The Family and Beyond

MEMORY VERSE: "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32).

"We must have the Spirit of God, or we can never have harmony in the home. . . . If one errs, the other will exercise Christlike forbearance and not draw coldly away."—The Adventist Home, p. 118.

Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 527-540.(at the bottom of this page)

1. APPEALS TO WOMEN Sun, Nov 15

a. How can a wife promote beautiful harmony in her marriage? Proverbs 14:1; Ephesians 5:33 (last part); Colossians 3:18.

Proverbs 14:1
Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

Ephesians 5:33
Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Colossians 3:18
Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

"The relation of husband and wife is most sacred and solemn."—Manuscript Releases, vol. 6, p. 43.

"Many husbands stop at the words, 'Wives, submit yourselves,' but we will read the conclusion of the same injunction, which is, 'As it is fit in the Lord.'

"God requires that the wife shall keep the fear and glory of God ever before her. Entire submission is to be made only to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has purchased her as His own child by the infinite price of His life. God has given her a conscience, which she cannot violate with impunity. Her individuality cannot be merged into that of her husband, for she is the purchase of Christ. It is a mistake to imagine that with blind devotion she is to do exactly as her husband says in all things, when she knows that in so doing, injury would be worked for her body and her spirit, which have been ransomed from the slavery of Satan. There is One who stands higher than the husband to the wife; it is her Redeemer, and her submission to her husband is to be rendered as God has directed—'as it is fit in the Lord.' "—The Adventist Home, p. 116.

"The wife, if she has the spirit of Christ, will be careful of her words; she will control her spirit, she will be submissive, and yet will not feel that she is a bondslave, but a companion to her husband."—Ibid., p. 118.

2. A FORGOTTEN APPEAL — Mon, Nov 16

a. How are women who fear God to value His principles of behavior—and also be encouraged by their families and churches in so doing? 1 Peter 3:1-6; Philippians 2:14.

1 Peter 3:1-6
Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

Philippians 2:14
Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

"There are idols cherished in our families and in our churches today which have the same influence upon us as did the golden calf upon the Israelites. Will the people search themselves? Will the shepherds do their work as faithful sentinels of God? Will they see what idols they are cherishing? Will every one that is in moderate circumstances consider that they are to be a people distinct and separate in their fashions of dress, their speech, their deportment, from the world? Will they see their idolatry in small as well as in large matters, and that it is separating them from God? When reproofs come they are ashamed, but not repentant."—The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 941.

"Showy, extravagant dress too often encourages lust in the heart of the wearer and awakens base passions in the heart of the beholder. God sees that the ruin of the character is frequently preceded by the indulgence of pride and vanity in dress."—Counsels on Health, p. 602.

"Fashion has been the goddess who has ruled the outside world, and she often insinuates herself into the church. The church should make the word of God her standard, and parents should think intelligently upon this subject. When they see their children inclined to follow worldly fashions, they should, like Abraham, resolutely command their households after them. Instead of uniting them with the world, connect them with God."—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 499.

"To protect the people of God from the corrupting influence of the world, as well as to promote physical and moral health, the dress reform was introduced among us. It was not intended to be a yoke of bondage, but a blessing."—Ibid., vol. 4, p. 634.

b. What strengthens the church to uphold godly practices and protect morality in a godless world? Titus 2:1-5; Matthew 5:8.

Titus 2:1-5
But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. 3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Matthew 5:8
Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

"My sisters, you should avoid even the appearance of evil. In this fast age, which is reeking with corruption, you are not safe unless you stand guarded. Virtue and modesty are rare. I appeal to you as followers of Jesus Christ, making a high and exalted profession, to cherish this precious, priceless gem, modesty. This will guard virtue."—A Solemn Appeal, p. 151.

3. APPEALS TO MEN — Tue, Nov 17

a. In committing to marry, what must a man realize? Colossians 3:19.

Colossians 3:19
Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

"When husbands require the complete subjection of their wives, declaring that women have no voice or will in the family, but must render entire submission, they place their wives in a position contrary to the Scripture. In interpreting the Scripture in this way, they do violence to the design of the marriage institution. This interpretation is made simply that they may exercise arbitrary rule, which is not their prerogative. But we read on, 'Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.' Why should the husband be bitter against his wife? If the husband has found her erring and full of faults, bitterness of spirit will not remedy the evil. . . .

"It was not the design of God that the husband should have control, as head of the house, when he himself does not submit to Christ. He must be under the rule of Christ that he may represent the relation of Christ to the church."—The Adventist Home, pp. 116, 117.

"Many men love their wives, but are too selfish to manifest it. They have a false dignity and pride, and will not show their love by words and deeds. There are many men who never know how starved is the heart of the wife for words of tender appreciation and affection. They bury their loved ones from their sight and murmur at the providence of God that has deprived them of their companions, when, could they look into the inner life of those companions, they would see

that their own course was the cause of their premature death."—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 527, 528.

b. What inspires true love in a man for his wife—and how is his connection with God affected by his attitude? Ephesians 5:25, 33 (first part); 1 Peter 3:7.

Ephesians 5:25
Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Ephesians 5:33
Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

1 Peter 3:7
Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

"Husbands should study the pattern and seek to know what is meant by the symbol presented in Ephesians, the relation Christ sustains to the church. The husband is to be as a Saviour in his family. Will he stand in his noble, God-given manhood, ever seeking to uplift his wife and children? Will he breathe about him a pure, sweet atmosphere? Will he not as assiduously cultivate the love of Jesus, making it an abiding principle in his home, as he will assert his claims to authority?

"Let every husband and father study to understand the words of Christ, not in a one-sided manner, merely dwelling upon the subjection of the wife to her husband, but in the light of the cross of Calvary, study as to his own position in the family circle."—The Adventist Home, p. 117.

4. PARENTS AND CHILDREN — Wed, Nov 18

a. Explain our duty to our parents. Deuteronomy 5:16; Colossians 3:20.

Deuteronomy 5:16
Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Colossians 3:20
Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

"Children who dishonor and disobey their parents, and disregard their advice and instructions, can have no part in the earth made new. The purified new earth will be no place for the rebellious, the disobedient, the ungrateful son or daughter."—The Adventist Home, p. 295.

"There is no time when children should withhold respect and love from their father and mother. While the parents live, it should be the children's joy to

honor and respect them. They should bring all the cheerfulness and sunshine into the life of the aged parents, that they possibly can. . . .

"The thought that children have ministered to the comfort of their parents is a thought of satisfaction all through the life, and will especially bring them joy when they themselves are in need of sympathy and love. Those whose hearts are filled with love will regard the privilege of smoothing the passage to the grave for their parents an inestimable privilege. They will rejoice that they had a part in bringing comfort and peace to the last days of their loved parents."—The Review and Herald, November 15, 1892.

b. As parents, how are we bidden to make our own children's duty toward us much easier for them? Colossians 3:21; Ephesians 4:32; 6:4.

Colossians 3:21
Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

Ephesians 4:32
And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Ephesians 6:4
And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

"Youth are ignorant and inexperienced, and the love of the Bible and its sacred truths will not come naturally. Unless great pains is taken to build up around them barriers to shield them from Satan's devices, they are subject to his temptations and are led captive by him at his will. In their early years children are to be taught the claims of God's law and faith in Jesus our Redeemer to cleanse from the stains of sin. . . .

"Children can be molded when they are young. But years pass when their hearts are tender and susceptible to the impressions of truth, and but little time is devoted to their moral culture. The precious lessons of truth and duty should be instilled into their hearts daily."—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 329.

"When fathers and mothers realize how their children copy them, they will watch carefully every word and gesture."—Sermons and Talks, vol. 1, p. 325.

"Happy are the parents whose lives are a true reflection of the divine, so that the promises and commands of God awaken in the child gratitude and reverence; the parents whose tenderness and justice and long-suffering interpret to the child the love and justice and long-suffering of God."—Prophets and Kings, p. 245.

5. ON THE JOB — Thur, Nov 19

a. Regardless of our employment rank or position in society, what perspective inspires a genuinely Christian attitude in us? Colossians 3:22–4:1, 5.

Colossians 3:22–4:1, 5.

Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; **23** And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; **24** Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. **25** But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. **4:1** Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. **5** Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

"There is science in the humblest kind of work, and if all would thus regard it, they would see nobility in labor. Heart and soul are to be put into work of any kind; then there is cheerfulness and efficiency. . . . There is honor in any class of work that is essential to be done. Let the law of God be made the standard of action and it ennobles and sanctifies all labor. Faithfulness in the discharge of every duty makes the work noble, and reveals a character that God can approve.

" 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' God desires the love that is expressed in heart service, in soul service, in the service of the physical powers. . . .

"You can choose to become stereotyped in a wrong course of action because you have not the determination to take yourselves in hand and reform, or you may cultivate your powers to do the very best kind of service, and then you will find yourselves in demand anywhere and everywhere. You will be appreciated for all that you are worth. 'Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.' 'Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.' "—The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1112.

"We know not what results a day, an hour, or a moment may determine, and never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our heavenly Father. His angels are appointed to watch over us, and if we put ourselves under their guardianship, then in every time of danger they will be at our right hand. When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing our words for us, and influencing our actions. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but mighty power in drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world."—Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 341, 342.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS — Fri, Nov 20

1. Explain the healthy balance that God directs for wives.
2. Name an idolatrous distraction that often ends up as a snare.
3. Describe the high calling of a husband in marriage.
4. In my attitude toward my parents, how can I better reflect God's will?
5. How can I better reflect God's will to those in my workplace?

Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 527-540

There are many in our world who are starving for the love and sympathy which should be given them. Many men love their wives, but are too selfish to manifest

it. They have a false dignity and pride, and will not show their love by words and deeds. There are many men who never know how starved is the heart of the wife for words of tender appreciation and affection. They bury their loved ones from their sight and murmur at the providence of God that has deprived them of their companions, when, could they look into the inner life of those companions, they would see that their own course was the cause of their premature death. The religion of Christ will lead us to be kind and courteous and not so tenacious of our opinions. We should die to self and esteem others better than ourselves.

God's word is our standard, but how far have His professed people departed from it! Our religious faith must be not only theoretical, but practical. Pure and undefiled religion will not allow us to trample upon the rights of the least of God's creatures, much less of the members of His body and the members of our own family. God is love, and whoso dwelleth in Him dwelleth in love. The influence of worldly selfishness, which is carried about by some like a cloud, chilling the very atmosphere that others breathe, causes sickness of soul and frequently chills to death.

It will be a great cross for you to cultivate pure, unselfish love and disinterested benevolence. To yield your opinions and ideas, to give up your judgment, and to follow the counsel of others will be a great cross to you. The several members of your family now have families of their own. But the same spirit which existed to a greater or less extent in their father's home is carried to their own firesides and is felt by those outside of their family circles. They lack sweet simplicity, Christlike tenderness, and unselfish love. They have a work to do to overcome these selfish traits of character in order to be fruitful branches of the True Vine. Said Christ: "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." You need to bring Jesus near to you, to have Him in your homes and in your hearts. You should not only have a knowledge of what is right, but should practice it from right motives, having an eye single to the glory of God. You may be helps, if you will comply with the conditions given in the word of God.

The religion of Christ is something more than talk. The righteousness of Christ consists in right actions and good works from pure, unselfish motives. Outside righteousness, while the inward adorning is wanting, will be of no avail. "This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 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." If we have not the light and love of God we are not His children. If we gather not with Christ we scatter abroad. We all have an influence, and that influence is telling upon the destiny of others for their present and future good or for their eternal loss.

J and K both lack sympathy and love for those outside of their own families. They are in danger of watching to see defects in others while greater evils exist undiscerned in themselves. If these dear souls ever enter heaven, they must die to self and obtain an experience in well-doing. They have lessons to learn in the school of Christ in order to perfect Christian characters and have a oneness with Christ. Said Christ to His disciples: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." He explained His meaning to them. He did not wish them to become children in understanding, but in malice. Little children do not manifest feelings of superiority and aristocracy. They are simple and natural in their appearance. Christ would have His followers

cultivate unaffected manners, that their whole bearing may be humble and Christlike. He has made it our duty to live for others' good. He came from the royal courts of heaven to this world to show how great an interest He had in man, and the infinite price paid for the redemption of man shows that man is of so great value that Christ could sacrifice His riches and honor in the royal courts to lift him from the degradation of sin.

If the Majesty of heaven could do so much to show His love for man, what ought not men to be willing to do to help one another out of the pit of darkness and suffering! Said Christ, "Love one another, as I have loved you;" not with a greater love; for "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Our love is frequently selfish, for we confine it to prescribed limits. When we come into close union and fellowship with Christ, our love and sympathy and our works of benevolence will reach down deeper and will widen and strengthen with exercise. The love and interest of Christ's followers must be as broad as the world. Those who live merely for "me and mine" will fail of heaven. God calls upon you as a family to cultivate love, to become less sensitive in regard to yourselves and more sensitive to the griefs and trials of others. This selfish spirit that you have cherished all your lives is correctly represented by the priest and the Levite who passed by the unfortunate on the other side. They saw that he needed help, but purposely avoided him.

Each one of you needs to awake and face square about to get out of the cart rut of selfishness. Improve the short, probationary time given you by working with your might to redeem the failures of your past life. God has placed you in a world of suffering to prove you, to see if you will be found worthy of the gift of eternal life. There are those all around you who have woes, who need words of sympathy, love, and tenderness, and our humble, pitying prayers. Some are suffering under the iron hand of poverty, some with disease, and others with heartaches, despondency, and gloom. Like Job, you should be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, and you should inquire into the cause which you know not and search it out with the object in view to relieve their necessities and help just where they most need help.

L needs to cultivate love for his wife, love that will find expression in words and deeds. He should cultivate tender affection. His wife has a sensitive, clinging nature and needs to be cherished. Every word of tenderness, every word of appreciation and affectionate encouragement, will be remembered by her and will reflect back in blessings upon her husband. His unsympathizing nature needs to be brought into close contact with Christ, that that stiffness and cold reserve may be subdued and softened by divine love. It will not be weakness or a sacrifice of manhood and dignity to give his wife expressions of tenderness and sympathy in words and acts; and let it not end with the family circle, but extend to those outside the family. L has a work to do for himself that no one can do for him. He may grow strong in the Lord by bearing burdens in His cause. His affection and love should be centered upon Christ and heavenly things, and he should be forming a character for everlasting life.

Dear K has very limited ideas of what constitutes a Christian. She has freed herself from burdens which Christ has borne for her. She is not willing to bear His cross and has not exercised to the best account the ability, the talents, given her of God. She has not grown strong in moral fortitude and courage, nor felt the weight of individual responsibility. She has not loved to bear reproach for Christ's sake, considering the promise: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy

are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." The Master has a work for each to do. None can be idle, none can be careless and selfish, and yet perfect Christian character. He wants all of your family to unclose their hearts to the benign influence of His love and grace, that their compassion for others may overflow the boundaries of self and the enclosures of family walls, as did the Samaritan's to the poor, suffering stranger who was neglected and left to die by the priest and the Levite. I was shown that there are many who need our sympathy and advice; and when we consider that we can pass through this world but once, that we can never return to repair the errors and mistakes we have made, how important that we go through it as we ought!

Some time ago I was shown the case of J. Her errors and wrongs were faithfully portrayed before her; but in the last view given me I saw that the wrongs still existed, that she was cold and unsympathizing with her husband's children. Correction and reproof are not given by her for grave offenses merely, but for trivial matters that should be passed by unnoticed. Constant faultfinding is wrong, and the Spirit of Christ cannot abide in the heart where it exists. She is disposed to pass over the good in her children without a word of approval, but is ever ready to bear down with censure if any wrong is seen. This ever discourages children and leads to habits of heedlessness. It stirs up the evil in the heart and causes it to cast up mire and dirt. In children who are habitually censured there will be a spirit of "I don't care," and evil passions will frequently be manifested regardless of consequences.

Whenever the mother can speak a word of commendation for the good conduct of her children, she should do so. She should encourage them by words of approval and looks of love. These will be as sunshine to the heart of a child and will lead to the cultivation of self-respect and pride of character. Sister J should cultivate love and sympathy. She should manifest tender affection for the motherless children under her care. This would be a blessing to these children of God's love and would be reflected back upon her in affection and love.

Children have sensitive, loving natures. They are easily pleased and easily made unhappy. By gentle discipline in loving words and acts, mothers may bind their children to their hearts. To manifest severity and to be exacting with children are great mistakes. Uniform firmness and unimpassioned control are necessary to the discipline of every family. Say what you mean calmly, move with consideration, and carry out what you say without deviation.

It will pay to manifest affection in your association with your children. Do not repel them by lack of sympathy in their childish sports, joys, and griefs. Never let a frown gather upon your brow or a harsh word escape your lips. God writes all these words in His book of records. Harsh words sour the temper and wound the hearts of children, and in some cases these wounds are difficult to heal. Children are sensitive to the least injustice, and some become discouraged under it and will neither heed the loud, angry voice of command nor care for threatenings of punishment. Rebellion is too frequently established in the hearts of children through the wrong discipline of the parents, when if a proper course had been taken, the children would have formed good and harmonious characters. A mother who does not have perfect control of herself is unfit to have the management of children.

Brother M is molded by the positive temperament of his wife. He has become in a degree selfish like her. His mind is almost completely occupied by "me and mine,"

to the exclusion of other things of infinitely more importance. He does not take his position in his family as father of his flock and, unprejudiced and uninfluenced, pursue a uniform course with his children. His wife is not, and without a transformation never can be, a true mother to his motherless children. Brother M, as a father to his children, has not stood in the position that God would have him. These motherless children are God's little ones, precious in His sight. Naturally Brother M has a tender, refined, loving, generous, sensitive nature, while his wife is exactly the opposite. Instead of his molding and softening the character of his wife, she is transforming him.

He thinks that in order to have peace he must let things pass which trouble his mind. He has learned that submission and the yielding of her opinion are not to be expected. She will rule; she will carry out her ideas at any cost. Unless they are both in earnest in their efforts to reform, they will not obtain eternal life. They have had light, but have neglected to follow it. Selfish love of the world has blinded their perceptions and hardened their hearts. J needs to see that unless she lays aside her selfishness, and overcomes her will and her temper, she cannot have heaven. She would mar all heaven with these elements in her character. I warn Sister J to repent. I call upon her in the name of my Master to arouse quickly from her stupid indifference, to heed the counsel of the True Witness, and zealously repent; for she is imperiling her soul.

God is merciful. He will now accept the offering of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Will Sister J excuse herself as did the Levite and the priest, for not seeing and feeling others' woes, and pass by on the other side? God holds her accountable for neglect of duty in not exercising sympathy and tenderness for the unfortunate. She does not keep the commandments of God which plainly show her duty to her neighbor. Said Christ to the lawyer: "This do, and thou shalt live." Thus a neglect of duty to our neighbor will result in our loss of eternal life.

K, poor child, like many others, has a work to do that she has never dreamed of. She has backslidden from God. Her thoughts are too much upon herself, and she seeks to please the world, not by disinterested love for souls and by seeking to turn them to Christ, but by her lack of spirituality, and her conformity to the world in spirit and works. She should die to self and obtain an experience in well-doing. She is cold and unsympathizing. She needs to have all this icy, unapproachable spirit subdued, melted away by the sunshine of Christ's love. She is very much shut up to herself. God saw that she was a poor dwarfed plant, bearing no fruit, nothing but leaves. Her thoughts were almost exclusively occupied with "me and mine." In mercy He has been pruning this plant of His love, lopping off the branches, that the roots might strike down deeper. He has been seeking to draw this child to Himself. Her religious life has been almost entirely without fruit. She is accountable for the talent God has given her. She may be useful; she may be a co-worker with Christ if she will break down the wall of selfishness which has shut her away from God's light and love.

There are many who need our sympathy and advice, but not that advice which implies superiority in the giver and inferiority in the receiver. K needs the softening, melting love of God in her heart. The looks and tones of the voice should be modulated by thoughtful consideration and tender, respectful love. Every look and every tone of voice that implies, "I am superior," chills the atmosphere of her presence and is more like an icicle than a ray of light that gives warmth. My sister, your influence is positive. You mold those with whom you associate, or else you cannot agree with them. You have not the least thought of

being molded yourself by the better influence of others and of yielding your judgment and your opinions to them. You will reason for your way and justify your ideas and your course. If you do not convince others you will recur again and again to the same point. This trait in your character will be a valuable one if sanctified to God and controlled by His Holy Spirit; but if not, it will prove a curse to you and a curse to others. Assertions and advice which savor of a dictatorial spirit are not good fruit. You need the softening, melting love of Christ in your heart, which will be reflected in all your acts toward your family and to all who are brought under your influence.

I fear, greatly fear, that J will fail of heaven. She loves the world and the things of the world so well that she has no love to spare for Jesus. She is so incrusted in selfishness that the illuminating light from heaven cannot penetrate the cold, dark walls of self-love and self-esteem which she has been building up for a lifetime. Love is the key to open hearts, but the precious plant of love has not been cherished. J has so long blinded her eyes to her selfishness that she cannot now discern it. She has had so little experimental religion that in heart she is of the world, and I fear that this world is all the heaven she will ever have. Her influence over her husband is not good. He is swayed by it and does not see the necessity of being fortified by the grace of God to stand for the right with true moral courage. Not only does she fail to realize and do the work that God requires of her, but she exerts an overpowering influence to hold her husband and tie his hands. And she has succeeded to a great extent. He is blinded.

Brother M should consider that God has claims upon him which are above every earthly relationship. He needs the eye-salve, the white raiment, and the gold, that he may have a symmetrical character and an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God. Nothing short of an entire conversion can ever open the soul of his wife to see her errors and to confess her wrongs. She has great changes to make, which she has not made because she did not realize her true condition and could not see the necessity of reform. So far from being willing to learn of the heavenly Teacher, who was meek and lowly of heart, she considers meekness servility; and a becoming spirit, lowliness of mind to esteem others better than herself, she regards as degrading and humiliating.

J has a positive, imperious, proud, self-willed spirit. She does not see anything particularly desirable in a meek and quiet spirit that she should covet it. This valuable ornament possesses so little value for her that she cannot consent to wear it. She has, too frequently, a spirit of resentment which is as opposite to the Spirit of God as the east is to the west. True gentleness is a gem of great value in the sight of God. A meek and quiet spirit will not be ever looking out for happiness for itself, but will seek for self-forgetfulness and find sweet content and true satisfaction in making others happy.

In the providence of God, Sister N has been separated from her father's family. Although, with others, she shares the characteristics of the family association, bearing grave responsibilities has led her out of herself and has given her an interest in others' woes. She has, in a measure, opened her heart in sympathy and love for God's family, taking an interest in others. The work and cause of God have engaged her attention. She has felt, in some degree, that poor fallen mortals are one great brotherhood. She has had to educate herself to think for others, do for others, and forget self; and yet she has not cultivated as thoroughly as she should the interest, sympathy, and affection for others that are necessary for the followers of Christ. She needs to have greater sympathy and less tense, rigid

justice. As she has given her interest and time to the great subject of health reform she has reached out beyond self. As she has done this she has been blessed. The more she does for others' good, the more she sees to do and the more she feels inclined to do.

Her work for others frequently brings her where the exercise of faith is necessary to bring her through hard and trying positions. But answers to earnest prayers are realized, and faith, love, and confidence in God are strengthened. Through oft repeated perplexities and trials, experience is obtained. God is molding the heart into something more like Himself. And yet self clamors constantly for the victory. Sister N needs to cultivate more tenderness and thoughtful care in her daily connection with others. She needs to study to subdue self. If she is indeed a Christian she will feel that she must devote the best part, and if need be the whole, of her life to unselfish, patient toil and thus show her love for the Master. Without this experience she would fall far short of perfection of Christian character.

Sister N has taken some advance steps, and the family feel that she has left them, and this is a crucifixion to them. They do not feel that she now has the same interest and affections and objects in life as themselves. They feel that they can no longer enjoy, as formerly, the society of their sister. They feel that she is to blame, that she has changed, and that her sympathy is no longer one with theirs. The reason for this lack of assimilation of feeling is that Sister N has been advancing in feeling for others' woes, while they have been slothful servants, not doing the work God has given them to do on earth. Consequently they have been retrograding. The family have selfishly shut up their interest and affection to themselves and the love of the world.

N has been a worker in a good cause. The health reform has been to her a subject of great importance, for her experience has shown her its necessity. Her father's family have not seen the necessity of health reform. They have not seen the part that it acts in the closing work of these last days, because they have not been inclined to see. They have dropped into the cart rut of custom, and it is a difficult work to make the effort required to get out. They would rather be let alone. It is a terrible thing to rust from inaction. But this family will surely be weighed in the balances and found wanting unless they begin at once to do something. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." This is close language. Who can stand the test? The word of God is to us a daguerreotype of the mind of God and of Christ, also of man fallen, and of man renewed after the image of Christ, possessing the divine mind. We may compare our thoughts, feelings, and intentions with the picture of Christ. We have no relationship with Him unless we are willing to work the works of Christ.

Christ came to do His Father's will. Are we following in His steps? All who have named the name of Christ should be constantly seeking for a more intimate acquaintance with Him, that they may walk even as He walked, and do the works of Christ. We should appropriate the lessons of His life to our lives. Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Here is the work of self-denial upon which we must enter with cheerfulness, in imitation of the example of our Redeemer. The Christian's life must be one of conflict and of sacrifice. The path of duty should be followed, not the path of inclination and choice.

When the family of Brother I see the work before them, and do the work God has left them to do, they will not be so widely separated from Brother and Sister O and Sister N, and those who are working in union with the Master. It may take time to attain perfect submission to God's will, but we can never stop short of it and be fitted for heaven. True religion will lead its possessor on to perfection. Your thoughts, your words, and your actions, as well as your appetites and passions, must be brought into subjection to the will of God. You must bear fruit unto holiness. Then you will be led to defend the poor, the fatherless, the motherless, and the afflicted. You will do justice to the widow and will relieve the needy. You will deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God.

We must let Christ into our hearts and homes if we would walk in the light. Home should be made all that the word implies. It should be a little heaven upon earth, a place where the affections are cultivated instead of being studiously repressed. Our happiness depends upon this cultivation of love, sympathy, and true courtesy to one another. The reason there are so many hardhearted men and women in our world is that true affection has been regarded as weakness and has been discouraged and repressed. The better part of the nature of persons of this class was perverted and dwarfed in childhood, and unless rays of divine light can melt away their coldness and hardhearted selfishness, the happiness of such is buried forever. If we would have tender hearts, such as Jesus had when He was upon the earth, and sanctified sympathy, such as the angels have for sinful mortals, we must cultivate the sympathies of childhood, which are simplicity itself. Then we shall be refined, elevated, and directed by heavenly principles.

A cultivated intellect is a great treasure; but without the softening influence of sympathy and sanctified love, it is not of the highest value. We should have words and deeds of tender consideration for others. We can manifest a thousand little attentions in friendly words and pleasant looks, which will be reflected upon us again. Thoughtless Christians manifest by their neglect of others that they are not in union with Christ. It is impossible to be in union with Christ and yet be unkind to others and forgetful of their rights. Many long intensely for friendly sympathy. God has given each of us an identity of our own, which cannot be merged in that of another; but our individual characteristics will be much less prominent if we are indeed Christ's and His will is ours. Our lives should be consecrated to the good and happiness of others, as was our Saviour's. We should be self-forgetful, ever looking out for opportunities, even in little things, to show gratitude for the favors we have received of others, and watching for opportunities to cheer others and lighten and relieve their sorrows and burdens by acts of tender kindness and little deeds of love. These thoughtful courtesies, that, commencing in our families, extend outside the family circle, help make up the sum of life's happiness; and the neglect of these little things makes up the sum of life's bitterness and sorrow.

It is the work that we do or do not do that tells with tremendous power upon our lives and destinies. God requires us to improve every opportunity for usefulness that is offered us. Neglect to do this is perilous to our spiritual growth. We have a great work to do. Let us not pass in idleness the precious hours that God has given us in which to perfect characters for heaven. We must not be inactive or slothful in this work, for we have not a moment to spend without a purpose or object. God will help us to overcome our wrongs if we will pray and believe on Him. We can be more than conquerors through Him who has loved us. When the short life in this world is ended, and we see as we are seen and know as we are

known, how short in duration and how small will the things of this world appear to us in comparison with the glory of the better world! Christ would never have left the royal courts and taken humanity, and become sin for the race, had He not seen that man might, with His help, become infinitely happy and obtain durable riches and a life that would run parallel with the life of God. He knew that without His help sinful man could not attain these things.

We should have a spirit of progress. We must guard continually against being fixed in our views, feelings, and actions. The work of God is onward. Reforms must be carried on, and we must take hold and help move on the car of reform. Energy, tempered with patience and ambition, and balanced by wisdom, is now needed by every Christian. The work of saving souls is yet left to us, the disciples of Christ. Not one of us is excused. Many have become dwarfed and stunted in their Christian life because of inaction. We should employ our time diligently while in this world. How earnestly should we improve every opportunity of doing good, of bringing others to a knowledge of the truth! Our motto should ever be, "Onward, higher," surely, steadily onward to duty and to victory.

I have been shown in regard to the individuals mentioned that God loves them and would save them if they would be saved in His appointed way. "And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." This is the process, the refining, purifying process, which is to be carried on by the Lord of hosts. The work is most trying to the soul, but it is only through this process that the rubbish and defiling impurities can be removed. Our trials are all necessary to bring us close to our heavenly Father, in obedience to His will, that we may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. To each whose name is here mentioned, God has given capabilities, talents to improve. You each need a new and living experience in the divine life in order to do the will of God. No amount of past experience will suffice for the present nor strengthen us to overcome the difficulties in our path. We must have new grace and fresh strength daily in order to be victorious.

We are seldom, in all respects, placed in the same circumstances twice. Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Daniel, and many others were all sorely tried, but not in the same way. Everyone has his individual tests and trials in the drama of life, but the very same trials seldom come twice. Each has his own experience, peculiar in its character and circumstances, to accomplish a certain work. God has a work, a purpose, in the life of each of us. Every act, however small, has its place in our life experience. We must have the continual light and experience that come from God. We all need these, and God is more than willing that we should have them if we will take them. He has not closed the windows of heaven to your prayers, but you have felt satisfied to pass on without the divine help you so much need.

How little you know the bearing of your daily acts upon the history of others. You may think that what you do or say is of little consequence, when the most important results for good or evil are the consequence of our words and actions. The words and actions looked upon as so small and unimportant are links in the long chain of human events. You have not felt the need of God's manifesting His will to us in all the acts of our daily life. With our first parents the desire for a single gratification of appetite opened the floodgate of woe and sin upon the world. Would that you, my dear sisters, might feel that every step you take may

have a lasting and controlling influence upon your own lives and the characters of others. Oh, how much need, then, of communion with God! What need of divine grace to direct every step and show us how to perfect Christian characters!

Christians will have new scenes and new trials to pass through where past experience cannot be a sufficient guide. We have greater need to learn of the divine Teacher now than at any other period of our lives. And the more experience we gain, the nearer we draw toward the pure light of heaven, the more shall we discern in ourselves that needs reforming. We may all do a good work in blessing others if we will seek counsel of God and follow on in obedience and faith. The path of the just is progressive, from strength to strength, from grace to grace, and from glory to glory. The divine illumination will increase more and more, corresponding with our onward movements, qualifying us to meet the responsibilities and emergencies before us.

When trials press you, when despondency and dark unbelief control your thoughts, when selfishness molds your actions, you do not see your need of God and of a deep and thorough knowledge of His will. You know not the will of God, neither can you know it while you live for self. You rely upon your good intentions and resolutions, and the principal sum of life is composed of resolutions made and resolutions broken. What you all need is to die to self, cease clinging to self, and surrender to God. Gladly would I comfort you if I could. Gladly would I praise your good qualities, good purposes, and good acts; but God was not pleased to show me these. He presented before me the hindrances to your gaining the noble, elevated character of holiness needful for you to have that you may not lose the heavenly rest and immortal glory He would have you attain. Look away from yourselves to Jesus. He is all and in all. The merits of the blood of a crucified and risen Saviour will avail to cleanse from the least and greatest sin. In trusting faith commit the keeping of your souls to God as unto a faithful Creator. Be not continually in fear and apprehension that God will leave you. He never will unless you depart from Him. Christ will come in and dwell with you if you will open the door of your hearts to Him. There may be perfect harmony between you and the Father and His Son if you will die to self and live unto God.

How few are aware that they have darling idols, that they have cherished sins! God sees these sins to which you may be blinded, and He works with His pruning knife to strike deep and separate these cherished sins from you. You all want to choose for yourselves the process of purification. How hard it is for you to submit to the crucifixion of self; but when the work is all submitted to God, to Him who knows our weakness and our sinfulness, He takes the very best way to bring about the desired results. It was through constant conflict and simple faith that Enoch walked with God. You may all do the same. You may be thoroughly converted and transformed, and be indeed children of God, enjoying not only the knowledge of His will, but, by your example, leading others in the same path of humble obedience and consecration. Real godliness is diffusive and communicative. The psalmist says: “I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation: I have not concealed Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth from the great congregation.” Wherever the love of God is, there is always a desire to express it.

May God help you all to make earnest efforts to gain everlasting life and to lead others in the path of holiness.