

Treasuring God's Mercy

MEMORY VERSE: “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help” (Hosea 13:9).

“Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 36.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 186-213. (At the bottom of this page)

1. THE DAYS OF VISITATION

Sun, Jan 18

a. What warning echoes down to the close of probation? Hosea 9:7.

Hosea 9:7

The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.

“The heart of A has not been devoted to God. He has capabilities and talents for which he must render an account to the great Giver of all. His heart has been unconsecrated and his life unworthy of his profession; yet he has been closely connected with the sacred work of God for more than a score of years. What light he has had, what privileges! He has enjoyed the rarest opportunities to develop a substantial Christian character. The words of Christ when He wept over Jerusalem are applicable to him: ‘If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.’ A, the retribution of God hangs over you, ‘because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.’

“B, is of the same cast of mind, but not so thoroughly selfish. Both are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Their course is entirely inconsistent with the Christian life. They lack stability, sobriety, and devotion to God. With B the work of grace is altogether too superficial. He desires to be a Christian, but does not strive to maintain the victory over self and act up to his convictions of right and wrong. Deeds, not idle words and empty intentions, are acceptable to God.

“A, you have heard the word of God in reproofs, in counsels, in warnings, as well as in the entreaties of love. But hearing is not enough. ‘Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.’ It is easy to be borne along by the current, and to cry Hosannah with the multitude; but in the calm of everyday life, when there is no special excitement or exaltation, then comes the test of true Christianity.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 187, 188.

2. SUBTLE SNARES

Mon, Jan 19

a. How does the enemy often lead believers to ruin? Hosea 9:8, 9, 17.

Hosea 9:8, 9

The watchman of Ephraim was with my God:but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God. **9** They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah:therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins.

Hosea 9:17

My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

“[Satan] seizes men and women who are selfish and unconsecrated, and makes of them sentinels to watch the faithful servants of God, to question their words, their actions, and their motives, and to find fault and murmur at their reproofs and warnings. Through them he creates suspicion and jealousy, and seeks to weaken the courage of the faithful, to please the unsanctified, and to bring to nought the labors of God’s servants.

“Satan has had great power over the minds of parents through their undisciplined children. The sin of parental neglect stands marked against many Sabbathkeeping parents. The spirit of gossip and talebearing is one of Satan’s special agencies to sow discord and strife, to separate friends, and to undermine the faith of many in the truthfulness of our positions. Brethren and sisters are too

ready to talk of the faults and errors that they think exist in others, and especially in those who have borne unflinchingly the messages of reproof and warning given them of God.

“The children of these complainers listen with open ears and receive the poison of disaffection. Parents are thus blindly closing the avenues through which the hearts of the children might be reached. How many families season their daily meals with doubt and questionings. They dissect the characters of their friends, and serve them up as a dainty dessert.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 194, 195.

b. What was the root cause of Israel's spiritual failure? Hosea 10:1; Deuteronomy 8:11-14.

Hosea 10:1

Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images.

Deuteronomy 8:11-14

Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: **12** Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; **13** And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; **14** Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

“The people of Israel lost sight of their high privileges as God's representatives. They forgot God and failed to fulfill their holy mission. The blessings they received brought no blessing to the world. All their advantages they appropriated for their own glorification. They shut themselves away from the world in order to escape temptation. The restrictions that God had placed upon their association with idolaters as a means of preventing them from conforming to the practices of the heathen, they used to build up a wall of separation between themselves and all other nations. They robbed God of the service He required of them, and they robbed their fellow men of religious guidance and a holy example. “Priests and rulers became fixed in a rut of ceremonialism. They were satisfied

with a legal religion, and it was impossible for them to give to others the living truths of heaven.”—The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 14, 15.

3. SOFTENING THE SOIL

Tue, Jan 20

a. What appeal does God make to His people who have become spiritually unresponsive? Hosea 10:12; James 4:8.

Hosea 10:12

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

James 4:8

Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

“Our churches are to cooperate in the work of spiritual tilling, with the hope of reaping by and by. There is much perversity to be met, much thwarting of holy plans and consecrated effort, because of the evil heart of unbelief. But the work must be done. The soil is stubborn, but the fallow ground must be broken up, the seeds of righteousness must be sown. Pause not, teachers beloved by God, as though doubtful whether to prosecute a labor which will grow as performed. Fail not, neither be discouraged. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. . . . Remember that you cannot trust in self.”—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, p. 420.

b. How does God reveal His tender love for His people, extending His hand to us even in our waywardness? Hosea 11:1-4.

Hosea 11:1-4

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. 2 As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. 3 I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. 4 I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

“Though now He has ascended to the presence of God, and shares the throne of the universe, Jesus has lost none of His compassionate nature. Today

the same tender, sympathizing heart is open to all the woes of humanity. Today the hand that was pierced is reached forth to bless more abundantly His people that are in the world. 'And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.' The soul that has given himself to Christ is more precious in His sight than the whole world. The Saviour would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast.

"Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. . . . I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 480–483.

4. A LITTLE MORE TIME . . .

Wed, Jan 21

a. What illustrates the depth of God's mercy? Hosea 11:7-9; Luke 13:6-9.

Hosea 11:7-9

And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him. **8** How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

9 I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.

Luke 13:6-9

He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. **7** Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? **8** And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

“Must [God] give up the people for whom such a provision has been made, even His only-begotten Son, the express image of Himself? God permits His Son to be delivered up for our offenses. He Himself assumes toward the Sin Bearer the character of a judge, divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a father. “Herein His love commends itself in the most marvelous manner to the rebellious race. What a sight for angels to behold!”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 246.

b. Why does God use prophets—and how are they crucial to spiritual restoration? Hosea 12:10, 13; Amos 3:7.

Hosea 12:10

I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

Hosea 12:13

And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.

Amos 3:7

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

“[The] plain utterances of the prophets and of the Master Himself, should be received by us as the voice of God to every soul.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 327.

c. Even in the tragic end of Israel, what shows God is fair? Hosea 13:4-9; 14:1.

Hosea 13:4-9

Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me. **5** I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought. **6** According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me. **7** Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them: **8** I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them. **9** O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.

Hosea 14:1

O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

“[Those] sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work. By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. The horrible cruelties enacted in the destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan’s vindictive power over those who yield to his control.

“We cannot know how much we owe to Christ for the peace and protection which we enjoy. It is the restraining power of God that prevents mankind from passing fully under the control of Satan. The disobedient and unthankful have great reason for gratitude for God’s mercy and long-suffering in holding in check the cruel, malignant power of the evil one. But when men pass the limits of divine forbearance, that restraint is removed. God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 35, 36.

5. WITHERED—OR FLOURISHING?

Thu, Jan 22

a. How did Jesus illustrate His people’s fate as a nation? Matthew 21:19, 20.

Matthew 21:19, 20

And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. **20** And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

“Jesus had come to the fig tree hungry, to find food. So He had come to Israel, hungering to find in them the fruits of righteousness. He had lavished on them His gifts, that they might bear fruit for the blessing of the world. Every opportunity and privilege had been granted them, and in return He sought their sympathy and cooperation in His work of grace. He longed to see in them self-sacrifice and compassion, zeal for God, and a deep yearning of soul for the salvation of their fellow men. Had they kept the law of God, they would have done the same unselfish work that Christ did. But love to God and man was eclipsed by

pride and self-sufficiency. They brought ruin upon themselves by refusing to minister to others. The treasures of truth which God had committed to them, they did not give to the world. In the barren tree they might read both their sin and its punishment. Withered beneath the Saviour's curse, standing forth sere and blasted, dried up by the roots, the fig tree showed what the Jewish people would be when the grace of God was removed from them. Refusing to impart blessing, they would no longer receive it."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 583.

b. How does the book of Hosea conclude by emphasizing God's hope, healing, and a call to wisdom? Hosea 14:4, 5, 8, 9.

Hosea 14:4, 5

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. **5** I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

Hosea 14:8, 9

Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found. **9** Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

“The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. So spiritual growth is attained through cooperation with divine agencies. As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take root in Christ. As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, so are we to receive the Holy Spirit. If our hearts are stayed upon Christ, He will come unto us ‘as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.’ As the Sun of Righteousness, He will arise upon us ‘with healing in His wings.’ We shall ‘grow as the lily.’ We ‘shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.’ Hosea 6:3; Malachi 4:2; Hosea 14:5, 7.”—*Education*, p. 106.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Jan 23

1. What does God require of us in the day of His visitation?
2. Why was God not satisfied with the merely external religion of Israel?
3. What does breaking up the fallow ground of the heart do for us?
4. On what should I be focusing in these remaining moments of probation?

5. How can I be assured of being blessed rather than cut off by God?

Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, pp. 186-213.

The following testimony, given in my last vision, January 5, 1875, I wrote in my tent between the services of the Vermont camp meeting, August, 1875. It sets forth the condition of things at ---- in January, 1875. Developments during the following summer fully justified the apparent severity of the testimony. In September I read portions of it to that church, and a great work commenced under our labors; yet, for the benefit of that church and others, I give the testimony in this humble work. (4T 186.1)

Darkness is getting the control where only the Spirit of God should rule. But few who engage in the work realize the necessity of personal effort and individual responsibility in whatever department they occupy. Few feel the sacredness of the work in which they are engaged. They regard it as upon a common level with ordinary enterprises. (4T 186.2)

Selfishness predominates with many who should know that a life of self-sacrificing love is a life of peace and liberty. Those who seek happiness by gratifying themselves and looking out mainly for their own interests are on the wrong track to secure happiness even upon earth. Whoever is unfaithful in the least of his duties is unfaithful in greater ones. If he neglects to faithfully perform the small tasks devolving upon him, he proves himself incapable of bearing weightier responsibilities; he indicates that he is not wholehearted in the work and that he does not have an eye single to the glory of God. (4T 186.3)

Some are ready to define the duties that belong to others, and realize the full importance of their responsibilities, but fail to readily perceive their own. Personal fidelity and individual responsibility are needed especially in the Health Institute [now sanitarium], and in the office, the church, and the school. If all connected with these institutions were listening eagerly to hear what Jesus directed them to do, instead of turning to ask what this man or that man shall do, we should witness a great change in every department of the work. If the language of each heart was, "I must listen to Christ's teachings, and obey His voice; no one can do my work for me; the attention of others can never repair my

negligence,” then we might see the cause of God advancing as it has never yet advanced. (4T 186.4)

It is this holding back, waiting for others to do, that brings spiritual feebleness. To reserve one’s energies is a sure way to lessen them. Jesus requires implicit obedience and willing submission from all His servants. There must be no halting or self-indulgence in the service of Christ. There is no concord between Christ and Belial. What a lack of devotion to the work of God, what a want of caretaking, has there been at ----. (4T 187.1)

The heart of A has not been devoted to God. He has capabilities and talents for which he must render an account to the great Giver of all. His heart has been unconsecrated and his life unworthy of his profession; yet he has been closely connected with the sacred work of God for more than a score of years. What light he has had, what privileges! He has enjoyed the rarest opportunities to develop a substantial Christian character. The words of Christ when He wept over Jerusalem are applicable to him: “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.” Luke 19:42. A, the retribution of God hangs over you, “because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” Luke 19:44. (4T 187.2)

B is of the same cast of mind, but not so thoroughly selfish. Both are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Their course is entirely inconsistent with the Christian life. They lack stability, sobriety, and devotion to God. With B the work of grace is altogether too superficial. He desires to be a Christian, but does not strive to maintain the victory over self and act up to his convictions of right and wrong. Deeds, not idle words and empty intentions, are acceptable to God. (4T 187.3)

A, you have heard the word of God in reproofs, in counsels, in warnings, as well as in the entreaties of love. But hearing is not enough. “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” James 1:22. It is easy to be borne along by the current, and to cry Hosannah with the multitude; but in the calm of everyday life, when there is no special excitement or exaltation, then comes the test of true Christianity. It is then that your heart becomes cold, and your zeal abates, and religious exercises become distasteful to you. (4T 187.4)

You positively neglect to do the will of God. Says Christ: “Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” John 15:14. This is the condition imposed; this is

the test that proves men's characters. Feelings are often deceiving, emotions are no sure safeguard; for they are variable and subject to external circumstances. Many are deluded by relying on sensational impressions. The test is: What are you doing for Christ? What sacrifices are you making? What victories are you gaining? A selfish spirit overcome, a temptation to neglect duty resisted, passion subdued, and willing, cheerful obedience rendered to the will of Christ are far greater evidences that you are a child of God than spasmodic piety and emotional religion. (4T 188.1)

Both of you have been averse to reproof; it has ever awakened disaffection and murmuring in your hearts against your best Friend, who has ever sought to do you good, and whom you have every reason to respect. You have separated yourselves from Him and have vexed the Spirit of God by rising up against the words He has given His servants to speak in regard to your course. You have not listened to these admonitions, and have thus rejected the Spirit of God and turned it from your hearts, and have become careless and indifferent in your deportment. (4T 188.2)

Brother A, you should have gained a valuable experience during the many years that you have been blessed with the great light God has permitted to shine upon your pathway. I heard a voice saying in reference to you: "It is an unfruitful tree; why should its fruitless branches shadow the space that a fruitful tree might occupy? Cut it down; for why cumbereth it the ground?" Then I heard the pleading tones of Mercy's sweet voice, saying: "Spare it a little longer. I will dig about its roots; I will prune it. Give it one more trial; if it fails to be fruitful then, you may cut it down." So a little longer probation is granted the unproductive tree, a little longer time for the barren life to blossom and bear fruit. Will the opportunity given be improved? Will the warnings of God's Spirit be heeded? The words of Jesus in regard to Jerusalem after she had slighted the salvation graciously offered by her Redeemer are also, in substance, spoken unto you: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ... how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matthew 23:37. Christ pleaded, He invited; but His love was unrequited by the people He came to save. You have done no better in your day than did the poor, self-deceived and blinded Jews in theirs. You might have improved your blessed privileges and opportunities, and perfected Christian character; but your heart has been rebellious, and you "would not" humble yourself to be truly converted and live in obedience to God's requirements. (4T 188.3)

The unreconciled feelings and murmurings which have been expressed by some have also been festering in your soul, although you have not dared to speak out plainly to the same effect. It would have been better for the office and for all concerned had you been separated from it years ago. The more light you have had, the more privileges you have enjoyed, the less sincerity and righteousness have you manifested. Your heart has been carnal, and you have neglected the expressed word of God. Although you have been hedged about with warnings and counsels, and have had the strongest evidence that God was in this work and that His voice was speaking to you, yet you have slighted and rejected solemn reproofs, and gone on in your own selfish, willful way. (4T 189.1)

Sometimes your fears have been aroused, but still you have never realized your wretched spiritual condition and absolute danger. You have repeatedly fallen back again into the same state of indifference and selfishness. Your repentance has never gone deep enough to perfect a thorough reformation. You have had a surface work, but not that entire transformation which is necessary in order to bring you into acceptance with God. "He that followeth Me," says Christ, "shall not walk in darkness." John 8:12. But through the greater part of your professed Christian life you have walked in darkness because you have failed to connect with heaven and receive the pure light of God's Spirit. (4T 189.2)

If you were in daily communion with the Lord and cultivated a love for souls you would grow out of self and become an earnest worker in the vineyard of the Lord. You would perceive how the faithful performance of the duties of life would preserve you from self-love and self-gratification. You have not been diligent, seeking to gain an advanced experience every day. You should be at this time a trusty man in any position of responsibility, but selfishness has marked the performance of everything you have set your hand to do. You have been wise in your own conceit, but have failed to gain wisdom from the experience of many years. (4T 190.1)

B has been vain. He might have moved steadily forward, growing in grace, but the external appearance has seemed to him more important than the inward adorning, even the garment of a meek and quiet spirit, which God accounts of great value. Unbelievers who have been employed in the office, but have not had the light of present truth as you have had, have nevertheless been far more faithful and conscientious than either of you whom I am addressing. If you had been

diligently gathering with Christ, some of these would now be with us in the truth. But your lives were a stumbling block to them. God looks upon these unbelievers with greater pity and favor than upon those who believe the truth, yet deny Him in their works. That belief that is laid aside when convenient, and put on and off like a garment, is not the religion of Christ, but a spurious article that will not bear the tests even of this world. (4T 190.2)

True religion is ever distinctly seen in our words and deportment, and in every act of life. With the followers of Christ, religion should never be divorced from business. They should go hand in hand, and God's commandments should be strictly regarded in all the details of worldly matters. The knowledge that we are children of God should give a high tone of character even to the everyday duties of life, making us not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit. Such a religion as this bears the scrutiny of a critical world with a grand consciousness of integrity. (4T 190.3)

Every workman in the office should consider himself God's steward and should do his work with exactness and faithful vigilance. The constant inquiry should be: "Is this in accordance with the will of God? Will this please my Redeemer?" Bible religion elevates the reason until Christ is blended with all the thoughts. Every action, every word, and every moment of our lives should bear the impress of our holy faith. The end of all things is at hand, and we have no time to be idle or to live in pleasure, at cross-purposes with God. (4T 191.1)

The Lord will not be trifled with. Those who neglect His mercies and blessings in this day of opportunities will bring impenetrable darkness upon themselves and will be candidates for the wrath of God. Sodom and Gomorrah were visited with the curse of the Almighty for their sins and iniquities. There are those in our day who have equally abused the mercies of God and slighted His warnings. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for those who bear the name of Christ, yet dishonor Him by their unconsecrated lives. This class are laying up for themselves a fearful retribution when God in His wrath shall visit them with His judgments. (4T 191.2)

Sinners who have not had the light and privileges that Seventh-day Adventists have enjoyed will, in their ignorance, be in a more favorable position before God than those who have been unfaithful while in close connection with His work and professing to love and serve Him. The tears of Christ upon the mount came from

an anguished, breaking heart because of His unrequited love and the ingratitude of His chosen people. He had labored untiringly to save them from the fate that they seemed determined to bring upon themselves, but they refused His mercy and knew not the time of their visitation. Their day of privilege was ending, yet they were so blinded by sin that they knew it not. (4T 191.3)

Jesus looked down through the centuries even to the close of time, and, taking in the cases of all who had repaid His love and admonitions with selfishness and neglect, and all who would thus repay Him, He addressed to them those solemn words, declaring that they knew not the time of their visitation. The Jews were gathering about themselves the dark clouds of retribution, and many today, in like manner, are drawing upon themselves the wrath of God, because of opportunities unimproved, the counsels and love of Jesus scorned, and His servants despised and hated for speaking the truth. (4T 192.1)

There is no place on the face of the earth where so great light has been granted as at ----. Even Jerusalem of old was not more highly favored with the beams of heaven's light shining upon the way that her people should tread. Yet they have failed to walk, by faithful obedience, in the full radiance of the light, serving God night and day. A sickly, dwarfed religion is the result of neglecting to follow the revealed light of the Spirit of the Lord. Energy and love increase as we exercise them, and the Christian graces can be developed only by careful cultivation. (4T 192.2)

Necessity of Family Discipline

The state of many in ---- is truly alarming; especially is this the case with a majority of the youth. Families have moved to the place with the understanding that they were not to burden the church, but to be a help to it. With a considerable number the result has been quite the contrary. The neglect of parents to properly discipline their children has been a fruitful source of evil in many families. The youth have not been restrained as they should have been. Parents have neglected to follow the directions of the word of God in this matter, and the children have taken the reins of government into their own hands. The consequence has been that they have generally succeeded in ruling their parents instead of being under their authority. (4T 192.3)

The parents are blind to the true state of their children, who have succeeded in entirely deceiving them. But those who have lost the control of their children are not pleased when others seek to control them or to point out their defects for the purpose of correcting them. The cause of God has been retarded in ---- by parents' bringing their unruly and undisciplined children into this large church. Many are living in constant neglect of their duty to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; yet these very ones have most to say concerning the wickedness of the youth in ----, when it is the wrong example and evil influence of their own children that have demoralized the young people with whom they have associated. (4T 193.1)

Such families have brought upon this church its heaviest burdens. They come with false ideas. They seem to expect the church to be faultless and that it will take the responsibility of making Christians of those very children whom they, as parents, are unable to control or keep within bounds. They throw themselves upon the church, a terrible and crushing weight. They might be a help if they would yield their selfishness and strive to honor God and to repair the mistakes they made in their lives. But they do no such thing; they hold themselves aloof, ready to criticize the lack of spirituality in the church, whose greatest calamity is that it numbers among its members too many like themselves—dead weights, persons whose hearts and lives are unconsecrated, and whose course is all wrong. The institutions located at ---- have carried along too many diseased and lifeless bodies for their own prosperity and spiritual vitality. (4T 193.2)

Criticizing Burden Bearers

The church is suffering for want of unselfish Christian workers. If all who are, as a rule, unable to resist temptation and are too weak to stand alone would remain away from ----, there would be a much purer spiritual atmosphere in that place. Those who live upon the husks of others' failings and deficiencies, and who gather to themselves the unwholesome miasma of their neighbors' neglects and shortcomings, making themselves church scavengers, are no advantage to the society of which they form a part, but are an actual burden to the community upon which they inflict themselves. (4T 193.3)

The church is in need, not of burdens, but of earnest workers; not of faultfinders, but of builders in Zion. Missionaries are really needed at the great heart of the work—men who will keep the fort, who will be true as steel to preserve the honor

of those whom God has placed at the head of His work, and who will do their utmost to sustain the cause in all its departments, even at the sacrifice of their own interests and lives, if need be. But I was shown that there are but few who have the truth wrought into their very souls, who can bear the searching test of God. There are many who have taken hold of the truth, but the truth has not taken hold of them, to transform their hearts and cleanse them from all selfishness. There are those who come to ---- to help in the work, as well as many of the old members, who have a fearful account to render to God for the hindrance they have been to the work through their self-love and unconsecrated lives. (4T 194.1)

Religion has no saving virtue if the characters of those professing it do not correspond with their profession. God has graciously given great light to His people in ----; but Satan has his work to accomplish, and he brings his power to bear most strongly at the great heart of the work. He seizes men and women who are selfish and unconsecrated, and makes of them sentinels to watch the faithful servants of God, to question their words, their actions, and their motives, and to find fault and murmur at their reproofs and warnings. Through them he creates suspicion and jealousy, and seeks to weaken the courage of the faithful, to please the unsanctified, and to bring to nought the labors of God's servants. (4T 194.2)

Satan has had great power over the minds of parents through their undisciplined children. The sin of parental neglect stands marked against many Sabbathkeeping parents. The spirit of gossip and talebearing is one of Satan's special agencies to sow discord and strife, to separate friends, and to undermine the faith of many in the truthfulness of our positions. Brethren and sisters are too ready to talk of the faults and errors that they think exist in others, and especially in those who have borne unflinchingly the messages of reproof and warning given them of God. (4T 194.3)

The children of these complainers listen with open ears and receive the poison of disaffection. Parents are thus blindly closing the avenues through which the hearts of the children might be reached. How many families season their daily meals with doubt and questionings. They dissect the characters of their friends, and serve them up as a dainty dessert. A precious bit of slander is passed around the board to be commented upon, not only by adults, but by children. In this God is dishonored. Jesus said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matthew 25:40. Therefore Christ is slighted and abused by those who slander His servants. (4T 195.1)

The names of God's chosen servants have been handled with disrespect, and in some cases with absolute contempt, by certain persons whose duty it is to uphold them. The children have not failed to hear the disrespectful remarks of their parents in reference to the solemn reproofs and warnings of God's servants. They have understood the scornful jests and depreciatory speeches that from time to time have met their ears, and the tendency has been to bring sacred and eternal interests, in their minds, on a level with the common affairs of the world. What a work are these parents doing in making infidels of their children even in their childhood! This is the way that children are taught to be irreverent and to rebel against Heaven's reproof of sin. Spiritual declension can but prevail where such evils exist. These very fathers and mothers, blinded by the enemy, marvel why their children are so inclined to unbelief and to doubt the truth of the Bible. They wonder that it is so difficult to reach them by moral and religious influences. Had they spiritual eyesight, they would at once discover that this deplorable condition of things is the result of their own home influence, the offspring of their jealousy and distrust. Thus many infidels are educated in the family circles of professed Christians. (4T 195.2)

There are many who find special enjoyment in discoursing and dwelling upon the defects, whether real or imaginary, of those who bear heavy responsibilities in connection with the institutions of God's cause. They overlook the good that has been accomplished, the benefits that have resulted from arduous labor and unflinching devotion to the cause, and fasten their attention upon some apparent mistake, some matter that, after it has been done and the consequences have followed, they fancy could have been done in a better manner with fairer results, when the truth is, had they been left to do the work, they would either have refused to move at all under the attending discouragements of the case, or would have managed more indiscreetly than those who did do the work, following the opening of God's providence. (4T 196.1)

But these unruly talkers will fasten upon the more disagreeable features of the work, even as the lichen clings to the roughness of the rock. These persons are spiritually dwarfed by continually dwelling upon the failings and faults of others. They are morally incapable of discerning good and noble actions, unselfish endeavors, true heroism, and self-sacrifice. They are not becoming nobler and loftier in their lives and hopes, more generous and broad in their ideas and plans. They are not cultivating that charity that should characterize the Christian's life.

They are degenerating every day and are becoming narrower in their prejudices and views. Littleness is their element, and the atmosphere that surrounds them is poisonous to peace and happiness. (4T 196.2)

The great sin of ---- is a neglect to cherish the light which God has given them through His servants. Said Christ to His apostles: "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." John 13:20. Here it is made plain that those who reject the messages of God's servants reject not only the Son, but also the Father. (4T 196.3)

Again He says: "But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me." Luke 10:10-16. (4T 197.1)

How awfully solemn are these words! How important that we should not be found rejecting the warnings and admonitions that God delivers through His humble instruments; for in slighting the light brought by His messengers, we slight the Saviour of the world, the King of glory. Many are running this terrible risk and are thus bringing upon themselves the condemnation of God. The Almighty will not be trifled with, nor allow His voice to be disregarded with impunity. (4T 197.2)

Evils of Lax Discipline

Brethren C and D did not bring that relief to the cause at ---- that they should have brought. Had they both taken hold humbly, in the fear of God, and persevered in well-doing both in the church and the office, they would have been a great blessing to the work of God. Had they felt their accountability to God for the training and discipline of their children they would have been worthy examples to others. These children needed not only the education acquired at school, but home

training also, that their mental and moral powers might be developed in due proportion, each having the requisite exercise. The physical, mental, and spiritual capabilities should be developed in order to form a properly balanced character. (4T 197.3)

Children should be watched, guarded, and disciplined in order to successfully accomplish this. It requires skill and patient effort to mold the young in the right manner. Certain evil tendencies are to be carefully restrained and tenderly rebuked; the mind is to be stimulated in favor of the right. The child should be encouraged in attempting to govern self, and all this is to be done judiciously, or the purpose desired is frustrated. (4T 198.1)

Parents may well inquire: “Who is sufficient for these things?” 2 Corinthians 2:16. God alone is their sufficiency, and if they leave Him out of the question, seeking not His aid and counsel, hopeless indeed is their task. But by prayer, by study of the Bible, and by earnest zeal on their part they may succeed nobly in this important duty and be repaid a hundredfold for all their time and care. But gossiping and anxiety concerning the external appearance have taken the precious time that should have been devoted to prayer for wisdom and strength from God to fulfill their most sacred trust. Parents who are wise unto salvation will so order their surroundings that they will be favorable to the formation of correct characters in their children. This is almost always in their power. The source of wisdom is open, from which they may draw all necessary knowledge in this direction. (4T 198.2)

The Bible, a volume rich in instruction, should be their textbook. If they train their children according to its precepts they not only set their young feet in the right path, but they educate themselves in their most holy duties. Impressions made upon the minds of the young are hard to efface. How important, then, that these impressions should be of the right sort, bending the elastic faculties of youth in the right direction. (4T 198.3)

Certain parents have come to ---- with their children and dropped them into the church as if they resigned from thenceforth all responsibility of their moral and religious training. Brother and Sister C and Brother and Sister D have made a decided failure in disciplining their children as well as in properly regulating themselves. Their children have gloried in their freedom to do as they pleased. They have been released from home responsibilities and have despised restraint.

A life of usefulness appears to them like a life of drudgery. Lax government at home has unfitted them for any position, and as a natural consequence they have rebelled against school discipline. Their complaints have been received and credited by their parents, who, in sympathizing with their imaginary troubles, have encouraged their children in wrong-doing. These parents have in many instances believed positive untruths that have been palmed off upon them by their deceiving children. A few such cases of unruly and dissembling children would do much toward breaking down all authority in the school and demoralizing the young people of our church. (4T 198.4)

There is perfect order in heaven, perfect concord and agreement. If parents so neglect to bring their children under proper authority here, how can they hope that they will be considered fit companions for the holy angels in a world of peace and harmony? Indulgent parents, who justify their children in their wrongdoing, are thereby creating an element that will bring discord into society and subvert the authority of both school and church. (4T 199.1)

Children need watchful care and guidance as never before; for Satan is striving to gain the control of their minds and hearts, and to drive out the Spirit of God. The fearful state of the youth of this age constitutes one of the strongest signs that we are living in the last days, but the ruin of many may be traced directly to the wrong management of the parents. The spirit of murmuring against reproof has been taking root and is bearing its fruit of insubordination. While the parents are not pleased with the characters their children are developing, they fail to see the errors that make them what they are. (4T 199.2)

Eli remonstrated with his sons, but did not act promptly in restraining them. The ease-loving, affectionate father was warned of God that retribution would follow his neglect, but even then he did not feel the importance of at once putting the disgusting evil away from Israel. He should have taken prompt measures himself; but instead of this he said, with remarkable submission: "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good." 1 Samuel 3:18. If he had been aroused to the full guilt of his neglect, Israel might have been saved from the humiliation of defeat, and the ark of God would not have fallen into the enemy's hands. (4T 199.3)

God condemns the negligence that dallies with sin and crime, and the insensibility that is slow to detect its baleful presence in the families of professed Christians. He holds parents accountable in a great degree for the faults and follies of their

offspring. God visited with His curse not only the sons of Eli, but Eli himself, and this fearful example should be a warning to the parents of this time. (4T 200.1)

As I looked upon the perilous situation of our youth, and was shown how indifferent the parents are to their welfare, my heart was sick and faint; angels were troubled and wept with grief. The youth are passing into the world, and into the hands of Satan. They are becoming less susceptible to the sweet influences of the grace of God, bolder and more defiant, and manifest increasing disregard of eternal interests. I saw Satan planting his banner in the households of those who profess to be God's chosen ones, but those who are walking in the light should be able to discern the difference between the black banner of the adversary and the bloodstained standard of Christ. (4T 200.2)

Children should be taught by precept and example. Parents should meet their grave responsibilities with fear and trembling. Fervent prayers should be offered for divine strength and guidance in this task. In many families the seeds of vanity and selfishness are sown in the hearts of the children almost during babyhood. Their cunning little sayings and doings are commented upon and praised in their presence, and repeated with exaggerations to others. The little ones take note of this and swell with self-importance; they presume to interrupt conversations, and become forward and impudent. Flattery and indulgence foster their vanity and willfulness, until the youngest not unfrequently rules the whole family, father and mother included. (4T 200.3)

The disposition formed by this sort of training cannot be laid aside as the child matures to riper judgment. It grows with his growth, and what might have appeared cunning in the baby becomes contemptible and wicked in the man or woman. They seek to rule over their associates, and if any refuse to yield to their wishes they consider themselves aggrieved and insulted. This is because they have been indulged to their injury in youth, instead of being taught the self-denial necessary to bear the hardships and toils of life. (4T 201.1)

Parents frequently pet and indulge their young children because it appears easier to manage them in that way. It is smoother work to let them have their own way than to check the unruly inclinations that rise so strongly in their breasts. Yet this course is cowardly. It is a wicked thing thus to shirk responsibility; for the time will come when these children, whose unchecked inclinations have strengthened into absolute vices, will bring reproach and disgrace upon themselves and their

families. They go out into busy life unprepared for its temptations, not strong enough to endure perplexities and troubles; passionate, overbearing, undisciplined, they seek to bend others to their will, and, failing in this, consider themselves ill-used by the world and turn against it. (4T 201.2)

The lessons of childhood, good or bad, are not learned in vain. Character is developed in youth for good or evil. At home there may be praise and false flattery; in the world each stands on his own merits. The pampered ones, to whom all home authority has yielded, are there daily subjected to mortification by being obliged to yield to others. Many are even then taught their true place by these practical lessons of life. Through rebuffs, disappointments, and plain language from their superiors they often find their true level and are humbled to understand and accept their proper place. But this is a severe and unnecessary ordeal for them to pass through, and could have been prevented by proper training in their youth. (4T 201.3)

The majority of these ill-disciplined ones go through life at cross-purposes with the world, making a failure where they should have succeeded. They grow to feel that the world owes them a grudge because it does not flatter and caress them, and they take revenge by holding a grudge against the world and bidding it defiance. Circumstances sometimes oblige them to affect a humility they do not feel; but it does not fit them with a natural grace, and their true characters are sure to be exposed sooner or later. (4T 202.1)

If such persons have families of their own, they become arbitrary rulers at home and display there the selfish and unreasonable disposition they are forced to partially conceal from the outside world. Their dependents feel to the utmost all the faults of their early training. Why will parents educate their children in such a manner that they will be at war with those who are brought in contact with them? (4T 202.2)

Their religious experience is molded by the education received in childhood. The sad trials, which prove so dangerous to the prosperity of a church, and which cause the unbelieving to stumble and turn away with doubt and dissatisfaction, usually arise from an unsubdued and rebellious spirit, the offspring of parental indulgence in early youth. How many lives are wrecked, how many crimes are committed, under the influence of a quick-rising passion that might have been checked in childhood, when the mind was impressible, when the heart was easily

influenced for right, and was subject to a fond mother's will. Inefficient training of children lies at the foundation of a vast amount of moral wretchedness. (4T 202.3)

Children who are allowed to have their own way are not happy. The unsubdued heart has not within itself the elements of rest and contentment. The mind and heart must be disciplined and brought under proper restraint in order for the character to harmonize with the wise laws that govern our being. Restlessness and discontent are the fruits of indulgence and selfishness. The soil of the heart, like that of a garden, will produce weeds and brambles unless the seeds of precious flowers are planted there and receive care and cultivation. As in visible nature, so is it with the human soul. (4T 202.4)

The youth of ---- are in a startling condition. While some in the church have been burdened in regard to those occupying responsible positions, and have been finding fault and murmuring against reproof, insinuating their doubts, and gossiping of the affairs of others, their own souls have been enshrouded in darkness, and their children have been leavened with the spirit that was working upon their parents. This disposition is calculated to break down all restraint and authority. God holds these parents responsible for the malice and rebellion of the youth under their care. (4T 203.1)

Satan has succeeded wonderfully in his plans. Men of experience, fathers of families, who manifest a headstrong defiance when their track is crossed, show plainly that they cannot or do not control themselves. Then how can they succeed in controlling their children, who follow in their steps and rebel against their authority and all other restraint, even as they themselves rebel against the authority of the church and the institutions with which they are connected? Some of these professed Christians have yielded themselves into the hands of Satan and have become his instruments. They influence souls against the truth by exhibiting their insubordination and restless discontent. While professing righteousness, they are flying in the face of the Almighty, and before they are aware of the enormity of their sin they have accomplished the object of the adversary. The impression has been made, the shadow of darkness has been cast, the arrows of Satan have found their mark. Verily, a little leaven has leavened the entire lump. Unbelief creeps in and fastens its grasp upon minds that would have wholly accepted the truth. (4T 203.2)

Meanwhile, these spasmodic workers for Satan look innocently upon those who have drifted into skepticism, and who stand unmoved under reproof or entreaty. While those persons who have been thus influenced have gone farther in unbelief than even they themselves had dared to venture, they flatter themselves that in comparison with them, they are virtuous and righteous. They fail to understand that those sad cases are the result of their own unbridled tongues and wicked rebellion, that the tempted ones have fallen through their evil influence. They started the difficulty; they sowed the seeds of anarchy and unbelief. (4T 203.3)

No family is justified in bringing children to ---- who are not under the control of their parents. If their parents have disregarded the word of God in the matter of instructing and training their children, ---- is no place for them. They will only be the means of demoralizing the young people of that place and bringing discord where peace and prosperity should reign. Let such parents take up the neglected work of restraining and disciplining their children before they venture to impose them upon the church at ----. (4T 204.1)

Many are as guilty of neglect toward their children as was Eli, and the punishment of God will as surely rest upon them as upon him. The case of Brother E was a marked one. God's hand was stretched out in the wrath of His retribution, not only over his children, but over himself also. The word of God was plain, but its admonitions had been trampled underfoot; warnings had been given him, reproofs administered, but all were unheeded, and the curse fell upon him. It is a terrible thing to neglect the education of children. Not only will they be lost in consequence, but the parents themselves, who have so far departed from God as to lose all sense of their sacred responsibility, stand in a very perilous position as regards eternal life. (4T 204.2)

Fond and indulgent parents, let me present for your instruction the directions given in the Bible for dealing with a rebellious son: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die; so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear." Deuteronomy 21:18-21. (4T 204.3)

Both the young and the old who are connected with the office should be looked after closely, lest their influence should be such as to work directly against the object designed by the office. If any are employed whose influence is of a character to lead away from God and the truth, there should not be a moment's question as to the disposal of their cases. They should be separated from the office at once, for they are scattering from Christ instead of gathering with Him. They are virtually servants of Satan. (4T 205.1)

If there are young people connected with the office who do not respect the authority of parents, and are ungovernable at home, despising counsel and restraint, the curse of God will fall upon them; and it will not only rest upon them, but upon the office, should their services be retained and they be given further opportunity to pervert the young with whom they are there brought in contact. Those who occupy responsible positions in the office are accountable for the prevailing influence there, and if they are indifferent to the course of the insubordinate and impenitent in their employ they become partakers of their sin. (4T 205.2)

There has been a covering up of iniquity in ----. God calls for a different order of things. The youth connected with His work should be select, those who will be improved, refined, and ennobled by being associated with the cause of God. Faithful minutemen are needed at every post of duty, especially at the great heart of the work. Like sleepless sentinels, those who profess the truth should guard the interests of the cause at the office; they should sacredly guard themselves and one another from spiritual contamination. (4T 205.3)

Those who have imbibed the spirit of independence, and come to ---- as students in our school, thinking to do as they please in all matters, should be quickly undeceived and brought under proper discipline. But especially should the youth residing at ---- be brought under the strictest rules, to guard their integrity and morality. If they refuse to submit to these regulations they should be expelled from the school and cut off from association with those whom they are demoralizing by their wrong example. (4T 205.4)

Parents living at a distance send their children to ---- to be educated, feeling perfect confidence that they will there receive the proper moral training and not be exposed to wrong influences. It is due these patrons of our school that the

moral atmosphere there be purified. A lack of propriety and a disregard of strict virtue has been developing among a certain class of young men and women in ----. Some of these are low in the scale of morality and are influencing the young students who have been sent there from a distance and have not the advantages of parental advice and protection. This should be attended to at once, for it is a matter of grave importance. (4T 206.1)

The influence of some youth in ---- is demoralizing. They seem to think it praiseworthy to appear independent and to show disrespect to the authority of their parents. Paul gives a faithful description of this class of youth in these words: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." 2 Timothy 3:1-4. (4T 206.2)

The influence of this class upon the youth of ---- is doing much harm. Their conversation and example are contemptibly low. The young whose morals are established, and whose minds are of an elevated character, would find no attraction in their society and would therefore be beyond the reach of their influence. But there are young men and women who find pleasure in the company of just such persons. Satan has marked success in benumbing the spiritual sensibilities of certain persons who have believed the truth, and in clouding their minds with false ideas until they are unable to discern right from wrong. Then suggestions are made to undermine their confidence in the chosen servants of God, and they are led into positive unbelief. (4T 206.3)

If the young would choose the company of those whose lives are an honor to their profession, they would escape many serious dangers. Satan is constantly seeking the ruin of those who are ignorant concerning his devices, yet feel no special need of the prayers and counsel of experienced and godly friends. Many of the youth who come to ---- with good resolutions to live Christian lives fall in with a class of young people who take them by the hand and, under the guise of friendship, lead them directly into Satan's snare. The enemy does not always come as a roaring lion; he frequently appears as an angel of light, assuming friendly airs, presenting peculiar temptations which it is difficult for the inexperienced to withstand. Sometimes he accomplishes his purpose of deluding the unwary by exciting the

pity of their sympathetic natures, and presenting himself before them as a righteous being who has been persecuted without a cause. (4T 207.1)

Satan finds willing instruments to do his work. He exercises a skill in this direction that has been perfected by years of experience. He uses the accumulated knowledge of ages in executing his malicious designs. Ignorant youth play themselves into the hands of Satan for him to use as instruments to lead souls to ruin. Those who yield to Satan's power gain no happiness thereby. They are never contented or at rest. They are dissatisfied, querulous and irritable, unthankful and rebellious. Such a one is the young man now under review. But God will have mercy upon him if he sincerely repents and becomes converted. His sins may be washed away by the atoning blood of Jesus. (4T 207.2)

The Saviour of the world offers to the erring the gift of eternal life. He watches for a response to His offers of love and forgiveness with a more tender compassion than that which moves the heart of an earthly parent to forgive a wayward, repenting, suffering son. He cries after the wanderer: "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you." Malachi 3:7. If the sinner still refuses to heed the voice of mercy which calls after him with tender, pitying love, his soul will be left in darkness. If he neglects the opportunity presented him, and goes on in his evil course, the wrath of God will, in an unexpected moment, break forth upon him. "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Proverbs 29:1. This young man has made light of his father's authority, and despised restraint. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It lies at the foundation of a proper education. Those who, having a favorable opportunity, have failed to learn this first great lesson, are not only disqualified for service in the cause of God, but are a positive injury to the community in which they live. (4T 207.3)

Solomon exhorts the youth: "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not" (Proverbs 1:8~10) "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at My reproof: behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you." Proverbs 1:20~23. (4T 208.1)

“Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of My counsel: they despised all My reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.” Proverbs 1:8-33. (4T 208.2)

Order should be maintained in our different institutions at ----. Insubordination should be overruled. None should be retained in the office who have been instructed by Sabbath-keeping parents and have been privileged to hear the truth yet rebel against its teachings. No persons should be connected with the sacred work of God who speak lightly of it or treat our holy faith with disrespect. Those who have been connected with the office for quite a length of time and have had ample opportunity to become acquainted with our faith, yet manifest opposition to the truth, should no longer be retained in the office. Their influence is against the truth if they continue to neglect the light and slight salvation. This very indifference has a chilling influence upon the faith of others to draw them away from God. These impenitent, unimpressible ones should not occupy positions that might be filled by persons who will respect the truth and yield to the influence of the Spirit of God by being so closely connected with this sacred work. (4T 209.1)

The influence of our young people in the office is not what it should be. A and B have virtually worked against the cause. The influence of their conversation and deportment has been such as to disgust unbelievers and turn them from our faith and from Christ. The young who heed not the warnings of the word of God and slight the Testimonies of His Spirit can only be a living curse to the office and should be separated from it. (4T 209.2)

The youth whose influence is demoralizing should have no connection with our college. Those who are possessed of a lovesick sentimentalism, and make their

attendance at school an opportunity for courting and exchanging improper attentions, should be brought under the closest restrictions. Authority must be maintained. Justice and Mercy are twin sisters, standing side by side. (4T 209.3)

If no efforts are made to correct the state of things existing at ----, it will soon be a place for the encouragement of immorality and dissipation. Will parents and those in charge of our institutions sleep while Satan is taking possession of the minds of the children? God abhors the sins that are fostered and concealed by the church, cherished in the office, and sheltered under the paternal roof. Let parents, and those in authority, earnestly take hold of the work and purge this evil from among them. (4T 210.1)

We are living in the last days. John exclaims: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Revelation 12:12. Christ is the only refuge in these perilous times. Satan is at work in secrecy and darkness. Cunningly he draws away the followers of Christ from the cross and brings them into self-indulgence and wickedness. (4T 210.2)

Vital interests are located at ----, and Satan is opposed to everything that will strengthen the cause of Christ and weaken his own power. He is diligently laying plans to undermine the work of God. He never rests for a moment when he sees that the right is gaining the ascendancy. He has legions of evil angels that he sends to every point where light from heaven is shining upon the people. Here he stations his pickets to seize every unguarded man, woman, or child and press them into his service. (4T 210.3)

The great heart of the work is at ----; and, as the human heart throws its living current of blood into all parts of the body, so does the management at this place, the headquarters of our church, affect the whole body of believers. If the physical heart is healthy, the blood that is sent from it through the system is also healthy; but if this fountain is impure, the whole organism becomes diseased by the poison of the vital fluid. So it is with us. If the heart of the work becomes corrupt, the whole church, in its various branches and interests, scattered abroad over the face of the earth, suffers in consequence. (4T 210.4)

Satan's chief work is at the headquarters of our faith. He spares no pains to corrupt men in responsible positions and to persuade them to be unfaithful to

their several trusts. He insinuates his suspicions and jealousies into the minds of those whose business it is to do God's work faithfully. While God is testing and proving these helpers, and fitting them for their posts, Satan is doing his utmost to deceive and allure them, that they may not only be destroyed themselves, but may influence others to do wrong and to injure the great work. He seeks by all the means in his power to shake the confidence of God's people in the voice of warning and reproof through which God designs to purify the church and prosper His cause. (4T 210.5)

It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the Testimonies. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the Testimonies, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction. (4T 211.1)

Satan has gained marked advantage in ---- because the people of God have not guarded the outposts. The very men whose labors God has signified that He would accept if they were fully consecrated have been the ones to be deceived, to fail in their duties, and to prove a terrible burden and discouragement, instead of the help and blessing that they should have been. These men who have been trusted to keep the fort have well-nigh betrayed it into the hands of the enemy. They have opened the gates to a wily foe, who has sought to destroy them. (4T 211.2)

Men of experience have seen stealthy hands slipping the bolts that Satan might enter; yet they have held their peace with apparent indifference as to the results. Some have been glad to see this, as it seemed an extenuation of their past neglect, which made it a necessity to call for others to fill the posts of responsibility that they had abused or neglected. This lack of watchfulness on the part of these newer incumbents seemed to excuse the former for their own want of faithfulness, as it showed that others were fully as derelict in duty. These persons do not realize that God holds them responsible for every advantage gained by the foe who is admitted to the fort. The desolation and ruin following lie at the door of the unfaithful sentinels, who, by their neglect, become agents in the hands of the adversary to win souls to destruction. Men in responsible positions should seek wisdom and guidance of God, and not trust to their own judgment and knowledge.

Like Solomon they should earnestly pray for faith and light, and God will give them freely of His abundant supply. (4T 211.3)

God would have His work done intelligently, not in a haphazard manner. He would have it done with faith and careful exactness, that He may place the sign of His approval upon it. Those who love Him, and walk with fear and humility before Him, He will bless and guide and connect with heaven. If the workers rely upon Him, He will give them wisdom and correct their infirmities, so that they will be able to do the work of the Lord with perfection. (4T 212.1)

We must put on the armor and be prepared to successfully resist all the attacks of Satan. His malignity and cruel power are not sufficiently estimated. When he finds himself foiled upon one point he takes new ground and fresh tactics, and tries again, working wonders in order to deceive and destroy the children of men. The youth should be carefully warned against his power and patiently and prayerfully directed how to endure the trials sure to come upon them in this life. They should be led to cling to the word of God and give attention to counsel and advice. (4T 212.2)

Living faith in the merits of a crucified Redeemer will carry them through the fiery furnace of affliction and trial. The form of the Fourth will be with them in the fierce heat of the furnace, which will not leave even the smell of fire upon their garments. Children should be encouraged to become Bible students and to have firm religious principles that will stand the test of the perils sure to be experienced by all who live upon the earth during the last days in the closing history of the world. (4T 212.3)