists determined to put down what they termed daring obstinacy. They began by endeavouring to cause divisions among the supporters of the Reformation, and to intimidate all who had not openly declared in its favour. The representatives of the free cities were at last summoned before the Diet, and required to declare whether they would accede to the terms of the proposition. They pleaded for delay, but in vain. When brought to the test, nearly one-half their number sided with the reformers. Those who thus refused to sacrifice liberty of conscience and the right of individual judgment well knew that their position marked them for future criticism, condemnation, and persecution. Said one of the delegates, “We must either deny the Word of God or—be burned.” {GC88 201.2}

King Ferdinand, the emperor's representative at the Diet, saw that the decree would cause serious divisions unless the princes could be induced to accept and sustain it. He therefore tried the art of persuasion, well knowing that to employ force with such men would only render them the more determined. He begged them to accept the decree, assuring them that such an act would be highly gratifying to the emperor. But these faithful men acknowledged an authority above that of earthly rulers, and they answered calmly, “We will obey the emperor in everything that may contribute to maintain peace and the honour of God.” {GC88 201.3}

In the presence of the Diet, the king at last announced that the decree was about to be published as an imperial edict, and that the only course remaining for the elector and his friends was to submit to the majority. Having thus spoken, he withdrew from the assembly, giving the reformers no opportunity for deliberation or reply. In vain they sent messengers entreating him to return. To their remonstrances he answered only, “It is a settled affair; submission is all that remains.” {GC88 202.1}

The imperial party were convinced that the Christian princes would adhere to the Holy Scriptures as superior to human doctrines and requirements; and they knew that wherever this principle was accepted, the papacy would eventually be overthrown. But, like thousands since their time, looking only “at the things which are seen,” they flattered themselves that the cause of the emperor and the pope was strong, and that of the reformers weak. Had the reformers depended upon human aid alone, they would have been as powerless as the papists supposed. But though

weak in numbers, and at variance with Rome, they had their strength. They appealed from the decision of the Diet to the Scriptures of truth, and from the emperor of Germany to the King of Heaven and earth. {GC88 202.2}

As Ferdinand had refused to regard their conscientious convictions, the princes decided not to heed his absence, but to bring their Protest before the national council without delay. A solemn declaration was therefore drawn up, and presented to the Diet:— {GC88 202.3}

“We protest by these presents, before God, our only Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and Saviour, and who will one day be our Judge, as well as before all men and all creatures, that we, for us and our people, neither consent nor adhere in any manner whatever to the proposed decree in anything that is contrary to God, to his Word, to our right conscience, or to the salvation of our souls. . . . We cannot assert that when Almighty God calls a man to his knowledge, he dare not embrace that divine knowledge. . . . There is no true doctrine but that which conforms to the Word of God. The Lord forbids the teaching of any other faith. The Holy Scriptures, with one text explained by other and plainer texts, are, in all things necessary for the Christian, easy to be understood, and adapted to enlighten. We are therefore resolved by divine grace to maintain the pure preaching of God's only Word, as it is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, without anything added thereto. This word is the only truth. It is the sure rule of all doctrine and life, and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the powers of hell, whilst all the vanities that are set up against it shall fall before the face of God.” “We therefore reject the yoke that is imposed upon us.” “At the same time we are in expectation that his imperial majesty will behave toward us like a Christian prince who loves God above all things; and we declare ourselves ready to pay unto him, as well as unto you, gracious lords, all the affection and obedience that are our just and legitimate duty.” {GC88 202.4}

A deep impression was made upon the Diet. The majority were filled with amazement and alarm at the boldness of the protesters. The future appeared to them stormy and uncertain. Dissension, strife, and bloodshed seemed inevitable. But the reformers, assured of the justice of their cause, and relying upon the arm of Omnipotence, were full of courage and firmness. {GC88 203.1}

The Protest denied the right of civil rulers to legislate in matters between the soul and God, and declared with prophets and apostles, “We ought to obey God rather than men.” It rejected also the arbitrary power of the church, and set forth the unerring principle that all human teaching should be in subjection to the oracles of God. The protesters had thrown off the yoke of man's supremacy, and had exalted Christ as supreme in the church, and his Word in the pulpit. The power of conscience was set above the State, and the authority of the Holy Scriptures above the visible church. The crown of Christ was uplifted above the pope's tiara and the emperor's diadem. The protesters had moreover affirmed their right to freely utter their convictions of truth. They would not only believe and obey, but teach what the Word of God presents, and they denied the right of priest or magistrate to interfere. The Protest of Spires was a solemn witness against religious intolerance, and an assertion of the right of all men to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. {GC88 203.2}

The declaration had been made. It was written in the memory of thousands, and registered in the books of Heaven, where no effort of man could erase it. All evangelical Germany adopted the Protest as the expression of its faith. Everywhere men beheld in this declaration the promise of a new and better era. Said one of the princes to the Protestants of Spires, “May the Almighty, who has given you grace to confess energetically, freely, and fearlessly; preserve you in that Christian firmness until the day of eternity.” {GC88 204.1}

Had the Reformation, after attaining a degree of success, consented to temporize to secure favour with the world, it would have been untrue to God and to itself, and would thus have insured its own destruction. The experience of those noble reformers contains a lesson for all succeeding ages. Satan's manner of working against God and his Word has not changed; he is still as much opposed to the Scriptures being made the guide of life as in the sixteenth century. In our time there is a wide departure from their doctrines and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle,—the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty. Satan is still working through every means which he can control to destroy religious liberty. The antichristian power which the protesters of Spires rejected, is now with renewed vigour seeking to re-establish its lost supremacy. The same unswerving adherence to the Word of God manifested at that crisis of the Reformation, is the only hope of reform today. {GC88 204.2}

There appeared tokens of danger to the Protestants. There were tokens, also, that the divine hand was stretched out to protect the faithful. It was about this time that Melancthon hurried his friend Grynaeus through the streets of Spires to the Rhine, and urged him to cross the river without delay. Grynaeus, in astonishment, desired to know the reason for this sudden flight. Said Melancthon, "An old man of grave and solemn aspect, but who is unknown to me, appeared before me, and said, 'In a minute the officers of justice will be sent by Ferdinand to arrest Grynaeus.'" On the banks of the Rhine, Melancthon waited until the waters of that stream interposed between his beloved friend and those who sought his life. When he saw him on the other side at last, he said, "He is torn from the cruel jaws of those who thirst for innocent blood." {GC88 205.1}

Grynaeus had been on intimate terms with a leading papist doctor; but, having been shocked at one of his sermons, he went to him, and entreated that he would no longer war against the truth. The papist concealed his anger, but immediately repaired to the king, and obtained from him authority to arrest the protester. When Melancthon returned to his house, he was informed that after his departure officers in pursuit of Grynaeus had searched it from top to bottom. He ever believed that the Lord had saved his friend by sending a holy angel to give him warning. {GC88 205.2}

The Reformation was to be brought into greater prominence before the mighty ones of the earth. The evangelical princes had been denied a hearing by King Ferdinand; but they were to be granted an opportunity to present their cause in the presence of the emperor and the assembled dignitaries of Church and State. To quiet the dissensions which disturbed the empire, Charles V., in the year following the Protest of Spires, convoked a Diet at Augsburg, over which he announced his intention to preside in person. Thither the Protestant leaders were summoned. {GC88 205.3}

Great dangers threatened the Reformation; but its advocates still trusted their cause with God, and pledged themselves to be firm to the gospel. The Elector of Saxony was urged by his councillors not to appear at the Diet. The emperor, they said, required the attendance of the princes in order to draw them into a snare. "Was it not risking everything to shut oneself up within the walls of a city with a powerful enemy?" But others nobly declared. "Let the princes only comport themselves with courage, and God's cause is saved." "Our God is faithful; he will not abandon us," said Luther. The elector set out, with his retinue, for Augsburg. All were acquainted with the dangers that menaced him, and many went forward with gloomy countenance and troubled heart. But Luther—who accompanied them as far as Coburg—revived their sinking faith by singing the hymn, written on that journey,—“A strong tower is our God.” Many an anxious foreboding was banished, many a heavy heart lightened, at the sound of the inspiring strains. {GC88 206.1}

The reformed princes had determined upon having a statement of their views in systematic form, with the evidence from the Scriptures, to present before the Diet; and the task of its preparation was committed to Luther, Melancthon, and their associates. This Confession was accepted by the Protestants as an exposition of their faith, and they assembled to affix their names to the important document. It was a solemn and trying time. The reformers were solicitous that their cause should not be confounded with political questions; they felt that the Reformation should exercise no other influence than that which proceeds from the Word of God. As the Christian princes advanced to sign the Confession, Melancthon interposed, saying, "It is for the theologians and ministers to propose these things, while the authority of the mighty ones of earth is to be reserved for other matters." "God forbid," replied John of Saxony, "that you should exclude me. I am resolved to do my duty, without being troubled about my crown. I desire to confess the Lord. My electoral hat and robes are not so precious to me as the cross of Jesus Christ." Having thus spoken he wrote down his name. Said another of the princes as he took the pen, "If the honour of my Lord Jesus Christ requires it, I am ready to leave my goods and life behind me." "Rather would I renounce my subjects and my States, rather would I quit the country of my fathers, staff in hand," he continued, "than to receive any other doctrine than is contained in this Confession." Such was the faith and daring of those men of God. {GC88 206.2}

The appointed time came to appear before the emperor. Charles V., seated upon his throne, surrounded by the electors and the princes, gave audience to the Protestant reformers. The confession of their faith was read. In that august assembly the truths of the gospel were clearly set forth, and the errors of the papal church were pointed out. Well has that day been pronounced "the greatest day of the Reformation, and one of the most glorious in the history of Christianity and of the world." {GC88 207.1}

But a few years had passed since the monk of Wittenberg stood alone at Worms before the national council. Now in his stead were the noblest and most powerful princes of the empire. Luther had been forbidden to appear at Augsburg, but he had been present by his words and prayers. “I thrill with joy,” he wrote, “that I have lived until this hour, in which Christ has been publicly exalted by such illustrious confessors, and in so glorious an assembly. Herein is fulfilled what the Scripture says, ‘I will declare thy testimony in the presence of kings.’” {GC88 207.2}

In the days of Paul, the gospel for which he was imprisoned was thus brought before the princes and nobles of the imperial city. So on this occasion, “that which the emperor had forbidden to be preached from the pulpit, was proclaimed in the palace; what many had regarded as unfit even for servants to listen to, was heard with wonder by the masters and lords of the empire. Kings and great men were the auditory, crowned princes were the preachers, and the sermon was the royal truth of God.” “Since the apostolic age,” says a writer, “there has never been a greater work, or a more magnificent confession of Jesus Christ.” {GC88 207.3}

“All that the Lutherans have said is true, and we cannot deny it,” declared a papist bishop. “Can you by sound reasons refute the Confession made by the elector and his allies?” asked another, of Doctor Eck. “Not with the writings of the apostles and prophets,” was the reply; “but with the Fathers and councils I can.” “I understand, then,” responded the questioner, “that the Lutherans are entrenched in the Scriptures, and we are only outside.” Some of the princes of Germany were won to the reformed faith. The emperor himself declared that the Protestant articles were but the truth. The Confession was translated into many languages, and circulated through all Europe, and it has been accepted by millions in succeeding generations as the expression of their faith. {GC88 208.1}

God's faithful servants were not toiling alone. While “principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high places” were leagued against them, the Lord did not forsake his people. Could their eyes have been opened, they would have seen as marked evidence of divine presence and aid as was granted to a prophet of old. When Elisha's servant pointed his master to the hostile army surrounding them, and cutting off all opportunity for escape, the prophet prayed, “Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see.” [2 Kings 6:17.] And, lo, the mountain was filled with chariots and horses of fire, the army of Heaven stationed to protect the man of God. Thus did angels guard the workers in the cause of the Reformation. {GC88 208.2}

One of the principles most firmly maintained by Luther was that there should be no resort to secular power in support of the Reformation, and no appeal to arms for its defence. He rejoiced that the gospel was confessed by princes of the empire; but when they proposed to unite in a defensive league, he declared that “the doctrine of the gospel should be defended by God alone. The less men meddle in the work, the more striking would be God's intervention in its behalf. All the political precautions suggested were, in his view, attributable to unworthy fear and sinful mistrust.” {GC88 209.1}

When powerful foes were uniting to overthrow the reformed faith, and thousands of swords seemed about to be unsheathed against it, Luther wrote: “Satan is raging; ungodly priests take counsel together, and we are threatened with war. Exhort the people to contend earnestly before the throne of the Lord, by faith and prayer, that our adversaries, being overcome by the Spirit of God, may be constrained to peace. The most urgent of our wants—the very first thing we have to do, is to pray; let the people know that they are at this hour exposed to the edge of the sword and the rage of the devil; let them pray.” {GC88 209.2}

Again, at a later date, referring to the league contemplated by the reformed princes, he declared that the only weapon employed in this warfare should be “the sword of the Spirit.” He wrote to the Elector of Saxony: “We cannot in our conscience approve of the proposed alliance. Our Lord Christ is mighty enough, and can well find ways and means to rescue us from danger, and bring the thoughts of the ungodly princes to nothing. . . . Christ is only trying us whether we are willing to obey his word or no, and whether we hold it for certain truth or not. We would rather die ten times over than that the gospel should be a cause of blood or hurt by any act of ours. Let us rather patiently suffer, and, as the psalmist says, be accounted as sheep for the slaughter; and instead of avenging or defending ourselves, leave room for God's wrath.” “The cross of Christ must be borne. Let your highness be without fear. We shall do more by our prayers than all our enemies by their boastings. Only let not your hands be stained with the blood of your brethren. If the emperor requires us to be given up to his tribunals, we are ready to appear. You cannot defend the faith; each one should believe at his own risk and peril.” {GC88 209.3}

From the secret place of prayer came the power that shook the world in the Great Reformation. There, with holy calmness, the servants of the Lord set their feet upon the rock of his promises. During the struggle at Augsburg, Luther did not fail to devote three hours each day to prayer; and these were taken from that portion of the day most favourable to study. In the privacy of his chamber he was heard to pour out his soul before God in words full of adoration, fear, and hope, as if speaking to a friend. "I know that thou art our Father and our God," he said, "and that thou wilt scatter the persecutors of thy children; for thou art thyself endangered with us. All this matter is thine, and it is only by thy constraint that we have put our hands to it. Defend us, then, O Father!" To Melancthon, who was crushed under the burden of anxiety and fear, he wrote: "Grace and peace in Christ! In Christ, I say, and not in the world, Amen! I hate with exceeding hatred those extreme cares which consume you. If the cause is unjust, abandon it; if the cause is just, why should we belie the promises of Him who commands us to sleep without fear?" "Christ will not be wanting to the work of justice and truth. He lives, he reigns; what fear, then, can we have?" {GC88 210.1}

God did listen to the cries of his servants. He gave to princes and ministers grace and courage to maintain the truth against the rulers of the darkness of this world. Says the Lord, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-store, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." [1 Peter 2:6.] The Protestant reformers had built on Christ, and the gates of hell could not prevail against them. {GC88 210.2}

Chapter XII - The French Reformation

The Protest of Spires and the Confession at Augsburg, which marked the triumph of the Reformation in Germany, were followed by years of conflict and darkness. Weakened by divisions among its supporters, and assailed by powerful foes, Protestantism seemed destined to be utterly destroyed. Thousands sealed their testimony with their blood. Civil war broke out; the Protestant cause was betrayed by one of its leading adherents; the noblest of the reformed princes fell into the hands of the emperor, and were dragged as captives from town to town. But in the moment of his apparent triumph, the emperor was smitten with defeat. He saw the prey wrested from his grasp, and he was forced at last to grant toleration to the doctrines which it had been the ambition of his life to destroy. He had staked his kingdom, his treasures, and life itself, upon the crushing out of the heresy. Now he saw his armies wasted by battle, his treasures drained, his many kingdoms threatened by revolt, while everywhere the faith which he had vainly endeavoured to suppress, was extending. Charles V. had been battling against omnipotent power. God had said, "Let there be light," but the emperor had sought to keep the darkness unbroken. His purposes had failed, and in premature old age, worn out with the long struggle, he abdicated the throne, and buried himself in a cloister. {GC88 211.1}

In Switzerland, as in Germany, there came dark days for the Reformation. While many cantons accepted the reformed faith, others clung with blind persistence to the creed of Rome. Their persecution of those who desired to receive the truth, finally gave rise to civil war. Zwingle and many who had united with him in reform, fell on the bloody field of Cappel. Oecolampadius, overcome by these terrible disasters, soon after died. Rome was triumphant, and in many places seemed about to recover all that she had lost. But He whose counsels are from everlasting had not forsaken his cause or his people. His hand would bring deliverance for them. In other lands he had raised up labourers to carry forward the reform. {GC88 211.2}

In France, before the name of Luther had been heard as a reformer, the day had already begun to break. One of the first to catch the light was the aged Lefebvre, a man of extensive learning, a professor in the University of Paris, and a sincere and zealous papist. In his researches into ancient literature his attention was directed to the Bible, and he introduced its study among his students. Lefebvre was an enthusiastic adorer of the saints, and he had undertaken to prepare a history of the saints and martyrs, as given in the legends of the church. This was a work which involved great labour, but he had already made considerable progress in it, when, thinking that he might obtain useful assistance from the Bible, he began its study with this object. Here indeed he found saints brought to view, but not such as figured in the Romish calendar. A flood of divine light broke in upon his mind. In amazement and disgust he turned away from his self-appointed task, and devoted himself to the Word of God. The precious truths which he there discovered, he soon began to teach. In 1512, before either Luther or Zwingle had begun the work of reform, Lefebvre wrote: "It is God who gives us, by faith, that righteousness which by grace justifies unto eternal life." Dwelling upon the mysteries of redemption, he exclaimed, "Oh, the unspeakable greatness of that exchange,—the Sinless One is condemned, and he who is guilty goes free; the Blessing bears the curse, and the

curse is brought into blessing; the Life dies, and the dead live; the Glory is whelmed in darkness, and he who knew nothing but confusion of face is clothed with glory.” {GC88 212.1}

And while teaching that the glory of salvation belongs solely to God, he also declared that the duty of obedience belongs to man. “If thou art a member of Christ's church,” he said, “thou art a member of his body; if thou art of his body, then thou art full of the divine nature.” “Oh, if men could but enter into the understanding of this privilege, how purely, chastely, and holily, would they live, and how contemptible, when compared with the glory within them,— that glory which the eye of flesh cannot see,—would they deem all the glory of this world.” {GC88 213.1}

There were some among Lefevre's students who listened eagerly to his words, and who, long after the teacher's voice should be silenced, were to continue to declare the truth. Such was William Farel. The son of pious parents, and educated to accept with implicit faith the teachings of the church, he might, with the apostle Paul, have declared concerning himself, “After the most straightest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.” [Acts 26:5.] A devoted Romanist, he burned with zeal to destroy all who should dare to oppose the church. “I would gnash my teeth like a furious wolf,” he afterward said, referring to this period of his life, “when I heard any one speaking against the pope.” He had been untiring in his adoration of the saints, in company with Lefevre making the round of the churches of Paris, worshiping at the altars, and adorning with gifts the holy shrines. But these observances could not bring peace of soul. Conviction of sin fastened upon him, which all the acts of penance that he practiced, failed to banish. As a voice from Heaven, he listened to the reformer's words: “Salvation is of grace. The Innocent One is condemned, and the criminal is acquitted.” “It is the cross of Christ alone that opens the gates of Heaven, and shuts the gates of hell.” {GC88 213.2}

Farel joyfully accepted the truth. By a conversion like that of Paul, he turned from the bondage of tradition to the liberty of the sons of God. “Instead of the murderous heart of a ravening wolf,” he came back, he says, “quietly, like a meek and harmless lamb, having his heart entirely withdrawn from the pope, and given to Jesus Christ.” {GC88 213.3}

While Lefevre continued to spread the light among his students, Farel, as zealous in the cause of Christ as he had been in that of the pope, went forth to declare the truth in public. A dignitary of the church, the bishop of Meaux, soon after united with them. Other teachers who ranked high for their ability and learning, joined in proclaiming the gospel, and it won adherents among all classes, from the homes of artisans and peasants to the palace of the king. The sister of Francis I., then the reigning monarch, accepted the reformed faith. The king himself, and the queen mother, appeared for a time to regard it with favour, and with high hopes the reformers looked forward to the time when France should be won to the gospel. {GC88 214.1}

But their hopes were not to be realized. Trial and persecution awaited the disciples of Christ. This, however, was mercifully veiled from their eyes. A time of peace intervened, that they might gain strength to meet the tempest; and the Reformation made rapid progress. The bishop of Meaux laboured zealously in his own diocese to instruct both the clergy and the people. Ignorant and immoral priests were removed, and, so far as possible, replaced by men of learning and piety. The bishop greatly desired that his people might have access to the Word of God for themselves, and this was soon accomplished. Lefevre undertook the translation of the New Testament, and at the very time when Luther's German Bible was issuing from the press in Wittenberg, the French New Testament was published at Meaux. The bishop spared no labour or expense to circulate it among his parishes, and soon the peasants of Meaux were in possession of the Holy Scriptures. {GC88 214.2}

As travellers perishing from thirst welcome with joy a living water-spring, so did these souls receive the message of Heaven. The labourers in the field, the artisans in the workshop, cheered their daily toil by talking of the precious truths of the Bible. At evening, instead of resorting to the wine shops, they assembled in each other's homes to read God's Word and join in prayer and praise. A great change was soon manifest in these communities. Though belonging to the humblest class, an unlearned and hard-working peasantry, the reforming, uplifting power of divine grace was seen in their lives. Humble, loving, and holy, they stood as witnesses to what the gospel will accomplish for those who receive it in sincerity. {GC88 214.3}

The light kindled at Meaux shed its beams afar. Every day the number of converts was increasing. The rage of the hierarchy was for a time held in check by the king, who despised the narrow bigotry of the monks; but the

papist leaders finally prevailed. Now the stake was set up. The bishop of Meaux, forced to choose between the fire and recantation, accepted the easier path; but notwithstanding the leader's fall, his flock remained steadfast. Many witnessed for the truth amid the flames. By their courage and fidelity at the stake, these humble Christians spoke to thousands who in days of peace had never heard their testimony. {GC88 215.1}

It was not alone the humble and the poor, that amid suffering and scorn dared to bear witness for Christ. In the lordly halls of the castle and the palace, there were kingly souls by whom truth was valued above wealth or rank or even life. Knightly Armor concealed a loftier and more steadfast spirit than did the bishop's robe and mitre. Louis de Berquin was of noble birth. A brave and courtly knight, he was devoted to study, polished in manners, and of blameless morals. "He was," says a writer, "a great follower of the papistical constitutions, and a great hearer of masses and sermons." "And he crowned all his other virtues by holding Lutheranism in special abhorrence." But, like so many others, providentially guided to the Bible, he was amazed to find there, not the teachings of popery, but the doctrines of Luther. Henceforth he gave himself, with entire devotion, to the cause of the gospel. {GC88 215.2}

"The most learned of the nobles of France," his genius and eloquence, his indomitable courage and heroic zeal, and his influence at court—for he was a favourite with the king—caused him to be regarded by many as one destined to be the reformer of his country. Said Beza, "Berquin would have been a second Luther, had he found in Francis I. a second elector." "He is worse than Luther," cried the papists. More dreaded he was indeed by the Romanists of France. They thrust him in prison as a heretic, but he was set at liberty by the king. For years the struggle continued. Francis, wavering between Rome and the Reformation, alternately tolerated and restrained the fierce zeal of the monks. Berquin was three times imprisoned by the papist authorities, only to be released by the monarch, who, in admiration of his genius and his nobility of character, refused to sacrifice him to the malice of the hierarchy. {GC88 216.1}

Berquin was repeatedly warned of the danger that threatened him in France, and urged to follow the steps of those who had found safety in voluntary exile. The timid and time-serving Erasmus—who with all the splendour of his scholarship failed of that moral greatness which holds life and honour subservient to truth—wrote to Berquin: "Ask to be sent as ambassador to some foreign country; go and travel in Germany. You know Beda and such as he—he is a thousand-headed monster, darting venom on every side. Your enemies are named legion. Were your cause better than that of Jesus Christ, they will not let you go till they have miserably destroyed you. Do not trust too much to the king's protection. At all events, do not compromise me with the faculty of theology." {GC88 216.2}

But as dangers thickened, Berquin's zeal only waxed the stronger. So far from adopting the politic and self-serving counsel of Erasmus, he determined upon still bolder measures. He would not only stand in defence of the truth, but he would attack error. The charge of heresy which the Romanists were seeking to fasten upon him, he would rivet upon them. The most active and bitter of his opponents were the learned doctors and monks of the theological department in the great university of Paris, one of the highest ecclesiastical authorities both in the city and the nation. From the writings of these doctors, Berquin drew twelve propositions which he publicly declared to be contrary to the Bible, and therefore heretical; and he appealed to the king to act as judge in the controversy. {GC88 216.3}

The monarch, not loth to bring in contrast the power and acuteness of the opposing champions, and glad of an opportunity of humbling the pride of these haughty monks, bade the Romanists defend their cause by the Bible. This weapon, they well knew, would avail them little; imprisonment, torture, and the stake were arms which they better understood to wield. Now the tables were turned, and they saw themselves about to fall into the pit into which they had hoped to plunge Berquin. In amazement they looked about them for some way of escape. {GC88 217.1}

Just at this time an image of the virgin, standing at the corner of one of the public streets, was found mutilated. There was great excitement in the city. Crowds of people flocked to the place, with expressions of mourning and indignation. The king also was deeply moved. Here was an advantage which the monks could turn to good account, and they were quick to improve it. "These are the fruits of the doctrines of Berquin," they cried. "All is about to be overthrown,—religion, the laws, the throne itself,—by this Lutheran conspiracy." {GC88 217.2}

Again Berquin was apprehended. The king withdrew from Paris, and the monks were thus left free to work their will. The reformer was tried, and condemned to die, and lest Francis should even yet interpose to save him, the sentence was executed on the very day it was pronounced. At noon Berquin was conducted to the place of death. An immense throng gathered to witness the event, and there were many who saw with astonishment and misgiving that the victim had been chosen from the best and bravest of the noble families of France. Amazement, indignation, scorn, and bitter hatred darkened the faces of that surging crowd; but upon one face no shadow rested. The martyr's thoughts were far from that scene of tumult; he was conscious only of the presence of his Lord. {GC88 217.3}

The wretched tumbril upon which he rode, the frowning faces of his persecutors, the dreadful death to which he was going,—these he heeded not; He who lives and was dead, and is alive forevermore, and hath the keys of death and of hell, was beside him. Berquin's countenance was radiant with the light and peace of Heaven. He had attired himself in goodly raiment, wearing “a cloak of velvet, a doublet of satin and damask, and golden hose.” He was about to testify to his faith in presence of the King of kings and the witnessing universe, and no token of mourning should belie his joy. {GC88 218.1}

As the procession moved slowly through the crowded streets, the people marked with wonder the unclouded peace, the joyous triumph, of his look and bearing. “He is,” they said, “like one who sits in a temple, and meditates on holy things.” {GC88 218.2}

At the stake, Berquin endeavoured to address a few words to the people, but the monks, fearing the result, began to shout, and the soldiers to clash their arms, and their clamour drowned the martyr's voice. Thus in 1529, the highest literary and ecclesiastical authority of cultured Paris “set the populace of 1793 the base example of stifling on the scaffold the sacred words of the dying.” {GC88 218.3}

Berquin was strangled, and his body was consumed in the flames. The tidings of his death caused sorrow to the friends of the Reformation throughout France. But his example was not lost. “We too are ready,” said the witnesses for the truth, “to meet death cheerfully, setting our eyes on the life that is to come.” {GC88 218.4}

During the persecution at Meaux, the teachers of the reformed faith were deprived of their license to preach, and they departed to other fields. Lefevre after a time made his way to Germany. Farel returned to his native town in Eastern France, to spread the light in the home of his childhood. Already tidings had been received of what was going on at Meaux, and the truth, which he taught with fearless zeal, found listeners. Soon the authorities were roused to silence him, and he was banished from the city. Though he could no longer labour publicly, he traversed the plains and villages, teaching in private dwellings and in secluded meadows, and finding shelter in the forests and among the rocky caverns which had been his haunts in boyhood. God was preparing him for greater trials. “Crosses, persecution, and the lying-in-wait of Satan, of which I had intimation, were not wanting,” he said; “they were even much more than I could have borne in my own strength; but God is my Father; he has ministered, and will forever minister, to me all needful strength.” {GC88 218.5}

As in apostolic days, persecution had “fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel. [Philippians 1:12.] Driven from Paris and Meaux, “they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.” [Acts 8:4.] And thus the light found its way into many of the remote provinces of France. {GC88 219.1}

God was still preparing workers to extend his cause. In one of the schools of Paris was a thoughtful, quiet youth, already giving evidence of a powerful and penetrating mind, and no less marked for the blamelessness of his life than for intellectual ardour and religious devotion. His genius and application soon made him the pride of the college, and it was confidently anticipated that John Calvin would become one of the ablest and most honoured defenders of the church. But a ray of divine light penetrated even within the walls of scholasticism and superstition by which Calvin was enclosed. He heard of the new doctrines with a shudder, nothing doubting that the heretics deserved the fire to which they were given. Yet all unwittingly he was brought face to face with the heresy, and forced to test the power of Romish theology to combat the Protestant teaching. {GC88 219.2}

A cousin of Calvin's, who had joined the reformers, was in Paris. The two kinsmen often met, and discussed together the matters that were disturbing Christendom. “There are but two religions in the world,” said Olivetan, the Protestant. “The one class of religions are those which men have invented, in all of which man saves himself by ceremonies and good works; the other is that one religion which is revealed in the Bible, and which teaches men to

look for salvation solely to the free grace of God. "I will have none of your new doctrines," exclaimed Calvin; "think you that I have lived in error all my days?" {GC88 220.1}

But thoughts had been awakened in his mind which he could not banish at will. Alone in his chamber he pondered upon his cousin's words. Conviction of sin fastened upon him; he saw himself, without an intercessor, in the presence of a holy and just Judge. The mediation of saints, good works, the ceremonies of the church, all were powerless to atone for sin. He could see before him nothing but the blackness of eternal despair. In vain the doctors of the church endeavoured to relieve his woe. Confession, penance, were resorted to in vain; they could not reconcile the soul with God. {GC88 220.2}

While still engaged in these fruitless struggles, Calvin, chancing one day to visit one of the public squares, witnessed there the burning of a heretic. He was filled with wonder at the expression of peace which rested upon the martyr's countenance. Amid the tortures of that dreadful death, and under the more terrible condemnation of the church, he manifested a faith and courage which the young student painfully contrasted with his own despair and darkness, while living in strictest obedience to the church. Upon the Bible, he knew, the heretics rested their faith. He determined to study it, and discover, if he could, the secret of their joy. {GC88 220.3}

In the Bible he found Christ. "O Father," he cried, "his sacrifice has appeased thy wrath; his blood has washed away my impurities; his cross has borne my curse; his death has atoned for me. We had devised for ourselves many useless follies, but thou hast placed thy Word before me like a torch, and thou hast touched my heart, in order that I may hold in abomination all other merits save those of Jesus." {GC88 221.1}

Calvin had been educated for the priesthood. When only twelve years of age he had been appointed to the chaplaincy of a small church, and his head had been shorn by the bishop in accordance with the canon of the church. He did not receive consecration, nor did he fulfill the duties of a priest, but he became a member of the clergy, holding the title of his office, and receiving an allowance in consideration thereof. {GC88 221.2}

Now, feeling that he could never become a priest, he turned for a time to the study of law, but finally abandoned this purpose, and determined to devote his life to the gospel. But he hesitated to become a public teacher. He was naturally timid, and was burdened with a sense of the weighty responsibility of the position, and he desired to still devote himself to study. The earnest entreaties of his friends, however, at last won his consent. "Wonderful it is," he said, "that one of so lowly an origin should be exalted to so great dignity." {GC88 221.3}

Quietly did Calvin enter upon his work, and his words were as the dew falling to refresh the earth. He had left Paris, and was now in a provincial town under the protection of the princess Margaret, who, loving the gospel, extended her protection to its disciples. Calvin was still a youth, of gentle, unpretentious bearing. His work began with the people at their homes. Surrounded by the members of the household, he read the Bible, and opened the truths of salvation. Those who heard the message, carried the good news to others, and soon the teacher passed beyond the city to the outlying towns and hamlets. To both the castle and the cabin he found entrance, and he went forward, laying the foundation of churches that were to yield fearless witnesses for the truth. {GC88 221.4}

A few months and he was again in Paris. There was unwonted agitation in the circle of learned men and scholars. The study of the ancient languages had led men to the Bible, and many whose hearts were untouched by its truths were eagerly discussing them, and even giving battle to the champions of Romanism. Calvin, though an able combatant in the fields of theological controversy, had a higher mission to accomplish than that of these noisy schoolmen. The minds of men were stirred, and now was the time to open to them the truth. While the halls of the universities were filled with the clamour of theological disputation, Calvin was making his way from house to house, opening the Bible to the people, and speaking to them of Christ and him crucified. {GC88 222.1}

In God's providence, Paris was to receive another invitation to accept the gospel. The call of Lefebvre and Farel had been rejected, but again the message was to be heard by all classes in that great capital. The king, influenced by political considerations, had not yet fully sided with Rome against the Reformation. Margaret still clung to the hope that Protestantism was to triumph in France. She resolved that the reformed faith should be preached in Paris. During the absence of the king, she ordered a Protestant minister to preach in the churches of the city. This being forbidden by the papal dignitaries, the princess threw open the palace. An apartment was fitted up as a chapel, and it was announced that every day, at a specified hour, a sermon would be preached, and the people of every rank and

station were invited to attend. Crowds flocked to the service. Not only the chapel, but the ante-chambers and halls were thronged. Thousands every day assembled,—nobles, statesmen, lawyers, merchants, and artisans. The king, instead of forbidding the assemblies, ordered that two of the churches of Paris should be opened. Never before had the city been so moved by the Word of God. The spirit of life from Heaven seemed to be breathed upon the people. Temperance, purity, order, and industry were taking the place of drunkenness, licentiousness, strife, and idleness. {GC88 222.2}

But the hierarchy were not idle. The king still refused to interfere to stop the preaching, and they turned to the populace. No means were spared to excite the fears, the prejudices, and the fanaticism of the ignorant and superstitious multitudes. Yielding blindly to her false teachers, Paris, like Jerusalem of old, knew not the time of her visitation, nor the things which belonged unto her peace. For two years the Word of God was preached in the capital; but while there were many who accepted the gospel, the majority of the people rejected it. Francis had made a show of toleration, merely to serve his own purposes, and the papists succeeded in regaining the ascendancy. Again the churches were closed, and the stake was set up. {GC88 223.1}

Calvin was still in Paris, preparing himself by study, meditation, and prayer, for his future labours, and continuing to spread the light. At last, however, suspicion fastened upon him. The authorities determined to bring him to the flames. Regarding himself as secure in his seclusion, he had no thought of danger, when friends came hurrying to his room with the news that officers were on their way to arrest him. At the instant a loud knocking was heard at the outer entrance. There was not a moment to be lost. Some of his friends detained the officers at the door, while others assisted the reformer to let himself down from a window, and he rapidly made his way to the outskirts of the city. Finding shelter in the cottage of a labourer who was a friend to the reform, he disguised himself in the garments of his host, and, shouldering a hoe, started on his journey. Traveling southward he again found refuge in the dominions of Margaret. {GC88 223.2}

Here for a few months he remained, safe under the protection of powerful friends, and engaged, as before, in study. But his heart was set upon the evangelization of France, and he could not long remain inactive. As soon as the storm had somewhat abated, he sought a new field of labour in Poitiers, where was a university, and where already the new opinions had found favour. Persons of all classes gladly listened to the gospel. There was no public preaching, but in the home of the chief magistrate, in his own lodgings, and sometimes in a public garden, Calvin opened the words of eternal life to those who desired to listen. After a time, as the number of hearers increased, it was thought safer to assemble outside the city. A cave in the side of a deep and narrow gorge, where trees and overhanging rocks made the seclusion still more complete, was chosen as the place of meeting. Little companies, leaving the city by different routes, found their way hither. In this retired spot the Bible was read and explained. Here the Lord's supper was celebrated for the first time by the Protestants of France. From this little church several faithful evangelists were sent out. {GC88 223.3}

Once more Calvin returned to Paris. He could not even yet relinquish the hope that France as a nation would accept the Reformation. But he found almost every door of labour closed. To teach the gospel was to take the direct road to the stake, and he at last determined to depart to Germany. Scarcely had he left France when a storm burst over the Protestants, that, had he remained, must surely have involved him in the general ruin. {GC88 224.1}

The French reformers, eager to see their country keeping pace with Germany and Switzerland, determined to strike a bold blow against the superstitions of Rome, that should arouse the whole nation. Accordingly placards attacking the mass were in one night posted all over France. Instead of advancing the reform, this zealous but ill-judged movement brought ruin, not only upon its propagators, but upon the friends of the reformed faith throughout France. It gave the Romanists what they had long desired,—a pretext for demanding the utter destruction of the heretics as agitators dangerous to the stability of the throne and the peace of the nation. {GC88 224.2}

By some secret hand—whether of indiscreet friend or wily foe was never known—one of the placards was attached to the door of the king's private chamber. The monarch was filled with horror. In this paper, superstitions that had received the veneration of ages were attacked with an unsparing hand. And the unexampled boldness of obtruding these plain and startling utterances into the royal presence, aroused the wrath of the king. In his amazement he stood for a little time trembling and speechless. Then his rage found utterance in the terrible words:

“Let all be seized; and let Lutheranism be totally exterminated.” The die was cast. The king had determined to throw himself fully on the side of Rome. {GC88 225.1}

Measures were at once taken for the arrest of every Lutheran in Paris. A poor artisan, an adherent of the reformed faith, who had been accustomed to summon the believers to their secret assemblies, was seized; and with the threat of instant death at the stake, was commanded to conduct the papist emissary to the home of every Protestant in the city. He shrunk in horror from the base proposal, but at last fear of the flames prevailed, and he consented to become the betrayer of his brethren. Preceded by the host, and surrounded by a train of priests, incense-bearers, monks, and soldiers, Morin, the royal detective, with the traitor, slowly and silently passed through the streets of the city. The demonstration was ostensibly in honour of the “holy sacrament,” an act of expiation for the insult put upon the mass by the protesters. But beneath this pageant a deadly purpose was concealed. On arriving opposite the house of a Lutheran, the betrayer made a sign, but no word was uttered. The procession halted, the house was entered, the family were dragged forth and chained, and the terrible company went forward in search of fresh victims. “No house was spared, great or small, not even the colleges of the University of Paris. Morin made the whole city quake.” “The reign of terror had begun.” {GC88 225.2}

The victims were put to death with cruel torture, it being specially ordered that the fire should be lowered, in order to prolong their agony. But they died as conquerors. Their constancy was unshaken, their peace unclouded. Their persecutors, powerless to move their inflexible firmness, felt themselves defeated. “The scaffolds were distributed over all the quarters of Paris, and the burnings followed on successive days, the design being to spread the terror of heresy by spreading the executions. The advantage, however, in the end, remained with the gospel. All Paris was enabled to see what kind of men the new opinions could produce. There is no pulpit like the martyr's pile. The serene joy that lighted up the faces of these men as they passed along to the place of execution, their heroism as they stood amid the bitter flames, their meek forgiveness of injuries, transformed, in instances not a few, anger into pity, and hate into love, and pleaded with resistless eloquence in behalf of the gospel.” {GC88 225.3}

The priests, bent upon keeping the popular fury at its height, circulated the most terrible accusations against the Protestants. They were charged with plotting to massacre the Catholics, to overthrow the government, and to murder the king. Not a shadow of evidence could be produced in support of the allegations. Yet these prophecies of evil were to have a fulfillment; under far different circumstances, however, and from causes of an opposite character. The cruelties that were inflicted upon the innocent Protestants by the Catholics accumulated in a weight of retribution, and in after-centuries wrought the very doom they had predicted to be impending, upon the king, his government, and subjects; but it was brought about by infidels, and by the papists themselves. It was not the establishment, but the suppression of Protestantism, that, three hundred years later, was to bring upon France these dire calamities. {GC88 226.1}

Suspicion, distrust, and terror now pervaded all classes of society. Amid the general alarm it was seen how deep a hold the Lutheran teaching had gained upon the minds of men who stood highest for education, influence, and excellence of character. Positions of trust and honour were suddenly found vacant. Artisans, printers, scholars, professors in the universities, authors, and even courtiers, disappeared. Hundreds fled from Paris, self-constituted exiles from their native land, in many cases thus giving the first intimation that they favoured the reformed faith. The papists looked about them in amazement at thought of the unsuspected heretics that had been tolerated among them. Their rage spent itself upon the multitudes of humbler victims who were within their power. The prisons were crowded, and the very air seemed darkened with the smoke of burning piles, kindled for the confessors of the gospel. {GC88 226.2}

Francis I. had gloried in being a leader in the great movement for the revival of learning which marked the opening of the sixteenth century. He had delighted to gather at his court men of letters from every country. To his love of learning and his contempt for the ignorance and superstition of the monks was due, in part, at least, the degree of toleration that had been granted to the reform. But, inspired with zeal to stamp out heresy, this patron of learning issued an edict declaring printing abolished all over France! Francis I. presents one among the many examples on record showing that intellectual culture is not a safeguard against religious intolerance and persecution. {GC88 227.1}

France by a solemn and public ceremony was to commit herself fully to the destruction of Protestantism. The priests demanded that the affront offered to high Heaven in the condemnation of the mass, be expiated in blood, and that the king, in behalf of his people, publicly give his sanction to the dreadful work. {GC88 227.2}

The 21st of January, 1535, was fixed upon for the awful ceremonial. The superstitious fears and bigoted hatred of the whole nation had been roused. Paris was thronged with the multitudes that from all the surrounding country crowded her streets. The day was to be ushered in by a vast and imposing procession. Along the line of march the houses were draped in mourning. At intervals altars were erected, and before every door was a lighted torch in honour of the "holy sacrament." Before daybreak the procession formed, at the palace of the king. After the crosses and banners of the parishes, came citizens, walking two and two, and bearing lighted torches. The four orders of friars followed, each in its own peculiar dress. Then came a vast collection of famous relics. Following these rode lordly ecclesiastics in their purple and scarlet robes and jewelled adornings, a gorgeous and glittering array. {GC88 227.3}

The host was borne under a splendid canopy, supported by four princes of highest rank. After them walked the monarch, divested of his crown and royal robe, with uncovered head and downcast eyes, and bearing in his hand a lighted taper. Thus the king of France appeared publicly as a penitent. At every altar he bowed down in humiliation, not for the vices that defiled his soul, not the innocent blood that stained his hands, but for the deadly sin of his subjects who had dared to condemn the mass. Following him came the queen and the dignitaries of State also walking two and two, each with a lighted torch. {GC88 228.1}

As a part of the services of the day, the monarch himself addressed the high officials of the kingdom in the great hall of the bishop's palace. With a sorrowful countenance he appeared before them, and in words of moving eloquence bewailed the "crime, the blasphemy, the day of sorrow and disgrace," that had come upon the nation. And he called upon every loyal subject to aid in the extirpation of the pestilent heresy that threatened France with ruin. "As true, Messieurs, as I am your king," he said, "if I knew one of my own limbs spotted or infected with this detestable rottenness, I would give it to you to cut off. . . . And, further, if I saw one of my children defiled by it, I would not spare him. . . . I would deliver him up myself, and would sacrifice him to God." Tears choked his utterance, and the whole assembly wept, with one accord exclaiming, "We will live and die in the Catholic religion." {GC88 228.2}

Terrible had become the darkness of the nation that had rejected the light of truth. "The grace that brings salvation" had appeared; but France, after beholding its power and holiness, after thousands had been drawn by its divine beauty, after cities and hamlets had been illuminated by its radiance, had turned away, choosing darkness rather than light. They had put from them the heavenly gift, when it was offered them. They had called evil good, and good evil, till they had fallen victims to their wilful self-deception. Now, though they might actually believe that they were doing God service in persecuting his people, yet their sincerity did not render them guiltless. The light that would have saved them from deception, from staining their souls with blood-guiltiness, they had wilfully rejected. {GC88 229.1}

A solemn oath to extirpate heresy was taken, in the great cathedral where, nearly three centuries later, the "Goddess of Reason" was to be enthroned by a nation that had forgotten the living God. Again the procession formed, and the representatives of France set out to begin the work which they had sworn to do. At intervals along the homeward route, scaffolds had been erected for the execution of heretics, and it was arranged that at the approach of the king the pile should be lighted, that he might thus be witness to the whole terrible spectacle. The details of the tortures endured by these witnesses for Christ are too harrowing for recital; but there was no wavering on the part of the victims. On being urged to recant, one answered, "I only believe in what the prophets and apostles formerly preached, and what all the company of the saints believed. My faith has a confidence in God which will resist all the power of hell." {GC88 229.2}

Again and again the procession halted at the places of torture. Upon reaching their starting-point at the royal palace, the crowd dispersed, and the king and the prelates withdrew, well satisfied with the day's proceedings, and congratulating themselves that the work now begun would be continued to the complete destruction of heresy. {GC88 229.3}

The gospel of peace which France had rejected was to be only too surely rooted out, and terrible would be the results. On the 21st of January, 1793, two hundred and fifty-eight years from the very day that fully committed France to the persecution of the reformers, another procession, with a far different purpose, passed through the streets of Paris. "Again the king was the chief figure; again there were tumult and shouting; again there was heard the cry for more victims; again there were black scaffolds; and again the scenes of the day were closed by horrid executions; Louis XVI., struggling hand to hand with his jailers and executioners, was dragged forward to the block, and there held down by main force till the axe had fallen, and his dissevered head fell on the scaffold." Nor was the king the only victim; near the same spot two thousand and eight hundred human beings perished by the guillotine during the bloody days of the reign of terror. {GC88 230.1}

The Reformation had presented to the world an open Bible, unsealing the precepts of the law of God, and urging its claims upon the consciences of the people. Infinite love had unfolded to men the statutes and principles of Heaven. God had said, "Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people," [Deuteronomy 4:6.] When France rejected the gift of Heaven, she sowed the seeds of anarchy and ruin; and the inevitable outworking of cause and effect resulted in the Revolution and the reign of terror. {GC88 230.2}

Long before the persecution excited by the placards, the bold and ardent Farel had been forced to flee from the land of his birth. He repaired to Switzerland, and by his labours, seconding the work of Zwingli, he helped to turn the scale in favour of the Reformation. His later years were to be spent here, yet he continued to exert a decided influence upon the reform in France. During the first years of his exile, his efforts were especially directed to spreading the gospel in his native country. He spent considerable time in preaching among his countrymen near the frontier, where with tireless vigilance he watched the conflict, and aided by his words of encouragement and counsel. With the assistance of other exiles, the writings of the German reformers were translated into the French language, and, together with the French Bible, were printed in large quantities. By colporteurs, these works were sold extensively in France. They were furnished to the colporteurs at a low price, and thus the profits of the work enabled them to continue it. {GC88 230.3}

Farel entered upon his work in Switzerland in the humble guise of a school-master. Repairing to a secluded parish, he devoted himself to the instruction of children. Besides the usual branches of learning, he cautiously introduced the truths of the Bible, hoping through the children to reach their parents. There were some who believed, but the priests came forward to stop the work, and the superstitious country people were roused to oppose it. "That cannot be the gospel of Christ," urged the priests, "seeing the preaching of it does not bring peace but war." Like the first disciples, when persecuted in one city he fled to another. From village to village, from city to city, he went; traveling on foot, enduring hunger, cold, and weariness, and everywhere in peril of his life. He preached in the market-places, in the churches, sometimes in the pulpits of the cathedrals. Sometimes he found the church empty of hearers; at times his preaching was interrupted by shouts and jeers, again he was pulled violently out of the pulpit. More than once he was set upon by the rabble, and beaten almost to death. Yet he pressed forward. Though often repulsed, with unwearying persistence he returned to the attack; and, one after another, he saw towns and cities which had been strongholds of popery, opening their gates to the gospel. The little parish where he had first laboured, soon accepted the reformed faith. The cities of Morat and Neuchatel also renounced the Romish rites, and removed the idolatrous images from their churches. {GC88 231.1}

Farel had long desired to plant the Protestant standard in Geneva. If this city could be won, it would be a center for the Reformation in France, in Switzerland, and in Italy. With this object before him, he had continued his labours until many of the surrounding towns and hamlets had been gained. Then with a single companion he entered Geneva. But only two sermons was he permitted to preach. The priests, having vainly endeavoured to secure his condemnation by the civil authorities, summoned him before an ecclesiastical council, to which they came with arms concealed under their robes, determined to take his life. Outside the hall, a furious mob, with clubs and swords, was gathered to make sure of his death if he should succeed in escaping the council. The presence of magistrates and an armed force, however, saved him. Early next morning he was conducted, with his companion, across the lake to a place of safety. Thus ended his first effort to evangelize Geneva. {GC88 232.1}

For the next trial a lowlier instrument was chosen,—a young man, so humble in appearance that he was coldly treated even by the professed friends of reform. But what could such a one do where Farel had been rejected? How could one of little courage and experience withstand the tempest before which the strongest and bravest had been forced to flee? "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord." [Zechariah 4:6.] "God hath chosen

the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.” “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” [1 Corinthians 1:27, 25.] {GC88 232.2}

Froment began his work as a school-master. The truths which he taught the children at school, they repeated at their homes. Soon the parents came to hear the Bible explained, until the school-room was filled with attentive listeners. New Testaments and tracts were freely distributed, and they reached many who dared not come openly to listen to the new doctrines. After a time this labourer also was forced to flee; but the truths he taught had taken hold upon the minds of the people. The Reformation had been planted, and it continued to strengthen and extend. The preachers returned, and through their labours the Protestant worship was finally established in Geneva. {GC88 232.3}

The city had already declared for the Reformation, when Calvin, after various wanderings and vicissitudes, entered its gates. Returning from a last visit to his birthplace, he was on his way to Basel, when, finding the direct road occupied by the armies of Charles V., he was forced to take the circuitous route by Geneva. {GC88 233.1}

In this visit, Farel recognized the hand of God. Though Geneva had accepted the reformed faith, yet a great work remained to be accomplished here. It is not as communities but as individuals that men are converted to God; the work of regeneration must be wrought in the heart and conscience by the power of the Holy Spirit, not by the decrees of councils. While the people of Geneva had cast off the authority of Rome, they were not so ready to renounce the vices that had flourished under her rule. To establish here the pure principles of the gospel, and to prepare this people to fill worthily the position to which Providence seemed calling them, was no light task. {GC88 233.2}

Farel was confident that he had found in Calvin one whom he could unite with himself in this work. In the name of God he solemnly adjured the young evangelist to remain and labour here. Calvin drew back in alarm. Timid and peace-loving, he shrank from contact with the bold, independent, and even violent spirit of the Genevese. The feebleness of his health, together with his studious habits, led him to seek retirement. Believing that by his pen he could best serve the cause of reform, he desired to find a quiet retreat for study, and there, through the press, instruct and build up the churches. But Farel's solemn admonition came to him as a call from Heaven, and he dared not refuse. It seemed to him, he said, “that the hand of God was stretched down from Heaven, that it laid hold of him, and fixed him irrevocably to the place he was so impatient to leave.” {GC88 233.3}

At this time great perils surrounded the Protestant cause. The anathemas of the pope thundered against Geneva, and mighty nations threatened it with destruction. How was this little city to resist the powerful hierarchy that had so often forced kings and emperors to submission? How could it stand against the armies of the world's great conquerors? {GC88 234.1}

Throughout Christendom, Protestantism was menaced by formidable foes. The first triumphs of the Reformation past, Rome summoned new forces, hoping to accomplish its destruction. At this time, the order of the Jesuits was created, the most cruel, unscrupulous, and powerful of all the champions of popery. Cut off from every earthly tie and human interest, dead to the claims of natural affection, reason and conscience wholly silenced, they knew no rule, no tie, but that of their order, and no duty but to extend its power. The gospel of Christ had enabled its adherents to meet danger and endure suffering, undismayed by cold, hunger, toil, and poverty, to uphold the banner of truth in face of the rack, the dungeon, and the stake. To combat these forces, Jesuitism inspired its followers with a fanaticism that enabled them to endure like dangers, and to oppose to the power of truth all the weapons of deception. There was no crime too great for them to commit, no deception too base for them to practice, no disguise too difficult for them to assume. Vowed to perpetual poverty and humility, it was their studied aim to secure wealth and power, to be devoted to the overthrow of Protestantism, and the re-establishment of the papal supremacy. {GC88 234.2}

When appearing as members of their order, they wore a garb of sanctity, visiting prisons and hospitals, ministering to the sick and the poor, professing to have renounced the world, and bearing the sacred name of Jesus, who went about doing good. But under this blameless exterior the most criminal and deadly purposes were concealed. It was a fundamental principle of the order that the end justifies the means. By this code, lying, theft, perjury, assassination, were not only pardonable but commendable, when they served the interests of the church. Under various disguises the Jesuits worked their way into offices of State, climbing up to be the counsellors of kings, and shaping the policy of nations. They became servants, to act as spies upon their masters. They established

colleges for the sons of princes and nobles, and schools for the common people; and the children of Protestant parents were drawn into an observance of popish rites. All the outward pomp and display of the Romish worship was brought to bear to confuse the mind, and dazzle and captivate the imagination; and thus the liberty for which the fathers had toiled and bled was betrayed by the sons. The Jesuits rapidly spread themselves over Europe, and wherever they went, there followed a revival of popery. {GC88 234.3}

To give them greater power, a bull was issued re-establishing the Inquisition. Notwithstanding the general abhorrence with which it was regarded, even in Catholic countries, this terrible tribunal was again set up by popish rulers, and atrocities too terrible to bear the light of day were repeated in its secret dungeons. In many countries, thousands upon thousands of the very flower of the nation, the purest and noblest, the most intellectual and highly educated, pious and devoted pastors, industrious and patriotic citizens, brilliant scholars, talented artists, skilful artisans, were slain, or forced to flee to other lands. {GC88 235.1}

Such were the means which Rome had invoked to quench the light of the Reformation, to withdraw from men the Bible, and to restore the ignorance and superstition of the Dark Ages. But under God's blessing and the labours of those noble men whom he had raised up to succeed Luther, Protestantism was not overthrown. Not to the favour or arms of princes was it to owe its strength. The smallest countries, the humblest and least powerful nations, became its strongholds. It was little Geneva in the midst of mighty foes plotting her destruction; it was Holland on her sand-banks by the Northern Sea, wrestling against the tyranny of Spain, then the greatest and most opulent of kingdoms; it was bleak, sterile Sweden, that gained victories for the Reformation. {GC88 235.2}

For nearly thirty years, Calvin laboured at Geneva; first to establish there a church adhering to the morality of the Bible, and then for the advancement of the Reformation throughout Europe. His course as a public leader was not faultless, nor were his doctrines free from error. But he was instrumental in promulgating truths that were of special importance in his time, in maintaining the principles of Protestantism against the fast-returning tide of popery; and in promoting in the reformed churches simplicity and purity of life, in place of the pride and corruption fostered under the Romish teaching. {GC88 236.1}

From Geneva, publications and teachers went out to spread the reformed doctrines. To this point the persecuted of all lands looked for instruction, counsel, and encouragement. The city of Calvin became a refuge for the hunted reformers of all Western Europe. Fleeing from the awful tempests that continued for centuries, the fugitives came to the gates of Geneva. Starving, wounded, bereft of home and kindred, they were warmly welcomed and tenderly cared for; and finding a home here, they blessed the city of their adoption by their skill, their learning, and their piety. Many who sought here a refuge returned to their own countries to resist the tyranny of Rome. John Knox, the brave Scotch reformer, not a few of the English Puritans, the Protestants of Holland, and the Huguenots of France, carried from Geneva the torch of truth to lighten the darkness of their native land. {GC88 236.2}

*E. G. W. Study Help 2**Sabbath, May 25th, 2024***Selected Messages, Book 1,
Chapter 2, p. 24-39****A Letter to Dr. Paulson, St. Helena, California, June 14, 1906**

Dear Brother:

Your letter came to me while in southern California. For some weeks the consideration of matters connected with the development of our sanitarium work there, and the writing out of the views given me regarding the earthquake and its lessons, have taken my time and strength. {1SM 24.1}

But now I must respond to the letters received from you and others. In your letter you speak of your early training to have implicit faith in the testimonies and say, "I was led to conclude and most firmly believe that every word that you ever spoke in public or private, that every letter you wrote under any and all circumstances, was as inspired as the Ten Commandments." {1SM 24.2}

My brother, you have studied my writings diligently, and you have never found that I have made any such claims, neither will you find that the pioneers in our cause ever made such claims. {1SM 24.3}

In my introduction to The Great Controversy you have no doubt read my statement regarding the Ten Commandments and the Bible, which should have helped you to a correct understanding of the matter under consideration. Here is the statement: {1SM 24.4}

"The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all 'given by inspiration of God' (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language. {1SM 25.1}

"The Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. They are of divine, and not human composition. But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us' (John 1:14). {1SM 25.2}

"Written in different ages, by men who differed widely in rank and occupation, and in mental and spiritual endowments, the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded. Different forms of expression are employed by different writers; often the same truth is more strikingly presented by one than by another. And as several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced reader, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the thoughtful, reverent student, with clearer insight, discerns the underlying harmony. {1SM 25.3}

"As presented through different individuals, the truth is brought out in its varied aspects. One writer is more strongly impressed with one phase of the subject; he grasps those points that harmonize with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation; another seizes upon a different phase; and each, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind--a different aspect of the truth in each, but a perfect harmony through all. And the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole, adapted to meet the wants of men in all the circumstances and experiences of life. {1SM 25.4}

"God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do His work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, none the less, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth." {1SM 26.1}

The Integrity of the Testimonies

In perfect harmony with this are my statements found in the article "The Testimonies Slighted," written June 20, 1882, and published in Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, No. 31, pages 62-84. From this I quote for your consideration, several paragraphs: {1SM 26.2}

"Many are looking with self-complacency upon the long years during which they have advocated the truth. They now feel that they are entitled to a reward for their past trials and obedience. But this genuine experience in the things of God in the past, makes them more guilty before Him for not preserving their integrity and going forward to perfection. The faithfulness for the past year will never atone for the neglect of the present year. A man's truthfulness yesterday will not atone for his falsehood today. {1SM 26.3}

"Many excused their disregard of the testimonies by saying, 'Sister White is influenced by her husband; the testimonies are molded by his spirit and judgment.' Others were seeking to gain something from me which they could construe to justify their course or to give them influence. It was then I decided that nothing more should go from my pen until the converting power of God was seen in the church. But the Lord placed the burden upon my soul. I laboured for you earnestly. How much this cost both my husband and myself, eternity will tell. Have I not a knowledge of the state of the church, when the Lord has presented their case before me again and again for years? Repeated warnings have been given, yet there has been no decided change.... {1SM 26.4}

"Yet now when I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of you declare it to be merely the opinion of Sister White. You have thereby insulted the Spirit of God. You know how the Lord has manifested Himself through the Spirit of prophecy. Past, present, and future have passed before me. I have been shown faces that I had never seen, and years afterward I knew them when I saw them. I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind and I have written, at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent, and arriving at a crisis, have saved great disaster to the cause of God. This has been my work for many years. A power has impelled me to reprove and rebuke wrongs that I had not thought of. Is this work of the last thirty-six years from above or from beneath? ... {1SM 27.1}

"When I went to Colorado I was so burdened for you that, in my weakness, I wrote many pages to be read at your camp meeting. Weak and trembling, I arose at three o'clock in the morning to write to you. God was speaking through clay. You might say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper, expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision--the precious rays of light shining from the throne.... {1SM 27.2}

"What voice will you acknowledge as the voice of God? What power has the Lord in reserve to correct your errors and show you your course as it is? What power to work in the church? If you refuse to believe until every shadow of uncertainty and every possibility of doubt is removed, you will never believe. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to faith. Faith rests upon evidence, not demonstration. The Lord requires us to obey the voice of duty, when there are other voices all around us urging us to pursue an opposite course. It requires earnest attention from us to distinguish the voice which speaks from God. We must resist and conquer inclination, and obey the voice of conscience without parleying or compromise, lest its promptings cease, and will and impulse control. {1SM 27.3}

"The word of the Lord comes to us all who have not resisted His Spirit by determining not to hear and obey. This voice is heard in warnings, in counsels, in reproof. It is the Lord's message of light to His people. If we wait for louder calls or better opportunities, the light may be withdrawn, and we left in darkness.... {1SM 28.1}

"It pains me to say, my brethren, that your sinful neglect to walk in the light has enshrouded you in darkness. You may now be honest in not recognizing and obeying the light; the doubts you have entertained, your neglect to heed the requirements of God, have blinded your perception so that darkness is now to you light, and light is darkness. God has bidden you to go forward to perfection. Christianity is a religion of progress. Light from God is full and ample, waiting our demand upon it. Whatever blessings the Lord may give, He has an infinite supply beyond, an inexhaustible store from which we may draw. Scepticism may treat the sacred claims of the gospel with jests, scoffing, and denial. The spirit of worldliness may contaminate the many and control the few; the cause of God may hold its ground only by great exertion and continual sacrifice, yet it will triumph finally. {1SM 28.2}

"The word is: Go forward; discharge your individual duty, and leave all consequences in the hands of God. If we move forward where Jesus leads the way we shall see His triumph, we shall share His joy. We must share the conflicts if we wear the crown of victory. Like Jesus, we must be made perfect through suffering. Had Christ's life been one of ease, then might we safely yield to sloth. Since His life was marked with continual self-denial, suffering, and self-sacrifice, we shall make no complaint if we are partakers with Him. We can walk safely in the darkest path if we have the Light of the world for our guide.... {1SM 28.3}

"When the Lord last presented your case before me, and made known to me that you had not regarded the light which had been given you, I was bidden to speak to you plainly in His name, for His anger was kindled against you. These words were spoken to me: 'Your work is appointed you of God. Many will not hear you, for they refused to hear the Great Teacher; many will not be corrected, for their ways are right in their own eyes. Yet bear to them the reproofs and warnings I shall give you, whether they will hear or forbear.'"... {1SM 29.1}

In connection with these quotations, study again the article "The Nature and Influence of the Testimonies," in Testimonies, volume 5, pages 654-691. {1SM 29.2}

The statement which you quote from Testimony No. 31 [volume 5, page 67] is correct: "In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision --the precious rays of light shining from the throne." It is true concerning the articles in our papers and in the many volumes of my books. I have been instructed in accordance with the Word in the precepts of the law of God. I have been instructed in selecting from the lessons of Christ. Are not the positions taken in my writings in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ? {1SM 29.3}

Peril of Deceptive Representations

To some of the questions you have asked, I am not to answer Yes or No. I must not make statements that can be misconstrued. I see and feel the peril of those who, I have been instructed, are endangering their souls at times by listening to deceptive representations regarding the messages that God has given me. Through many twistings and turnings and false reasonings on what I have written, they try to vindicate their personal unbelief. I am sorry for my brethren who have been walking in the mist of suspicion and scepticism and false reasoning. I know that some of them would be blessed by messages of counsel if the clouds obscuring their spiritual vision could be driven back, and they could see aright. But they do not see clearly. Therefore I dare not communicate with them. When the Spirit of God clears away the mysticism, there will be found just as complete comfort and faith and hope in the messages that I have been instructed to give, as were found in them in years past. {1SM 29.4}

Truth will surely bear away the victory. The One who gave His life to ransom man from the delusions of Satan, is not asleep, but watching. When His sheep turn away from following the voice of a stranger, whose sheep they are not, they will rejoice in the voice they have loved to follow. {1SM 30.1}

We can learn precious lessons from the study of the life of Christ. The envious Pharisees misinterpreted the acts and words of Christ, which, if properly received, would have been beneficial to their spiritual understanding. Instead of admiring His goodness, they charged Him, in the presence of His disciples, with impiety--"Why eats your Master with publicans and sinners?" (Matthew 9:11). Instead of addressing our blessed Saviour Himself, whose answer would at once have convicted them of their malice, they talked with the disciples, and made their charges where, as a leaven of evil, they would do great harm. If Christ had been an impious man, He would have lost His hold upon the hearts of His believing followers. But because of their confidence in Christ, the disciples would not give ear to the insinuations of His wicked accusers. {1SM 30.2}

Desiring to bring censure upon the disciples, these wicked accusers went again and again to Christ with the question, Why do Thy disciples that which is not lawful? And when they judged our Lord to have transgressed, they spoke, not to Himself, but to His disciples, to plant the seeds of unbelief in the hearts of His followers. {1SM 30.3}

Thus they worked to bring in doubt and dissension. Every method was tried to bring doubt into the hearts of the little flock, that it might cause them to watch for something that would check the good and gracious work of the gospel of Jesus Christ. {1SM 31.1}

Work of this same character will be brought to bear upon true believers today. The Lord Jesus reads the heart; He discerns the interests and purposes of the thoughts of all men concerning Himself and His believing disciples. He answers their thoughts concerning the fault-finding ones, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Matthew 9:12). The insolent Pharisees had an exalted idea of their own piety and holiness, while they were ready to pass censure on the lives of others.-- Letter 206, 1906. {1SM 31.2}

The Lord's Messenger

Last night, in vision, I was standing before an assembly of our people, bearing a decided testimony regarding present truth and present duty. After the discourse, many gathered about me, asking questions. They desired so many explanations about this point, and that point, and another point, that I said, "One at a time, if you please, lest you confuse me." {1SM 31.3}

And then I appealed to them, saying: "For years you have had many evidences that the Lord has given me a work to do. These evidences could scarcely have been greater than they are. Will you brush away all these evidences as a cobweb, at the suggestion of a man's unbelief? That which makes my heart ache is the fact that many who are now perplexed and tempted are those who have had abundance of evidence and opportunity to consider and pray and understand; and yet they do not discern the nature of the sophistries that are presented to influence them to reject the warnings God has given to save them from the delusions of these last days." {1SM 31.4}

Some have stumbled over the fact that I said I did not claim to be a prophet; [REFERENCE IS HERE MADE TO A DISCOURSE GIVEN AT BATTLE CREEK, OCTOBER 2, 1904, IN WHICH SHE SAID, "I DO NOT CLAIM TO BE A PROPHETESS."--COMPILERS.] and they have asked, Why is this? {1SM 31.5}

I have had no claims to make, only that I am instructed that I am the Lord's messenger; that He called me in my youth to be His messenger, to receive His word, and to give a clear and decided message in the name of the Lord Jesus. {1SM 32.1}

Early in my youth I was asked several times, Are you a prophet? I have ever responded, I am the Lord's messenger. I know that many have called me a prophet, but I have made no claim to this title. My Saviour declared me to be His messenger. "Your work," He instructed me, "is to bear My word. Strange things will arise, and in your youth I set you apart to bear the message to the erring ones, to carry the word before unbelievers, and with pen and voice to reprove from the Word actions that are not right. Exhort from the Word. I will make My Word open to you. It shall not be as a strange language. In the true eloquence of simplicity, with voice and pen, the messages that I give shall be heard from one who has never learned in the schools. My Spirit and My power shall be with you." {1SM 32.2}

"Be not afraid of man, for My shield shall protect you. It is not you that speaks: it is the Lord that giveth the messages of warning and reproof. Never deviate from the truth under any circumstances. Give the light I shall give you. The messages for these last days shall be written in books, and shall stand immortalized, to testify against those who have once rejoiced in the light, but who have been led to give it up because of the seductive influences of evil." {1SM 32.3}

Why have I not claimed to be a prophet?--Because in these days many who boldly claim that they are prophets are a reproach to the cause of Christ; and because my work includes much more than the word "prophet" signifies. {1SM 32.4}

When this work was first given me, I begged the Lord to lay the burden on someone else. The work was so large and broad and deep that I feared I could not do it. But by His Holy Spirit the Lord has enabled me to perform the work which He gave me to do. {1SM 32.5}

A Work of Many Features

God has made plain to me the various ways in which He would use me to carry forward a special work. Visions have been given me, with the promise, "If you deliver the messages faithfully and endure to the end, you shall eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and drink of the water of the river of life." {1SM 33.1}

The Lord gave me great light on health reform. In connection with my husband, I was to be a medical missionary worker. I was to set an example to the church by taking the sick to my home and caring for them. This I have done, giving the women and children vigorous treatment. I was also to speak on the subject of Christian temperance, as the Lord's appointed messenger. I engaged heartily in this work, and spoke to large assemblies on temperance in its broadest and truest sense. {1SM 33.2}

I was instructed that I must ever urge upon those who profess to believe the truth, the necessity of practicing the truth. This means sanctification, and sanctification means the culture and training of every capability for the Lord's service. {1SM 33.3}

I was charged not to neglect or pass by those who were being wronged. I was specially charged to protest against any arbitrary or overbearing action toward the ministers of the gospel by those having official authority. Disagreeable though the duty may be, I am to reprove the oppressor, and plead for justice. I am to present the necessity of maintaining justice and equity in all our institutions. {1SM 33.4}

If I see those in positions of trust neglecting aged ministers, I am to present the matter to those whose duty it is to care for them. Ministers who have faithfully done their work are not to be forgotten or neglected when they have become feeble in health. Our conferences are not to disregard the needs of those who have borne the burdens of the work. It was after John had grown old in the service of the Lord that he was exiled to Patmos. And on that lonely isle he received more communications from heaven than he had received during the rest of his lifetime. {1SM 33.5}

After my marriage I was instructed that I must show a special interest in motherless and fatherless children, taking some under my own charge for a time, and then finding homes for them. Thus I would be giving others an example of what they could do. {1SM 34.1}

Although called to travel often, and having much writing to do, I have taken children of three and five years of age, and have cared for them, educated them, and trained them for responsible positions. I have taken into my home from time to time boys from ten to sixteen years of age, giving them motherly care, and a training for service. I have felt it my duty to bring before our people that work for which those in every church should feel a responsibility. {1SM 34.2}

While in Australia I carried on this same line of work, taking into my home orphan children, who were in danger of being exposed to temptations that might cause the loss of their souls. {1SM 34.3}

In Australia we [REFERENCE HERE IS TO HER ASSOCIATE WORKERS. JAMES WHITE DIED IN 1881.] also worked as Christian medical missionaries. At times I made my home in Cooranbong an asylum for the sick and afflicted. My secretary, who had received a training in the Battle Creek Sanitarium, stood by my side, and did the work of a missionary nurse. No charge was made for her services, and we won the confidence of the people by the interest that we manifested in the sick and suffering. After a time the Health Retreat at Cooranbong was built, and then we were relieved of this burden. {1SM 34.4}

No Boastful Claims

To claim to be a prophetess is something that I have never done. If others call me by that name, I have no controversy with them. But my work has covered so many lines that I cannot call myself other than a messenger, sent to bear a message from the Lord to His people, and to take up work in any line that He points out. {1SM 34.5}

When I was last in Battle Creek, I said before a large congregation that I did not claim to be a prophetess. Twice I referred to this matter, intending each time to make the statement, "I do not claim to be a prophetess." If I spoke otherwise than this, let all now understand that what I had in mind to say was that I do not claim the title of prophet or prophetess. {1SM 35.1}

I understood that some were anxious to know if Mrs. White still held the same views that she did years ago when they had heard her speak in the sanitarium grove, in the Tabernacle, and at the camp meetings held in the suburbs of Battle Creek. I assured them that the message she bears today is the same that she has borne during the sixty years of her public ministry. She has the same service to do for the Master that was laid upon her in her girlhood. She receives lessons from the same Instructor. The directions given her are, "Make known to others what I have revealed to you. Write out the messages that I give you, that the people may have them." This is what she has endeavoured to do. {1SM 35.2}

I have written many books, and they have been given a wide circulation. Of myself I could not have brought out the truth in these books, but the Lord has given me the help of His Holy Spirit. These books, giving the instruction that the Lord has given me during the past sixty years, contain light from heaven, and will bear the test of investigation. {1SM 35.3}

At the age of seventy-eight I am still toiling. We are all in the hands of the Lord. I trust in Him; for I know that he will never leave nor forsake those who put their trust in Him. I have committed myself to His keeping. {1SM 35.4}

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Timothy 1:12).--The Review and Herald, July 26, 1906. {1SM 35.5}

The Work of a Prophet and More

During the discourse, I said that I did not claim to be a prophetess. Some were surprised at this statement, and as much is being said in regard to it, I will make an explanation. Others have called me a prophetess, but I have never assumed that title. I have not felt that it was my duty thus to designate myself. Those who boldly assume that they are prophets in this our day are often a reproach to the cause of Christ. {1SM 35.6}

My work includes much more than this name signifies. I regard myself as a messenger, entrusted by the Lord with messages for His people.--Letter 55, 1905. {1SM 36.1}

I am now instructed that I am not to be hindered in my work by those who engage in suppositions regarding its nature, whose minds are struggling with so many intricate problems connected with the supposed work of a prophet. My commission embraces the work of a prophet, but it does not end there. It embraces much more than the minds of those who have been sowing the seeds of unbelief can comprehend.--Letter 244, 1906. (Addressed to elders of Battle Creek church.) {1SM 36.2}

Receiving and Imparting the Light

As inquiries are frequently made as to my state in vision, and after I come out, I would say that when the Lord sees fit to give a vision, I am taken into the presence of Jesus and angels, and am entirely lost to earthly things. I can see no farther than the angel directs me. My attention is often directed to scenes transpiring upon earth. {1SM 36.3}

At times I am carried far ahead into the future and shown what is to take place. Then again I am shown things as they have occurred in the past. After I come out of vision I do not at once remember all that I have seen, and the matter is not so clear before me until I write, then the scene rises before me as was presented in vision, and I can write with freedom. Sometimes the things which I have seen are hid from me after I come out of vision, and I cannot call them to mind until I am brought before a company where that vision applies, then the things which I have seen come to my mind with force. I am just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in relating or writing a vision, as in having the vision. It is impossible for me to call up things which have been shown me unless the Lord brings them before me at the time that He is pleased to have me relate or write them.--Spiritual Gifts (1860), vol. 2, pp. 292, 293. {1SM 36.4}

Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation.--The Review and Herald, Oct. 8, 1867. {1SM 37.1}

The question is asked, How does Sister White know in regard to the matters of which she speaks so decidedly, as if she had authority to say these things? I speak thus because they flash upon my mind when in perplexity like lightning out of a dark cloud in the fury of a storm. Some scenes presented before me years ago have not been retained in my memory, but when the instruction then given is needed, sometimes even when I am standing before the people, the remembrance comes sharp and clear, like a flash of lightning, bringing to mind distinctly that particular instruction. At such times I cannot refrain from saying the things that flash into my mind, not because I have had a new vision, but because that which was presented to me perhaps years in the past has been recalled to my mind forcibly.--The Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies, p. 24. {1SM 37.2}

No Claim to Infallibility

We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.--The Review and Herald, July 26, 1892. {1SM 37.3}

In regard to infallibility, I never claimed it; God alone is infallible. His word is true, and in Him is no variableness, or shadow of turning.--Letter 10, 1895. {1SM 37.4}

The Sacred and the Common Sanitarium, California March 5, 1909

I am troubled in regard to Brother A, who for some years has been a worker in southern California. He has made some strange statements, and I am pained to see him denying the testimonies as a whole because of what seems to him an inconsistency--a statement made by me in regard to the number of rooms in the Paradise Valley Sanitarium. Brother A says that in a letter written to one of the brethren in southern California, the statement was made by me that the sanitarium contained forty rooms, when there were really only thirty-eight. This, Brother A gives to me as the reason why he has lost confidence in the testimonies. . . . {1SM 38.1}

The information given concerning the number of rooms in the Paradise Valley Sanitarium was given, not as a revelation from the Lord, but simply as a human opinion. There has never been revealed to me the exact number of rooms in any of our sanitariums; and the knowledge I have obtained of such things I have gained by inquiring of those who were supposed to know. In my words, when speaking upon these common subjects, there is nothing to lead minds to believe that I receive my knowledge in a vision from the Lord and am stating it as such. . . . {1SM 38.2}

When the Holy Spirit reveals anything regarding the institutions connected with the Lord's work, or concerning the work of God upon human hearts and minds, as He has revealed these things through me in the past, the message given is to be regarded as light given of God for those who need it. But for one to mix the sacred with the common is a great mistake. In a tendency to do this we may see the working of the enemy to destroy souls. {1SM 38.3}

To every soul whom God has created He has given capabilities to serve Him, but Satan seeks to make this work of service hard by his constant temptation to mislead souls. He works to dim the spiritual perceptions that men may not distinguish between that which is common and that which is holy. I have been made to know this distinction through a life's service for my Lord and Master.... {1SM 38.4}

The message came to me, Dedicate yourself to the highest work ever committed to mortals. I will give you high aspirations and powers and a true sense of the work of Christ. You are not your own, for you are bought with a price, by the life and death of the Son of God. God calls for your child's heart and service under the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. {1SM 39.1}

I gave myself, my whole being, to God, to obey His call in everything, and since that time my life has been spent in giving the message, with my pen and in speaking before large congregations. It is not I who controls my words and actions at such times. {1SM 39.2}

But there are times when common things must be stated, common thoughts must occupy the mind, common letters must be written and information given that has passed from one to another of the workers. Such words, such information, are not given under the special inspiration of the Spirit of God. Questions are asked at times that are not upon religious subjects at all, and these questions must be answered. We converse about houses and lands, trades to be made, and locations for our institutions, their advantages and disadvantages. {1SM 39.3}

I receive letters asking for advice on many strange subjects, and I advise according to the light that has been given me. Men have again and again opposed the counsel that I have been instructed to give because they did not want to receive the light given, and such experiences have led me to seek the Lord most earnestly.--Manuscript 107, 1909. {1SM 39.4}

*E. G. W. Study Help 3**Sabbath, May 25th, 2024***Patriarchs and Prophets,
Introduction, p. 13-22****Introduction**

This volume treats upon the themes of Bible history, themes not in themselves new, yet here so presented as to give them a new significance, revealing springs of action, showing the important bearing of certain movements, and bringing into stronger light some features that are but briefly mentioned in the Bible. Thus the scenes have a vividness and importance that tend to make new and lasting impressions. Such a light is shed upon the Scripture record as to reveal more fully the character and purposes of God; to make manifest the wiles of Satan and the means by which his power will be finally overthrown; to bring to view the weakness of the human heart, and show how the grace of God has enabled men to conquer in the battle with evil. All this is in harmony with what God has shown to be His purpose in unfolding to men the truths of His word. The agency by which these revelations have been given is seen—when tested by the Scriptures—to be one of the methods God still employs to impart instruction to the children of men. [PP 19.1]

While it is not now as it was in the beginning, when man in his holiness and innocence had personal instruction from his Maker, still man is not left without a divine teacher which God has provided in His representative, the Holy Spirit. So we hear the apostle Paul declaring that a certain divine “illumination” is the privilege of the followers of Christ; and that they are “enlightened” by being made “partakers of the Holy Ghost.” Hebrews 10:32; 6:4. John also says, “Ye have an unction from the Holy One.” 1 John 2:20. And Christ promised the disciples, as He was about to leave them, that He would send them the Holy Spirit as a comforter and guide to lead them into all truth. John 14:16, 26. [PP 19.2]

To show how this promise was to be fulfilled to the church, the apostle Paul, in two of his epistles, presents formal declaration that certain gifts of the Spirit have been placed in the Church for its edification and instruction to the end of time. 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:8-13; Matthew 28:20 Nor is this all: a number of clear and explicit prophecies declare that in the last days there will be a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and that the church at the time of Christ's appearing will have had, during its closing experience, “the testimony of Jesus,” which is the spirit of prophecy. Acts 2:17-20, 39; 1 Corinthians 1:7; Revelation 12:17; Revelation 19:10. In these facts we see an evidence of God's care and love for His people; for the presence of the Holy Spirit as a comforter, teacher, and guide, not only in its ordinary, but in its extraordinary, methods of operation, certainly is needed by the church as it enters the perils of the last days, more than in any other part of its experience. [PP 20.1]

The Scriptures point out various channels through which the Holy Spirit would operate on the hearts and minds of men to enlighten their understanding and guide their steps. Among these were visions and dreams. In this way God would still communicate with the children of men. Here is His promise on this point: “Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.” Numbers 12:6. By this means supernatural knowledge was communicated to Balaam. Thus He says: “Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: he hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.” Numbers 24:15, 16. [PP 20.2]

It thus becomes a matter of great interest to investigate the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the extent to which the Lord designed that the Spirit should manifest itself in the church during the period of human probation. [PP 20.3]

After the plan of salvation had been devised, God, as we have seen, could still, through the ministry of His Son and the holy angels, communicate with men across the gulf which sin had made. Sometimes He spoke face to face with them, as in the case of Moses, but more frequently by dreams and visions. Instances of such communication are everywhere prominent upon the sacred record, covering all dispensations. Enoch the seventh from Adam looked forward in the spirit of prophecy to the second advent of Christ in power and glory, and exclaimed, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints." Jude 14. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21. If the operation of the spirit of prophecy has at times seemed almost to disappear, as the spirituality of the people waned, it has nevertheless marked all the great crises in the experience of the church, and the epochs which witnessed the change from one dispensation to another. When the era marked by the incarnation of Christ was reached, the father of John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied. Luke 1:67. To Simeon it was revealed that he should not see death till he had seen the Lord; and when the parents of Jesus brought Him into the temple that He might be dedicated, Simeon came by the Spirit into the temple, took Him into his arms, and blessed Him while he prophesied concerning Him. And Anna, a prophetess, coming in the same instant, spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Luke 2:26, 36. [PP 21.1]

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit which was to attend the preaching of the gospel by the followers of Christ was announced by the prophet in these words: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come." Joel 2:28-31. [PP 21.2]

Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, quoted this prophecy in explanation of the wonderful scene which then occurred. Cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of the disciples; they were filled with the holy spirit, and spake with other tongues. And when the mockers charged that they were filled with new wine, Peter answered, "These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." Then he quotes the prophecy substantially as found in Joel (quoted above), only he puts the words "in the last days," in the place of "Afterward," making it read, "and it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of My Spirit," etc. [PP 22.1]

It is evident that it was that part of the prophecy only which relates to the outpouring of the Spirit, that began to be fulfilled on that day; for there were no old men there dreaming dreams, nor young men and maidens seeing visions and prophesying; and no wonders of blood and fire and pillars of smoke then appeared; and the sun was not darkened and the moon was not turned to blood at that time; and yet what was there witnessed was in fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. It is equally evident that this part of the prophecy concerning the outpouring of the Spirit was not exhausted in that one manifestation; for the prophecy covers all days from that time on to the coming of the great day of the Lord. [PP 22.2]

But the Day of Pentecost was in fulfillment of other prophecies besides that of Joel. It fulfilled the words of Christ Himself as well. In His last discourse to His disciples before His crucifixion, He said to them: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, ... Even the Spirit of truth." John 14:16, 17. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things." Verse 26. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." Chapter 16:13. And after Christ had risen from the dead, He said to the disciples, "Behold, I send

the promise of my Father upon you: But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49. [PP 22.3]

On the Day of Pentecost the disciples were thus endued with power from on high. But this promise of Christ's was not, any more than the prophecy of Joel, confined to that occasion. For He gave them the same promise in another form by assuring them that He would be with them always, even to the end of the world. Matthew 28:20. Mark tells us in what sense and what manner the Lord was to be with them. He says, "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Mark 16:20. And Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, testified concerning the perpetuity of this operation of the Spirit which they had witnessed. When the convicted Jews said unto the apostles, "What shall we do?" Peter answered, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:37-39. This certainly provides for the operation of the Holy Spirit in the church, even in its special manifestations, to all coming time, as long as mercy shall invite men to accept the pardoning love of Christ. [PP 23.1]

Twenty-eight years later in his letter to the Corinthians, Paul set before that church a formal argument on the question. He says (1 Corinthians 12:1), "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant"—so important did he deem it that this subject should be understood in the Christian church. After stating that though the Spirit is one it has diversities of operation, and explaining what those diversities are, he introduces the figure of the human body, with its various members, to show how the church is constituted with its different offices and gifts. And as the body has its various members, each having its particular office to fill, and all working together in unity of purpose to constitute one harmonious whole, so the Spirit was to operate through various channels in the church to constitute a perfect religious body. Paul then continues in these words: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." [PP 23.2]

The declaration that God *hath set* some in the church, etc., implies something more than that the way was left open for the gifts to appear if circumstances should chance to favour. It rather signifies that they were to be permanent parts of the true spiritual constitution of the church, and that if these were not in active operation the church would be in the condition of a human body, some of whose members had, through accident or disease, become crippled and helpless. Having once been set in the church, there these gifts must remain until they are formally removed. But there is no record that they ever have been removed. [PP 24.1]

Five years later the same apostle writes to the Ephesians relative to the same gifts, plainly stating their object, and thus showing indirectly that they must continue till that object is accomplished. He says (Ephesians 4:8, 11-13): "Wherefore He says, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.... And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." [PP 24.2]

The church did not reach the state of unity here contemplated, in the apostolic age; and very soon after that age, the gloom of the great spiritual apostasy began to overshadow the church; and certainly during the state of declension, this fullness of Christ, and unity of faith, was not reached. Nor will it be reached till the last message of mercy shall have gathered out of every kindred and people, every class of society, and every organization of error, a people complete in all gospel reforms, waiting for the coming of the Son of man. And truly, if ever in her experience the church would need the benefit of every agency

ordained for her comfort and guidance, encouragement and protection, it would be amid the perils of the last days, when the powers of evil, well-nigh perfected by experience and training for their nefarious work, would, by their masterpieces of imposture, deceive if it were possible even the elect. Very appropriately, therefore, come in the special prophecies of the outpouring of the Spirit for the benefit of the church in the last days. [PP 24.3]

It is, however, usually taught, in the current literature of the Christian world, that the gifts of the Spirit were only for the apostolic age; that they were given simply for the planting of the gospel; and that the gospel being once established, the gifts were no longer needed, and consequently were suffered soon to disappear from the church. But the apostle Paul warned the Christians of his day that the “mystery of iniquity” was already at work, and that after his departure, grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock, and that also of their own selves men would arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:29, 30. It cannot therefore be that the gifts, placed in the church to guard against these very evils, were ready, when that time came, to pass away as having accomplished their object; for their presence and help would be needed under these conditions more than when the apostles themselves were on the stage of action. [PP 25.1]

We find another statement in Paul's letter to the Corinthian church, which shows that the popular conception of the temporary continuance of the gifts cannot be correct. It is his contrast between the present, imperfect state, and the glorious, immortal condition to which the Christian will finally arrive. 1 Corinthians 13. He says (Verses 9, 10). “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” He further illustrates this present state by comparing it to the period of childhood with its weakness and immaturity of thought and action; and the perfect state, to the condition of manhood with its clearer vision, maturity, and strength. And he classes the gifts among those things which are needed in this present, imperfect condition, but which we shall have no occasion for when the perfect state is come. “Now,” he says (Verse 12), “we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” Then he states what graces are adapted to the eternal state, and will there exist, namely, faith, hope, and charity, or love, “these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” [PP 25.2]

This explains the language of Verse 8: “Charity never fails;” that is, charity, the heavenly grace of love, will endure forever; it is the crowning glory of man's future, immortal condition; but “whether there be prophecies, they shall fail;” that is, the time will come when prophecies will be no longer needed, and the gift of prophecy, as one of the helps in the church, will no longer be exercised; “whether there be tongues, they shall cease;” that is, the gift of tongues will no longer be of service; “whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away;” that is, knowledge, not in the abstract, but as one of the special gifts of the Spirit, will be rendered unnecessary by the perfect knowledge with which we shall be endowed in the eternal world. [PP 26.1]

Now, if we take the position that the gifts ceased with the apostolic age, because no longer needed, we commit ourselves to the position that the apostolic age was the weak and childish age of the church, when everything was seen through a glass, darkly; but the age that followed, when grievous wolves were to enter in, not sparing the flock, and men were to arise, even in the church, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them, was an age of perfect light and knowledge, in which the imperfect and childish and darkened knowledge of apostolic times had passed away! For, be it remembered, the gifts cease only when a perfect state is reached, and because that state is reached, which renders them no longer necessary. But no one, on sober thought, can for a moment seek to maintain the position that the apostolic age was inferior in spiritual elevation to any age which has succeeded it. And if the gifts were needed then, they certainly are needed now. [PP 26.2]

Among the agencies which the apostle in his letters to both the Corinthians and Ephesians enumerates as “gifts” *set* in the church, we find “pastors,” “teachers,” “helps,” and “governments;” and all these are acknowledged, on every hand, as still continuing in the church. Why not, then, the others also, including faith, healing, prophecy, etc.? Who is competent to draw the line, and say what gifts have been “set out” of the church, when all were, in the beginning, equally “set” therein? [PP 27.1]

Revelation 12:17 has been referred to as a prophecy that the gifts would be restored in the last days. An examination of its testimony will confirm this view. The text speaks of the remnant of the woman's seed. The woman being a symbol of the church, her seed would be the individual members composing the church at any one time; and the “remnant” of her seed would be the last generation of Christians, or those living on the earth at the second coming of Christ. The text further declares that these “keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ;” and the “testimony of Jesus” is explained in chapter 19:10 to be “the spirit of prophecy,” which must be understood as that which among the gifts is called “the gift of prophecy.” 1 Corinthians 12:9, 10. [PP 27.2]

The setting of the gifts in the church does not imply that every individual was to have them in exercise. On this point the apostle (1 Corinthians 12:29) says, “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?” etc. the implied answer is no; not all are; but the gifts are divided among the members as it pleases God. 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11. Yet these gifts are said to be “set in the *church*,” and if a gift is bestowed upon even one member of the church, it may be said that that gift is “in the church,” or that the church “has” it. So the last generation was to have, and it is believed does now have, the testimony of Jesus, or the gift of prophecy. [PP 27.3]

Another portion of Scripture evidently written with reference to the last days, brings the same fact plainly to view. 1 Thessalonians 5. The apostle opens the chapter with these words: “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” In Verse 4 he adds, “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” Then he gives them sundry admonitions in view of that event, among which are these (verses 19-21): “Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” And in verse 23 he prays that these very ones who were thus to have to do with “prophesyings” may be preserved blameless unto the *coming of the Lord*. [PP 28.1]

On the strength of these considerations are we not justified in believing that the gift of prophecy will be manifested in the church in the last days, and that through it much light will be imparted, and much timely instruction given? [PP 28.2]

All things are to be treated according to the apostle's rule: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good;” and to be tested by the Saviour's standard: “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Appealing to this standard in behalf of what claims to be a manifestation of the gift of prophecy, we commend this volume to the consideration of those who believe that the Bible is the word of God, and that the church is the body of which Christ is head. [PP 28.3]

Uriah Smith.

LESSON 10

“GOD’S CHURCH OF PROPHECY BEARS HIS MESSAGE”

June 1 — June 7

? STUDY HELP :

- ✓ Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3, p. 446-449
- ✓ Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 8, p. 41-42
- ✓ Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 132-135
- * SDA Bible Commentary on Scripture references
- * Prophets and Kings, p. 60-606. (Chapters 4-49)

Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3, Chapter 36, p. 446-449

“Unity of the Church”

God wants His people to be united in the closest bonds of Christian fellowship; confidence in our brethren is essential to the prosperity of the church; union of action is important in a religious crisis. One imprudent step, one careless action, may plunge the church into difficulties and trials from which it may not recover for years. One member of the church filled with unbelief may give an advantage to the great foe that will affect the prosperity of the entire church, and many souls may be lost as the result. Jesus would have His followers subject one to another; then God can use them as instruments to save one another; for one may not discern the dangers which another's eye is quick to perceive; but if the undiscerning will in confidence obey the warning, they may be saved great perplexities and trials. {3T 446.1}

As Jesus was about to leave His disciples, He prayed for them in a most touching, solemn manner that they all might be one "as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gave Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." The apostle Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians exhorts them to unity: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." {3T 446.2}

God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing, and another having faith and views entirely opposite, each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without regard to the opinions of his brethren, and justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ? And if another and still another arises, each asserting his right to believe and talk what he pleases without reference to the faith of the body, where will be that harmony which existed between Christ and His Father, and which Christ prayed might exist among His brethren? {3T 446.3}

God is leading out a people and establishing them upon the one great platform of faith, the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus. He has given His people a straight chain of Bible truth, clear and connected. This truth is of heavenly origin and has been searched for as for hidden treasure. It has been dug out through careful searching of the Scriptures and through much prayer. {3T 447.1}

Brother B is doubting point after point of our faith. If he is right in his new theories, the body of Sabbath keepers is wrong. Shall the established faith in the strong points of our position, which has led us out from the world and united us a distinct and peculiar people, be given up as erroneous? Shall we receive the faith of this one man, with the evidences he gives us of the fruits of his religious character? Or will Brother B yield his judgment and opinions, and come to the body? If he had not blinded his soul by receiving prejudice, and by cherishing wicked opposition to the work of God, he would not have been left to such darkness and deception. {3T 447.2}

He is a ready talker and will persistently urge his opinions and will not yield to the weight of evidence against him. It is cruel for him to stand in the way of the prosperity of the church, as he has done. The world is large; he has all the privileges that he can ask of going out among unbelievers and converting them to his theories; and when he can present a well-organized body that he has been the means of converting from sin to righteousness, then, and not before, should he press his peculiar views upon the church of God, which is pained and disheartened with his

darkness and error. He has no right to build upon another man's foundation his wood, hay, and stubble to be consumed by the fires of the last day. {3T 447.3}

I was shown that the only safe position for Brother B is to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn the way of life more perfectly. His doctrine shall drop as the rain, and His speech shall distil as the dew, upon the heart of the humble and teachable. Brother B must obtain a teachable disposition. He is not to sit as a judge, but as a learner; not to cavil, but to believe; not to question and find fault and oppose, but to listen. Pride must give way to humility, and prejudice must be exchanged for candour, or the gracious words of Christ will be in vain to him. My brother, you may reason with your blind judgment and unsanctified mind until the day of God and not advance a step toward heaven; you may debate and investigate and search learned authors, and even the Scriptures, and yet grow more and more self-deceived, and become darker and darker, as did the Jews in reference to Christ. What was their fault? They rejected the light which God had already given them and were seeking for some new light by which they might so interpret the Scriptures as to sustain their actions. {3T 448.1}

You are doing the same; you pass over the light that God has seen fit to give you in the publications upon present truth and in His word, and are seeking doctrines of your own, theories which cannot be sustained by the word of God. When you become as a little child, willing to be led, and when your understanding is sanctified and your will and prejudices surrendered, such a light will be shed abroad in your heart as will illumine the Scriptures and show you present truth in its beautiful harmony. It will appear like a golden chain, link joined to link in a perfect whole. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Learn of Me," says Christ; "for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." {3T 448.2}

If you have indeed entered the school of Christ, He expects you to manifest in your character and deportment the lowliness which is so beautifully exemplified in His character. 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. If you really search for the truth with the right motive you will come with the body, for they have the truth. If you are searching the Scriptures and different authors that you may find doctrines which will coincide with your own preconceived opinions, and if you have already settled your faith, then you will be boastful, self-confident, and unyielding. {3T 448.3}

Self-Confidence a Snare

Brother B, with your present self-willed, stubborn spirit, you will go further and further from the truth; and unless you are converted you will prove to be a great hindrance to the cause of God in any place where you have any influence. You are persistent to carry your points. Your self-sufficient spirit must be yielded before you can see anything clearly. You have led your wife to think that you knew the truth better than any of our ministers; you have taken the key of knowledge into your own hands, so far as she is concerned, and have kept her in darkness. God has given His church men of judgment, experience, and faith. They know the way of truth and salvation, for they have searched for it in agony of spirit because of the opposition they had to meet from men who turned the truth of God into a lie; and the benefit of the labour of these faithful servants of God is given to the world. {3T 449.1}

There are very few who realize the exalted nature of the work of God in comparison with the temporal business cares of life. Jesus, the heavenly Teacher, has given us lessons of instruction through His disciples. When He sent out the twelve, He instructed them that into whatever city or town they should enter they must inquire who in it was worthy of their attention and visits; and if a suitable place was found where the people would esteem the blessing sent them,—the privilege of entertaining the messengers of Christ,—there they were to abide and there let their peace rest until they left that city. They were not instructed to visit any and every house indiscriminately, urging their presence upon the people whether they were welcome or not; but if they were not welcomed, if their peace could not rest in the house, they were to leave it and seek a house where the members were worthy and where their spirit could rest. {3T 449.2}

Testimonies for the Church, Volume 8, Section 1, p. 41-42

“Present Opportunities”

A View of the Conflict

In vision I saw two armies in terrible conflict. One army was led by banners bearing the world's insignia; the other was led by the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel. Standard after standard was left to trail in the dust as company after company from the Lord's army joined the foe and tribe after tribe from the ranks of the enemy united with the commandment-keeping people of God. An angel flying in the midst of heaven put the standard of Immanuel into many hands, while a mighty general cried out with a loud voice: "Come into line. Let those who are loyal to the commandments of God and the testimony of Christ now take their position. Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters. Let all who will come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." {8T 41.1}

The battle raged. Victory alternated from side to side. Now the soldiers of the cross gave way, "as when a standard-bearer faints." Isaiah 10:18. But their apparent retreat was but to gain a more advantageous position. Shouts of joy were heard. A song of praise to God went up, and angel voices united in the song, as Christ's soldiers planted His banner on the walls of fortresses till then held by the enemy. The Captain of our salvation was ordering the battle and sending support to His soldiers. His power was mightily displayed, encouraging them to press the battle to the gates. He taught them terrible things in righteousness as He led them on step by step, conquering and to conquer. {8T 41.2}

At last the victory was gained. The army following the banner with the inscription, "The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus," was gloriously triumphant. The soldiers of Christ were close beside the gates of the city, and with joy the city received her King. The kingdom of peace and joy and everlasting righteousness was established. {8T 41.3}

Now the church is militant. Now we are confronted with a world in midnight darkness, almost wholly given over to idolatry. But the day is coming in which the battle will have been fought, the victory won. The will of God is to be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Then the nations will own no other law than the law of heaven. All will be a happy, united family, clothed with the garments of praise and thanksgiving --the robe of Christ's righteousness. All nature, in its surpassing loveliness, will offer to God a constant tribute of praise and adoration. The world will be bathed in the light of heaven. The years will move on in gladness. The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold greater than it is now. Over the scene the morning stars will sing together, and the sons of God will shout for joy, while God and Christ will unite in proclaiming: "There shall be no more sin, neither shall there be any more death." {8T 42.1}

This is the scene that is presented to me. But the church must and will fight against seen and unseen foes. Satan's agencies in human form are on the ground. Men have confederated to oppose the Lord of hosts. These confederacies will continue until Christ shall leave His place of intercession before the mercy seat and shall put on the garments of vengeance. Satanic agencies are in every city, busily organizing into parties those opposed to the law of God. Professed saints and avowed unbelievers take their stand with these parties. This is no time for the people of God to be weaklings. We cannot afford to be off our guard for one moment. {8T 42.2}

"Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour 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 armour 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." Ephesians 6:10-17. {8T 42.3}

E. G. W. Study Help 3*Sabbath, June 1st, 2024***Testimonies to Minister and Gospel Workers,
Chapter 4, p. 132-135****“God’s High Standard”****Sabbath Observance the Sign of Loyalty**

[SPECIAL TESTIMONY TO BATTLE CREEK CHURCH (1898), PAGES 29-40.]

Sunnyside, Cooranbong, January 12, 1898.

I call upon all who have united in a course of action that is wrong in principle to make a decided reformation, and forever after walk humbly with God. The world is soon to be judged. A righteous God must avenge the death of His Son. Today men are choosing Barabbas, and saying, Crucify Christ. They will do this in the person of His saints. They will go over the same ground as the Jewish priests and rulers did in their treatment of Christ. He, the Son of God, and an innocent man, was murdered because He told men truths that it did not please them to hear. Yet He was the Son of the infinite God. {TM 131.2}

Those who today despise the law of Jehovah, showing no respect for His commandments, are taking sides with the great apostate. They proclaim to a sin-corrupted world that the law of God is null and void. Those who declare this as truth deceive the people, and have virtually nailed the law of Jehovah to the cross between two thieves. What a thought! {TM 132.1}

Before the worlds unfallen and the heavenly universe, the world will have to give an account to the Judge of the whole earth, the very One they condemned and crucified. What a reckoning day that will be! It is the great day of God's vengeance. Christ does not then stand at Pilate's bar. Pilate and Herod, and all that mocked, scourged, rejected, and crucified Him will then understand what it means to feel the wrath of the Lamb. Their deeds will appear before them in their true character. {TM 132.2}

A Terrible Deception

What a terrible deception is upon the minds of those who think that the world is growing better! Christ declares, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." "For as in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." To just such a pass will the world come in rejecting the law of God. {TM 132.3}

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name." {TM 132.4}

John was called to behold a people distinct from those who worship the beast or his image by keeping the first day of the week. The observance of this day is the mark of the beast. John declares, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." {TM 133.1}

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." We are plainly shown that two parties will

exist at the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In which party do we wish to be found? "Behold, I come quickly," Christ says, "and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." This is the destination of commandment keepers. Should we not all wish to be among that number who have right to the tree of life, and who enter through the gates into the city? {TM 133.2}

Adam and Eve and their posterity lost their right to the tree of life because of their disobedience. "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." Adam and Eve transgressed the law of God. This made it necessary for them to be driven from Eden and be separated from the tree of life, to eat of which after their transgression would perpetuate sin. "So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Man was dependent upon the tree of life for immortality, and the Lord took these precautions lest men should eat of that tree "and live forever"--become immortal sinners. {TM 133.3}

Death entered the world because of transgression. But Christ gave His life that man should have another trial. He did not die on the cross to abolish the law of God, but to secure for man a second probation. He did not die to make sin an immortal attribute; He died to secure the right to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. He suffered the full penalty of a broken law for the whole world. This He did, not that men might continue in transgression, but that they might return to their loyalty and keep God's commandments and His law as the apple of their eye. {TM 134.1}

A Sign of Obedience

The sign of obedience is the observance of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. If men keep the fourth commandment, they will keep all the rest. It was no human voice that spoke to Moses, giving him the Sabbath as a sign. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul be cut off from among his people." {TM 134.2}

The Lord does not leave so important a precept as this without definite specification. "Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant." {TM 135.1}

Human Philosophy Versus Divine Revelation

Human philosophy declares that an indefinite period of time was taken in the creation of the world. Does God state the matter thus? No; He says, "It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days [not six indefinite periods of time; for then there would be no possible way for man to observe the day specified in the fourth commandment] the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." Please read carefully the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy. God says again, "Remember [do not forget] the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." {TM 135.2} Yet with the living oracles before them, those who claim to preach the word present the suppositions of human minds, the maxims and commandments of men. They make void the law of God by their traditions. The sophistry in regard to the world's being created in an indefinite period of time is one of Satan's falsehoods. God speaks to the human family in language they can comprehend. He does not leave the matter so indefinite that human beings can handle it according to their theories. When the Lord declares that He made the world in six days and rested on the seventh day, He means the day of twenty-four hours, which He has marked off by the rising and setting of the sun. {TM 135.3}

LESSON 11

“A GIFT THAT GUIDES AND GUARDS”

June 8 — June 14

? STUDY HELP :

- ✓ Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pages 24-62
- * A.G. Daniells. The Abiding Gift of Prophecy, pages 330-369
- * S.D.A. Bible Commentary, on Scripture references.

Testimonies to Minister and Gospel Workers, Chapter 1, the Church of Christ, p. 24-62

“Unity of the Church”

Organization and Development

[CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AND TEACHINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE, PAGES 192-205.]

It is nearly forty years since organization was introduced among us as a people. [WRITTEN IN 1892.] I was one of the number who had an experience in establishing it from the first. I know the difficulties that had to be met, the evils which it was designed to correct, and I have watched its influence in connection with the growth of the cause. At an early stage in the work, God gave us special light upon this point, and this light, together with the lessons that experience has taught us, should be carefully considered. {TM 24.1}

From the first our work was aggressive. Our numbers were few, and mostly from the poorer class. Our views were almost unknown to the world. We had no houses of worship, but few publications, and very limited facilities for carrying forward our work. The sheep were scattered in the highways and byways, in cities, in towns, in forests. The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus was our message. {TM 24.2}

Unity in Faith and Doctrine

My husband, with Elders Joseph Bates, Stephen Pierce, Hiram Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, was among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. {TM 24.3}

We would come together burdened in soul, praying that we might be one in faith and doctrine; for we knew that Christ is not divided. One point at a time was made the subject of investigation. The Scriptures were opened with a sense of awe. Often we fasted, that we might be better fitted to understand the truth. After earnest prayer, if any point was not understood it was discussed, and each one expressed his opinion freely; then we would again bow in prayer, and earnest supplications went up to heaven that God would help us to see eye to eye, that we might be one as Christ and the Father are one. Many tears were shed. {TM 24.4}

We spent many hours in this way. Sometimes the entire night was spent in solemn investigation of the Scriptures, that we might understand the truth for our time. On some occasions the Spirit of God would come upon me, and difficult portions were made clear through God's appointed way, and then there was perfect harmony. We were all of one mind and one spirit. {TM 25.1}

We sought most earnestly that the Scriptures should not be wrested to suit any man's opinions. We tried to make our differences as slight as possible by not dwelling on points that were of minor importance, upon which there were varying opinions. But the burden of every soul was to bring about a condition among the brethren which would answer the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one as He and the Father are one. {TM 25.2}

Sometimes one or two of the brethren would stubbornly set themselves against the view presented, and would act out the natural feelings of the heart; but when this disposition appeared, we suspended our investigations and adjourned our meeting, that each one might have an opportunity to go to God in prayer and, without conversation with others, study the point of difference, asking light from heaven. With expressions of friendliness we parted, to meet again as soon as possible for further investigation. At times the power of God came upon us in a marked manner, and when clear light revealed the points of truth, we would weep and rejoice together. We loved Jesus; we loved one another. {TM 25.3}

Our numbers gradually increased. The seed that was sown was watered of God, and He gave the increase. At first we assembled for worship, and presented the truth to those who would come to hear, in private houses, in large kitchens, in barns, in groves, and in schoolhouses; but it was not long before we were able to build humble houses of worship. {TM 26.1}

The Introduction of Church Order

As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable. {TM 26.2}

Yet there was strong feeling against it among our people. The first-day Adventists [SEE APPENDIX.] were opposed to organization, and most of the Seventh-day Adventists entertained the same ideas. We sought the Lord with earnest prayer that we might understand His will, and light was given by His Spirit that there must be order and thorough discipline in the church--that organization was essential. System and order are manifest in all the works of God throughout the universe. Order is the law of heaven, and it should be the law of God's people on the earth. {TM 26.3}

We had a hard struggle in establishing organization. Notwithstanding that the Lord gave testimony after testimony upon this point, the opposition was strong, and it had to be met again and again. But we knew that the Lord God of Israel was leading us, and guiding by His providence. We engaged in the work of organization, and marked prosperity attended this advance movement. {TM 26.4}

As the development of the work called upon us to engage in new enterprises, we were prepared to enter upon them. The Lord directed our minds to the importance of the educational work. We saw the need of schools, that our children might receive instruction free from the errors of false philosophy, that their training might be in harmony with the principles of the word of God. The need of a health institution had been urged upon us, both for the help and instruction of our own people and as a means of blessing and enlightenment to others. This enterprise also was carried forward. All this was missionary work of the highest order. {TM 27.1}

Results of United Effort

Our work was not sustained by large gifts or legacies; for we have few wealthy men among us. What is the secret of our prosperity? We have moved under the orders of the Captain of our salvation. God has blessed our united efforts. The truth has spread and flourished. Institutions have multiplied. The mustard seed has grown to a great tree. The system of organization has proved a grand success. Systematic benevolence [SEE APPENDIX.] was entered into according to the Bible plan. The body has been "compacted by that which every joint supplies." As we have advanced, our system of organization has still proved effectual. {TM 27.2}

Let none entertain the thought that we can dispense with organization. It has cost us much study and many prayers for wisdom, that we know God has answered, to erect this structure. It has been built up by His direction, through much sacrifice and conflict. Let none of our brethren be so deceived as to attempt to tear it down, for you will thus bring in a condition of things that you do not dream of. In the name of the Lord I declare to you that it is to stand, strengthened, established, and settled. At God's command, "Go forward," we advanced when the difficulties to be surmounted made the advance seem impossible. We know how much it has cost to work out God's plans in the past, which have made us as a people what we are. Then let everyone be exceedingly careful not to unsettle minds in regard to those things that God has ordained for our prosperity and success in advancing His cause. {TM 27.3}

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 cooperation 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 cooperate with them. But never, never will these heavenly messengers place their endorsement upon irregularity, disorganization, and disorder. All these evils are the result of Satan's efforts to weaken our forces, to destroy our courage, and prevent successful action. {TM 28.1}

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 perfect 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 labouring 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 devoted 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. {TM 29.1}

Individual Responsibility and Christian Unity

God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing and another having faith and views entirely opposite, each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without regard to the opinion of his brethren, and justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ? And if another and still another arises, each asserting his right to believe and talk what he pleases without reference to the faith of the body, where will be that harmony which existed between Christ and His Father, and which Christ prayed might exist among His brethren? {TM 29.2}

Though we have an individual work and an individual responsibility before God, we are not to follow our own independent 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. {TM 30.1}

It is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial. . . . We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed. {TM 30.2}

When a brother receives new light upon the Scriptures, he should frankly explain his position, and every minister should search the Scriptures with the spirit of candour to see if the points presented can be substantiated by the Inspired Word. "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." 2 Timothy 2:24, 25. {TM 30.3}

What Hath God Wrought!

In reviewing our past history, having travelled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history. {TM 31.1}

We are now a strong people, if we will put our trust in the Lord; for we are handling the mighty truths of the word of God. We have everything to be thankful for. If we walk in the light as it shines upon us from the living oracles of God, we shall have large responsibilities, corresponding to the great light given us of God. We have many duties to perform because we have been made the depositaries of sacred truth to be given to the world in all its beauty and glory. We are debtors to God to use every advantage He has entrusted to us to beautify the truth by holiness of character, and to send the messages of warning, and of comfort, of hope and love, to those who are in the darkness of error and sin. {TM 31.2}

Thank God for what has already been done in providing for our youth facilities for religious and intellectual training. Many have been educated to act a part in the various branches of the work, not only in America, but in foreign fields. The press has furnished literature that has spread far and wide the knowledge of truth. Let all the gifts that like rivulets have swelled the stream of benevolence be recognized as a cause of thanksgiving to God. {TM 31.3}

We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. We want our children to believe the truth. We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth. Let all be so trained that they may rightly represent the truth, giving the reason of the hope that is within them, and honouring God in any branch of the work where they are qualified to labour. . . . {TM 32.1}

As the disciples of Christ it is our duty to diffuse light which we know the world has not. Let the people of God "be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." 1 Timothy 6:18, 19. {TM 32.2}

The Remnant Church Not Babylon [REVIEW AND HERALD, AUGUST 22 TO SEPTEMBER 12, 1893.]

I have been made very sad in reading the pamphlet that has been issued by Brother S. [SEE APPENDIX.] and by those associated with him in the work he has been doing. Without my consent, they have made selections from the Testimonies, and have inserted them in the pamphlet they have published, to make it appear that my writings sustain and approve the position they advocate. In doing this they have done that which is not justice or righteousness. Through taking unwarrantable liberties they have presented to the people a theory that is of character to deceive and destroy. In times past many others have done this same thing, and have made it appear that the Testimonies sustained positions that were untenable and false. {TM 32.3}

I have had light to the effect that the position taken by Brother S. and his sympathizers is not true, but one of the "lo, here's," and "lo, there's" that will characterize the days in which we are living. As a sample of the way in which Brother S. has compiled this pamphlet, I will give the following incident: I wrote a private letter to one of our ministers, and in kindness, thinking that it might be a help to Brother S., this brother sent a copy of it to him; but instead of regarding it as a matter for his personal help, he prints portions of it in the pamphlet as an unpublished testimony, to sustain the position he had taken. Is this honourable? There was nothing in the testimony to sustain the position Brother S. holds; but he misapplied it, as many do the Scriptures, to the injury of his own soul and the souls of others. God will judge those who take unwarrantable liberties and make use of dishonourable means in order to give character and influence to what they regard as truth. In the use of private letter sent to another, Brother S. has abused the kindly efforts of one who desired to help him. The parties publishing the pamphlet on the Loud Cry, and the fall of all the churches, give evidence that the Holy Spirit of God is not working with them. "By their fruits ye shall know them." {TM 33.1}

Those who receive the pamphlets advocating these false positions, will receive the impression that I sustain these positions, and am united with these workers in proclaiming what they term the "new light." I know that their

message is mingled with truth, but the truth is misapplied and wrested by its connection with error. I would say to the brother who sent to these men a copy of a letter I had written him, that I have not one thought of censuring you, and no one should cast the least blame upon you concerning the matter. If I should misjudge and censure you, when your motives and intentions were good, I should incur the displeasure of God. If the brother you desired to help has taken liberties, and has betrayed your confidence, do not blame yourself and grieve over the results of his unfaithfulness. {TM 33.2}

Instruction to the Disciples

There are matters in the Testimonies that are written, not for the world at large, but for the believing children of God, and it is not appropriate to make instruction, warning, reproof, or counsel of this character public to the world. The world's Redeemer, the Sent of God, the greatest Teacher the children of men ever knew, presented some matters of instruction, not to the world, but to His disciples alone. While He had communications designed for the multitudes that thronged His steps, He also had some special light and instruction to impart to His followers which he did not impart to the great congregation, as it would neither be understood nor appreciated by them. He sent His disciples forth to preach, and when they returned from their first missionary labour and had various experiences to relate concerning their success in preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, He said unto them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." In a place of seclusion Jesus imparted to His followers such instruction, counsel, cautions and corrections as He saw were needed in their manner of work; but the instruction He then gave them was not to be thrown broadcast to the promiscuous company, for His words were designed for His disciples only. {TM 34.1}

On several occasions when the Lord had wrought works of healing, He charged those whom He had blessed to tell His deed to no one. They ought to have heeded His injunctions and realized that Christ had not lightly required silence on their part, but had a reason for His command, and they should in no wise have disregarded His expressed desire. It ought to have been sufficient for them to know that He desired them to keep their own counsel, and had good reasons for His urgent request. The Lord knew that in healing the sick, in working miracles for the restoring of sight to the blind, and for the cleansing of the leper, He was endangering His own life; for if the priests and rulers would not receive the evidences He gave them of His divine mission, they would misconstrue, falsify, and make charges against Him. It is true that He did many miracles openly, yet in some instances He requested that those whom He had blessed should tell no man what He had done for them. When prejudice was aroused, envy and jealousy cherished, and His way hedged up, He left the cities, and went in search of those who would listen to and appreciate the truth He came to impart. {TM 35.1}

The Lord Jesus thought it necessary to make many things clear to His disciples which He did not open to the multitudes. He plainly revealed to them the reason of the hatred manifested toward Him by the scribes, Pharisees, and priests, and told them of His suffering, betrayal, and death; but to the world He did not make these matters so plain. He had warnings to give to His followers, and He unfolded to them the sorrowful developments that would take place, and what they were to expect. He gave to His followers precious instruction that even they did not comprehend until after His death, resurrection, and ascension. When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them, all things were brought to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them. {TM 35.2}

A Betrayal of Confidence

It was a betrayal of sacred trust to take that which Jesus designed should be kept secret, and publish it to others, and bring upon the cause of truth reproach and injury. The Lord has given to His people appropriate messages of warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, but it is not appropriate to take these messages out of their connection and place them where they will seem to give force to messages of error. In the pamphlet published by Brother S. and his associates, he accuses the church of God of being Babylon, and would urge a separation from the church. This is a work that is neither honourable nor righteous. In compiling this work, they have used my name and writings for the support of that which I disapprove and denounce as error. The people to whom this pamphlet will come will charge the responsibility of this false position upon me, when it is utterly contrary to the teachings of my writings and the light which God has given me. I have no hesitancy in saying that those who are urging on this work are greatly deceived. {TM 36.1}

A False Message

For years I have borne my testimony to the effect that when any arise claiming to have great light, and yet advocating the tearing down of that which the Lord through His human agents has been building up, they are greatly deceived, and are not working along the lines where Christ is working. Those who assert that the Seventh-day Adventist churches constitute Babylon, or any part of Babylon, might better stay at home. Let them stop and consider what is the message to be proclaimed at this time. In place of working with divine agencies to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord, they have taken their stand with him who is an accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God day and night. Satanic agencies have been moved from beneath, and they have inspired men to unite in a confederacy of evil, that they may perplex, harass, and cause of the people of God great distress. The whole world is to be stirred with enmity against Seventh-day Adventists, because they will not yield homage to the papacy, by honouring Sunday, the institution of this antichristian power. It is the purpose of Satan to cause them to be blotted from the earth, in order that his supremacy of the world may not be disputed. {TM 36.2}

Satan's Accusations

The scene of Satan's accusation was presented before the prophet. He says, "He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him." Jesus is our great High Priest in heaven. And what is He doing? He is making intercession and atonement for his people who believe in Him. Through His imputed righteousness, they are accepted of God as those who are manifesting to the world that they acknowledge allegiance to God, keeping all His commandments. Satan is full of malignant hatred against them, and manifests to them the same spirit that he manifested to Jesus Christ when He was upon earth. When Jesus was before Pilate, the Roman ruler sought to release Him, and desired that the people should choose to release Jesus from the ordeal through which He was about to pass. He presented before the clamouring multitude the Son of God and the criminal Barabbas, and inquired. "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" "They said, Barabbas. Pilate says unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let Him be crucified?" {TM 37.1}

The world was stirred by the enmity of Satan, and when asked to choose between the Son of God and the criminal Barabbas, they chose a robber rather than Jesus. The ignorant multitudes were led, by the deceptive reasonings of those in high position, to reject the Son of God, and choose a robber and murderer in His stead. Let us all remember that we are still in a world where Jesus, the Son of God, was rejected and crucified, where the guilt of despising Christ and preferring a robber rather than the spotless Lamb of God still rests. Unless we individually repent toward God because of transgression of His law, and exercise faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, whom the world has rejected, we shall lie under the full condemnation that the action of choosing Barabbas instead of Christ merited. The whole world stands charged today with the deliberate rejection and murder of the Son of God. The word bears record that Jews and Gentiles, kings, governors, ministers, priests, and people--all classes and sects who reveal the same spirit of envy, hatred, prejudice, and unbelief manifested by those who put to death the Son of God--would act the same part, were the opportunity granted, as did the Jews and people of the time of Christ. They would be partakers of the same spirit that demanded the death of the Son of God. {TM 38.1}

In the scene representing the work of Christ for us, and the determined accusation of Satan against us, Joshua stands as the high priest, and makes request in behalf of God's commandment-keeping people. At the same time Satan represents the people of God as great sinners, and presents before God the list of sins he has tempted them to commit through their lifetime, and urges that because of their transgressions, they be given into his hands to destroy. He urges that they should not be protected by ministering angels against the confederacy of evil. He is full of anger because he cannot bind the people of God into bundles with the world, to render to him complete allegiance. Kings and rulers and governors have placed upon themselves the brand of antichrist, and are represented as the dragon who goes to make war with the saints--with those who keep the commandments of God and who have the faith of Jesus. In their enmity against the people of God, they show themselves guilty also of the choice of Barabbas instead of Christ. {TM 38.2}

The World Called to Account

God has a controversy with the world. When the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, He has an awful account to settle, which would now make the world fear and tremble were men not blinded and bewitched by satanic delusions and deceptions. God will call the world to account for the death of His only-begotten Son, whom to all intents and purposes the world has crucified afresh, and put to open shame in the persecution of His people. The world has rejected Christ in the person of His saints, has refused His messages in the refusal of the messages of prophets, apostles, and messengers. They have rejected those who have been colaborers with Christ, and for this they will have to render an account. {TM 39.1}

Satan stands at the head of all the accusers of the brethren; but when he presents the sins of the people of God, what does the Lord answer? He says, "The Lord rebuke [not Joshua, who is a representative of the tried and chosen people of God, but] thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the Angel." Satan had represented the chosen and loyal people of God as being full of defilement and sin. He could depict the particular sins of which they had been guilty. Had he not set the whole confederacy of evil at work to lead them, through his seductive arts, into these very sins? But they had repented, they had accepted the righteousness of Christ. They were therefore standing before God clothed with the garments of Christ's righteousness, and "He answered and spake unto those that stood before Him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Every sin of which they had been guilty was forgiven, and they stood before God as chosen and true, as innocent, as perfect, as though they had never sinned. {TM 39.2}

The Encouraging Word

"And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they [the angels of God] set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the Angel of the Lord stood by [Jesus their Redeemer]. And the Angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." I wish that all who claim to believe present truth would think seriously of the wonderful things presented in this chapter. However weak and compassed with infirmity the people of God may be, those who turn from disloyalty to God in this wicked and perverse generation, and come back to their allegiance, standing to vindicate the holy law of God, making up the breach made by the man of sin under the direction of Satan, will be accounted the children of God, and through the righteousness of Christ will stand perfect before God. Truth will not always lie in the dust to be trampled underfoot of men. It will be magnified and made honourable; it will yet arise and shine forth in all its natural lustre, and will stand fast forever and ever. {TM 40.1}

Words of Accusation Not of God

God has a people in which all heaven is interested, and they are the one object on earth dear to the heart of God. [SEE APPENDIX.] Let everyone who reads these words give them thorough consideration, for in the name of Jesus I would press them home upon every soul. When anyone arises, either among us or outside of us, who is burdened with a message which declares that the people of God are numbered with Babylon, and claims that the loud cry is a call to come out of her, you may know that he is not bearing the message of truth. Receive him not, nor bid him Godspeed; for God has not spoken by him, neither has He given a message to him, but he has run before he was sent. The message contained in the pamphlet called the Loud Cry, is a deception. Such messages will come, and it will be claimed for them that they are sent of God, but the claim will be false; for they are not filled with light, but with darkness. There will be messages of accusation against the people of God, similar to the work done by Satan in accusing God's people, and these messages will be sounding at the very time when God is saying to His people, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." {TM 41.1}

A Work of Deception

It will be found that those who bear false messages will not have a high sense of honour and integrity. They will deceive the people, and mix up with their error the Testimonies of Sister White, and use her name to give influence to their work. They make such selections from the Testimonies as they think they can twist to support their positions, and place them in a setting of falsehood, so that their error may have weight and be accepted by the people. They misinterpret and misapply that which God has given to the church to warn, counsel, reprove, comfort, and encourage those who shall make up the remnant people of God. Those who receive the Testimonies as the message of God will be helped and blessed thereby; but those who take them in parts, simply to support some theory or idea of their own, to vindicate themselves in a course of error, will not be blessed and benefited by what they teach. To claim that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Babylon, is to make the same claim as does Satan, who is an accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God night and day. By this misusing of the Testimonies, souls are placed in perplexity, because they cannot understand the relation of the Testimonies to such a position as is taken by those in error; for God intended that the Testimonies should always have a setting in the framework of truth. {TM 42.1}

Those who advocate error will say, "The Lord says," "when the Lord hath not spoken." They testify to falsehood, and not to truth. If those who have been proclaiming the message that the church is Babylon had used the money expended in publishing and circulating this error, in building up, instead of tearing down, they would have made it evident that they were the people whom God is leading. {TM 43.1}

There is a great work to be done in the world, a great work to be done in foreign lands. Schools must be established in order that youth, children, and those of more mature age may be educated as rapidly as possible to enter the missionary field. There is need not only of ministers for foreign fields, but of wise, judicious labourers of all kinds. The Macedonian cry is sounding from all parts of the world, "Come over, . . . and help us." With all the responsibility upon us to go and preach the gospel to every creature, there is great need of men and means, and Satan is at work in every conceivable way to tie up means, and to hinder men from engaging in the very work that they should be doing. The money that should be used in doing the good work of building houses of worship, of establishing schools for the purpose of educating labourers for the missionary field, of drilling young men and women so that they may go forth and labour patiently, intelligently, and with all perseverance that they may be agents through whom a people may be prepared to stand in the great day of God, is diverted from a channel of usefulness and blessing into a channel of evil and cursing. {TM 43.2}

The great day of God is upon us, and hastes greatly, and there is a great work to be done, and it must be done speedily. But we find that amid the work that is to be done, there are those professing to believe the present truth who know not how to expend the means entrusted to them, and because of a lack of meekness and lowliness of heart they do not see how great is the work to be done. All those who learn of Jesus will be labourers together with God. But those who go forth to proclaim error, expending time and money in a vain work, lay upon the true workers in new fields increased burden; for instead of devoting their time to advocating truth, they are obliged to counteract the work of those who are proclaiming falsehood and claiming that they have the message from heaven. {TM 44.1}

If those who have done this kind of work had felt the necessity of answering the prayer of Christ that He offered to His Father just previous to His crucifixion,--that the disciples of Christ might be one as He was one with the Father,--they would not be wasting the means entrusted to them and so greatly needed to advance the truth. They would not be wasting precious time and ability in disseminating error, and thus necessitate the devoting of the labourer's time to counteracting and quenching its influence. A work of this character is inspired, not from above, but from beneath. {TM 44.2}

"Who is among you that fear the Lord, that obey the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow." The message that has been borne by those who have proclaimed the church to be Babylon has made the impression that God has no church upon earth. {TM 44.3}

A Living Church

Has God no living church? He has a church, but it is the church militant, not the church triumphant. We are sorry that there are defective members, that there are tares amid the wheat. Jesus said: "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. . . . So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." {TM 45.1}

In the parable of the wheat and the tares, we see the reason why the tares were not to be plucked up; it was lest the wheat be rooted up with the tares. Human opinion and judgment would make grave mistakes. But rather than have a mistake made, and one single blade of wheat rooted up, the Master says, "Let both grow together until the harvest;" then the angels will gather out the tares, which will be appointed to destruction. Although in our churches, that claim to believe advanced truth, there are those who are faulty and erring, as tares among the wheat, God is long-suffering and patient. He reprove and warns the erring, but He does not destroy those who are long in learning the lesson He would teach them; He does not uproot the tares from the wheat. Tares and wheat are to grow together till the harvest; when the wheat comes to its full growth and development, and because of its character when ripened, it will be fully distinguished from the tares. {TM 45.2}

The church of Christ on earth will be imperfect, but God does not destroy His church because of its imperfection. There have been and will be those who are filled with zeal not according to knowledge, who would purify the church, and uproot the tares from the midst of the wheat. But Christ has given special light as to how to deal with those who are erring, and with those who are unconverted in the church. There is to be no spasmodic, zealous, hasty action taken by church members in cutting off those they may think defective in character. Tares will appear among the wheat; but it would do more harm to weed out the tares, unless in God's appointed way, than to leave them alone. While the Lord brings into the church those who are truly converted, Satan at the same time brings persons who are not converted into its fellowship. While Christ is sowing the good seed, Satan is sowing the tares. There are two opposing influences continually exerted on the members of the church. One influence is working for the purification of the church, and the other for the corrupting of the people of God. {TM 46.1}

Judas Given Opportunities

Jesus knew that Judas was defective in character, but notwithstanding this, He accepted him as one of the disciples, and gave him the same opportunities and privileges that He gave to the others whom He had chosen. Judas was left without excuse in the evil course he afterward pursued. Judas might have become a doer of the word, as were eventually Peter and James and John and the other disciples. Jesus gave precious lessons of instruction, so that those who were associated with Him might have been converted, and have no need of clinging to the defects that marred their characters. {TM 46.2}

The Church Not Perfect

Some people seem to think that upon entering the church they will have their expectations fulfilled, and meet only with those who are pure and perfect. They are zealous in their faith, and when they see faults in church members, they say, "We left the world in order to have no association with evil characters, but the evil is here also;" and they ask, as did the servants in the parable, "From whence then hath it tares?" But we need not be thus disappointed, for the Lord has not warranted us in coming to the conclusion that the church is perfect; and all our zeal will not be successful in making the church militant as pure as the church triumphant. The Lord forbids us to proceed in any violent way against those whom we think erring, and we are not to deal out excommunications and denunciations to those who are faulty. {TM 47.1}

Finite man is likely to misjudge character, but God does not leave the work of judgment and pronouncing upon character to those who are not fitted for it. We are not to say what constitutes the wheat, and what the tares. The

time of the harvest will fully determine the character of the two classes specified under the figure of the tares and the wheat. The work of separation is given to the angels of God, and not committed into the hands of any man. {TM 47.2}

False doctrine is one of the satanic influences that work in the church, and brings into it those who are unconverted in heart. Men do not obey the words of Jesus Christ, and thus seek for unity in faith, spirit, and doctrine. They do not labour for the unity of spirit for which Christ prayed, which would make the testimony of Christ's disciples effective in convincing the world that God had sent His Son into the world, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If the unity for which Christ prayed existed among the people of God, they would bear living testimony, would send forth a bright light to shine amid the moral darkness of the world. {TM 47.3}

Satan Permitted to Tempt

Instead of the unity which should exist among believers, there is disunion; for Satan is permitted to come in, and through his specious deceptions and delusions he leads those who are not learning of Christ meekness and lowliness of heart, to take a different line from the church, and break up, if possible, the unity of the church. Men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves. They claim that God has given them great light; but how do they act under its influence? Do they pursue the course that the two disciples pursued on their journey to Emmaus? When they received light, they returned and found those whom God had led and was still leading, and told them how they had seen Jesus and had talked with Him. {TM 48.1}

Have the men who have claimed to have light concerning the church pursued this course? Have they gone to those who are chosen of God to bear a living testimony, and given them evidence that this light would better qualify them to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God? Have they sought counsel of those who have been and are still bearing the truth, and giving to the world the last message of warning? Have they counselled with those who have had a deep experience in the things of God? Why were these men, so full of zeal for the cause, not present at the General Conference held at Battle Creek, as were the devout men at Jerusalem at the time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? At the great heart of the work, men opened their treasures of light; and while the Lord was pouring out His Spirit upon the people, did these men receive of the heavenly anointing? While the deep movings of the Spirit of God were made manifest among the people, and souls were being converted, and hard hearts broken, there were those who were listening to the suggestions of Satan, and they were inspired with zeal from beneath to go forth and proclaim that the very people receiving of the Holy Spirit, who are to receive the latter rain and the glory that is to lighten the whole earth, were Babylon. Did the Lord give these messengers their message? No, for it was not a message of truth. {TM 48.2}

The Church the Light of the World

Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproved, warned, and counselled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard. The world is a workshop in which, through the cooperation of human and divine agencies, Jesus is making experiments by His grace and divine mercy upon human hearts. Angels are amazed as they behold the transformation of character brought about in those who yield themselves to God, and they express their joy in songs of rapturous praise to God and to the Lamb. They see those who are by nature the children of wrath, converted and becoming labourers together with Christ in drawing souls to God. They see those who were in darkness becoming lights to shine amid the moral night of this wicked and perverse generation. They see them becoming prepared by a Christlike experience to suffer with their Lord, and afterward to be partakers with Him in His glory in heaven above. {TM 49.1}

God has a church on earth who are lifting up the downtrodden law, and presenting to the world the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. The church is the depository of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lightened with its glory. The prayer of Christ that His church may be one as He was one with His

Father will finally be answered. The rich dowry of the Holy Spirit will be given, and through its constant supply to the people of God they will become witnesses in the world of the power of God unto salvation. {TM 50.1}

There is but one church in the world who are at the present time standing in the breach, and making up the hedge, building up the old waste places; and for any man to call the attention of the world and other churches to this church, denouncing her as Babylon, is to do a work in harmony with him who is the accuser of the brethren. Is it possible that men will arise from among us, who speak perverse things, and give voice to the very sentiments that Satan would have disseminated in the world in regard to those who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus? Is there not work enough to satisfy your zeal in presenting the truth to those who are in the darkness of error? As those who have been made stewards of means and ability, you have been misapplying your Lord's goods in disseminating error. The whole world is filled with hatred of those who proclaim the binding claims of the law of God, and the church who are loyal to Jehovah must engage in no ordinary conflict. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Those who have any realization of what this warfare means will not turn their weapons against the church militant, but with all their powers will wrestle with the people of God against the confederacy of evil. {TM 50.2}

Those who start up to proclaim a message on their own individual responsibility, who, while claiming to be taught and led of God, still make it their special work to tear down that which God has been for years building up, are not doing the will of God. Be it known that these men are on the side of the great deceiver. Believe them not. They are allying themselves with the enemies of God and the truth. They will deride the order of the ministry as a system of priestcraft. From such turn away, have no fellowship with their message, however much they may quote the Testimonies and seek to entrench themselves behind them. Receive them not, for God has not given them this work to do. The result of such work will be unbelief in the Testimonies, and, as far as possible, they will make of none effect the work that I have for years been doing. {TM 51.1}

Almost my whole lifetime has been devoted to this work, but my burden has often been made heavier by the arising of men who went forth to proclaim a message that God had not given them. This class of evil workers have selected portions of the Testimonies, and have placed them in the framework of error, in order by this setting to give influence to their false testimonies. When it is made manifest that their message is error, then the Testimonies, brought into the companionship of error, share the same condemnation; and people of the world, who do not know that the testimonies quoted are extracts from private letters used without my consent, present these matters as evidence that my work is not of God or of truth, but falsehood. Those who thus bring the work of God into disrepute will have to answer before God for the work they are doing. {TM 51.2}

A Divinely Appointed Ministry

God has a church, and she has a divinely appointed ministry. "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." {TM 52.1}

The Lord has His appointed agencies, and a church that has lived through persecution, conflict, and darkness. Jesus loved the church, and gave Himself for it, and He will replenish, refine, ennoble, and elevate it, so that it shall stand fast amid the corrupting influences of this world. Men appointed of God have been chosen to watch with jealous care, with vigilant perseverance, that the church may not be overthrown by the evil devices of Satan, but that she shall stand in the world to promote the glory of God among men. There will ever be fierce conflict between the church and the world. Mind will come into contact with mind, principle with principle, truth with error; but in the crisis soon to culminate, which has already begun, the men of experience are to do their God-appointed work, and watch for souls as they that must give an account. {TM 52.2}

Those who are carrying this message of error, denouncing the church as Babylon, are neglecting their God-appointed work, are in opposition to organization, in opposition to the plain command of God spoken by Malachi

in regard to bringing all the tithes into the treasury of God's house, and imagine that they have a work to do in warning those whom God has chosen to forward His message of truth. These workers are not bringing greater efficiency to the cause and kingdom of God, but are engaged in a work similar to that in which the enemy of all righteousness is engaged. Let these men who are rising up against the ways and means ordained of God to forward His work in these days of peril divest themselves of all unscriptural views concerning the nature, office, and power of God's appointed agencies. {TM 53.1}

Let all understand the words that I now write. Those who are labourers together with God are but His instruments, and they in themselves possess no essential grace or holiness. It is only when they are

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cooperating with heavenly intelligences that they are successful. They are but earthen vessels, the depositaries in which God places the treasure of His truth. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God alone that gives the increase. {TM 53.2}

God speaks through His appointed agencies, and let no man, or confederacy of men, insult the Spirit of God by refusing to hear the message of God's word from the lips of His chosen messengers. By refusing to hear the message of God, men close themselves in a chamber of darkness. They shut their own souls away from vast blessings and rob Christ of the glory that should come to Him, by showing disrespect to His appointed agencies. {TM 54.1}

Beware of False Teachers

God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. But Satan is a vigilant, unsleeping foe, ever at work upon human minds, seeking a soil in which he can sow his tares. If he finds any whom he can press into his service, he will suggest ideas and false theories, and make them zealous in advocating error. The truth not only converts, but works the purification of its receiver. Jesus has warned us to beware of false teachers. From the beginning of our work, men have arisen from time to time, advocating theories that were new and startling. But if those who claim to believe the truth would go to those who have had experience, would go to the word of God in a teachable, humble spirit, and examine their theories in the light of truth and with the aid of the brethren who have been diligent Bible students, and at the same time make supplication unto God, asking, Is this the way of the Lord, or is it a false path in which Satan would lead me? they would receive light, and would escape out of the net of the fowler. {TM 54.2}

Let all our brethren and sisters beware of anyone who would set a time for the Lord to fulfill His word in regard to His coming, or in regard to any other promise He has made of special significance. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." False teachers may appear to be very zealous for the work of God, and may expend means to bring their theories before the world and the church; but as they mingle error with truth, their message is one of deception, and will lead souls into false paths. They are to be met and opposed, not because they are bad men, but because they are teachers of falsehood and are endeavouring to put upon falsehood the stamp of truth. {TM 55.1}

What a pity it is that men will go to such pains to discover some theory of error when there is a whole storehouse of precious gems of truth by which the people might be enriched in the most holy faith. Instead of teaching truth they let their imagination dwell upon that which is new and strange, and throw themselves out of harmony with those whom God is using to bring the people up upon the platform of truth. They cast aside all that has been said in regard to unity of sentiment and feeling, and trample upon the prayer of Christ as though the unity for which He prayed were unessential, and there were no necessity for His followers to be one, even as He is one with the Father. They go off on a tangent, and, Jehu like, call to their brethren to follow their example of zeal for the Lord. {TM 55.2}

If their zeal led them to work in the same lines in which their brethren who have carried the heat and burden of the day are working, if they were as persevering to overcome discouragements and obstacles as their brethren have been, they might well be imitated, and God would accept them. But men are to be condemned who start out with a proclamation of wonderful light, and yet draw away from the agents whom God is leading. This was the way in which Korah, Dathan, and Abiram did, and their action is recorded as a warning to all others. We are not to do as they have done--accuse and condemn those upon whom God has laid the burden of the work. {TM 55.3}

Those who have proclaimed the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Babylon, have made use of the Testimonies in giving their position a seeming support; but why is it that they did not present that which for years has been the burden of my message--the unity of the church? Why did they not quote the words of the angel, "Press together, press together, press together"? Why did they not repeat the admonition and state the principle, that "in union there is strength, in division there is weakness"? It is such messages as these men have borne that divide the church, and put us to shame before the enemies of truth; and in such messages is plainly revealed the specious working of the great deceiver, who would hinder the church from attaining unto perfection in unity. These teachers follow the sparks of their own kindling, move according to their own independent judgment, and cumber the truth with false notions and theories. They refuse the counsel of their brethren, and press on in their own way until they become just what Satan would desire to have them--unbalanced in mind. {TM 56.1}

I warn my brethren to guard against the working of Satan in every form. The great adversary of God and man is exulting today that he has succeeded in deceiving souls, and in diverting their means and ability into harmful channels. Their money might have been used to advance present truth, but instead of this it has been expended in presenting notions that have no foundation in truth. {TM 56.2}

Another Example

In 1845 a man by the name of Curtis [SEE APPENDIX.] did a similar work in the State of Massachusetts. He presented a false doctrine, and wove into his theories sentences and selections from the testimonies, and published his theories in the Day Star, and in sheet form. For years these productions bore their baleful fruit, and brought reproach upon the testimonies that, as a whole, in no way supported his work. My husband wrote to him, and asked him what he meant by presenting the testimonies interwoven with his own words, in support of that which we were opposed to, and requested him to correct the impression that his work had given. He flatly refused to do so, saying that his theories were truth, and that the visions ought to have corroborated his views, and that they virtually did support them, but that I had forgotten to write out the matters that made his theories plain. {TM 57.1}

Ever since the beginning of the work, one after another has risen up to do this kind of work, and I have had to go to the trouble and incur the expense of contradicting these falsehoods. They have published their theories and have deceived many souls, but may God guard the sheep of His pasture. {TM 57.2}

I urge those who claim to believe the truth, to walk in unity with their brethren. Do not seek to give to the world occasion to say that we are extremists, that we are disunited, that one teaches one thing, and one another. Avoid dissension. Let everyone be on guard, and be careful to be found standing in the gap to make up the breach, in place of standing at the wall seeking to make a breach. Let all be careful not to make an outcry against the only people who are fulfilling the description given of the remnant people who keep the commandments of God and have faith in Jesus, who are exalting the standard of righteousness in these last days. {TM 57.3}

God has a distinct people, a church on earth, second to none, but superior to all in their facilities to teach the truth, to vindicate the law of God. God has divinely appointed agencies--men whom He is leading, who have borne the heat and burden of the day, who are cooperating with heavenly instrumentalities to advance the kingdom of Christ in our world. Let all unite with these chosen agents, and be found at last among those who have the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God, and have the faith of Jesus. {TM 58.1}

The Letter

The following is the letter sent to Brother S. [SEE APPENDIX.]: "Napier, New Zealand, March 23, 1893. {TM 58.2}

"Dear Brother S.:

"I address to you a few lines. I am not in harmony with the position that you have taken, for I have been shown by the Lord that just such positions will be taken by those who are in error. Paul has given us warning to this effect:

'Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.' {TM 58.3}

"My brother, I learn that you are taking the position that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Babylon, and that all that would be saved must come out of her. You are not the only man the devil has deceived in this matter. For the last forty years, one man after another has arisen, claiming that the Lord has sent him with the same message; but let me tell you, as I have told them, that this message you are proclaiming is one of the satanic delusions designed to create confusion among the churches. {TM 58.4}

"My brother, you are certainly off the track. The second angel's message was to go to Babylon [the churches] proclaiming her downfall, and calling the people to come out of her. This same message is to be proclaimed the second time. 'And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.' {TM 59.1}

"My brother, if you are teaching that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Babylon, you are wrong, God has not given you any such message to bear. Satan will use every mind to which he can attain access, inspiring men to originate false theories or go off on some wrong tangent, that he may create a false excitement, and thus divert souls from the true issue for this time. I presume that some may be deceived by your message, because they are full of curiosity and desire for some new thing. {TM 59.2}

"It makes me feel sad indeed that you should be deceived in any way by the suggestions of the enemy; for I know the theory that you are advocating is not truth. In advancing the ideas you do, you will do great injury to yourself and to others. Do not seek to misinterpret, and twist, and pervert the Testimonies to substantiate any such message of error. Many have passed over this ground, and have done great harm. As others have started up full of zeal to proclaim this message, again and again, I have been shown that it was not truth. {TM 60.1}

"I understand that you are also proclaiming that we should not pay tithe. My brother, take 'off thy shoes from off thy feet;' for the place whereon you are standing is holy ground. The Lord has spoken in regard to paying tithes. He has said, 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' But while He pronounces a blessing upon those who bring in their tithes, He pronounces a curse upon those who withhold them. Very recently I have had direct light from the Lord upon this question, that many Seventh-day Adventists were robbing God in tithes and offerings, and it was plainly revealed to me that Malachi has stated the case as it really is. Then how dare any man even think in his heart that a suggestion to withhold tithes and offerings is from the Lord? Where, my brother, have you stepped out of the path? Oh, get your feet back in the straight path again. {TM 60.2}

"We are near the end, but if you or any other man shall be seduced by the enemy, and led on to set the time for Christ's coming, he will be doing the same evil work which has wrought the ruin of the souls of those who have done it in the past. {TM 60.3}

"If you are wearing the yoke of Christ, if you are lifting His burden, you will see that there is plenty to do in the same lines wherein the servants of God are labouring--in preaching Christ and Him crucified. But anyone who shall start up to proclaim a message to announce the hour, day, or year of Christ's appearing has taken up a yoke and is proclaiming a message that the Lord has never given him. {TM 61.1}

"God has a church upon the earth who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people. The truth is a sanctifying power; but the church militant is not the church triumphant. There are tares among the wheat. 'Wilt thou then that we . . . gather them up?' was the question of the servant; but the master answered, 'Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat

with them.' The gospel net draws not only good fish, but bad ones as well, and the Lord only knows who are His. {TM 61.2}

"It is our individual duty to walk humbly with God. We are not to seek any strange, new message. We are not to think that the chosen ones of God who are trying to walk in the light compose Babylon. The fallen denominational churches are Babylon. Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God's holy and sanctified day. These and kindred errors are presented to the world by the various churches, and thus the Scriptures are fulfilled that say, 'For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' It is a wrath which is created by false doctrines, and when kings and presidents drink this wine of the wrath of her fornication, they are stirred with anger against those who will not come into harmony with the false and satanic heresies which exalt the false sabbath, and lead men to trample underfoot God's memorial. {TM 61.3}

"Fallen angels upon earth form confederations with evil men. In this age antichrist will appear as the true Christ, and then the law of God will be fully made void in the nations of our world. Rebellion against God's holy law will be fully ripe. But the true leader of all this rebellion is Satan clothed as an angel of light. Men will be deceived and will exalt him to the place of God, and deify him. But Omnipotence will interpose, and to the apostate churches that unite in the exaltation of Satan, the sentence will go forth, 'Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judges her.'" {TM 62.1}

The object of preaching is not alone to convey information, not merely to convince the intellect. The preaching of the word should appeal to the intellect, and should impart knowledge, but it should do more than this. The words of the minister should reach the hearts of the hearers.--Review and Herald, December 22, 1904. {TM 62.2}

LESSON 12

“PROPHECY, A GUIDING LIGHT”

June 15 — June 21

? STUDY HELP :

- ✓ Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, pages 467- 476
- ✓ Prophets and Kings, pages 582-592
- ✓ Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, pages 269-273
- * S.D.A. Bible Commentary, on Scripture references

**Testimonies for the Church,
Vol. 5, Chapter 54, p. 467-476**

“Joshua and the Angel”

"If any man's work abide, . . . he shall receive a reward." Glorious will be the reward bestowed when the faithful workers are gathered about the throne of God and the Lamb. When John in his mortal state beheld the glory of God, he fell as one dead; he was not able to endure the sight. But when mortal shall have put on immortality, the ransomed ones are like Jesus, for they see Him as He is. They stand before the throne, signifying that they are accepted. All their sins are blotted out, all their transgressions borne away. Now they can look upon the undimmed glory from the throne of God. They have been partakers with Christ of His sufferings, they have been workers together with Him in the plan of redemption, and they are partakers with Him in the joy of beholding souls saved through their instrumentality to praise God through all eternity. {5T 467.1}

If the veil which separates the visible from the invisible world could be lifted, and the people of God could behold the great controversy that is going on between Christ and holy angels and Satan and his evil hosts concerning the redemption of man; if they could understand the wonderful work of God for the rescue of souls from the bondage of sin, and the constant exercise of His power for their protection from the malice of the evil one, they would be better prepared to withstand the devices of Satan. Their minds would be solemnized in view of the vast extent and importance of the plan of redemption and the greatness of the work before them as colaborers with Christ. They would be humbled, yet encouraged, knowing that all heaven is interested in their salvation. {5T 467.2}

A most forcible and impressive illustration of the work of Satan and the work of Christ, and the power of our Mediator to vanquish the accuser of His people, is given in the prophecy of Zechariah. In holy vision the prophet beholds Joshua the high priest, "clothed with filthy garments," standing before the Angel of the Lord, entreating the mercy of God in behalf of his people who are in deep affliction. Satan stands at his right hand to resist him. Because Israel had been chosen to preserve the knowledge of God in the earth, they had been, from their first existence as a nation, the special objects of Satan's enmity, and he had determined to cause their destruction. He could do them no harm while they were obedient to God; therefore he had bent all his power and cunning to enticing them into sin. Ensnared by his temptations they had transgressed the law of God and thus separated from the Source of their strength, and had been left to become the prey of their heathen enemies. They were carried into captivity to Babylon, and there remained for many years. Yet they were not forsaken of the Lord. His prophets were sent to them with reproofs and warnings. The people were awakened to see their guilt, they humbled themselves before God, and returned to Him with true repentance. Then the Lord sent them messages of encouragement, declaring that He would deliver them from their captivity and restore them to His favour. It was this that Satan was determined to prevent. A remnant of Israel had already returned to their own land, and Satan was seeking to move upon the heathen nations, who were his agents, to utterly destroy them. {5T 467.3}

As Joshua humbly pleads for the fulfillment of God's promises, Satan stands up boldly to resist him. He points to the transgressions of Israel as a reason why that people should not be restored to the favour of God. He claims them as his prey and demands that they be given into his hands to be destroyed. {5T 468.1}

The high priest cannot defend himself or his people from Satan's accusations. He does not claim that Israel are free from fault. In his filthy garments, symbolizing the sins of the people, which he bears as their representative, he stands before the Angel, confessing their guilt, yet pointing to their repentance and humiliation, relying upon the mercy of a sin-pardoning Redeemer and in faith claiming the promises of God. {5T 468.2}

Then the Angel, who is Christ Himself, the Saviour of sinners, puts to silence the accuser of His people, declaring: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a

brand plucked out of the fire?" Israel had long remained in the furnace of affliction. Because of their sins they had been well-nigh consumed in the flame kindled by Satan and his agents for their destruction, but God had now set His hand to bring them forth. In their penitence and humiliation the compassionate Saviour will not leave His people to the cruel power of the heathen. "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." {5T 469.1}

As the intercession of Joshua is accepted, the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments from him," and to Joshua the Angel declares, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." "So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments." His own sins and those of his people were pardoned. Israel were clothed with "change of raiment" --the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. The mitre placed upon Joshua's head was such as was worn by the priests and bore the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord," signifying that, notwithstanding his former transgressions, he was now qualified to minister before God in His sanctuary. {5T 469.2}

After thus solemnly investing him with the dignity of the priesthood the Angel declared: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." He would be honoured as the judge or ruler over the temple and all its services; he should walk among attending angels, even in this life, and should at last join the glorified throng around the throne of God. {5T 469.3}

"Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch." Here is revealed the hope of Israel. It was by faith in the coming Saviour that Joshua and his people received pardon. Through faith in Christ they were restored to God's favour. By virtue of His merits, if they walked in His ways and kept His statutes, they would be "men wondered at," honoured as the chosen of heaven among the nations of the earth. Christ was their hope, their defense, their justification and redemption, as He is the hope of His church today. {5T 469.4}

As Satan accused Joshua and his people, so in all ages he accuses those who are seeking the mercy and favour of God. In the Revelation he is declared to be the "accuser of our brethren," "which accused them before our God day and night." The controversy is repeated over every soul that is rescued from the power of evil and whose name is registered in the Lamb's book of life. Never is one received from the family of Satan into the family of God without exciting the determined resistance of the wicked one. Satan's accusations against those who seek the Lord are not prompted by displeasure at their sins. He exults in their defective characters. Only through their transgression of God's law can he obtain power over them. His accusations arise solely from his enmity to Christ. Through the plan of salvation, Jesus is breaking Satan's hold upon the human family and rescuing souls from his power. All the hatred and malignity of the arch rebel is stirred as he beholds the evidence of Christ's supremacy, and with fiendish power and cunning he works to wrest from Him the remnant of the children of men who have accepted His salvation. {5T 470.1}

He leads men into scepticism, causing them to lose confidence in God and to separate from His love; he tempts them to break His law, and then he claims them as his captives and contests the right of Christ to take them from him. He knows that those who seek God earnestly for pardon and grace will obtain it; therefore he presents their sins before them to discourage them. He is constantly seeking occasion against those who are trying to obey God. Even their best and most acceptable services he seeks to make appear corrupt. By countless devices, the most subtle and the most cruel, he endeavours to secure their condemnation. Man cannot meet these charges himself. In his sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. But Jesus our Advocate presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser by the mighty arguments of Calvary. His perfect obedience to God's law, even unto the death of the cross, has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims of His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. To the accuser of His people He declares: "'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.' These are the purchase of My blood, brands plucked from the burning." Those who rely upon Him in faith receive the comforting assurance: "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." All that have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of Christ. Not one soul that in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. His word is pledged: "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." The promise given to Joshua

is made to all: "If thou wilt keep My charge, . . . I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." Angels of God will walk on either side of them, even in this world, and they will stand at last among the angels that surround the throne of God. {5T 470.2}

The fact that the acknowledged people of God are represented as standing before the Lord in filthy garments should lead to humility and deep searching of heart on the part of all who profess His name. Those who are indeed purifying their souls by obeying the truth will have a most humble opinion of themselves. The more closely they view the spotless character of Christ, the stronger will be their desire to be conformed to His image, and the less will they see of purity or holiness in themselves. But while we should realize our sinful condition, we are to rely upon Christ as our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own. {5T 471.1}

Yet we should never be content with a sinful life. It is a thought that should arouse Christians to greater zeal and earnestness in overcoming evil, that every defect in character, every point in which they fail to meet the divine standard, is an open door by which Satan can enter to tempt and destroy them; and, furthermore, that every failure and defect on their part gives occasion to the tempter and his agents to reproach Christ. We are to exert every energy of the soul in the work of overcoming, and to look to Jesus for strength to do what we cannot do of ourselves. No sin can be tolerated in those who shall walk with Christ in white. The filthy garments are to be removed, and Christ's robe of righteousness is to be placed upon us. By repentance and faith we are enabled to render obedience to all the commandments of God, and are found without blame before Him. Those who shall meet the approval of God are now afflicting their souls, confessing their sins, and earnestly pleading for pardon through Jesus their Advocate. Their attention is fixed upon Him, their hopes, their faith, are centered on Him, and when the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments, and clothe him with change of raiment, and set a fair mitre upon his head," they are prepared to give Him all the glory of their salvation. {5T 472.1}

Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing up of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects, he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. All will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law. Those who will be true to God and to duty will be menaced, denounced, and proscribed. They will "be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends." {5T 472.2}

Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer. As Joshua was pleading before the Angel, so the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and earnest faith, will plead for pardon and deliverance through Jesus their Advocate. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives, they see their weakness and unworthiness, and as they look upon themselves they are ready to despair. The tempter stands by to accuse them, as he stood by to resist Joshua. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonoured their Redeemer. He endeavours to affright the soul with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away. He hopes to so destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations, turn from their allegiance to God, and receive the mark of the beast. {5T 473.1}

Satan urges before God his accusations against them, declaring that they have by their sins forfeited the divine protection, and claiming the right to destroy them as transgressors. He pronounces them just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favour of God. "Are these," he says, "the people who are to take my place in heaven and the place of the angels who united with me? While they profess to obey the law of God, have they kept its precepts? Have they not been lovers of self, more than of God? Have they not placed their own interests above His service? Have they not loved the things of the world? Look at the sins which have marked their lives. Behold their selfishness, their malice, their hatred toward one another." {5T 473.2}

The people of God have been in many respects very faulty. Satan has an accurate knowledge of the sins which he has tempted them to commit, and he presents these in the most exaggerated light, declaring: "Will God banish

me and my angels from His presence, and yet reward those who have been guilty of the same sins? Thou canst not do this, O Lord, in justice. Thy throne will not stand in righteousness and judgment. Justice demands that sentence be pronounced against them." {5T 474.1}

But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves to the control of evil. They have put away their sins, and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition, and the divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. He who has been most abused by their ingratitude, who knows their sin, and also their repentance, declares: "'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.' I gave My life for these souls. They are graven upon the palms of My hands." {5T 474.2}

The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord's eye is upon His people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but Jesus will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. Their earthliness must be removed that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected; unbelief must be overcome; faith, hope, and patience are to be developed. {5T 474.3}

The people of God are sighing and crying for the abominations done in the land. With tears they warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they humble themselves before the Lord on account of their own transgressions. The wicked mock their sorrow, ridicule their solemn appeals, and sneer at what they term their weakness. But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, and their eyes are fixed upon His perfect purity, that they so clearly discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Their contrition and self-abasement are infinitely more acceptable in the sight of God than is the self-sufficient, haughty spirit of those who see no cause to lament, who scorn the humility of Christ, and who claim perfection while transgressing God's holy law. Meekness and lowliness of heart are the conditions for strength and victory. The crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross. Blessed are these mourners, for they shall be comforted. {5T 474.4}

The faithful, praying ones are, as it were, shut in with God. They themselves know not how securely they are shielded. Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them; but could their eyes be opened, as were the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan, they would see the angels of God encamped about them, by their brightness and glory holding in check the hosts of darkness. {5T 475.1}

As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments" from them, and the encouraging words are spoken, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. And the remnant are not only pardoned and accepted, but honoured. "A fair mitre" is set upon their heads. They are to be as kings and priests unto God. While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." {5T 475.2}

Now is reached the complete fulfillment of those words of the Angel: "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch." Christ is revealed as the Redeemer and Deliverer of His people. Now indeed are the remnant "men wondered at," as the tears and humiliation of their pilgrimage give place to joy and honour in the presence of God and the Lamb. "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem." {5T 476.1}

*E. G. W. Study Help 2**Sabbath, June 15th, 2024***Prophets and Kings,
Chapter 47, p. 582-592****“Joshua and the Angel”**

The steady advancement made by the builders of the temple greatly discomfited and alarmed the hosts of evil. Satan determined to put forth still further effort to weaken and discourage God's people by holding before them their imperfections of character. If those who had long suffered because of transgression could again be induced to disregard God's commandments, they would be brought once more under the bondage of sin. {PK 582.1}

Because Israel had been chosen to preserve the knowledge of God in the earth, they had ever been the special objects of Satan's enmity; he was determined to cause their destruction. While they were obedient, he could do them no harm; therefore he had bent all his power and cunning to entice them into sin. Ensnared by his temptations, they had transgressed the law of God and had been left to become the prey of their enemies. {PK 582.2}

Yet though they were carried as captives to Babylon, God did not forsake them. He sent His prophets to them with reproofs and warnings, and aroused them to see their guilt. When they humbled themselves before God and returned to Him with true repentance, He sent them messages of encouragement, declaring that He would deliver them from captivity, restore them to His favour, and once more establish them in their own land. And now that this work of restoration had begun, and a remnant of Israel had already returned to Judea, Satan was determined to frustrate the carrying out of the divine purpose, and to this end he was seeking to move upon the heathen nations to destroy them utterly. {PK 582.3}

But in this crisis the Lord strengthened His people "with good words and comfortable words." Zechariah 1:13. Through an impressive illustration of the work of Satan and the work of Christ, He showed the power of their Mediator to vanquish the accuser of His people. {PK 583.1}

In vision the prophet beholds "Joshua the high priest," "clothed with filthy garments" (Zechariah 3:1, 3), standing before the Angel of the Lord, entreating God's mercy in behalf of his afflicted people. As he pleads for the fulfillment of God's promises, Satan stands up boldly to resist him. He points to the transgressions of Israel as a reason why they should not be restored to the favour of God. He claims them as his prey, and demands that they be given into his hands. {PK 583.2}

The high priest cannot defend himself or his people from Satan's accusations. He does not claim that Israel is free from fault. In filthy garments, symbolizing the sins of the people, which he bears as their representative, he stands before the Angel, confessing their guilt, yet pointing to their repentance and humiliation, and relying upon the mercy of a sin-pardoning Redeemer. In faith he claims the promises of God. {PK 583.3}

Then the Angel, who is Christ Himself, the Saviour of sinners, puts to silence the accuser of His people, declaring, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Verse 2. Long had Israel remained in the furnace of affliction. Because of their sins they had been well-nigh consumed in the flame kindled by Satan and his agents for their destruction, but God had now set His hand to bring them forth. {PK 584.1}

As the intercession of Joshua is accepted, the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments from him;" and to Joshua the Angel says, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." "So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments." Verses 4, 5. His own sins and those of his people were pardoned. Israel was clothed with "change of raiment"--the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. The mitre placed upon Joshua's head was such as was worn by the priests, and bore the

inscription, "Holiness to the Lord" (Exodus 28:36), signifying that notwithstanding his former transgressions, he was now qualified to minister before God in His sanctuary. {PK 584.2}

The Angel now declared to Joshua: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." Zechariah 3:7. If obedient, he should be honoured as the judge, or ruler, over the temple and all its services; he should walk among attending angels, even in this life; and at last he should join the glorified throng around the throne of God. {PK 584.3}

"Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth My Servant the Branch." Verse 8. In the Branch, the Deliverer to come, lay the hope of Israel. It was by faith in the coming Saviour that Joshua and his people had received pardon. Through faith in Christ they had been restored to God's favour. By virtue of His merits, if they walked in His ways and kept His statutes, they would be "men wondered at," honoured as the chosen of Heaven among the nations of the earth. {PK 585.1}

As Satan accused Joshua and his people, so in all ages he accuses those who seek the mercy and favour of God. He is "the accuser of our brethren, . . . which accused them before our God day and night." Revelation 12:10. Over every soul that is rescued from the power of evil, and whose name is registered in the Lamb's book of life, the controversy is repeated. Never is one received into the family of God without exciting the determined resistance of the enemy. But He who was the hope of Israel then, their defense, their justification and redemption, is the hope of the church today. {PK 585.2}

Satan's accusations against those who seek the Lord are not prompted by displeasure at their sins. He exults in their defective characters; for he knows that only through their transgression of God's law can he obtain power over them. His accusations arise solely from his enmity to Christ. Through the plan of salvation, Jesus is breaking Satan's hold upon the human family and rescuing souls from his power. All the hatred and malignity of the arch rebel is stirred as he beholds the evidences of Christ's supremacy; and with fiendish power and cunning he works to wrest from Him the children of men who have accepted salvation. He leads men into scepticism, causing them to lose confidence in God and to separate from His love; he tempts them to break the law and then claims them as his captives, contesting Christ's right to take them from him. {PK 585.3}

Satan knows that those who ask God for pardon and grace will obtain it; therefore he presents their sins before them to discourage them. Against those who are trying to obey God, he is constantly seeking occasion for complaint. Even their best and most acceptable service he seeks to make appear corrupt. By countless devices, the most subtle and the most cruel, he endeavours to secure their condemnation. {PK 586.1}

In his own strength, man cannot meet the charges of the enemy. In sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he stands before God. But Jesus, our Advocate, presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause, and by the mighty arguments of Calvary, vanquishes their accuser. His perfect obedience to God's law has given Him all power in heaven and in earth, and He claims from His Father mercy and reconciliation for guilty man. To the accuser of His people He declares: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. These are the purchase of My blood, brands plucked from the burning." And to those who rely on Him in faith, He gives the assurance, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zechariah 3:4. {PK 586.2}

All who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of the Saviour. Not one soul who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. His word is pledged: "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." Isaiah 27:5. The promise given to Joshua is given to all: "If thou wilt keep My charge, . . . I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." Zechariah 3:7. Angels of God will walk on either side of them, even in this world, and they will stand at last among the angels that surround the throne of God. {PK 587.1}

Zechariah's vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God's people in the closing scenes of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will then be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts.

Satan numbers the world as his subjects; he has gained control even of many professing Christians. But here is a little company who are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete. As he influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. Men will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law. {PK 587.2}

Those who are true to God will be menaced, denounced, proscribed. They will be "betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends," even unto death. Luke 21:16. Their only hope is in the mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer. As Joshua pleaded before the Angel, so the remnant church, with brokenness of heart and unfaltering faith, will plead for pardon and deliverance through Jesus, their Advocate. They are fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives, they see their weakness and unworthiness; and they are ready to despair. {PK 588.1}

The tempter stands by to accuse them, as he stood by to resist Joshua. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonoured their Redeemer. He endeavours to affright them with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations, and turn from their allegiance to God. {PK 588.2}

Satan has an accurate knowledge of the sins that he has tempted God's people to commit, and he urges his accusations against them, declaring, that by their sins they have forfeited divine protection, and claiming that he has the right to destroy them. He pronounces them just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favour of God. "Are these," he says, "the people who are to take my place in heaven, and the place of the angels who united with me? They profess to obey the law of God; but have they kept its precepts? Have they not been lovers of self, more than lovers of God? Have they not placed their own interests above His service? Have they not loved the things of the world? Look at the sins that have marked their lives. Behold their selfishness, their malice, their hatred of one another. Will God banish me and my angels from His presence, and yet reward those who have been guilty of the same sins? Thou canst not do this, O Lord, in justice. Justice demands that sentence be pronounced against them." {PK 588.3}

But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves up to be controlled by the satanic agencies. They have repented of their sins and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition, and the divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. He who has been most abused by their ingratitude, who knows their sin and also their penitence, declares: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. I gave My life for these souls. They are graven upon the palms of My hands. They may have imperfections of character; they may have failed in their endeavours; but they have repented, and I have forgiven and accepted them." {PK 589.1}

The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are subtle; but the Lord's eye is upon His people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but Jesus will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. Their earthliness will be removed, that through them the image of Christ may be perfectly revealed. {PK 589.2}

At times the Lord may seem to have forgotten the perils of His church and the injury done her by her enemies. But God has not forgotten. Nothing in this world is so dear to the heart of God as His church. It is not His will that worldly policy shall corrupt her record. He does not leave His people to be overcome by Satan's temptations. He will punish those who misrepresent Him, but He will be gracious to all who sincerely repent. To those who call upon Him for strength for the development of Christian character, He will give all needed help. {PK 590.1}

In the time of the end the people of God will sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. With tears they will warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they will humble themselves before the Lord in penitence. The wicked will mock their sorrow and ridicule their solemn appeals. But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. It is because they are drawing nearer to Christ, because their eyes are fixed on His perfect purity, that they discern so clearly the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Meekness and lowliness are the conditions of success and victory. A crown of glory awaits those who bow at the foot of the cross. {PK 590.2}

God's faithful, praying ones are, as it were, shut in with Him. They themselves know not how securely they are shielded. Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them; but could the eyes of God's children be opened as were the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan, they would see angels of God encamped about them, holding in check the hosts of darkness. {PK 590.3}

As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments," and the encouraging words are spoken, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zechariah 3:4. The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. A "fair mitre" is set upon their heads. {PK 591.1}

While Satan has been urging his accusations, holy angels, unseen, have been passing to and fro, placing upon the faithful ones the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:4, 5. {PK 591.2}

Now is reached the complete fulfillment of the words of the Angel: "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth My Servant the Branch." Zechariah 3:8. Christ is revealed as the Redeemer and Deliverer of His people. Now indeed are the remnant "men wondered at," as the tears and humiliation of their pilgrimage give place to joy and honour in the presence of God and the Lamb. "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem." Isaiah 4:2, 3. {PK 592.1}

**Testimonies for the Church,
Vol. 1, Chapter 56-58, p. 269-273**

“Perilous Times, Organization, Duty to the Poor”

Perilous Times

The unbelieving world will soon have something to think of besides their dress and appearance; and as their minds are torn from these things by distress and perplexity, they will have nothing to turn to. They are not prisoners of hope, and therefore do not turn to the Stronghold. Their hearts will fail them for repining and fear. They have not made God their refuge, and He will not be their consolation then, but will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh. They have despised and trampled upon the truths of God's word. They have indulged in extravagant dress, and have spent their lives in hilarity and glee. They have sown to the wind; they must reap the whirlwind. In the time of distress and perplexity of nations there will be many who have not given themselves wholly to the corrupting influences of the world and the service of Satan, who will humble themselves before God and turn to Him with their whole heart and find acceptance and pardon. {1T 268.3}

Those among Sabbath keepers who have been unwilling to make any sacrifice, but have yielded to the influence of the world, are to be tested and proved. The perils of the last days are upon us, and a trial is before the young which they have not anticipated. They are to be brought into most distressing perplexity. The genuineness of their faith will be proved. They profess to be looking for the coming of the Son of man, yet some of them have been a miserable example to unbelievers. They have not been willing to give up the world, but have united with them, have attended picnics and other gatherings of pleasure, flattering themselves that they were engaging in innocent amusement. Yet I was shown that it is just such indulgences that separate them from God and make them children of the world. God does not own the pleasure seeker as His follower. He has given us no such example. Those only who are self-denying, and who live a life of sobriety, humility, and holiness, are true followers of Jesus; and such cannot engage in and enjoy the frivolous, empty conversation of the lovers of the world. {1T 269.1}

A day of heart-rending anguish is before us. I was shown that pointed testimonies should be borne, and that those who will come up to the help of the Lord will receive His blessing. But Sabbath keepers have a work to do. Hoops, I was shown, are an abomination, and every Sabbath keeper's influence should be a rebuke to this ridiculous fashion, which has been a screen to iniquity, and which arose from a house of ill fame in Paris. Individuals were shown me who will despise instruction, even if it comes from heaven; they will frame some excuse to avoid the most pointed testimony, and in defiance of all the light given will put on hoops because it is the fashion, and risk the consequences. {1T 269.2}

The prophecy of Isaiah 3 was presented before me as applying to these last days, and the reproofs are given to the daughters of Zion who have thought only of appearance and display. Read verse 25: "Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war." I was shown that this scripture will be strictly fulfilled. Young men and women professing to be Christians, yet having no Christian experience, and having borne no burdens and felt no individual responsibility, are to be proved. They will be brought low in the dust and will long for an experience in the things of God, which they have failed to obtain.

War lifts his helmet to his brow;
O God, protect Thy people now. {1T 270.1}

Chap. 57 - Organization

August 3, 1861, I was shown that some have feared that our churches would become Babylon if they should organize; but those in central New York have been perfect Babylon, confusion. And now unless the churches are so organized that they can carry out and enforce order, they have nothing to hope for in the future; they must scatter into fragments. Previous teachings have nourished the elements of disunion. A spirit has been cherished to watch and accuse, rather than to build up. If ministers of God would unitedly take their position, and maintain it with decision, there would be a uniting influence among the flock of God. Separating bars would be broken to fragments. Hearts would flow together and unite like drops of water. Then there would be a power and strength in the ranks of Sabbath keepers far exceeding anything we have yet witnessed. {1T 270.2}

The hearts of God's servants are made sad as they journey from church to church, by meeting the opposing influence of other ministering brethren. There are those who have stood ready to oppose every advance step that God's people have taken. The hearts of those who have dared to venture out are saddened and distressed by the lack of union of action on the part of their fellow labourers. We are living in a solemn time. Satan and evil angels are working with mighty power, with the world on their side to help them. And professed Sabbath keepers who claim to believe solemn, important truth unite their forces with the combined influence of the powers of darkness to distract and tear down that which God designs to build up. The influence of such is recorded as of those who retard the advancement of reform among God's people. {1T 271.1}

The agitation of the subject of organization has revealed a great lack of moral courage on the part of the ministers proclaiming present truth. Some who were convinced that organization was right have failed to stand up boldly and advocate it. They let some few understand that they favoured it. Was this all that God required of them? No; He was displeased with their cowardly silence and lack of action. They feared blame and opposition. They watched the brethren generally to see how their pulse beat, before standing manfully for what they believed to be right. The people waited for the voice of their favourite ministers, and because they could hear no response in its favour from them, decided that organization was wrong. {1T 271.2}

Thus the influence of some of the ministers was against organization, while they professed to be in favour of it. They were afraid of losing their influence. But someone must move out and bear responsibility, and venture his influence; and as the one who has done this has become inured to censure and blame, he is suffered to bear it. His fellow labourers, who should stand by his side and take their share of the burden, are looking on to see how he succeeds in fighting the battle alone. But God marks his distress, his anguish, his tears, his discouragement and despair, while his mind is taxed almost beyond endurance; and when ready to sink, God lifts him up and points him to the rest for the weary, the reward for the faithful; and again he puts his shoulder under the heavy burden. I saw that all will be rewarded as their works shall be. Those who shun responsibility will meet with loss in the end. The time for ministers to stand together is when the battle goes hard. {1T 271.3}

Chap. 58 - Duty to the Poor

Inquiries are often made in regard to our duty to the poor who embrace the third message; and we ourselves have long been anxious to know how to manage with discretion the cases of poor families who embrace the Sabbath. But while at Roosevelt, New York, August 3, 1861, I was shown some things in regard to the poor. {1T 272.1}

God does not require our brethren to take charge of every poor family that shall embrace this message. If they should do this, the ministers must cease to enter new fields, for the funds would be exhausted. Many are poor from their own lack of diligence and economy; they know not how to use means aright. If they should be helped, it would hurt them. Some will always be poor. If they should have the very best advantages, their cases would not be helped. They have not good calculation and would use all the means they could obtain, were it much or little. Some know nothing of denying self and economizing to keep out of debt and to get a little ahead for a time of need. If the church should help such individuals instead of leaving them to rely upon their own resources, it would injure them in the end, for they look to the church and expect to receive help from them and do not practice self-denial and economy when they are well provided for. And if they do not receive help every time, Satan tempts them, and they

become jealous and very conscientious for their brethren, fearing they will fail to do all their duty to them. The mistake is on their own part. They are deceived. They are not the Lord's poor. {1T 272.2}

The instructions given in the word of God in regard to helping the poor do not touch such cases, but are for the unfortunate and afflicted. God in His providence has afflicted individuals to test and prove others. Widows and invalids are in the church to prove a blessing to the church. They are a part of the means which God has chosen to develop the true character of Christ's professed followers and to call into exercise the precious traits of character manifested by our compassionate Redeemer. {1T 273.1}

Many who can but barely live when they are single, choose to marry and raise a family when they know they have nothing with which to support them. And worse than this, they have no family government. Their whole course in their family is marked with their loose, slack habits. They have but little control over themselves, and are passionate, impatient, and fretful. When such embrace the message, they feel that they are entitled to assistance from their more wealthy brethren; and if their expectations are not met, they complain of the church and accuse them of not living out their faith. Who must be the sufferers in this case? Must the cause of God be sapped, and the treasury in different places exhausted, to take care of these large families of poor? No. The parents must be the sufferers. They will not, as a general thing, suffer any greater lack after they embrace the Sabbath than they did before. {1T 273.2}

LESSON 13

“CONFIDENCE IN THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY”

June 22 — June 28

? STUDY HELP :

- ✓ Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, pages 668-670
- ✓ Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, pages 678- 683
- ✓ Selected Messages, Book 1, pages 40-48
- * S.D.A. Bible Commentary, on Scripture references.

Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, Chapter 54, p. 668-670

Wrong Use of the "Testimonies"

Some who believe the Testimonies have erred by urging them unduly upon others. In volume 1, number 8, is a testimony bearing upon this point. There were some in----who were God's children, and yet doubted the visions. Others had no opposition, yet dared not take a decided stand in regard to them. Some were sceptical, and they had sufficient cause to make them so. The false visions and fanatical exercises, and the wretched fruits following, had an influence upon the cause in----to make minds jealous of everything bearing the name of visions. All these things should have been taken into consideration and wisdom exercised. There should be no trial or labour 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. . . . {5T 668.1}

"Some, I was shown, could receive the published visions, judging of the tree by its fruits. Others are like doubting Thomas; they cannot believe the published Testimonies, nor receive evidence through the testimony of others, but must see and have the evidence for themselves. Such must not be set aside, but long patience and brotherly love should be exercised toward them until they find their position and become established for or against. If they fight against the visions, of which they have no knowledge; if they carry their opposition so far as to oppose that in which they have had no experience, . . . the church may know that they are not right." [VOL. 1, P. 328 (1862).] {5T 668.2}

Some of our brethren had had long experience in the truth and for years had been acquainted with me and my work. They had proved the truthfulness of the Testimonies and had asserted their belief in them. They had felt the powerful influence of the Spirit of God resting upon them to witness to their truthfulness. I was shown that if such, when reproved through the Testimonies, should rise up against them and work secretly to lessen their influence, they should be faithfully dealt with; for their course would endanger those who were lacking in experience. [VOL. 1, 382.] {5T 669.1}

The first number of the Testimonies ever published contains a warning against the injudicious use of the light which is thus given to God's people. [VOL. 1, 119.] I stated that some had taken an unwise course; when they had talked their faith to unbelievers, and the proof had been asked for, they had read from my writings instead of going to the Bible for proof. It was shown me that this course was inconsistent and would prejudice unbelievers against the truth. The Testimonies can have no weight with those who know nothing of their spirit. They should not be referred to in such cases. {5T 669.2}

Other warnings concerning the use of the Testimonies have been given from time to time, as follows: {5T 669.3}

"Some of the preachers are far behind. They profess to believe the testimony borne, and some do harm by making them an iron rule for those who have had no experience in reference to them, but they fail to carry them out themselves. They have had repeated testimonies which they have utterly disregarded. The course of such is not consistent." [VOL. 1, P. 369 (1863).] {5T 669.4}

"I saw that many have taken advantage of what God has shown in regard to the sins and wrongs of others. They have taken the extreme meaning of what has been shown in vision, and then have pressed it until it has a tendency to weaken the faith of many in what God has shown, and also to discourage and dishearten the church." [VOL. 1, P. 166 (1857).] {5T 669.5}

The enemy will seize upon everything which he can use to destroy souls. "Testimonies have been borne in favour of individuals occupying important positions. They commence well to lift the burdens and act their part in connection with the work of God. But Satan pursues them with his temptations, and they are finally overcome. As others look upon their wrong course, Satan suggests to their minds that there must be a mistake in the testimonies given for these persons, else these men would not have proved themselves unworthy to bear a part in the work of God." {5T 670.1}

Thus doubts arise in regard to the light that God has given. "That which can be said of men under certain circumstances cannot be said of them under other circumstances. Men are weak in moral power and so supremely selfish, so self-sufficient, and so easily puffed up with vain conceit, that God cannot work in connection with them, and they are left to move like blind men and to manifest so great weakness and folly that many are astonished that such individuals should ever have been accepted and acknowledged as worthy of having any connection with God's work. This is just what Satan designed. This was his object from the time he first specially tempted them to reproach the cause of God and to cast reflections upon the Testimonies. Had they remained where their influence would not have been specially felt upon the cause of God, Satan would not have beset them so fiercely, for he could not have accomplished his purpose by using them as his instruments to do a special work." [VOL. 3, PP. 469, 470 (1875).] {5T 670.2}

Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, Chapter 54, p. 678-683

Rejection of Reproof

"Many now despise the faithful reproof given of God in testimony. I have been shown that some in these days have even gone so far as to burn the written words of rebuke and warning, as did the wicked king of Israel. But opposition to God's threatenings will not hinder their execution. To defy the words of the Lord, spoken through His chosen instruments, will only provoke His anger and eventually bring certain ruin upon the offender. Indignation often kindles in the heart of the sinner against the agent whom God chooses to deliver His reproofs. It has ever been thus, and the same spirit exists today that persecuted and imprisoned Jeremiah for obeying the word of the Lord." [VOL. 4, P. 180 (1876).] {5T 678.1}

From the beginning of my work, as I have been called to bear a plain, pointed testimony, to reprove wrongs, and to spare not, there have been those who have stood in opposition to my testimony and have followed after to speak smooth things, to daub with untempered mortar, and to destroy the influence of my labours. The Lord would move upon me to bear reproof, and then individuals would step in between me and the people to make my testimony of no effect. {5T 678.2}

"In almost every case where reproof is necessary, there will be some who entirely overlook the fact that the Spirit of the Lord has been grieved and His cause reproached. These will pity those who deserved reproof, because personal feelings have been hurt. All this unsanctified sympathy places the sympathizers where they are sharers in the guilt of the one reproved. In nine cases out of ten if the one reproved had been left under a sense of his wrongs, he might have been helped to see them and thereby have been reformed. But meddling, unsanctified sympathizers place altogether a wrong construction upon the motives of the reprover and the nature of the reproof given, and by sympathizing with the one reproved lead him to feel that he has been really abused; and his feelings rise up in rebellion against the one who has only done his duty. Those who faithfully discharge their unpleasant duties under a sense of their accountability to God will receive His blessing." [VOL. 3, P. 359 (1875).] {5T 679.1}

"There are some in these last days who will cry: 'Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.' But this is not my work. God has set me as a reprover of His people; and just so surely as He has laid upon me the heavy burden, He will make those to whom this message is given responsible for the manner in which they treat it. God will not be trifled with, and those who despise His work will receive according to their deeds. I have not chosen this unpleasant labour for myself. It is not a work which will bring to me the favour or praise of men. It is a work which but few will appreciate. But those who seek to make my labour doubly hard by their misrepresentations, jealous suspicions, and unbelief, thus creating prejudice in the minds of others against the Testimonies God has given me, and limiting my work, have the matter to settle with God, while I shall go forward as Providence and my brethren may open the way before me. In the name and strength of my Redeemer I shall do what I can. . . . My duty is not to please myself, but to do the will of my heavenly Father, who has given me my work." [VOL. 4, PP. 231, 232 (1876).] {5T 679.2}

If God has given me a message to bear to His people, those who would hinder me in the work and lessen the faith of the people in its truth are not fighting against the instrument, but against God. "It is not the instrument whom you slight and insult, but God, who has spoken to you in these warnings and reproofs." "It is hardly possible for men to offer a greater insult to God than to despise and reject the instrumentalities that He has appointed to lead them." [VOL. 5, P. 235; VOL. 3, P. 355.] {5T 680.1}

Neglect of the "Testimonies"

It is not alone those who openly reject the Testimonies, or who cherish doubt concerning them, that are on dangerous ground. To disregard light is to reject it. {5T 680.2}

"Some of you in words acknowledge reproof, but you do not in heart accept it. You go on the same as before, only being less susceptible to the influence of the Spirit of God, becoming more and more blinded, having less wisdom, less self-control, less moral power, and less zeal and relish for religious exercises; and, unless converted, you will finally yield your hold upon God entirely. You have not made decided changes in your life when reproof has come, because you have not seen and realized your defects of character and the great contrast between your life and the life of Christ." "What do your prayers amount to while you regard iniquity in your hearts? Unless you make a thorough change, you will, not far hence, become weary of reproof, as did the children of Israel; and, like them, you will apostatize from God." [VOL. 4, P. 332 (1879).] {5T 680.3}

"Many are going directly contrary to the light which God has given to His people, because they do not read the books which contain the light and knowledge in cautions, reproofs, and warnings. The cares of the world, the love of fashion, and the lack of religion have turned the attention from the light God has so graciously given, while books and periodicals containing error are traveling all over the country. Scepticism and infidelity are increasing everywhere. Light so precious, coming from the throne of God, is hid under a bushel. God will make His people responsible for this neglect. An account must be rendered to Him for every ray of light He has let shine upon our pathway, whether it has been improved to our advancement in divine things or rejected because it was more agreeable to follow inclination." [VOL. 4, P. 391 (1880).] {5T 681.1}

"The volumes of Spirit of Prophecy, [THE GREAT CONTROVERSY] and also the Testimonies, should be introduced into every Sabbath keeping family, and the brethren should know their value and be urged to read them. It was not the wisest plan to place these books at a low figure and have only one set in a church. They should be in the library of every family and be read again and again. Let them be kept where they can be read by many." [VOL. 4, P. 390 (1880).] {5T 681.2}

Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth hardens when it does not save. The rejection of light leaves men captives, bound about by chains of darkness and unbelief. "The soul that refuses to listen to the invitations of mercy from day to day can soon listen to the most urgent appeals without an emotion stirring his soul. As labourers with God we need more fervent piety and less self-exaltation. The more self is exalted, the more will faith in the Testimonies of the Spirit of God be lessened. . . . Those who trust wholly in themselves will see less and less of God in the Testimonies of His Spirit." [VOL. 5, P. 134 (1882).] {5T 681.3}

How to Receive Reproof

"Those who are reprov'd by the Spirit of God should not rise up against the humble instrument. It is God, and not an erring mortal, who has spoken to save them from ruin." [VOL. 3, P. 257 (1873).] It is not pleasing to human nature to receive reproof, nor is it possible for the heart of man, unenlightened by the Spirit of God, to realize the necessity of reproof or the blessing it is designed to bring. As man yields to temptation, and indulges in sin, his mind becomes darkened. The moral sense is perverted. The warnings of conscience are disregarded, and its voice is less clearly heard. He gradually loses the power to distinguish between right and wrong, until he has no true sense or his standing before God. He may observe the forms of religion and zealously maintain its doctrines, while destitute of its spirit. His condition is that described by the True Witness: "Thou say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." When the Spirit of God, by message of reproof, declares this to be his condition, he cannot see that the message is true. Is he therefore to reject the warning? No. God has given sufficient evidence, so that all who desire to do so may satisfy themselves as to the character of the Testimonies; and, having acknowledged them to be from God, it is their duty to accept reproof, even though they do not themselves see the sinfulness of their course. If they fully realized their condition, what would be the need of reproof? Because they know it not, God mercifully sets it before them, so that they may repent and reform before it shall be too late. "Those who despise the warning will be left in blindness to become self-deceived; but those who heed it, and zealously go about the work of separating their sins from them in order to have the needed graces, will be opening the door of their hearts that the dear

Saviour may come in and dwell with them." [VOL. 3, P. 257 (1873).] Those who are most closely connected with God are the ones who know His voice when He speaks to them. Those who are spiritual discern spiritual things. Such will feel grateful that the Lord has pointed out their errors." [VOL. 5, P. 134.] {5T 682.1}

"David learned wisdom from God's dealings with him and bowed in humility beneath the chastisement of the Most High. The faithful portrayal of his true state by the prophet Nathan made David acquainted with his own sins and aided him to put them away. He accepted counsel meekly and humiliated himself before God. 'The law of the Lord,' he exclaims, 'is perfect, converting the soul.'" [VOL. 4, PP. 14, 15 (1876).] {5T 683.1}

"If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye . . . not sons." Our Lord has said: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." "No chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Though bitter the discipline, it is appointed by a Father's tender love, "that we might be partakers of His holiness." {5T 683.2}

An Unwarranted Distinction

Some have taken the position that the warnings, cautions, and reproofs given by the Lord through His servant, unless they come through special vision for each individual case, should have no more weight than counsels and warnings from other sources. In some cases it has been represented that in giving a testimony for churches or individuals I have been influenced to write as I did by letters received from members of the church. There have been those who claimed that testimonies purporting to be given by the Spirit of God were merely the expression of my own judgment, based upon information gathered from human sources. This statement is utterly false. If, however, in response to some question, statement, or appeal from churches or individuals, a testimony is written presenting the light which God has given concerning them, the fact that it has been called forth in this manner in nowise detracts from its validity or importance. I quote from Testimony 31 a few paragraphs bearing directly upon this point: {5T 683.3}

Selected Messages, Book 1, Chapter 3, p. 40-48

“Attitudes Towards the Testimonies”

An Early Statement

I saw the state of some who stood on present truth, but disregarded the visions--the way God had chosen to teach in some cases, those who erred from Bible truth. I saw that in striking against the visions they did not strike against the worm--the feeble instrument that God spake through--but against the Holy Ghost. I saw it was a small thing to speak against the instrument, but it was dangerous to slight the words of God. I saw if they were in error and God chose to show them their errors through visions, and they disregarded the teachings of God through visions, they would be left to take their own way, and run in the way of error, and think they were right, until they would find it out too late. Then in the time of trouble I heard them cry to God in agony, "Why didst Thou not show us our wrong, that we might have got right and been ready for this time?" Then an angel pointed to them and said, "My Father taught, but you would not be taught. He spoke through visions, but you disregarded His voice, and He gave you up to your own ways, to be filled with your own doings."--Broadside, To Those Who Are Receiving the Seal of the Living God, Jan. 31, 1849. {1SM 40.1}

Safe Instruction for Closing Days

A wealth of moral influence has been brought to us in the last half century. Through His Holy Spirit the voice of God has come to us continually in warning and instruction, to confirm the faith of the believers in the Spirit of prophecy. Repeatedly the word has come, Write the things that I have given you to confirm the faith of My people in the position they have taken. Time and trial have not made void the instruction given, but through years of suffering and self-sacrifice have established the truth of the testimony given. The instruction that was given in the early days of the message is to be held as safe instruction to follow in these its closing days. Those who are indifferent to this light and instruction must not expect to escape the snares which we have been plainly told will cause the rejecters of light to stumble, and fall, and be snared, and be taken. If we study carefully the second chapter of Hebrews, we shall learn how important it is that we hold steadfastly to every principle of truth that has been given.--The Review and Herald, July 18, 1907. {1SM 41.1}

Varying Attitudes Enumerated

Soon every possible effort will be made to discount and pervert the truth of the testimonies of God's Spirit. We must have in readiness the clear, straight messages that since 1846 have been coming to God's people. {1SM 41.2}

There will be those once united with us in the faith who will search for new, strange doctrines, for something odd and sensational to present to the people. They will bring in all conceivable fallacies, and will present them as coming from Mrs. White, that they may beguile souls.... {1SM 41.3}

Those who have treated the light that the Lord has given as a common thing will not be benefited by the instruction presented. {1SM 41.4}

There are those who will misinterpret the messages that God has given, in accordance with their spiritual blindness. {1SM 41.5}

Some will yield their faith, and will deny the truth of the messages, pointing to them as falsehoods. {1SM 41.6}

Some will hold them up to ridicule, working against the light that God has been giving for years, and some who are weak in the faith will thus be led astray. {1SM 42.1}

But others will be greatly helped by the messages. Though not personally addressed, they will be corrected, and will be led to shun the evils specified.... The Spirit of the Lord will be in the instruction, and doubts existing in many minds will be swept away. The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture. Many will read with eagerness the messages reproving wrong, that they may learn what they may do to be saved. . . . Light will dawn upon the understanding, and the Spirit will make an impression on minds, as Bible truth is clearly and simply presented in the messages that since 1846 God has been sending His people. These messages are to find their place in hearts, and transformations will take place.-- Letter 73, 1903. {1SM 42.2}

Perils of Dissecting Inspired Messages

Some sit in judgment on the Scriptures, declaring that this or that passage is not inspired, because it does not strike their minds favourably. They cannot harmonize it with their ideas of philosophy and science, "falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20). Others for different reasons question portions of the Word of God. Thus many walk blindly where the enemy prepares the way. Now, it is not the province of any man to pronounce sentence upon the Scriptures, to judge or condemn any portion of God's Word. When one presumes to do this, Satan will create an atmosphere for him to breathe which will dwarf spiritual growth. When a man feels so very wise that he dares to dissect God's Word, his wisdom is, with God, counted foolishness. When he knows more, he will feel that he has everything to learn. And his very first lesson is to become teachable. "Learn of me," says the Great Teacher; "for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29). {1SM 42.3}

You who have been educating yourselves and others in a spirit of criticism and accusing, remember that you are imitating the example of Satan. When it suits your purpose, you treat the Testimonies as if you believed them, quoting from them to strengthen any statement you wish to have prevail. But how is it when light is given to correct your errors? Do you then accept the light? When the Testimonies speak contrary to your ideas, you treat them very lightly. {1SM 42.4}

It does not become anyone to drop a word of doubt here and there that shall work like poison in other minds, shaking their confidence in the messages which God has given, which have aided in laying the foundation of this work, and have attended it to the present day, in reproofs, warnings, corrections, and encouragements. To all who have stood in the way of the Testimonies, I would say, God has given a message to His people, and His voice will be heard, whether you hear or forbear. Your opposition has not injured me; but you must give an account to the God of heaven, who has sent these warnings and instructions to keep His people in the right way. You will have to answer to Him for your blindness, for being a stumbling block in the way of sinners. {1SM 43.1}

"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). Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the Word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.--General Conference Daily Bulletin, April 13, 1891. {1SM 43.2}

Inspired Messages Wrongly Applied

One man, B by name, came all the way from Michigan with a special message for Sister White. He said that Sister White had been appointed by God to occupy the position occupied by Moses, and that he, B, was to occupy the position of Joshua. Thus the work was to be carried forward. Sister White's work was to be united with his work, and we were to proclaim the truth with power. {1SM 43.3}

This man took the liberty, as many others have done, to mingle a great deal of Scripture with his message,

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quoting passages which he applied to Seventh-day Adventists. During my connection with the work many such men have arisen. They have selected and arranged scriptures which they made applicable to the people of God. Mr. B read with a loud, strong voice the passages he had selected, declaring them to be applicable to us as a people. He said that I must see that he was right; for was it not the Bible he was reading. {1SM 43.4}

"Yes," I said, "you have selected and put these scriptures together, but like many who have arisen as you have, you are wresting the Scriptures, interpreting them to mean thus and so, when I know they do not apply as you have applied them. {1SM 44.1}

"You, or any other deluded person, could arrange and have arranged certain scriptures of great force, and applied them according to your own ideas. Any man could misinterpret and misapply God's Word, denouncing people and things, and then take the position that those who refused to receive his message had rejected the message of God, and decided their destiny for eternity." . . . {1SM 44.2}

From the various letters which have come to me, I see that when such men as B, claiming to be sent by God, go to those who are more or less isolated from our people, these souls are ready to grasp anything that purports to be of heavenly origin. Letters come to me entreating an answer; I know that many men take the testimonies the Lord has given, and apply them as they suppose they should be applied, picking out a sentence here and there, taking it from its proper connection, and applying it according to their idea. Thus poor souls become bewildered, when could they read in order all that has been given, they would see the true application, and would not become confused. Much that purports to be a message from Sister White, serves the purpose of misrepresenting Sister White, making her testify in favour of things that are not in accordance with her mind or judgment. This makes her work very trying. Reports fly from one to another regarding what Sister White has said. Each time the report is repeated, it grows larger. If Sister White has anything to

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say, leave her to say it. No one is called upon to be a mouthpiece for Sister White. . . . Please let Sister White bear her own message. It will come with a better grace from her than from the one who reports her.--Manuscript 21, 1901. {1SM 44.3}

Doubting the Testimonies

[EXTRACT FROM A SERMON AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1883,
APPEARING IN NOTEBOOK LEAFLETS, THE CHURCH, NO. 6.]

When you find men questioning the testimonies, finding fault with them, and seeking to draw away the people from their influence, be assured that God is not at work through them. It is another spirit. Doubt and unbelief are cherished by those who do not walk circumspectly. They have a painful consciousness that their life will not abide the test of the Spirit of God, whether speaking through His Word or through the testimonies of His Spirit that would bring them to His Word. Instead of beginning with their own hearts, and coming into harmony with the pure principles of the gospel, they find fault, and condemn the very means that God has chosen to fit up a people to stand in the day of the Lord. {1SM 45.1}

Let some sceptical one come along, who is not willing to square his life by the Bible rule, who is seeking to gain the favour of all, and how soon the class that are not in harmony with the work of God are called out. Those who are converted, and grounded in the truth, will find nothing pleasing or profitable in the influence or teaching of such a one. But those who are defective in character, whose hands are not pure, whose hearts are not holy, whose habits of life are loose, who are unkind at home, or untrustworthy in deal--all these will be sure to enjoy the new sentiments presented. All may see, if they will, the true measure of the man, the nature of his teaching, from the character of his followers. {1SM 45.2}

Those who have most to say against the testimonies are generally those who have not read them, just as those who boast of their disbelief of the Bible are those who have little knowledge of its teachings. They know that it condemns them, and their rejection of it gives them a feeling of security in their sinful course. {1SM 45.3}

Error's Bewitching Power

There is in error and unbelief that which bewilders and bewitches the mind. To question and doubt and cherish unbelief in order to excuse ourselves in stepping aside from the straight path is a far easier matter than to purify the soul through a belief of the truth, and obedience thereto. But when better influences lead one to desire to return, he finds himself entangled in such a network of Satan, like a fly in a spider's web, that it seems a hopeless task to him, and he seldom recovers himself from the snare laid for him by the wily foe. {1SM 46.1}

When once men have admitted doubt and unbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, they are strongly tempted to adhere to the opinions which they have avowed before others. Their theories and notions fix themselves like a gloomy cloud over the mind, shutting out every ray of evidence in favour of the truth. The doubts indulged through ignorance, pride, or love of sinful practices, rivet upon the soul fetters that are seldom broken. Christ, and He alone, can give the needed power to break them. {1SM 46.2}

The testimonies of the Spirit of God are given to direct men to His Word, which has been neglected. Now if their messages are not heeded, the Holy Spirit is shut away from the soul. What further means has God in reserve to reach the erring ones, and show them their true condition? {1SM 46.3}

The churches that have cherished influences which lessen faith in the testimonies, are weak and tottering. Some ministers are working to attract the people to themselves. When an effort is made to correct any wrong in these ministers, they stand back in independence and say, "My church accepts my labours." {1SM 46.4}

Jesus said, "Every one that doeth evil, hates the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproofed." There are many today pursuing a similar course. In the testimonies are specified the very sins of which they are guilty; hence they have no desire to read them. There are those who from their youth up have received warning and reproofs through the testimonies; but have they walked in the light and reformed?--Not at all. They still indulge the same sins; they have the same defects of character. These evils mar the work of God, and make their impress upon the churches. The work the Lord would do to set the churches in order is not done, because the individual members--and especially the leaders of the flock--would not be corrected. {1SM 46.5}

Many a man professes to accept the testimonies, while they have no influence upon his life or character. His faults become stronger by indulgence until, having been often reproofed and not heeding the reproof, he loses the power of self-control, and becomes hardened in a course of wrongdoing. If he is overworked, if weakness comes upon him, he has not moral power to rise above the infirmities of character which he did not overcome; they become his strongest points, and he is overborne by them. Then bring him to the test and ask, "Did not God reprove this phase in your character by the testimonies years ago?" He will answer, "Yes, I received a written testimony saying that I was wrong in these things." "Why, then, did you not correct these wrong habits?" "I thought the reprover must have made a mistake; that which I could see, I accepted; that which I could not see, I said was the mind of the one who gave the message. I did not accept the reproof." {1SM 47.1}

In some cases the very faults of character which God would have His servants see and correct, but which they refuse to see, have cost these men their life. They might have lived to be channels of light. God wanted them to live, and sent them instruction in righteousness, that they might preserve their physical and mental powers to do acceptable service for Him; and had they received the counsel of God, and become altogether such as He would have them, they would have been able workmen for the advancement of the truth, men who would have stood high in the affections and confidence of our people. But they are sleeping in the grave, because they did not see that God knew them better than they knew themselves. His thoughts were not their thoughts, nor His ways, their ways. These one-sided men have molded the work wherever they have laboured. The churches under their management have been greatly weakened. {1SM 47.2}

God reproofs men because He loves them. He wants them to be strong in His strength, to have well-balanced minds and symmetrical characters; then they will be examples to the flock of God, leading them by precept and example nearer to heaven. Then they will build up a holy temple for God.--Manuscript 1, 1883. {1SM 48.1}

Searching the Testimonies for an Excuse

Some who are not willing to receive the light, but who prefer to walk in ways of their own choosing, will search the testimonies to find something in them to encourage the spirit of unbelief and disobedience. Thus a spirit of disunion will be brought in; for the spirit which leads them to criticize the testimonies will also lead them to watch their brethren to find in them something to condemn.--Manuscript 73, 1908. {1SM 48.2}

The Last Deception of Satan

Satan is . . . constantly pressing in the spurious--to lead away from the truth. The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony.-- Letter 12, 1890. {1SM 48.3}

There will be a hatred kindled against the testimonies which is satanic. The workings of Satan will be to unsettle the faith of the churches in them, for this reason: Satan cannot have so clear a track to bring in his deceptions and bind up souls in his delusions if the warnings and reproofs and counsels of the Spirit of God are heeded.-- Letter 40, 1890. {1SM 48.4}

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