

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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Chapter 1

Proper Education

It is the nicest work ever assumed by men and women to deal with youthful minds. The greatest care should be taken in the education of youth to vary the manner of instruction so as to call forth the high and noble powers of the mind. Parents and teachers of schools are certainly disqualified to educate children properly, if they have not first learned the lessons of self-control, patience, forbearance, gentleness, and love. What an important position for parents, guardians, and teachers! There are very few who realize the most essential wants of the mind, and how to direct the developing intellect, the growing thoughts and feelings of youth.

There is a period for training children, and a time for educating youth. And it is essential that both of these be combined in a great degree in the schools. Children may be trained for the service of sin or for the service of righteousness. The early

education of youth shapes their character in this life, and in their religious life. Solomon says: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6) This language is positive. The training which Solomon enjoins is to direct, educate, and develop. In order for parents and teachers to do this work, they must themselves understand the way the child should go. This embraces more than merely having a knowledge of books. It takes in everything that is good, virtuous, righteous, and holy. It comprehends the practice of temperance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love to God, and to each other. In order to attain to this object, the physical, mental, moral, and religious education of children must have attention.

In households and in schools the education of children should not be like the training of dumb animals; for children have an intelligent will, which should be directed to control all their powers. The dumb animals need to be trained; for they have not reason and intellect. The human mind must be taught self-control. It must be

educated to rule the human being, while the animal is controlled by the master. The beast is trained to be submissive to his master. The master is mind, judgment, and will for his beast. A child may be so trained as to have, like the beast, no will of his own. His individuality may even be submerged in the one who superintends his training, and the will is, to all intents and purposes, subject to the will of the teacher.

Children who are thus educated will ever be deficient in moral energy and individual responsibility. They have not been taught to move from reason and principle. Their will was controlled by another, and the mind was not called out, that it might expand and strengthen by exercise. They were not directed and disciplined with respect to their peculiar constitution and capabilities of mind, to put forth their strongest powers when required. Teachers should not stop here, but give special attention to the cultivation of the weaker faculties, that all the powers may be brought into exercise, and carried forward from one degree of strength to another, that the mind

may attain to due proportions.

Children should be taught to respect experienced judgment, and be guided by their parents and teachers. They should be so educated that their minds will be united with the minds of their parents and teachers, and so instructed that they can see the propriety of heeding their counsel. Then when they shall go forth from the guiding hand of their parents and teachers, their characters will not be like the reed trembling in the wind.

God never designed that one human mind should be under the complete control of another human mind. And those who make efforts to have the individuality of their pupils submerged in themselves, and they be mind, will, and conscience for their pupils, assume fearful responsibilities. These scholars may, upon certain occasions, appear like well-drilled soldiers. But when the restraint is removed, there will be seen a want of independent action from firm principle, existing in them. But those who make it their object so to educate their pupils that they may see and feel that the power

lies in themselves to make men and women of firm principle, qualified for any position in life, are the most useful and permanently successful teachers. Their work may not show to the very best advantage to careless observers, and their labors may not be valued as highly as the teacher who holds the will and mind of his scholars by absolute authority, but the future lives of the pupils will show the fruits of the better plan of education.

There is danger of both parents and teachers commanding and dictating too much, while they fail to come sufficiently into social relation with their children, or their scholars. They often hold themselves too much reserved, and exercise their authority in a cold, unsympathizing manner, which cannot win the hearts of their children and pupils. If they would gather the children close to them, and show that they love them, and manifest an interest in all their efforts, and even in their sports, and sometimes be even a child among them, they would make the children very happy, would gain their love, and win their confidence. And the children would sooner respect and love the

authority of their parents and teachers.

The principles and habits of the teacher should be considered of greater importance than even his literary qualifications. If the teacher is a sincere Christian, he will feel the necessity of having an equal interest in the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual education of his scholars. In order to exert the right influence, he should have perfect control over himself, and his own heart should be richly imbued with love for his pupils, which will be seen in his looks, words, and acts. He should have firmness of character; then he can mould the minds of his pupils, as well as instruct them in the sciences.

The early education of youth generally shapes their character for life. Those who deal with the young should be very careful to call out the qualities of the mind, that they may better know how to direct their powers, and that they may be exercised to the very best account.

Many children have been ruined for life by

urging the intellect, and neglecting to strengthen the physical powers. Many have died in childhood because of the course pursued by injudicious parents and school-teachers in forcing their young intellects, by flattery or fear, when they were too young to see the inside of a school-room. Their minds have been taxed with lessons, when they should not have been called out, but kept back until the physical constitution was strong enough to endure mental effort. Small children should be left as free as lambs to run out-of-doors, to be free and happy, and should be allowed the most favorable opportunities to lay the foundation for sound constitutions.

Parents should be the only teachers of their children until they have reached eight or ten years of age. As fast as their minds can comprehend it, the parents should open before them God's great book of nature. The mother should have less love for the artificial in her house, and in the preparation of her dress for display, and should find time to cultivate, in herself and in her children, a love for the beautiful buds and opening flowers. By calling

the attention of her children to their different colors and variety of forms, she can make them acquainted with God, who made all the beautiful things which attract and delight them. She can lead their minds up to their Creator, and awaken in their young hearts a love for their heavenly Father, who has manifested so great love for them. Parents can associate God with all his created works. The only school-room for children from eight to ten years of age should be in the open air, amid the opening flowers and nature's beautiful scenery. And their only text book should be the treasures of nature. These lessons, imprinted upon the minds of young children amid the pleasant, attractive scenes of nature, will not be soon forgotten.

In order for children and youth to have health, happiness, vivacity, and well-developed muscle and brain, they should be much in the open air, and have well-regulated employment and amusement. Children and youth who are kept at school, and confined to books, cannot have sound physical constitutions. The exercise of the brain in study, without corresponding physical exercise, has a

tendency to attract the blood to the brain, and the circulation of the blood through the system becomes unbalanced. The brain has too much blood, and the extremities too little. There should be rules regulating their studies to certain hours, and then a portion of their time should be spent in physical labor. And if their habits of eating, dressing, and sleeping were in accordance with physical law, they could obtain an education without sacrificing physical and mental health.

The patriarchs from Adam to Noah, with but few exceptions, lived nearly a thousand years. Since the days of Noah, the length of life has been tapering. Those suffering with disease were brought to Christ for him to heal, from every town, city, and village; for they were afflicted with all manner of diseases. And disease has been steadily on the increase through successive generations since that period. Because of the continued violation of the laws of life, mortality has increased to a fearful extent.

Disease has been transmitted from parents to

children from generation to generation. Infants in their cradle are miserably afflicted because of the sins of their parents, which have lessened their vital force. Their wrong habits of eating and dressing, and their general dissipation, are transmitted as an inheritance to their children. Many are born insane, deformed, blind, deaf, and a very large class deficient in intellect. The strange absence of principle which characterizes this generation, in disregarding the laws of life and health, is astonishing. Ignorance prevails upon this subject, while light is shining all around them. With the majority, their principal anxiety is, What shall I eat? what shall I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed? Notwithstanding all that is said and written in regard to how we should treat our bodies, appetite is the great law which governs men and women generally.

The moral powers are beclouded, because men and women will not live in obedience to the laws of health, and make this great subject a personal duty. Parents bequeath to their offspring their own perverted habits; and loathsome diseases corrupt

the blood, and enervate the brain. The majority of men and women remain in ignorance of the laws of their being, and indulge appetite and passion at the expense of intellect and morals, and seem willing to remain in ignorance of the result of their violation of nature's laws. They indulge the depraved appetite in the use of slow poisons, which corrupt the blood, and undermine the nervous forces, and in consequence bring upon themselves sickness and death. Their friends call the result of their own course the dispensation of Providence. In this they insult Heaven. They rebelled against the laws of nature, and suffered the punishment of her abused laws. Suffering and mortality now prevail everywhere, especially among the children. How great is the contrast between this generation, and those who lived during the first two thousand years! I inquired if this tide of woe could not be prevented, and something done to save the youth of this generation from the ruin which threatens them. It was shown to me that one cause of the existing deplorable state of things is, that parents do not feel under obligation to bring up their children to conform to physical law. Mothers love their

children with an idolatrous love, and they indulge their appetite when they know that it will injure the health of the children, and thereby bring upon them disease and unhappiness. This cruel kindness is carried out to a great extent in the present generation. The desires of children are gratified at the expense of health and happy tempers, because it is easier for the mother, for the time being, to gratify them than to withhold that for which her children clamor.

Had the system of education generations back been conducted upon altogether a different plan, the youth of this generation would not now be so depraved and worthless. The managers and teachers of schools should have been those who understood physiology, and who had an interest, not only to educate youth in the sciences, but to teach them how to preserve health, in order to use their knowledge to the best account after they had obtained it. There should have been in connection with the schools, establishments for various branches of labor, that the students might have employment, and necessary exercise out of school

hours.

The students' employment and amusements should have been regulated with reference to physical law, and adapted to preserve to them the healthy tone of all the powers of the body and mind. Then their education in practical business could have been obtained, while their literary progress was being secured. Students at school should have had their moral sensibilities aroused to see and feel that society had claims upon them, and that they should so live in obedience to natural law that they could, by their existence and influence, by precept and example, be an advantage and blessing to society. It should be impressed upon youth that all have an influence that is constantly telling upon society, to improve and elevate, or to lower and debase it. The first study of youth should be to know themselves, and how to keep their bodies in health.

Many parents have kept their children at school nearly the year round. These children have gone through the routine of study mechanically, and they

have not retained that which they learned. Many of these constant students seem almost destitute of intellectual life. The monotony of continual study wearies the mind, and they have but little interest in their lessons, and to many, the application to books becomes painful. They had not an inward love of thought, and ambition to acquire knowledge. They did not encourage in themselves reflection, and investigation of objects and things.

Children are in great need of proper education, in order that their lives should be of use in the world. But any effort that exalts intellectual culture above moral training is misdirected. Instructing, cultivating, polishing, and refining youth and children should be the main burden with both parents and teachers. Close reasoners and logical thinkers are few, for the reason that false influences have checked the development of the intellect. The supposition of parents and teachers that continual study would strengthen the intellect has proved erroneous; for it has had in many cases the opposite effect.

In the early education of children, many parents and teachers fail to understand that the greatest attention needs to be given to the physical constitution, that a healthy condition of body and brain may be secured. It has been the custom to encourage children to attend school when they are mere babies, needing a mother's care. Children of a delicate age are frequently crowded into ill-ventilated school-rooms, to sit upon poorly-constructed benches; and the young and tender frames have, through sitting in wrong positions, become deformed.

The disposition and habits of youth will be very likely to be manifested in the matured man. You may bend a young tree to almost any form that you may choose, and if you let it remain and grow as you have bent it, it will be a deformed tree, and will ever tell of the injury and abuse received at your hand. You may, after years of growth, try to straighten the tree, but all your efforts will prove unavailing. It will ever be a crooked tree. This is the case with the minds of youth. They should be carefully and tenderly trained in childhood. They

may be trained in the right direction or the wrong, and they will in their future life pursue the course in which they were directed in youth. The habits formed in youth will grow with their growth and strengthen with their strength; and they will generally be the same in after life, only continuing to grow stronger.

We are living in an age when almost everything is superficial. There is but little stability and firmness of character, because the training and education of children from their cradle is superficial. Their characters are built upon sliding sand. Self-denial and self-control have not been moulded into their characters. They have been petted and indulged until they are spoiled for practical life. The love of pleasure controls minds, and children are flattered and indulged to their ruin. Children should be trained and educated so that they may expect to meet with difficulties, as well as with temptations and dangers. They should be taught to have control over themselves, and to overcome difficulties nobly; and if they do not willfully rush into danger, and needlessly place

themselves in the way of temptation; if they shun evil influences and vicious society, and then are unavoidably compelled to be in dangerous company, they will have strength of character to stand for the right and preserve principle, and will come forth in the strength of God with their morals untainted. The moral powers of youth who have been properly educated, if they make God their trust, will be equal to stand the most powerful test.

If parents would feel it a solemn duty that God enjoins upon them to educate their children for usefulness in this life, if they would adorn the inner temple of the souls of their sons and daughters for the immortal life, we should see a great change in society for the better. And then there would not be manifest so great indifference to practical godliness, and it would not be as difficult to arouse the moral sensibilities of children to understand the claims that God has upon them. But parents become more and more careless in the education of their children in the useful branches. Many parents allow their children to form wrong habits, and to follow their inclination rather than to impress upon

their minds the danger of their doing this, and the necessity of their being controlled by principle.

Children frequently engage in a piece of work, and become perplexed or weary of it, and wish to change and take hold of something new, although they entered upon the work with enthusiasm. Thus they may take hold of several things, meet with a little discouragement, and give them up; and thus pass from one thing to another, perfecting nothing. Parents should not be so much engaged with other things that they have not time patiently to discipline those developing minds. They should not allow the love of change to control their children. A few words of encouragement or a little help at the right time may carry them over their trouble and discouragement, and the satisfaction they will have in seeing completed the task they undertook will stimulate them to greater exertion.

Many children, for want of words of encouragement, and a little assistance in their efforts in childhood and youth, become disheartened, and change from one thing to

another. And they carry this sad defect with them in mature life. They cannot make a success of anything they engage in; for they have not been taught to persevere under discouraging circumstances. Thus the entire lifetime of many proves a failure because they did not have correct discipline. The education in childhood and youth not only affects their entire business career in mature life, but the religious experience bears a corresponding stamp.

Young ladies frequently give themselves up to study, and to the neglect of other branches of education even more essential for practical life than the study of books. After they have obtained their education, they are frequently invalids for life. They neglected their health by remaining too much in-doors, deprived of the pure air of heaven, and the God-given sunlight.

These young ladies might have come from their schools in health, if they had combined with their studies household labor and exercise in the open air.

Health is a great treasure. It is the richest possession mortals can have. Wealth, honor, or learning is dearly purchased, if it be at the loss of the vigor of health. None of these attainments can secure happiness if health is wanting. It is a terrible sin to abuse the health God has given us. Every abuse of health enfeebles for life, and makes us losers, even if we gain any amount of education.

Poverty, in many cases, is a blessing; for it prevents youth and children from being ruined by inaction. The physical as well as the mental should be cultivated and properly developed. The first and constant care of parents should be that their children may have firm constitutions, that they may be sound men and women. It is impossible to attain this object without physical exercise. Children, for their own physical health and moral good, should be taught to work, even if there is no necessity as far as want is concerned. If they would have virtuous characters, they must have the discipline of well-regulated labor, which will bring into exercise all the muscles. The satisfaction children

will have in being useful, in denying themselves to help others, will be the most healthful pleasure they ever enjoyed. Why should the wealthy rob themselves and their dear children of this great blessing?

Parents, inaction is the greatest curse that ever came upon youth. Your daughters should not be allowed to lie late in bed in the morning, sleeping away the precious hours lent them of God to be used for the best purpose, and for which they will have to give an account to God. The mother is doing her daughters great injury in bearing the burdens the daughters should share with her for their own present good and future benefit. The course many parents pursue in allowing their children to be indolent and to gratify a desire for reading romance, is unfitting them for real life. Novel and story-book reading is the greatest evil that youth can indulge in. Novel and love-story readers always fail to make good practical mothers. They live in an unreal world. They are air-castle builders, living in an imaginary world. They become sentimental, and have sick fancies. Their

artificial life spoils them for anything useful. They are dwarfed in intellect, although they flatter themselves that they are superior in mind and manners. Exercise in household labor will be of the greatest advantage to young girls.

Physical labor will not prevent the cultivation of the intellect. Far from this. The advantages gained by physical labor will so balance the mind that it shall not be overworked. The toil will then come upon the muscles, and relieve the wearied brain. There are many listless, useless girls who consider it unladylike-like to engage in active labor. But their characters are too transparent to deceive sensible persons in regard to their real worthlessness. They will simper and giggle, and are all affectation. They appear as though they could not speak fairly and squarely, but torture all they say with lispings and simpering. Are these ladies? They are not born fools, but were educated such. It does not require a frail, helpless, overdressed, simpering thing to make a lady. A sound body is required for a sound intellect. Physical soundness, and a practical knowledge in all the

necessary household duties, is never a hindrance to a well-developed intellect, but is highly important for a lady.

All the powers of the mind should be called into use, and developed, in order for men and women to have well-balanced minds. The world is full of one-sided men and women, because one set of the faculties is cultivated, while others are dwarfed from inaction. The education of most youth is a failure. They overstudy, while they neglect that which pertains to practical business life. Men and women become parents without considering their responsibilities, and their offspring sink lower in the scale of human deficiency than they themselves. Thus we are fast degenerating. The constant application to study, as the schools are now conducted, is unfitting youth for practical life. The human mind will have action. If it is not active in the right direction, it will be active in the wrong. And in order to preserve the balance of the mind, labor and study should be united in schools.

There should have been in past generations provisions made for education upon a larger scale. In connection with the schools should have been agricultural and manufacturing establishments. There should have been teachers also of household labor. There should have been a portion of the time each day devoted to labor, that the physical and mental might be equally exercised. If schools had been established upon the plan we have mentioned, there would not now be so many unbalanced minds.

I have been led to inquire, Must all that is valuable in our youth be sacrificed in order that they may obtain an education at the schools? If there had been agricultural and manufacturing establishments in connection with our schools, and competent teachers had been employed to educate the youth in the different branches of study and labor, devoting a portion of each day to mental improvement, and a portion of the day to physical labor, there would now be a more elevated class of youth to come upon the stage of action, to have influence in moulding society. The youth who

would graduate at such institutions would many of them come forth with stability of character. They would have perseverance, fortitude, and courage to surmount obstacles, and principles that would not be swerved by wrong influence, however popular. There should have been experienced teachers to give lessons to young ladies in the cooking department. Young girls should have been instructed to manufacture wearing apparel, to cut, make, and mend garments, and thus become educated for the practical duties of life.

For young men there should be establishments where they could learn different trades, which would bring into exercise their muscles as well as their mental powers. If the youth can have but a one-sided education, and it is asked, Which is of the greater consequence, the study of the sciences with all the disadvantages to health and life, or the knowledge of labor for practical life, we unhesitatingly say, The latter. If one must be neglected, let it be the study of books. There are very many girls who have married and have families who have but little practical knowledge of

the duties devolving upon a wife and mother. They cannot cook, but they can read, and play upon an instrument of music. They cannot make good bread, which is very essential to the health of the family. They cannot cut and make garments, for they did not learn how to do these things. They did not consider these things essential, and they are in their married life dependent, as their own little children, upon some one to do these things for them. It is this inexcusable ignorance in regard to the most needful duties of life which makes very many unhappy families.

The impression that work is degrading to fashionable life, has laid thousands in the grave who might have lived. Those who perform only manual labor frequently work to excess, without giving themselves periods of rest, while the intellectual class overwork the brain, and suffer for want of the healthful vigor physical labor gives. If the intellectual would share the burden of the laboring class to a degree, that the muscles might be strengthened, the laboring class might do less, and devote a portion of their time to mental and

moral culture. Those of sedentary and literary habits should exercise the physical, even if they have no need to labor so far as means is concerned. Health should be a sufficient inducement to lead them to unite physical with their mental labor.

Intellectual, physical, and moral culture should be combined in order to have well-developed and well-balanced men and women. Some are qualified to exercise greater intellectual strength than others, while others are inclined to love and enjoy physical labor. Both of these should seek to improve where they are deficient, that they may present to God their entire being, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to him, which is their reasonable service. The habits and customs of fashionable society should not shape their course of action. The inspired apostle adds, “And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2)

Thinking men’s minds labor too hard. They

frequently use their mental powers prodigally; while there is another class whose highest aim in life is physical labor. The latter class do not exercise the mind. Their muscles are exercised, while their brain is robbed of intellectual strength; and the brain-workers neglect exercising the muscles, and rob their bodies of strength and vigor. Those who are content to devote their lives to physical labor, and leave others to do the thinking for them, while they simply carry out what other brains have planned, will have strength of muscle, but feeble intellects. Their influence for good is small in comparison with what it might be if they would use their brains as well as their muscles. This class fall more readily if attacked with disease, because the system is not vitalized by the electrical force of the brain to resist disease.

Men who have good physical powers should educate themselves to think as well as to act, and not depend upon others to be brains for them. It is a popular error with a large class, to regard work as degrading. Therefore young men are very anxious to educate themselves to become teachers, clerks,

merchants, lawyers, and to occupy almost any position that does not require physical labor. Young women regard housework as demeaning. And although the physical exercise required to perform household labor, if not too severe, is calculated to promote health, they will seek for education that will fit them to become teachers, clerks, or learn some trade which confines them indoors to sedentary employment. The bloom of health fades from their cheeks, and disease fastens upon them, because they are robbed of physical exercise; and their habits are perverted generally, because it is fashionable. They enjoy delicate life, which is feebleness and decay.

True, there is some excuse for young women's not choosing housework for employment, because those who hire their kitchen girls generally treat them as servants. Frequently their employers do not respect them, and treat them as though they were unworthy to be members of their families. They do not give them privileges as they do the seamstress, the copyist, and the teacher of music. But there can be no employment more important

than that of housework. To cook well and to present healthful food upon the table in an inviting manner, require intelligence and experience. The one who prepares food that is to be placed in our stomachs, to be converted into blood to nourish the system, occupies a most important and elevated position. The position of copyist, dress-maker, or music teacher, cannot equal in importance that of the cook.

The foregoing is a statement of what might have been done by a proper system of education. But time is too short now to accomplish that which might have been done in past generations. But we can do much, even in these last days, to correct the existing evils in the education of youth. And because time is short, we should be in earnest, and work zealously to give the young that education which is consistent with our faith. We are reformers. We desire that our children should study to the best advantage. In order to do this, employment should be given them which would call into exercise the muscles. Daily, systematic labor should constitute a part of the education of

youth even at this late period. Much can now be gained in connecting labor with schools. The students will acquire, in following this plan, elasticity of spirit and vigor of thought, and can accomplish more mental labor, in a given time, than they could by study alone. And they can leave their schools with their constitutions unimpaired, with strength and courage to persevere in any position in which the providence of God may place them.

There are many young men whose services God would accept if they would consecrate themselves to him unreservedly. If they would exercise the powers of their mind in the service of God, which they use in serving themselves, and in acquiring property, they would make earnest, persevering, successful laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. Many of our young men should turn their attention to the study of the Scriptures, that God may use them in his cause. But they do not become intelligent in spiritual knowledge as in temporal things, therefore they fail to do the work of God which they could do with acceptance. There are but

few to warn sinners and win souls to Christ, when there should be many. Our young men generally are wise in worldly matters, but not intelligent in regard to the things of the kingdom of God. They might turn their minds in the heavenly and divine channel, walking in the light, and going on from one degree of light and strength to another, until they could turn sinners to Christ, and point the unbelieving and desponding to a bright track heavenward. And when the warfare is ended, they might be welcomed to the joy of the Lord.

Young men should not enter upon the work of explaining the Scriptures and lecturing upon the prophecies, when they do not have a knowledge of the important Bible truths they try to explain to others. They may be deficient in the common branches of education, and fail to do the amount of good they otherwise could do, if they had had the advantages of a good school. Ignorance will not increase the humility or spirituality of any professed follower of Christ. The truths of the divine word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can be better glorified

by those who serve him intelligently. The great object of education is to enable us to bring into use the powers which God has given us, in such a manner as will best represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God. For all the talents which God has intrusted to us, we are indebted to him who gave us existence.[1]

Note:

1. "Testimony," No. 22, first published in 1873.

Chapter 2

Our College

The education and training of the youth is an important and solemn work. The great object to be secured should be the proper development of character, that the individual may be fitted to rightly discharge the duties of the present life, and to enter at last upon the future, immortal life. Eternity will reveal the manner in which the work has been performed. If ministers and teachers could have a full sense of their responsibility, we should see a different state of things in the world today. But they are too narrow in their views and purposes. They do not realize the importance of their work, or its results.

All connected with our College must be men and women who have the fear of God before them, and his love in their hearts. They should make their religion attractive to the youth who come within the sphere of their influence. The professors and teachers should constantly feel their dependence

upon God. Their work is in this world, but the Source of wisdom and knowledge from which they must continually draw, is above. Self must not obtain the mastery. The Spirit of God must control. They must walk humbly with God, and they should feel their responsibility, which is not less than that of the minister. The influence which professors and teachers exert upon the youth in our College, will be carried wherever these youth may go. A sacred influence should go forth from that College to meet the moral darkness existing everywhere. When I was shown by the angel of God that an institution should be established for the education of our youth, I saw that it would be one of the greatest means ordained of God for the salvation of souls.

Those who would make a success in the education of the youth must take them as they are, not as they ought to be, nor as they will be when they come from under their training. With dull scholars they have a trial, and they must bear patiently with their ignorance. With sensitive, nervous students they must deal tenderly and very kindly, remembering that they are hereafter to meet

their students before the judgment seat of Christ. A sense of their own imperfections should constantly lead educators to cherish feelings of tender sympathy and forbearance for those who are struggling with the same difficulties. They may help their students, not by overlooking their defects, but by faithfully correcting wrong in such a manner that the one reprov'd shall be bound still closer to the teacher's heart.

God has linked old and young together by the law of mutual dependence. The educators of youth should feel an unselfish interest for the lambs of the flock, as Christ has given us an example in his life. There is too little pitying tenderness, and too much of the unbending dignity of the stern judge. Exact and impartial justice should be given to all, for the religion of Christ demands this; but it should ever be remembered that firmness and justice have a sister which is mercy. To stand aloof from the students, to treat them indifferently, to be unapproachable, harsh, and censorious, is contrary to the spirit of Christ.

We need individually to open our hearts to the love of God, to overcome selfishness and harshness, and to let Jesus in to take possession of the soul. The educator of youth will do well to remember that with all his advantages of age, education, and experience, he is not yet a perfect overcomer; he is himself erring, and makes many failures. As Christ deals with him, he should endeavor to deal with the youth under his care, who have had fewer advantages, and less favorable surroundings than he himself has enjoyed. Christ has borne with the erring through all their manifest perversity and rebellion. His love for the sinner does not grow cold, his efforts do not cease, and he does not give him up to the buffeting of Satan. He has stood with open arms to welcome again the erring, the rebellious, and even the apostate. By precept and example, teachers should represent Christ in the education and training of youth; and in the day of Judgment they will not be put to shame by meeting their students, and the history of their management of them.

Again and again has the educator of youth

carried into the school-room the shadow of darkness which has been gathering upon his soul. He has been overtaxed, and is nervous; or dyspepsia has colored everything a gloomy hue. He enters the school-room with quivering nerve and irritated stomach. Nothing seems to be done to please him, he thinks that his scholars are bent upon showing him disrespect, and his sharp criticisms and censures are given on the right hand and on the left.

Perhaps one or more commit errors, or are unruly. The case is exaggerated in his mind, and he becomes unjust, and is severe and cutting in reproof, even taunting the one whom he considers at fault. This same injustice afterward prevents him from admitting that he has not taken the proper course. To maintain the dignity of his position he has lost a precious, golden opportunity to manifest the spirit of Christ, perhaps to gain a soul for heaven.

Men and women of experience should understand that this is a time of especial danger for

the young. Temptations surround them on every hand; and while it is easy work to float with the current, the strongest effort is required to press against the tide of evil. It is Satan's studied effort to secure the youth in sin, for then he is more sure of the man. The enemy of souls is filled with intense hatred against every endeavor to influence the youth in the right direction. He hates everything which will give correct views of God and our Saviour, and his efforts are especially directed against all who are placed in a favorable position to receive light from heaven. He knows that any movement on their part to come in connection with God, will give them power to resist his devices. Those who are at ease in their sins, are safe under his banner. But as soon as efforts are made to break his power, his wrath is aroused, and he commences in earnest his work to thwart the purpose of God, if possible.

If the influence in our College is what it should be, the youth who are educated there will be enabled to discern God, and glorify him in all his works. And while engaged in cultivating the

faculties which God has given them, they will be preparing to render to him more efficient service. The intellect, sanctified, will unlock the treasures of God's word, and gather its precious gems to present to other minds, and lead them also to search for the deep things of God. A knowledge of the riches of this grace, will ennoble and elevate the human soul, and through connection with Christ, it will become a partaker of the divine nature, and obtain power to resist the advances of Satan.

Students must be impressed with the fact that knowledge alone may be, in the hands of the enemy of all good, a power to destroy them. It was a very intellectual being, one who occupied a high position among the angelic throng, that finally became a rebel; and many a mind of superior intellectual attainments is now being led captive by his power. The sanctified knowledge which God imparts is of the right quality, and will tell to his glory.

The work of the teachers in our College will be

laborious. Among those who attend the school, there will be some who are nothing less than Satan's agents. They have no respect for the rules of the school, and they demoralize all who associate with them. After the teachers have done all they can to reform this class; after they have, by personal effort, by entreaties and prayer, endeavored to reach them, and they refuse all the efforts made in their behalf, and continue in their course of sin, then it will be necessary to separate them from the school, that others may not be contaminated by their evil influence.

To maintain proper discipline, and yet exercise pitying love and tenderness for the souls of those under his care, the teacher needs a constant supply of the wisdom and grace of God. Order must be maintained. But those who love souls, the purchase of the blood of Christ, should do their utmost to save the erring. These poor, sinful ones are too frequently left in darkness and deception to pursue their own course, and those who should help them let them alone to go to ruin.

It has been shown me that personal effort, judiciously put forth, will have a telling influence upon these cases considered so hardened. All may not be so hard at heart as they appear. We have seen a good work done in the salvation of many who have come to our College, but much more can be accomplished by personal effort.

Educators should understand how to guard the health of their students. They should restrain them from taxing their minds with too many studies. If they leave college with a knowledge of the sciences, but with shattered constitutions, it would have been better had they not entered the school at all. Some parents feel that their children are being educated at considerable expense, and they urge them forward in their studies. Students are desirous of taking many studies in order to complete their education in as short a time as possible. The professors have allowed some to advance too rapidly. While some may need urging, others need holding back. Students should ever be diligent, but they ought not to crowd their minds so as to become intellectual dyspeptics. They should not be

so pressed with studies as to neglect the culture of the manners; and above all, they should let nothing interfere with their seasons of prayer, which bring them in connection with Jesus Christ, the best teacher the world has ever known. In no case should they deprive themselves of religious privileges. Many students have made their studies the first great object, and have neglected prayer, and absented themselves from the Sabbath-school and the prayer-meeting; and from neglect of religious duties they have returned to their homes backslidden from God. A most important part of their education has been neglected. That which lies at the foundation of all true knowledge should not have been made a secondary consideration. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Psalm 111:10) “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” (Matthew 6:33) This must not be made last, but first.

The student must have opportunities to become conversant with his Bible. He needs time for this. A student who makes God his strength, who is becoming intelligent in the knowledge of God as

revealed in his word, is laying the foundation for a thorough education.

God designs that the College at Battle Creek shall reach a higher standard of intellectual and moral culture than any other institution of the kind in our land. The youth should be taught the importance of cultivating their physical, mental, and moral powers, that they may not only reach the highest attainments in science, but through a knowledge of God, may be educated to glorify him; that they may develop symmetrical characters, and thus be fully prepared for usefulness in this world, and obtain a moral fitness for the immortal life.

I wish I could find language to express the importance of our College. All should feel that it is one of God's instrumentalities to make himself known to man. The teachers may do a greater work than they have hitherto calculated upon. Minds are to be moulded, and character is to be developed by interested experiment. In the fear of God, every endeavor to develop the higher faculties, even if it

is marked with great imperfection, should be encouraged and strengthened. The minds of many of the youth are rich in talents which are put to no available use, because they have lacked opportunity to develop them. Their physical powers have been strengthened by exercise; but the faculties of the mind lie hidden, because the discernment and God-given tact of the educator have not been exercised in bringing them into use. Aids to self-development must be given to the youth; they must be drawn out, stimulated, encouraged, and urged to action.

Workers are needed all over the world. The truth of God is to be carried to foreign lands, that those in darkness may be enlightened by it. God requires that a zeal be shown in this direction infinitely greater than has hitherto been manifested. As a people, we are almost paralyzed. We are not doing one-twentieth part of the good we might, because selfishness prevails to a large extent among us. Cultivated intellect is now needed in the cause of God, for novices cannot do the work acceptably. God has devised our College as an

instrumentality for developing workers of whom he will not be ashamed. The height to which man may reach by proper culture, has not hitherto been realized. We have among us more than an average of men of ability. If their talents were brought into use, we should have twenty ministers where we now have one.

Teachers should not feel that their duty is done when their pupils have been instructed in the sciences. But they should realize that they have the most important missionary field in the world. If the capabilities of all engaged as instructors are used as God would have them, they will be most successful missionaries. It must be remembered that the youth are forming habits which will, in nine cases out of ten, decide their future. The influence of the company they keep, the associations they form, and the principles they adopt, will be carried with them through life.

It is a terrible fact, and one which should make the hearts of parents tremble, that the colleges to which the youth of our day are sent for the

cultivation of the mind, endanger their morals. As innocent youth, when placed with hardened criminals, learn lessons of crime they never before dreamed of, so pure-minded young people, through association with college companions of corrupt habits, lose their purity of character, and become vicious and debased. Parents should awake to their responsibilities, and understand what they are doing in sending their children from home to colleges where they can expect nothing else but that they will become demoralized. The College at Battle Creek should stand higher in moral tone than any other college in the land, that the safety of the children intrusted to her keeping may not be endangered. If the teachers do their work in the fear of God, working with the Spirit of Christ for the salvation of the souls of the students, God will crown their efforts with success. God-fearing parents will be more concerned in regard to the characters their children bring home with them from college, than in regard to the success and advancement made in their studies.

I was shown that our College was designed of

God to accomplish the great work of saving souls. It is only when brought under full control of the Spirit of God that the talents of an individual are rendered useful to the fullest extent. The precepts and principles of religion are the first steps in the acquisition of knowledge, and lie at the very foundation of true education. Knowledge and science must be vitalized by the Spirit of God in order to serve the noblest purposes. The Christian alone can make the right use of knowledge. Science, in order to be fully appreciated, must be viewed from a religious standpoint. The heart which is ennobled by the grace of God can best comprehend the real value of education. The attributes of God, as seen in his created works, can be appreciated only as we have a knowledge of the Creator. In order to lead the youth to the fountain of truth, to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, the teachers must not only be acquainted with the theory of the truth, but must have an experimental knowledge of the way of holiness. Knowledge is a power when united with true piety.

Our brethren and sisters abroad should feel it their duty to sustain this institution which God has devised. Some of the students return home with murmuring and complaints, and parents and members of the church give an attentive ear to their exaggerated, one-sided statements. They would do well to consider that there are two sides to the story, but instead, they allow these garbled reports to build up a barrier between them and the College. They then begin to express fears, questionings, and suspicions in regard to the way the College is conducted. Such an influence does great harm. The words of dissatisfaction spread like a contagious disease, and the impression made upon minds is hard to efface. The story enlarges with every repetition, until it becomes of gigantic proportions; when investigation would reveal the fact that there was no fault with the teachers or professors. They were simply doing their duty in enforcing the rules of the school, which must be carried out, or the school will become demoralized.

Parents do not always move wisely. Many are very exacting in wishing to bring others to their

ideas, and become impatient and overbearing if they cannot do this; but when their own children are required to observe rules and regulations at school, and these children fret under the necessary restraint, too often their parents, who profess to love and fear God, join with the children instead of reproving them, and correcting their faults. This often proves the turning point in the character of their children. Rules and order are broken down, and discipline is trampled under foot.[1]

Note:

1. "Testimony," No. 29.

Chapter 3

Pure Education

Education comprises more than a knowledge of books. Proper education includes not only mental discipline, but that training which will secure sound morals and correct deportment. In this age of the world, children should have strict watch-care. They should be advised and restrained. Eli was cursed of God, because he did not promptly and decidedly restrain his wicked sons.

Every son and daughter should be called to account if absent from home at night. Parents should know what company their children are in, and at whose house they spend their evenings. Some children deceive their parents with falsehoods to avoid exposure of their wrong course. There are those who seek the society of corrupt companions, and secretly visit saloons and other forbidden places of resort in the city. There are students who visit the billiard-rooms, and who engage in card-playing, flattering themselves that

there is no danger. Since their object is merely amusement, they feel perfectly safe. It is not the lower grade alone who do this. Some who have been carefully reared, and educated to look upon such things with abhorrence, are venturing upon the forbidden ground.

The young should be controlled by firm principle, that they may rightly improve the powers which God has given them. But youth follow impulse so much and so blindly, without reference to principle, that they are constantly in danger. Since they cannot always have the guidance and protection of parents and guardians, they need to be trained to self-reliance and self-control. They must be taught to think and act from conscientious principle.

Those who are engaged in study should have relaxation. The mind must not be constantly confined to close thought, for the delicate mental machinery becomes worn. The body, as well as the mind, must have exercise. There is great need of temperance in amusements, as in every other

pursuit. The character of these amusements should be carefully and thoroughly considered. Every youth should ask himself, What influence will these amusements have on physical, mental, and moral health? Will my mind become so infatuated as to forget God? Shall I cease to have his glory before me?

Card-playing should be prohibited. The associations and tendencies are dangerous. The prince of the powers of darkness presides in the gaming-room and wherever there is card-playing. Evil angels are familiar guests in these places. There is nothing in such amusements beneficial to soul or body. There is nothing to strengthen the intellect, nothing to store it with valuable ideas for future use. The conversation is upon trivial and degrading subjects. There is heard the unseemly jest, the low, vile talk, which lowers and destroys the true dignity of manhood. These games are the most senseless, useless, unprofitable and dangerous employments the youth can have. Those who engage in card-playing become intensely excited, and soon lose all relish for useful and elevating

occupations. Expertness in handling cards will soon lead to a desire to put this knowledge and tact to some use for personal benefit. A small sum is staked, and then a larger, until a thirst for gaming is acquired, which leads to certain ruin. How many has this pernicious amusement led to every sinful practice, to poverty, to prison, to murder, and to the gallows! And yet many parents do not see the terrible gulf of ruin that is yawning for our youth.

Among the most dangerous resorts for pleasure is the theater. Instead of being a school of morality and virtue, and is so often claimed, it is the very hotbed of immorality. Vicious habits and sinful propensities are strengthened and confirmed by these entertainments. Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes, deprave the imagination, and debase the morals. Every youth who habitually attends such exhibitions will be corrupted in principle. There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imagination, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life than theatrical amusements. The love for these scenes

increases with every indulgence, as the desire for intoxicating drink strengthens with its use. The only safe course is to shun the theater, the circus, and every other questionable place of amusement.

There are modes of recreation which are highly beneficial to both mind and body. An enlightened, discriminating mind will find abundant means for entertainment and diversion, from sources not only innocent, but instructive. Recreation in the open air, the contemplation of the works of God in nature, will be of the highest benefit.[1]

Note:

1. "Testimony," No. 30, first published in 1881.

Chapter 4

Our College

To give students a knowledge of books merely, is not the purpose of the institution. Such education can be obtained at any college in the land. I was shown that it is Satan's purpose to prevent the attainment of the very object for which the College was established. Hindered by his devices, its managers reason after the manner of the world, and copy its plans, and imitate its customs. But in thus doing, they will not meet the mind of the Spirit of God.

A more comprehensive education is needed,--an education which will demand from teachers and principal such thought and effort as mere instruction in the sciences does not require. The character must receive proper discipline for its fullest and noblest development. The students should receive at college, such training as will enable them to maintain a respectable, honest, virtuous standing in society, against the

demoralizing influences which are corrupting the youth.

It would be well could there be connected with our College, land for cultivation, and also workshops, under the charge of men competent to instruct the students in the various departments of physical labor. Much is lost by a neglect to unite physical with mental taxation. The leisure hours of the student are often occupied with frivolous pleasures, which weaken physical, mental, and moral powers. Under the debasing power of sensual indulgence, or the untimely excitement of courtship and marriage, many students fail to reach that height of mental development which they might otherwise have attained.

No other study will so ennoble every thought, feeling, and aspiration, as the study of the Scriptures. This sacred word is the will of God revealed to men. Here we may learn what God expects of the beings formed in his image. Here we learn how to improve the present life, and how to secure the future life. No other book can satisfy the

questionings of the mind, and the craving of the heart. By obtaining a knowledge of God's word, and giving heed thereto, men may rise from the lowest depths of ignorance and degradation, to become the sons of God, the associates of sinless angels.

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

As an educating power, the Bible is without a rival. Nothing will so impart vigor to all the faculties as requiring students to grasp the stupendous truths of revelation. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, to the exclusion of grand and lofty themes, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems,

or put to the stretch to comprehend important truths, it will, after a time, almost lose the power of growth.

The Bible is the most comprehensive and the most instructive history which men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, and a divine hand has preserved its purity through all the ages. Its bright rays shine into the far distant past, where human research seeks vainly to penetrate. In God's word alone we find an authentic account of creation. Here we behold the power that laid the foundation of the earth, and that stretched out the heavens. Here, only, can we find a history of our race, unsullied by human prejudice or human pride.

In the word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration. Here we may hold communion with patriarchs and prophets, and listen to the voice of the Eternal as he speaks with men. Here, we behold the Majesty of heaven, as he humbled himself to become our substitute and surety, to cope single-handed with the powers of darkness, and to gain the victory in our behalf. A

reverent contemplation of such themes as these, cannot fail to soften, purify, and ennoble the heart, and, at the same time, to inspire the mind with new strength and vigor.

If morality and religion are to live in a school, it must be through a knowledge of God's word. Some may urge that if religious teaching is to be made prominent, our school will become unpopular; that those who are not of our faith will not patronize the College. Very well, then, let them go to other colleges where they will find a system of education that suits their taste. Our school was established, not merely to teach the sciences, but for the purpose of giving instruction in the great principles of God's word, and in the practical duties of everyday life.

In the name of my Master, I entreat all who stand in responsible positions in that school, to be men of God. When the Lord requires us to be distinct and peculiar, how can we crave popularity, or seek to imitate the customs and practices of the world? God has declared his purpose to have one

college in the land where the Bible shall have its proper place in the education of the youth. Will we do our part to carry out that purpose?

It may seem that the teaching of God's word has but little effect on the minds and hearts of many students; but if the teacher's work has been wrought in God, some lessons of divine truth will linger in the memory of the most careless. The Holy Spirit will water the seed sown, and often it will spring up after many days, and bear fruit to the glory of God.

Satan is constantly seeking to divert the attention of the people from the Bible. The words of God to men, which should receive our first attention, are neglected for the utterances of human wisdom. How can he who is infinite in power and wisdom, bear thus with the presumption and effrontery of men?

Through the medium of the press, knowledge of every kind is placed within the reach of all; and yet how large a share of every community are

depraved in morals, and superficial in mental attainments. If the people would but become Bible readers--Bible students--we would see a different state of things.

In an age like ours, in which iniquity abounds, and God's character and his law are alike regarded with contempt, special care must be taken to teach the youth to study, to reverence and obey the divine will as revealed to man. The fear of the Lord is fading from the minds of our youth, because of their neglect of Bible study.

In the system of instruction used in the common schools, the most essential part of education is neglected, viz., the religion of the Bible. Education not only affects to a great degree the life of the student in this world, but its influence extends to eternity. How important, then, that the teachers be persons capable of exerting a right influence. They should be men and women of religious experience, daily receiving divine light to impart to their pupils.

But the teacher should not be expected to do the parent's work. There has been, with many parents, a fearful neglect of duty. Like Eli, they fail to exercise proper restraint; and then they send their undisciplined children to college to receive the training which the parents should have given them at home. The teachers have a task which but few appreciate. If they succeed in reforming these wayward youth, they receive but little credit. If the youth choose the society of the evil-disposed, and go on from bad to worse, then the teachers are censured, and the school denounced.

In many cases, the censure justly belongs to the parents. They had the first and most favorable opportunity to control and train their children, when the spirit was teachable, and the mind and the heart easily impressed. But through the slothfulness of the parents, the children are permitted to follow their own will, until they become hardened in an evil course.

Let parents study less of the world, and more of Christ; let them put forth less effort to imitate the

customs and fashions of the world, and devote more time and effort to moulding the minds and characters of their children according to the divine Model. Then they could send forth their sons and daughters, fortified by pure morals and a noble purpose, to receive an education for positions of usefulness and trust. Teachers who are controlled by the love and fear of God, could lead such youth still onward and upward, training them to be a blessing to the world, and an honor to their Creator.

Connected with God, every instructor will exert an influence to lead his pupils to study God's word, and to obey his law. He will direct their minds to the contemplation of eternal interests, and open before them vast fields for thought; grand and ennobling themes, which the most vigorous intellect may put forth all its powers to grasp, and yet feel that there is an infinity beyond.

The teacher who is severe, critical, overbearing, heedless of others' feelings, must expect the same spirit to be manifested toward himself. He who wishes to preserve his own dignity and self-respect,

must be careful not to wound needlessly the self-respect of others. This rule should be sacredly observed toward the dullest, the youngest, the most blundering scholars. What God intends to do with those apparently uninteresting youth, you do not know. He has, in the past, accepted persons no more promising or attractive, to do a great work for him. His Spirit moving upon the heart has aroused every faculty to vigorous action. The Lord saw in those rough, unhewn stones, precious material, that would stand the test of storm and heat and pressure. God seeth not as man sees. He judges not from appearances, but he searches the heart, and judges righteously.

The teacher should ever conduct himself as a Christian gentleman. He should ever stand in the attitude of a friend and counselor to his pupils. If all our people--teachers, ministers, and lay members--would cultivate the spirit of Christian courtesy, they would far more readily find access to the hearts of the people; many more would be led to examine and receive the truth. When every teacher shall forget self, and feel a deep interest in

the success and prosperity of his pupils, realizing that they are God's property, and that he must render an account for his influence upon their minds and character, then we shall have a school in which angels will love to linger. Jesus will look approvingly upon the work of the teachers, and will send his grace into the hearts of the students.

Our College at Battle Creek is a place where the younger members of God's family are to be trained according to God's plan of growth and development. They should be impressed with the idea that they are created in the image of their Maker, and that Christ is the pattern which they are to follow. Our brethren permit their minds to take too narrow and too low a range. They do not keep the divine plan ever in view, but are fixing their eyes upon worldly models. Look up, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and then labor that your pupils may be conformed to that perfect character.

If you lower the standard in order to secure popularity and an increase of numbers, and then

make this increase a cause of rejoicing, you show great blindness. If numbers were evidence of success, Satan might claim the pre-eminence; for, in this world, his followers are largely in the majority. It is the degree of moral power pervading the College, that is a test of its prosperity. It is the virtue, intelligence, and piety of the people composing our churches, not their numbers, that should be a source of joy and thankfulness.

Without the influence of divine grace, education will prove no real advantage; the learner becomes proud, vain, and bigoted. But that education which is received under the ennobling, refining influence of the great Teacher, will elevate man in the scale of moral value with God. It will enable him to subdue pride and passion, and to walk humbly before God, as dependent upon him for every capability, every opportunity, and every privilege.

I speak to the workers in our College: You must not only profess to be Christians, but you must exemplify the character of Christ. Let the

wisdom from above pervade all your instruction. In a world of moral darkness and corruption, let it be seen that the spirit by which you are moved to action, is from above, not from beneath. While you rely wholly upon your own strength and wisdom, your best efforts will accomplish little. If you are prompted by love to God, his law being your foundation, your work will be enduring. While the hay, wood, and stubble are consumed, your work will stand the test. The youth placed under your care you must meet again around the great white throne. If you permit your uncultivated manners, or uncontrolled tempers to bear sway, and thus fail to influence these youth for their eternal good, you must at that day, meet the grave consequences of your work. By a knowledge of the divine law, and obedience to its precepts, men may become the sons of God. By violation of that law, they become servants of Satan. On the one hand, they may rise to any height of moral excellence, or on the other hand, they may descend to any depth iniquity and degradation. The workers in our College should manifest a zeal and earnestness proportionate to the value of the prize at stake,—the souls of their

students, the approval of God, eternal life, and the joys of the redeemed.

As co-laborers with Christ, with so favorable opportunities to impart the knowledge of God, our teachers should labor as if inspired from above. The hearts of the youth are not hardened; nor their ideas and opinions stereotyped, as are those of older persons. They may be won to Christ by your holy demeanor, your devotion, your Christ-like walk. It would be much better to crowd them less in the study of the sciences, and give them more time for religious privileges. Here a grave mistake has been made.

We should ever look upon the youth as the purchase of the blood of Christ. As such they have demands upon our love, our patience, and our sympathy. If we would follow Jesus, we cannot restrict our interest and affection to ourselves and our own families; we cannot give our time and attention to temporal matters, and forget the eternal interests of those around us. I have been shown that it is the result of our selfishness that there are not

one hundred young men, where now there is one, engaged in earnest labor for the salvation of their fellow-men.

“Love one another as I have loved you,” is the command of Jesus. Look at his self-denial; behold what manner of love he has bestowed upon us; and then seek to imitate the Pattern.[1]

If facilities for manual labor were provided in connection with our school, and students were required to devote a portion of their time to some active employment, it would prove a safeguard against many of the evil influences that prevail in institutions of learning. Manly, useful occupations, substituted for frivolous and corrupting diversions, would give legitimate scope for the exuberance of youthful life, and would promote sobriety and stability of character. All possible effort should be made to encourage a desire for moral and physical as well as mental improvement. If girls were taught how to cook, especially how to bake good bread, their education would be of far greater value. A knowledge of useful labor would prevent, to a great

extent, that sickly sentimentalism which has been, and is still, ruining thousands. The exercise of the muscles as well as the brain will encourage taste for the homely duties of practical life.[2]

Notes:

1. "Testimony" No. 31, first published in 1882.
2. "Testimony" No. 31.

Chapter 5

Proper Education of the Young

The third angel is represented as flying in the midst of the heavens, showing that the message is to go forth throughout the length and breadth of the earth. It is the most solemn message ever given to mortals, and all who connect with the work should first feel their need of an education, and a most thorough training process for the work, in reference to their future usefulness; and there should be plans made and efforts adopted for the improvement of that class who anticipate connecting with any branch of the work. Ministerial labor cannot and should not be intrusted to boys, neither should the work of giving Bible readings be intrusted to inexperienced girls, because they offer their services, and are willing to take responsible positions, but who are wanting in religious experience, without a thorough education and training. They must be proved to see if they will

bear the test; and unless there is developed a firm, conscientious principle to be all that God would have them to be, they will not correctly represent our cause and work for this time. There must be with our sisters engaged in the work in every mission, a depth of experience, gained from those who have had an experience, and who understand the manners and ways of working. The missionary operations are constantly embarrassed for the want of workers of the right class of minds, and the devotion and piety that will correctly represent our faith.

There are numbers that ought to become missionaries who never enter the field, because those who are united with them in church capacity or in our colleges, do not feel the burden of labor with them, to open before them the claims that God has upon all the powers, and do not pray with them and for them; and the eventful period which decides the plans and course of life passes, convictions, with them are stifled, other influences and inducements attract them, and temptations to seek worldly positions that will, they think, bring

them money, take them into the worldly current. These young men might have been saved to the ministry through well-organized plans. If the churches in the different places do their duty, God will work with their efforts by his Spirit, and will supply faithful men to the ministry.

Our schools are to be educating schools and training schools; and if men and women come forth from them fitted in any sense for the missionary field, they must have impressed upon them the greatness of the work, and that practical godliness must be brought into their daily experience, to be fitted for any place of usefulness in our world, or in the church, or in God's great moral vineyard, now calling for laborers in foreign lands.

The youth must be impressed with the idea that they are trusted. They have a sense of honor, and they want to be respected, and it is their right. If pupils receive the impression that they cannot go out or come in, sit at the table, or be anywhere, even in their rooms, except they are watched, a critical eye is upon them, to criticise and report, it

will have the influence to demoralize, and pastime will have no pleasure in it. This knowledge of a continual oversight is more than a parental guardianship, and far worse; for wise parents can, through tact, often discern beneath the surface and see the working of the restless mind under the longings of youth, or under the forces of temptations, and set their plans to work to counteract evils. But this constant watchfulness is not natural, and produces evils that it is seeking to avoid. The healthfulness of youth requires exercise, cheerfulness, and a happy, pleasant atmosphere surrounding them, for the development of physical health and symmetrical character.

God's word must be opened to the youth, but a youth should not be placed in the position to do this. Those who must have an eye upon them constantly to insure their good behavior, will require to be watched in any position where they may be. Therefore the mould given the character in youth by such a system of training, is wholly deleterious. Aim for mental discipline and the formation of right moral sentiments and habits.

Studies should generally be few and well chosen, and those who attend our colleges are to have a different training than that of the common schools of the day. They have been generally taught upon Christian principles, if they have wise and God-fearing parents. The word of God has been respected in their homes, and its teachings made the law of the home. They have been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the gospel, and when they come to the schools, this same education and training is to go on. The world's maxims, the world's customs and practices, are not the teaching they need; but they are to see that the teachers in the schools care for their souls, that they will take a decided interest in their spiritual welfare, and religion is to be the great principle inculcated; for the love and fear of God are the beginning of wisdom. Youth removed from the domestic atmosphere, from the home rule and guardianship of parents, if left to themselves to pick and choose their companions, meet with a crisis in their history not generally favorable to piety or principle.

Then, wherever a school is established, there should be warm hearts to take a lively interest in our youth. Fathers and mothers are needed with warm sympathy, and with kindly admonitions, and all the pleasantness possible should be brought into the religious exercises. If there are those who prolong religious exercises to weariness, they are leaving impressions upon the mind of the youth, that would associate religion with all that is dry, unsocial, and uninteresting. And these youth make their own standard not the highest, but weak principles and a low standard spoil those who if properly taught, would be not only qualified to be a blessing to the cause, but to the church and to the world. Ardent, active piety in the teacher is essential. Morning and evening service in the chapel, and the Sabbath meetings, may be, without constant care and unless vitalized by the Spirit of God, the most formal, dry, and bitter mixture, and, to the youth, the most burdensome and the least pleasant and attractive of all the school exercises. The social meetings should be managed with plans and devices to make them not only seasons of pleasantness, but positively attractive.

Let those who are competent to teach youth, study themselves in the school of Christ, and learn lessons to communicate to youth. Sincere, earnest, heartfelt devotion is needed. All narrowness should be avoided. Let teachers so far unbend from their dignity as to be one with the children in their exercises and amusements, without leaving the impression that you are watching them, and without going round and round in stately dignity, as though you were like a uniformed soldier on guard over them. Your very presence gives a mould to their course of action. Your unity with them causes your heart to throb with new affection. The youth need sympathy, affection, and love, else they will become discouraged. A spirit of “I care for nobody and nobody cares for me” takes possession of them, and although they profess to be followers of Christ, they have a tempting devil on their track, and they are in danger of becoming disheartened, and lukewarm, and back-slidden from God. Then some feel it a duty to blame them, and to treat them coldly, as if they were a great deal worse than they really are, and but few, and

perhaps none, feel it a special duty to make personal effort to reform them, and to remove the baleful impressions that have been made upon them.

The teacher's obligations are weighty and sacred, but no part of the work is more important than to look after the youth with tender, loving solicitude, that they may feel that we have a friend in them. Once gain their confidence, and you can lead them, control them, and train them easily. The holy motives of our Christian principles must be brought into our life. The salvation of our pupils is the highest interest intrusted to the God-fearing teacher. He is Christ's worker, and his special and determined effort should be to save souls from perdition and win them to Jesus Christ. God will require this at the hands of teachers. Every one should lead a life of piety, of purity, of pains-taking effort in the discharge of every duty. If the heart is glowing with the love of God, there will be pure affection, which is essential; prayers will be fervent, and faithful warnings will be given. Neglect these, and the souls under your charge are

endangered. Better spend less time in long speeches, or in absorbing study, and attend to these neglected duties.

After all these efforts, teachers may find that some under their charge will develop unprincipled characters. They are lax in morals as the result, in many cases, of vicious example and neglected parental discipline. And teachers doing all they can will fail to bring these youth to a life of purity and holiness; and after patient discipline, affectionate labor, and fervent prayer, they will be disappointed by those from whom they have hoped so much. And in addition to this, the reproaches of the parents will come to them, because they did not have power to counteract the influence of their own example and unwise training. The teacher will have these discouragements after doing his duty. But he must work on, trusting in God to work with him, standing at his post manfully, and laboring on in faith. Others will be saved to God, and their influence will be exerted in saving others. Let the minister, the Sabbath-school teacher, and the teachers in our colleges unite heart and soul and

purpose in the work of saving our youth from ruin.

Many have felt, “Well, it don’t matter if we are not so particular to become thoroughly educated,” and a lower standard of knowledge has been accepted. And now when suitable men are wanted to fill various positions of trust, they are rare; when women are wanted with well-balanced minds, with not a cheap style of education, but with an education fitting them for any position of trust, they are not easily found. What is worth doing at all, is worth doing well. While religion should be the pervading element in every school, it will not lead to a cheapening of the literary attainments. While a religious atmosphere should pervade the school, diffusing its influence, it will make all who are truly Christians feel more deeply their need of thorough knowledge, that they may make the best use of the faculties that God has bestowed upon them. While growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, they will groan under a sense of their imperfections, and will seek constantly to put to the stretch their powers of mind, that they may become intelligent Christians.

The Lord Jesus is dishonored by low ideas or designs on our part. He who does not feel the binding claims of God's law, and neglects to keep every requirement, violates the whole law. He who is content to partially meet the standard of righteousness, and who does not triumph over every spiritual foe, will not meet the designs of Christ. He cheapens the whole plan of his religious life, and weakens his religious character, and under the force of temptation his defects of character gain the supremacy, and evil triumphs. We need to be persevering and determined, to meet the highest standard possible. Pre-established habits and ideas must be overcome in many cases, before we can make advancement in religious life. The faithful Christian will bear much fruit; he is a worker; he will not lazily drift, but will put on the whole armor to fight the battles of the Lord. The essential work is to conform the tastes, the appetite, the passions, the motives, the desires, to the great moral standard of righteousness. The work must begin at the heart. That must be pure, wholly conformed to Christ's will, else some master passion, or some habit or

defect, will become a power to destroy. God will accept of nothing short of the whole heart.

God wants the teachers in our schools to be efficient. If they are advanced in spiritual understanding, they will feel that it is important that they should not be deficient in the knowledge of the sciences. Piety and a religious experience lie at the very foundation of true education. But let none feel that having an earnestness in religious matters is all that is essential in order to become educators. While they need no less of piety, they also need a thorough knowledge of the sciences. This will make them not only good, practical Christians, but will enable them to educate the youth, and at the same time they will have heavenly wisdom to lead them to the fountain of living waters. He is a Christian who aims to reach the highest attainments for the purpose of doing others good. Knowledge harmoniously blended with a Christlike character will make a person truly a light to the world. God works with human efforts. All those who give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, will feel that a superficial

knowledge will not fit them for positions of usefulness. Education balanced by a solid religious experience, fits the child of God to do his appointed work steadily, firmly, understandingly. If one is learning of Jesus, the greatest educator the world ever knew, he will not only have a symmetrical Christian character, but a mind trained to effectual labor. Minds that are quick to discern will go deep beneath the surface.

God does not want us to be content with lazy, undisciplined minds, dull thoughts, and loose memories. He wants every teacher to be efficient, not to feel satisfied with some measure of success, but to feel his need of perpetual diligence in acquiring knowledge. Our bodies and souls belong to God, for he has bought them. He has given us talents, and has made it possible for us to acquire more, in order that we may be able to help ourselves and others onward in the way to life. It is the work of each individual to develop and strengthen the gifts which God has lent him, with which to do most earnest, practical work, both in temporal and religious things. If all realized this,

what a vast difference we should see in our schools, in our churches, and in our missions! But the larger number are content with a meager knowledge, a few attainments, just to be passable; and the necessity of being men like Daniel and Moses, men of influence, men whose characters have become harmonious by their working to bless humanity and glorify God,--such an experience but few have had, and the result is, there are but few now fitted for the great want of the times.

God does not ignore ignorant men, but if they are connected with Christ, if they are sanctified through the truth, they will be constantly gathering knowledge. By exerting every power to glorify God, they will have increased power with which to glorify him.

But those who are willing to remain in a narrow channel because God condescended to accept them when they were there, are very foolish; and yet there are hundreds and thousands who are doing this very thing. God has given them the living machinery, and this needs to be used daily in order

for the mind to reach higher and still higher attainments. It is a shame that many link ignorance with humility, and that with all the qualities God has given us for education, so great a number are willing to remain in the same low position that they were in when the truth first reached them. They do not grow mentally; they are no better fitted and prepared to do great and good works than when they first heard the truth.

Many who are teachers of the truth cease to be students, digging, ever digging for truth as for hidden treasures. Their minds reach a common, low standard; but they do not seek to become men of influence,--not for the sake of selfish ambition, but for Christ's sake, that they may reveal the power of the truth upon the intellect. It is no sin to appreciate literary talent, if it is not idolized; but no one is to strive for vain glory to exalt self. When this is the case, there is an absence of the wisdom that cometh from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of love and of good fruits.[1]

Note:

1. The Review and Herald, June 21, 1887.

Chapter 6

A Knowledge of God

Many are the ways in which God is seeking to make himself known to us and to bring us into communion with him. Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of his hands. The listening ear can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature. The green fields, the lofty trees, the buds and flowers, the passing cloud, the falling rain, the babbling brook, the glories of the heavens, speak to our hearts, and invite us to become acquainted with him who made them all.

Our Saviour bound up his precious lessons with the things of nature. The trees, the birds, the flowers of the valley, the hills, the lakes, and the beautiful heavens, as well as the incidents and surroundings of daily life, were all linked with the words of truth, that his lessons might thus be often recalled to mind, even amid the busy cares of

man's life of toil.

God would have his children appreciate his works, and delight in the simple, quiet beauty with which he has adorned our earthly home. He is a lover of the beautiful, and above all that is outwardly attractive he loves beauty of character; he would have us cultivate purity and simplicity, the quiet graces of the flowers.

If we will but listen, God's created works will teach us precious lessons of obedience and trust. From the stars that in their trackless course through space, follow from age to age their appointed path, down to the minutest atom, the things of nature obey the Creator's will. And God cares for everything and sustains everything that he has created. He who upholds the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, at the same time cares for the wants of the little brown sparrow that sings its humble song without a fear. When men go forth to their daily toil, as when they engage in prayer; when they lie down at night, and when they rise in the morning; when the rich man feasts in his

palace, or when the poor man gathers his children about the scanty board, each is tenderly watched by the heavenly Father. No tears are shed that God does not notice. There is no smile that he does not mark.

If we would but fully believe this, all undue anxieties would be dismissed. Our lives would not be filled with disappointment as now; for everything, whether great or small, would be left in the hands of God, who is not perplexed by the multiplicity of cares, or overwhelmed by their weight. We would then enjoy a rest of soul to which many have long been strangers.

As your senses delight in the attractive loveliness of the earth, think of the world that is to come, that shall never know the blight of sin and death; where the face of nature will no more wear the shadow of the curse. Let your imagination picture the home of the saved, and remember that it will be more glorious than your brightest imagination can portray. In the varied gifts of God in nature we see but the faintest gleaming of his

glory. It is written, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9)

The poet and the naturalist have many things to say about nature, but it is the Christian who enjoys the beauty of the earth with the highest appreciation, because he recognizes his Father’s handiwork, and perceives his love in flower and shrub and tree. No one can fully appreciate the significance of hill and vale, river and sea, who does not look upon them as an expression of God’s love to man.

God speaks to us through his providential workings, and through the influence of his Spirit upon the heart. In our circumstances and surroundings, in the changes daily taking place around us, we may find precious lessons if our hearts are but open to discern them. The psalmist, tracing the work of God’s providence, says, “The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.” “Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they

shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.”
(Psalm 33:5; 107:43)

God speaks to us in his word. Here we have in clearer lines the revelation of his character, of his dealings with men, and the great work of redemption. Here is open before us the history of the patriarchs and prophets and other holy men of old. They were men “subject to like passions as we are.” We see how they struggled through discouragements like our own, how they fell under temptations as we have done, and yet took heart again and conquered through the grace of God; and beholding, we are encouraged in our striving after righteousness. As we read of the precious experiences granted them, of the light and love and blessing it was theirs to enjoy, and of the work they wrought through the grace given them, the spirit that inspired them kindles a flame of holy emulation in our hearts, and a desire to be like them in character,--like them to walk with God.

Jesus said of the Old Testament Scriptures,--and how much more is it true of the New,--“They

are they which testify of me,” (John 5:39) the Redeemer, him in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. Yes, the whole Bible tells of Christ. From the first record of creation,—“for without him was not anything made that was made,” [John 1:3]--to the closing promise, “Behold I come quickly,” we are reading of his works and listening to his voice. If you would become acquainted with the Saviour, study the Holy Scriptures.

Fill the whole heart with the words of God. They are the living water, quenching your burning thirst. They are the living bread from heaven. Jesus declares, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” (John 6:53) And he explains himself by saying, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63) Our bodies are built up from what we eat and drink; and as in the natural economy, so in the spiritual economy, it is what we meditate upon that will give tone and strength to our spiritual nature.

The theme of redemption is one that the angels

desire to look into; it will be the science and the song of the redeemed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Is it not worthy of careful thought and study now? The infinite love and mercy of Jesus, the sacrifice made in our behalf, calls for the most serious and solemn reflection. We should dwell upon the character of our dear Redeemer and Intercessor. We should meditate upon the mission of him who came to save his people from their sins. As we thus contemplate heavenly themes, our faith and love will grow stronger, and our prayers will be more and more acceptable to God, because they will be more and more mixed with faith and love. They will be intelligent and fervent. There will be more constant confidence in Jesus, and a daily, living experience in his power to save to the utmost all that come unto God by him.

As we meditate upon the perfections of the Saviour, we shall desire to be wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of his purity. There will be a hungering and thirsting of soul to become like him whom we adore. The more our thoughts are upon Christ, the more we shall speak of him to

others, and represent him to the world.

The Bible was not written for the scholar alone; on the contrary, it was designed for the common people. The great truths necessary for salvation are made as clear as noonday; and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God.

We should not take the testimony of any man as to what the Scriptures teach, but should study the word of God ourselves. If we allow others to do our thinking, we shall have crippled energies and contracted abilities. The noble powers of the mind may be so dwarfed by lack of exercise on themes worthy of their concentration as to lose their ability to grasp the deep meaning of the word of God. The mind will enlarge if it is employed in tracing out the subjects of the Bible, comparing scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual. There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give

vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose that is rarely seen in these times.

But there is but little benefit derived from a hasty reading of the Scriptures. One may read the whole Bible through, and yet fail to see its beauty or comprehend its deep and hidden meaning. One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind, and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained. Keep your Bible with you. As you have opportunity, read it; fix the texts in your memory. Even while you are walking the streets, you may read a passage, and meditate upon it, thus fixing it in the mind.

We cannot obtain wisdom without earnest attention and prayerful study. Some portions of Scripture are indeed too plain to be misunderstood; but there are others whose meaning does not lie on

the surface, to be seen at a glance. Scripture must be compared with scripture. There must be careful research and prayerful reflection. And such study will be richly repaid. As the miner discovers veins of precious metal concealed beneath the surface of the earth, so will he who perseveringly searches the word of God as for hid treasure, find truths of the greatest value, which are concealed from the view of the careless seeker. The words of inspiration, pondered in the heart, will be as streams flowing from the fountain of life.

Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages, we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given. When Nathanael came to Jesus, the Saviour exclaimed, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." [John 1:47.] Nathanael said, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus answered, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." And Jesus will see us also in the secret places of prayer, if we will seek him for light, that we may know what is truth. Angels from the world of light will be with those who in

humility of heart seek for divine guidance.

The Holy Spirit exalts and glorifies the Saviour. It is his office to present Christ, the purity of his righteousness, and the great salvation that we have through him. Jesus says, “He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.” (John 16:14) The Spirit of truth is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. How must God esteem the human race, since he gave his Son to die for them, and appoints his Spirit to be man’s teacher and continual guide.[1]

Note:

1. “Steps to Christ” by Mrs. E. G. White.

Chapter 7

The Schools of the Prophets

The Lord himself directed the education of Israel. His care was not restricted to their religious interests; whatever affected their mental or physical well-being was also the subject of divine providence, and came within the sphere of divine law.

God had commanded the Hebrews to teach their children his requirements, and to make them acquainted with all his dealings with their fathers. This was one of the special duties of every parent,-one that was not to be delegated to another. In the place of stranger lips, the loving hearts of the father and mother were to give instruction to their children. Thoughts of God were to be associated with all the events of daily life. The mighty works of God in the deliverance of his people, and the promises of the Redeemer to come, were to be often recounted in the homes of Israel; and the use of figures and symbols caused the lessons given to

be more firmly fixed in the memory. The great truths of God's providence and of the future life were impressed on the young mind. It was trained to see God alike in the scenes of nature and the words of revelation. The stars of heaven, the trees and flowers of the field, the lofty mountains, the rippling brooks,--all spoke of the Creator. The solemn service of sacrifice and worship at the sanctuary, and the utterances of the prophets, were a revelation of God.

Such was the training of Moses in the lowly cabin home in Goshen; of Samuel by the faithful Hannah; of David, in the hill-dwelling at Bethlehem; of Daniel before the scenes of the captivity separated him from the home of his father. Such, too, was the early life of Christ at Nazareth; such the training by which the child Timothy learned from the lips of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, the truths of Holy Writ.

Further provision was made for the instruction of the young, by the establishment of the schools of

the prophets. If a youth desired to search deeper into the truths of the word of God, and to seek wisdom from above, that he might become a teacher in Israel, these schools were open to him. The schools of the prophets were founded by Samuel, to serve as a barrier against the widespread corruption, to provide for the moral and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the future prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counselors. In the accomplishment of this object, Samuel gathered companies of young men who were pious, intelligent, and studious. These were called the sons of the prophets. As they communed with God, and studied his word and his works, wisdom from above was added to their natural endowments. The instructors were men not only well versed in divine truth, but those who had themselves enjoyed communion with God, and had received the special endowment of his Spirit. They enjoyed 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 Kirjathjearim, where the ark then was. Others were established in later times.

The pupils of these schools sustained themselves by their own labor in tilling the soil or in some mechanical employment. In Israel this was not thought strange or degrading; indeed, it was regarded a crime to allow children to grow up in ignorance of useful labor. By the command of God, every child was taught some trade, even though he was to be educated for holy office. Many of the religious teachers supported themselves by manual labor. Even so late as the time of the apostles, Paul and Aquila were no less honored because they earned a livelihood by their trade of tent-making.

The chief subjects of study in these schools were the law of God, with the instructions given to Moses, sacred history, sacred music, and poetry. The manner of instruction was far different from that in the theological schools of the present day, from which many students graduate with less real knowledge of God and religious truth than when

they entered. In those schools of the olden time it was the grand object of all study to learn the will of God, and man's duty toward him. In the records of sacred history were traced the footsteps of Jehovah. The great truths set forth by the types 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 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 intellects brought forth from the treasure-house of God, things new and old, and the Spirit of God was manifested in prophecy and sacred song.

Music was made to serve a holy purpose, to lift the thoughts to that which is pure, noble, and elevating, and to awaken in the soul devotion and gratitude to God. What a contrast between the ancient custom and the uses to which music is now

too often devoted! How many employ this gift to exalt self, instead of using it to glorify God! A love for music leads the unwary to unite with world-lovers in pleasure-gatherings where God has forbidden his children to go. Thus that which is a great blessing when rightly used, becomes one of the most successful agencies by which Satan allures the mind from duty and from the contemplation of eternal things.

Music forms a part of God's worship in the courts above, and we should endeavor, in our songs of praise, to approach as nearly as possible to the harmony of the heavenly choirs. The proper training of the voice is an important feature in education, and should not be neglected. Singing, as a part of religious service, is as much an act of worship as is prayer. The heart must feel the spirit of the song, to give it right expression.

How wide the difference between those schools taught by the prophets of God, and our modern institutions of learning! How few schools are to be found that are not governed by the maxims and

customs of the world! There is a deplorable lack of proper restraint and judicious discipline. The existing ignorance of God's word, among a people professedly Christian, is alarming. Superficial talk, mere sentimentalism, passes for instruction in morals and religion. The justice and mercy of God, the beauty of holiness, and the sure reward of right-doing, the heinous character of sin, and the certainty of its terrible results, are not impressed upon the minds of the young. Evil associates are instructing the youth in the ways of crime, dissipation, and licentiousness.

Are there not some lessons which the educators of our day might learn with profit from the ancient schools of the Hebrews? He who created man has provided for his development in body and mind and soul. Hence, real success in education depends upon the fidelity with which men carry out the Creator's plan.

The true object of education is to restore the image of God in the soul. In the beginning, God created man in his own likeness. He endowed him

with noble qualities. His mind was well-balanced, and all the powers of his being were harmonious. But the fall and its effects have perverted these gifts. Sin has marred and well-nigh obliterated the image of God in man. It was to restore this that the plan of salvation was devised, and a life of probation was granted to man. To bring him back to the perfection in which he was first created, is the great object of life,--the object that underlies every other. It is the work of parents and teachers, in the education of the youth, to co-operate with the divine purpose; and in so doing they are "laborers together with God." (1 Corinthians 3:9)

All the varied capabilities that men possess--of mind and soul and body--are given them by God, to be so employed as to reach the highest possible degree of excellence. But this cannot be a selfish and exclusive culture; for the character of God, whose likeness we are to receive, is benevolence and love. Every faculty, every attribute, with which the Creator has endowed us, is to be employed for his glory and for the uplifting of our fellow-men. And in this employment is found its purest,

noblest, and happiest exercise.

Were this principle given the attention which its importance demands, there would be a radical change in some of the current methods of education. Instead of appealing to pride and selfish ambition, kindling a spirit of emulation, teachers would endeavor to awaken the love for goodness and truth and beauty,--to arouse the desire for excellence. The student would seek the development of God's gifts in himself, not to excel others, but to fulfill the purpose of the Creator and to receive his likeness. Instead of being directed to mere earthly standards, or being actuated by the desire for self-exaltation, which in itself dwarfs and belittles, the mind would be directed to the Creator, to know him, and to become like him.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10) The great work of life is character-building; and a knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education. To impart this knowledge, and to mould the character in

harmony with it, should be the object of the teacher's work. The law of God is a reflection of his character. Hence the psalmist says, "All thy commandments are righteousness;" (Psalm 119:172) and "through thy precepts I get understanding." (Psalm 119:104) God has revealed himself to us in his word and in the works of creation. Through the volume of inspiration and the book of nature, we are to obtain a knowledge of God.

It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. As an educating power, the Bible is without a rival. In the word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration. The Bible is the most instructive history that men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, and a divine hand has preserved its purity through all the ages. It lights up the far-distant past, where human

research seeks vainly to penetrate. In God's word we behold the power that laid the foundation of the earth and that stretched out the heavens. Here only can we find a history of our race, unsullied by human prejudice or human pride. Here are recorded the struggles, the defeats, and the victories of the greatest men this world has ever known. Here the great problems of duty and destiny are unfolded. The curtain that separates the visible from the invisible world is lifted, and we behold the conflict of the opposing forces of good and evil, from the first entrance of sin, to the final triumph of righteousness and truth; and all is but a revelation of the character of God.

In the reverent contemplation of the truths presented in his word, the mind of the student is brought into communion with the infinite mind. Such a study will not only refine and ennoble the character, but it cannot fail to expand and invigorate the mental powers.

The teaching of the Bible has a vital bearing upon man's prosperity in all the relations of this

life. It unfolds the principles that are the cornerstone of a nation's prosperity,--principles with which is bound up the well-being of society, and which are the safeguard of the family,--principles without which no man can attain usefulness, happiness, and honor in this life, or can hope to secure the future, immortal life. There is no position in life, no phase of human experience, for which the teaching of the Bible is not an essential preparation. Studied and obeyed, the word of God would give to the world men of stronger and more active intellect than will the closest application to all the subjects that human philosophy embraces. It would give men of strength and solidity of character, of keen perception and sound judgment,--men who would be an honor to God and a blessing to the world.

In the study of the sciences also, we are to obtain a knowledge of the Creator. All true science is but an interpretation of the handwriting of God in the material world. Science brings from her research only fresh evidences of the wisdom and power of God. Rightly understood, both the book

of nature and the written word make us acquainted with God by teaching us something of the wise and beneficent laws through which he works.

The student should be led to see God in all the works of creation. Teachers should copy the example of the Great Teacher, who from the familiar scenes of nature drew illustrations that simplified his teachings, and impressed them more deeply upon the minds of his hearers. The birds caroling in the leafy branches, the flowers of the valley, the lofty trees, the fruitful lands, the springing grain, the barren soil, the setting sun, gilding the heavens with its golden beams,--all served as means of instruction. He connected the visible works of the Creator with the words of life which he spoke, that whenever these objects should be presented to the eyes of his hearers, their thoughts might revert to the lessons of truth he had linked with them.

The impress of Deity, manifest in the pages of revelation, is seen upon the lofty mountains, the fruitful valleys, the broad, deep ocean. The things

of nature speak to man of his Creator's love. He has linked us to himself by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. This world is not all sorrow and misery. "God is love," (1 John 4:8) is written upon every opening bud, upon the petals of every flower, and upon every spire of grass. Though the curse of sin has caused the earth to bring forth thorns and thistles, there are flowers upon the thistles, and the thorns are hidden by roses. All things in nature testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God, and to his desire to make his children happy. His prohibitions and injunctions are not intended merely to display his authority, but in all that he does, he has the well-being of his children in view. He does not require them to give up anything that it would be for their best interest to retain.

The opinion which prevails in some classes of society, that religion is not conducive to health or to happiness in this life, is one of the most mischievous of errors. The Scripture says: "The fear of the Lord tendeth to life; and he that hath it shall abide satisfied." (Proverbs 19:23) "What man

is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.” (Psalm 34:12-14) The words of wisdom “are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.” (Proverbs 4:22)

True religion brings man into harmony with the laws of God, physical, mental, and moral. It teaches self-control, serenity, temperance. Religion ennobles the mind, refines the taste, and sanctifies the judgment. It makes the soul a partaker of the purity of heaven. Faith in God’s love and overruling providence lightens the burdens of anxiety and care. It fills the heart with joy and contentment in the highest or the lowliest lot. Religion tends directly to promote health, to lengthen life, and to heighten our enjoyment of all its blessings. It opens to the soul a never-failing fountain of happiness. Would that all who have not chosen Christ might realize that he has something vastly better to offer them than they are seeking for themselves. Man is doing the greatest injury and

injustice to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the will of God. No real joy can be found in the path forbidden by him who knows what is best, and who plans for the good of his creatures. The path of transgression leads to misery and destruction; but wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." (Proverbs 3:17)

The physical as well as the religious training practiced in the schools of the Hebrews may be profitably studied. The worth of such training is not appreciated. There is an intimate relation between the mind and the body, and in order to reach a high standard of moral and intellectual attainment, the laws that control our physical being must be heeded. To secure a strong, well-balanced character, both the mental and the physical powers must be exercised and developed. What study can be more important for the young than that which treats of this wonderful organism that God has committed to us, and of the laws by which it may be preserved in health?

And now, as in the days of Israel, every youth should be instructed in the duties of practical life. Each should acquire a knowledge of some branch of manual labor, by which, if need be, he may obtain a livelihood. This is essential, not only as a safeguard against the vicissitudes of life, but from its bearing upon physical, mental, and moral development. Even if it were certain that one would never need to resort to manual labor for his support, still he should be taught to work. Without physical exercise, no one can have a sound constitution and vigorous health; and the discipline of well-regulated labor is no less essential to the securing of a strong and active mind and a noble character.

Every student should devote a portion of each day to active labor. Thus habits of industry would be formed, and a spirit of self-reliance encouraged, while the youth would be shielded from many evil and degrading practices that are so often the result of idleness. And this is all in keeping with the primary object of education; for in encouraging activity, diligence, and purity, we are coming into

harmony with the Creator.

Let the youth be led to understand the object of their creation,--to honor God, and bless their fellow-men; let them see the tender love which the Father in heaven has manifested toward them, and the high destiny for which the discipline of this life is to prepare them,--the dignity and honor to which they are called, even to become the sons of God,--and thousands would turn with contempt and loathing from the low and selfish aims and the frivolous pleasures that have hitherto engrossed them. They would learn to hate sin, and to shun it, not merely from hope of reward or fear of punishment, but from a sense of its inherent baseness,--because it would be a degrading of their God-given powers, a stain upon their God-like manhood.

God does not bid the youth to be less aspiring. The elements of character that make a man successful and honored among men,--the irrepressible desire for some greater good, the indomitable will, the strenuous exertion, the

untiring perseverance,--are not to be crushed out. By the grace of God they are to be directed to objects as much higher than mere selfish and temporal interests as the heavens are higher than the earth. And the education begun in this life will be continued in the life to come. Day by day the wonderful works of God, the evidences of his wisdom and power in creating and sustaining the universe, the infinite mystery of love and wisdom in the plan of redemption, will open to the mind in new beauty. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9) Even in this life we may catch glimpses of his presence, and may taste the joy of communion with heaven; but the fullness of its joy and blessing will be reached in the hereafter. Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain.[1]

Note:

1. Patriarchs and Prophets, 594-602.

Chapter 8

The Teacher of Truth the Only Safe Educator

There are two classes of educators in the world. One class are those whom God makes channels of light, and the other class are those whom Satan uses as his agents, who are wise to do evil. One class contemplates the character of God, and increases in the knowledge of Jesus, whom God hath sent into the world. This class becomes wholly given up to those things which bring heavenly enlightenment, heavenly wisdom, to the uplifting of the soul. Every capability of their nature is submitted to God, and their thoughts are brought into captivity to Christ. The other class is in league with the prince of darkness, who is ever on the alert that he may find an opportunity to teach others the knowledge of evil. If place is made for him, he will not be slow to press his way into heart and mind.

There is great need of elevating the standard of

righteousness in our schools, to give instruction after God's order. Should Christ enter our institutions for the education of the youth, he would cleanse them as he cleansed the temple, banishing many things that have a defiling influence. Many of the books which the youth study would be expelled, and their places would be filled with others that would inculcate substantial knowledge, and abound in sentiments which might be treasured in the heart, in precepts that might govern the conduct. Is it the Lord's purpose that false principles, false reasoning, and the sophistries of Satan should be kept before the mind of our youth and children? Shall pagan and infidel sentiments be presented to our students as valuable additions to their store of knowledge? The works of the most intellectual skeptic are works of a mind prostituted to the service of the enemy, and shall those who claim to be reformers, who seek to lead the children and youth in the right way, in the path cast up, imagine that God will be pleased with having them present to the youth that which will misrepresent his character, placing him in a false light before the young? Shall the sentiments of

unbelievers, the expressions of dissolute men, be advocated as worthy of the student's attention, because they are the productions of men whom the world admires as great thinkers? Shall men professing to believe in God, gather from these unsanctified authors their expressions and sentiments, and treasure them up as precious jewels to be stored away among the riches of the mind?-- God forbid.

The Lord bestowed upon these men whom the world admires, priceless intellectual gifts; he endowed them with master minds; but they did not use them to the glory of God. They separated themselves from him as did Satan; but while they separated themselves from him, they still retained many of the precious gems of thought which he had given them, and these they placed in a framework of error to give luster to their own human sentiments, to make attractive the utterances inspired by the prince of evil. It is true that in the writings of pagans and infidels there are found thoughts of an elevated character, which are attractive to the mind. But there is a reason for this.

Was not Satan the light-bearer, the sharer of God's glory in heaven, and next to Jesus in power and majesty? In the words of inspiration he is described as one who seals up "the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." (Ezekiel 28:12) The prophet says, "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering. ... Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. ... Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any

more.” (Ezekiel 28:13-15, 17-19)

The greatness and power with which the Creator endowed Lucifer he has perverted; and yet, when it suits his purpose, he can impart to men sentiments that are enchanting. Everything in nature comes from God; yet Satan can inspire his agents with thoughts that appear elevating and noble. Did he not come to Christ with quotations of Scripture when he designed to overthrow him with his specious temptations? This is the way in which he comes to man, as an angel of light disguising his temptations under an appearance of goodness, and making men believe him to be the friend rather than the enemy of humanity. It is in this way that he has deceived and seduced the race,--beguiling them with subtle temptations, bewildering them with specious deceptions.

Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which flesh is heir. He has represented him as a God who delights in the sufferings of his creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a

punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and dethrone the human reason.

Heaven, looking down, and seeing the delusions into which men were led, knew that a divine Instructor must come to earth. Men in ignorance and moral darkness must have light, spiritual light; for the world knew not God, and he must be revealed to their understanding. Truth looked down from heaven and saw not the reflection of her image; for dense clouds of moral darkness and gloom enveloped the world, and the Lord Jesus alone was able to roll back the clouds; for he was the light of the world. By his presence he could dissipate the gloomy shadow that Satan had cast between man and God. Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Through the accumulated misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character.

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage

than the Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might worship him in spirit and in truth. Christ revealed to men the fact that the strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature. Christ came to the world to sow it with truth. He held the keys to all the treasures of wisdom, and was able to open doors to science, and to reveal undiscovered stores of knowledge, were it essential to salvation. He presented to men that which was exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the paternal love of the Father, who “so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them, who treated them despitefully. In this he was revealing to them the character of the Father, who

is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth. Those who accepted his teaching were under the guardian care of angels, who were commissioned to strengthen, to enlighten, that the truth might renew and sanctify the soul.

Christ declares the mission he had in coming to the earth. He says in his last public prayer, “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17:25, 26) When Moses asked the Lord to show him his glory, the Lord said, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee.” (Exodus 33:19) “And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty. ... And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and

worshiped.” (Exodus 34:6-8) When we are able to comprehend the character of God as did Moses, we too shall make haste to bow in adoration and praise. Jesus contemplated nothing less than “that the love wherewith Thou hast love me” (John 17:26) should be in the hearts of his children, that they might impart the knowledge of God to others.

O what an assurance is this, that the love of God may abide in the hearts of all who believe in him! O what salvation is provided; for he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him. In wonder we exclaim, How can these things be? But Jesus will be satisfied with nothing less than this. Those who are partakers of his sufferings here, of his humiliation, enduring for his name’s sake, are to have the love of God bestowed upon them as it was upon the Son. One who knows, has said, “The Father himself loveth you.” (John 16:27) One who has had an experimental knowledge of the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of that love, has declared unto us this amazing fact. This love is ours through faith in the Son of God, therefore a connection with Christ means

everything to us. We are to be one with him as he is one with the Father, and then we are beloved by the infinite God as members of the body of Christ, as branches of the living Vine. We are to be attached to the parent stock, and to receive nourishment from the Vine. Christ is our glorified Head, and the divine love flowing from the heart of God, rests in Christ, and is communicated to those who have been united to him. This divine love entering the soul inspires it with gratitude, frees it from its spiritual feebleness, from pride, vanity, and selfishness, and from all that would deform the Christian character.

Look, O look to Jesus and live! You cannot but be charmed with the matchless attractions of the Son of God. Christ was God manifest in the flesh, the mystery hidden for ages, and in our acceptance or rejection of the Saviour of the world are involved eternal interests.

To save the transgressor of God's law, Christ, the one equal with the Father, came to live heaven before men, that they might learn to know what it

is to have heaven in the heart. He illustrated what man must be to be worthy of the precious boon of the life that measures with the life of God.

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and he longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from his countenance, and his conduct was characterized by grace, humility, truth, and love. Every member of his church militant must manifest the same qualities, if he would join the church triumphant. The love of Christ is so broad, so full of glory, that in comparison to it, everything that men esteem as great, dwindles into insignificance. When we obtain a view of it, we exclaim, O the depth of the riches of the love that God bestowed upon men in the gift of his only begotten Son!

When we seek for appropriate language in which to describe the love of God, we find words too tame, too weak, too far beneath the theme, and we lay down our pen and say, “No, it cannot be described.” We can only do as did the beloved

disciple, and say, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” (1 John 3:1) In attempting any description of this love, we feel that we are as infants lisping their first words. Silently we may adore; for silence in this matter is the only eloquence. This love is past all language to describe. It is the mystery of God in the flesh, God in Christ, and divinity in humanity. Christ bowed down in unparalleled humility, that in his exaltation to the throne of God, he might also exalt those who believe in him, to a seat with him upon his throne. All who look upon Jesus in faith that the wounds and bruises that sin has made will be healed in him, shall be made whole.

The themes of redemption are momentous themes, and only those who are spiritually minded can discern their depth and significance. It is our safety, our life, our joy, to dwell upon the truths of the plan of salvation. Faith and prayer are necessary in order that we may behold the deep things of God. Our minds are so bound about with narrow ideas, that we catch but limited views of the

experience it is our privilege to have. How little do we comprehend what is meant by the prayer of the apostle, when he says, “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:16-21)[1]

Note:

1. The Review and Herald, November 17, 1891.

Chapter 9

The Treasure with Which to Store the Mind

Jesus beheld the human race, ignorant, apostate from God, standing under the penalty of the broken law; and he came to bring deliverance, to offer a complete pardon, signed by the Majesty of heaven. If man will accept this pardon, he may be saved; if he rejects it, he will be lost. The wisdom of God alone can unfold the mysteries of the plan of salvation. The wisdom of men may or may not be valuable, as experience shall prove, but the wisdom of God is indispensable; and yet many who profess to be wise are willingly ignorant of the things that pertain to eternal life. Miss what you may in the line of human attainments, but you must have faith in the pardon brought to you at infinite cost, or all of wisdom attained in earth, will perish with you.

Were the Sun of Righteousness to withdraw his beams of light from the world, we should be left in

the darkness of eternal night. Jesus spake as never man spake. He poured out to men the whole treasure of heaven in wisdom and knowledge. He is the light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world. Every phase of truth was evident to him. He did not come to utter uncertain sentiments and opinions; but only to speak truth established upon eternal principles. Then why take the unstable words of men as exalted wisdom, when a greater and certain wisdom is at your command? Men take the writings of scientists, falsely so-called, and seek to make their deductions harmonize with the statements of the Bible. But where there is no agreement, there can be no harmony. Christ declares, "No man can serve two masters." (Matthew 6:24) Their interests are sure to clash. Again and again men have attempted to put the Bible and the writings of men upon a common basis; but the attempt has proved a failure; for we cannot serve God and mammon.

We are in the world, but we are not to be of the world. Jesus entreats that those for whom he died, may not lose their eternal reward by lavishing their

affections on the things of this perishing earth, and so cheat themselves out of unending happiness. An enlightened judgment compels us to acknowledge that heavenly things are superior to the things of earth, and yet the depraved heart of man leads him to give precedence to the things of the world. The opinions of great men, the theories of science, falsely so-called, are blended with the truths of Holy Writ.

But the heart that is surrendered to God, loves the truth of God's word; for through the truth the soul is regenerated. The carnal mind finds no pleasure in contemplating the word of God, but he who is renewed in the spirit of his mind, sees new charms in the living oracles; for divine beauty and celestial light seem to shine in every passage. That which was to the carnal mind a desolate wilderness, to the spiritual mind becomes a land of living streams. That which to the unrenewed heart appeared a barren waste, to the converted soul becomes the garden of God, covered with fragrant buds and blooming flowers.

The Bible has been placed in the background, while the sayings of great men, so-called, have been taken in its stead. May the Lord forgive us the slight we have put upon his word. Though inestimable treasures are in the Bible, and it is like a mine full of precious ore, it is not valued, it is not searched, and its riches are not discovered. Mercy and truth and love are valuable beyond our power to calculate; we cannot have too great a supply of these treasures, and it is in the word of God we find out how we may become possessors of these heavenly riches, and yet why is it that the word of God is uninteresting to many professed Christians? Is it because the word of God is not spirit and is not life? Has Jesus put upon us an uninteresting task, when he commands us to “search the Scriptures”? (John 5:39) Jesus says, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” (John 6:63) But spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and the reason of your lack of interest is that you lack the Spirit of God. When the heart is brought into harmony with the word, a new life will spring up within you, a new light will shine upon every line of the word, and it will become the voice of

God to your soul. In this way you will take celestial observations, and know whither you are going, and be able to make the most of your privileges today.

We should ask the Lord to open our understanding, that we may comprehend divine truth. If we humble our hearts before God, empty them of vanity and pride and selfishness, through the grace abundantly bestowed upon us; if we sincerely desire and unwaveringly believe, the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness will shine into our minds, and illuminate our darkened understanding. Jesus is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He is the light of the world, and he bids us come unto him, and learn of him. Jesus was the great Teacher. He could have made disclosures on the sciences that would have placed the discoveries of the greatest men in the background as utter littleness; but this was not his mission or his work. He had come to seek and to save that which was lost, and he could not permit himself to be turned from his one object. He allowed nothing to divert him. This work he has given into our hands. Shall we do it?

In the days of Christ the established teachers instructed men in the traditions of the fathers, in childish fables, mingled with the opinions of those who they thought were high authorities. Yet neither high nor low could discern any ray of light in their teaching. What wonder was it that crowds followed in the footsteps of the Lord, and gave him homage as they listened to his words! He revealed truths that had been buried under the rubbish of error, and he freed them from the exactions and traditions of men, and bade them stand fast forever. He rescued truth from its obscurity, and set it in its proper framework, to shine in its original luster. He addressed men in his own name; for authority was vested in himself, and why should men, professing to be his followers, not speak with authority concerning subjects on which he has given light? Why take inferior sources of instruction when Christ is the great Teacher who knows all things? Why present inferior authors to the attention of students, when he whose words are spirit and life invites, “Come, ... and learn of me”? (Matthew 11:28, 29)

Shall we not be intensely interested in the lessons of Christ? Shall we not be charmed with the new and glorious light of heavenly truth? This light is above everything that man can present. We can receive light only as we come to the cross and present ourselves at the altar of sacrifice. Here man's weakness is made manifest; here his strength is revealed. Here men see there is power in Christ to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

Shall we not be doers of the words of him who knows all things? Shall we not make the Bible the man of our counsel in the education and training of our youth? The word of God is the foundation of all true knowledge, and Christ teaches what men must do in order to be saved. Hitherto the designs of the enemy have been carried out in bringing before our students such books as have taught specious errors, and presented fables that have tempted their carnal appetites. Shall we bring into our schools the sower of tares? Shall we permit men who are called great, and yet who have been

taught by the enemy of all truth, to have the education of our youth? Or shall we take the word of God as our guide, and have our schools conducted more after the order of the ancient schools of the prophets?

If the Bible was studied and obeyed; if we had the spirit of Christ, we should make determined efforts to be laborers together with God. We should better appreciate the worth of the soul; for every soul converted to God means a vessel dedicated to a holy use, a depository of truth, a bearer of light to others. God expects more of the schools than has yet been brought forth. Christ has said, “Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life; which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed.” (John 6:27)

Then we shall rightly understand the teaching of God’s word, and esteem the truth as the most valuable treasure with which to store the mind. We shall have a constant well-spring of the waters of life. We shall pray as did the psalmist, “Open thou

mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law,” (Psalm 119:18) and shall find as he did that “the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.” (Psalm 119:9-11)[1]

Note:

1. The Review and Herald, November 24, 1891.

Chapter 10

The Science of Salvation the First of Sciences

The schools established among us are matters of grave responsibility; for important interests are involved. In a special manner our schools are a spectacle unto angels and to men. A knowledge of science of all kinds is power, and it is in the purpose of God that advanced science shall be taught in our schools as a preparation for the work that is to precede the closing scenes of earth's history. The truth is to go to the remotest bounds of the earth, through agents trained for the work. But while the knowledge of science is a power, the knowledge which Jesus in person came to impart to the world was the knowledge of the gospel. The light of truth was to flash its bright rays into the uttermost parts of the earth, and the acceptance or rejection of the message of God involved the eternal destiny of souls.

The plan of salvation had its place in the counsels of the Infinite from all eternity. The gospel is the revelation of God's love to men, and means everything that is essential to the happiness and well-being of humanity. The work of God in the earth is of immeasurable importance, and it is Satan's special object to crowd it out of sight and mind, that he may make his specious devices effectual in the destruction of those for whom Christ died. It is his purpose to cause the discoveries of men to be exalted above the wisdom of God. When the mind is engrossed with the conceptions and theories of men to the exclusion of the wisdom of God, it is stamped with idolatry. Science, falsely so-called, has been exalted above God, nature above its Maker, and how can God look upon such wisdom?

In the Bible the whole duty of man is defined. Solomon says, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes 12:13) The will of God is revealed in his written word, and this is the essential knowledge. Human wisdom, familiarity with the

languages of different nations, is a help in the missionary work. An understanding of the customs of the people, of the location and time of events, is practical knowledge; for it aids in making the figures of the Bible clear, in bringing out the force of Christ's lessons; but it is not positively necessary to know these things. The way-faring man may find the pathway cast up for the ransomed to walk in, and there will be no excuse found for any one who perishes through misapprehension of the Scriptures.

In the Bible every vital principle is declared, every duty made plain, every obligation made evident. The whole duty of man is summed up by the Saviour. He says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ... Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matthew 13:37, 39) In the word the plan of salvation is plainly delineated.

The gift of eternal life is promised on condition of saving faith in Christ. The drawing power of the Holy Spirit is pointed out as an agent in the work

of man's salvation. The rewards of the faithful, the punishment of the guilty, are all laid out in clear lines. The Bible contains the science of salvation for all those who will hear and do the words of Christ.

The apostle says, "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) The Bible is its own expositor. One passage will prove to be a key that will unlock other passages, and in this way light will be shed upon the hidden meaning of the word. By comparing different texts treating on the same subject, viewing their bearing on every side, the true meaning of the Scriptures will be made evident.

Many think that they must consult commentaries on the Scriptures in order to understand the meaning of the word of God, and we would not take the position that commentaries

should not be studied; but it will take much discernment to discover the truth of God under the mass of the words of men. How little has been done by the church as a body professing to believe the Bible, to gather up the scattered jewels of God's word into one perfect chain of truth? The jewels of truth do not lie upon the surface, as many suppose. The master mind in the confederacy of evil is ever at work to keep the truth out of sight, and to bring into full view the opinions of great men. The enemy is doing all in his power to obscure heaven's light through educational processes; for he does not mean that men shall hear the voice of the Lord, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." (Isaiah 30:21)

The jewels of truth lie scattered over the field of revelation; but they have been buried beneath human traditions, beneath the sayings and commandments of men, and the wisdom from heaven has been practically ignored; for Satan has succeeded in making the world believe that the words and achievements of men are of great consequence. The Lord God, the Creator of the

worlds, at infinite cost has given the gospel to the world. Through this divine agent, glad, refreshing springs of heavenly comfort and abiding consolation have been opened for those who will come to the fountain of life. There are veins of truth yet to be discovered; but spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Minds beclouded with evil cannot appreciate the value of the truth as it is in Jesus. When iniquity is cherished, men do not feel the necessity of making diligent effort, with prayer and reflection, to understand what they must know or lose heaven. They have so long been under the shadow of the enemy, that they view truth as men behold objects through a smoked and imperfect glass; for all things are dark and perverted in their eyes. Their spiritual vision is feeble and untrustworthy; for they look upon the shadow, and turn away from the light.

But those who profess to believe in Jesus, should ever press to the light. They should daily pray for the light of the Holy Spirit to shine upon the pages of the sacred book, that they may be enabled to comprehend the things of the Spirit of

God. We must have implicit trust in God's word, or we are lost. The words of men, however great they may be, are not able to make us perfect, to thoroughly furnish unto all good works. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thessalonians 2:13) In this text the two agencies in the salvation of man are revealed,--the divine influence, the strong, living faith of those who follow Christ. It is through the sanctification of the spirit and the belief of the truth, that we become laborers together with God. God waits for the co-operation of his church. He does not design to add a new element of efficiency to his word; he has done his great work in giving his inspiration to the world. The blood of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the divine word, are ours. The object of all this provision of heaven is before us,--the souls for whom Christ died,--and it depends upon us to lay hold of the promises God has given, and become laborers together with him; for divine and human agencies must co-operate in this work.

The reason that many professed Christians do

not have a clear, well-defined experience, is that they do not think it is their privilege to understand what God has spoken through his word. After the resurrection of Jesus, two of his disciples were journeying toward Emmaus, and Jesus joined them. But they did not recognize their Lord, and thought he was some stranger, although “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? ... Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.” (Luke 24:27-32, 45)

This is the work that we may look to Christ to do for us; for what the Lord has revealed, is for us and our children forever.

Jesus knew that whatever was presented that was out of harmony with what he came to earth to unfold, was false and delusive. But he said, “Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” (John 18:37) Having stood in the counsels of God, having dwelt in the everlasting heights of the sanctuary, all elements of truth were in him, and of him; for he was one with God. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak what we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” (John 3:11-13) “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” (Proverbs 30:5, 6)[1]

Note:

1. The Review and Herald, December 1, 1891.

Chapter 11

Christian Character Exemplified in Teachers and Students

In the name of my Master I appeal to the young men and women who claim to be sons and daughters of God, to obey the word of God. I appeal to teachers in our schools to set a right example to those with whom they are associated. Those who would be qualified to mould the character of the youth, must be learners in the school of Christ, that they may be meek and lowly of heart, as was the divine Pattern. In dress, in deportment, in all their ways, they should exemplify the Christian character, revealing the fact that they are under wise disciplinary rules of the great Teacher. The Christian youth should be in earnest, trained to bear responsibilities with brave heart and willing hand. He should be ready to encounter the trials of life with patience and fortitude. He should seek to form a character after

the model of the divine One, following maxims of worth, confirming himself in habits that will enable him to win the victor's crown.

In school life the youth may sow seeds which will bear a harvest, not of thorns, but of precious grain for the heavenly garner. There is no time more favorable than the time spent in school in which to acknowledge the power of Christ's saving grace, to be controlled by the principles of the divine law, and it is for the student's interest to live a godly life. The crowning glory of life results from a connection with Christ. No man liveth unto himself. Your life is interwoven with all others in the common web of humanity, and you are to be laborers together with God for the salvation of those who perish in degradation and woe. You are to be instruments in influencing all those with whom you associate to a better life, to direct the mind to Jesus.

John writes: "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked

one.” (John 2:14) And Paul exhorts Timothy to bid the young men to “be sober-minded.” (Titus 2:6) Elevate your soul to be as was Daniel, a loyal, steadfast servant of the Lord of hosts. Ponder well the path of your feet; for you are standing on holy ground, and the angels of God are about you. It is right that you should feel that you must climb to the highest round of the educational ladder. Philosophy and history are important studies; but your sacrifice of time and money will avail nothing, if you do not use your attainments for the honor of God and the good of humanity. Unless the knowledge of science is a stepping stone to the attainment of the highest purposes, it is worthless. The education that does not furnish knowledge as enduring as eternity, is of no purpose. Unless you keep heaven and the future, immortal life before you, your attainments are of no permanent value. But if Jesus is your teacher, not simply on one day of the week, but every day, every hour, you may have his smile upon you in the pursuit of literary acquirements.

Daniel ever kept before him the glory of God,

and you should also say, Lord, I desire knowledge, not for the glorification of self, but to meet the expectation of Jesus, that I may perfect an intelligent Christian character, through the grace he has given unto me. Will the students be true to principle as was Daniel?

In the future there will be more pressing need of men and women of literary qualifications than there has been in the past; for broad fields are opening out before us, white already for harvest. In these fields you may be laborers together with God. But if you are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, if you are filled with levity, if you allow the golden opportunities to pass without acquiring knowledge, without placing solid timbers in your character building, you will be dwarfed and crippled in any line of occupation you may undertake.

While a good education is a great benefit if combined with consecration in its possessor, still those who do not have the privilege of gaining high literary attainments need not think they cannot

advance in intellectual and spiritual life. If they will make the most of the knowledge they have, if they will seek to gather something to their store every day, and will overcome all perverseness of temper through the studious cultivation of Christ-like traits of character, God will open channels of wisdom to them, and it may be said of them as it was said of old, concenter

It is not that brilliant young men always make the greatest success. How often men of talent and education have been placed in positions of trust, and have proved failures. Their glitter had the appearance of gold, but when it was tried, it proved to be but tinsel and dross. They made a failure of their work through unfaithfulness. They were not industrious and persevering, and did not go to the bottom of things. They were not willing to begin at the bottom of the ladder, and with patient toil, ascend round after round till they reached the top. They walked in the sparks (their bright flashes of thought) of their own kindling. They did not depend on the wisdom which God alone can give. Their failure was not because they did not have a

chance, but because they were not sober-minded. They did not feel that their educational advantages were of value to them, and so did not advance as they might have advanced in the knowledge of religion and science. Their mind and character were not balanced by high principles of right.

Let our young men be sober, and ponder the ways of their feet. Let them shun sin because it is destructive in its tendencies and displeasing to God. Let them discern what possibilities are within their reach, and seek God for grace to keep in the paths of righteousness. Let them seek the counsel and guidance of the Lord, that they may spend their lives for his glory in the world.

In obtaining an education, success is not to be regarded as a matter of chance or destiny; it is from that God who read the heart of Daniel, who looked with pleasure upon his purity of motive, his determination of purpose to honor the Lord. Daniel did not walk in sparks of his own kindling, but made the Lord his wisdom. Divine philosophy was made the foundation of his education. He

welcomed the counsel of the Lord. Would that all students were as was Daniel; but many do not see the importance of submitting to divine discipline.

O, that all might realize that without Christ they can do nothing! Those who do not gather with him scatter abroad. Their thoughts and actions will not bear the right character, and their influence will be destructive of good. Our actions have a twofold influence; for they affect others as well as ourselves. This influence will either be a blessing or a curse to those with whom we associate. How little we appreciate this fact. Actions make habits, and habits, character, and if we do not guard our habits, we shall not be qualified to unite with heavenly agencies in the work of salvation, nor be prepared to enter the heavenly mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare; for no one will be there except those who have surrendered their will and way to God's will and way. He whose character is proved, who has stood the test of trial, who is a partaker of the divine nature, will be among those whom Christ pronounces blessed.

Without Christ we can do nothing. The pure principles of uprightness, virtue, and goodness are all from God. A conscientious discharge of duty, Christ-like sympathy, love for souls and love for your own soul, because you belong to God, and have been bought with the precious blood of Christ, will make you a laborer together with God, and endow you with persuasive, drawing power. You must respect your own faith in order successfully to introduce it to others. By example as well as precept, you must show that you reverence your faith, speaking reverently of sacred things. Never allow one expression of lightness and trifling to escape your lips when quoting scripture. As you take the Bible in your hands, remember that you are on holy ground. Angels are around you, and could your eyes be opened, you would behold them. Let your conduct be such that you will leave the impression upon every soul with whom you associate that a pure and holy atmosphere surrounds you. One vain word, one trifling laugh, may balance a soul in the wrong direction. Terrible are the consequences of not having a constant connection with God.

Abstain from all evil. Common sins, however insignificant they may be regarded, will impair your moral sense, and extinguish the inward impression of the Spirit of God. The character of the thoughts leaves its imprint upon the soul, and all low conversation pollutes the mind. All evil works ruin to those who commit it. God may and will forgive the repenting sinner, but though forgiven, the soul is marred; the power of the elevated thought possible to the unimpaired mind is destroyed. Through all time the soul bears the scars. Then let us seek for that faith which works by love and purifies the heart, that we may represent the character of Christ to the world.[1]

Note:

1. The Review and Herald, December 8, 1891.

Chapter 12

The World by Wisdom Knew not God

The truth of God is infinite, capable of measureless expansion, and the more we contemplate it, the more will its glory appear. The truth has been opened before us, and yet the words of Paul to the Galatians are applicable to us. He says: “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.” (Galatians 3:1-4)

“Without me,” Christ says, “ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5) Those who undertake to

carry forward the work in their own strength will certainly fail. Education alone will not fit a man for a place in the work, will not enable him to obtain a knowledge of God. Hear what Paul has say on this matter: “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (1 Corinthians 1:17-21)

Through successive ages of darkness, in the midnight of heathenism, God permitted men to try the experiment of finding out God by their own wisdom, not to demonstrate their inability to his satisfaction, but that men themselves might see that

they could not obtain a knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ his Son, save through the revelation of his word by the Holy Spirit. When Christ came to the world, the experiment had been fully tried, and the result made it evident that the world by wisdom knew not God. Even in the church God has allowed men to test their own wisdom in this matter, but when a crisis has been brought about through human fallibility, God has risen mightily to defend his people. When the church has been brought low, when trial and oppression have come upon his people, he more abundantly exalted them by signal deliverance. When unfaithful teachers came among the people, weakness followed, and the faith of God's people seemed to wane; but God arose and purged his floor, and the tried and true were lifted up.

There are times when apostasy comes into the ranks, when piety is left out of the heart by those who should have kept step with their divine Leader. The people of God separate from the source of their strength, and pride, vanity, extravagance, and display follow. There are idols

within and idols without; but God sends the Comforter as a reprover of sin, that his people may be warned of their apostasy and rebuked for their backsliding. When the more precious manifestations of his love shall be gratefully acknowledged and appreciated, the Lord will pour in the balm of comfort and the oil of joy.

When men are led to realize that their human calculations come far short, and are convinced that their wisdom is but foolishness, then it is that they turn to the Lord to seek him with all the heart, that they may find him.

It has been shown me that every church among us needs the deep movings of the Spirit of God. O, we would point men to the cross of Calvary. We would bid them look upon Him whom their sins have pierced. We would bid them to behold the Redeemer of the world suffering the penalty of their transgression of the law of God. The verdict is that “the soul that sinneth it shall die.” (Ezekiel 18:4) But on the cross the sinner sees the only begotten of the Father, dying in his stead, and

giving the transgressor life. All the intelligences in earth and heaven are called upon to behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Every sinner may look and live. Do not survey that scene of Calvary with careless, thoughtless mind. Can it be that angels shall look down upon us, the recipients of God's love, and see us cold, indifferent, unimpressible, when heaven in amazement beholds the stupendous work of redemption to save a fallen world, and desires to look into the mystery of Calvary's love and woe? Angels in wonder and amazement look upon those for whom so great salvation has been provided, and marvel that the love of God does not awaken them, and lead them to pour forth melodious strains of gratitude and adoration. But the result which all heaven looks to behold is not seen among those who profess to be followers of Christ. How readily do we speak in endearing words of our friends and relatives, and yet how slow we are to speak of Him whose love has no parallel, set forth in Christ crucified among you.

The love of our heavenly Father in the gift of his only begotten Son to the world, is enough to inspire every soul, to melt every hard, loveless heart into contrition and tenderness; and yet shall heavenly intelligences see in those for whom Christ died, insensibility to his love, hardness of heart, and no response of gratitude and affection to the Giver of all good things? Shall affairs of minor importance absorb the whole power of the being, and the love of God meet no return? Shall the Sun of Righteousness shine in vain? In view of what God has done, could his claims be less upon you?

Jesus looked upon the world in its fallen state with infinite pity. He took humanity upon himself that he might touch and elevate humanity. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He reached to the very depth of human misery and woe, to take man as he found him, a being tainted with corruption, degraded with vice, depraved by sin, and united with Satan in apostasy, and elevate him to a seat upon his throne. But it was written of him that “he shall not fail nor be discouraged,” (Isaiah 42:4) and he went forth in the path of self-denial

and self-sacrifice, giving us an example that we should follow in his steps. We should work as did Jesus, departing from our own pleasure, turning away from Satan's bribes, despising ease, and abhorring selfishness, that we may seek and save that which is lost, bringing souls from darkness into light, into the sunshine of God's love. We have been commissioned to go forth and preach the gospel to every creature. We are to bring to the lost the tidings that Christ can forgive sin, can renew the nature, can clothe the soul in the garments of his righteousness, bring the sinner to his right mind, and teach him and fit him up to be a laborer together with God.

The converted soul lives in Christ. His darkness passes away, and a new and heavenly light shines into his soul. "He that winneth souls is wise." (Proverbs 11:30) "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." (Daniel 12:3) What is done through the co-operation of men with God is a work that shall never perish, but endure through the eternal ages.

He that makes God his wisdom, that grows up into the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus, will stand before kings, before the so-called great men of the world, and show forth the praises of Him who hath called him out of darkness into his marvelous light. Science and literature cannot bring into the darkened mind of men the light which the glorious gospel of the Son of God can bring. The Son of God alone can do the great work of illuminating the soul. No wonder Paul exclaims, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Romans 1:16) The gospel of Christ becomes personality in those who believe, and makes them living epistles, known and read of all men. In this way the leaven of godliness passes into the multitude. The heavenly intelligences are able to discern the true elements of greatness in character; for only goodness is esteemed as efficiency with God.

"Without me," Christ says, "ye can do nothing." (John 15:5) Our faith, our example, must be held more sacred than they have been held in

the past. The word of God must be studied as never before; for it is the precious offering that we must present to men, in order that they may learn the way of peace, and obtain that life which measures with the life of God. Human wisdom so highly exalted among men sinks into insignificance before that wisdom which points out the way cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. The Bible alone affords the means of distinguishing the path of life from the broad road that leads to perdition and death.[1]

Note:

1. The Review and Herald, December 15, 1891.

Chapter 13

Books in Our Schools

In the work of educating the youth in our schools, it will be a difficult matter to retain the influence of God's Holy Spirit, and at the same time hold fast to erroneous principles. The light shining upon those who have eyes to see, cannot be mingled with the darkness of heresy and error found in many of the text-books recommended to the students in our colleges. Both teachers and pupils have thought that in order to obtain an education, it was necessary to study the productions of writers who teach infidelity, because their works contain some bright gems of thought. But who was the originator of these gems of thought?--It was God and God alone; for he is the source of all light. Are not all things essential for the health and growth of the spiritual and moral nature found in the pages of Holy Writ? Is not Christ our living head? And are not we to grow up in him to the full stature of men and women? Can an impure fountain send forth sweet waters? Why

should we wade through the mass of error contained in the works of pagans and infidels, for the sake of obtaining the benefit of a few intellectual truths, when all truth is at our command?

Man can accomplish nothing good without God. He is the originator of every ray of light that has pierced the darkness of the world. All that is of value comes from God, and belongs to him. There is a reason that the agents of the enemy sometimes display remarkable wisdom. Satan himself was educated and disciplined in the heavenly courts, and he has a knowledge of good as well as of evil. He mingles the precious with the vile, and this is what gives him his power of deceiving the sons of men. But because Satan has stolen the livery of heaven in order that he may exercise an influence in his usurped dominions, shall those who have been sitting in darkness and have seen a great light, turn from the light to recommend darkness? Shall those who have known the oracles of God recommend our students to study the books that express pagan or infidel sentiments, that they may

become intelligent? Satan has his agents, educated after his methods, inspired by his spirit, and adapted to his works; but shall we co-operate with them? Shall we, as Christians, recommend the works of his agents as valuable, even essential to the attainment of an education?

The Lord himself has signified that schools should be established among us in order that true knowledge may be obtained. No teacher in our schools should suggest the idea that, in order to have the right discipline, it is essential to study text-books expressing pagan and infidel sentiments. Students who are thus educated, are not competent to become educators in their turn; for they are filled with the subtle sophistries of the enemy. The study of works that in any way express infidel sentiments is like handling black coals; for a man cannot be undefiled in mind who thinks along the line of skepticism. In going to such sources for knowledge, are we not turning away from the snow of Lebanon to drink from the turbid water of the valley?

Men who turn away from the knowledge of God, have placed their minds under the control of their master, Satan, and he trains them to be his servants. The less the productions expressing infidel views are brought before the youth, the better. Evil angels are ever on the alert that they may exalt before the minds of the youth that which will do them injury; and as books expressing infidel and pagan sentiments are read, these unseen agents of evil seek to impress those who study them with the spirit of questioning and unbelief. Those who drink from these polluted channels do not thirst for the waters of life; for they are satisfied with the broken cisterns of the world. They think they have the treasures of knowledge, when they are hoarding that which is but wood and hay and stubble, not worth gaining, not worth keeping. Their self-esteem, their idea that a superficial knowledge of things constitutes education, make them boastful and self-satisfied, when they are, as were the Pharisees, ignorant of the Scriptures and the power of God.

O that our youth would treasure up the

knowledge that is imperishable, that they can carry with them into the future, immortal life, the knowledge that is represented as gold and silver and precious stones! The class of educators and learners who deem themselves wise, know nothing as they ought to know it. They need to learn meekness and lowliness in the school of Christ, that they may esteem highly that which Heaven regards as excellent. Those who receive a valuable education, one that will be as enduring as eternity, will not be regarded as the world's best educated men. But the Scriptures declare that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Psalm 111:10) This kind of knowledge is below par in the estimation of the world, and yet it is essential for every youth to become wise in the Scriptures, if he would have eternal life. The apostle says, "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) This is broad enough. Let all seek to comprehend, to the full extent of their powers, the meaning of the word of

God. A mere superficial reading of the inspired word will be of little advantage; for every statement made in the sacred pages requires thoughtful contemplation. It is true that some passages do not require as earnest concentration as do others; for their meaning is more evident. But the student of the word of God should seek to understand the bearing of one passage upon another until the chain of truth is revealed to his vision. As veins of precious ore are hidden beneath the surface of the earth, so spiritual riches are concealed in the passages of Holy Writ, and it requires mental effort and prayerful attention to discover the hidden meaning of the word of God. Let every student who values the heavenly treasure put to the stretch his mental and spiritual powers, and sink the shaft deep into the mine of truth, that he may obtain the celestial gold,--that wisdom which will make him wise unto salvation.

If half the zeal manifested in seeking to comprehend the bright ideas of infidels, was manifested in studying the plan of salvation, thousands who are now in darkness, would be

charmed with the wisdom, the purity, the elevation of the provisions of God in our behalf; they would be lifted out of and away from themselves in wonder and amazement at the love and condescension of God in giving his only begotten Son for a fallen race. How is it that many are satisfied to drink at the turbid streams that flow in the murky valley, when they might refresh their souls at the living streams of the mountains? The prophet asks, “Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? Or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?” (Jeremiah 18:14) The Lord answers, “My people hath forsaken me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, in a way not cast up.” (Jeremiah 18:15)

It is a sad fact that men who have been entrusted with fine capabilities to be employed in the service of God, have prostituted their powers in the service of evil, and laid their talents at the feet of the enemy. They submitted in the most servile

bondage to the prince of evil, while rejecting the service of Christ as humiliating and undesirable. They looked upon the work of the follower of Christ as a work below their ambition, that required a stepping down from their greatness, a species of slavery, that would enthrall their powers, and narrow the circle of their influence. He who had made an infinite sacrifice that they might be set free from the bondage of evil, was set aside as unworthy of their best efforts and most exalted service.

These men had received their talents from God, and every gem of thought by which they had been esteemed worthy of the attention of scholars and thinkers, belongs not to them, but to the God of all wisdom, whom they did not acknowledge. Through tradition, through false education, these men are exalted as the world's educators; but in going to them students are in danger of accepting the vile with the precious; for superstition, specious reasoning, and error are mingled with portions of true philosophy and instruction. This mingling makes a potion that is poisonous to the soul,--

destructive of faith in the God of all truth. Those who have a thirst for knowledge need not go to these polluted fountains; for they are invited to come to the fountain of life and drink freely. Through searching the word of God, they may find the hidden treasure of truth that has long been buried beneath the rubbish of error, human tradition, and opinions of men.

The Bible is the great educator; for it is not possible prayerfully to study its sacred pages without having the intellect disciplined, ennobled, purified, and refined. “Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised.” (Jeremiah 9:23, 24)

Those who claim to be Christians, who profess to believe the truth, and yet drink at the polluted fountains of infidelity, and by precept and example draw others away from the cold, snow-waters of Lebanon, are fools, though they profess themselves to be wise. “Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. ... But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. Every man is brutish in

his knowledge; every founder is confounded by his graven image; for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: The Lord of hosts is his name.” (Jeremiah 10:1, 2, 10-16)

“Thus saith the Lord; cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth 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. ... O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the

earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters. Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.” (Jeremiah 17:5-8, 13, 14)

Let believers in the truth for this time, turn away from authors that teach infidelity. Let not the works of skeptics appear on your library shelves, where your children can have access to them. Let those who have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, no longer deem it an essential feature of a good education to have a knowledge of the writings of those who deny the existence of God, and pour contempt upon his holy word. Give no place to the agents of Satan, since there is nothing by which to vindicate their doings; a clean thing cannot come out of an unclean.[1]

Note:

1. The Review and Herald, November 10, 1891.

Chapter 14

The Book of Books

The study of the Bible will give strength to the intellect. Says the psalmist, “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” (Psalm 119:130) The question has often been asked me, “Should the Bible become the important book in our schools?” It is a precious book, a wonderful book. It is a treasury containing jewels of precious value. It is a history that opens to us the past centuries. Without the Bible we should have been left to conjectures and fables in regard to the occurrences of past ages. Of all the books that have flooded the world, be they ever so valuable, the Bible is the Book of books, and is most deserving of the closest study and attention. It gives not only the history of the creation of this world, but a description of the world to come. It contains instruction concerning the wonders of the universe, and it reveals to our understanding the Author of the heavens and the earth. It unfolds a simple and complete system of theology and

philosophy. Those who are close students of the word of God, and who obey its instructions, and love its plain truths, will improve in mind and manners. It is an endowment of God that should awaken in every heart the most sincere gratitude; for it is the revelation of God to man.

If the truths of the Bible are woven into practical life, they will bring the mind up from its earthliness and debasement. Those who are conversant with the Scriptures, will be found to be men and women who exert an elevating influence. In searching for the heaven-revealed truths, the Spirit of God is brought into close connection with the sincere searcher of the Scriptures. An understanding of the revealed will of God, enlarges the mind, expands, elevates, and endows it with new vigor, by bringing its faculties in contact with stupendous truths. If the study of the Scriptures is made a secondary consideration, great loss is sustained. The Bible was for a time excluded from our schools, and Satan found a rich field, in which he worked with marvelous rapidity, and gathered a harvest to his liking.

The understanding takes the level of the things with which it becomes familiar. If all would make the Bible their study, we should see a people further developed, capable of thinking more deeply, and showing a greater degree of intelligence, than the most earnest efforts in studying merely the sciences and histories of the world could make them. The Bible gives the true seeker an advanced mental discipline, and he comes from contemplation of divine things with his faculties enriched; self is humbled, while God and his revealed truth are exalted. It is because men are unacquainted with the precious Bible histories, that there is so much lifting up of man, and so little honor given to God. The Bible contains just that quality of food that the Christian needs in order that he may grow strong in spirit and intellect. The searching of all books of philosophy and science cannot do for the mind and morals what the Bible can do, if it is studied and practiced. Through the study of the Bible, converse is held with patriarchs and prophets. The truth is clothed in elevated language, which exerts a fascinating power over

the mind; the thought is lifted up from the things of earth, and brought to contemplate the glory of the future immortal life. What wisdom of man can compare with the grandeur of the revelation of God? Finite man, who knows not God, may seek to lessen the value of the Scriptures, and may bury the truth beneath the supposed knowledge of science.

Those who boast of wisdom beyond the teaching of the word of God, need to drink deeper of the fountain of knowledge, that they may learn their real ignorance. There is a boasted wisdom of men, that is foolishness in the sight of God. Let no man deceive himself. "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." (1 Corinthians 3:19) Those who have only this wisdom, need to become fools in their own estimation. The greatest ignorance that now curses the human race is in regard to the binding claims of the law of God; and this ignorance is the result of neglecting the study of the word of God. It is

Satan's determined plan to so engage and absorb the mind, that God's great guide book shall not be the Book of books, and that the sinner may not be led from the path of transgression to the path of obedience.

The Bible is not exalted to its place, and yet of what infinite importance it is to the souls of men. In searching its pages, we move through scenes majestic and eternal. We behold Jesus, the Son of God, coming to our world, and engaging in the mysterious conflict that discomfited the powers of darkness. O how wonderful, how almost incredible it is, that the infinite God would consent to the humiliation of his own dear Son! Let every student of the Scriptures contemplate this great fact, and he will not come from such a contemplation without being elevated, purified, and ennobled.

The Bible is a book which discloses the principles of right and truth. It contains whatever is needful for the saving of the soul, and at the same time, it is adapted to strengthen and discipline the mind. If used as a text book in our schools, it will

be found far more effective than any other book in the world, in guiding wisely in the affairs of this life, as well as in aiding the soul up the ladder of progress which reaches to heaven. God cares for us as intellectual beings, and he has given us his word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our pathway. “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” (Psalm 119:130) It is not the mere reading of the word that will accomplish the result that is designed by Heaven, but the truth revealed in the word of God must find an entrance into the heart, if the good intended is obtained.

The best educated in the sciences are not always the most effective instruments for God’s use. There are many who find themselves laid aside, and those who have had fewer advantages of obtaining knowledge of books, taking their places, because the latter have a knowledge of practical things that is essential to the uses of every-day life; while those who consider themselves learned, often cease to be learners, are self-sufficient, and above being taught, even by Jesus, who was the greatest

teacher the world ever knew. Those who have grown and expanded, whose reasoning faculties have been improved by deep searching of the Scriptures, that they may know the will of God, will come into positions of usefulness; for the word of God has had an entrance into their life and character. It must do its peculiar work, even to the piercing asunder of the joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. God's word is to become the nourishment by which the Christian must grow strong in spirit and in intellect, that he may battle for truth and righteousness.

Why is it that our youth, and even those of maturer years, are so easily led into temptation and sin?--It is because the word of God is not studied and meditated upon as it should be. If it were appreciated, there would be an inward rectitude, a strength of spirit, that would resist the temptations of Satan to do evil. A firm, decided will-power is not brought into the life and character, because the sacred instruction of God is not made the study, and the subject of meditation. There is not the

effort put forth that there should be to associate the mind with pure, holy thoughts and to divert it from what is impure and untrue. There is not the choosing of the better part, the sitting at the feet of Jesus, as did Mary, to learn the most sacred lessons of the divine Teacher, that they may be laid up in the heart, and practiced in the daily life. Meditation upon holy things will elevate and refine the mind, and will develop Christian ladies and gentlemen.

God will not accept one of us who is belittling his powers in lustful, earthly debasement, by thought, or word, or action. Heaven is a pure and holy place, where none can enter unless they are refined, spiritualized, cleansed, and purified. There is a work for us to do for ourselves, and we shall be capable of doing it only by drawing strength from Jesus. We should make the Bible our study above every other book; we should love it, and obey it as the voice of God. We are to see and to understand his restrictions and requirements, “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not”, and realize the true meaning of the word of God.

When God's word is made the man of our counsel, and we search the Scriptures for light, angels of heaven come near to impress the mind, and enlighten the understanding, so that it can truly be said, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." (Psalm 119:130) It is no marvel that there is not more heavenly-mindedness shown among the youth who profess Christianity, when there is so little attention given to the word of God. The divine counsels are not heeded; the admonitions are not obeyed; grace and heavenly wisdom are not sought, that past sins may be avoided, and every taint of corruption be cleansed from the character. David's prayer was, "Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works." (Psalm 119:27)

If the minds of our youth, as well as those of more mature age, were directed aright when associated together, their conversation would be upon exalted themes. When the mind is pure, and the thoughts elevated by the truth of God, the words will be of the same character, "like apples of

gold in pictures of silver.” (Proverbs 25:11) But with the present understanding, with the present practices, with the low standard which even Christians are content to reach, the conversation is cheap and profitless. It is “of the earth, earthy,” and savors not of the truth, or of heaven, and does not come up, even to the standard of the more cultured class of worldlings. When Christ and heaven are the themes of contemplation, the conversation will give evidence of the fact. The speech will be seasoned with grace, and the speaker will show that he has been obtaining an education in the school of the divine Teacher. Says the psalmist, “I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.” (Psalm 119:30) He treasured the word of God. It found an entrance to his understanding, not to be disregarded, but to be practiced in his life.

Unless the sacred word is appreciated, it will not be obeyed as a sure and safe and precious text book. Every besetting sin must be put away. Warfare must be waged against it until it is overcome. The Lord will work with your efforts. As finite, sinful man works out his own salvation

with fear and trembling, it is God who works in him, to will and to do of his own good pleasure. But God will not work without the co-operation of man. He must exercise his powers to the very utmost; he must place himself as an apt, willing student in the school of Christ; and as he accepts the grace that is freely offered to him, the presence of Christ in the thought and in the heart will give him decision of purpose to lay aside every weight of sin, that the heart may be filled with all the fullness of God, and of his love.

The students of our schools should consider that through the contemplation of sin, the sure result has followed, and their God-given faculties have been weakened and unfitted for moral advancement, because they have been misapplied. There are many who admit this as the truth. They have cherished pride and self-conceit, until these evil traits of character have become a ruling power, controlling their desires and inclinations. While they have had a form of godliness, and have performed many acts of self-righteousness, there has been no real heart change. They have not

brought their life practices into definite and close measurement with the great standard of righteousness, the law of God. Should they critically compare their life with this standard, they could not but feel that they were deficient, sin-sick, and in need of a physician. They can only understand the depth to which they have fallen, by beholding the infinite sacrifice that has been made by Jesus Christ, to lift them out of their degradation.

There are but few who have an appreciation of the grievous character of sin, and who comprehend the greatness of the ruin that has resulted from the transgression of God's law. By examining the wonderful plan of redemption to restore the sinner to the moral image of God, we see that the only means for man's deliverance was wrought out by the self-sacrifice, and the unparalleled condescension and love of the Son of God. He alone had the strength to fight the battles with the great adversary of God and man, and, as our substitute and surety, he has given power to those who lay hold of him by faith, to become victors in

his name, and through his merits.

We can see in the cross of Calvary what it has cost the Son of God to bring salvation to a fallen race. As the sacrifice in behalf of man was complete, so the restoration of man from the defilement of sin must be thorough and complete. The law of God has been given to us, that we may have rules to govern our conduct. There is no act of wickedness that the law will excuse; there is no unrighteousness that will escape its condemnation. The life of Christ is a perfect fulfillment of every precept of this law. He says, "I have kept my Father's commandments." (John 15:10) The knowledge of the law would condemn the sinner, and crush hope from his breast, if he did not see Jesus as his substitute and surety, ready to pardon his transgression, and to forgive his sin. When, through faith in Jesus Christ, man does according to the very best of his ability, and seeks to keep the way of the Lord by obedience to the ten commandments, the perfection of Christ is imputed to cover the transgression of the repentant and obedient soul.

There will be an effort made on the part of many pretended friends of education to divorce religion from the sciences, in our schools. They would spare no pains or expense to impart secular knowledge; but they would not mingle with it a knowledge of what God has revealed as constituting perfection of character. And yet a training in the truth of God would develop the mind, and impart secular knowledge as well; for the very foundation of true education is in the fear of the Lord. Says the psalmist, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The living oracles of God reveal the deceptions of the father of lies. Who of our youth can know anything of what is truth, in comparison with error, unless they are acquainted with the Scriptures? The simplicity of true godliness must be brought into the education of our young people, if they are to have divine knowledge to escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Those who are truly the followers of Christ, will not serve God only when it is in accordance with their inclination, but, as well, when it involves self-denial and cross-

bearing. The earnest counsel given by the apostle Paul to Timothy, that he might not fail in doing his duty, should be set before the youth of today: “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” (1 Timothy 4:12) Besetting sins must be battled with, and overcome. Objectionable traits of character, whether hereditary or cultivated, should be taken up separately, and compared with the great rule of righteousness; and in the light reflected from the word of God, they should be firmly resisted and overcome, through the strength of Christ. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14)

Day by day, and hour by hour, there must be a vigorous process of self-denial and of sanctification going on within; and then the outward works will testify that Jesus is abiding in the heart by faith. Sanctification does not close the avenues of the soul to knowledge, but it comes to expand the mind, and to inspire it to search for truth, as for hidden treasure; and the knowledge of

God's will advances the work of sanctification. There is a heaven, and O, how earnestly we should strive to reach it. I appeal to you students of our schools and colleges, to believe in Jesus as your Saviour. Believe that he is ready to help you by his grace, when you come to him in sincerity. You must fight the good fight of faith. You must be wrestlers for the crown of life. Strive, for the grasp of Satan is upon you; and if you do not wrench yourselves from him, you will be palsied and ruined. The foe is on the right hand, and on the left, before you, and behind you; and you must trample him under your feet. Strive, for there is a crown to be won. Strive, for if you win not the crown, you lose everything in this life and in the future life. Strive, but let it be in the strength of your risen Saviour.

Will the students of our schools study, and endeavor to copy the life and character of Him who came down from heaven to show them what they must be, if they would enter the kingdom of God? I have borne you a message of the near coming of the Son of God in the clouds of heaven with power

and great glory. I have not presented before you any definite time, but have repeated to you the injunction of Christ himself, to watch unto prayer, “For in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.” (Matthew 24:44) The warning has come echoing down the ages to our time, “Behold, I come quickly; 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.” (Revelation 22:12-14)[1]

Note:

1. The Review and Herald, August 21, 1888.

Chapter 15

The Value of Bible Study

“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) The word of God is like a treasure-house, containing everything that is essential to perfect the man of God. We do not appreciate the Bible as we should. We do not have a proper estimate of the richness of its stores, nor do we realize the great necessity of searching the Scriptures for ourselves. Men neglect the study of the word of God in order to pursue some worldly interest, or to engage in the pleasures of the time. Some trivial affair is made an excuse for ignorance of the Scriptures given by inspiration of God. But anything of an earthly character might better be put off, than this all-important study, that is to make us wise unto eternal life.

My heart aches as I see men--even those who

profess to be looking for Christ's coming,--devoting their time and talents to circulating books that contain nothing concerning the special truths for our time,--books of narrative, books of biography, books of men's theories and speculations. The world is full of such books; they can be had anywhere; but can the followers of Christ engage in so common a work when there is crying need for God's truth on every hand? It is not our mission to circulate such works. There are thousands of others to do this, who have as yet no knowledge of anything better. We have a definite mission, and we ought not to turn from it to side issues, employing men and means to bring to the attention of the people books that have no bearing upon the present truth.

Do you pray for the advancement of the truth? Then work for it, and show that your prayers rise from sincere and earnest hearts. God does not work miracles where he has provided means by which the work may be accomplished. Use your time and talents in his service, and he will not fail to work with your efforts. If the farmer fails to plow and

sow, God does not work a miracle to undo the results of his neglect. Harvest-time finds his fields barren--there are no sheaves to be reaped, no grain to be garnered. God provided the seed and the soil, the sun and the rain; and if the agriculturist had employed the means that were at his hand, he would have received according to his sowing and his labor.

There are great laws that govern the world of nature, and spiritual things are controlled by principles equally certain; the means for an end must be employed, if the desired results are to be attained. Those who make no decided efforts themselves, are not working in harmony with the laws of God. They are not using the provisions of the heavenly Father, and they can expect nothing but meager returns. The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty, it is left with us to decide our course.

You who are waiting in idle expectation that

God will perform some wonderful miracle to enlighten the world in regard to the truth, I want to ask you if you have employed the means that God has provided for the advancement of his cause? You who pray for light and truth from heaven, have you studied the Scriptures? Have you desired “the sincere milk of the word,” that you may grow thereby? Have you submitted yourselves to the revealed command? “Thou shalt,” and “thou shall not,” are definite requirements, and there is no place for idleness in the Christian life. You who mourn your spiritual dearth, do you seek to know and to do the will of God? Are you striving to enter in at the straight gate? There is work, earnest work, to be done for the Master. The evils condemned in God’s word, must be overcome. You must individually battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. The word of God is called “the sword of the Spirit,” and you should become skillful in its use, if you would cut your way through the hosts of opposition and darkness.

Wrench yourself away from hurtful associations. Count the cost of following Jesus, and

make it, with a determined purpose to cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Eternal life is worth your all, and Jesus has said, “Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:33) He who does nothing, but waits to be compelled by some supernatural agency, will wait on in lethargy and darkness. God has given his word. God speaks in unmistakable language to your soul. Is not the word of his mouth sufficient to show you your duty, and to urge its fulfillment?

Those who humbly and prayerfully search the Scriptures, to know and to do God’s will, will not be in doubt of their obligations to God. For “if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.” (John 7:17) If you would know the mystery of godliness, you must follow the plain word of truth,--feeling or no feeling, emotion or no emotion. Obedience must be rendered from a sense of principle, and the right must be pursued under all circumstances. This is the character that is elected of God unto salvation. The test of a genuine Christian is given in the word of God. Says Jesus,

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15) “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. ... If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.” (John 14:21, 23, 24)

Here are the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life. Your obedience to God’s commandments will prove your right to an inheritance with the saints in light. God has elected a certain excellence of character; and every one who, through the grace of Christ, shall reach the standard of his requirement, will have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of glory. All who would reach this standard of character, will have to employ the means that God has provided to this end. If you would inherit the rest that remaineth for the children of God, you must become a co-laborer

with God. You are elected to wear the yoke of Christ,--to bear his burden, to lift his cross. You are to be diligent “to make your calling and election sure.” (2 Peter 1:10) Search the Scriptures, and you will see that not a son or a daughter of Adam is elected to be saved in disobedience to God’s law. The world makes void the law of God; but Christians are chosen to sanctification through obedience to the truth. They are elected to bear the cross, if they would wear the crown.

The Bible is the only rule of faith and doctrine. And there is nothing more calculated to energize the mind, and strengthen the intellect, than the study of the word of God. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God’s word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose, that is rarely seen in these times. Thousands of men who minister in the pulpit are lacking in essential qualities of mind and character, because they do not apply themselves to the study of the Scriptures.

They are content with a superficial knowledge of the truths that are full of rich depths of meaning; and they prefer to go on, losing much in every way, rather than to search diligently for the hidden treasure.

The search for truth will reward the seeker at every turn, and each discovery will open up richer fields for his investigation. Men are changed in accordance with what they contemplate. If commonplace thoughts and affairs take up the attention, the man will be commonplace. If he is too negligent to obtain anything but a superficial understanding of God's truth, he will not receive the rich blessings that God would be pleased to bestow upon him. It is a law of the mind, that it will narrow or expand to the dimensions of the things with which it becomes familiar. The mental powers will surely become contracted, and will lose their ability to grasp the deep meanings of the word of God, unless they are put vigorously and persistently to the task of searching for truth. The mind will enlarge, if it is employed in tracing out the relation of the subjects of the Bible, comparing

scripture with scripture, and spiritual things with spiritual. Go below the surface; the richest treasures of thought are waiting for the skillful and diligent student.

Those who are teaching the most solemn message ever given to the world, should discipline the mind to comprehend its significance. The theme of redemption will bear the most concentrated study, and its depth will never be fully explored. You need not fear that you will exhaust this wonderful theme. Drink deep of the well of salvation. Go to the fountain for yourself, that you may be filled with refreshment, that Jesus may be in you a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life. Only Bible truth and Bible religion will stand the test of the judgment. We are not to pervert the word of God to suit our convenience, and worldly interests, but to honestly inquire, “What wilt thou have me to do?” “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price.” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20) And what a price! Not “with corruptible things, as silver and gold, ... but with the precious blood of Christ.” (1 Peter 1:18, 19)

When man was lost, the Son of God said, I will redeem him, I will become his surety and substitute. He laid aside his royal robes, clothed his divinity with humanity, stepped down from the royal throne, that he might reach the very depth of human woe and temptation, lift up our fallen natures, and make it possible for us to be overcomers,--the sons of God, the heirs of the eternal kingdom. Shall we then allow any consideration of earth to turn us away from the path of truth? Shall we not challenge every doctrine and theory, and put it to the test of God's word?

We should not allow any argument of man's to turn us away from a thorough investigation of Bible truth. The opinions and customs of men are not to be received as of divine authority. God has revealed in his word what is the whole duty of man, and we are not to be swayed from the great standard of righteousness. He sent his only begotten Son to be our example, and bade us to hear and to follow him. We must not be influenced from the truth as it is in Jesus, because great and

professedly good men urge their ideas above the plain statements of the word of God.

The work of Christ is to draw men from the false and spurious to the true and genuine. “He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:12) There is no danger of going into error while we follow in the footsteps of “the Light of the world.” We are to work the works of Christ. We must engage heart and soul in his service; we must search the word of life, and present it to others. We must educate the people to realize the importance of its teaching, and the danger of deviating from its plain commands.

The Jews were led into error and ruin, and to the rejection of the Lord of glory, because they knew not the Scriptures, nor the power of God. A great work is before us,--to lead men to take God’s word as the rule of their lives, to make no compromise with tradition and custom, but to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.[1]

Note:

1. The Review and Herald, July 17, 1888.

Chapter 16

The Necessity of Doing Our Best

The Lord has made provision that our minds may be elevated. Instead of allowing our thoughts to dwell upon small and unimportant matters, the nobler powers of the mind, which are adapted to the contemplation of exalted themes, should be trained for high pursuits. But instead of this, men pervert the higher faculties of the mind, and press them into the service of the earthly and the temporal interests, as if the attainment of the things of earth were of supreme importance. In this way the higher powers have been dwarfed, and have failed to develop so that men might be qualified for the duties of life that devolve upon them; for even in the performance of the obligations relating to this life, they fail to act with integrity, if the nobler powers of the mind are not cultivated. It is Satan's design that these high faculties of the mind should become belittled and sensualized; but it is not

God's will that any one should yield the mind to the control of the evil one. He would have his children make progress in intellectual and spiritual pursuits.

Let no one suppose that conversion is the beginning and end of the Christian life. There is a science of Christianity that must be mastered. There is to be growth in grace, that is constant progress and improvement. The mind is to be disciplined, trained, educated; for the child of God is to do service for God in ways that are not natural, or in harmony with inborn inclination. Those who become the followers of Christ find that new motives of action are supplied, new thoughts arise, and new actions must result. But they can make advancement only through conflict; for there is an enemy that ever contends against them, presenting temptations to cause the soul to doubt and sin. Besides this ever vigilant foe, there are hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil that must be overcome. The training and education of a lifetime must often be discarded that the Christian may become a learner in the school of Christ, and

in him who would be a partaker of the divine nature, appetite and passion must be brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. There is to be no end to this warfare this side of eternity, but while there are constant battles to fight, there are also precious victories to gain, and the triumph over self and sin is of more value than the mind can estimate. The effort put forth to overcome, though requiring self-denial, is of little account beside the victory over evil.

The life-work given to us is that of preparation for the life eternal, and if we accomplish this work as God has designed that we should, every temptation may work for our advance; for as we resist its allurements, we make progress in the divine life. In the heat of the conflict, while engaged in earnest spiritual warfare, unseen agencies are by our side, commissioned of heaven to aid us in our wrestlings, and in the crisis, strength and firmness and energy are imparted to us, and we have more than mortal power. But unless the human agent shall bring his will into harmony with the will of God, unless he shall

forsake every idol, and overcome every wrong practice, he will never succeed in the warfare; but will be finally overcome. Those who would be conquerors must engage in conflict with unseen agencies; inward corruption must be overcome, and every thought must be brought into harmony with, and subjection to, Christ. The Holy Spirit is ever at work seeking to purify, refine, and discipline the souls of men in order that they may become fitted for the society of saints and angels, and as overcomers be able to sing the song of redemption, ascribing glory and honor to God and to the Lamb in the courts above.

As children of God, we should make earnest efforts to be overcomers, and as students seeking to honor and glorify God, we should study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed. The workman for God should make earnest efforts to become a representative of Christ, discarding all uncomely gestures, and uncouth speech. O that the youth who are now forming their habits would seek to attain perfection! They should seek to use correct

language, and though there are a large class who are careless in the way they speak, yet by careful, painstaking attention, they may become representatives of the truth. Every day they should make advancement and not detract from their usefulness and influence by cherishing defects of manner, tone, or language. Through close watchfulness, and earnest discipline, the Christian youth may keep his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile. Common, cheap expressions should be replaced by sound and pure words, and we should be careful not to give an incorrect pronunciation of our words. There are men among us who in theory know better than to use incorrect language, yet in practice they make frequent mistakes. The Lord would have us careful to do our best, making wise use of our faculties and opportunities. The Lord has endowed men with gifts whereby they are to bless and edify others, and it is our duty to so educate ourselves that we may be best fitted for the great work committed to us.

Education comprehends far more than many

suppose. Mind and body must both receive attention; and unless our youth are versed in the science of how to care for the body as well as the mind, they will not be successful students. It is essential that students exercise their physical powers in such a way that their physical strength shall not be disproportionate to their mental development, and therefore a judicious system of physical culture should be combined with school discipline, that there may be a harmonious development of all the powers of mind and body. Nothing that pertains to physical perfection should be looked upon as of little importance. In eating, drinking, and dressing, the laws of health should be diligently followed, and in regulating the hours for sleep, there should be no haphazard work. No student should form the habit of sitting up late at night to burn the midnight oil, and then take the hours of day for sleep. If they have been accustomed to doing this at home, they should seek to correct their habits and go to rest at a seasonable hour, and rise in the morning refreshed for the day's duties. In our schools the lights should be extinguished at half past nine.

The student who desires to put the work of two terms into one, should not be permitted to have his own way in this matter. To undertake to do double work means with many, overtaxation of the mind, and a neglect of proper physical exercise. It is not reasonable to suppose that the mind can grasp and digest an oversupply of mental food, and it is as great a sin to overfeed the mind as it is to load the digestive organs, giving the stomach no periods of rest. The brain is the citadel of the whole man, and wrong habits of eating, dressing, or sleeping, affect the brain, and prevent the attaining of that which the student desires,--a good mental discipline. Any part of the body that is not treated with consideration will telegraph its injury to the brain. There should be exercised much patience and perseverance in instructing the youth how to preserve their health. They should become well informed on this matter, that every muscle and organ may be so strengthened and disciplined that in voluntary or involuntary action, the best of health may result, and the brain be invigorated to sustain the taxation of study.

In reading or in recitation the pronunciation should be clear, and a nasal tone, or an ungainly attitude should at once be corrected. Every sentence should be clear and distinct, and any lack of distinctness should be marked as defective. Many have allowed themselves to form the habit of speaking in a thick, indistinct way, as though their tongue was too large for the mouth, and this habit has done great injury to usefulness; but if those who have defects in their manner of utterance will submit to criticism and correction, they may overcome these defects. They should perseveringly practice speaking in a low, distinct tone, exercising the abdominal muscles in deep breathing, and making the throat the channel of communication. Many speak in a rapid way and in a high, unnatural key, but if they continue such a practice, they will injure the throat and lungs, and as a result of continual abuse, the weak and inflamed organs will become diseased in a serious way, and they will fall into consumption.

Ministers and teachers should give especial

attention to the voice, and learn the art of speaking, not in a nervous, hurried manner, but in a slow, clear, distinct manner, preserving the music of the voice. The Saviour was the greatest teacher the world ever knew, and his voice was as music to the ears of those who had been accustomed to hear the monotonous, spiritless preaching of the Scribes and Pharisees. He spoke slowly and impressively, emphasizing those words to which he wished them to give special attention.

The old and young, the ignorant and the learned, could catch the full meaning of his words, but this would have been impossible had he spoken in a hurried way, and rushed sentence upon sentence without pause. The people were very attentive to him, and it was said of him that he spake not as the Scribes and Pharisees, for his word was as of one who had authority. The people were astonished at his doctrine, and after hearing him, the verdict was, “Never man spake like this man.” (John 7:46)

Jesus’ manner of teaching was beautiful and

attractive, and it was ever characterized by simplicity. He unfolded the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven through the use of figures and symbols with which his hearers were familiar, and the common people heard him gladly; for they could comprehend his words. There were no high-sounding words used, to understand which it was necessary to consult a dictionary. He illustrated the glories of the kingdom of God by the use of the experiences and occurrences of earth. In compassionate love and tenderness he cheered and comforted and instructed all who heard him; for grace was poured upon his lips that he might convey to men in the most attractive way the treasures of truth.

This is the manner in which he would have us present his truth to others. The power of speech is of great value, and the voice should be cultivated for the blessing of those with whom we come in contact. I am pained when I see how little this precious gift is appreciated. In reading the Bible, in engaging in prayer, in bearing testimony, how necessary is clear, distinct utterance. How much is

lost in family worship when the one offering prayer bows the face down, and speaks in a low, feeble voice, as though just recovering from a long sickness. But as soon as family worship is over, those who could not speak loud enough to be heard in prayer, can speak in clear, distinct tones, and there is no difficulty in hearing what is said. Prayer that is thus uttered is appropriate for the closet, but not suitable for public worship; for unless those assembled with them can hear what is said, they cannot say Amen.

Nearly all persons can speak loud enough to be heard in ordinary conversation, and why should not the same voice and talent be used when they are called upon to bear testimony or offer prayer? When speaking of heavenly and divine things, why not speak in distinct tones, in a manner that will make it manifest that you know what you are talking about, and are not ashamed to show your colors? Why not pray as though you had a conscience void of offense, and could come to the throne of grace in humility and yet with holy boldness, lifting up holy hands without wrath and

doubting? Do not bow down and cover up your face as if there were something that you desired to conceal; but lift up your eyes toward the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ your Mediator stands before the Father to present your prayers as fragrant incense, mingled with his own merit and spotless righteousness. You are invited to come, to ask, to seek, to knock, and you are assured that you will not come in vain. Jesus says

“Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.” He illustrates the willingness of God to bless by presenting before us the willingness of a father to grant the request of his child. He asks, “If a son ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone, or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (Luke 11:9-

13)

We come unto God in the name of Jesus by special invitation, and he welcomes us to his audience chamber, and imparts to the humble and contrite heart that faith in Christ by which he is justified, and Jesus blots out as a thick cloud his transgressions by the bright sunshine of his love, and the comforted heart exclaims, “O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.” (Isaiah 12:1) He will understand in experience the words of Paul, “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:10) He then becomes a sanctified agent that God can employ to work out his noble purposes. He then represents Christ, holding forth to the world his mercy and love. He has a testimony that he is desirous that others should hear, and in the language of the psalmist, he says, “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all

thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercy.” (Psalm 103:1-4)

God has given us the gift of speech that we may recite to others the dealing of God with us, that his love and compassion may touch their hearts, and that praise may also arise from their souls to him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. The Lord has said, “Ye are my witnesses.” (Isaiah 43:10) But all who are called to be witnesses for Christ must learn of him, that they maybe efficient witnesses. As children of the heavenly King, you should educate yourselves to bear testimony in a clear, distinct voice, and in such a manner that no one may have the impression that you are reluctant to speak of the mercies of the Lord. In social meeting, prayer should be offered so that all may be edified, and those who take part in this exercise should follow the example given us in the Lord’s beautiful prayer for the world. The prayer of Jesus is simple, clear, comprehensive, and yet not long and spiritless as are the dry prayers that are often offered in public. These

spiritless prayers better not be uttered; for they fail to bless or edify, and are a mere form without vital power.

“And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church,” (1 Corinthians 14:7-12) “No man liveth unto himself.” In all our religious services we should seek to conduct ourselves in a way that we may edify others, working as much as lies in our power for the perfection of the church. “Wherefore

let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also. ...Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all; yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” (1 Corinthians 14:13-19)

The principle presented by Paul concerning the gift of tongues, is equally applicable to the use of the voice in prayer and social meeting. We would not have any one of you who is defective in this respect, cease from offering public prayer, or from bearing witness to the power and love of Christ. I do not write these words to silence you; for there has been already too much silence in our meetings;

but I write that you may consecrate your voice to Him who gave you this gift, and realize the necessity of cultivating it so that you may edify the church by what you say. If you have acquired the habit of speaking in a low, indistinct way, you should regard it as a defect, and put forth earnest effort to overcome, that you may honor God and edify his children.

“How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.” (1 Corinthians 14:26) In our devotional social meetings, our voices should express by prayer and praise our adoration of our heavenly Father, that all may know that we worship God in simplicity and truth, and in the beauty of holiness. Precious indeed in this world of sin and ignorance is the gift of speech, is the melody of the human voice, when devoted to the praises of Him who hath loved us, and hath given himself for us. The gift of speech has been greatly abused, and widely perverted from its intended purpose; but let those

who claim to be children of the heavenly King awaken to their responsibility, and make more of this precious talent than ever they have done before. Let no one say, “There is no use for me to try to pray, for others do not hear me.” Rather say, “I will make earnest efforts to overcome this God-dishonoring habit of speaking in a low, indistinct tone, and I will put myself under discipline until my voice shall be audible, even to those who are hard of hearing.” Will it not be worth disciplining yourself to be able to add interest to the service of God, and to edify the children of God? Let the voices of the followers of Christ be trained so that instead of crowding words together in a thick, indistinct way, their words will be clear, forcible, and edifying. Do not let the voice fall after each word, but keep it up so that every sentence will be full and complete. The voice of thanksgiving, praise, and rejoicing is heard in heaven. The voices of the children of God unite with the voices of the angels of heaven, as they ascribe honor and glory and praise unto God and to the Lamb for the great salvation he has provided.

Let every one seek to do his best. Let those who have enlisted under the banner of Prince Emmanuel grow daily in grace and efficiency. Let the teachers in our institutions endeavor to train the students in all lines of education, that they may come forth properly disciplined to bless mankind and glorify God. It is essential that they be educated to read in a clear, distinct tone. We have been pained as we have attended conference meetings, tract society meetings, and meetings of various kinds, where reports were read in an almost inaudible tone, or in a hesitating, muffled manner. One half the interest in a meeting is killed when the participants take their parts in this indifferent, spiritless fashion. They should train and discipline themselves in such a way that they may edify those who listen. Let every one connected with the missionary work qualify himself to speak in a clear, attractive way, enunciating his words in a perfect manner. The proper use of the vocal organs will bring benefit to the physical health, and increase your usefulness and influence. It is through falling into bad habits that persons become tedious readers and speakers; but those who are

looked upon as intelligent enough to become missionary workers, or to transact business, ought to have intelligence enough to reform in the manner of speaking. They can give attention to the cultivation of the voice, and by judicious exercise, may expand the chest, and strengthen the muscles. Let the abdominal muscles have full play. Do not bind the waist with bands and corsets, but taking in full breath, let the burden of your words come from this foundation, supported by abdominal breathing, and let the throat be the channel for the tone. By giving heed to proper instruction, by following health principles in regard to the expansion of the lungs and the culture of the voice, our young men and women may become speakers that can be heard, and the exercise necessary to this accomplishment will prolong life.

If you gain correct ideas on this subject, you will see the necessity of educating and training yourselves so that you may do justice to yourselves, may honor God, and bless others. Put yourselves under patient, efficient teachers, and learn to read in a way that will preserve the melody

of the voice. Having an eye single to the glory of God, make the most of the natural capabilities that God has given you, and your intellectual efficiency will increase, and commanding your own powers, you will not become embarrassed by your defects of speech, and your usefulness in the cause of God will be increased. There is need that among our ministers careful attention should be given to the culture of the voice, or many will lie down in untimely graves. The Lord is not glorified by the reflections that are cast upon him, when men attribute to him their sufferings; for the Lord has no pleasure in the suffering and death of his people. He would have them pursue a right course of action, carefully looking after their bodies that they may be in health, and know how to keep the habitation in order. If we neglect to heed the simple laws by which we may preserve health, and fail to cultivate right habits, the Lord will not work a miracle to heal our disorders, while we continue to transgress his laws. Men are sleeping in their graves that the Lord would have had live. They destroyed themselves through lack of knowledge. On many points they were instructed, and yet failed

to carry out the instruction given them; but let us become enlightened Christians, walking in the light, and overcoming every defect that we may reap reward in this life, and gain the life eternal hereafter.[1]

Note:

1. MS.

Chapter 17

Formality, Not Organization, An Evil

Evil does not result because of organization, but because of making organization everything, and vital godliness of little moment. When form and machinery take the pre-eminence, and a laborious task is made of carrying on the work that should be done with simplicity, evil will result, and little will be accomplished in proportion to the effort put forth. The object of organization is just the reverse of this; and should we disorganize, it would be like tearing down that which we have built up. Evil results have been seen, both in the Sabbath-school work and in the missionary society, because of making much of machinery while vital experience was lost sight of. In many of the imagined improvements that have been brought in, the mould of man has been placed upon the work. In the Sabbath-school, men and women have been accepted as officers and teachers, who have not

been spiritually minded, and had no live interest in the work committed to their care; but matters can be set in order only through the aid of the Holy Spirit. The same evil has existed for years as now exists in our churches. Formality, pride, and love of display have taken the place of true piety and humble godliness. We might see a different order of things should a number consecrate themselves wholly to God, and then devote their talents to the Sabbath-school work, ever advancing in knowledge, and educating themselves so that they would be able to instruct others as to the best methods to employ in the work; but it is not for the workers to seek for methods by which they can make a show, consuming time in theatrical performances and musical display, for this benefits no one. It does no good to train the children to make speeches for special occasions. They should be won to Christ, and instead of expending time, money, and effort to make a display, let the whole effort be made to gather sheaves for the harvest.

Many have seemed to think that all that was essential in Sabbath-school work was to organize

the school, and drill the scholars so that they would act in harmony with a set of ceremonies and forms; and that if persons could be secured as teachers, the Sabbath-school would run itself. Teachers are often secured who cannot lead souls to Christ because they know not what it is to find him precious to their own souls; but all those who do not value the soul so that they will work as Christ would have them, will scatter away from Christ. “He that (mark these words) gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.” (Matthew 12:30) If teachers have no burden to lead souls to Jesus, they will grow indifferent to the truth; they will become careless, and the atmosphere with which they surround their souls will work to scatter away from Christ. And with such elements in the Sabbath-school, there will be a perpetual conflict with difficulties; for when the teachers engage in the work and have no interest in it, the pupils will partake of the same spirit.

But although these difficulties exist, will it abolish them to put an end to organization? I am sure that the Lord has wrought in the organization

that has been perfected, and the fact that there are discouraging features in the work should not be thought a sufficient reason for disorganization. Much light was given to us in reference to the organization of churches, and yet we had a hard battle to fight in perfecting organization; but the victory was gained at last, and now shall the church be disorganized because of indifference, formality, and pride? Shall we go back to disorder because unconsecrated members of the church have placed upon the work the mould of man, and sought to fashion the church to meet a popular standard?

It is true that the simplicity of true godliness has to a large degree been lost from the church, and many of those who profess to be followers of Christ have become so blinded that they think that gain is godliness, and they devote their powers to the things of time. They do not realize that all their intellectual ability has been purchased by Christ, and that they should devote to him the best results of their thought, that his cause may be advanced. But instead of giving their sharp, clear ideas to advance the cause, to strengthen and bless the

church, they devote all their powers to the advancement of their own interests. They do not gather with Christ, but lead away from him by their words and acts. They surround their souls with an atmosphere that is deleterious to spirituality. They profess to be followers of Christ, but they do not know him by an experimental knowledge. They do not practice religion. They do not seek to be Christians in the same way in which they would learn a trade. They profess to believe advanced truth; but it is evident that they keep it in the outer court; for it has no sanctifying power on life and character. They do not realize how much is at stake; for the salvation of their own souls and that of others is imperiled. They do not realize that in order to be a savor of life into life they must be under spiritual discipline and training, learning in the school of Christ. Without this spiritual discipline, they become inefficient, ignorant, and undeveloped, and see no necessity for the spiritual training and knowledge which would qualify them to hold positions of influence and usefulness. If they do not consecrate themselves wholly to God, becoming learners in his school, they will do hap-

hazard work that will result in injury to the church.

But because of these unconsecrated influences, shall we take backward steps, and tear down those methods which it has cost us much to build, and declare that organization is all a mistake? We dare not do this. There are many things that need adjusting; for some things of little importance are made much of, while other things of vast importance are neglected, and looked upon as unessential. The minds of men need literary as well as spiritual training that they may be harmoniously developed; for without literary training, men cannot fill acceptably various positions of trust.

The great educating book is the Bible, and yet it is little read or practiced. O that every individual would seek to make of himself all that he could, improving his opportunities to the very best of his ability, purposing to use every power which God has given him, not simply to advance his temporal affairs, but to advance his spiritual interests. O that all might search diligently to know what is truth, to study earnestly that they might have correct

language and cultivated voices, that they might present the truth in all its elevated and ennobling beauty. Let no one imagine that he will drift into some position of usefulness. If men would be used to work for God, let them put to the stretch their powers, and concentrate their minds in earnest application. It is Satan that would keep men in ignorance and inefficiency, that they may be developed in a one-sided way which they may never be able to correct. He would have men exercise one set of faculties to the exclusion of the exercise of another set, so that the mind will lose its vigor, and when there is a real necessity, be unable to rise to the emergency. God wants men to do their best, and while Satan is pulling the mind in one direction, Jesus is drawing it in another.

When the truth is received into the heart, it begins the work of refining and sanctifying the receiver. He who cherishes the truth, will not feel that he has no more need of enlightenment, but will realize as he carries out the truth in his practical life, that he is in need of continual light that he may increase in knowledge. As he brings the truth into

his life, he will feel his real ignorance, and realize the necessity of having a more thorough education, that he may understand how to use his ability to the best account.

There is a dearth of educated ability among us, and we have not men who are sufficiently trained to do justice to the work of managing our Sabbath-schools and churches. Many who know the truth, still do not understand it in such a way that they could hold their own in its presentation. They are not prepared to present it in such a way that its sacred, majestic character will be clear to the people. Instead of less discipline, they need more thorough training. It is impossible for any one to foresee to what he may be called. He may be placed in situations where he will need quick discernment and well-balanced arguments, and therefore it is for the honor of Christ that well educated workers should be multiplied among us; they will be better able to communicate the truth in a clear, intelligent way, and the truth should be presented in a way that will be as free as possible from defects.

True education, when the mind is under the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit, is of great importance, and each individual should learn to rightly appreciate the capabilities that God has given; and by the practice of the knowledge he gains, he may, by the influence of his own character, impress upon others the value of obtaining a training for the service of Christ, and lead them to follow his example. There is much to be done in the world, and it is not profitable to set novices to work upon those matters that are of the highest importance. The apathy, the indolence, the inattention that has been manifested in regard to education is marvelous; but it is well pleasing to Satan. God would have us arouse from our indifference, and no longer allow the intellectual powers to run to waste, and degenerate into imbecility. Men are to appreciate the talents entrusted to them, and take advantage of the opportunities placed within their reach. Let the mental powers be girded for work, and by vigorous exertion let the mind be enlarged and developed.

There is more need now than ever before that our young men and women shall be intellectually qualified for the work. Our Sabbath-schools not only need intellectual, but spiritual workers, and the mind receives its tone and efficiency by thorough discipline. By superficial study, the mind gradually loses its tone, and degenerates into imbecility, and is not capable of any taxing effort. But education prepares men to know and to do the very line of work that must at this time be done. Thorough discipline, under a wise teacher, is of more value than the natural aptitude and endowment, where there is no discipline.

The Lord has made manifest his appreciation of man, in that he gave his only begotten Son to redeem him. Satan has also manifested his appreciation of well trained and sanctified ability, by the ingenious methods by which he seeks to divert the mind and heart of such an one from the service of God, that he may lead him to join in the ranks of apostasy. Like an angel of light, he comes with his insinuations to draw men into his service; for he knows that an educated man or woman,

when not under the control of the Spirit of God, can be of great advantage to him. He will pursue the student with specious temptations, seeking to induce him to take pride in his attainments, and to imagine that he is some great one, that he may trust in himself, and walk in the sparks of his own kindling. Thus he is led to separate his soul from God, the source of all light and knowledge, and, in order that he may exalt himself, unite with Satan, the originator of all sin.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom; and when God is not depended upon, the result of education is only to elevate ungodliness. The reason that the church is weak and inefficient is that there is a want of the grace of Christ among those who profess the truth for these last days. If the Lord has ever spoken by me, there is sin of almost every character cherished by many who claim to be children of God; and unless they separate themselves from Satan and cling to Jesus our righteousness, the woe of God will be upon those who have had great light, and yet have chosen to walk in darkness. “Then began he to

upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin; Woe unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.” (Matthew 11:20-25)

It is a fearful thing to have great light and blessing, to have many opportunities and privileges, and yet make no saving use of them. Those who do not make a saving use of their opportunities, will be condemned by the privileges God has granted to them; but those who walk in the light will have increased light. Those who have had the light of truth, and yet have failed to walk in the

light, are under the same sentence of condemnation as were Chorazin and Bethsaida. Shall not these warnings be heeded? Shall not these admonitions have weight with us? In the near future it will be seen just who have been walking humbly with God, and who have been obeying his orders. Those who have been walking in the sparks of their own kindling will lie down in sorrow. It will be seen that they have made a terrible mistake. O let us awake! light is now shining; let the windows of the mind and heart be open to welcome the heaven-sent rays. Shall Jesus say of those who profess to obey the truth, and yet who fail to walk in its light, “In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them”? (Matthew 13:14, 15)[1]

Note:

1. MS.

Chapter 18

The Education Most Essential For Gospel Workers

There are Christian workers who have not received a collegiate education because it was impossible for them to secure this advantage; but God has given evidence that he has chosen them. He has ordained them to go forth and labor in his vineyard. He has made them effectual co-workers with himself. They have a teachable spirit; they feel their dependence upon God, and the Holy Spirit is with them to help their infirmities. It will quicken and energize the mind, direct their thoughts, and aid in the presentation of truth. When the laborer stands before the people to hold forth the words of life, there is heard in his voice the echo of the voice of Christ.

It is evident that he walks with God; that he has been with Jesus and learned of him. He has brought the truth into the inner sanctuary of the soul; it is to

him a living reality, and he presents the truth in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The people hear the joyful sound. God speaks to their hearts through the man consecrated to his service. As the worker lifts up Jesus through the Spirit, he becomes really eloquent. He is earnest and sincere, and is beloved by those for whom he labors.

What a sin would rest upon any one who should listen to such a man merely to criticise, to notice bad grammar, or incorrect pronunciation, and hold these errors up to ridicule. The Pharisees scoffed at Christ; they criticized the simplicity of his language, which was so plain that the child, the aged, the common people heard him gladly, and were charmed by his words. The Sadducees also derided him because his discourses were so unlike anything delivered by their rulers and scribes. Those Jewish teachers spoke in monotonous tones, and the plainest and most precious scriptures were made uninteresting and unintelligible, buried under such a mass of tradition and learned lore that after the Rabbis had spoken, the people knew less of the meaning of the Scriptures than before they listened.

There were many souls starving for the Bread of Life, and Jesus fed them with pure, simple truth. In his teaching he drew illustrations from the things of nature and the common transactions of life, with which they were familiar. Thus the truth became to them a living reality; the scenes of nature and the affairs of daily life were ever repeating to them the Saviour's precious teachings. Christ's manner of teaching was just what he desires his servants to follow.

The speaker who has not a thorough education may sometimes fall into errors of grammar or pronunciation; he may not employ the most eloquent expressions or the most beautiful imagery, but if he has himself eaten of the Bread of Life; if he has drunk of the Fountain of Life, he can feed the hungry souls; he can give of the Water of Life to him that is athirst. His defects will be forgiven and forgotten. His hearers will not become weary or disgusted, but will thank God for the message of grace sent them through his servant.

If the worker has consecrated himself fully to

God and is diligent in prayer for strength and heavenly wisdom, the grace of Christ will be his teacher, and he will overcome great defects and become more and more intelligent in the things of God. But let none take license from this to be indolent, to squander time and opportunities, and neglect the training that is essential for him in order to become efficient. The Lord is in no wise pleased with those who have opportunities to obtain knowledge but who excuse themselves in neglecting to improve all the privileges he has placed within their reach that they may become intelligent, well qualified workers, of whom he will not be ashamed.

Above all other people upon the earth, the man whose mind is enlightened by the opening of the word of God to his understanding, will feel that he must give himself to greater diligence in the perusal of the word of God, and to a diligent study of the sciences, for his hope and calling are greater than any other. The more closely connected man is with the Source of all knowledge and wisdom the more he can be advantaged intellectually as well as

spiritually through his relation to God. The knowledge of God is the essential education, and this knowledge every true worker will make it his constant study to obtain.[1]

Note:

1. MS.

Chapter 19

To Teachers

Every one who has to do with educating the younger class of students, should consider that these children are affected by, and feel the impressions of, the atmosphere, whether it be pleasant or unpleasant.

If the teacher is connected with God, if he has Christ abiding in his heart, the spirit that is cherished by him is felt by the children. When a teacher manifests impatience or fretfulness toward a child, the fault may not be with the child one half as much as with the teacher. Teachers become tired with their work, then something the children say or do does not accord with their feelings, but will they let Satan's spirit enter into them, and lead them to create feelings in the children very unpleasant and disagreeable, through their own lack of tact and wisdom from God? There should not be a teacher employed, unless you have evidence by test and trial, that he loves, and fears to offend God. If

teachers are taught of God, if their lessons are daily learned in the school of Christ, they will work in Christ's lines. They will win and draw with Christ; for every child and youth is precious.

Every teacher needs Christ abiding in his heart by faith, and to possess a true, self-denying, self-sacrificing spirit for Christ's sake. One may have sufficient education and knowledge in science to instruct; but has it been ascertained that he has tact and wisdom to deal with human minds? If instructors have not the love of Christ abiding in the heart, they are not fit to be brought into connection with children, and to bear the grave responsibilities placed upon them, of educating these children and youth. They lack the higher education and training in themselves, and they know not how to deal with human minds. There is the spirit of their own insubordinate, natural hearts that is striving for the control, and to subject the plastic minds and characters of children to such a discipline, is to leave scars and bruises upon the mind that will never be effaced.

If a teacher cannot be made to feel the responsibility and the carefulness he should ever reveal in dealing with human minds, his education has in some cases been very defective. In the home life the training has been harmful to the character, and it is a sad thing to reproduce this defective character and management in the children brought under his control. We are standing before God on test and trial to see if we can individually be trusted to be of the number of the family who shall compose the redeemed in heaven. “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened; which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” (Revelation 20:12)

Here are represented the great white throne and He that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away. Let every teacher consider that he is doing his work in the sight of the universe of heaven. Every child with whom the teacher is brought in contact has been purchased by the blood

of God's only begotten Son, and he who has died for these children would have them treated as his property. Be sure that your contact, teachers, with every one of these children shall be of that character that will not make you ashamed when you meet them in that great day when every word and action is brought in review before God, and with its burden of results laid open before you individually. "Bought with a price,"--O what a price, eternity alone will reveal!

The Lord Jesus Christ has infinite tenderness for those whom he has purchased at the cost of his own sufferings in the flesh, that they should not perish with the devil and his angels, but that he may claim them as his chosen ones. They are the claim of his love, of his own property; and he looks upon them with unutterable affection, and the fragrance of his own righteousness he gives to his loved ones who believe in him. It requires tact and wisdom and human love, and sanctified affection for the precious lambs of the flock, to lead them to see and appreciate their privilege in yielding themselves up to the tender guidance of the faithful

shepherds. The children of God will exercise the gentleness of Jesus Christ.

Teachers, Jesus is in your school every day. His great heart of infinite love is drawn out, not only for the best-behaved children, who have the most favorable surroundings, but for children who have by inheritance objectionable traits of character. Even parents have not understood how much they are responsible for the traits of character developed in their children, and have not had the tenderness and wisdom to deal with these poor children, whom they have made what they are. They fail to trace back the cause of these discouraging developments which are a trial to them. But Jesus looks upon these children with pity and with love, for he sees, he understands from cause to effect.

The teacher may bind these children to his or her heart by the love of Christ abiding in the soul-temple as a sweet fragrance, a savor of life unto life. The teachers may, through the grace of Christ imparted to them, be the living human agency--be laborers together with God--to enlighten, lift up,

encourage, and help to purify the soul from its moral defilement; and the image of God shall be revealed in the soul of the child, and the character become transformed by the grace of Christ.

The gospel is the power and wisdom of God, if it is correctly represented by those who claim to be Christians. Christ crucified for our sins should humble every soul before God in his own estimation. Christ risen from the dead, ascended on high, our living Intercessor in the presence of God, is the science of salvation which we need to learn and teach to children and youth. Said Christ, "I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified," (John 17:19) This is the work that ever devolves upon every teacher. There must not be any haphazard work in this matter, for even the work of educating the children in the day schools requires very much of the grace of Christ and the subduing of self. Those who naturally are fretful, easily provoked, and have cherished the habit of criticism, of thinking evil, should find some other kind of work that will not reproduce any of their unlovely traits of character in the children and

youth, for they have cost too much. Heaven sees in the child, the undeveloped man or woman, with capabilities and powers that, if correctly guided and developed with heavenly wisdom, will become the human agencies through whom the divine influences can cooperate to be laborers together with God. Sharp words, and continual censure bewilder the child, but never reform him. Keep back that pettish word; keep your own spirit under discipline to Jesus Christ; then will you learn how to pity and sympathize with those brought under your influence. Do not exhibit impatience and harshness, for if these children did not need educating, they would not need the advantages of the school. They are to be patiently, kindly, and in love brought up the ladder of progress, climbing step by step in obtaining knowledge.

It is a daily working agency that is to be brought into exercise, a faith that works by love, and purifies the soul of the educator. Is the revealed will of God placed as your highest authority? If Christ is formed within, the hope of glory, then the truth of God will so act upon your

natural temperament, that its transforming agency will be revealed in a changed character, and you will not by your influence through the revealings of an unsanctified heart and temper, turn the truth of God into a lie before any of your pupils; nor in your presentation of a selfish, impatient un-Christlike temper in dealing with any human mind, reveal that the grace of Christ is not sufficient for you at all times and in all places. Thus you will show that the authority of God over you is not merely in name but in reality and truth. There must be a separation from all that is objectionable or un-Christlike, however difficult it may be to the true believer.

Inquire, teachers, you who are doing your work not only for time but eternity, Does the love of Christ constrain my heart and my soul, in dealing with the precious souls for whom Jesus has given his own life? Under his constraining discipline, do old traits of character, not in conformity to the will of God, pass away and the opposite take their place? “A new heart also will I give you.” (Ezekiel 36:26) Have all things become new through your

conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ? In words and by pains-taking effort are you sowing such seed in these young hearts that you can ask the Lord to water it, that it shall, with his imputed righteousness, ripen into a rich harvest? Ask yourselves, Am I by my own unsanctified words and impatience and want of that wisdom that is from above, confirming these youth in their own perverse spirit, because they see that their teacher has a spirit unlike Christ? If they should die in their sins, shall I not be accountable for their souls? The soul who loves Jesus, who appreciates the saving power of his grace, will feel such a drawing near to Christ that he will desire to work in his lines. He cannot, dare not, let Satan control his spirit and a poisonous miasma surround his soul. Everything will be placed one side that will corrupt his influence, because it opposes the will of God and endangers the souls of the precious sheep and lambs; and he is required to watch for souls as they must give an account. Wherever God has, in providence, placed us, he will keep us; as our day our strength shall be.

Whoever shall give way to his natural feelings and impulses makes himself weak and untrustworthy, for he is a channel through which Satan can communicate to taint and corrupt many souls, and these unholy fits that control the person unswerve him, and shame and confusion are the sure result. The spirit of Jesus Christ ever has a renewing, restoring power upon the soul that has felt its own weakness and fled to the unchanging One who can give grace and power to resist evil. Our Redeemer had a broad comprehensive humanity. His heart was ever touched with the known helplessness of the little child that is subject to rough usage; for he loved children. The feeblest cry of human suffering never reached his ear in vain. And every one who assumes the responsibility of instructing the youth will meet obdurate hearts, perverse dispositions, and his work is to cooperate with God in restoring the moral image of God in every child. Jesus, precious Jesus,--a whole fountain of love was in his soul. Those who instruct the children should be men and women of principle.

The religious life of a large number who profess to be Christians is such as to show that they are not Christians. They are constantly misrepresenting Christ, falsifying his character. They do not feel the importance of this transformation of character, and that they must be conformed to his divine likeness; and at times they will exhibit a false phase of Christianity to the world, which will work ruin to the souls of those who are brought into association with them, for the very reason that they are, while professing to be Christians, not under the control of Jesus Christ. Their own hereditary and cultivated traits of character are indulged as precious qualifications when they are death-leading in their influence over other minds. In plain, simple words, they walk in the sparks of their own kindling. They have a religion subject to, and controlled by, circumstances. If everything happens to move in a way that pleases them, and there are no irritating circumstances that call to the surface their unsubdued, un-Christlike natures, they are condescending and pleasant, and will be very attractive. When there are things that occur in the

family or in their association with others which ruffle their peace and provoke their tempers, if they lay every circumstance before God, and continue their request, supplicating his grace before they shall engage in their daily work as teachers, and know for themselves the power and grace and love of Christ abiding in their own hearts before entering upon their labors, angels of God are brought with them into the schoolroom. But if they go in a provoked, irritated spirit into the schoolroom, the moral atmosphere surrounding their souls is leaving its impression upon the children who are under their care, and in the place of being fitted to instruct the children, they need one to teach them the lessons of Jesus Christ.

Let every teacher who accepts the responsibility of educating the children and youth, examine himself, and study critically from cause to effect. Has the truth of God taken possession of my soul? Has the wisdom which cometh from Jesus Christ, which is first “pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partially and without hypocrisy”

been brought into my character? While I stand in the responsible position of an educator, do I cherish the principle that “the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace”? (James 3:17, 18) The truth is not to be kept to be practiced when we feel just like it, but at all times and in all places.

Well balanced minds and symmetrical characters are required as teachers in every line. Give not this work into the hands of young women and young men who know not how to deal with human minds. They know so little of the controlling power of grace upon their own hearts and characters that they have to unlearn, and learn entirely new lessons in Christian experience. They have never learned to keep their own soul and character under discipline to Jesus Christ, and bring even the thoughts into captivity to Jesus Christ. There are all kinds of characters to deal with in the children and youth. Their minds are impressible. Anything like a hasty, passionate exhibition on the part of the teacher may cut off her influence for good over the students whom she is

having the name of educating. And will this education be for the present and future eternal good of the children and youth? There is the correct influence to be exerted upon them for their spiritual good. Instruction is to be constantly given to encourage the children in the formation of correct habits in speech, in voice, in deportment.

Many of those children have not had proper training at home. They have been sadly neglected. Some have been left to do as they pleased; others have been found fault with and discouraged. But little pleasantness and cheerfulness have been shown toward them, and but few words of approval have been spoken to them. The defective characters of the parents have been inherited, and the discipline given by these defective characters has been objectionable in the formation of characters. Solid timbers have not been brought into the character building. There is no more important work that can be done than the educating and training of these youth and children. The teachers who work in this part of the Lord's vineyard need to learn first how to be self-possessed, keeping

their own temper and feelings under control, in subjection to the Holy Spirit of God. They should give evidence of having not a one-sided experience, but a well balanced mind, a symmetrical character so that they can be trusted because they are conscientious Christians, themselves under the chief Teacher, who has said, “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” (Matthew 11:29) Then learning in Christ’s school daily they can educate children and youth.

Self-cultured, self-controlled, under discipline in the school of Christ, having a living connection with the great Teacher, they will have an intelligent knowledge of practical religion; and keeping their own souls in the love of God, they will know how to exercise the grace of patience and Christlike forbearance. The patience, love, long-forbearance, and tender sympathies are called into activity. They will discern that they have a most important field in the Lord’s vineyard to cultivate. They must lift up their hearts unto God in sincere prayer, Be thou my pattern, and then by beholding Jesus they will do

the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do.” (John 5:19) So with the sons and daughters of God; they steadfastly and teachably look to Jesus, doing nothing in their own way and after their own will and pleasure; but that which they have, in the lessons of Christ, seen him, their pattern, do, they do also. Thus they represent to the students under their instruction at all times and upon all occasions the character of Jesus Christ. They catch the bright rays of the Sun of Righteousness and reflect these precious beams upon the children and youth whom they are educating. The formation of correct habits is to leave its impress upon the mind and characters of the children, that they may practice the right way. It means much to bring these children under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, training and disciplining them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The formation of correct habits, the exhibition of a right spirit, will call for earnest efforts in the name and strength of Jesus. The instructor must persevere, giving line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, in all long-suffering and patience, sympathy

and love, binding these children to his heart by the love of Christ revealed in himself.

This truth can in the highest sense be acted, and exemplified before the children. “Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof, he ought as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.” (Hebrews 5:2, 3)

Let teachers bear this in mind, and never lose sight of it when they are inclined to have their feelings stirred against the children and youth for any misbehavior; let them remember that the angels of God are looking upon them sorrowfully; for if the children do err and misbehave, then it is all the more essential that those who are placed over them as teachers should be able to teach them by precept and example. In no case are they to lose self-control, to manifest impatience and harshness, and want of sympathy and love; for these children are the property of Jesus Christ, and teachers must be very careful and God-fearing in regard to the

spirit they cherish and the words they utter, for the children will catch the spirit manifested, be it good or evil. It is a heavy and a sacred responsibility.

There need to be teachers who are thoughtful, considerate of their own weakness and infirmities and sins, and who will not be oppressive and discourage the children and youth. There needs to be much praying, much faith, much forbearance and courage, which the Lord is ready to bestow. For God sees every trial, and a wonderful influence can be exerted by teachers, if they will practice the lessons which Christ has given them. But will these teachers consider their own wayward course, that they make very feeble efforts to learn in the school of Christ and practice Christlike meekness and lowliness of heart? The teachers should be themselves in obedience to Jesus Christ, and ever practicing his words, that they may exemplify the character of Jesus Christ to the students. Let your light shine in good works, in faithful watching and caring for the lambs of the flock, with patience, with tenderness, and the love of Jesus Christ in your own hearts.

To place young men and young women in such a field, who have not developed a deep, earnest love for God and the souls for whom Christ has died, is making a mistake which will result in the loss of many precious souls. The teacher needs to be susceptible to the influences of the Spirit of God. Not one who will become impatient and irritated, should be an educator. Teachers must consider that they are dealing with children, not men and women. They are children who have everything to learn, and it is much more difficult for some to learn than others. The dull scholar needs much more encouragement than he receives. If teachers are placed over these varied minds, who naturally love to order and dictate and magnify themselves in their authority, who will deal with partiality, having favorites to whom they will show preferences, while others are treated with exactitude and severity, it will create a state of confusion and insubordination. Teachers who have not been blessed with a pleasant and well balanced experience may be placed to take charge of children and youth, but a great wrong is done to

those whom they instruct. Parents must come to view this matter in a different light. They must feel it their duty to co-operate with the teacher, to encourage wise discipline, and to pray much for the one who is teaching their children. You will not help the children by fretting, censuring, or discouraging them; neither will you act a good part to help them to rebel, and to be disobedient and unkind and unlovable, because of the spirit you develop. If you are Christians indeed, you will have an abiding Christ, and the spirit of him who gave his life for sinners; and the wisdom of God will teach you in every emergency the course to pursue.

Children are in need of having a steady, firm, living principle of righteousness exercised over them and practiced before them. Be sure you let the true light shine before your pupils. The light of heaven is wanted. Never let the world have the impression that your spirit and taste and longings are of no higher and purer order than that of worldlings. If you in your actions leave this impression upon them, you let a false, deceptive

light lead them to ruin. The trumpet must give a certain sound. There is a broad, clear, and deep line drawn by the eternal God between the righteous and unrighteous, the godly and the ungodly; between those who are obedient to God's commandments and those who are disobedient.

The ladder which Jacob saw in the night vision, the base of it resting upon the earth and the topmost round reaching unto the highest heavens; God himself above the ladder, and his glory shining upon every round; angels ascending and descending upon this ladder of shining brightness, is a symbol of constant communication kept up between this world and heavenly places. God accomplishes his will through the instrumentality of heavenly angels in continual intercourse with humanity. This ladder reveals a direct and important channel of communication with the inhabitants of this earth. The ladder represented to Jacob the world's Redeemer, who links earth and heaven together. Every one who has seen the evidence and light of truth and accepts the truth, professing his faith in Jesus Christ, is a missionary

in the highest sense of the word. He is the receiver of heavenly treasures, and it is his duty to impart them, to diffuse that which he has received.

Then to those who are accepted as teachers in our schools is opened a field for labor and cultivation, for the sowing of the seed and for the harvesting of the ripening grain. What can give greater satisfaction than to be laborers together with God in educating and training the children and youth to love God and keep his commandments? Lead the children whom you are instructing in the day school and the Sabbath-school to Jesus. What can give you greater joy than to see children and youth following Christ, the great Shepherd, who calls, and the sheep and lambs hear his voice and follow him? What can spread more sunshine through the soul of the interested, devoted worker than to know that his persevering, patient labor is not in vain in the Lord, and to see his pupils have the sunshine of joy in their souls because Christ has forgiven their sins? What can be more satisfying to the worker together with God, than to see children and youth receiving the impressions of the spirit of

God in true nobility of character and in the restoration of the moral image of God--the children seeking the peace coming from the Prince of Peace? The truth a bondage?--Yes, in one sense; it binds the willing souls in captivity to Jesus Christ, bowing their hearts to the gentleness of Jesus Christ. O it means so much more than finite minds can comprehend, to present in every missionary effort Jesus Christ and him crucified. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:21) This is to be the burden of our work. If any one thinks he is capable of teaching in the Sabbath-school or in the day school the science of education, he needs first to learn the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, that he may teach this the highest of all sciences.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom

thou hast sent.” (John 17:3) “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.” (John 17:8) Here is the work laid before us, to be representatives of Christ, as he in our world was the representative of the Father. We are to teach the words given us in the lessons of Christ. “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.” We have our work, and every instructor of the youth in any capacity is to receive in a good and honest heart what God has unfolded and recorded in his holy word in the lessons of Christ, meekly to accept the words of life. We are in the antitypical day of atonement, and not only are we to humble our hearts before God and confess our sins, but we are, by all our educating talent, to seek to instruct those with whom we are brought in contact, and to bring them by precept and example to know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

O, I so much wish that the Lord of heaven would open many eyes that are now blind, that they

might see themselves as God sees them, and give to them a sense of the work to be done in the fields of labor. But I have no hope that all the appeals I make will avail, unless the Lord speaks to the soul and writes his requirements upon the tablets of the heart. Cannot every living human agent have a high and elevated sense of what it means to have a large and important field of home missionary work appointed to him, without the necessity of going to far-off lands? And while some must proclaim the message of mercy to them that are afar off, there are many who have to proclaim the message to those who are nigh. Our schools are to be educating schools to qualify youth to become missionaries both by precept and example. Let the one who is acting in the capacity of teacher ever bear in mind that these children and youth are the purchase of the blood of the Son of God. They must be led to believe in Christ as their personal Saviour. The name of each separate believer is graven on the palms of his hands. The Chief Shepherd is looking down from the heavenly sanctuary upon the sheep of his pasture. "He calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them

out.” (John 10:3) “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” (1 John 2:1) O precious, blessed truth! He does not treat one case with indifference.

His impressive parable of the good shepherd represents the responsibility of every minister and of every Christian who has accepted a position as teacher of children and youth and a teacher of old and young, in opening to them the Scriptures. If one strays from the fold, he is not followed with harsh words and with a whip, but with winning invitations to return. The ninety and nine that had not strayed do not call for the sympathy and tender, pitying love of the shepherd. But the shepherd follows the sheep and lambs that have caused him the greatest anxiety and have engrossed his sympathies. The disinterested, faithful shepherd leaves all the rest of the sheep, and his whole heart and soul and energies are taxed to seek the one that is lost. And then the figure--praise God--the shepherd returns with the sheep, carrying him in his arms, rejoicing at every step; he says, “Rejoice with me for I have found my sheep which was

lost.” (Luke 15:6) I am so thankful we have in the parable, the sheep found. And this is the very lesson the shepherd is to learn,--success in bringing the sheep and lambs back.

There is no picture presented before our imagination of a sorrowful shepherd returning without the sheep. And the Lord Jesus declares the pleasure of the shepherd and his joy in finding the sheep causes pleasure and rejoicing in heaven among the angels. The wisdom of God, his power and his love, are without a parallel. It is the divine guarantee that not one, even, of the straying sheep and lambs is overlooked and not one left unsuccored. A golden chain--the mercy and compassion of divine power--is passed around every one of these imperiled souls. Then shall not the human agent co-operate with God? Shall he be sinful, failing, defective in character himself, regardless of the soul ready to perish? Christ has linked him to his eternal throne by offering his own life.

Zechariah’s description of Joshua, the high

priest, is a striking representation of the sinner for whom Christ is mediating that he may be brought to repentance. Satan is standing at the right hand of the Advocate, resisting the work of Christ, and pleading against him that man is his property since he has chosen him as his ruler. But the defender of man, the restorer, mightier than the mightiest, hears the demands and claims of Satan, and answers him: “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? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel. 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. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by.” (Zechariah 3:2-5)

Bear in mind, every teacher who takes the responsibility of dealing with human minds, that

every soul who is inclined to err and is easily tempted, is the special object for whom Christ is solicitor. They that are whole need not a physician, but those that are sick. The compassionate Intercessor is pleading, and will sinful, finite men and women repulse a single soul?

Shall any man or woman be indifferent to the very souls for whom Christ is pleading in the courts of heaven? Shall you in your course of action, imitate the Pharisees, who would be merciless, and Satan, who would accuse and destroy? O will you individually humble your own souls before God, and let that stern nerve and iron will be subdued and broken?

Step away from Satan's voice and from acting his will, and stand by the side of Jesus, possessing his attributes, the possessor of keen and tender sensibilities, who can make the cause of afflicted, suffering ones his own. The man who has had much forgiven will love much. Jesus is a compassionate intercessor, a merciful and faithful high priest. He, the Majesty of heaven--the King of

glory--can look upon finite man, subject to the temptations of Satan, knowing that he has felt the power of Satan's wiles. "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren (clothing his divinity with humanity), that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." (Hebrews 2:17, 18)

Then I call upon you, my brethren, to practice working in lines in which Christ worked. You must never put on the cloak of severity and condemn and denounce and drive away from the fold, poor, tempted mortals; but as laborers together with God, heal the spiritually diseased. This you will do if you have the mind of Christ. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15) "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?"

There is no searching of his understanding.” (Isaiah 40:28)[1]

Note:

1. M.S.

Chapter 20

Home Education

The work of the mother is an important one. Amid the homely cares and trying duties of everyday life, she should endeavor to exert an influence that will bless and elevate her household. In the children committed to her care, every mother has a sacred charge from the heavenly Father; and it is her privilege, through the grace of Christ, to mould their characters after the divine pattern, to shed an influence over their lives that will draw them toward God and heaven. If mothers had always realized their responsibility, and made it their first purpose, their most important mission, to fit their children for the duties of this life and for the honors of the future immortal life, we would not see the misery that now exists in so many homes in our land. The mother's work is such that it demands continual advancement in her own life, in order that she may lead her children to higher and still higher attainments. But Satan lays his plans to secure the souls of both parents and

children. Mothers are drawn away from the duties of home and the careful training of their little ones, to the service of self and the world. Vanity, fashion, and matters of minor importance are allowed to absorb the attention, and the physical and moral education of the precious children is neglected.

If she makes the customs and practices of the world her criterion, the mother will become unfitted for the responsible duties of her lot. If fashion holds her in bondage, it will weaken her powers of endurance, and make life a wearing burden instead of a blessing. Through physical weakness she may fail to appreciate the value of the opportunities that are hers, and her family may be left to grow up without the benefit of her thought, her prayers, and her diligent instruction. If mothers would only consider the wonderful privileges that God has given them, they would not be so easily turned aside from their sacred duties to the trivial affairs of the world.

The mother's work begins with the babe in her

arms. I have often seen the little one throw itself and scream, if its will was crossed in any way. This is the time to rebuke the evil spirit. The enemy will try to control the minds of our children, but shall we allow him to mould them according to his will? These little ones cannot discern what spirit is influencing them, and it is the duty of the parents to exercise judgment and discretion for them. Their habits must be carefully watched. Evil tendencies are to be restrained, and the mind stimulated in favor of the right. The child should be encouraged in every effort to govern itself.

Regularity should be the rule in all the habits of children. Mothers make a great mistake in permitting them to eat between meals. The stomach becomes deranged by this practice, and the foundation is laid for future suffering. Their fretfulness may have been caused by unwholesome food, still undigested; but the mother feels that she cannot spend time to reason upon the matter and correct her injurious management. Neither can she stop to soothe their impatient worrying. She gives the little sufferers a piece of cake or some other

dainty to quiet them, but this only increases the evil. Some mothers, in their anxiety to do a great amount of work, get wrought up into such nervous haste that they are more irritable than the children, and by scolding and even blows they try to terrify the little ones into quietude.

Mothers often complain of the delicate health of their children, and consult the physician, when, if they would but exercise a little common sense, they would see that the trouble is caused by errors in diet.

We are living in an age of gluttony, and the habits to which the young are educated, even by many Seventh-day Adventists, are in direct opposition to the laws of nature. I was seated once at the table with several children under twelve years of age. Meat was plentifully served, and then a delicate, nervous girl called for pickles. A bottle of chow-chow, fiery with mustard and pungent with spices, was handed her, from which she helped herself freely. The child was proverbial for her nervousness and irritability of temper, and

these fiery condiments were well calculated to produce such a condition. The oldest child thought he could not eat a meal without meat, and showed great dissatisfaction, and even disrespect, if it was not provided for him. The mother had indulged him in his likes and dislikes till she had become little better than a slave to his caprices. The lad had not been provided with work, and he spent the greater portion of his time in reading that which was useless or worse than useless. He complained almost constantly of headache, and had no relish for simple food.

Parents should provide employment for their children. Nothing will be a more sure source of evil than indolence. Physical labor that brings healthful weariness to the muscles, will give an appetite for simple, wholesome food, and the youth who is properly employed will not rise from the table grumbling because he does not see before him a platter of meat and various dainties to tempt his appetite.

Jesus, the Son of God, in laboring with his

hands at the carpenter's trade, gave an example to all youth. Let those who scorn to take up the common duties of life remember that Jesus was subject to his parents, and contributed his share toward the sustenance of the family. Few luxuries were seen on the table of Joseph and Mary, for they were among the poor and lowly.

Parents should be an example to their children in the expenditure of money. There are those who, as soon as they get money, spend it for dainties to eat, or for needless adornments of dress, and when the supply of money becomes reduced, they feel the need of that which they have wasted. If they have an abundant income, they use every dollar of it; if small, it is not sufficient for the habits of extravagance they have acquired, and they borrow to supply the demand. They gather from any source possible to meet their fancied necessities. They become dishonest and untruthful, and the record that stands against them in the books of heaven is such as they will not care to look upon in the day of Judgment. The desire of the eye must be gratified, the craving of the appetite indulged, and

they keep themselves poor by their improvident habits, when they might have learned to live within their means. Extravagance is one of the sins to which youth are prone. They despise economical habits, for fear they shall be thought niggardly and mean. What will Jesus, the Majesty of heaven, who has given them an example of patient industry and economy, say to such?

It is not necessary to specify here how economy may be practiced in every particular. Those whose hearts are fully surrendered to God, and who take his word as their guide, will know how to conduct themselves in all the duties of life. They will learn of Jesus, who is meek and lowly of heart; and in cultivating the meekness of Christ they will close the door against innumerable temptations.

They will not be studying how to gratify appetite and the passion for display, while so many cannot even keep hunger from the door. The amount daily spent in needless things, with the thought, "It is only a nickel," "It is only a dime,"

seems very little; but multiply these littles by the days of the year, and as the years go by, the array of figures will seem almost incredible.

The Lord has been pleased to present before me the evils which result from spendthrift habits, that I might admonish parents to teach their children strict economy. Teach them that money spent for that which they do not need, is perverted from its proper use. He that is unfaithful in that which is least, would be unfaithful in much. If men are unfaithful with earthly goods, they cannot be intrusted with the eternal riches. Set a guard over the appetite; teach your children by example as well as by precept to use a simple diet. Teach them to be industrious, not merely busy, but engaged in useful labor. Seek to arouse the moral sensibilities. Teach them that God has claims upon them, even from the early years of their childhood. Tell them that there are moral corruptions to be met on every hand, that they need to come to Jesus and give themselves to him, body and spirit, and that in him they will find strength to resist every temptation. Keep before their minds that they were not created

merely to please themselves, but to be the Lord's agents for noble purposes. Teach them, when temptations urge into paths of selfish indulgence, when Satan is seeking to shut out God from their sight, to look to Jesus, pleading, "Save, Lord, that I be not overcome." Angels will gather about them in answer to their prayers, and lead them into safe paths.

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

the life and example of the mother than by that of the father, because of this stronger and more tender bond of union. Yet the mother's responsibility is a heavy one, and should have the constant aid of the father.

Intemperance in eating and drinking, intemperance in labor, intemperance in almost everything, exists on every hand. Those who make great exertions to accomplish just so much work in a given time, and continue to labor when their judgment tells them they should rest, are never gainers. They are living on borrowed capital. They are expending the vital force which they will need at a future time. And when the energy they have so recklessly used is demanded, they fail for want of it. The physical strength is gone, the mental powers fail. They realize that they have met with a loss, but do not know what it is. Their time of need has come, but their physical resources are exhausted. Every one who violates the laws of health must some time be a sufferer to a greater or less degree. God has provided us with constitutional force, which will be needed at different periods of our

lives. If we recklessly exhaust this force by continual overtaxation, we shall sometime be losers. Our usefulness will be lessened, if not our life itself destroyed.

As a rule the labor of the day should not be prolonged into the evening. If all the hours of the day are well improved, the work extended into the evening is so much extra, and the overtaxed system will suffer from the burden imposed upon it. I have been shown that those who do this, often lose much more than they gain, for their energies are exhausted, and they labor on nervous excitement. They may not realize any immediate injury, but they are surely undermining their constitution.

Let parents devote the evenings to their families. Lay off care and perplexity with the labors of the day. The husband and father would gain much if he would make it a rule not to mar the happiness of his family by bringing his business troubles home to fret and worry over. He may need the counsel of his wife in difficult matters, and they may both obtain relief in their perplexities by

unitedly seeking wisdom of God; but to keep the mind constantly strained upon business affairs will injure the health of both mind and body.

Let the evenings be spent as happily as possible. Let home be a place where cheerfulness, courtesy, and love exist. This will make it attractive to the children. If the parents are continually borrowing trouble, are irritable and fault-finding, the children partake of the same spirit of dissatisfaction and contention, and home is the most miserable place in the world. The children find more pleasure among strangers, in reckless company, or in the street, than at home. All this might be avoided if temperance in all things were practiced, and patience cultivated. Self-control on the part of all the members of the family will make home almost a paradise. Make your rooms as cheerful as possible. Let the children find home the most attractive place on earth. Throw about them such influences that they will not seek for street companions, nor think of the haunts of vice except with horror. If the home life is what it should be, the habits formed there will be a strong defense

against the assaults of temptation when the young shall leave the shelter of home for the world.

Do we build our houses for the happiness of the family, or merely for display? Do we provide pleasant, sunny rooms for our children, or do we keep them darkened and closed, reserving them for strangers who are not dependent on us for happiness? There is no nobler work that we can do, no greater benefit that we can confer upon society, than to give to our children a proper education, impressing upon them, by precept and example, the important principle that purity of life and sincerity of purpose will best qualify them to act their part in the world.

Our artificial habits deprive us of many privileges and much enjoyment, and unfit us for usefulness. A fashionable life is a hard, thankless life. How often time, money, and health are sacrificed, the patience sorely tried, and self-control lost, merely for the sake of display. If parents would cling to simplicity, not indulging in expense for the gratification of vanity, and to

follow fashion; if they would maintain a noble independence in the right, unmoved by the influence of those who, while professing Christ, refuse to lift the cross of self-denial, they would by this example itself give their children an invaluable education. The children would become men and women of moral worth, and, in their turn, would have courage to stand bravely for the right, even against the current of fashion and popular opinion.

Every act of the parents tells on the future of the children. In devoting time and money to the outward adorning and the gratification of perverted appetite, they are cultivating vanity, selfishness, and lust in the children. Mothers complain of being so burdened with care and labor that they cannot take time patiently to instruct their little ones, and to sympathize with them in their disappointments and trials. Young hearts yearn for sympathy and tenderness, and if they do not obtain it from their parents, they will seek it from sources that may endanger both mind and morals. I have heard mothers refuse their children some innocent pleasure, for lack of time and thought, while their

busy fingers and weary eyes were diligently engaged on some useless piece of adorning, something which could only serve to encourage vanity and extravagance in the children. “As the twig is bent, the tree is inclined.” As the children approach manhood and womanhood, these lessons bear fruit in pride and moral worthlessness. The parents deplore the children’s faults, but are blind to the fact that they are but reaping the crop from seed of their own planting.

Christian parents, take up your life burden, and think candidly of the sacred obligations that rest upon you. Make the word of God your standard, instead of following the fashions and customs of the world, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. The future happiness of your families and the welfare of society depend largely upon the physical and moral education which your children receive in the first years of their life. If their tastes and habits are as simple in all things as they should be, if the dress is tidy, without extra adornment, mothers will find time to make their children happy, and teach them loving obedience.

Do not send your little ones away to school too early. The mother should be careful how she trusts the moulding of the infant mind to other hands. Parents ought to be the best teachers of their children until they have reached eight or ten years of age. Their schoolroom should be the open air, amid the flowers and birds, and their text-book the treasure of nature. As fast as their minds can comprehend it, the parents should open before them God's great book of nature. These lessons, given amid such surroundings, will not soon be forgotten. Great pains should be taken to prepare the souls of the heart for the Sower to scatter the good seed. If half the time and labor that is now worse than wasted in following the fashions of the world, were devoted to the cultivation of the minds of the children, to the formation of correct habits, a marked change would be apparent in families.

Not long since I heard a mother say that she liked to see a house fitly constructed, that defects in the arrangement and mismatched wood-work in the finishing annoyed her. I do not condemn nice

taste in this respect, but as I listened to her, I regretted that this nicety could not have been brought into her methods of managing her children. These were buildings for whose framing she was responsible; yet their rough, uncourteous ways, their passionate, selfish natures and uncontrolled wills, were painfully apparent to others. Ill-formed characters, mismatched pieces of humanity, indeed they were, yet the mother was blind to it all. The arrangement of her house was of more consequence to her than the symmetry of her children's character.

Cleanliness and order are Christian duties, yet even these may be carried too far, and made the one essential, while matters of greater importance are neglected. Those who neglect the interests of the children for these considerations, are tithing the mint and cummin, while they neglect the weightier matters of the law,--justice, mercy, and the love of God.

Those children who are the most indulged become willful, passionate, and unlovely. Would

that parents could realize that upon judicious, early training depends the happiness of both the parents and the children. Who are these little ones that are committed to our care? They are the younger members of the Lord's family. "Take this son, this daughter," he says, "nurse them for me, and fit them up 'that they may be polished after the similitude of a palace,' that they may shine in the courts of the Lord." Precious work! Important work! Yet we see mothers sighing for a wider field of labor, for some missionary work to do. If they could only go to Africa or India, they would feel that they were doing something. But to take up the little daily duties of life, and to carry them forward faithfully, perseveringly, seems to them an unimportant thing. Why is this? Is it not often because the mother's work is so rarely appreciated? She has a thousand cares and burdens of which the father seldom has any knowledge. Too often he returns home bringing with him his cares and business perplexities to overshadow the family, and if he does not find everything just to his mind at home, he gives expression to his feelings in impatience and fault-finding. He can boast of what

he has achieved through the day, but the mother's work, to his mind, amounts to little, or is at least undervalued. To him her cares appear trifling. She has only to cook the meals, look after the children, sometimes a large family of them, and keep the house in order. She has tried all day to keep the domestic machinery running smoothly. She has tried, though tired and perplexed, to speak kindly and cheerfully, and to instruct the children and keep them in the right path. All this has cost effort, and much patience on her part. She cannot, in her turn, boast of what she has done. It seems to her as though she has accomplished nothing. But it is not so. Though the results of her work are not apparent, angels of God are watching the careworn mother, noting the burdens she carries from day to day. Her name may never appear upon the records of history, or receive the honor and applause of the world, as may that of the husband and father; but it is immortalized in the book of God. She is doing what she can, and her position in God's sight is more exalted than that of a king upon his throne; for she is dealing with character, she is fashioning minds.

The mothers of the present day are making the society of the future. How important that their children be so brought up that they shall be able to resist the temptations they will meet on every side in later life!

Whatever may be his calling and its perplexities, let the father take into his home the same smiling countenance and pleasant tones with which he has all day greeted visitors and strangers. Let the wife feel that she can lean upon the large affections of her husband,--that his arms will strengthen and uphold her through all her toils and cares, that his influence will sustain hers, and her burden will lose half its weight. Are the children not his as well as hers?

Let the father seek to lighten the mother's task. In the time that he would devote to selfish enjoyment of leisure, let him seek to become acquainted with his children--associate with them in their sports, in their work. Let him point them to the beautiful flowers, the lofty trees, in whose very

leaves they can trace the work and love of God. He should teach them that the God who made all these things loves the beautiful and the good. Christ pointed his disciples to the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, showing how God cares for them, and presented this as an evidence that he will care for man, who is of higher consequence than birds and flowers. Tell the children that however much time may be wasted in attempts at display, our appearance can never compare, for grace and beauty, with that of the simplest flowers of the field. Thus their minds may be drawn from the artificial to the natural. They may learn that God has given them all these beautiful things to enjoy, and that he wants them to give him the heart's best and holiest affections.

Parents should seek to awaken in their children an interest in the study of physiology. Youth need to be instructed in regard to their own bodies. There are but few among the young who have any definite knowledge of the mysteries of life. The study of the wonderful human organism, the relation and dependence of all its complicated

parts, is one in which most mothers take little if any interest. They do not understand the influence of the body upon the mind, or of the mind upon the body. They occupy themselves with needless trifles, and then plead that they have no time to obtain the information which they need in order to care properly for the health of their children. It is less trouble to trust them to the doctors. Thousands of children die through ignorance of the laws of their being.

If parents themselves would obtain knowledge upon this subject, and feel the importance of putting it to a practical use, we should see a better condition of things. Teach your children to reason from cause to effect. Show them that if they violate the laws of their being, they must pay the penalty by suffering. If you cannot see as rapid improvement as you desire, do not be discouraged, but instruct them patiently, and press on until victory is gained. Continue to teach them in regard to their own bodies, and how to take care of them. Recklessness in regard to bodily health tends to recklessness in morals.

Do not neglect to teach your children how to prepare healthful food. In giving them these lessons in physiology and in good cooking, you are giving them the first steps in some of the most useful branches of education, and inculcating principles which are needful elements in a religious education.

All the lessons of which I have spoken in this article are needed. If properly heeded, they will be like a bulwark that will preserve our children from the evils which are flooding the world. We want temperance at our tables. We want houses where the God-given sunlight and the pure air of heaven are welcomed. We want a cheerful, happy influence in our homes. We must cultivate useful habits in our children, and must instruct them in the things of God. It costs something to do all this. It costs prayers and tears, and patient, oft-repeated instruction. We are sometimes put to our wit's end to know what to do; but we can take the children to God in our prayers, pleading that they may be kept from evil, praying, "Now, Lord, do thy work;

soften and subdue the hearts of our children,” and he will hear us. He hearkens to the prayers of the weeping, careworn mothers. When Christ was on earth, the burdened mothers brought their children to him; they thought that if he would lay his hands upon them, they would have better courage to bring them up as they ought to go. The Saviour knew why these mothers came to him with their little ones, and he rebuked the disciples, who would have kept them away, saying, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.” (Mark 10:14) Jesus loves the little ones, and he is watching to see how parents are doing their work.

Iniquity abounds on every hand, and if the children are saved, earnest, persevering effort must be put forth. Christ has said, “I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified.” (John 17:19) He wanted his disciples to be sanctified, and he made himself their example, that they might follow him. What if fathers and mothers should take this same position, saying, “I want my children to have steadfast principles, and I will give them an

example of this in my life”? Let the mother think no sacrifice too great, if made for the salvation of her household. Remember, Jesus gave his life for the purpose of rescuing you and yours from ruin. You will have his sympathy and help in this blessed work, and will be a laborer together with God.

In whatever else we may fail, let us be thorough in the work for our children. If they go forth from the home training, pure and virtuous, if they fill the least and lowest place in God’s great plan of good for the world, our life-work can never be called a failure.[1]

Note:

1. Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, 60-72.

Chapter 21

Parental Responsibility

God has permitted the light of health reform to shine upon us in these last days, that by walking in the light we may escape many of the dangers to which we shall be exposed. Satan is working with great power to lead men to indulge appetite, gratify inclination, and spend their days in heedless folly. He presents attractions in a life of selfish enjoyment and of sensual indulgence. Intemperance saps the energies of both mind and body. He who is thus overcome has placed himself upon Satan's ground, where he will be tempted and annoyed, and finally controlled at pleasure by the enemy of all righteousness. Parents need to be impressed with their obligation to give to the world children having well-developed characters,-- children who will have moral power to resist temptation, and whose life will be an honor to God and a blessing to their fellowmen. Those who enter upon active life with firm principles, will be prepared to stand unsullied amid the moral

pollutions of this corrupt age. Let mothers improve every opportunity to educate their children for usefulness.

The work of the mother is sacred and important. She should teach her children, from the cradle up, habits of self-denial and self-control. Her time, in a special sense, belongs to her children. But if it is mostly occupied with the follies of this degenerate age, if society, dress, and amusements absorb her attention, her children will fail to be suitably educated.

Many mothers who deplore the intemperance that exists everywhere, do not look deep enough to see the cause. Too often it may be traced to the home table. Many a mother, even among those who profess to be Christians, is daily setting before her household, rich and highly-seasoned food, which tempts the appetite and encourages overeating. In some families, flesh-meats constitute the principal article of diet, and in consequence, the blood is filled with cancerous and scrofulous humors. Then when suffering and disease follow,

Providence is charged with that which is the result of a wrong course. I repeat: Intemperance begins at the table, and, with the majority, appetite is indulged until indulgence becomes second nature.

Whoever eats too much, or of food which is not healthful, is weakening his power to resist the clamors of other appetites and passions. Many parents, to avoid the task of patiently educating their children to habits of self-denial, indulge them in eating and drinking whenever they please. The desire to satisfy the taste and to gratify inclination, does not lessen with the increase of years; and these indulged youth, as they grow up, are governed by impulse, slaves to appetite. When they take their places in society, and begin life for themselves, they are powerless to resist temptation. In the glutton, the tobacco devotee, the wine-bibber, and the inebriate, we see the evil results of erroneous education and of self-indulgence.

When we hear the sad lamentation of Christian men and women over the terrible evils of intemperance, the questions at once arise: Who

have educated the youth? who have fostered in them these unruly appetites? who have neglected the solemn responsibility of forming their characters for usefulness in this life, and for the society of heavenly angels in the next?

When parents and children meet at the final reckoning, what a scene will be presented! Thousands of children who have been slaves to appetite and debasing vice, whose lives are moral wrecks, will stand face to face with the parents who made them what they are. Who but the parents must bear this fearful responsibility? Did the Lord make these youth corrupt?--Oh, no! Who, then, has done this fearful work? Were not the sins of the parents transmitted to the children in perverted appetites and passions? and was not the work completed by those who neglected to train them according to the pattern which God has given? Just as surely as they exist, all these parents will pass in review before God.

Satan is ready to do his work: he will not neglect to present allurements which the children

have no will or moral power to resist. I saw that, through his temptations, he is instituting ever-changing fashions, and attractive parties and amusements, that mothers may be led to devote their time to frivolous matters, instead of to the education and training of their children. Our youth need mothers who will teach them from the cradle, to control passion, to deny appetite, and to overcome selfishness. They need line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.

The Hebrews were taught how to train their children so that they might avoid the idolatry and wickedness of the heathen nations: “Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” (Deuteronomy 11:18, 19)

Woman should fill the position which God

originally designed for her, as her husband's equal. The world needs mothers who are mothers not merely in name, but in every sense of the word. We may safely say that the distinctive duties of woman are more sacred, more holy, than those of man. Let woman realize the sacredness of her work, and in the strength and fear of God take up her life mission. Let her educate her children for usefulness in this world, and for a home in the better world.

The position of a woman in her family is more sacred than that of the king upon his throne. Her great work is to make her life an example such as she would wish her children to copy. And by precept as well as example, she is to store their minds with useful knowledge, and lead them to self-sacrificing labor for the good of others. The great stimulus to the toiling, burdened mother should be that every child who is trained aright, and who has the inward adorning, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, will shine in the courts of the Lord.

I intreat Christian mothers to realize their

responsibility, and to live, not to please themselves, but to glorify God. Christ pleased not himself, but took upon him the form of a servant. He left the royal courts, and clothed his divinity with humanity, that by his own example he might teach us how we may be exalted to the position of sons and daughters in the royal family, children of the heavenly King. But what are the conditions upon which we may obtain this great blessing?--“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.” (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18)

Christ humbled himself from the position of one equal with God to that of a servant. His home was in Nazareth, a place proverbial for its wickedness. His parents were among the lowly poor. His trade was that of a carpenter, and he labored with his hands to do his part in sustaining the family. For thirty years he was subject to his parents. The life of Christ points out our duty to be diligent in labor, and to provide for those intrusted

to our care.

In his lessons of instruction to his disciples, Jesus taught them that his Kingdom is not a worldly kingdom, where all are striving for the highest position; but he gave them lessons in humility and self-sacrifice for the good of others. His humility did not consist in a low estimate of his own character and qualifications, but in adapting himself to fallen humanity, in order to raise them up with him to a higher life. Yet how few see anything attractive in the humility of Christ! Worldlings are constantly striving to exalt themselves one above another; but Jesus, the Son of God, humbled himself in order to uplift man. The true disciple of Christ will follow his example. Would that the mothers of this generation might feel the sacredness of their mission, not trying to vie with their wealthy neighbors in appearance, but seeking to honor God by the faithful performance of duty. If right principles in regard to temperance were implanted in the youth who are to form and mould society, there would be little necessity for temperance crusades. Firmness of character, moral

control, would prevail, and in the strength of Jesus the temptations of these last days would be resisted.

It is a most difficult matter to unlearn the habits which have been indulged through life. The demon of intemperance is of giant strength, and is not easily conquered. But if parents begin the crusade against it at their own firesides, in their own families, in the principles they teach their children from very infancy, then they may hope for success. It will pay you, mothers, to use the precious hours which are given you by God in forming the characters of your children, and in teaching them to adhere strictly to the principles of temperance in eating and drinking.

A sacred trust is committed to parents, to guard the physical and moral constitutions of their children, so that the nervous system may be well balanced, and the soul not endangered. Fathers and mothers should understand the laws of life, that they may not, through ignorance, allow wrong tendencies to develop in their children. The diet

affects both physical and moral health. How carefully, then, should mothers study to supply the table with the most simple, healthful food, in order that the digestive organs may not be weakened, the nerves unbalanced, or the instruction which they give their children counteracted.

Satan sees that he cannot have so great power over minds when the appetite is kept under control as when it is indulged, and he is constantly working to lead men to indulgence. Under the influence of unhealthful food, the conscience becomes stupefied, the mind is darkened, and its susceptibility to impressions is impaired. But the guilt of the transgressor is not lessened because the conscience has been violated till it has become insensible.

Since a healthy state of mind depends upon the normal condition of the vital forces, what care should be exercised that neither stimulants nor narcotics be used! Yet we see that a large number of those who profess to be Christians are using tobacco. They deplore the evils of intemperance;

yet while speaking against the use of liquors, these very men will eject the juice of tobacco. There must be a change of sentiment with reference to tobacco-using before the root of the evil will be reached. We press the subject still closer. Tea and coffee are fostering the appetite for stronger stimulants. And then we come still closer home, to the preparation of food, and ask, Is temperance practiced in all things? are the reforms which are essential to health and happiness carried out here?

Every true Christian will have control of his appetites and passions. Unless he is free from the bondage of appetite, he cannot be a true, obedient servant of Christ. The indulgence of appetite and passion blunts the effect of truth upon the heart. It is impossible for the spirit and power of the truth to sanctify a man, soul, body, and spirit, when he is controlled by sensual desires.[1]

Note:

1. Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, 75-80.

Chapter 22

Education And Health

For generations the prevailing system of education has been destructive to health, and even to life itself. Many parents and teachers fail to understand that in the child's early years the greatest attention needs to be given to the physical constitution, that a healthy condition of body and brain may be secured. It has been the custom to encourage sending children to school when they were mere babies, needing a mother's care. In many instances the little ones are crowded into ill-ventilated schoolrooms, where they sit in improper positions, upon poorly constructed benches, and as the result, the young and tender frames often become deformed. Little children, whose limbs and muscles are not strong, and whose brains are undeveloped, are kept confined, to their injury. Many have but a slight hold on life to begin with, and confinement in school from day to day makes them nervous, and they become diseased. Their bodies are dwarfed in consequence of the

exhausted condition of the nervous system. Yet when the lamp of life goes out, parents and teachers do not realize that they were in any way responsible for quenching the vital spark. Standing by the grave of their child, the afflicted parents look upon their bereavement as a special dispensation of Providence, when it was their own inexcusable, ignorant course that destroyed the young life. Under such circumstances, to charge the death to Providence, savors of blasphemy. God wants the little ones to live, and receive a right education, that they may develop a beautiful character, glorify him in this world, and praise him in the better world.

Parents and teachers take the responsibility of training these children, yet how few of them realize their duty before God to become acquainted with the physical organism, that they may know how to preserve the life and health of those who are placed in their charge. Thousands of children die because of the ignorance of those who care for them.

Many children have been ruined for life, and

some have died, as the result of the injudicious course of parents and teachers, in forcing the young intellect while neglecting the physical nature. The children were too young to be in a schoolroom. Their minds were taxed with lessons when they should have been left untasked until the physical strength was sufficient to support mental efforts. Small children should be as free as lambs to run out-of-doors. They should be allowed the most favorable opportunity to lay the foundation for a sound constitution.

Youth who are kept in school, and confined to close study, cannot have sound health. Mental effort without corresponding physical exercise, calls an undue proportion of blood to the brain, and thus the circulation is unbalanced. The brain has too much blood, while the extremities have too little. The hours of study and recreation should be carefully regulated, and a portion of the time should be spent in physical labor. When the habits of students in eating and drinking, dressing and sleeping are in accordance with physical law, they can obtain an education without sacrificing health.

The lesson must be often repeated, and pressed home to the conscience, that education will be of little value if there is no physical strength to use it after it is gained.

Students should not be permitted to take so many studies that they will have no time for physical training. The health cannot be preserved unless some portion of each day is given to muscular exertion in the open air. Stated hours should be devoted to manual labor of some kind, anything which will call into action all parts of the body. Equalize the taxation of the mental and physical powers, and the mind of the student will be refreshed. If he is diseased, physical exercise will often help the system to recover its normal condition. When students leave college, they should have better health and a better understanding of the laws of life than when they entered it. The health should be as sacredly guarded as the character.

Many students are deplorably ignorant of the fact that diet exerts a powerful influence upon the

health. Some have never made a determined effort to control the appetite, or to observe proper rules in regard to diet. They eat too much, even at their meals, and some eat between meals whenever the temptation is presented. If those who profess to be Christians desire to solve the questions so perplexing to them, why their minds are so dull, why their religious aspirations are so feeble, they need not, in many instances, go farther than the table; here is cause enough, if there were no other.

Many separate themselves from God by their indulgence of appetite. He who notices the fall of a sparrow, who numbers the very hairs of the head, marks the sin of those who indulge perverted appetite at the expense of weakening the physical powers, benumbing the intellect, and deadening the moral perceptions.

The teachers themselves should give proper attention to the laws of health, that they may preserve their own powers in the best possible condition, and by example as well as by precept, may exert a right influence upon their pupils. The

teacher whose physical powers are already enfeebled by disease or overwork, should pay especial attention to the laws of life. He should take time for recreation. He should not take upon himself responsibility outside of his school work, which will so tax him, physically or mentally, that his nervous system will be unbalanced; for in this case he will be unfitted to deal with minds, and cannot do justice to himself or to his pupils.

Our institutions of learning should be provided with every facility for instruction regarding the mechanism of the human system. Students should be taught how to breathe, how to read and speak so that the strain will not come on the throat and lungs, but on the abdominal muscles. Teachers need to educate themselves in this direction. Our students should have a thorough training, that they may enter upon active life with an intelligent knowledge of the habitation which God has given them. Teach them that they must be learners as long as they live. And while you are teaching them, remember that they will teach others. Your lesson will be repeated for the benefit of many more than

sit before you day by day.[1]

Note:

1. Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, 81-84.

Chapter 23

Mental Inebriates

What shall our children read? is a serious question, and demands a serious answer. I am troubled to see, in Christian families, periodicals and newspapers containing continued stories that leave no impress of good upon the mind. I have watched those whose taste for fiction has been thus cultivated. They have had the privilege of listening to the truths of God's word, of becoming acquainted with the reasons of our faith; but they have grown to mature years destitute of true piety. These dear youth need so much to put into their character building the very best material,--the love and fear of God and a knowledge of Christ. But many have not an intelligent understanding of the truth as it is in Jesus. The mind is feasted upon sensational stories. They live in an unreal world, and are unfitted for the practical duties of life. I have observed children allowed to come up in this way. Whether at home or abroad, they are either restless or dreamy, and are unable to converse,

save upon the most commonplace subjects. The nobler faculties, those adapted to higher pursuits, have been degraded to the contemplation of trivial, or worse than trivial subjects, until their possessor has become satisfied with such topics, and scarcely has power to reach anything higher. Religious thought and conversation has become distasteful. The mental food for which he has acquired a relish, is contaminating in its effects, and leads to impure and sensual thoughts. I have felt sincere pity for these souls as I have considered how much they are losing by neglecting opportunities to gain a knowledge of Christ, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. How much precious time is wasted, in which they might be studying the Pattern of true goodness.

I am personally acquainted with some who have lost the healthy tone of the mind through wrong habits of reading. They go through life with a diseased imagination, magnifying every little grievance. Things which a sound, sensible mind would not notice, become to them unendurable trials, insurmountable obstacles. To them, life is in

constant shadow.

Those who have indulged the habit of racing through exciting stories, are crippling, their mental strength, and disqualifying themselves for vigorous thought and research. There are men and women now in the decline of life who have never recovered from the effects of intemperate reading. The habit, formed in early years, has grown with their growth and strengthened with their strength; and their efforts to overcome it, though determined, have been only partially successful. Many have never recovered their original vigor of mind. All attempts to become practical Christians end with the desire. They cannot be truly Christlike, and continue to feed the mind upon this class of literature. Nor is the physical effect less disastrous. The nervous system is unnecessarily taxed by this passion for reading. In some cases, youth, and even those of mature age, have been afflicted with paralysis from no other cause than excess in reading. The mind was kept under constant excitement, until the delicate machinery of the brain became so weakened that it could not act, and

paralysis was the result.

When an appetite for exciting, sensational stories is cultivated, the moral taste becomes perverted, and the mind is unsatisfied unless constantly fed upon this trashy, unwholesome food. I have seen young ladies, professed followers of Christ, who were really unhappy unless they had on hand some new novel or story paper. The mind craved stimulation as the drunkard craves intoxicating drink. These youth manifested no spirit of devotion; no heavenly light was shed upon their associates, to lead them to the Fount of knowledge. They had no deep, religious experience. If this class of reading had not been constantly before them, there might have been some hope of their reforming; but they craved it, and would have it.

I am pained to see young men and women thus ruining their usefulness in this life, and failing to obtain an experience that will prepare them for an eternal life in heavenly society. We can find no more fit name for them than “mental inebriates.”

Intemperate habits of reading exert a pernicious influence upon the brain as surely as does intemperance in eating and drinking.

The best way to prevent the growth of evil is to preoccupy the soil. The greatest care and watchfulness is needed in cultivating the mind and sowing therein the precious seeds of Bible truth. The Lord, in his great mercy, has revealed to us in the Scriptures the rules of holy living. He tells us the sins to shun; he explains to us the plan of salvation, and points out the way to heaven. He has inspired holy men to record, for our benefit, instruction concerning the dangers that beset the path, and how to escape them. Those who obey his injunction to search the Scriptures will not be ignorant of these things. Amid the perils of the last days, every member of the church should understand the reasons of his hope and faith,--reasons which are not difficult of comprehension. There is enough to occupy the mind, if we would grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are finite, but we are to have a sense of the infinite. The mind must be brought into exercise in contemplating God, and his wonderful plan for our salvation. The soul will thus be lifted above the mere earthly and common-place, and fixed upon that which is ennobling and eternal. The thought that we are in God's world, in the presence of the great Creator of the universe, who made man after his own likeness, will lead the mind into broad, exalted fields for meditation. The thought that God's eye is watching over us, that he loves us, and cared so much for us as to give his dearly beloved Son to redeem us, that we might not miserably perish, is a great one; and he who opens his heart to the acceptance and contemplation of themes like these, will never be satisfied with trivial, sensational subjects.

If the Bible were studied as it should be, men would become strong in intellect. The subjects treated upon in the word of God, the dignified simplicity of its utterance, the noble themes which it presents to the mind, develop faculties in man

which cannot otherwise be developed. In the Bible, a boundless field is opened for the imagination. The student will come from a contemplation of its grand themes, from association with its lofty imagery, more pure and elevated in thought and feeling than if he had spent the time in reading any work of mere human origin, to say nothing of those of a trifling character. Youthful minds fail to reach their noblest development when they neglect the highest source of wisdom,--the word of God. The reason why we have so few men of good mind, of stability and solid worth, is that God is not feared, God is not loved, the principles of religion are not carried out in the life as they should be.

God would have us avail ourselves of every means of cultivating and strengthening our intellectual powers. We were created for a higher, nobler existence than the life that now is. This time is one of preparation for the future, immortal life. Where can be found grander themes for contemplation, a more interesting subject for thought, than the sublime truths unfolded in the Bible? These truths will do a mighty work for man,

if he will but follow what they teach. But how little the Bible is studied! Every unimportant thing is dwelt upon in preference to its themes. If the Bible were read more, if its truths were better understood, we should be a far more enlightened and intelligent people. Angels from the world of light stand by the side of the earnest seeker after truth, to impress and illuminate his mind. He who is dark of understanding may find light through an acquaintance with the Scriptures.[1]

Note:

1. Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, 123-126.

Chapter 24

The Literal Week

Like the Sabbath, the week originated at creation, and it has been preserved and brought down to us through Bible history. God himself measured off the first week as a sample for successive weeks to the close of time. Like every other, it consisted of seven literal days. Six days were employed in the work of creation; upon the seventh, God rested, and he then blessed this day, and set it apart as a day of rest for man.

In the law given from Sinai, God recognized the week, and the facts upon which it is based. After giving the command, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” and specifying what shall be done on the six days, and what shall not be done on the seventh, he states the reason for thus observing the week, by pointing back to his own example: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the

Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (Exodus 20:8-11)
This reason appears beautiful and forcible when we understand the days of creation to be literal. The first six days of each week are given to man for labor, because God employed the same period of the first week in the work of creation. On the seventh day man is to refrain from labor, in commemoration of the Creator’s rest.

But the assumption that the events of the first week required thousands upon thousands of years, strikes directly at the foundation of the fourth commandment. It represents the Creator as commanding men to observe the week of literal days in commemoration of vast, indefinite periods. This is unlike his method of dealing with his creatures. It makes indefinite and obscure that which he has made very plain. It is infidelity in its most insidious and hence most dangerous form; its real character is so disguised that it is held and taught by many who profess to believe the Bible.

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his

mouth.” “For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” (Psalm 33:6, 9) The Bible recognizes no long ages in which the earth was evolved from chaos. Of each successive day of creation, the sacred record declares that it consisted of the evening and the morning, like all other days that have followed. At the close of each day is given the result of the Creator’s work. The statement is made at the close of the first week’s record, “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created.” (Genesis 2:4) But this does not convey the idea that the days of creation were other than literal days. Each day was called a generation, because that in it God generated, or produced, some new portion of his work.

Geologists claim to find evidence from the earth itself that it is very much older than the Mosaic record teaches. Bones of men and animals, as well as instruments of warfare, petrified trees, etc., much larger than any that now exist, or that have existed for thousands of years, have been discovered, and from this it is inferred that the

earth was populated long before the time brought to view in the record of creation, and by a race of beings vastly superior in size to any men now living. Such reasoning has led many professed Bible believers to adopt the position that the days of creation were vast, indefinite periods.

But apart from Bible history, geology can prove nothing. Those who reason so confidently upon its discoveries, have no adequate conception of the size of men, animals, and trees before the flood, or of the great changes which then took place. Relics found in the earth do give evidence of conditions differing in many respects from the present; but the time when these conditions existed can be learned only from the Inspired Record. In the history of the flood, inspiration has explained that which geology alone could never fathom. In the days of Noah, men, animals, and trees, many times larger than now exist, were buried, and thus preserved as an evidence to later generations that the antediluvians perished by a flood. God designed that the discovery of these things should establish faith in inspired history; but men, with

their vain reasoning, fall into the same error as did the people before the flood,--the things which God gave them as a benefit, they turn into a curse by making a wrong use of them.

It is one of Satan's devices to lead the people to accept the fables of infidelity; for he can thus obscure the law of God, in itself very plain, and embolden men to rebel against the divine government. His efforts are especially directed against the fourth commandment, because it so clearly points to the living God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth.

There is a constant effort made to explain the work of creation as the result of natural causes; and human reasoning is accepted even by professed Christians, in opposition to plain Scripture facts. There are many who oppose the investigation of the prophecies, especially those of Daniel and the Revelation, declaring them to be so obscure that we cannot understand them; yet these very persons eagerly receive the suppositions of geologists, in contradiction of the Mosaic record. But if that

which God has revealed is so difficult to understand, how inconsistent it is to accept mere suppositions in regard to that which he has not revealed!

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever.” (Deuteronomy 29:29) Just how God accomplished the work of creation, he has never revealed to men; human science cannot search out the secrets of the Most High. His creative power is as incomprehensible as his existence.

God has permitted a flood of light to be poured upon the world, in both science and art; but when professedly scientific men treat upon these subjects from a merely human point of view, they will assuredly come to wrong conclusions. It may be innocent to speculate beyond what God’s word has revealed, if our theories do not contradict facts found in the Scriptures; but those who leave the word of God, and seek to account for his created works upon scientific principles, are drifting,

without chart or compass, upon an unknown ocean. The greatest minds, if not guided by the word of God in their research, become bewildered in their attempts to trace the relations of science and revelation. Because the Creator and his works are so far beyond their comprehension that they are unable to explain them by natural laws, they regard Bible history as unreliable. Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments, will be led to go a step farther, and doubt the existence of God; and then, having lost their anchor, they are left to beat about upon the rocks of infidelity.

These persons have lost the simplicity of faith. There should be a settled belief in the divine authority of God's holy word. The Bible is not to be tested by men's ideas of science. Human knowledge is an unreliable guide. Skeptics who read the Bible for the sake of caviling, may, through an imperfect comprehension of either science or revelation, claim to find contradictions between them; but rightly understood, they are in perfect harmony. Moses wrote under the guidance

of the Spirit of God; and a correct theory of geology will never claim discoveries that cannot be reconciled with his statements. All truth, whether in nature or in revelation, is consistent with itself in all its manifestations.

In the word of God many queries are raised that the most profound scholars can never answer. Attention is called to these subjects to show us how much there is, even among the common things of every-day life, that finite minds, with all their boasted wisdom, can never fully understand.

Yet men of science think that they can comprehend the wisdom of God, that which he has done or can do. The idea largely prevails that he is restricted by his own laws. Men either deny or ignore his existence, or think to explain everything, even the operation of his Spirit upon the human heart; and they no longer reverence his name, or fear his power. They do not believe in the supernatural, not understanding God's laws, or his infinite power to work his will through them. As commonly used, the term "laws of nature"

comprises what men have been able to discover with regard to the laws that govern the physical world; but how limited is their knowledge, and how vast the field in which the Creator can work in harmony with his own laws, and yet wholly beyond the comprehension of finite beings!

Many teach that matter possesses vital power,-- that certain properties are imparted to matter, and it is then left to act through its own inherent energy; and that the operations of nature are conducted in harmony with fixed laws, with which God himself cannot interfere. This is false science, and is not sustained by the word of God. Nature is the servant of her Creator. God does not annul his laws, or work contrary to them; but he is continually using them as his instruments. Nature testifies of an intelligence, a presence, an active energy, that works in and through her laws. There is in nature the continual working of the Father and the Son. Christ says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John 5:17)

The Levites, in their hymn recorded by

Nehemiah, sung, “Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things therein, ... and thou preservest them all.” (Nehemiah 9:6) As regards this world, God’s work of creation is completed. For “the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” (Hebrews 4:3) But his energy is still exerted in upholding the objects of his creation. It is not because the mechanism that has once been set in motion continues to act by its own inherent energy, that the pulse beats, and breath follows breath; but every breath, every pulsation of the heart is an evidence of the all-pervading care of Him in whom “we live, and move, and have our being.” (Acts 17:28) It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth produces her bounties, and continues her motion around the sun. The hand of God guides the planets, and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens. He “bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.” (Isaiah 40:26) It is through his power that vegetation flourishes, that the leaves

appear, and the flowers bloom. He “maketh grass to grow upon the mountains,” and by him the valleys are made fruitful. All the beasts of the field seek their meat from God, (Psalm 147:8; 104:20, 21) and every living creature, from the smallest insect up to man, is daily dependent upon his providential care. In the beautiful words of the psalmist, “These wait all upon thee. ... That thou givest them they gather; thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.” (Psalm 104:27, 28) His word controls the elements, he covers the heavens with clouds, and prepares rain for the earth. “He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.” “When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.” (Psalm 147:16; Jeremiah 10:13)

God is the foundation of everything. All true science is in harmony with his works; all true education leads to obedience to his government. Science opens new wonders to our view; she soars

high, and explores new depths; but she brings nothing from her research that conflicts with divine revelation. Ignorance may seek to support false views of God by appeals to science; but the book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other. We are thus led to adore the Creator, and to have an intelligent trust in his word.

No finite mind can fully comprehend the existence, the power, the wisdom, or the works of the Infinite One. Says the sacred writer: “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” (Job 11:7-9) The mightiest intellects of earth cannot comprehend God. Men may be ever searching, ever learning, and still there is an infinity beyond.

Yet the works of creation testify of God’s power and greatness. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.” (Psalm 19:1) Those who take the

written word as their counselor, will find in science an aid to understand God.

“The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.” (Romans 1:20)[1]

Note:

1. Patriarchs and Prophets, 111-116.

Chapter 25

Fragments

Christ as a Teacher

When Jesus spoke, it was not with hesitating uncertainty; his words came with an earnestness and assurance appropriate to their importance and the momentous consequences involved in their reception or rejection. When his doctrines were opposed, he defended them with so great zeal and certainty as to impress his hearers that he would die, if need be, to sustain the authority of his teachings.[1]

The Relation of Education to the Work of God

With the great work before us of enlightening the world, we who believe the truth should feel the necessity of thorough education in the practical branches of knowledge, and especially our need of an education in the truths of the Scriptures. Error of every character is now exalted as truth, and it is our

duty earnestly to search the sacred word, that we may know what is truth, and be able intelligently to present it to others. We shall be called upon to make known the reasons of our faith. We shall have to stand before magistrates to answer for our allegiance to the law of God. The Lord has called us out from the world that we may be witnesses for his truth; and all through our ranks, young men and women should be trained for positions of usefulness and influence. They are privileged to become missionaries for God; but they cannot be mere novices in education and in their knowledge of the word of God, and do justice to the sacred work to which they are appointed. In every land the want of education among our workers is painfully apparent. We realize that education is not only necessary to the proper fulfillment of the duties of domestic life, but necessary for success in all branches of usefulness Whatever business parents might think suitable for their children, whether they desire them to become manufacturers, agriculturists, mechanics, or to follow some professional calling, they would reap great advantages from the discipline of an education. ...

They need to be thoroughly furnished with the reasons of our faith, to understand the Scriptures for themselves. Through understanding the truths of the Bible, they will be better fitted to fill positions of trust. They will be fortified against the temptations that will beset them on the right hand and on the left. But if they are thoroughly instructed and consecrated, they may be called, as was Daniel, to fill important responsibilities. Daniel was a faithful statesman in the courts of Babylon; for he feared, loved, and trusted God; and in time of temptation and peril he was preserved by the power of God. We read that God gave Daniel wisdom, and endowed him with understanding.

Those who obtain a knowledge of God's will, and practice the teaching of his word, will be found faithful in whatever position of trust they may be placed. Consider this, parents, and place your children where they will be educated in the principles of truth, where every effort will be made to help them to maintain their consecration, if converted, or if unconverted, to influence them to become the children of God, and thus fit them to go

forth to win others to the truth.[2]

Above all other people on the earth, the man whose mind is enlightened by the opening of God's word to his understanding, will feel that he must give himself to diligence in the perusal of the word of God, and to a diligent study of the sciences; for his hope and calling are greater than any other. The more closely connected man is with the Source of all knowledge and wisdom, the more he can be advantaged intellectually, as well as spiritually, through his relation to God.

The opening of God's word is followed by remarkable strengthening of man's faculties; for the entrance of God's word is the application of divine truth to the heart, purifying and refining the soul through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

The mind devoted unreservedly to God, under the guidance of the divine Spirit, develops generally and harmoniously. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed through the power of God to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual

devotion and piety establish so close a relation between Jesus and his disciple, that the Christian becomes like him in mind and character. After association with the Son of God, the humble follower of Christ is found to be a person of sound principle, clear perception, and reliable judgment. He has a connection with God, the source of light and understanding. He who longed to be of service to the cause of Christ, has been so quickened by the life-giving rays of the Sun of Righteousness, that he has been enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God.

Men of the highest education and accomplishments have learned the most precious lessons from the precept and example of the humble follower of Christ, who is designated as “unlearned” by the world. But could men look with deeper insight, they would see that these humble men had obtained an education in the highest of all schools, even in the school of the divine Teacher, who spake as never man spake.

We would not discourage education, or put a

low estimate upon mental culture and discipline. God would have us students as long as we remain in this world. But no one should set himself as a critic to measure the usefulness and influence of his brother who has had few advantages of book knowledge. He may be rich in a rarer wisdom. Through a connection with God, the Christian will have clearer and broader views, unbiased by his own preconceived opinions. His discernment will be more penetrative and far-seeing, his judgment better balanced.[3]

Christian Courtesy

The heart in which the love of Christ abides, will constantly manifest more and more refinement, for the spring of the life is love to God and man. This is Christianity. This is “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14) This is the carrying out of God’s purpose. Divine harmony, worthy of the wisdom and mercy which God has manifested to men! True Christian growth tends upward to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.

True culture, real refinement of thought and manners, is better obtained through the lessons in the school of Christ, than through the most labored, pains-taking effort to observe forms and set rules, when the heart is not under the holy discipline of the Spirit of God.

The follower of Jesus should be constantly improving in manners, in habits, in spirit, and labor. But this is done by keeping the eye, not on mere outward, superficial attainments, but on Jesus the model. A transformation takes place in mind, in spirit, in character. The Christian is educated in the school of Christ to cherish the graces of his Spirit in all meekness and lowliness of mind. He is fitting for the society of heavenly angels. ... The Lord has presented to me in many ways, and at various times, how carefully we should deal with the young,--that it requires the finest discrimination to deal with minds. Every one who has to do with the education and training of youth, needs to live very close to the great Teacher, to catch his spirit and manner of work. Lessons are to be given which will affect their character and life work.

They should be taught that the gospel of Christ tolerates no spirit of caste, that it gives no place to unkind judgment of others, which tends directly to self-exaltation. The religion of Jesus never degrades the receiver, nor makes him coarse and rough; nor does it make him unkind in thought and feeling toward those for whom Christ died.

There is danger of attaching too much importance to the matter of etiquette, and devoting much time to education upon the subject of manner and form, that can never be of any great use to many youth. Some are in danger of making the externals all-important, of overestimating the value of mere conventionalities. The results will not warrant the expenditure of time and thought given to these matters. Some who are trained to give much attention to these things, will manifest little true respect or sympathy for anything, however excellent, that in any way fails to meet their standard of conventionality. Anything that would encourage ungenerous criticism, a disposition to notice and expose every defect or error, is wrong. It

fosters distrust and suspicion, which are contrary to the character of Christ, and detrimental to the mind thus exercised. Those who are engaged in this work, gradually depart from the true spirit of Christianity. While the gospel constantly sanctifies and ennobles the receiver, it will never lead us to cherish selfish and exalted ideas of our own ability or merit in contrast with that of others. It never nurtures pride and self-esteem. Every soul who sees Christ as he is, will abase self. He will exalt the Saviour as the “chiefest among ten thousand,” the One “altogether lovely.”

The most essential, enduring education is that which will develop the nobler qualities, which will encourage a spirit of universal kindness, leading the youth to think no evil of any one lest they shall misjudge motives and misinterpret words and actions. The time devoted to this kind of instruction will yield fruit to everlasting life.

The young people among us should be preparing to work for the Master in the saving of souls for whom Christ died. Attention to mere

conventionalities, or even to mental and social improvement, should be regarded as of secondary importance. These things have their place in the formation of character, but we should remember that the world is in gross darkness; irreligion, vice, and depravity are steadily strengthening and increasing; every teacher should feel in his very soul that the great needs of those under his care, are the regenerating power of God's Spirit in the heart, the living practice, the preparation for higher Christian attainments. This education will give to the character those softening, refining touches that proceed from Christ himself. These graces will give a sweetness of character, a gentleness of manner, which can never be equaled by the superficial polish of fashionable society. Let every worker for Christ make it his highest aim to win souls to God, rather than to be looking at and teaching mere superficial acquirements. Direct your energies to the fitting of living stones for the building of God's temple.[4]

The agency of the Spirit of God does not remove from us the necessity of exercising our

faculties and talents, but teaches us how to use every power to the glory of God. The human faculties when under the special direction of the grace of God, are capable of being used to the best purpose on earth, and will be exercised in the future immortal life.

Ignorance will not increase the humility or spirituality of any professed follower of Christ. The truths of the divine word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can be best glorified by those who serve him intelligently. The great object of education is to enable us to use the powers which God has given us in such a manner as will best represent the religion of the Bible and promote the glory of God.

We are indebted to Him who gave us existence for all the talents which have been intrusted to us; and it is a duty we owe to our Creator to cultivate and improve upon the talents he has committed to our trust. Education will discipline the mind, develop its powers, and understandingly direct them, that we may be useful in advancing the glory

of God.

It is true that the world's men of learning are not easily reached by the practical truths of God's word. The reason is, they trust to human wisdom, and pride themselves upon their intellectual superiority, and are unwilling to become humble learners in the school of Christ. Our Saviour did not ignore learning or despise education; yet he chose unlearned fishermen for the work of the gospel, because they had not been schooled in the false customs and traditions of the world. They were men of good natural ability, and of a humble, teachable spirit; men whom he could educate for his great work. In the ordinary walks of life there is many a man patiently treading the round of daily toil, all unconscious that he possesses powers, which, if called into action, would raise him to an equality with the world's most honored men. The touch of a skillful hand is needed to arouse and develop those dormant faculties. It was such men whom Jesus connected with himself; and he gave them the advantages of three year's training under his own care. No course of study in the schools of

the rabbis or the halls of philosophy could have equaled this in value.

Any young man is wanting in his duty to himself if he fails to meet the purposes of God by improving and enlarging his faculties. The mind is the best possession we have; but it must be trained by study, by reflection, by learning in the school of Christ, the best and truest educator the world has ever known.

Chasing through books superficially, clogs the mind, and causes you to become a mental dyspeptic. You cannot digest and use one half that you read. If you should read with one object in view, to improve the mind, and should read only as much as the mind can comprehend and digest, and would patiently persevere in such a course of reading, good results would be obtained. ... The perusal of works upon our faith, the reading of arguments from the pen of others, while an excellent and important practice, is not that which will give the mind the greatest strength. The Bible is the best book in the world for intellectual

culture.[5]

Nature as an Educator

The great honor conferred upon David did not serve to elate him. Notwithstanding the high position which he was to occupy, he quietly continued his employment, content to await the development of the Lord's plans in his own time and way. As humble and modest as before his anointing, the shepherd boy returned to the hills, and watched and guarded his flocks as tenderly as ever. But with new inspiration he composed his melodies, and played upon his harp. Before him spread a landscape of rich and varied beauty. The vines, with their clustering fruit, brightened in the sunshine. The forest trees, with their green foliage, swayed in the breeze. He beheld the sun flooding the heavens with light, coming forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. There were the bold summits of the hills reaching toward the sky; in the far-away distance rose the barren cliffs of the mountain wall of Moab; above all spread the tender

blue of the overarching heavens; and beyond was God. He could not see him, but his works were full of his praise. The light of day, gilding forest and mountain, meadow and stream, carried the mind up to behold the Father of lights, the Author of every good and perfect gift. Daily revelations of the character and majesty of his Creator, filled the young poet's heart with adoration and rejoicing. In contemplation of God and his works, the faculties of David's mind and heart were developing and strengthening for the work of his after life. He was daily coming into a more intimate communion with God. His mind was constantly penetrating into new depths, for fresh themes to inspire his song, and to wake the music of his harp. The rich melody of his voice poured out upon the air, echoed from the hills as if responsive to the rejoicing of the angels' songs in heaven.

Who can measure the results of those years of toil and wandering among the lonely hills? The communion with nature and with God, the care of his flocks, the perils and deliverances, the griefs and joys of his lowly lot, were not only to mould

the character of David, and to influence his future life, but through the psalms of Israel's sweet singer, they were, in all coming ages, to kindle love and faith in the hearts of God's people, bringing them nearer to the ever-loving heart of Him in whom all his creatures live.[6]

Young Men as Missionaries

It may in some cases be necessary that young men learn foreign languages. This they can do with most success by associating with the people, at the same time devoting a portion of each day to studying the language. This should be done, however, only as a necessary step preparatory to educating such as are found in the missionary fields themselves, and who with proper training can become workers. It is essential that those be urged into service who can speak in their mother tongue to the people of different nations. It is a great undertaking for a man of middle age to learn a foreign language; and with all his efforts it will be next to impossible for him to speak it so readily and correctly as to render him an efficient

laborer.[7]

But the church may inquire whether young men can be trusted with the grave responsibilities involved in establishing and superintending a foreign mission. I answer, God designed that they should be so trained in our colleges and by association in labor with men of experience, that they would be prepared for departments of usefulness in this cause. We must manifest confidence in our young men. They should be pioneers in every enterprise involving toil and sacrifice, while the overtaxed servants of Christ should be cherished as counselors, to encourage and bless those who strike the heaviest blows for God. Providence thrust these experienced fathers into trying, responsible positions at an early age, when neither physical nor intellectual powers were fully developed. The magnitude of the trust committed to them aroused their energies, and their active labor in the work aided both mental and physical development.

Young men are wanted. God calls them to

missionary fields. Being comparatively free from care and responsibilities, they are more favorably situated to engage in the work than are those who must provide for the training and support of a large family. Furthermore, young men can more readily adapt themselves to new climates and new society, and can better endure inconveniences and hardships. By tact and perseverance, they can reach the people where they are.[8]

The First Students

The holy pair (Adam and Eve) were not only children under the fatherly care of God, but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. They were full of the vigor imparted by the tree of life, and their intellectual power was but little less than that of the angels. The mysteries of the visible universe--“the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge” (Job 37:16) afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. The

laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men's study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life. With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that playeth among the waters, to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, "the balancings of the clouds," the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night,--all were open to the study of our first parents. On every leaf of the forest, or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God's name was written. The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power. They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love, and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude.

So long as they remained loyal to the divine

law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love, would continually increase. They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unfailing love of God.[9]

Ancient Infidelity

The dwellers on the plain of Shinar disbelieved God's covenant that he would not again bring a flood upon the earth. Many of them denied the existence of God, and attributed the flood to the operation of natural causes. Others believed in a supreme being, and that it was he who had destroyed the antediluvian world; and their hearts, like that of Cain, rose up in rebellion against him. One object before them in the erection of the tower of Babel was to secure their own safety in case of another deluge. By carrying the structure to a much greater height than was reached by the waters of the flood, they thought to place themselves beyond all possibility of danger. And as they would be able to ascend to the region of the clouds, they hoped to

ascertain the cause of the flood. The whole undertaking was designed to exalt still further the pride of its projectors, and to turn the minds of future generations away from God, and lead them into idolatry.[10]

The youth who aim to labor in the Master's vineyard must be as apprentices who are to learn the trade. They must learn to be useful in the work by first doing errands for the Lord, improving opportunities for doing missionary labor anywhere and in any capacity. Thus they may give evidence that they possess tact and qualifications for the greatest work ever intrusted to men. They should be constantly improving in mind, in manners, in speech, learning how to become successful laborers. They should cultivate tact and courtesy, and manifest the spirit of Christ. Let them never cease to learn. Onward and upward should be their constant endeavor.[11]

Our schools are to be training schools; and if men and women come forth from them fitted in any sense for the missionary field, they must be led

to realize the greatness of the work; practical godliness must be brought into their daily experience, if they would be fitted for any place of usefulness in the cause of God.[12]

Hundreds of young men should have been preparing to act a part in the work of scattering the seeds of truth beside all waters. We want men who will push the triumphs of the cross; men who will persevere under discouragements and privations; who will have the zeal and resolution and faith that are indispensable in the missionary field.[13]

The great reason why so few of the world's great men, and those having a college education, are led to obey the commandments of God, is because they have separated education from religion, thinking that each should occupy a field by itself. ...

There are many of our youth whom God has endowed with superior capabilities. He has given them the very best of talents; but their powers have been enervated, their minds confused and

enfeebled; and for years they have made no growth in grace and in a knowledge of the reasons of our faith, because they have gratified a taste for story reading. They have as much difficulty to control the appetite for such superficial reading as the drunkard has to control his appetite for intoxicating drink. These might today be connected with our publishing houses, and be efficient workers, to keep books, prepare copy for the press, or to read proof; but their talents have been perverted until they are mental dyspeptics, and consequently are unfitted for a responsible position anywhere. The imagination is diseased. They live an unreal life. They are unfitted for the practical duties of life; and that which is the most sad and discouraging is, they have lost all relish for solid reading. ...

The special effort of ministers, and of workers all through our ranks, for this time, should be to turn away the attention of the youth from all exciting stories, to the sure word of prophecy. The attention of every soul striving for eternal life should center upon the Bible. ...

It is with feelings of inexpressible sadness, and sometimes almost with despair, that I contemplate the condition of the young, and see how difficult it is to encourage those to obtain an education to whom I know God has liberally entrusted capabilities. Without education, they will be crippled and inefficient in any position. Yet in gaining this education they will be exposed to dangers and temptations. Satan will try to employ their cultivated abilities in his service. ...

The plans devised and carried out for the education of our youth are none too broad. They should not have a one-sided education, but all their powers should receive equal attention. Moral philosophy, the study of the Scriptures, and physical training should be combined with the studies usually pursued in schools. Every power--physical, mental, and moral--needs to be trained, disciplined, and developed, that it may render its highest service; for unless all are equally developed, one faculty cannot do its work thoroughly, without overtaxing some part of the human machinery.

Much has been said and written in regard to the importance of training the mind for its highest service. This has sometimes led to the opinion that if the intellect is educated to put forth its highest powers, it will strengthen the physical and moral nature for the development of the whole man. Time and experience have proved this to be an error. We have seen men and women go forth as graduates from college, who were in no way qualified to make a proper use of the wonderful physical organism which God had provided them. The whole body is designed for action, not for inaction. If the physical powers are not taxed equally with the mental, too much strain is brought upon the latter. Unless every part of the human machinery performs its allotted tasks, the mental powers cannot be used to their highest capacity for any length of time. Natural powers must be governed by natural laws, and the faculties must be educated to work harmoniously, and in accord with these laws. The teachers in our schools can disregard none of these particulars without shirking responsibility. Pride may lead them to seek for a

high worldly standard of intellectual attainment, that students may make a brilliant show; but when it comes to solid acquirements,--those which are essential to fit men and women for any and every emergency in practical life,--such students are only partially prepared to make life a success. Their defective education often leads to failure in whatever branch of business they undertake.

Gymnasium exercises may in some instances be an advantage. They were brought in to supply the want of useful physical training, and have become popular with educational institutions; but they are not without drawbacks. Unless carefully regulated, they are productive of more harm than good. Some have suffered life-long physical injury through these gymnasium sports. The manual training connected with our schools, if rightly conducted, will largely take the place of the gymnasium.

Teachers should give far more attention to the physical, mental, and moral influences in our schools. Although the study of the sciences may

carry the students to high literary attainments, it does not give a full, perfect education. When special attention is given to the thorough development of every physical and moral power which God has given, then students will not leave our colleges, calling themselves educated while they are ignorant of that knowledge which they must have for practical life, and for the fullest development of character. ...

There is too little zeal among the students. They should make more earnest effort. It requires much study to know how to study. Each student must cultivate the habit of industry. He should see that no second-class work comes forth from his hand. ...

Prophecy and history should form a part of the studies in our schools, and all who accept positions as educators, should prize more and more the revealed will of God. They should, in simplicity, instruct the students. They should unfold the Scriptures, and show by their own life and character the preciousness of Bible religion and the

beauty of holiness; but never, for one moment, let the impression be left upon any one that it would be for his profit to hide his faith and doctrines from the unbelieving people of the world, fearing that he might not be so highly honored if his principles were known.

It is no time to be ashamed of our faith. We are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. The whole universe is looking with inexpressible interest to see the closing work of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. At such a time as this, just as the great work of judging the living is to begin, shall we allow unsanctified ambition to take possession of the heart? What can be of any worth to us now, except to be found loyal and true to the God of heaven? What is there of any real value in this world, when we are on the very borders of the eternal world? What education can we give to the students in our schools, that is so necessary as a knowledge of “what saith the Scripture”? ...

The cause of God needs teachers who have

high moral qualities, and can be trusted with the education of others,--men who are sound in the faith, and have tact and patience; who walk with God, and abstain from the very appearance of evil; who stand so closely connected with God that they can be channels of light,--in short, Christian gentlemen. The good impressions made by such will never be effaced; and the training thus given will endure throughout eternity. What is neglected in this training process is likely to remain undone. Who will undertake this work? We would that there were strong young men, rooted and grounded in the faith, who had such a living connection with God that they could, if so counseled by our leading brethren, enter the higher colleges in our land, where they would have a wider field for study and observation. Association with different classes of minds, an acquaintance with the workings and results of popular methods of education, and a knowledge of theology as taught in the leading institutions of learning, would be of great value to such workers, preparing them to labor for the educated classes, and to meet the prevailing errors of our time. Such was the method pursued by the

ancient Waldenses; and, if true to God, our youth, like theirs, might do a good work, even while gaining their education, in sowing the seeds of truth in other minds. ...

We see the need of encouraging higher ideas of education, and of employing more trained men in the ministry. Those who do not obtain the right kind of education before they enter upon God's work, are not competent to accept this holy trust, and to carry forward the work of reformation. Yet all should continue their education after they engage in the work. They must have the word of God abiding in them. We need more cultivation, refinement, and nobility of soul in our laborers. Such an improvement as this would show results in eternity. ...

Efforts must be made to fit young men for the work. They must come to the front, to lift burdens and responsibilities. Those who are now young must become strong men. They must be able to plan and give counsel. The word of God abiding in them, will make them pure, and will fill them with

faith, hope, courage, and devotion. The work is now greatly retarded because men are carrying responsibilities for which they are unfitted. Shall this great want continue and increase? Shall these great responsibilities drop from the hands of old, experienced workers, into the hands of those unable to manage them? Are we not neglecting a very important work by failing to educate and train our youth to fill positions of trust?

Let the workers be educated, but at the same time let them be meek and lowly of heart. Let us elevate the work to the highest possible standard, ever remembering that if we do our part, God will not fail to do his.[14]

The Child Samuel

From Shiloh, Hannah quietly returned to her home at Ramah, leaving the child Samuel to be trained for service in the house of God, under the instruction of the high priest. From the earliest dawn of intellect, she had taught her son to love and reverence God, and to regard himself as the

Lord's. By every familiar object surrounding him, she had sought to lead his thoughts up to the Creator. When separated from her child, the faithful mother's solicitude did not cease. Every day he was the subject of her prayers. Every year she made, with her own hands, a robe of service for him; and as she went up with her husband to worship at Shiloh, she gave the child this reminder of her love. Every fiber of the little garment had been woven with a prayer that he might be pure, noble, and true. She did not ask for her son worldly greatness, but she earnestly pleaded that he might attain that greatness which heaven values,--that he might honor God, and bless his fellow-men.

What a reward was Hannah's! and what an encouragement to faithfulness is her example! There are opportunities of inestimable worth, interests infinitely precious, committed to every mother. The humble round of duties which women have come to regard as a wearisome task, should be looked upon as a grand and noble work. It is the mother's privilege to bless the world by her influence, and in doing this she will bring joy to

her own heart. She may make straight paths for the feet of her children, through sunshine and shadow, to the glorious heights above. But it is only when she seeks, in her own life, to follow the teachings of Christ, that the mother can hope to form the character of her children after the divine Pattern. The world teems with corrupting influences. Fashion and custom exert a strong power over the young. If the mother fails in her duty to instruct, guide, and restrain, her children will naturally accept the evil and turn from the good. Let every mother go often to her Saviour with the prayer, "Teach us how we shall order the child, and how we shall do unto him." (Judges 13:12) Let her heed the instruction which God has given in his word, and wisdom will be given her as she shall have need.

"The child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord, and also with men." (1 Samuel 2:26) Though Samuel's youth was passed at the tabernacle devoted to the worship of God, he was not free from evil influences or sinful example. The sons of Eli feared not God, nor honored their

father; but Samuel did not seek their company nor follow their evil ways. It was his constant endeavor to become what God would have him. This is the privilege of every youth. God is pleased when even little children give themselves to his service.

Samuel had been placed under the care of Eli, and the loveliness of his character drew forth the warm affection of the aged priest. He was kind, generous, obedient, and respectful. Eli, pained by the waywardness of his own sons, found rest and comfort and blessing in the presence of his charge. Samuel was helpful and affectionate, and no father ever loved his child more tenderly than did Eli this youth. It was a singular thing that between the chief magistrate of the nation and the simple child so warm an affection should exist. As the infirmities of age came upon Eli, and he was filled with anxiety and remorse by the profligate course of his own sons, he turned to Samuel for comfort.

It was not customary for the Levites to enter upon their peculiar services until they were twenty-five years of age, but Samuel had been an

exception to this rule. Every year saw more important trusts committed to him; and while he was yet a child, a linen ephod was placed upon him as a token of his consecration to the work of the sanctuary. Young as he was when brought to minister in the tabernacle, Samuel had even then duties to perform in the service of God, according to his capacity. These were at first very humble, and not always pleasant; but they were performed to the best of his ability, and with a willing heart. His religion was carried into every duty of life. He regarded himself as God's servant, and his work as God's work. His efforts were accepted, because they were prompted by love to God and a sincere desire to do his will. It was thus that Samuel became a co-worker with the Lord of heaven and earth. And God fitted him to accomplish a great work for Israel.

If children were taught to regard the humble round of every-day duties as the course marked out for them by the Lord, as a school in which they were to be trained to render faithful and efficient service, how much more pleasant and honorable

would their work appear. To perform every duty as unto the Lord, throws a charm around the humblest employment, and links the workers on earth with the holy beings who do God's will in heaven.

Success in this life, success in gaining the future life, depends upon a faithful, conscientious attention to the little things. Perfection is seen in the least, no less than in the greatest, of the works of God. The hand that hung the worlds in space is the hand that wrought with delicate skill the lilies of the field. And as God is perfect in his sphere, so we are to be perfect in ours. The symmetrical structure of a strong, beautiful character is built up by individual acts of duty. And faithfulness should characterize our life in the least as well as in the greatest of its details. Integrity in little things, the performance of little acts of fidelity and little deeds of kindness, will gladden the path of life; and when our work on earth is ended, it will be found that every one of the little duties faithfully performed, has exerted an influence for good,--an influence that can never perish.

The youth of our time may become as precious in the sight of God as was Samuel. By faithfully maintaining their Christian integrity, they may exert a strong influence in the work of reform. Such men are needed at this time. God has a work for every one of them. Never did men achieve greater results for God and humanity than may be achieved in this our day by those who will be faithful to their God-given trust.[15]

Responsibility to Restrain Children

God held Eli, as a priest and judge of Israel, accountable for the moral and religious standing of his people, and in a special sense for the character of his sons. He should first have attempted to restrain evil by mild measures; but if these did not avail, he should have subdued the wrong by the severest means. He incurred the Lord's displeasure by not reproofing sin and executing justice upon the sinner. He could not be depended upon to keep Israel pure. Those who have too little courage to reprove wrong, or who through indolence or lack of interest make no earnest effort to purify the

family or the church of God, are held accountable for the evil that may result from their neglect of duty. We are just as responsible for evils that we might have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority, as if the acts had been our own.

Eli did not manage his household according to God's rules for family government. He followed his own judgment. The fond father overlooked the faults and sins of his sons in their childhood, flattering himself that after a time they would outgrow their evil tendencies. Many are now making a similar mistake. They think they know a better way of training their children than that which God has given in his word. They foster wrong tendencies in them, urging as an excuse, "They are too young to be punished. Wait till they become older, and can be reasoned with." Thus wrong habits are left to strengthen until they become second nature. The children grow up without restraint, with traits of character that are a life-long curse to them, and are liable to be reproduced in others.

There is no greater curse upon households than to allow the youth to have their own way. When parents regard every wish of their children, and indulge them in what they know is not for their good, the children soon lose all respect for their parents, all regard for the authority of God or man, and are led captive at the will of Satan. The influence of an ill-regulated family is wide-spread, and disastrous to all society. It accumulates in a tide of evil that affects families, communities, and governments.

Because of Eli's position, his influence was more extended than if he had been an ordinary man. His family life was imitated throughout Israel. The baleful results of his negligent, ease-loving ways were seen in thousands of homes that were moulded by his example. If children are indulged in evil practices, while the parents make a profession of religion, the truth of God is brought into reproach. The best test of the Christianity of a home is the type of character begotten by its influence. Actions speak louder than the most

positive profession of godliness. If professors of religion, instead of putting forth earnest, persistent, and painstaking effort to bring up a well-ordered household as a witness to the benefits of faith in God, are lax in their government, and indulgent to the evil desires of their children, they are doing as did Eli, and are bringing disgrace on the cause of Christ, and ruin upon themselves and their households. But great as are the evils of parental unfaithfulness under any circumstances, they are ten-fold greater when they exist in the families of those appointed as teachers of the people. When these fail to control their households, they are, by their wrong example, misleading many. Their guilt is as much greater than that of others as their position is more responsible.[16]

Religion in the Home

The light esteem in which the law of God is held, even by religious leaders, has been productive of great evil. The teaching which has become so wide-spread that the divine statutes are no longer binding upon men, is the same as idolatry in its

effect upon the morals of the people. Those who seek to lessen the claims of God's holy law are striking directly at the foundation of the government of families and nations. Religious parents, failing to walk in his statutes, do not command their household to keep the way of the Lord. The law of God is not made the rule of life. The children, as they make homes of their own, feel under no obligation to teach their children what they themselves have never been taught. And this is why there are so many godless families; this is why depravity is so deep and wide-spread.

Not until parents themselves walk in the law of the Lord with perfect hearts, will they be prepared to command their children after them. A reformation in this respect is needed,--a reformation which shall be deep and broad. Parents need to reform; ministers need to reform; they need God in their households. If they would see a different state of things, they must bring his word into their families, and must make it their counselor. They must teach their children that it is the voice of God addressed to them, and is to be

implicitly obeyed. They should patiently instruct their children, and kindly and untiringly teach them how to live so as to please God. The children of such a household are prepared to meet the sophistries of infidelity. They have accepted the Bible as the basis of their faith, and they have a foundation that cannot be swept away by the incoming tide of skepticism.

In too many households, prayer is neglected. Parents feel they have no time for morning and evening worship. They cannot spare a few moments in which to give thanks to God for his abundant mercies,--for the blessed sunshine and the showers of rain, which cause vegetation to flourish, and for the guardianship of holy angels. They have no time to offer prayer for divine help and guidance, and for the abiding presence of Jesus in the household. They go forth to labor as the ox or the horse goes, without one thought of God or heaven. They have souls so precious that rather than permit them to be hopelessly lost, the Son of God gave his life to ransom them; but they have little more appreciation of his great goodness than

have the beasts that perish.

Like the patriarchs of old, those who profess to love God should erect an altar to the Lord wherever they pitch their tent. If ever there was a time when every house should be a house of prayer, it is now. Fathers and mothers should often lift up their hearts to God in humble supplication for themselves and their children. Let the father, as priest of the household, lay upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice, while the wife and children unite in prayer and praise. In such a household, Jesus will love to tarry.

From every Christian home a holy light should shine forth. Love should be revealed in action. It should flow out in all home intercourse, showing itself in thoughtful kindness, in gentle, unselfish courtesy. There are homes where this principle is carried out,--homes where God is worshiped, and truest love reigns. From these homes, morning and evening prayer ascends to God as sweet incense, and his mercies and blessings descend upon the suppliants like the morning dew.

A well-ordered Christian household is a powerful argument in favor of the reality of the Christian religion,--an argument that the infidel cannot gainsay. All can see that there is an influence at work in the family that affects the children, and that the God of Abraham is with them. If the homes of professed Christians had a right religious mould, they would exert a mighty influence for good. They would indeed be the "light of the world." The God of heaven speaks to every faithful parent in the words addressed to Abraham: "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Genesis 18:19)[17]

Labor for the Young

Very much has been lost to the cause of God by a lack of attention to the young. Ministers should form an acquaintance with the youth in their

congregations. Many are reluctant to do this, but their neglect is a sin in the sight of Heaven. There are among us many who are not ignorant of our faith, yet whose hearts have never been touched by the power of divine grace. Can we who claim to be servants of God pass on day after day, week after week, indifferent to these souls who are out of Christ? If they should die in their sins, unwarned, their blood would be required at the unfaithful watchman's hands.

Why should not this labor for the youth in our borders be regarded as the highest kind of missionary work? It will require the most delicate tact, the most thoughtful consideration, the most earnest prayer that heavenly wisdom may be imparted. The youth are the objects of Satan's special attacks; but kindness, courtesy, that tender sympathy that flows from a heart filled with love to Jesus, will give you access to them. You may win their confidence so that they will listen to your words, and thus be saved from many a snare of the enemy.

When the youth give their hearts to God, your care for them should not cease. Lay some special responsibility upon them. Make them feel that they are expected to do something. The Lord chooses them because they are strong. Teach them to labor in a quiet, unpretending way, for their young companions. Let different branches of the missionary work be laid out systematically, and let instruction and help be given, so that the young may learn to act a part. Thus they will grow up to be workers for God.[18]

A Mother's Influence

How far-reaching in its results was the influence of that one Hebrew woman, (the mother of Moses) and she an exile and a slave! The whole future life of Moses, the great mission which he fulfilled as the leader of Israel, testifies to the importance of the work of the Christian mother. There is no other work that can equal this. To a very great extent, the mother holds in her own hands the destiny of her children. She is dealing with developing minds and characters, working not

alone for time, but for eternity. She is sowing seed that will spring up and bear fruit, either for good or for evil. She has not to paint a form of beauty upon canvas or to chisel it from marble, but to impress upon a human soul the image of the divine. Especially during their early years the responsibility rests upon her of forming the characters of her children. The impressions now made upon their developing minds will remain with them all through life. Parents should direct the instruction and training of their children while very young, to the end that they may be Christians. They are placed in our care to be trained, not as heirs to the throne of an earthly empire, but as kings unto God, to reign through unending ages.

Let every mother feel that her moments are priceless; her work will be tested in the solemn day of accounts. Then it will be found that many of the failures and crimes of men and women have resulted from the ignorance and neglect of those whose duty it was to guide their childish feet in the right way. Then it will be found that many who have blessed the world with the light of genius and

truth and holiness, owe the principles that were the mainspring of their influence and success to a praying, Christian mother.[19]

Choosing a Home

When Lot entered Sodom, he fully intended to keep himself free from iniquity, and to command his household after him. But he signally failed. The corrupting influences about him had an effect upon his own faith, and his children's connection with the inhabitants of Sodom bound up his interest in a measure with theirs. The result is before us.

Many are still making a similar mistake. In selecting a home they look more to the temporal advantages they may gain than to the moral and social influences that will surround themselves and their families. They choose a beautiful and fertile country, or remove to some flourishing city, in the hope of securing greater prosperity; but their children are surrounded by temptation, and too often they form associations that are unfavorable to the development of piety and the formation of a

right character. The atmosphere of lax morality, of unbelief, of indifference to religious things, has a tendency to counteract the influence of the parents. Examples of rebellion against parental and divine authority are ever before the youth; many form attachments for infidels and unbelievers, and cast in their lot with the enemies of God.

In choosing a home, God would have us consider, first of all, the moral and religious influences that will surround us and our families. We may be placed in trying positions, for many cannot have their surroundings what they would; and wherever duty calls us, God will enable us to stand uncorrupted, if we watch and pray, trusting in the grace of Christ. But we should not needlessly expose ourselves to influences that are unfavorable to the formation of Christian character. When we voluntarily place ourselves in an atmosphere of worldliness and unbelief, we displease God, and drive holy angels from our homes.

Those who secure for their children worldly wealth and honor at the expense of their eternal

interests, will find in the end that these advantages are a terrible loss. Like Lot, many see their children ruined, and barely save their own souls. Their life work is lost; their life is a sad failure. Had they exercised true wisdom, their children might have had less of worldly prosperity, but they would have made sure of a title to the immortal inheritance.[20]

The Development of Character

How was Joseph enabled to make such a record of firmness of character, uprightness, and wisdom?--In his early years he had consulted duty rather than inclination; and the integrity, the simple trust, the noble nature of the youth, bore fruit in the deeds of the man. A pure and simple life had favored the vigorous development of both physical and intellectual powers. Communion with God through his works, and the contemplation of the grand truths intrusted to the inheritors of faith, had elevated and ennobled his spiritual nature, broadening and strengthening the mind as no other study could do. Faithful attention to duty in every station, from the lowliest to the most exalted, had

been training every power for its highest service. He who lives in accordance with the Creator's will is securing to himself the truest and noblest development of character. "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." (Job 28:28)

There are few who realize the influence of the little things of life upon the development of character. Nothing with which we have to do is really small. The varied circumstances that we meet day by day are designed to test our faithfulness, and to qualify us for greater trusts. By adherence to principle in the transactions of ordinary life, the mind becomes accustomed to hold the claims of duty above those of pleasure and inclination. Minds thus disciplined are not wavering between right and wrong, like the reed trembling in the wind; they are loyal to duty because they have trained themselves to habits of fidelity and truth. By faithfulness in that which is least, they acquire strength to be faithful in greater matters.

An upright character is of greater worth than the gold of Ophir. Without it none can rise to an honorable eminence. But character is not inherited. It cannot be bought. Moral excellence and fine mental qualities are not the result of accident. The most precious gifts are of no value unless they are improved. The formation of a noble character is the work of a lifetime, and must be the result of diligent and persevering effort. God gives opportunities; success depends upon the use made of them.[21]

The history of Israel's first king presents a sad example of the power of early wrong habits. In his youth, Saul did not love and fear God; and that impetuous spirit, not early trained to submission, was ever ready to rebel against divine authority. Those who in their youth cherish a sacred regard for the will of God, and who faithfully perform the duties of their position, will be prepared for higher service in after life. But men cannot for years pervert the powers that God has given them, and then, when they choose to change, find these powers fresh and free for an entirely opposite

course.[22]

Nadab and Abihu had not in their youth been trained to habits of self-control. The father's yielding disposition, his lack of firmness for right, had led him to neglect the discipline of his children. His sons had been permitted to follow inclination. Habits of self-indulgence, long cherished, obtained a hold upon them which even the responsibility of the most sacred office had not power to break. They had not been taught to respect the authority of their father, and they did not realize the necessity of exact obedience to the requirements of God. Aaron's mistaken indulgence of his sons, prepared them to become the subjects of divine judgments.[23]

Instructing Parents

Those who have no children of their own to share their thoughts and labor, and to call for the exercise of forbearance, patience, and love, should guard themselves, lest their thoughts and labor center upon themselves. They are poorly qualified

to instruct parents as to the training of their children; for they have not had experience in this work. Yet in very many cases, those who have no children are the most ready to instruct those who have, when at the same time, the former make children of themselves in many respects. They cannot be turned out of a certain course, and they require even more patience exercised toward them than do children. It is selfish to have a certain course marked out, and pursue this course to the inconvenience of others.[24]

Lessons from the Marriage of Isaac

Isaac was highly honored by God, in being made inheritor of the promises through which the world was to be blessed; yet when he was forty years of age, he submitted to his father's judgment in appointing his experienced, God-fearing servant to choose a wife for him. And the result of that marriage, as presented in the Scriptures, is a tender and beautiful picture of domestic happiness. "Isaac brought her unto his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved

her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." (Genesis 24:67)

What a contrast between the course of Isaac and that pursued by the youth of our time, even among professed Christians! Young people too often feel that the bestowal of their affections is a matter in which self alone should be consulted,--a matter that neither God nor their parents should in any wise control. Long before they have reached manhood or womanhood, they think themselves competent to make their own choice, without the aid of their parents. A few years of married life are usually sufficient to show them their error, but often too late to prevent its baleful results. For the same lack of wisdom and self-control that dictated the hasty choice is permitted to aggravate the evil, until the marriage relation becomes a galling yoke. Many have thus wrecked their happiness in this life, and their hope of the life to come.

If there is any subject which should be carefully considered, and in which the counsel of older and more experienced persons should be

sought, it is the subject of marriage; if ever the Bible was needed as a counselor, if ever divine guidance should be sought in prayer, it is before taking a step that binds persons together for life.

Parents should never lose sight of their own responsibility for the future happiness of their children. Isaac's deference to his father's judgment was the result of the training that had taught him to love a life of obedience. While Abraham required his children to respect parental authority, his daily life testified that that authority was not a selfish or arbitrary control, but was founded in love, and had their welfare and happiness in view.

Fathers and mothers should feel a sacred duty devolving upon them to guide the affections of the youth, that they may be placed upon those who will be suitable companions. They should feel it a duty, by their own teaching and example, with the assisting grace of God, so to mould the character of the children from their earliest years that they will be pure and noble, and will be attracted to the good and true. Like attracts like; like appreciates like.

Let the love for truth and purity and goodness be early implanted in the soul, and the youth will seek the society of those who possess these characteristics.

Let parents seek, in their own character and in their home life, to exemplify the love and beneficence of the heavenly Father. Let the home be full of sunshine. This will be worth far more to your children than lands or money. Let the home love be kept alive in their hearts, that they may look back upon the home of their childhood as a place of peace and happiness next to heaven. The members of the family do not all have the same stamp of character, and there will be frequent occasion for the exercise of patience and forbearance; but through love and self-discipline, all may be bound together in the closest union.

True love is a high and holy principle, altogether different in character from that love which is awakened by impulse, and which suddenly dies when severely tested. It is by faithfulness to duty in the parental home that the

youth are to prepare themselves for homes of their own. Let them here practice self-denial, and manifest kindness, courtesy, and Christian sympathy. Thus, love will be kept warm in the heart, and he who goes out from such a household to stand at the head of a family of his own, will know how to promote the happiness of her whom he has chosen as a companion for life. Marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be only its beginning.[25]

Instruction to Parents

God chose Abraham as the father of the faithful, because he knew that he would cultivate home religion, and cause the fear of the Lord to be the atmosphere of his dwelling-place. The Lord knew that there would be on the part of Abraham no betraying of sacred trusts; but that he would worship the Lord, and him only would he serve. He knew that his faithful servant would lead his household forward and upward, and influence them to keep the statutes of Jehovah. Abraham did not cherish a blind affection for his family; but by the

combined influence of affection and authority, he ruled his home. God's will was made paramount. He feared the Lord with all his house.

Those who have neglected this important work in the home, and have failed to command their children and their households after them to keep the way of the Lord, should now seek to redeem the time. Let parents take their Bibles, and search that they may understand what are the requirements of God in regard to their children. Let them seek to understand what is included in parental duty. The word of God must be our rule in conducting our family affairs; and neither the waywardness of children nor the press of business, should be looked upon as an excuse for neglect in following the counsel of God. Let parents set before their children a worthy example in personal piety, honoring the house of God and respecting his service. The want of home religion is felt in every branch of God's work, and the necessity of cultivating personal piety in the home should be continually kept before the people. They should have instruction, line upon line and precept upon

precept, that all those whose names are upon the church records may hear and obey the word of the Lord. Parents cannot rightly train their children unless they learn how to cooperate with the Lord in his work upon the heart. The first essential in educating your households in the fear of God, is consecration of yourself and your all to God. Let parents begin with heart work; for out of the heart are the issues of life. Let the prayer ascend from contrite hearts, “Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” (Psalm 51:6-13)

What a prayer is this! How evident it is that sinners in the household are not to be treated with indifference, but that the Lord looks upon them as the purchase of his blood. In every household where the unconverted are, it should be the work of those who know the Lord to work in wisdom for their conversion. The Lord will surely bless the efforts of parents, as in his fear and love they seek to save the souls of their household. The Lord Jesus is waiting to be gracious. O that the work might begin at the heart! “For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” (Psalm 51:16, 17) Then let it be understood by all the members of the household that the work must begin at the heart. The heart must be subdued and made contrite through the creating, regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Realizing the aid of this mighty agency, cannot parents work for the conversion of their children with more zeal and love than ever before?[26]

Pre-natal Influences

God had an important work for the promised child of Manoah (Samson) to do, and it was to secure for him the qualifications necessary for this work, that the habits of both the mother and the child were to be carefully regulated. “Neither let her drink wine or strong drink,” was the angel’s instruction for the wife of Manoah, “nor eat any unclean thing. All that I commanded her let her observe.” (Judges 13:14) The child will be affected for good or for evil by the habits of the mother. She must herself be controlled by principle, and must practice temperance and self-denial, if she would seek the welfare of her child. Unwise advisers will urge upon the mother the necessity of gratifying every wish and impulse; but such teaching is false and mischievous. The mother is by the command of God himself placed under the most solemn obligation to exercise self-control.

And fathers as well as mothers are involved in this responsibility. Both parents transmit their own characteristics, mental and physical, their dispositions and appetites, to their child. As the

result of parental intemperance, children often lack physical strength and mental and moral power. Liquor-drinkers and tobacco-users may, and do, transmit their insatiable craving, their inflamed blood and irritable nerves, to their children. The licentious often bequeath their unholy desires, and even loathsome diseases, as a legacy to their offspring. And as the children have less power to resist temptation than had the parents, the tendency is for each generation to fall lower and lower. To a great degree, parents are responsible, not only for the violent passions and perverted appetites of their children, but for the infirmities of the thousands born deaf, blind, diseased, or idiotic.

The inquiry of every father and mother should be, “What shall we do unto the child that shall be born unto us?” (Judges 13:8) The effect of prenatal influences has been by many lightly regarded; but the instruction sent from heaven to those Hebrew parents, and twice repeated in the most explicit and solemn manner, shows how this matter is looked upon by our Creator.

And it was not enough that the promised child should receive a good legacy from the parents. This must be followed by careful training, and the formation of right habits. God directed that the future judge and deliverer of Israel should be trained to strict temperance from infancy. He was to be a Nazarite from his birth, thus being placed under a perpetual prohibition against the use of wine or strong drink. The lessons of temperance, self-denial, and self-control, are to be taught to children even from babyhood.[27]

Parental Responsibility

Parents are in a great degree responsible for the mould given to the characters of their children. They should aim at symmetry and proportion. There are few well-balanced minds, because parents are wickedly negligent of their duty to stimulate weak traits and repress wrong ones. They do not remember that they are under the most solemn obligation to watch the tendencies of each child; that it is their duty to train their children to right habits and right ways of thinking.

Sometimes parents wait for the Lord to do the very work that he has given them to do. Instead of restraining and controlling their children as they should, they pet and indulge them, and gratify their whims and desires. When these children go out from their early homes, it is with characters deformed by selfishness, with ungoverned appetites, with strong self-will; they are destitute of courtesy or respect for their parents, and do not love religious truth or the worship of God. They have grown up with traits that are a life-long curse to themselves and to others. Home is made anything but happy if the evil weeds of dissension, selfishness, envy, passion, and sullen stubbornness are left to flourish in the neglected garden of the soul.

Parents should show no partiality, but should treat all their children with tenderness, remembering that they are the purchase of Christ's blood. Children imitate their parents; hence great care should be taken to give them correct models. Parents who are kind and polite at home, while at

the same time they are firm and decided, will see the same traits manifested in their children. If they are upright, honest and honorable, their children will be quite likely to resemble them in these particulars. If they reverence and worship God, their children, trained in the same way, will not forget to serve him also.

It is often the case that parents are not careful to surround their children with right influences. In choosing a home, they think more of their worldly interests than of the moral and social atmosphere; and the children form associations that are unfavorable to the development of piety and the formation of right characters. Then parents allow the world to engross their time, strength, and thought; and when the Sabbath comes, it finds them so utterly exhausted that they have naught to render to God on his holy day, no sweet piety to grace the home, and make the Sabbath a delight to their children. They are seldom visited by a minister, for they have placed themselves out of reach of religious privileges. An apathy steals over the soul. The children are contaminated by evil

communications, and the tenderness of soul that they once felt dies away and is forgotten.

Parents who denounce the Canaanites for offering their children to Moloch, what are you doing? You are making a most costly offering to your mammon god; and then, when your children grow up unloved and unlovely in character, when they show decided impiety, and a tendency to infidelity, you blame the faith you profess because it was unable to save them. You are reaping that which you have sown,--the result of your selfish love of the world and neglect of the means of grace. You moved your families into places of temptation, and the ark of God, your glory and defense, you did not consider essential; and the Lord has not worked a miracle to deliver your children from temptation.

You who profess to love God, take Jesus with you wherever you go; and, like the patriarchs of old, erect an altar to the Lord wherever you pitch your tent. A reformation in this respect is needed,--a reformation that shall be deep and broad. Parents

need to reform; ministers need to reform. They need God in their households. They need to build the waste places of Zion; to set up her gates, and make strong her walls for a defense of the people.

...

To many, education means a knowledge of books; but “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Psalm 111:10) The true object of education is to restore the image of God in the soul. The first and most precious knowledge is the knowledge of Christ; and wise parents will keep this fact ever before the minds of their children. Should a limb be broken or fractured, parents will try every means that love or wisdom can suggest to restore the affected member to comeliness and soundness. This is right, it is their duty; but the Lord requires that still greater tact, patience, and persevering effort be employed to remedy blemishes of the soul. That father is unworthy of the name who is not to his children a Christian teacher, ruler, and friend, binding them to his heart by the strong ties of sanctified love,--a love which has its foundation in duty faithfully performed.

Parents have a great and responsible work to do, and they may well inquire. “Who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Corinthians 2:16) But God has promised to give wisdom to those that ask in faith, and he will do just as he said he would. He is pleased with the faith that takes him at his word. The mother of Augustine prayed for her son’s conversion. She saw no evidence that the Spirit of God was impressing his heart, but she was not discouraged. She laid her finger upon the texts, presenting before God his own words, and pleaded as only a mother can. Her deep humiliation, her earnest importunities, her unwavering faith, prevailed, and the Lord gave her the desire of her heart. Today he is just as ready to listen to the petitions of his people. His “hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear;” (Isaiah 59:1) and if Christian parents seek him earnestly, he will fill their mouths with arguments, and, for his name’s sake, will work mightily in their behalf in the conversion of their children.[28]

If parents would place themselves in the position of the teachers, and see how difficult it must necessarily be to manage and discipline a school of hundreds of students of every grade and class of minds, they might upon reflection see things differently. They should consider that some children have never been disciplined at home.

Having always been indulged, and never trained to obedience, it would be greatly for their advantage to be removed from their injudicious parents, and placed under as severe regulations and drilling as soldiers in an army. Unless something shall be done for these children who have been so sadly neglected by unfaithful parents, they will never be accepted of Jesus; unless some power of control shall be brought to bear upon them, they will be worthless in this life, and will have no part in the future life.

In heaven there is perfect order, perfect obedience, perfect peace and harmony. Those who have had no respect for order or discipline in this life, would have no respect for the order which is

observed in heaven. They can never be admitted into heaven, for all worthy of an entrance there will love order and respect discipline. The characters formed in this, will determine the future life. When Christ shall come, he will not change the character of any individual. Precious, probationary time is given to be improved in washing our robes of character, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb.

To remove the stains of sin requires the work of a lifetime. Every day renewed efforts in restraining and denying self are needed. Every day there are new battles to fight, and victories to be gained. Every day the soul should be called out in earnest pleading with God for the mighty victories of the cross. Parents should neglect no duty on their part to benefit their children. They should so train them that they will be a blessing to society here, and may reap the reward of eternal life hereafter.[29]

Lose no opportunity of helping the children to become intelligent in the understanding of the Scriptures. This will do more to bar the way

against Satan's devices than we can now imagine. If they early become familiar with the truths of God's word, a barrier against ungodliness will be erected, and they will be able to meet the foe with Christ's words, "It is written." There is a great work to be done for the youth and children; and every son and daughter of God may act a part in it, and thus be partakers of the reward that will be given to the faithful workers.[30]

Parents should encourage their children to confide in them, and unburden to them their heart griefs, their little daily annoyances and trials. Thus the parents can learn to sympathize with their children, and can pray with and for them, that God would shield and guide them. They should point them to their never-failing Friend and Counselor, who will be touched with the feeling of their infirmities, who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Satan tempts children to be reserved with their parents, and to choose as their confidants their young and inexperienced companions. Children would be saved from many evils if they would be more familiar with their

parents. Parents should encourage in their children a disposition to be open and frank with them, to come to them with their difficulties, and when they are perplexed as to what course is right, to lay the matter, just as they view it, before their parents, and ask their advice.[31]

Parental Training

Children are what their parents make them, by their instruction, discipline, and example. Hence the overwhelming importance of parental faithfulness in training the young for the service of God. Children should early be taught the sacredness of religious obligations. This is a most important part of their education. Our duty to God should be performed before any other. The strict observance of God's law, from principle, should be taught and enforced. "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise

and declare them to their children. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.” (Psalm 78:5-8)

Deal honestly and faithfully with your children. Work bravely and patiently. Fear no crosses, spare no time or labor, burden or suffering. The future of your children will testify to the character of your work. Fidelity to Christ on your part can be better expressed in the symmetrical character of your children than in any other way. They are Christ’s property, bought with his own blood. If their influence is wholly on the side of Christ, they are his co-laborers, helping others to find the path of life. If you neglect your God-given work, your unwise course of discipline places them among the class who scatter from Christ and strengthen the kingdom of darkness.

This practical instruction in religious

experience is what Christian parents should be prepared to give their children. God requires this of you, and you neglect your duty if you fail to perform this work. Instruct your children in regard to God's chosen methods of discipline and the conditions of success in the Christian life. Teach them that they cannot serve God and have their minds absorbed in over-careful provision for this life; but do not let them cherish the thought that they have no need to toil and may spend their leisure moments in idleness. God's word is plain on this point. Jesus, the Majesty of Heaven, has left an example for the youth. He toiled in the workshop at Nazareth for his daily bread. He was subject to his parents, and sought not to control his own time or to follow his own will. By a life of easy indulgence a youth can never attain to real excellence as a man or as a Christian. God does not promise us ease, honor, or wealth in his service, but he assures us that all needed blessings will be ours, "with persecutions," and in the world to come "life everlasting." Nothing less than entire consecration to his service will Christ accept. This is the lesson which every one of us must learn.

The idea that we must submit to the ways of perverse children, is a mistake. Even kindness must have its limits. Authority must be sustained by a firm severity, or it will be received by many with mockery and contempt. The so-called tenderness, the coaxing and the indulgence used toward youth, by parents and guardians, is the worst evil which can come upon them. Firmness, decision, positive requirements, are essential in every family. Parents, take up your neglected responsibilities; educate your children after God's plan, showing "forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)[32]

Ministers should stand erect, and speak slowly, firmly, and distinctly, taking a full inspiration of air at every sentence, and throwing out the words by exercising the abdominal muscles. If they will observe this simple rule, giving attention to the laws of health in other respects, they may preserve their life and usefulness much longer than men in any other profession. Ministers and teachers should discipline themselves to clear and distinct

articulation, giving the full sound to every word. Those who talk rapidly, from the throat, jumbling the words together, and raising their voices to an unnaturally high pitch, soon become hoarse, and the words spoken lose half the force which they would have if spoken slowly, distinctly, and not so loud. The sympathies of the hearers are awakened for the speaker; for they know that he is doing violence to himself, and they fear that he will break down at any moment. It is no evidence that a man has zeal for God because he works himself up into a frenzy excitement and gesticulation. “Bodily exercise,” says the apostle, “profiteth little.” (1 Timothy 4:8)

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

Some reason that the Lord will, by his Spirit, qualify a man to speak as he would have him; but the Lord does not propose to do the work which he has given man to do. He has given us reasoning powers and opportunities to educate the mind and manners. And after we have done all we can for ourselves, making the best use of the advantages within our reach, then we may look to God with earnest prayer to do by his Spirit that which we cannot do for ourselves, and we shall ever find in our Saviour power and efficiency.[33]

God is displeased with those who are too careless or indolent to become efficient, well-informed workers. The Christian should possess more intelligence and keener discernment than the worldling. The study of God's word is continually expanding the mind and strengthening the intellect. There is nothing that will so refine and elevate the character, and give vigor to every faculty, as the continual exercise of the mind to grasp and comprehend weighty and important truths.

But if you can obtain the confidence of the

youth (a troublesome pupil), and bind him to your heart through cords of sympathy and love, you may win a soul to Christ. The wayward, self-willed, independent boy may become transformed in character.

But while it is necessary to manifest love and sympathy for your pupils, it is a manifest weakness to show partiality, and thus arouse suspicion and jealousy. Children are quick to discern the preferences of the teacher, and the favored student often measures his strength, his aptness and skill with that of the teacher in the management of the class. He may decide to be master, and unless the teacher has the grace of Christ, he will manifest weakness, become impatient, exacting, and severe. The leading spirit of the class will generally impart his purpose to other students, and there will be a combined effort to obtain the mastery. If the teacher, through the grace of Christ, is self-controlled, and holds the lines with a steady, patient hand, he will quell the boisterous element, keep his self-respect, and command the respect of his students. When once order is restored, let

kindness, gentleness, and affection be manifested. It may be that rebellion will rise again and again, but let not the hasty temper appear. Do not speak sharply to the evil doer, and discourage a soul who is struggling with the powers of darkness. Be still, and let your heart ascend in prayer to God for help. Angels will come close to your side, and help you to lift up the standard against the enemy, and instead of cutting off the erring one, you may be enabled to gain a soul for Christ.[34]

Those who occupy responsible positions should so educate and discipline themselves that all within the sphere of their influence may see what man can be, and what he can do, when connected with the God of wisdom and power.

And why should not a man thus privileged become intellectually strong? Again and again have worldlings sneeringly asserted that those who believe present truth are weak-minded, deficient in education, without position or influence. This we know to be untrue, but is there not some reason for these assertions? Many have considered it a mark

of humility to be ignorant and uncultivated. Such persons are deceived as to what constitutes true humility and Christian meekness.--[35]

Practical Discipline

Among the youth will be found great diversity of character and education. Some have lived in an element of arbitrary restraint and harshness, which has developed in them a spirit of obstinacy and defiance. Others have been household pets, allowed by overfond parents to follow their own inclinations. Every defect has been excused, until their character is deformed. To deal successfully with these different minds, the teacher needs to exercise great tact and delicacy in management, as well as firmness in government. Dislike and even contempt for proper regulations will often be manifested. Some will exercise all their ingenuity in evading penalties, while others will display a reckless indifference to the consequences of transgression. All this will call for more patience and greater exertion on the part of those who are entrusted with their education. If the parents would

stand pledged to sustain the authority of the teacher, much insubordination, vice, and profligacy would be prevented. Parents should require their children to respect and obey rightful authority. They should labor with unremitting care and diligence to instruct, guide, and restrain their children, until right habits are firmly established. With such training the youth would be in subjection to the institutions of society, and the general restraints of moral obligation.

Both by precept and example, the young should be taught simplicity of dress and manners, industry, sobriety, and economy. Many students are extravagant in spending the means furnished them by their parents. They try to show themselves superior to their associates by a lavish use of money for display and self-indulgence. In some institutions of learning, this matter has been regarded of so great consequence that the dress of the student is prescribed and his use of money limited by law. But indulgent parents and indulged students will find some way to evade the law. We would resort to no such means. We ask Christian

parents to take all these matters under careful, prayerful consideration, to seek counsel from the word of God, and then endeavor to act in accordance with its teachings.

If facilities for manual labor were provided in connection with our school, and students were required to devote a portion of their time to some active employment, it would prove a safeguard against many of the evil influences that prevail in institutions of learning. Manly, useful occupations, substituted for frivolous and corrupting diversions, would give legitimate scope for the exuberance of youthful life, and would promote sobriety and stability of character. All possible efforts should be made to encourage a desire for moral and physical as well as mental improvement. If girls were taught how to cook, especially how to make good bread, their education would be of far greater value. A knowledge of useful labor would prevent, to a great extent, that sickly sentimentalism which has been and is still ruining thousands. The exercise of the muscles as well as the brain will encourage taste for the homely duties of practical life.[36]

Literary societies are quite frequently organized, but, in nine cases out of ten, they have proved a damage to souls, rather than a blessing. This is because an alliance is formed with the world, or with a class whose influence and tendency is ever to lead away from the solid, to the superficial, from the real, to the fictitious. Literary societies would be of great advantage, if controlled by a religious element; but sooner or later, the irreligious element is almost certain to gain the ascendancy, and have a controlling influence.

Every physical and mental capability should be carefully preserved, and put to the best and highest use, to advance the glory of God. Those youth who permit their powers to be perverted, thus abusing God's gifts, will be called to strict account for the good they might have done had they availed themselves of the provision made through Jesus Christ. God claims the working of every faculty.[37]

All who become learners in the school of Christ

excel both in the quality and the extent of their education. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Proverbs 9:10) A knowledge of God and his requirements will open the understanding of the student to realize his responsibilities to God and to the world. To this end he will feel that his talents must be developed in that way which will produce the very best results. This cannot be done unless all the precepts and principles of religion are connected with his school education. In no case should he disconnect God from his studies. In the pursuit of knowledge, he is searching for truth; and all truth comes from God, the source of truth. Students who are virtuous, and are imbued with the Spirit of Christ, will grasp knowledge with all their faculties. Education acquired without Bible religion is disrobed of its true brightness and glory.[38]

There is no virtue in ignorance, and knowledge will not necessarily dwarf Christian growth; but if you seek for it from principle, having the right object before you, and feeling your obligation to God to use your faculties to do good to others and

promote his glory, knowledge will aid you to accomplish this end; it will help you to bring into exercise the powers which God has given you, and to employ them in his service. But, young men, if you gain ever so much knowledge, and yet fail to put that knowledge to a practical use, you fail of your object. If, in obtaining an education, you become so absorbed in your studies that you neglect prayer and religious privileges, and become careless and indifferent to the welfare of your souls, if you cease to learn in the school of Christ, you are selling your birthright for a mess of pottage. The object for which you are obtaining an education should not be lost sight of for a moment. It should be so to develop and direct your faculties that you may be more useful, and bless others to the extent of your ability. If by obtaining knowledge you increase your love of yourselves, and your inclination to excuse yourselves from bearing responsibilities, you are better without an education. If you love and idolize books, and allow them to get between you and your duties, so that you feel a reluctance to leave your studies and your reading to do essential labor that some one must

do, you should restrain your desire to study, and cultivate a love for doing those things in which you now take no interest. He that is faithful in that which is least will also be faithful in greater things.[39]

A Closing Exhortation

Shall the powers of mind and soul be misapplied? Shall opportunities be lost? Shall a form and routine be gone through day after day, with nothing gained? O, awake, awake, teachers and pupils, before it is too late! Awake before you hear from pale and agonized lips the terrible wail, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!”

Are the gifts and talents of every educator improved for the very best good of the pupils? Who is watching for a favorable moment to speak words of kindness and love? Who loves to tell the story of Him who so loved the world that he gave his life to redeem lost and perishing sinners? Train the youth, mould the character, educate, educate,

educate, for the future, immortal life. Pray often. Plead with God to give you a spirit of supplication. Do not feel that your work as teachers is done unless you can lead your scholars to faith in Jesus and love for him. Let the love of Christ pervade your own souls, and then you will unconsciously teach it to others. When you as instructors commit yourselves unreservedly to Jesus, for him to lead, to guide, to control, you will not fail. Teaching your students to be Christians is the greatest work before you. Go to God; he hears and answers prayers. Put from you questionings, doubts, and unbelief. Let no harshness come into your teaching. Be not too exacting, but cultivate tender sympathy and love. Be cheerful. Do not scold, do not censure too severely; be firm, be broad, be Christlike, pitiful, courteous. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

I cannot express to you the intense desire of my soul that you should all seek the Lord most earnestly while he may be found. We are in the day of God's preparation. Let nothing be regarded as of sufficient worth to draw your minds from the work

of preparing for the great day of Judgment. Get ready. Let not cold unbelief hold your souls away from God; but let his love burn on the altar of your hearts.[40]

Notes:

1. Gospel Workers, 260.
2. Extracts from an article in the Bible Echo for Sept. 1, 1892.
3. Gospel Workers, 387-389.
4. Gospel Workers, 315-319.
5. Gospel Workers, 384-386.
6. Patriarchs and Prophets, 641, 642.
7. Gospel Workers, 294.
8. Gospel Workers, 84.
9. Patriarchs and Prophets, 50, 51.
10. Patriarchs and Prophets, 119.
11. Gospel Workers, 285.
12. Gospel Workers, 291.
13. Gospel Workers, 293.
14. Extracts from "Testimony," No. 33.
15. Patriarchs and Prophets, 572-574.
16. Patriarchs and Prophets, 578, 579.

17. Patriarchs and Prophets, 143-144.
18. Gospel Workers, 278-279.
19. Patriarchs and Prophets, 244.
20. Patriarchs and Prophets, 168, 169.
21. Patriarchs and Prophets, 222, 223.
22. Patriarchs and Prophets, 622.
23. Patriarchs and Prophets, 360.
24. Gospel Workers, 252.
25. Patriarchs and Prophets, 175, 176.
26. Extract from an article in the Review and Herald, March 14, 1893.
27. Patriarchs and Prophets, 561, 562.
28. "Testimony," No. 32, pp. 75-79.
29. "Testimony," No. 29, first published in 1880.
30. Gospel Workers, 406.
31. "Testimony," No. 10.
32. "Testimony," No. 31.
33. "Testimony," No. 29.
34. Extract from an article in the Sabbath-school Worker for December, 1892.
35. "Testimony," No. 30.
36. "Testimony," No. 31.
37. "Testimony," No. 31.
38. "Testimony," No. 28.

39. "Testimony," No. 22.

40. "Testimony," No. 33, pp. 117, 118.