A Truly Distinct People

MEMORY VERSE: "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power" (2 Thessalonians 1:11).

"The Lord desires His followers to exercise great care in dealing with one another. They are to lift up, to restore, to heal. But there is to be in the church no neglect of proper discipline. The members are to regard themselves as pupils in a school, learning how to form characters worthy of their high calling."—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 264.

Suggested Readings: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, pp. 296-307; Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 591-603. (At the bottom of this page)

1. PURE INSIDE AND OUT Sun, Dec 13

a. What shows the depth of God's call to purity? 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

1 Thessalonians 5:22
Abstain from all appearance of evil.

"Do nothing among strangers, in the street, on the cars, in the home, that would have the least appearance of evil."—The Ministry of Healing, p. 491.

"Let your conduct be such that you will leave the impression upon every soul with whom you associate that a pure and holy atmosphere surrounds you. One vain word, one trifling laugh, may balance a soul in the wrong direction. Terrible are the consequences of not having a constant connection with God.

"Abstain from all evil. Common sins, however insignificant they may be regarded, will impair your moral sense, and extinguish the inward impression of the Spirit of God. The character of the thoughts leaves its imprint upon the soul, and all low conversation pollutes the mind. All evil works ruin to those who commit it. God may and will forgive the repenting sinner, but though forgiven, the soul is marred; the power of the elevated thought possible to the unimpaired mind is destroyed. Through all time the soul bears the scars. Then let us seek for that faith which works by love and purifies the heart, that we may represent the character of Christ to the world."—Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 195.

2. SANCTIFICATION THROUGH CHRIST Mon, Dec 14

a. Describe God's plan for our daily existence and how it is made possible. 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24.

1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24
And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

"Christians are bidden to present their bodies, 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' In order to do this, all their powers must be preserved in the best possible condition. Every practice that weakens physical or mental strength unfits man for the service of his Creator. And will God be pleased with anything less than the best we can offer? Said Christ: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.' Those who do love God with all the heart will desire to give Him the best service of their life, and they will be constantly seeking to bring every power of their being into harmony with the laws that will promote their ability to do His will. They will not, by the indulgence of appetite or passion, enfeeble or defile the offering which they present to their heavenly Father."—The Great Controversy, p. 473.

"The Scriptures teach us to seek for the sanctification to God of body, soul, and spirit. In this work we are to be laborers together with God. Much may be done to restore the moral image of God in man, to improve the physical, mental, and moral capabilities. Great changes can be made in the physical system by obeying the laws of God and bringing into the body nothing that defiles. And while we cannot claim perfection of the flesh, we may have Christian perfection of the soul. Through the sacrifice made in our behalf, sins may be perfectly forgiven. Our dependence is not in what man can do; it is in what God can do for man through Christ. When we surrender ourselves wholly to God, and fully believe, the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. The conscience can be freed from condemnation. Through faith in His blood, all may be made perfect in Christ Jesus. Thank God that we are not dealing with impossibilities."—Selected Messages, bk. 2, p. 32.

b. What qualities reveal a genuine depth of fellowship among believers? 1 Thessalonians 5:26–28; 1 John 1:7.

1 Thessalonians 5:26–28
Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss. **27** I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. **28** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. The first **epistle** to the Thessalonians was written from Athens.

1 John 1:7
But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

"The holy salutation mentioned in the gospel of Jesus Christ by the apostle Paul should ever be considered in its true character. **It is a holy kiss**. It should be regarded as a sign of fellowship to Christian friends when parting, and when meeting again after a separation of weeks or months. In 1 Thessalonians 5:26 Paul

says: 'Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.' In the same chapter he says: 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' There can be no appearance of evil when the holy kiss is given at a proper time and place."—Early Writings, p. 117. [Author's italics.]

3. CHRIST TO BE REVEALED — Tue, Dec 15

a. What supportive encouragement does Paul use to open his second epistle to the believers at Thessalonica? 2 Thessalonians 1:1-5.

2 Thessalonians 1:1-5

Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: **2** Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **3** We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; **4** So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: **5** ¶Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

"[Paul] expressed his confidence in [the Thessalonians'] integrity, and his gratitude that their faith was strong, and that their love abounded for one another and for the cause of their Master. He told them that he presented them to other churches as an example of the patient, persevering faith that bravely withstands persecution and tribulation."—The Acts of the Apostles, p. 264.

b. If persecuted as the Thessalonians were, why can we all be encouraged by the hope that was presented to them? 2 Thessalonians 1:6, 7.

2 Thessalonians 1:6, 7

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; **7** And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

"[2 Thessalonians 1:1–6 quoted.] Here we see the interest of these churches for one another. The persecution they endured drew all hearts together and bound them together. They were scattered abroad. The errors and superstitious faith and doctrines of the Jewish nation so bitterly opposed to Christ left the little flock as sheep without a shepherd. But the seed was being sown. Christ was lifted up as the One crucified among them, and efforts were constantly made to alleviate the poverty and oppression of the brethren because of their faith."—Letters and Manuscripts, vol. 12, Letter 28, 1897.

c. Why should the soon return of Christ deeply impress the hearts of us all? 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8; Psalm 50:3, 4.

2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8
And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, **8** In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Psalm 50:3, 4
Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. **4** He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

"[2 Thessalonians 1:8 quoted.] These momentous events are nigh at hand, yet many who profess to believe the truth are asleep. They will surely be numbered with the unfaithful servant who saith in his heart, 'My Lord delayeth His coming,' if they remain in their present position of friendship with the world. It is only to those who are waiting in hope and faith that Christ will appear, without sin unto salvation. Many have the theory of the truth who know not the power of godliness. If the word of God dwelt in the heart, it would control the life. Faith, purity, and conformity to the will of God would testify to its sanctifying power."—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 15.

4. A CLEAR-CUT DISTINCTION — Wed, Dec 16

a. Explain the doom of two types of people. 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9.

2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9
In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: **9** Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

"Excuse not your defects because others are wrong. In the day of God you will not dare to plead as an excuse for your neglect to form a character for heaven, that others did not manifest devotion and spirituality. The same lack which you discovered in others was in yourself. And the fact that others were sinners makes your sins nonetheless grievous. Both they and you, if you continue in your present state of unfitness, will be separated from Christ, and will with Satan and his angels be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

"The Lord made ample provision for you, that if you would seek Him, and follow the light He would give you, you should not fall by the way. The word of God was given to you as a lamp to your feet, a light to your path. If you stumble, it will be because you have not consulted your guide, the word of God, and made that precious word the rule of your life. God has not given you as a pattern the life of any human being, however good and apparently blameless his life may be. If you do as others do, and act as others act, you will at last be left outside the Holy

City, with a vast multitude who have done just as you have done, followed a pattern the Lord did not leave them, and who are lost just as you will be lost.

"That which others have done, or may do in the future, will not lessen your responsibility or guilt. A pattern has been given you, a faultless life characterized by self-denial and disinterested benevolence. If you turn from this correct, this perfect pattern, and take an incorrect one, which has been clearly represented in the word of God as one that you should shun, your course of action will receive its merited reward; your life will be a failure."—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 396.

b. What refreshing contrast is to exist, and why? 2 Thessalonians 1:10.

2 Thessalonians 1:10
When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

"The resurrection and ascension of our Lord is a sure evidence of the triumph of the saints of God over death and the grave, and a pledge that heaven is open to those who wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus ascended to the Father as a representative of the human race, and God will bring those who reflect His image to behold and share with Him His glory."—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 286.

5. TIME FOR FAITHFUL ACTION — Thur, Dec 17

a. Describe the wonderful outcome of God's church. 2 Thessalonians 1:11, 12.

2 Thessalonians 1:11, 12
Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: **12** That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

b. As prophetic scenes fulfill, of what are we assured? 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-7
Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, **2** That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. **3** ¶ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; **4** Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. **5** Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? **6** And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

"There is one pointed out in prophecy as the man of sin. He is the representative of Satan. Taking the suggestions of Satan concerning the law of God, which is as unchangeable as His throne, this man of sin comes in and represents to the world that he has changed that law, and that the first day of the week instead of the seventh is now the Sabbath. Professing infallibility, he claims the right to change the law of God to suit his own purposes. . . .

"But Christ declared that not one jot or tittle of the law should fail until heaven and earth should pass away. The very work that He came to do was to exalt that law, and show to the created worlds and to heaven that God is just, and that His law need not be changed. But here is Satan's right-hand man ready to carry on the work that Satan commenced in heaven, that of trying to amend the law of God. . . .

"The man of sin has exalted himself against God, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself to be God. He has trampled underfoot God's great memorial of creation, established to commemorate His work; and in its stead he has presented to the world a common working day. . . .

"But though every member of the human family should accept this child of the Papacy, in no case would this invalidate the holy Sabbath of Jehovah. Those who accept the false sabbath exalt the man of sin, and assail the government of God. But the man of sin cannot annul what God has declared shall stand fast forever. The work now to be done in our world is to exalt the law of the Lord, and call the attention of the people to it. The time has come when the truth is to be proclaimed against falsehood and error."—The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 910.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS — Fri, Dec 18

1. In a practical sense, how can I abstain from all appearance of evil?
2. According to 1 John 1:7, what is the basis of genuine fellowship?
3. What reality about the power of our God can inspire awe in our hearts?
4. Why must I avoid becoming dismayed over the shortcomings of others?
5. How can I help people understand the reality of God's true Sabbath?

Suggested Readings: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, pp. 296-307

Brother R,

Last June your case was presented before me in vision. But I have been so constantly pressed with labor that I could not possibly write out the things shown me in regard to individual cases. I wish to write what I have to write, before I hear any account of matters in regard to your case; for Satan might suggest doubts to your mind. This is his work.

I was pointed back to your past life and was shown that God had been very merciful to you in enlightening your eyes to see His truth, in rescuing you from your perilous condition of doubt and uncertainty, and in establishing your faith and settling your mind upon the eternal truths of His word. He established your feet upon the Rock. For a season you felt grateful and humble, but for some time you have been separating yourself from God. When you were little in your own eyes, then you were beloved of God.

Music has been a snare to you. You are troubled with self-esteem; it is natural for you to have exalted ideas of your own ability. Teaching music has been an injury to you. Many women have confided their family difficulties to you. This has also been an injury to you. It has exalted you and led you to still greater self-esteem.

In your own family you have occupied a dignified and rather haughty position. There are defects in your wife, of which you are aware. They have led to bad results. She is not naturally a housekeeper. Her education in this direction must be acquired. She has improved some, and should apply herself earnestly to make greater improvement. She lacks order, taste, and neatness in housekeeping and also in dress. It would be pleasing to God if she should train her mind upon these things wherein she lacks. She does not have good government in her family. She is too yielding, and fails to maintain her decisions. She is swayed by the desires and claims of her children, and yields her judgment to theirs. Instead of trying to improve in these respects, as it is her duty to do, she is glad of an opportunity or an excuse to release herself from home cares and responsibilities, and permits others to perform the duties in her family that she should educate herself to love to do. She cannot perform her part as a wife and mother until she shall educate herself in this direction. She lacks confidence in herself. She is timid and retiring, and distrustful of herself. She has a very poor opinion of what she does, and this discourages her from doing more. She needs encouragement; she needs words of tenderness and affection. She has a good spirit. She is meek and quiet, and the Lord loves her; yet she should make thorough efforts to correct these evils which tend to make her family unhappy. Practice in these things will give her confidence in her own ability to perform her duties aright.

You and your wife are opposite in your organizations. You love order and neatness, and have a nice taste, and quite good government. As a husband, you are rather stiff and stern. You fail to take a course to encourage confidence and familiarity in your wife. Her deficiencies have led you to regard her as inferior to yourself, and have also caused her to feel that you thus regard her. God esteems her more highly than yourself; for your ways are crooked before Him. For the sake of her husband and children, and for other reasons, she should seek to correct her deficiencies and to improve in those things wherein she now fails. She can do it if she will try hard enough.

God is displeased with disorder, slackness, and a lack of thoroughness, in anyone. These deficiencies are serious evils and tend to wean the affections of the husband from the wife when the husband loves order, well-disciplined children, and a well-regulated house. A wife and mother cannot make home agreeable and happy unless she possesses a love for order, preserves her dignity, and has good government; therefore all who fail on these points should begin at once to

educate themselves in this direction and cultivate the very things wherein is their greatest lack. Discipline will do much for those who are lacking in these essential qualifications. Sister R gives up to these failings, and thinks that she cannot do otherwise than she does. After she has made a trial, and fails to see decided improvement in herself, she is discouraged. This must not be. The happiness of herself and her family depend upon her arousing herself, and working with earnestness and zeal to make a decided reformation in these things. She must put on confidence and decision; put on the woman. Her nature is to shrink from anything untried. No one can be more ready and willing than she to do, where she thinks she can succeed. If she fails in her new effort, she must try, try again. She can earn the respect of her husband and children.

I was shown that self-exaltation has caused Brother R to stumble. He has exercised a certain dignity, savoring of severity, in his family and toward his wife. This has shut her from him. She felt that she could not approach him, and has been in her married life, more like a child fearing a stern, dignified father, than like a wife. She has loved, respected, and idolized her husband notwithstanding his lack of encouraging her confidence. My brother, you should pursue a course that would encourage your timid, shrinking wife to lean upon your large affections, and this would give you a chance, in a delicate, affectionate manner, to correct the errors existing in her, as far as you are capable of so doing, and to inspire her with confidence in herself.

I was shown that you had not possessed that love for your wife that you should. Satan has taken advantage of her defects and your errors, to work for the destruction of your family. You have suffered shame of your wife to come into your heart, and your respect has grown less and less for her whom you vowed to love and cherish until death should part you.

Danger of Confiding Family Troubles

October 25, 1868, your case was again presented before me. I was shown that evil thoughts and unlawful desires have led to improper acts and to a violation of the commandments of God. You have dishonored yourself, your wife, and the cause of God. You could have exerted an influence for good in the cause of God. But the pursuance of a wrong course in matters that you thought were of little consequence has led to greater evils.

Brother R, you are now in danger of making total shipwreck of your faith. You have sinned greatly. But your sin in seeking to cover up, and blind the eyes of those who have suspected you of wrong, has been tenfold greater. All have not acted as prudently and with as much love and care as the Lord would have been pleased to have them, in order to redeem you. But when you tried to put on an air of injured innocence, did you think that God could not see your wrong course? Did you think that He who made man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, could not discern the intents and purposes of the heart? You have thought that if you should confess your sin you would lose your honor—your life, as it were. You thought that your brethren would have no

confidence in you. You have not viewed matters in the right light. It is a shame to sin, but always an honor to confess sin.

Angels of God have kept a faithful record of every act, however secret you may have thought you were in its committal. God discerns the purposes of man and all his works. Every man will be rewarded according as his works have been, whether good or evil. That which a man sows will he also reap. There will be no failure in the crop. The harvest is sure and plentiful. You have tried to blind your brethren in regard to your course. How could you do so, when you knew that you were guilty in the sight of God? If you value your soul's salvation, make thorough work for eternity.

You will have to make a clean track behind you by thorough confession. You need a thorough conversion—a transformation of self by the renewing of your mind. Your self-esteem must be overcome. You must learn to esteem others better than yourself. Your exalted opinion of your own acquirements must be given up, and you must obtain a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

You have possessed a spirit which has led you from the path of rectitude, and now you are troubled. Doubts, and fears, and despair seize you. There is but one way out, and that is by the way of confession. Your only hope is in falling on the Rock and being broken to pieces; if you do not, it will surely fall upon you and grind you to powder. You can now right your wrongs; you can now redeem the past. By a life of goodness and true humility you can yet walk with acceptance before God in your family. May the Lord help you, in view of the judgment, to work as for your life. Dear brother, I feel deeply interested for you. You have been walking in darkness for some time. You have not arrived at your present state of darkness all at once. You have been leaving the light gradually. You first became exalted, and then, as you felt sufficient in your own strength, the Lord removed His strength from you.

You have been interested in music. This has given incautious, unwise women opportunity, and they have confided their troubles to you. This has gratified your pride, but it has been a snare to you. It has opened a door for the suggestions of Satan. You have not done as you should. You had no right to hear in families that which has been spoken to you. These communications have corrupted your mind, increased your self-esteem, and led to evil thoughts. You have permitted yourself to be a confessor to some sentimental women who desired sympathy and wished to lean upon others. Had they possessed sound judgment and stood self-reliant, having an aim in life, loving to do others good, they would not have been in a condition where they needed to come to anyone for sympathy.

You know not the deceptions of the human heart. You know not the devices of Satan. Some who have drawn largely upon your sympathy have a sickly, diseased imagination, are lovesick, sentimental, ever eager to create a sensation and make a great ado. Some are dissatisfied with their married life. There is not enough romance in it. Novel reading has perverted all the good sense they ever had. They live in an imaginary world. Their imagination creates a husband for themselves such as exists only in romances found in novels. They talk of unrequited love. They

are never contented or happy, because their imagination pictures to them a life that is unreal. When they face the reality, come down to the simplicity of real life, and take up life's burdens in their families, as is woman's lot, then they will find contentment and happiness.

You have cherished thoughts that were not right. These thoughts have borne fruit. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Your words are not always chaste, pure, and elevated. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." Guile is too often found in your mouth—low expressions that proceed from a heart cherishing corrupt thoughts and evil desires.

For some time your feet have been turned from the path of rectitude and purity. You know that your course has been displeasing to God, that you are transgressing His holy law; you know that these things cannot be hid. God will not permit His people to be deceived in your case. Your great sin is in enlisting the sympathies of those who do not understand your crooked course, and by thus doing dividing the judgment of the people who profess the truth. We pity you. My heart aches for you. I see nothing before you but perdition, nothing but utter shipwreck of faith.

Will you cover your sins and brave the matter out? God says you shall not prosper. But he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy. Will you choose death? Will you shut the kingdom of heaven against yourself because you will not yield your wicked pride? Your only hope is in confessing your backslidings. God has let light shine upon your pathway. Will you choose your own course of corruption? Will you cast the truth behind you because it will not sustain you in a course of iniquity? Oh, be entreated to "rend your heart, and not your garments." Make thorough work for eternity. God will be merciful to you. He will be entreated in your behalf. He will not despise a broken and contrite spirit. Will you turn? Will you live? Your soul is worth saving; it is precious. We wish to help you.
I saw that you are not happy. You are not at rest. You feel distressed, and yet you refuse to take the only course that will bring you relief and hope. He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy. Your condition is deplorable, and you are greatly injuring the cause of God. Your influence will destroy others besides yourself.

If you refuse to come to God and confess your backslidings that He may heal you, there is nothing to be hoped for you or your poor family in the future. Misery will follow upon the steps of sin. God's hand will be against you, and He will leave you to be controlled by Satan, to be led captive by him at his will. You know not to what lengths you may go. You will be like a man at sea without an anchor. The truth of God is an anchor. You are breaking away from that anchor. Your eternal interests are being sacrificed to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. You are on the point of breaking the bonds which would save you from utter destruction. In seeking to save your life by concealing your wrongs, you are losing it. If you now humble yourself before God, confess your wrongs, and return to Him with full purpose of heart, yours can yet be a happy family. If you will not do this, but choose your own way, your happiness is at an end.

You have a great work to do. You have been too slack in your deportment. Your words have not been elevated, chaste, and pure. You have been separating from the divine, and cultivating the baser passions. The intellectual and noble powers of your mind have been brought into subjection to the animal passions. You have not pursued a right course for some time. You have not abstained from every appearance of evil. It is not safe for you to pursue this course any longer.

You have not loved your wife as you should. She is a good woman. She has seen, in a small measure, your danger. But you have closed your ears to her cautions. You have thought her jealous, but this is not her nature. She loves you, and will bear with you, and forgive and love you, notwithstanding the deep wrong you have done her, if you will only press to the light and make clean work of the past. You must have a thorough conversion. Unless you do, all your past efforts to obey the truth will not save you nor cover up your past wrongs. Jesus requires of you a thorough reformation; then He will help, and bless, and love you, and blot out your sins with His own most precious blood. You can redeem the past. You can correct your ways and yet be an honor to the cause of God. You can do good when you take hold of the strength of God and in His name work—work for your own salvation and for the good of others.

Yours can yet be a happy family. Your wife needs your help. She is like a clinging vine; she wants to lean upon your strength. You can help her and lead her along. You should never censure her. Never reprove her if her efforts are not what you think they should be. Rather encourage her by words of tenderness and love. You can help your wife to preserve her dignity and self-respect. Never praise the work or acts of others before her to make her feel her deficiencies. You have been harsh and unfeeling in this respect. You have shown greater courtesy to your hired help than to her and have placed them ahead of her in the house.

God loves your wife. She has suffered, but He has noticed all, marked all, and will not hold you guiltless for the wounds you have caused. It is neither wealth nor intellect that gives happiness. It is moral worth. True goodness is accounted of Heaven as true greatness. The condition of the moral affections determines the worth of the man. A person may have property and intellect, and yet be valueless, because the glowing fire of goodness has never burned upon the altar of his heart, because his conscience has been seared, blackened, and crisped with selfishness and sin. When the lust of the flesh controls the man, and the evil passions of the carnal nature are permitted to rule, skepticism in regard to the realities of the Christian religion is encouraged, and doubts are expressed as though it were a special virtue to doubt.

The life of Solomon might have been remarkable until its close if virtue had been preserved. But he surrendered this special grace to lustful passion. In his youth he looked to God for guidance and trusted in Him, and God chose for him and gave him wisdom that astonished the world. His power and wisdom were extolled throughout the land. But his love of women was his sin. This passion he did not control in his manhood, and it proved a snare to him. His wives led him into idolatry, and when he began to descend the declivity of life, the wisdom that God had given him was removed; he lost his firmness of character and became more like the giddy youth, wavering between right and wrong. Yielding his principles, he

placed himself in the current of evil, and thus separated himself from God, the foundation and source of his strength. He had moved from principle. Wisdom had been more precious to him than the gold of Ophir. But, alas! lustful passions gained the victory. He was deceived and ruined by women. What a lesson for watchfulness! What a testimony to the need of strength from God to the very last! In the battle with inward corruptions and outward temptations, even the wise and powerful Solomon was vanquished. It is not safe to permit the least departure from the strictest integrity. "Abstain from all appearance of evil." When a woman relates her family troubles, or complains of her husband, to another man, she violates her marriage vows; she dishonors her husband and breaks down the wall erected to preserve the sanctity of the marriage relation; she throws wide open the door and invites Satan to enter with his insidious temptations. This is just as Satan would have it. If a woman comes to a Christian brother with a tale of her woes, her disappointments and trials, he should ever advise her, if she must confide her troubles to someone, to select sisters for her confidants, and then there will be no appearance of evil whereby the cause of God may suffer reproach.

Remember Solomon. Among many nations there was no king like him, beloved of his God. But he fell. He was led from God and became corrupt through the indulgence of lustful passions. This is the prevailing sin of this age, and its progress is fearful. Professed Sabbathkeepers are not clean. There are those who profess to believe the truth who are corrupt at heart. God will prove them, and their folly and sin shall be made manifest. None but the pure and lowly can dwell in His presence. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 591-603.

I feel urged to address those who are engaged in giving the last message of warning to the world. Whether those for whom they labor see and accept the truth depends very much upon the individual workers. The command from God is, "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord;" and Paul charges Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine." The work must commence with the worker; he must be united to Christ as the branch is united to the vine. "I am the Vine," said Christ; "ye are the branches." The closest possible connection is here represented. Engraft the leafless twig upon the flourishing vine stock, and it becomes a living branch, drawing sap and nourishment from the vine. Fiber by fiber, vein by vein, the sapling clings, until it buds and blossoms and bears fruit. The sapless twig represents the sinner. When united to Christ, soul is joined to

soul, the feeble and finite to the holy and infinite, and man becomes one with Christ.

"Without Me," says Christ, "ye can do nothing." Are we who claim to be workers with Christ, united to Him? Do we abide in Christ? and are we one with Him? The message that we bear is world wide. It must come before all nations, tongues, and peoples. The Lord will not require any one of us to go forth with this message without giving us grace and power to present it to the people in a manner corresponding to its importance. The great question with us today is: Are we carrying to the world this solemn message of truth in a way to show its importance? The Lord will work with the laborers if they will make Christ their only dependence. He never designed that His missionaries should work without His grace, destitute of His power.

Christ has chosen us out of the world, that we might be a peculiar and holy people. He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." God's workers must be men of prayer, diligent students of the Scriptures, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, that they may be a light and strength to others. Our God is a jealous God; and He requires us to worship Him in spirit and in truth, in the beauty of holiness. The psalmist says: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." As workers we must take heed to our ways. If the psalmist could not be heard if he regarded iniquity in his heart, how can the prayers of men now be heard while iniquity is regarded by them?

After the passing of the time in 1844, fanaticism came into the ranks of Adventists. God gave messages of warning to stay the incoming evil. There was too great familiarity between some men and women. I presented to them the holy standard of truth that we should reach and the purity of deportment that we should maintain in order to meet the approval of God and be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Most solemn denunciations from God were given to men and women whose thoughts were running in an impure channel, while they claimed to be especially favored by God; but the message which God gave was despised and rejected. They turned upon me and said: "Has God spoken only by you, and not by us?" They did not amend their ways, and the Lord suffered them to go on till defilement marked their lives.

We are not out of danger even now. Every soul who engages to give to the world the message of warning will be sorely tempted to pursue such a course in life as will deny his faith. It is Satan's studied plan to make the workers weak in prayer, weak in power, and weak in influence, because of their defects of character. We, as workers, must be united in frowning down and condemning everything that bears the least approach to evil in our associations with one another. Our faith is holy; our work is to vindicate the honor of God's law, and is not of a character to bring anyone down to a low level in thought or in deportment.

There is an exalted platform for us to stand upon. We must believe and teach the truth as it is in Jesus. Holiness of heart will never lead to impure actions. When one who claims to be teaching the truth is inclined to be much in the company of young or even married women, when he familiarly lays his hand upon them, or is

often conversing with them in a familiar manner, be afraid of him; the pure principles of truth are not inwrought in his soul. Such are not in Christ, and Christ is not abiding in them. They need a thorough conversion before God can accept their labors. The truth of heavenly origin never degrades the receiver, never leads him to the least approach to undue familiarity; on the contrary, it sanctifies the believer, refines his taste, elevates and ennobles him, and brings him into a close connection with Jesus. It leads him to regard the apostle Paul's injunction to abstain from even the appearance of evil, lest his "good be evil spoken of."

This is a subject to which we must give heed. We must guard against the sins of this degenerate age. We must stand aloof from everything that savors of undue familiarity. God condemns it. It is forbidden ground, upon which it is unsafe to set the feet. Every word and action should tend to elevate, refine, and ennoble the character. There is sin in thoughtlessness about such matters. The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to diligence and thoroughness in his ministry, and urged him to meditate upon those things that were pure and excellent, that his profiting might appear unto all. The same counsel is greatly needed by young men of the present age. Thoughtful consideration is essential. If men would only think more, and act less impulsively, they would meet with much greater success in their labors. We are handling subjects of infinite importance, and we cannot afford to weave into our work our own defects of character. We want to represent the character of Christ.

We have a great work to do to elevate men and win them to Christ, to lead them to choose and earnestly seek to be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Every thought, every word, and every action of the workers should be of that elevated character which is in harmony with the sacred truth they advocate. It may be that men and women will necessarily be united more or less in our important mission fields. If this is the case, they cannot be too circumspect. Let married men be reserved and guarded, that no evil may truthfully be said of them. We are living in an age when iniquity abounds, and an unguarded word or improper action may greatly injure the usefulness of the one who shows this weakness. Let the workers keep up the barriers of reserve; let not one instance occur of which the enemy can make capital. If they begin to place their affections upon one another, giving special attention to favorites and using flattering words, God will withdraw His Spirit.

If married men go into the work, leaving their wives to care for the children at home, the wife and mother is doing fully as great and important a work as the husband and father. Although one is in the missionary field, the other is a home missionary, whose cares and anxieties and burdens frequently far exceed those of the husband and father. Her work is a solemn and important one—to mold the minds and fashion the characters of her children, to train them for usefulness here and fit them for the future, immortal life. The husband in the open missionary field may receive the honors of men, while the home toiler may receive no earthly credit for her labor. But if she works for the best interest of her family, seeking to fashion their characters after the divine Model, the recording angel writes her name as one of the greatest missionaries in the world. God does not see things as man's finite vision views them. How careful should the husband and father be to maintain his loyalty to his marriage vows. How circumspect

should be his character, lest he shall encourage thoughts in young girls, or even in married women, that are not in accordance with the high, holy standard,—the commandments of God. Those commandments Christ shows to be exceedingly broad, reaching even the thoughts, intents, and purposes of the heart. Here is where many are delinquent. Their heart imaginings are not of the pure, holy character which God requires; and however high their calling, however talented they may be, God will mark iniquity against them and will count them as far more guilty and deserving of His wrath than those who have less talent, less light, less influence.

I am pained when I see men praised, flattered, and petted. God has revealed to me the fact that some who receive these attentions are unworthy to take His name upon their lips; yet they are exalted to heaven in the estimation of finite beings, who read only from outward appearance. My sisters, never pet and flatter poor, fallible, erring men, either young or old, married or unmarried. You know not their weaknesses, and you know not but that these very attentions and this profuse praise may prove their ruin. I am alarmed at the shortsightedness, the want of wisdom, that many manifest in this respect.

Men who are doing God's work and who have Christ abiding in their hearts will not lower the standard of morality, but will ever seek to elevate it. They will not find pleasure in the flattery of women or in being petted by them. Let men, both single and married, say: "Hands off! I will never give the least occasion that my good should be evil spoken of. My good name is capital of far more value to me than gold or silver. Let me preserve it untarnished. If men assail that name, it shall not be because I have given them occasion to do so, but for the same reason that they spoke evil of Christ—because they hated the purity and holiness of His character, for it was a constant rebuke to them."

I wish I could impress upon every worker in God's cause the great need of continual, earnest prayer. They cannot be constantly upon their knees, but they can be uplifting their hearts to God. This is the way that Enoch walked with God. Be careful lest self-sufficiency come in and you drop Jesus out and work in your own strength rather than in the spirit and strength of the Master. Do not waste golden moments in frivolous conversation. When you return from doing missionary work, do not praise yourself, but exalt Jesus; lift up the cross of Calvary. Allow no one to praise or flatter you, or to cling to your hand as if loath to let it go. Be afraid of every such demonstration. When young or even married persons show a disposition to open their family secrets to you, beware. When they express a desire for sympathy, know that it is time to exercise great caution. Those who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ and who are walking with God will have no unholy pining for sympathy. They have a companionship that satisfies every desire of the mind and heart. Married men who accept the attention, the praise and petting, of women should be assured that the love and sympathy of this class are not worth the obtaining.

Women are too often tempters. On one pretense or another they engage the attention of men, married or unmarried, and lead them on till they transgress the law of God, till their usefulness is ruined, and their souls are in jeopardy. The history of Joseph is left on record for the benefit of all who, like him, are tempted.

In principle he was firm as a rock, and he answered the tempter: “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” Moral power like his is what is needed now. If women would only elevate their lives and become workers with Christ, there would be less danger through their influence; but with their present feelings of unconcern in regard to home responsibilities and in regard to the claims that God has upon them, their influence is often strong in the wrong direction, their powers are dwarfed, and their work does not bear the divine impress. They are not home missionaries, neither are they missionaries away from home; and frequently home, precious home, is left to desolation.

Let everyone who professes Christ seek to overcome all unmanliness, all weakness and folly. Some men never grow up to the full stature of men in Christ Jesus. They are childish and self-indulgent. Humble piety would correct all this. Pure religion possesses no characteristics of childish self-indulgence. It is honorable in the highest degree. Then let not one of those who have enlisted as soldiers of Christ be ready to faint in the day of trial. All should feel that they have earnest work to do to elevate their fellow men. Not one has a right to rest from the warfare to make virtue desirable and vice hated. There is no rest for the living Christian this side of the eternal world. To obey God’s commandments is to do right and only right. This is Christian manliness. But many need to take frequent lessons from the life of Christ, who is the Author and Finisher of our faith. “Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” You are to show a growth in the Christian graces. By manifesting meekness under provocation and growing away from low earthliness you give evidence that you have an indwelling Saviour, and every thought, word, and deed attracts men to Jesus rather than to self. There is a great amount of work to be done and but little time in which to do it. Let it be your lifework to inspire all with the thought that they have a work to do for Christ. Wherever there are duties to be done which others do not understand because they do not wish to see their lifework, accept them and do them.

The standard of morality is not exalted high enough among God’s people. Many who profess to be keeping God’s commandments and standing in their defense are breaking them. Temptations present themselves in such a way that the tempted think they see an excuse to transgress. Those who enter the missionary field should be men and women who walk and talk with God. Those who stand as ministers in the sacred desk should be men of blameless reputation; their lives should be spotless, above everything that savors of impurity. Do not place your reputation in jeopardy by going in the way of temptation. If a woman lingeringly holds your hand, quickly withdraw it and save her from sin. If she manifests undue affection and mourns that her husband does not love her and sympathize with her, do not try to supply this lack. Your only safe and wise course in such a case is to keep your sympathy to yourself. Such cases are numerous. Point such souls to the Burden Bearer, the true and safe Counselor. If she has chosen Christ as a companion, He will give her grace to bear neglect without repining; meanwhile she should diligently do all in her power to bind her husband to herself by strictest fidelity to him and faithfulness in making his home cheerful and attractive. If all her efforts are unavailing and unappreciated, she will have the sympathy and aid of her blessed Redeemer. He will help her to bear all her

burdens and comfort her in her disappointments. She shows distrust of Jesus when she reaches for human objects to supply the place that Christ is ever ready to fill. In her repining she sins against God. She would do well to examine her own heart critically to see if sin is not lurking in the soul. The heart that thus seeks human sympathy and accepts forbidden attentions from any one is not pure and faultless before God.

The Bible affords many striking illustrations of the strong influence of evil-minded women. When Balaam was called upon to curse Israel, he was not permitted to do so; for the Lord "hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." But Balaam, who had already yielded to temptation, now became fully the agent of Satan; and he determined to accomplish indirectly what God had not permitted him to do directly. He at once laid a snare whereby Israel should be enchanted with the beautiful Moabitish women, who would lead them to transgress God's law. Thus iniquity would be found in them, and God's blessing would not rest upon them. Their forces would be greatly weakened, and their enemies would no longer fear their power, because the presence of the Lord of hosts was not with their armies.

This is intended as a warning to the people of God living in the last days. If they follow after righteousness and true holiness, if they keep all the commandments of God, Satan and his agents will not be permitted to overcome them. All the opposition of their bitterest foes will prove powerless to destroy or uproot the vine of God's own planting. Satan understands what Balaam learned by sad experience, that there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither divination against Israel, while iniquity is not cherished among them; therefore his power and influence will ever be employed to mar their unity and defile the purity of their characters. His snares are laid in a thousand ways to weaken their power for good. Again I urge upon you the necessity of purity in every thought, in every word, in every action. We have an individual accountability to God, an individual work, which no one can do for us; it is to make the world better by precept, by personal effort, and by example. While we should cultivate sociability, let it not be merely for amusement, but for a purpose. There are souls to save. Come near to them by personal effort. Open your doors to young men who are exposed to temptation. Evil invites them on every hand. Seek to interest them. If they are full of faults, seek to correct these errors. Do not hold yourselves aloof from them, but come close to them. Bring them to your firesides; invite them to your family altars. There is work that thousands need to have done for them. Every tree in Satan's garden is hung with tempting, poisonous fruit, and a woe is pronounced upon everyone who plucks and eats. Let us remember the claims of God upon us to make the path to heaven clear and bright and attractive, that we may win souls away from Satan's destructive enchantments.

God has given us reason to be used for a noble purpose. We are here as probationers for the next life. It is too solemn a period for any of us to be careless or to move in uncertainty. Our intercourse with others should be characterized by sobriety and heavenly-mindedness. Our conversation should be upon heavenly things. "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. 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."
What is more worthy to engross the mind than the plan of redemption? It is a subject that is exhaustless. The love of Jesus, the salvation offered to fallen man through His infinite love, holiness of heart, the precious, saving truth for these last days, the grace of Christ—these are subjects which may animate the soul and cause the pure in heart to feel that joy which the disciples felt when Jesus came and walked with them as they traveled toward Emmaus. He who has centered his affections upon Christ will relish this kind of hallowed association and will gather divine strength by such intercourse; but he who has no relish for this kind of conversation, and who is best pleased to talk sentimental nonsense, has wandered far away from God and is becoming dead to holy and noble aspirations. The sensual, the earthly, is interpreted by such to be heavenly. When the conversation is of a frivolous character and savors of a dissatisfied reaching out after human sympathy and appreciation, it springs from lovesick sentimentalism, and neither the youth nor the men with gray hairs are secure. When the truth of God is an abiding principle in the heart, it will be like a living spring. Attempts may be made to repress it, but it will gush forth in another place; it is there and cannot be repressed. The truth in the heart is a wellspring of life. It refreshes the weary and restrains vile thought and utterance.

Is there not enough taking place about us to show us the dangers that beset our path? Everywhere are seen wrecks of humanity, neglected family altars, broken-up families. There is a strange abandonment of principle, a lowering of the standard of morality; the sins are fast increasing which caused the judgments of God to be poured upon the earth in the Flood and in the destruction of Sodom by fire. We are nearing the end. God has borne long with the perversity of mankind, but their punishment is no less certain. Let those who profess to be the light of the world depart from all iniquity. We see the very same spirit manifested against the truth that was seen in Christ's day. For want of Bible arguments, those who are making void the law of God will manufacture falsehoods to stain and blacken the workers. They did this to the world's Redeemer; they will do it to His followers. Reports that have not the least foundation will be asserted as truth.

God has blessed His commandment-keeping people and all the opposition and falsehoods that may be brought against them will only strengthen those who stand firm in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints. But if those who profess to be the depositaries of God's law become transgressors of that law, His protecting care will be withdrawn, and many will fall through perverseness and licentiousness. Then we shall indeed be unable to stand before our enemies. But if His people remain separate and distinct from the world, as a nation that do righteousness, God will be their defense, and no weapons formed against them shall prosper.

In view of the dangers of this time shall not we, as God's commandment-keeping people, put away from among us all sin, all iniquity, all perverseness? Shall not the women professing the truth keep strict guard over themselves, lest the least encouragement be given to unwarrantable familiarity? They may close many a door of temptation if they will observe at all times strict reserve and propriety of deportment. Let men find an example in the life of Joseph and stand firm in

principle, however strongly tempted. We want to be strong men and women for the right. There are those around us who are weak in moral power. They need to be in the company of those who are firm, and whose hearts are closely knit with the heart of Christ. Everyone's principles will be put to the test. But there are those who go into temptation like a fool to the correction of stocks. They invite the enemy to tempt them. They unnerve themselves, are weakened in moral power, and shame and confusion are the result.

How contemptible in the sight of a holy God are those who profess to stand in vindication of His law and yet violate its precepts! They bring reproach upon the precious cause and give the opposers of truth occasion to triumph. Never should the mark of distinction between the followers of Jesus and the followers of Satan be obliterated. There is a distinct line drawn by God Himself between the world and the church, between commandment keepers and commandment breakers. They do not blend together. They are as different as midday and midnight—different in their tastes, their aims, their pursuits, their characters. If we cultivate the love and fear of God we shall loathe the least approach to impurity.

May the Lord attract souls to Himself and impart to them individually a sense of their sacred responsibility to form such characters that Christ will not be ashamed to call them brethren. Elevate the standard, and then the heavenly benediction will be pronounced upon you in that day when every man will receive according to the deeds done in the body. Workers for God must live as in His sight and be constantly developing in character, in true virtue and godliness. Their minds and hearts must be so thoroughly imbued with the Spirit of Christ and so solemnized by the sacred message they have to bear that every thought, every action, every motive, will be above the earthly and sensual. Their happiness will not be in forbidden, selfish gratifications, but in Jesus and His love.

My prayer is: "O Lord, anoint the eyes of Thy people, that they may discern between sin and holiness, between pollution and righteousness, and come off victors at last."