Preparing to See Christ

MEMORY VERSE: “That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour” (1 Thessalonians 4:4).

“Sanctification is a progressive work; it is not attained to in an hour or a day, and then maintained without any special effort on our part.”—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 472.

Suggested Readings: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, pp. 480-489; Selected Messages, bk. 2, pp. 257-274. (At the bottom of this page)

1. UNSATISFYING SPLENDOR Sun, Nov 29

a. Even amid the highest levels of artistic culture, how did Paul reveal the emptiness of life without Christ—and his longing for fellowship with faithful brethren? Acts 17:16, 17, 32, 33; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-4.

Acts 17:16, 17
Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. **17** Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

Acts 17:32, 33
And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. **33** So Paul departed from among them.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-4
Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; **2** And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: **3** That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. **4** For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

“The city of Athens was the metropolis of heathendom. Here Paul did not meet with an ignorant, credulous populace, as at Lystra, but with a people famous

for their intelligence and culture. Everywhere statues of their gods and of the deified heroes of history and poetry met the eye. . . .

"As Paul looked upon the beauty and grandeur surrounding him, and saw the city wholly given to idolatry, his spirit was stirred with jealousy for God, whom he saw dishonored on every side, and his heart was drawn out in pity for the people of Athens, who, notwithstanding their intellectual culture, were ignorant of the true God. . . .

"As he saw the magnificence of Athens he realized its seductive power over lovers of art and science, and his mind was deeply impressed with the importance of the work before him.

"In this great city, where God was not worshiped, Paul was oppressed by a feeling of solitude, and he longed for the sympathy and aid of his fellow laborers. So far as human friendship was concerned, he felt himself to be utterly alone. In his epistle to the Thessalonians he expresses his feelings in the words, 'Left at Athens alone.' "—The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 233, 234.

2. A WAY OF LIFE — Mon, Nov 30

a. In his letter to the Thessalonians, what again reveals Paul's tremendous love and dedication to the believers? 1 Thessalonians 3:5-10.

1 Thessalonians 3:5-10

For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain. **6** ¶ But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: **7** Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: **8** For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. **9** For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; **10** Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

"[Timothy and Silas] brought [Paul] 'good tidings' of the 'faith and charity' of those who had accepted the truth during the first visit of the gospel messengers to Thessalonica. Paul's heart went out in tender sympathy toward these believers, who, in the midst of trial and adversity, had remained true to God."—The Acts of the Apostles, p. 255.

b. Describe the glorious aim of God for His church, and explain how it operates in our lives. 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13; 4:1-3 (first half).

1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13

And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: **13** To the end he may stablish your

hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

1 Thessalonians 4:1–3
Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. **2** For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. **3** For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

"In his anxiety that the believers at Thessalonica should walk in the fear of God, the apostle pleaded with them to reveal practical godliness in the daily life." —Ibid., p. 262.

"God would have His children realize that in order to glorify Him their affection must be given to those who most need it. . . . No selfishness, in look, word, or deed, is to be manifested when dealing with those of like precious faith, . . . whether they be high or low, rich or poor. The love that gives kind words to only a few, while others are treated with coldness and indifference, is not love, but selfishness. It will not in any way work for the good of souls or the glory of God. Our love . . . is not to be sealed up for special ones, to the neglect of others. Break the bottle, and the fragrance will fill the house. . . .

"To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver; for they react upon him. Genuine love is a precious attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others."—Our High Calling, p. 231.

"Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others."—The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1076.

3. PURE IN A CORRUPT AGE — Tue, Dec 1

a. Name one specific sin of which Paul saw the need to warn the Thessalonians, a sin alarmingly common today as well. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5
For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: **4** That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; **5** Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

"Not all who profess to keep the commandments of God possess their bodies in sanctification and honor. The most solemn message ever committed to mortals has been entrusted to this people, and they can have a powerful influence if they will be sanctified by it. They profess to be standing upon the elevated platform of eternal truth, keeping all of God's commandments; therefore, if they indulge in sin, if they commit fornication and adultery, their crime is of tenfold greater magnitude than is that of the classes I have named, who do not acknowledge the law of God as binding upon them. In a peculiar sense do those who profess to keep God's law dishonor Him and reproach the truth by transgressing its precepts.

"It was the prevalence of this very sin, fornication, among ancient Israel, which brought upon them the signal manifestation of God's displeasure. His judgments then followed close upon their heinous sin; thousands fell, and their polluted bodies were left in the wilderness. . . .

"Seventh-day Adventists, above all other people in the world, should be patterns of piety, holy in heart and in conversation."—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, pp. 450, 451.

"Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. The people seem to be benumbed, and the lovers of virtue and true goodness are nearly discouraged by its boldness, strength, and prevalence. The iniquity which abounds is not merely confined to the unbeliever and the scoffer. Would that this were the case, but it is not. Many men and women who profess the religion of Christ are guilty. Even some who profess to be looking for His appearing are no more prepared for that event than Satan himself. They are not cleansing themselves from all pollution. They have so long served their lust that it is natural for their thoughts to be impure and their imaginations corrupt. It is as impossible to cause their minds to dwell upon pure and holy things as it would be to turn the course of Niagara and send its waters pouring up the falls."—Ibid., p. 346.

b. What is the next admonition Paul gives the flock? 1 Thessalonians 4:6, 7.

1 Thessalonians 4:6, 7

That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. **7** For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

"When the Lord comes forth as an avenger, He will also come as a protector of all those who have preserved the faith in its purity and kept themselves unspotted from the world."—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 210.

4. LESSONS THEN AND NOW — Wed, Dec 2

a. What encouragement did Paul have for the flock? 1 Thessalonians 4:8-10.

1 Thessalonians 4:8-10

He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. **9** ¶ But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. **10** And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

"One of the strongest evidences of true conversion is love to God and man. Those who accept Jesus as their Redeemer have a deep, sincere love for others of like precious faith. Thus it was with the believers at Thessalonica."—The Acts of the Apostles, p. 262.

b. What life lesson is helpful to all? 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12; Proverbs 13:4.

1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12
11 your own hands, as we commanded you; **12** That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

Proverbs 13:4
The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

"Young men, go forth into the places to which you are directed by the Spirit of the Lord. Work with your hands, that you may be self-supporting, and as you have opportunity proclaim the message of warning."—Medical Ministry, p. 321.

c. What Bible doctrine vital in Thessalonica is relevant again after centuries of darkness and confusion? 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15; Psalm 6:5; 13:3.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-15
But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. **14** For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. **15** For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

Psalm 6:5
For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

Psalm 13:3
Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;

"The Thessalonians had eagerly grasped the idea that Christ was coming to change the faithful who were alive, and to take them to Himself. They had

carefully guarded the lives of their friends, lest they should die and lose the blessing which they looked forward to receiving at the coming of their Lord. But one after another their loved ones had been taken from them, and with anguish the Thessalonians had looked for the last time upon the faces of their dead, hardly daring to hope to meet them in a future life.

"As Paul's epistle was opened and read, great joy and consolation was brought to the church by the words revealing the true state of the dead. Paul showed that those living when Christ should come would not go to meet their Lord in advance of those who had fallen asleep in Jesus."—The Acts of the Apostles, p. 258.

"Serious errors were . . . introduced into the Christian faith. Prominent among these was the belief in man's natural immortality and his consciousness in death. This doctrine laid the foundation upon which Rome established the invocation of saints and the adoration of the Virgin Mary. From this sprang also the heresy of eternal torment for the finally impenitent, which was early incorporated into the papal faith."—The Great Controversy, p. 58.

5. WAKING THE DEAD — Thur, Dec 3

a. Describe the awesome scene soon to occur when Christ returns in the clouds of glory. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 20:4-6.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: **17** Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. **18** Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Revelation 20:4-6

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. **5** But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. **6** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

"All heaven will be emptied of the angels, while the waiting saints will be looking for [Jesus] and gazing into heaven, as were the men of Galilee when He ascended from the Mount of Olivet. Then only those who are holy, those who have followed fully the meek Pattern, will with rapturous joy exclaim as they behold Him, 'Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.' And

they will be changed 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump'—that trump which wakes the sleeping saints, and calls them forth from their dusty beds, clothed with glorious immortality."—Early Writings, p. 110.

"The vitalizing power of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the mortal body binds every believing soul to Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Jesus are sacred to His heart; for their life is hid with Christ in God. The command will come from the Life-giver, 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead' (Isaiah 26:19).

"The Life-giver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection, and until that triumphant hour, when the last trump shall sound and the vast army shall come forth to eternal victory, every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name. By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and because they were partakers of the divine nature, they are brought forth from the dead. . . .

"What a glorious morning will the resurrection morning be! What a wonderful scene will open when Christ shall come to be admired of them that believe! All who were partakers with Christ in His humiliation and sufferings will be partakers with Him in His glory. By the resurrection of Christ from the dead every believing saint who falls asleep in Jesus will come forth from his prison house in triumph. The resurrected saint will proclaim, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' (1 Corinthians 15:55)."—Selected Messages, bk. 2, pp. 271, 272.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS — Fri, Dec 4

1. Like Athens, what places today reveal the limitations of earthly splendor?
2. Why is charitable love so essential in daily life?
3. What reality needs to be taught in today's licentious age?
4. Why is it important to understand the true state of the dead?
5. List the steps that occur at the return of Christ.

Suggested Readings: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, pp. 480–489

I have been surprised to see how many families are blinded by Satan so that they have no sense of his workings, his wiles and deceptions, practiced in their very midst. Parents seem to be stupefied by the paralyzing influence of the evil one, and yet think they are all right. I have been shown that Satan seeks to debase the minds of those who unite in marriage, that he may stamp his own hateful image upon their children. Because they have entered into the marriage relation, many think that they may permit themselves to be controlled by animal passions. They are led on by Satan, who deceives them and leads them to pervert this sacred institution. He is well pleased with the low level which their minds take; for he has much to gain in this direction. He knows that if he can excite the baser passions, and keep them in the ascendancy, he has nothing to be troubled about in their Christian experience; for the moral and intellectual faculties will be subordinate, while the animal propensities will predominate and keep in the ascendancy; and

these baser passions will be strengthened by exercise, while the nobler qualities will become weaker and weaker.

He can mold their posterity much more readily than he could the parents, for he can so control the minds of the parents that through them he may give his own stamp of character to their children. Thus many children are born with the animal passions largely in the ascendancy, while the moral faculties are but feebly developed. These children need the most careful culture to bring out, strengthen, and develop the moral and intellectual powers, that these may take the lead. But the workings of Satan are not perceived; his wiles are not understood. Children are not trained for God. Their moral and religious education is neglected. The animal passions are constantly strengthened, while the moral faculties become enfeebled.

Some children begin to practice self-pollution in their infancy; and as they increase in years, the lustful passions grow with their growth and strengthen with their strength. Their minds are not at rest. Girls desire the society of boys, and boys that of the girls. Their deportment is not reserved and modest. They are bold and forward, and take indecent liberties. The habit of self-abuse has debased their minds and tainted their souls. Vile thoughts, and the reading of novels, love stories, and vile books excite their imagination, and just such suit their depraved minds. They do not love work, and when engaged in labor they complain of fatigue; their backs ache; their heads ache. Is there not sufficient cause? Are they fatigued because of their labor? No, no! Yet the parents indulge these children in their complaints, and release them from labor and responsibility. This is the very worst thing that they can do for them. They are thus removing almost the only barrier that prevents Satan from having free access to their weakened minds. Useful labor would in some measure be a safeguard from his decided control of them.

We have some knowledge of Satan's manner of working and how well he succeeds in it. From what has been shown me, he has paralyzed the minds of parents. They are slow to suspect that their own children can be wrong and sinful. Some of these children profess to be Christians, and parents sleep on, fearing no danger, while the minds and bodies of their children are becoming wrecked. Some parents do not even take care to keep their children with them when in the house of God. Young girls attend meetings and take their seats, it may be, with their parents, but more frequently back in the congregation. They are in the habit of making an excuse to leave the house. Boys understand this, and go out before or after the exit of the girls, and then, as the meeting closes, they accompany them home. Parents are none the wiser for this. Again, excuses are made to walk, and boys and girls assemble in the fair grounds, or some other secluded place, and there play and have a regular high time, with no experienced eye upon them to caution them. They imitate men and women of advanced age.

This is a fast age. Little boys and girls commence paying attentions to one another when they should both be in the nursery, taking lessons in modesty of deportment. What is the effect of this common mixing up? Does it increase chastity in the youth who thus gather together? No, indeed! it increases the first

lustful passions; after such meetings the youth are crazed by the devil and give themselves up to their vile practices.

Parents are asleep and know not that Satan has planted his hellish banner right in their households. What, I was led to inquire, will become of the youth in this corrupt age? I repeat, Parents are asleep. The children are infatuated with a lovesick sentimentalism, and the truth has no power to correct the wrong. What can be done to stay the tide of evil? Parents can do much if they will. If a young girl just entering her teens is accosted with familiarity by a boy of her own age, or older, she should be taught to so resent this that no such advances will ever be repeated. When a girl's company is frequently sought by boys or young men, something is wrong. That young girl needs a mother to show her her place, to restrain her, and teach her what belongs to a girl of her age.

The corrupting doctrine which has prevailed, that, as viewed from a health standpoint, the sexes must mingle together, has done its mischievous work. When parents and guardians manifest one tithe of the shrewdness which Satan possesses, then can this association of sexes be nearer harmless. As it is, Satan is most successful in his effort to bewitch the minds of the youth; and the mingling of boys and girls only increases the evil twentyfold. Let boys and girls be kept employed in useful labor. If they are tired, they will have less inclination to corrupt their own bodies. There is nothing to be hoped for in the case of the young, unless there is an entire change in the minds of those who are older. Vice is stamped upon the features of boys and girls, and yet what is done to stay the progress of this evil? Boys and young men are allowed and encouraged to take liberties by immodest advances of girls and young women. May God arouse fathers and mothers to work earnestly to change this terrible state of things, is my prayer.

I have been looking over the Testimonies given for Sabbathkeepers and I am astonished at the mercy of God and His care for His people in giving them so many warnings, pointing out their dangers, and presenting before them the exalted position which He would have them occupy. If they would keep themselves in His love and separate from the world, He would cause His special blessings to rest upon them and His light to shine round about them. Their influence for good might be felt in every branch of the work and in every part of the gospel field. But if they fail to meet the mind of God, if they continue to have so little sense of the exalted character of the work as they have had in the past, their influence and example will prove a terrible curse. They will do harm and only harm. The blood of precious souls will be found upon their garments.
Testimonies of warning have been repeated. I inquire: Who have heeded them? Who have been zealous in repenting of their sins and idolatry, and have been earnestly pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? Who have shown the inward work of God, leading to self-denial and humble self-sacrifice? Who that have been warned have so separated themselves from the world, from its affections and lusts, that they have shown a daily growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Whom do we find among the active ones, that feel the burden for the church? Whom do we see that God is especially using, working by and through them to elevate the standard,

and to bring the church up to it, that they may prove the Lord and see if He will not pour them out a blessing?

I have waited anxiously, hoping that God would put His Spirit upon some and use them as instruments of righteousness to awaken and set in order His church. I have almost despaired as I have seen, year after year, a greater departure from that simplicity which God has shown me should characterize the life of His followers. There has been less and less interest in, and devotion to, the cause of God. I ask: Wherein have those who profess confidence in the Testimonies sought to live according to the light given in them? Wherein have they regarded the warnings given? Wherein have they heeded the instructions they have received?
I saw that great changes must be wrought in the hearts and lives of very many before God can work in them by His power for the salvation of others. They must be renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. Then the love of the world, the love of self, and every ambition of life calculated to exalt self will be changed by the grace of God and employed in the special work of saving souls for whom Christ died. Humility will take the place of pride, and haughty self-esteem will be exchanged for meekness. Every power of the heart will be controlled by disinterested love for all mankind. Satan, I saw, will arouse when they in earnest commence the work of reformation in themselves. He knows that these persons, if consecrated to God, could prove the strength of His promises and realize a power working with them that the adversary would not be able to gainsay or resist. They would realize the life of God in the soul.

One family in particular have needed all the benefits they could receive from the reform in diet, yet these very ones have been completely backslidden. Meat and butter have been used by them quite freely, and spices have not been entirely discarded. This family could have received great benefit from a nourishing, well-regulated diet. The head of the family needed plain, nutritious food. His habits were sedentary, and his blood moved sluggishly through the system. He could not, like others, have the benefit of healthful exercise; therefore his food should have been of the right quality and quantity. There has not been in this family the right management in regard to diet; there has been irregularity. There should have been a specified time for each meal, and the food should have been prepared in a simple form and free from grease; but pains should have been taken to have it nutritious, healthful, and inviting. In this family, as also in many others, a special parade has been made for visitors, many dishes prepared and frequently made too rich, so that those seated at the table would be tempted to eat to excess. Then in the absence of company there was a great reaction, a falling off in the preparations brought on the table. The diet was spare and lacked nourishment. It was considered not so much matter "just for ourselves." The meals were frequently picked up, and the regular time for eating not regarded. Every member of the family was injured by such management. It is a sin for any of our sisters to make such great preparations for visitors, and wrong their own families by a spare diet which will fail to nourish the system.

The brother referred to felt a lack in his system; he was not nourished, and he thought that meat would give him the needed strength. Had he been suitably cared for, his table spread at the right time with food of a nourishing quality, all the demands of nature would have been abundantly supplied. The butter and

meat stimulate. These have injured the stomach and perverted the taste. The sensitive nerves of the brain have been benumbed, and the animal appetite strengthened at the expense of the moral and intellectual faculties. These higher powers, which should control, have been growing weaker, so that eternal things have not been discerned. Paralysis has benumbed the spiritual and devotional. Satan has triumphed to see how easily he can come in through the appetite and control men and women of intelligence, calculated by the Creator to do a good and great work.

The case above referred to is not an isolated one; if it were, I would not introduce it here. When Satan takes possession of the mind, how soon the light and instruction that the Lord has graciously given, fade away and have no force! How many frame excuses and make necessities which have no existence, to bear them up in their course of wrong in setting aside the light and trampling it underfoot! I speak with assurance. The greatest objection to health reform is that this people do not live it out; and yet they will gravely say they cannot live the health reform and preserve their strength.

We find in every such instance a good reason why they cannot live out the health reform. They do not live it out, and have never followed it strictly, therefore they cannot be benefited by it. Some fall into the error that because they discard meat they have no need to supply its place with the best fruits and vegetables, prepared in their most natural state, free from grease and spices. If they would only skillfully arrange the bounties with which the Creator has surrounded them, parents and children with a clear conscience unitedly engaging in the work, they would enjoy simple food, and would then be able to speak understandingly of health reform. Those who have not been converted to health reform, and have never fully adopted it, are not judges of its benefits. Those who digress occasionally to gratify the taste in eating a fattened turkey or other flesh meats, pervert their appetites, and are not the ones to judge of the benefits of the system of health reform They are controlled by taste, not by principle.

I have a well-set table on all occasions. I make no change for visitors, whether believers or unbelievers. I intend never to be surprised by an unreadiness to entertain at my table from one to half a dozen extra who may chance to come in. I have enough simple, healthful food ready to satisfy hunger and nourish the system. If any want more than this, they are at liberty to find it elsewhere. No butter or flesh meats of any kind come on my table. Cake is seldom found there. I generally have an ample supply of fruits, good bread, and vegetables. Our table is always well patronized, and all who partake of the food do well, and improve upon it. All sit down with no epicurean appetite, and eat with a relish the bounties supplied by our Creator.

A wonderful indifference has been manifested upon this important subject by those right at the heart of the work. The lack of stability in regard to the principles of health reform is a true index of their character and their spiritual strength. They are deficient in thoroughness in their Christian experience. Conscience is not regarded. The basis or cause of every right action existing and operating in the renewed heart secures obedience without external or selfish motives. The spirit of truth and a good conscience are sufficient to inspire and regulate the

motives and conduct of those who learn of Christ and are like Him. Those who have no strength of religious principle in themselves are easily swayed, by the example of others, in a wrong direction. Those who have never learned their duty from God, and acquainted themselves with His purposes concerning them, are not reliable in times of severe conflict with the powers of darkness. They are swayed by external and present appearances. Worldly men are governed by worldly principles; they can appreciate no other. But Christians should not be governed by these principles. They should not seek to strengthen themselves in the performance of duty by any other consideration than a love to obey every requirement of God as found in His word and dictated by an enlightened conscience.

In the renewed heart there will be a fixed principle to obey the will of God, because there is a love for what is just, and good, and holy. There will be no hesitating, conferring with the taste, or studying of convenience, or moving in a certain course because others do so. Everyone should live for himself. The minds of all who are renewed by grace will be an open medium, continually receiving light, grace, and truth from above, and transmitting the same to others. Their works are fruitful. Their fruit is unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

But very few have an experimental knowledge of the sanctifying influence of the truths which they profess. Their obedience and devotion have not been in accordance with their light and privileges. They have no real sense of the obligation resting upon them to walk as children of the light, and not as children of darkness. If the light that has been given to these had been given Sodom and Gomorrah, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes, and would have escaped the signal wrath of God. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for those who have been privileged with the clear light, and have had a vast amount of labor, but have not profited by it. They have neglected the great salvation which God in mercy was willing to bestow. They were so blinded by the devil that they verily thought themselves rich and in the favor of God, when the True Witness declares them to be wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

Selected Messages, bk. 2, pp. 257–274.

Bereavement Softens and Subdues

It has been my lot to be chastened by affliction, which has had a softening and subduing influence, removing enmity from my heart, and filling it with sympathy and love. My life of bereavement, [Two of her four boys had died at an early age—the oldest, Henry, at the age of sixteen and Herbert, the youngest, at the age of three months. Death came to her husband, Elder James White, in 1881 after a very brief illness, at the age of sixty. Reference to this experience is found later in the chapter.—Compilers.] Pain, and suffering has not been without precious revealings of the presence of my Saviour. My eyes have been attracted to the heavens that shine in beauty above us; I have obtained glimpses of the eternal world and of the exceeding great reward. When all has seemed dark, there has been a rift in the clouds, and sunbeams from the throne have dispersed the gloom. God would not have any of us remain pressed down by dumb sorrow, with

sore and breaking hearts. He would have us look up to catch the rainbow of promise, and reflect light to others.
Oh, the blessed Saviour stands by many whose eyes are so blinded by tears that they do not discern Him. He longs to clasp our hands firmly, while we cling to Him in simple faith, imploring Him to guide us. It is our privilege to rejoice in God. If we will let the comfort and peace of Jesus into our lives, we shall be kept close to His great heart of love.—The Review and Herald, November 25, 1884.

We Shall See Our Children Again

Comfort to a Mother on the Death of Her Child

As you relate your experience in the death of your child, and how you bowed in prayer, submitting your will to the will of your heavenly Father, leaving the matter with Him, my mother heart is touched. I have passed through an experience similar to the experience through which you have just passed.

When my eldest son was sixteen years old, he was stricken down in sickness. His case was considered critical, and he called us to his bedside, and said, "Father, Mother, it will be hard for you to part with your eldest son. If the Lord sees fit to spare my life, for your sake I will be pleased. If it is for my good and His name's glory for my life to close now, I will say, It is well with my soul. Father, go by yourself, and Mother, go by yourself; and pray. Then you will receive an answer according to the will of my Saviour, whom you love and I love." He was afraid that if we should bow together, our sympathies would strengthen, and we would ask for that which it would not be best for the Lord to grant.

We did as he requested, and our prayers were similar in every point to the prayers you offered. We received no evidence that our son would recover. He died, putting his full trust in Jesus our Saviour. His death was a great blow to us, but it was a victory even in death; for his life was hid with Christ in God.

Before the death of my eldest boy, my babe was sick unto death. We prayed, and thought that the Lord would spare us our darling; but we closed his eyes in death, and laid him away to rest in Jesus, until the Life-giver shall come to awaken His precious loved ones to a glorious immortality.

Then my husband, the faithful servant of Jesus Christ, who had stood by my side for thirty-six years, was taken from me, and I was left to labor alone. He sleeps in Jesus. I have no tears to shed over his grave. But how I miss him! How I long for his words of counsel and wisdom! How I long to hear his prayers blending with my prayers for light and guidance, for wisdom to know how to plan and lay out the work!

But the Lord has been my Counselor, and the Lord will give you grace to bear your bereavement.

You inquire in regard to your little one's being saved. Christ's words are your answer: "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:16).

Remember the prophecy, “Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted.... Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border” (Jeremiah 31:15-17).
This promise is yours. You may be comforted and trust in the Lord. The Lord has often instructed me that many little ones are to be laid away before the time of trouble. We shall see our children again. We shall meet them and know them in the heavenly courts. Put your trust in the Lord, and be not afraid.—Letter 196, 1899.

Children In the Resurrection

Lines Penned on the Death of the Child of Mrs. White’s Twin Sister

Our fondest hopes are often blighted here. Our loved ones are torn from us by death. We close their eyes and habit them for the tomb, and lay them away from our sight. But hope bears our spirits up. We are not parted forever, but shall meet the loved ones who sleep in Jesus. They shall come again from the land of the enemy. The Life-giver is coming. Myriads of holy angels escort Him on His way. He bursts the bands of death, breaks the fetters of the tomb, the precious captives come forth in health and immortal beauty.

As the little infants come forth immortal from their dusty beds, they immediately wing their way to their mothers’ arms. They meet again nevermore to part. But many of the little ones have no mother there. We listen in vain for the rapturous song of triumph from the mother. The angels receive the motherless infants and conduct them to the tree of life.

Jesus places the golden ring of light, the crown upon their little heads. God grant that the dear mother of “Eva” may be there, that her little wings may be folded upon the glad bosom of her mother.—The Youth’s Instructor, April, 1858.
Jesus Says, “Lean on Me”

Words to Parents Who Had Lost Children at Sea

I have thought of you many, many times
The comforts of the Scriptures are very great; they abound in consolations to the afflicted and bereaved, the sick and the suffering. I seem to see Jesus saying to you, Father and Mother D, “Lean on Me, lean hard. I will bear you up. My arm shall never fail you. It shall be strong to support you over all the rough and difficult places. Only make Me your trust and you shall be guided safely and upheld firmly.” Oh, the precious Bible, its truths are full of marrow and fatness. We may consider and rejoice in the light of the promises. They are the gracious utterances of an infinite God. His voice is speaking to us out of His Word. I hope you are of good courage.

This affliction that has come to you, you may not be able to explain. Everything may remain in impenetrable mystery until the sea shall give up her dead. But let not your heart bow down in sorrow, for they are the Lord's property and He will do what He will with His own. This we know, that His love is greater than ours possibly can be, and Jesus so loved them that He gave His life to redeem them; then let them rest, and let your heart go out more decidedly after Jesus to supply every soul hunger, every want

Whatever may be your circumstances, however dark and mysterious may be the ways of Providence, though the path may be through the deep waters, and trials and bereavements may afflict again and again, the assurance still comes, "All things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12).—Letter 32, 1893.

Blessed Are the Dead Who Die in the Lord

Comfort on the Death of a Mother

Dear Sister,
I have read the letter ... in regard to your mother's death, and I could but say, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13). For a long time your mother had been very feeble. You have cared constantly for her. To see her face no more will be a great grief to you. Were we living nearer you, we would say, Come apart, and rest awhile. But your duties claim your time. I would say to you, Trust in the Lord.

You will feel the death of your mother very keenly; but let me tell you that I sorrow not for the righteous dead, but for the living. I know that you have laid your mother in the tomb in the full hope that she will come forth when the trump of God shall sound.... I know what it means to bury loved ones. My father, mother, brothers and sisters, my husband and two of my sons, are sleeping in their graves. My sister Mary and I and my two sons are all that are left.—Letter 98, 1903.

Look to the Happy Family Reunion

Comfort on the Loss of a Wife

Dear Brother,
We have heard the news of your wife's death, but have received no particulars in regard to her sickness.

We sympathize with you. We pray that the Lord will comfort you, and impart to you His grace, so that you will not be prostrated by overmuch grief. Let us thank God that our faces are set toward the promised inheritance. Let us thank Him that His salvation is nigh, and not far off.

As you look upon your little ones, toward whom your wife so faithfully discharged her responsibilities as a mother, you have reason for rejoicing that she has done

what she could to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The blessed Saviour, who took little children in His arms and blessed them, will not leave your children or you comfortless. A double responsibility now rests upon you. May the Lord inspire the hearts of those who shall deal with these lambs of Christ's fold, to treat them gently, tenderly, lovingly, so that their young and inexperienced feet may be ever guided to walk safely.

Dear little ones, Sister White loves you, and she will ask the Saviour to bless you, for He loves you as His little children.

Brother E, I know you will feel sad because you have had to bury one who was dear to your heart. But what saith the Scriptures?

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:12, 13).

We will pray for you and your precious little ones, that you may, by patient continuance in welldoing, keep your face and steps always directed heavenward. We will pray that you may have influence and success in guiding your little ones, that you, with them, may gain the crown of life, and that in the home above, now being prepared for us, you and your wife and children may be a family joyously, happily reunited, nevermore to be separated.

Will Be Called in Special Resurrection

Words to Husband and Children on the Loss of Wife and Mother

I hardly know what to say to you. The news of your wife's death was to me overwhelming. I could hardly believe it and can hardly believe it now. God gave me a view last Sabbath night which I will write

I saw that she was sealed and would come up at the voice of God and stand upon the earth, and would be with the 144,000. I saw we need not mourn for her; she would rest in the time of trouble, and all that we could mourn for was our loss in being deprived of her company. I saw her death would result in good.

I warn F and the rest of the children to prepare to meet Jesus, and then they will meet their mother again, nevermore to be parted. O children, will you heed her faithful warning that she gave you while she was with you, and let not all her prayers that she has offered up to God for you be as water spilt upon the ground? Get ready to meet Jesus, and all will be well. Give your hearts to God and do not rest a day unless you know that you love Jesus.

Dear Brother, we have prayed to God to gird you up and strengthen you to sustain your loss. God will be with you and uphold you. Only have faith....

Sorrow not as those who have no hope. The grave can hold her but a little while. Hope thou in God and cheer up, dear brother, and you will meet her in a little while. We will not cease to pray for the blessings of God to rest upon your family and you. God will be your sun and your shield. He will stand by you in this your deep affliction and trial. Endure the trial well and you will receive a crown of glory with your companion at the appearing of Jesus. Hold fast truth, and you with her will be crowned with glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life.—Letter 10, 1850.

No Sin in Weeping

Comfort to a Widow

Dear Sister,
We sympathize with you in your bereavement and widowhood. I have passed over the ground that you are now traveling, and know what it means. How much sorrow there is in our world! How much grief! How much weeping! It is not right to say to the bereaved ones, "Do not weep; it is not right to weep." Such words have little consolation in them. There is no sin in weeping. Although the one who passes away has been for years a sufferer because of weakness and pain, yet that does not wipe away the tears from our eyes.

Our loved ones die. Their accounts with God are sealed up. But while we consider it a serious, solemn thing to die, we must consider it a much more solemn thing to live. Every day of life is freighted with responsibilities which we must bear. Our individual interests, our words, our actions, are making impressions upon those with whom we are connected. We are to find our consolation in Jesus Christ. Precious Saviour! He was ever touched with human woe Cling to the Source of your strength.—Letter 103, 1898.

On the Death of a Husband and Father

My Dear Afflicted Sister,

I am afflicted with you in your affliction. Although I did not expect to meet your husband again in this life, yet I have been made sad to hear of his death, and of the heavy responsibilities that this has left to rest upon you in the care of the family. We sympathize with you and will pray often for you and your children. Your husband sleeps in Jesus. "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours: and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13).

The Father loves all who are believers in deed and in truth, as members of that body of which Christ is the head. You must now sit down under Christ's shadow, and you will realize His peace. Think of Christ. Look to Him in faith, believing His promises. Keep your mind trustful. He will be your stay. Lean on Him, depend on Him. Do not be sorrowful above measure, but bear up; for a heavy burden rests upon you. Put your trust in One whose arm will never fail you.

I have lost my husband, and I know by experience what your sorrow is. But looking to Jesus you will find encouragement. May you have the blessing of the Lord every day. My dear sister, may the Lord bless and sustain you.

It is too dark to see now, so I will say good night. Be as cheerful as you can for the sake of your children.—Letter 167, 1905.

Dear Children,

I must write a few lines to you. We wish that we could step into your home and weep with you and kneel with you in prayer. Will each one of you seek the Lord and serve Him? You can be a great blessing to your mother by doing nothing that will make her heart sad. The Lord Jesus will receive you if you will give your hearts to Him. Do all that is possible to relieve your mother from every care and burden. The Lord has promised to be a Father to the fatherless. If you will give your hearts to Him, He will give you power to become the sons and daughters of God. If the elder children will relieve the mother by bearing as many burdens as possible, and by treating the younger children kindly, teaching them to do right and not to worry Mother, the Lord will greatly bless them.

Give your hearts to the loving Saviour, and do only those things that are pleasing in His sight. Do nothing to grieve your mother. Remember that the Lord loves you, and that each one of you can become a member of the family of God. If you are faithful here, when He shall come in the clouds of heaven, you will meet your father, and will be a united family.
In love.—Letter 165, 1905.

On the Death of a Husband

Dear Sister,

A letter has just been placed in my hands from Sister G, giving an account of your bereavement. I deeply sympathize with you, my sister. If I were where I could visit you I would do so

I will say to you, my sister, the Lord would not have you grieve in sadness. Your husband has been spared to you many years longer than I supposed he would be. God has mercifully spared him, and mercifully, after much suffering, has let him rest in Jesus.... Your husband and my husband are at rest. They have no more pain, no more suffering. They are at rest.

I am sorry, my sister, that you are in affliction and sorrow. But Jesus, the precious Saviour, lives. He lives for you. He wants you to be comforted in His love. Do not worry; trust in the Lord. Remember that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the notice of your heavenly Father....

Be comforted, my sister, in the Lord. “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us ..., arm yourselves likewise with the same mind” (1 Peter 4:1). I urge you in your suffering to stay your soul upon God. The Lord will be your help, your strength, your comfort. Then look to Him and trust in Him. We must receive our

consolation from Christ. Learn in His school His meekness and lowliness of heart. Let every word you speak show that you recognize the goodness, the mercy, and the love of God. Be determined to be a comfort and a blessing to all in the home. Create a sweet, pure, heavenly atmosphere....

Open the windows of the soul heavenward, and let the light of the Sun of Righteousness in. Do not complain. Do not mourn and weep. Do not look on the dark side. Let the peace of God reign in your soul. Then you will have strength to bear all your sufferings, and you will rejoice that you have grace to endure. Praise the Lord; talk of His goodness; tell of His power. Sweeten the atmosphere which surrounds your soul.

Do not dishonor God by words of repining, but praise Him with heart and soul and voice. Look on the bright side of everything. Do not bring a cloud or shadow into your home. Praise Him who is the light of your countenance and your God. Do this, and see how smoothly everything will go.
Love to yourself and your daughter.—Letter 56, 1900.

In my recent bereavement, I have had a near view of eternity. I have, as it were, been brought before the great white throne, and have seen my life as it will there appear. I can find nothing of which to boast, no merit that I can plead. "Unworthy, unworthy of the least of Thy favors, O my God," is my cry. My only hope is in a crucified and risen Saviour. I claim the merits of the blood of Christ. Jesus will save to the uttermost all who put their trust in Him.

It is sometimes hard for me to preserve a cheerful countenance when my heart is rent with anguish. But I would not permit my sorrow to cast a gloom upon all around me. Seasons of affliction and bereavement are often rendered more sorrowful and distressing than they should be, because it is customary to give ourselves up to mourning without restraint. By the help of Jesus, I determined to shun this evil; but my resolution has been severely tested. My husband's death was a heavy blow to me, more keenly felt because so sudden. As I saw the seal of death upon his countenance, my feelings were almost insupportable. I longed to cry out in my anguish. But I knew that this could not save the life of my loved one, and I felt that it would be unchristian to give myself up to sorrow. I sought help and comfort from above, and the promises of God were verified to me. The Lord's hand sustained me. It is a sin to indulge, without restraint, in mourning and lamentation. By the grace of Christ, we may be composed and even cheerful under sore trial.

Let us learn a lesson of courage and fortitude from the last interview of Christ with His apostles. They were about to be separated. Our Saviour was entering the bloodstained path which would lead Him to Calvary. Never was scene more trying than that through which He was soon to pass. The apostles had heard the words of Christ foretelling His sufferings and death, and their hearts were heavy with sorrow, their minds distracted with doubt and fear. Yet there were no loud outcries; there was no abandonment of grief. Those last solemn, momentous hours were spent by our Saviour in speaking words of comfort and assurance to His disciples, and then all united in a hymn of praise....

A Time for Prayer and Praise

When difficulties and trials surround us, we should flee to God, and confidently expect help from Him who is mighty to save and strong to deliver. We must ask for God's blessing if we would receive it. Prayer is a duty and a necessity; but do we not neglect praise? Should we not oftener render thanksgiving to the Giver of all our blessings? We need to cultivate gratitude. We should frequently contemplate and recount the mercies of God, and laud and glorify His holy name, even when we are passing through sorrow and affliction....

The Lord's merciful kindness is great toward us. He will never leave nor forsake those who trust in Him. If we would think and talk less of our trials, and more of the mercy and goodness of God, we would find ourselves raised above much of our gloom and perplexity. My brethren and sisters, you who feel that you are entering upon a dark path, and like the captives in Babylon must hang your harps upon the willows, let us make trial of cheerful song. You may say, How can I sing, with this dark prospect before me, with this burden of sorrow and bereavement upon my soul? But have earthly sorrows deprived us of the all-powerful Friend we have in Jesus? Should not the marvelous love of God in the gift of His dear Son be a theme of continual rejoicing? When we bring our petitions to the throne of grace, let us not forget to offer also anthems of thanksgiving. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me" (Psalm 50:23). As long as our Saviour lives, we have cause for unceasing gratitude and praise.—The Review and Herald, November 1, 1881.

A Message to Friends on Pitcairn Island

We were made very sad last Thursday to learn of your deep affliction. Our hearts are pained to hear of the deaths of those of our beloved Brother [J. R.] McCoy's family. Our sympathies go out to all who are bereaved by this affliction. We extend our sympathy to the children and members of the family who have been thus sorely bereaved, but we would point you to Jesus as your only hope and consolation. The dear companion of our afflicted Brother McCoy, and the mother of the bereaved children whom she loved, is silent in death. But while we weep with those that weep, we joy at heart because this loved mother and daughter, and Brother Young, the elder of your church, and others who may have been removed by death, believed in and loved Jesus.

Let the words of the apostle Paul comfort you: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We are not like the heathen, to have days and nights of mourning when nothing is heard but dismal chanting for the dead, for the purpose of arousing human sympathy. We are not to clothe ourselves with mourning clothing and wear a mournful countenance, as though our friends and relatives were forever parted from us. John exclaims, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:12, 13).

How appropriate are the words of John in the case of these loved ones who sleep in Jesus. The Lord loved them, and the words spoken by them in their life, the labors of love which will be remembered, will be repeated by others. Their earnest wholeheartedness in the work of God leaves an example for others to follow, for the Holy Spirit has worked in them to will and to do of His good pleasure.

"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11). O how precious are these words to every bereaved soul! Christ is our Guide and Comforter, who comforts us in all our tribulations. When He gives us a bitter draught to drink, He also holds a cup of blessing to our lips. He fills the heart with submission, with joy and peace in believing, and enables us to say submissively, Not my will, but Thy will, O Lord, be done. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). With this submission hope is resurrected, and the hand of faith lays hold upon the hand of infinite power. "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11).

The very bodies that are sown in corruption will be raised in incorruption. That which is sown in dishonor will be raised in glory; sown in weakness, it will be raised in power; sown a natural body, it will be raised a spiritual body. The mortal bodies are quickened by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Christ claims all those as His who have believed in His name. The vitalizing power of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the mortal body binds every believing soul to Jesus Christ. Those who believe in Jesus are sacred to His heart; for their life is hid with Christ in God. The command will come from the Life-giver, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isaiah 26:19).

The life-giver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection, and until that triumphant hour, when the last trump shall sound and the vast army shall come forth to eternal victory, every sleeping saint will be kept in safety and will be guarded as a precious jewel, who is known to God by name. By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and because they were partakers of the divine nature, they are brought forth from the dead.

Christ claimed to be the Only Begotten of the Father, but men encased in unbelief, barricaded with prejudice, denied the Holy and the Just One. He was charged with blasphemy, and was condemned to a cruel death, but He burst the fetters of the tomb, and rose from the dead triumphant, and over the rent sepulcher of Joseph He declared, "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25). All power in heaven and in earth was vested in Him, and the righteous will also come forth from the tomb free in Jesus. They shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13:43).

What a glorious morning will the resurrection morning be! What a wonderful scene will open when Christ shall come to be admired of them that believe! All who were partakers with Christ in His humiliation and sufferings will be partakers with Him in His glory. By the resurrection of Christ from the dead every believing saint who falls asleep in Jesus will come forth from his prison house in triumph. The resurrected saint will proclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55)....

Jesus Christ has triumphed over death and rent the fetters of the tomb, and all who sleep in the tomb will share the victory; they will come forth from their graves as did the Conqueror....

God Has Not Left You

Dear afflicted ones, so sadly bereaved, God has not left you to be the sport of Satan's temptations. Let your sorrowful hearts be opened to receive the words of consolation from your pitying Redeemer. Jesus loves you. Receive the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness and be comforted. Thank Him who has risen from the dead, and who ever liveth to make intercession for you. Jesus Christ is a living Saviour. He is not in Joseph's new tomb. He is risen, He is risen! Rejoice, even in this your day of sorrow and bereavement, that you have a Saviour who sympathizes with all your grief. He wept at the grave of Lazarus, and identifies His sorrows with those of the sorrowing children.

In all your conflicts, in all the trials and perplexities of life, seek counsel from God. The path of obedience to God is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Follow step after step in the path of duty. Steep places may have to be climbed, but go forward in the path of humility, of faith and self-denial, leaving the clouds of doubt behind you. Sorrow not in a hopeless way, for the living need your care and love. You have enlisted in the Lord's army; be brave soldiers of Jesus Christ. Let words of penitence and grateful praise come up before God as sweet incense in His heavenly sanctuary.

You may be disappointed, and your will and your way may be denied; but be assured that the Lord loves you. The furnace fire may kindle upon you, not for the purpose of destroying you, but to consume the dross, that you may come forth as gold seven times purified. Bear in mind that God will give you songs in the night. Darkness may seem to enclose you, but you are not to look at the clouds. Beyond the darkest cloud there is an ever-shining light. The Lord has light for every soul. Open the door of the heart to hope, peace, and joy. Jesus says, "These things have

I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).

God has a special work for everyone to do, and each one of us may do well the work which God has assigned him. The only thing we have to fear on our part is that we shall not keep our eyes continually fixed upon Jesus, that we shall not have an eye single to the glory of God, so that if we were called to lay down our armor and sleep in death we might not be ready to give an account of our trust. Forget not for a moment that you are Christ's property, bought with an infinite price, and that you are to glorify Him in your spirit, and in your body, which are His.

Be of Good Comfort

To the afflicted ones I would say, Be of good comfort in the hope of the resurrection morning. The waters of which you have been drinking are as bitter to your taste as were the waters of Marah to the children of Israel in the wilderness, but Jesus can make them so sweet with His love. When Moses presented before the Lord the sad difficulties of the children of Israel, He did not present some new remedy, but called their attention to that which was at hand; for there was a bush or shrub which He had created that was to be cast into the water to make the fountain sweet and pure. When this was done, the suffering people could drink of the water with safety and pleasure.

God has provided a balm for every wound. There is a balm in Gilead, there is a physician there. Will you not now as never before study the Scriptures? Seek the Lord for wisdom in every emergency. In every trial plead with Jesus to show you a way out of your troubles, then your eyes will be opened to behold the remedy and to apply to your case the healing promises that have been recorded in His Word. In this way the enemy will find no place to lead you into mourning and unbelief, but instead you will have faith and hope and courage in the Lord. The Holy Spirit will give you clear discernment that you may see and appropriate every blessing that will act as an antidote to grief, as a branch of healing to every draught of bitterness that is placed to your lips. Every draught of bitterness will be mingled with the love of Jesus, and in place of complaining of the bitterness, you will realize that Jesus' love and grace are so mingled with sorrow that it has been turned into subdued, holy, sanctified joy.

When Henry White, our eldest son, lay dying, he said, "A bed of pain is a precious place when we have the presence of Jesus." When we are obliged to drink of the bitter waters, turn away from the bitter to the precious and the bright. In trial grace can give the human soul assurance, and when we stand at the deathbed and see how the Christian can bear suffering and go through the valley of death, we gather strength and courage to work, and we fail not, neither are we discouraged in leading souls to Jesus.—Letter 65a, 1894.

The Best Comforters

Those who have borne the greatest sorrows are frequently the ones who carry the greatest comfort to others, bringing sunshine wherever they go. Such ones

have been chastened and sweetened by their afflictions; they did not lose confidence in God when trouble assailed them, but clung closer to His protecting love. Such ones are a living proof of the tender care of God, who makes the darkness as well as the light, and chastens us for our good. Christ is the light of the world; in Him is no darkness. Precious light! Let us live in that light! Bid adieu to sadness and repining. Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.—The Health Reformer, vol. 12, No. 10, October, 1877.