

Malachi's Final Appeal

MEMORY VERSE: "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:3).

"Solemnly evildoers were warned of the day of judgment to come and of Jehovah's purpose to visit with swift destruction every transgressor. Yet none were left without hope; Malachi's prophecies of judgment were accompanied by invitations to the impenitent to make their peace with God."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 706.

Suggested Readings: Prophets and Kings, pp. 702-721; Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, pp. 45-50. (At the bottom of this page)

1. FAULTS OFTEN OVERLOOKED

Sun, Mar 22

a. Of what tendency toward selfish greed might we be guilty? Malachi 1:8.

Malachi 1:8

And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.

"Many have indulged in needless expense, merely to gratify the feelings, the taste, and the eye, when the cause needed the very means thus used, and when some of the servants of God were poorly clothed and were crippled in their labor for lack of means. Said the angel: 'Their time to do will soon be past. Their works show that self is their idol, and to it they sacrifice.' Self must first be gratified; their feeling is: 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Warning after warning many have received, but heeded not. Self is the main object, and to it everything must bow."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 115.

b. In stark contrast to the cultural practices of today's society, how does God view the tender, sacred commitment of marriage? Malachi 2:12-16; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:4-6.

Malachi 2:12-16

The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts. **13** And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. **14** Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. **15** And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. **16** For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Matthew 19:4-6

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, **5** And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? **6** Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

“Study to advance the happiness of each other. Let there be mutual love, mutual forbearance. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be as it were the very beginning of love.”—The Ministry of Healing, p. 360.

a. Explain the prophetic fulfillment of Malachi 3:1-3; John 2:13-16.

Malachi 3:1-3

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. **2** But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: **3** And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

John 2:13-16

And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, **14** And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: **15** And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; **16** And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

“In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah. . . . The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 161.

“God would have His servants become acquainted with the moral machinery of their own hearts. In order to bring this about, He often permits the fire of affliction to assail them that they may become purified. . . .”

“The purification of the people of God cannot be accomplished without their suffering. God permits the fires of affliction to consume the dross, to separate the worthless from the valuable, that the pure metal may shine forth. He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. If we cannot bear these trials, what will we do in the time of trouble? If prosperity or adversity discover falseness, pride, or selfishness in our hearts, what shall we do when God tries every man's work as by fire, and lays bare the secrets of all hearts?”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 85.

b. Name some ways in which God's people are rebuked for forgetting Him, and what does robbing God truly involve? Malachi 3:5-8; James 1:27; Luke 12:15; Proverbs 3:9,10.

Malachi 3:5-8

And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts. **6** For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. **7** Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? **8** Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

James 1:27

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Luke 12:15

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Proverbs 3:9, 10

Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: **10** So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

“We must deliberately resolve that we will honor God with our substance; and then we must let nothing tempt us to rob Him of the tithes and offerings that are His due. We must be intelligent, systematic, and continuous in our acts of charity to men and our expressions of gratitude to God for His bounties to us. This is too sacred a duty to be left to chance or to be controlled by impulse or feeling. We should regularly reserve something for God's cause, that He may not be robbed of the portion which He claims. When we rob God we rob ourselves also. We give up the heavenly treasure for the sake of having more of this earth. This is a loss that we cannot afford to sustain. If we live so that we can have the blessing of God we shall have His prospering hand with us in our temporal affairs, but if His hand is against us He can defeat all our plans and scatter faster than we can gather.”—Ibid, vol. 5, pp. 271, 272.

a. Name some blessings resulting from the return of a faithful tithe and liberal offerings—and explain our need to avoid delay in this. Malachi 3:10-12.

Malachi 3:10-12

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. **11** And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. **12** And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

“Deathbed charity is not what Christ requires of His followers; it cannot excuse the selfishness of the living. Those who hold fast their property till the last moment, surrender it to death rather than to the cause. Losses are occurring continually. Banks fail, and property is consumed in very many ways. Many purpose to do something, but they delay the matter, and Satan works to prevent the means from coming into the treasury at all. It is lost before it is returned to God, and Satan exults that it is so.

“If you would do good with your means, do it at once lest Satan get it in his hands and thus hinder the work of God. Many times, when the Lord has opened the way for brethren to handle their means to advance His cause, the agents of Satan have presented some enterprise by which they were positive the brethren could double their means. They take the bait; their money is invested, and the cause, and frequently themselves, never receive a dollar.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 154.

b. What painfully accurate record of ourselves should we determine to see blotted out? Ecclesiastes 12:14; Isaiah 65:6, 7.

Ecclesiastes 12:14

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Isaiah 65:6, 7

Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, **7** Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers

together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.

c. Besides having their names in the book of life, what reveals the deeds in God's record of His faithful children? Malachi 3:16; Psalm 56:8.

Malachi 3:16

Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

Psalm 56:8

Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?

‘“A book of remembrance’ is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of ‘them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.’ Malachi 3:16. Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven. Nehemiah refers to this when he says: ‘Remember me, O my God, . . . and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God.’ Nehemiah 13:14. In the book of God’s remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ’s sake, is recorded.”—The Great Controversy, p. 481.

4. RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED

Wed, Mar 25

a. What joy does God express toward His faithful people, and how can we reflect that joy in our character and deeds? Malachi 3:17; Matthew 25:34–40.

Malachi 3:17

And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Matthew 25:34–40

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I

was a stranger, and ye took me in: **36** Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. **37** Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? **38** When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? **39** Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? **40** And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

“When hearts sympathize with hearts burdened with discouragement and grief, when the hand dispenses to the needy, when the naked are clothed, the stranger made welcome to a seat in your parlor and a place in your heart, angels are coming very near, and an answering strain is responded to in heaven. Every act of justice, mercy, and benevolence makes melody in heaven. The Father from His throne beholds those who do these acts of mercy, and numbers them with His most precious treasures.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 25.

b. How do we know the distinction between the wicked and the righteous is soon to be fully apparent? Malachi 3:18; Revelation 22:11, 12.

Malachi 3:18

Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Revelation 22:11, 12

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. **12** And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

‘ “The heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is judge Himself.” Psalm 50:6. That holy law, God’s righteousness, that amid thunder and flame was proclaimed from Sinai as the guide of life, is now revealed to men as the rule of judgment. The hand opens the tables, and there are seen the precepts of the Decalogue, traced as with a pen of fire. The words are so plain that all can read them. Memory is aroused, the darkness of superstition and heresy is swept from every mind, and God’s ten words, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, are presented to the view of all the inhabitants of the earth.

“It is impossible to describe the horror and despair of those who have trampled upon God’s holy requirements. The Lord gave them His law; they might have compared their characters with it and learned their defects while there was yet opportunity for repentance and reform; but in order to secure the favor of the world, they set aside its precepts and taught others to transgress. They have endeavored to compel God’s people to profane His Sabbath. Now they are condemned by that law which they have despised. With awful distinctness they see that they are without excuse....

“Too late they see the true nature of their spurious sabbath and the sandy foundation upon which they have been building. They find that they have been fighting against God. Religious teachers have led souls to perdition while professing to guide them to the gates of Paradise.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 639, 640.

5. THE LAST CHAPTER

Thu, Mar 26

a. Describe the final destiny of evildoers. **Malachi 4:1-3.**

Malachi 4:1-3

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. 3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

b. What final appeal does God send from the minor prophets? **Malachi 4:5, 6.**

Malachi 4:5, 6

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

“It is earthliness and selfishness that separate from God. The messages from heaven are of a character to arouse opposition. The faithful witnesses for Christ and the truth will reprove sin. Their words will be like a hammer to break the flinty heart, like a fire to consume the dross. There is constant need of earnest, decided

messages of warning. God will have men who are true to duty. At the right time He sends His faithful messengers to do a work similar to that of Elijah.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 254.

“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, kindly and untiringly teach them how to live in order 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.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 143.

“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. . . . If the homes of professed Christians had a right religious mold, they would exert a mighty influence for good. They would indeed be the ‘light of the world.’”—*Ibid.*, p. 144.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Mar 27

- 1. Whether married or not, how can I reinforce God’s plan for marriage?**
- 2. In what ways am I seeing evidence of God’s purification process in me?**
- 3. Name the three record books mentioned in the courts of Heaven.**
- 4. How can I bring joy to the heart of heavenly intelligences?**
- 5. What is the most powerful sermon that is called for in these last days?**

In proclaiming the truths of the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred,

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tongue, and people, God’s church on earth today is fulfilling the ancient prophecy, “Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.” Isaiah 27:6. The followers of Jesus, in co-operation with heavenly intelligences, are rapidly occupying the waste places of the earth; and, as the

result of their labors, an abundant fruitage of precious souls is developing. Today, as never before, the dissemination of Bible truth by means of a consecrated church is bringing to the sons of men the benefits foreshadowed centuries ago in the promise to Abraham and to all Israel,—to God's church on earth in every age,—“I will bless thee, ... and thou shalt be a blessing.” Genesis 12:2. (PK 703.1)

This promise of blessing should have met fulfillment in large measure during the centuries following the return of the Israelites from the lands of their captivity. It was God's design that the whole earth be prepared for the first advent of Christ, even as today the way is preparing for His second coming. At the end of the years of humiliating exile, God graciously gave to His people Israel, through Zechariah, the assurance: “I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain.” And of His people He said, “Behold, ... I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.” Zechariah 8:3, 7, 8. (PK 703.2)

These promises were conditional on obedience. The sins that had characterized the Israelites prior to the captivity, were not to be repeated. “Execute true judgment,” the Lord exhorted those who were engaged in rebuilding; “and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother.” “Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates.” Zechariah 7:9, 10; 8:16. (PK 704.1)

Rich were the rewards, both temporal and spiritual, promised those who should put into practice these principles of righteousness. “The seed shall be prosperous,” the Lord declared; “the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so I will save you, and ye shall be a blessing.” Zechariah 8:12, 13. (PK 704.2)

By the Babylonish captivity the Israelites were effectually cured of the worship of graven images. After their return, they gave much attention to religious instruction and to the study of that which had been written in the book of the law and in the prophets concerning the worship of the true God. The restoration of the temple enabled them to carry out fully the ritual services of the sanctuary. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, of Ezra, and of Nehemiah they repeatedly covenanted to keep all the commandments and ordinances of Jehovah. The

seasons of prosperity that followed gave ample evidence of God's willingness to accept and forgive, and yet with fatal shortsightedness they turned again and again from their glorious destiny and selfishly appropriated to themselves that which would have brought healing and spiritual life to countless multitudes. (PK 705.1)

This failure to fulfill the divine purpose was very apparent in Malachi's day. Sternly the Lord's messenger dealt with the evils that were robbing Israel of temporal prosperity and spiritual power. In his rebuke against transgressors the prophet spared neither priests nor people. "The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel" through Malachi was that the lessons of the past be not forgotten and that the covenant made by Jehovah with the house of Israel be kept with fidelity. Only by heartfelt repentance could the blessing of God be realized. "I pray you," the prophet pleaded, "beseech God that He will be gracious unto us." Malachi 1:1, 9. (PK 705.2)

Not by any temporary failure of Israel, however, was the plan of the ages for the redemption of mankind to be frustrated. Those to whom the prophet was speaking might not heed the message given, but the purposes of Jehovah were nevertheless to move steadily forward to their complete fulfillment. "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same," the Lord declared through His messenger, "My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering: for My name shall be great among the heathen." Malachi 1:11. (PK 705.3)

The covenant of "life and peace" God had made with the sons of Levi—the covenant which, if kept, would have brought untold blessing—the Lord now offered to renew with those who once had been spiritual leaders, but who through transgression had become "contemptible and base before all the people." Malachi 2:5, 9. (PK 706.1)

Solemnly evildoers were warned of the day of judgment to come and of Jehovah's purpose to visit with swift destruction every transgressor. Yet none were left without hope; Malachi's prophecies of judgment were accompanied by invitations to the impenitent to make their peace with God. "Return unto Me," the Lord urged; "and I will return unto you." Malachi 3:7. (PK 706.2)

It seems as if every heart must respond to such an invitation. The God of heaven is pleading with His erring children to return to Him, that they may again co-operate

with Him in carrying forward His work in the earth. The Lord holds out His hand to take the hand of Israel and to help them to the narrow path of self-denial and self-sacrifice, to share with Him the heirship as sons of God. Will they be entreated? Will they discern their only hope? (PK 706.3)

How sad the record, that in Malachi's day the Israelites hesitated to yield their proud hearts in prompt and loving obedience and hearty co-operation! Self-vindication is apparent in their response, "Wherein shall we return?" Malachi 3:7. (PK 707.1)

The Lord reveals to His people one of their special sins. "Will a man rob God?" He asks. "Yet ye have robbed Me." Still unconvicted of sin, the disobedient inquire, "Wherein have we robbed Thee?" Malachi 3:8. (PK 707.2)

Definite indeed is the Lord's answer: "In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts." Malachi 3:8-12. (PK 707.3)

God blesses the work of men's hands, that they may return to Him His portion. He gives them the sunshine and the rain; He causes vegetation to flourish; He gives health and ability to acquire means. Every blessing comes from His bountiful hand, and He desires men and women to show their gratitude by returning Him a portion in tithes and offerings—in thank offerings, in freewill offerings, in trespass offerings. They are to devote their means to His service, that His vineyard may not remain a barren waste. They are to study what the Lord would do were He in their place. They are to take all difficult matters to Him in prayer. They are to reveal an unselfish interest in the building up of His work in all parts of the world. (PK 707.4)

Through messages such as those borne by Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, as well as through oppression from heathen foes, the Israelites finally learned the lesson that true prosperity depends upon obedience to the law of God. But with many of the people, obedience was not the outflow of faith and love. Their motives were selfish. Outward service was rendered as a means of attaining

to national greatness. The chosen people did not become the light of the world, but shut themselves away from the world as a safeguard against being seduced into idolatry. The restrictions which God had given, forbidding intermarriage between His people and the heathen, and prohibiting Israel from joining in the idolatrous practices of surrounding nations, were so perverted as to build up a wall of partition between the Israelites and all other peoples, thus shutting from others the very blessings which God had commissioned Israel to give to the world. (PK 708.1)

At the same time the Jews were, by their sins, separating themselves from God. They were unable to discern the deep spiritual significance of their symbolic service. In their self-righteousness they trusted to their own works, to the sacrifices and ordinances themselves, instead of relying upon the merits of Him to whom all these things pointed. Thus “going about to establish their own righteousness” (Romans 10:3), they built themselves up in a self-sufficient formalism. Wanting the Spirit and grace of God, they tried to make up for the lack by a rigorous observance of religious ceremonies and rites. Not content with the ordinances which God Himself had appointed, they encumbered the divine commands with countless exactions of their own devising. The greater their distance from God, the more rigorous they were in the observance of these forms. (PK 708.2)

With all these minute and burdensome exactions it was a practical impossibility for the people to keep the law. The great principles of righteousness set forth in the Decalogue, and the glorious truths shadowed in the symbolic service, were alike obscured, buried under a mass of human tradition and enactment. Those who were really desirous of serving God, and who tried to observe the whole law as enjoined by the priests and rulers, groaned under a heavy burden. (PK 709.1)

As a nation, the people of Israel, while desiring the advent of the Messiah, were so far separated from God in heart and life that they could have no true conception of the character or mission of the promised Redeemer. Instead of desiring redemption from sin, and the glory and peace of holiness, their hearts were fixed upon deliverance from their national foes, and restoration to worldly power. They looked for Messiah to come as a conqueror, to break every yoke, and exalt Israel to dominion over all nations. Thus Satan had succeeded in preparing the hearts of the people to reject the Saviour when He should appear. Their own pride of heart, and their false conceptions of His character and mission, would prevent them from honestly weighing the evidences of His Messiahship. (PK 709.2)

For more than a thousand years the Jewish people had waited the coming of the promised Saviour. Their brightest hopes had rested upon this event. For a thousand years, in song and prophecy, in temple rite and household prayer, His name had been enshrined; and yet when He came, they did not recognize Him as the Messiah for whom they had so long waited. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” John 1:11. To their world-loving hearts the Beloved of heaven was “as a root out of a dry ground.” In their eyes He had “no form nor comeliness;” they discerned in Him no beauty that they should desire Him. Isaiah 53:2. (PK 710.1)

The whole life of Jesus of Nazareth among the Jewish people was a reproof to their selfishness, as revealed in their unwillingness to recognize the just claims of the Owner of the vineyard over which they had been placed as husbandmen. They hated His example of truthfulness and piety; and when the final test came, the test which meant obedience unto eternal life or disobedience unto eternal death, they rejected the Holy One of Israel and became responsible for His crucifixion on Calvary’s cross. (PK 710.2)

In the parable of the vineyard, Christ near the close of His earthly ministry called the attention of the Jewish teachers to the rich blessings bestowed upon Israel, and in these showed God’s claim to their obedience. Plainly He set before them the glory of God’s purpose, which through obedience they might have fulfilled. Withdrawing the veil from the future, He showed how, by failure to fulfill His purpose, the whole nation was forfeiting His blessing and bringing ruin upon itself. (PK 710.3)

“There was a certain householder,” Christ said, “which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.” Matthew 21:33. (PK 711.1)

Thus the Saviour referred to “the vineyard of the Lord of hosts,” which the prophet Isaiah centuries before had declared to be “the house of Israel.” Isaiah 5:7. (PK 711.2)

“And when the time of the fruit drew near,” Christ continued, the owner of the vineyard “sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did

unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." Matthew 21:34~39. (PK 711.3)

Having portrayed before the priests their crowning act of wickedness, Christ now put to them the question, "When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" Matthew 21:40. The priests had been following the narrative with deep interest; and without considering the relation of the subject to themselves, they joined with the people in answering, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons." Matthew 21:41. (PK 711.4)

Unwittingly they had pronounced their own doom. Jesus looked upon them, and under His searching gaze they knew that He read the secrets of their hearts. His divinity flashed out before them with unmistakable power. They saw in the husbandmen a picture of themselves, and they involuntarily exclaimed, "God forbid!" Luke 20:16. (PK 712.1)

Solemnly and regretfully Christ asked: "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Matthew 21:34-44. (PK 712.2)

Christ would have averted the doom of the Jewish nation if the people had received Him. But envy and jealousy made them implacable. They determined that they would not receive Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. They rejected the Light of the world, and henceforth their lives were surrounded with darkness as the darkness of midnight. The doom foretold came upon the Jewish nation. Their own fierce passions, uncontrolled, wrought their ruin. In their blind rage they destroyed one another. Their rebellious, stubborn pride brought upon them the wrath of their Roman conquerors. Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple laid in ruins, and its site plowed like a field. The children of Judah perished by the most horrible forms of death. Millions were sold to serve as bondmen in heathen lands. (PK 712.3)

That which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today. He has “let out His vineyard unto other husbandmen,” even to His covenant-keeping people, who faithfully “render Him the fruits in their seasons.” Matthew 21:41. Never has the Lord been without true representatives on this earth who have made His interests their own. These witnesses for God are numbered among the spiritual Israel, and to them will be fulfilled all the covenant promises made by Jehovah to His ancient people. (PK 713.1)

Today the church of God is free to carry forward to completion the divine plan for the salvation of a lost race. For many centuries God’s people suffered a restriction of their liberties. The preaching of the gospel in its purity was prohibited, and the severest of penalties were visited upon those who dared disobey the mandates of men. As a consequence, the Lord’s great moral vineyard was almost wholly unoccupied. The people were deprived of the light of God’s word. The darkness of error and superstition threatened to blot out a knowledge of true religion. God’s church on earth was as verily in captivity during this long period of relentless persecution as were the children of Israel held captive in Babylon during the period of the exile. (PK 714.1)

But, thank God, His church is no longer in bondage. To spiritual Israel have been restored the privileges accorded the people of God at the time of their deliverance from Babylon. In every part of the earth, men and women are responding to the Heaven-sent message which John the revelator prophesied would be proclaimed prior to the second coming of Christ: “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.” Revelation 14:7. (PK 714.2)

No longer have the hosts of evil power to keep the church captive; for “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city,” which hath “made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication;” (Revelation 14:8) and to spiritual Israel is given the message, “Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” (Revelation 18:4). As the captive exiles heeded the message, “Flee out of the midst of Babylon” (Jeremiah 51:6), and were restored to the Land of Promise, so those who fear God today are heeding the message to withdraw from spiritual Babylon, and soon they are to stand as trophies of divine grace in the earth made new, the heavenly Canaan. (PK 715.1)

In Malachi's day the mocking inquiry of the impenitent, "Where is the God of judgment?" met with the solemn response: "The Lord ... shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant.... But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." Malachi 2:17; 3:1-4. (PK 715.2)

When the promised Messiah was about to appear, the message of the forerunner of Christ was: Repent, publicans and sinners; repent, Pharisees and Sadducees; "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 3:2. (PK 715.3)

Today, in the spirit and power of Elias and of John the Baptist, messengers of God's appointment are calling the attention of a judgment-bound world to the solemn events soon to take place in connection with the closing hours of probation and the appearance of Christ Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords. Soon every man is to be judged for the deeds done in the body. The hour of God's judgment has come, and upon the members of His church on earth rests the solemn responsibility of giving warning to those who are standing as it were on the very brink of eternal ruin. To every human being in the wide world who will give heed must be made plain the principles at stake in the great controversy being waged, principles upon which hang the destinies of all mankind. (PK 716.1)

In these final hours of probation for the sons of men, when the fate of every soul is so soon to be decided forever, the Lord of heaven and earth expects His church to arouse to action as never before. Those who have been made free in Christ through a knowledge of precious truth, are regarded by the Lord Jesus as His chosen ones, favored above all other people on the face of the earth; and He is counting on them to show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into marvelous light. The blessings which are so liberally bestowed are to be communicated to others. The good news of salvation is to go to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. (PK 716.2)

In the visions of the prophets of old the Lord of glory was represented as bestowing special light upon His church in the days of darkness and unbelief preceding His second coming. As the Sun of Righteousness, He was to arise upon His church, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. And from every true disciple

was to be diffused an influence for life, courage, helpfulness, and true healing. (PK 716.3)

The coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history. The days of Noah and of Lot picture the condition of the world just before the coming of the Son of man. The Scriptures, pointing forward to this time, declare that Satan will work with all power and "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10. His working is plainly revealed by the rapidly increasing darkness, the multitudinous errors, heresies, and delusions of these last days. Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are leavening the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight. To God's people it will be a night of trial, a night of weeping, a night of persecution for the truth's sake. But out of that night of darkness God's light will shine. (PK 717.1)

He causes "the light to shine out of darkness." 2 Corinthians 4:6. When "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep," "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Genesis 1:2, 3. So in the night of spiritual darkness, God's word goes forth, "Let there be light." To His people He says, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isaiah 60:1. (PK 717.2)

"Behold," says the Scripture, "the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." Isaiah 60:2. Christ, the outshining of the Father's glory, came to the world as its light. He came to represent God to men, and of Him it is written that He was anointed "with the Holy Ghost and with power," and "went about doing good." Acts 10:38. In the synagogue at Nazareth He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18, 19. This was the work He commissioned His disciples to do. "Ye are the light of the world," He said. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:14, 16. (PK 718.1)

This is the work which the prophet Isaiah describes when he says: "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not

thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward.” Isaiah 58:7, 8. (PK 718.2)

Thus in the night of spiritual darkness God’s glory is to shine forth through His church in lifting up the bowed down and comforting those that mourn. (PK 718.3)

All around us are heard the wails of a world’s sorrow. On every hand are the needy and distressed. It is ours to aid in relieving and softening life’s hardships and misery. The wants of the soul only the love of Christ can satisfy. If Christ is abiding in us, our hearts will be full of divine sympathy. The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed. (PK 719.1)

There are many from whom hope has departed. Bring back the sunshine to them. Many have lost their courage. Speak to them words of cheer. Pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. Read to them from the word of God. Upon many is a soul sickness which no earthly balm can reach nor physician heal. Pray for these souls. Bring them to Jesus. Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician there. (PK 719.2)

Light is a blessing, a universal blessing, pouring forth its treasures on a world unthankful, unholy, demoralized. So it is with the light of the Sun of Righteousness. The whole earth, wrapped as it is in the darkness of sin and sorrow and pain, is to be lighted with the knowledge of God’s love. From no sect, rank, or class of people is the light shining from heaven’s throne to be excluded. (PK 719.3)

The message of hope and mercy is to be carried to the ends of the earth. Whosoever will, may reach forth and take hold of God’s strength and make peace with Him, and he shall make peace. No longer are the heathen to be wrapped in midnight darkness. The gloom is to disappear before the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. (PK 719.4)

Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. He desires that we shall reveal His own joy in our lives. (PK 720.1)

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” Isaiah 60:1. Christ is coming with power and great glory. He is coming with

His own glory and with the glory of the Father. And the holy angels will attend Him on His way. While all the world is plunged in darkness, there will be light in every dwelling of the saints. They will catch the first light of His second appearing. The unsullied light will shine from His splendor, and Christ the Redeemer will be admired by all who have served Him. While the wicked flee, Christ's followers will rejoice in His presence. (PK 720.2)

Then it is that the redeemed from among men will receive their promised inheritance. Thus God's purpose for Israel will meet with literal fulfillment. That which God purposes, man is powerless to disannul. Even amid the working of evil, God's purposes have been moving steadily forward to their accomplishment. It was thus with the house of Israel throughout the history of the divided monarchy; it is thus with spiritual Israel today. (PK 720.3)

The seer of Patmos, looking down through the ages to the time of this restoration of Israel in the earth made new, testified: (PK 720.4)

"I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Revelation 7:9~10. (PK 720.5)

"And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts ['living creatures,' R.V.], and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever." Revelation 7:11~12. (PK 721.1)

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him." "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Revelation 7:9-12; 19:6, 7; Revelation 17:14. (PK 721.2)

My Dear Brother and Sister (7T 45)

You have united in a lifelong covenant. Your education in married life has begun. The first year of married life is a year of experience, a year in which husband and

wife learn each other's different traits of character, as a child learns lessons in school. In this, the first year of your married life, let there be no chapters that will mar your future happiness. (7T 45.1)

To gain a proper understanding of the marriage relation is the work of a lifetime. Those who marry enter a school from which they are never in this life to be graduated. (7T 45.2)

My brother, your wife's time and strength and happiness are now bound up with yours. Your influence over her may be a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. Be very careful not to spoil her life. (7T 45.3)

My sister, you are now to learn your first practical lessons in regard to the responsibilities of married life. Be sure to learn these lessons faithfully day by day. Do not give way to discontent or moodiness. Do not long for a life of ease and inactivity. Guard constantly against giving way to selfishness. (7T 45.4)

In your life union your affections are to be tributary to each other's happiness. Each is to minister to the happiness of the other. This is the will of God concerning you. But while you are to blend as one, neither of you is to lose his or her individuality in the other. God is the owner of your individuality. Of Him you are to ask: What is right? What is wrong? How may I best fulfill the purpose of my creation? "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. Your love for that which is human is to be secondary to your love for God. The wealth of your affection is to flow forth to Him who gave His life for you. Living for God, the soul sends forth to Him its best and highest affections. Is the greatest outflow of your love toward Him who died for you? If it is, your love for each other will be after heaven's order. (7T 45.5)

Affection may be as clear as crystal and beauteous in its purity, yet it may be shallow because it has not been tested and tried. Make Christ first and last and best in everything. Constantly behold Him, and your love for Him will daily become deeper and stronger as it is submitted to the test of trial. And as your love for Him increases, your love for each other will grow deeper and stronger. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." 2 Corinthians 3:18. (7T 46.1)

You now have duties to perform that before your marriage you did not have. "Put on therefore, ... kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." Colossians 3:12. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." Ephesians 5:2. Give careful study to the following instruction: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.... Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." Ephesians 5:22-25. (7T 46.2)

Marriage, a union for life, is a symbol of the union between Christ and His church. The spirit that Christ manifests toward the church is the spirit that husband and wife are to manifest toward each other. (7T 46.3)

Neither husband nor wife is to make a plea for rulership. The Lord has laid down the principle that is to guide in this matter. The husband is to cherish his wife as Christ cherishes the church. And the wife is to respect and love her husband. Both are to cultivate the spirit of kindness, being determined never to grieve or injure the other. (7T 47.1)

My brother and sister, both of you have strong will power. You may make this power a great blessing or a great curse to yourselves and to those with whom you come in contact. Do not try to compel each other to do as you wish. You cannot do this and retain each other's love. Manifestations of self-will destroy the peace and happiness of the home. Let not your married life be one of contention. If you do you will both be unhappy. Be kind in speech and gentle in action, giving up your own wishes. Watch well your words, for they have a powerful influence for good or for ill. Allow no sharpness to come into your voices. Bring into your united life the fragrance of Christlikeness. (7T 47.2)

Before a man enters a union as close as the marriage relation, he should learn how to control himself and how to deal with others. (7T 47.3)

In the training of a child there are times when the firm, matured will of the mother meets the unreasoning, undisciplined will of the child. At such times there is need of great wisdom on the part of the mother. By unwise management, by stern compulsion, great harm may be done the child. (7T 47.4)

Whenever possible, this crisis should be avoided; for it means a severe struggle for both mother and child. But once such a crisis is entered into, the child must be led to yield its will to the wiser will of the parent. (7T 47.5)

The mother should keep herself under perfect control, doing nothing that will arouse in the child a spirit of defiance. She is to give no loud-voiced commands. She will gain much by keeping the voice low and gentle. She is to deal with the child in a way that will draw him to Jesus. She is to realize that God is her Helper; love, her power. If she is a wise Christian she does not attempt to force the child to submit. She prays earnestly that the enemy shall not obtain the victory, and, as she prays, she is conscious of a renewal of spiritual life. She sees that the same power that is working in her is working also in the child. He becomes more gentle, more submissive. The battle is won. Her patience, her kindness, her words of wise restraint, have done their work. There is peace after the storm, like the shining of the sun after rain. And the angels, who have been watching the scene, break forth into songs of joy. (7T 48.1)

These crises come also in the life of husband and wife, who, unless controlled by the Spirit of God, will at such times manifest the impulsive, unreasoning spirit so often manifested by children. As flint striking flint will be the conflict of will with will. (7T 48.2)

My brother, be kind, patient, forbearing. Remember that your wife accepted you as her husband, not that you might rule over her, but that you might be her helper. Never be overbearing and dictatorial. Do not exert your strong will power to compel your wife to do as you wish. Remember that she has a will and that she may wish to have her way as much as you wish to have yours. Remember, too, that you have the advantage of your wider experience. Be considerate and courteous. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." James 3:17. (7T 48.3)

One victory it is positively essential for you both to gain, the victory over the stubborn will. In this struggle you can conquer only by the aid of Christ. You may struggle hard and long to subdue self, but you will fail unless you receive strength from on high. By the grace of Christ you can gain the victory over self and selfishness. As you live His life, showing self-sacrifice at every step, constantly revealing a stronger sympathy for those in need of help, you will gain victory after victory. Day by day you will learn better how to conquer self and how to

strengthen your weak points of character. The Lord Jesus will be your light, your strength, your crown of rejoicing, because you yield your will to His will. (7T 49.1)

Men and women may reach God's ideal for them if they will take Christ as their Helper. Make an unreserved surrender to God. To know that you are striving for eternal life will strengthen and comfort you. Christ can give you power to overcome. By His help you can utterly destroy the root of selfishness. (7T 49.2)

Christ died that the life of man might be bound up with His life in the union of divinity and humanity. He came to our world and lived a divine-human life, in order that the lives of men and women might be as harmonious as God designs them to be. The Saviour calls upon you to deny self and take up the cross. Then nothing will prevent the development of the whole being. The daily experience will reveal healthy, harmonious action. (7T 49.3)

Remember, my dear brother and sister, that God is love and that by His grace you can succeed in making each other happy, as in your marriage pledge you promised to do. And in the strength of the Redeemer you can work with wisdom and power to help some crooked life to be straight in God. What is there that Christ cannot do? He is perfect in wisdom, in righteousness, in love. Do not shut yourselves up to yourselves, satisfied to pour out all your affection upon each other. Seize every opportunity to contribute to the happiness of those around you, sharing with them your affection. Words of kindness, looks of sympathy, expressions of appreciation, would to many a struggling, lonely one be as a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul. A word of cheer, an act of kindness, would go far to lighten the burdens that are resting heavily upon weary shoulders. It is in unselfish ministry that true happiness is found. And every word and deed of such service is recorded in the books of heaven as done for Christ. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren," He declares, "ye have done it unto Me." Matthew 25:40. (7T 49.4)

Live in the sunshine of the Saviour's love. Then your influence will bless the world. Let the Spirit of Christ control you. Let the law of kindness be ever on your lips. Forbearance and unselfishness mark the words and actions of those who are born again, to live the new life in Christ. (7T 50.1)

"None of us liveth to himself." Romans 14:7. The character will manifest itself. The looks, the tone of the voice, the actions,—all have their influence in making or marring the happiness of the domestic circle. They are molding the temper and

character of the children; they are inspiring or tending to destroy confidence and love. All are made either better or worse, happy or miserable, by these influences. We owe our families the knowledge of the word brought into practical life. All that it is possible for us to be to purify, enlighten, comfort, and encourage those connected with us in family relation should be done. (7T 50.2)