

Ellen G. White Estate

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ELLEN G. WHITE

**S.D.A. Bible
Commentary Vol. 6**

Ellen G. White

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About the Author

Ellen G. White (1827-1915) is considered the most widely translated American author, her works having been published in more than 160 languages. She wrote more than 100,000 pages on a wide variety of spiritual and practical topics. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she exalted Jesus and pointed to the Scriptures as the basis of one's faith.

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Acts

Book of Acts, Instruction for Today—The whole of the book of Acts should receive careful study. It is full of precious instruction; it records experiences in evangelistic work, the teachings of which we need in our work today. This is wonderful history; it deals with the highest education, which the students in our schools are to receive ([Letter 100, 1909](#)).

Chapter 1

1-5 (Luke 1:1-4). Authorship of Book of Acts—Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, and Theophilus, to whom it is addressed, had been pleasantly associated. From Luke, Theophilus had received much instruction and great light. Luke had been Theophilus' teacher, and he still felt a responsibility to direct and instruct him, and to sustain and protect him in his work.

At that time it was customary for a writer to send his manuscript to someone for examination and criticism. Luke chose Theophilus, as a man in whom he had confidence, to perform this important work. He first directs the attention of Theophilus to the record of Christ's life as given in the book of Luke, which had also been addressed by the same writer to Theophilus. [Acts 1:1-5 quoted.] ... The teachings of Christ were to be preserved in manuscripts and books (Manuscript 40, 1903).

7, 8. Preach the Simple Gospel, Not Startling Speculations—The disciples were anxious to know the exact time for the revelation of the kingdom of God, but Jesus tells them that they may not know the times and the seasons; for the Father has not revealed them. To understand when the kingdom of God should be restored, was not the thing of most importance for them to know. They were to be found following the Master, praying, waiting, watching, and working. They were to be representatives to the world of the character of Christ. That which was essential for a successful Christian experience in the days of the disciples, is essential in our day. "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." And after the Holy Ghost was come upon them, what were they to do? "And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

This is the work in which we also are to be engaged. Instead of living in expectation of some special season of excitement, we

are wisely to improve present opportunities, doing that which must be done in order that souls may be saved. Instead of exhausting the powers of our mind in speculations in regard to the times and seasons which the Lord has placed in His own power, and withheld from men, we are to yield ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit, to do present duties, to give the bread of life, unadulterated with human opinions, to souls who are perishing for the truth.

[1052]

Satan is ever ready to fill the mind with theories and calculations that will divert men from the present truth, and disqualify them for the giving of the third angel's message to the world. It has ever been thus; for our Saviour often had to speak reprovably to those who indulged in speculations and were ever inquiring into those things which the Lord had not revealed. Jesus had come to earth to impart important truth to men, and He wished to impress their minds with the necessity of receiving and obeying His precepts and instructions, of doing their present duty, and His communications were of an order that imparted knowledge for their immediate and daily use.

Jesus said: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." All that was done and said had this one object in view—to rivet truth in their minds that they might attain unto everlasting life. Jesus did not come to astonish men with some great announcement of some special time when some great event would occur, but He came to instruct and save the lost. He did not come to arouse and gratify curiosity; for He knew that this would but increase the appetite for the curious and the marvelous. It was His aim to impart knowledge whereby men might increase in spiritual strength and advance in the way of obedience and true holiness. He gave only such instruction as could be appropriated to the needs of their daily life, only such truth as could be given to others for the same appropriation. He did not make new revelations to men, but opened to their understanding truths that had long been obscured or misplaced through the false teaching of the priests and teachers. Jesus replaced the gems of divine truth in their proper setting, in the order in which they had been given to patriarchs and prophets. And after giving them this precious instruction. He promised to give them the Holy Spirit whereby all things that He had said unto them should be brought to their remembrance.

We are in continual danger of getting above the simplicity of the gospel. There is an intense desire on the part of many to startle the world with something original, that shall lift the people into a state of spiritual ecstasy, and change the present order of experience. There is certainly great need of a change in the present order of experience; for the sacredness of present truth is not realized as it should be, but the change we need is a change of heart, and can only be obtained by seeking God individually for His blessing, by pleading with Him for His power, by fervently praying that His grace may come upon us, and that our characters may be transformed. This is the change we need today, and for the attainment of this experience we should exercise persevering energy and manifest heartfelt earnestness. We should ask with true sincerity, What shall I do to be saved? We should know just what steps we are taking heavenward.

Christ gave to His disciples truths whose breadth and depth and value they little appreciated, or even comprehended, and the same condition exists among the people of God today. We too have failed to take in the greatness, to perceive the beauty of the truth which God has entrusted to us today. Should we advance in spiritual knowledge, we would see the truth developing and expanding in lines of which we have little dreamed, but it will never develop in any line that will lead us to imagine that we may know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power. Again and again have I been warned in regard to time-setting. There will never again be a message for the people of God that will be based on time. We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ ([The Review and Herald, March 22, 1892](#)).

[1053] **8 (John 15:26, 27). A Gift Unexcelled**—Christ determined that when He ascended from this earth, He would bestow a gift on those who had believed on Him, and those who should believe on Him. What gift could He bestow rich enough to signalize and grace His ascension to the mediatorial throne? It must be worthy of His greatness and His royalty. He determined to give His representative, the third person of the Godhead. This gift could not be excelled. He would give all gifts in one, and therefore the divine Spirit, that converting, enlightening, and sanctifying power, would be His donation....

Christ longed to be in a position where He could accomplish the most important work by few and simple means. The plan of redemption is comprehensive; but its parts are few, and each part depends on the others, while all work together with the utmost simplicity and in entire harmony. Christ is represented by the Holy Spirit; and when this Spirit is appreciated, when those controlled by the Spirit communicate to others the energy with which they are imbued, an invisible chord is touched which electrifies the whole. Would that we could all understand how boundless are the divine resources ([The Southern Work, November 28, 1905](#)).

The Holy Spirit Gives Divine Authority—Jesus says, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me.” It is the union of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the living witness that is to warn the world. The worker for God is the agent through which the heavenly communication is given, and the Holy Spirit gives divine authority to the word of truth ([The Review and Herald, April 4, 1893](#)).

8, 9. See [EGW comment on Acts 2:1-4](#).

9 (Psalm 24:7-10; 47:5, 6; Psalm 68:17, 18; Ephesians 4:8).
Christ Ascended as King—[[Psalm 47:5, 6; 68:17, 18](#) quoted.] Christ came to earth as God in the guise of humanity. He ascended to heaven as the King of saints. His ascension was worthy of His exalted character. He went as one mighty in battle, a conqueror, leading captivity captive. He was attended by the heavenly host, amid shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song....

Only for a few moments could the disciples hear the angels’ song as their Lord ascended, His hands outstretched in blessing. They heard not the greeting He received. All heaven united in His reception. His entrance was not begged. All heaven was honored by His presence....

The seal of heaven has been fixed to Christ’s atonement ([Manuscript 134, 1897](#)).

9-11 (Luke 24:50, 51). **Full Glory of Ascension Veiled**—The most precious fact to the disciples in the ascension of Jesus was that He went from them into heaven in the tangible form of their divine Teacher....

The disciples not only saw the Lord ascend, but they had the testimony of the angels that He had gone to occupy His Father’s

throne in heaven. The last remembrance that the disciples were to have of their Lord was as the sympathizing Friend, the glorified Redeemer. Moses veiled his face to hide the glory of the law which was reflected upon it, and the glory of Christ's ascension was veiled from human sight. The brightness of the heavenly escort and the opening of the glorious gates of God to welcome Him were not to be discerned by mortal eyes.

Had the track of Christ to heaven been revealed to the disciples in all its inexpressible glory, they could not have endured the sight. Had they beheld the myriads of angels, and heard the bursts of triumph from the battlements of heaven, as the everlasting doors were lifted up, the contrast between that glory and their own lives in a world of trial, would have been so great that they would hardly have been able to again take up the burden of their earthly lives, prepared to execute with courage and faithfulness the commission given them by the Saviour. Even the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, which was sent to them, would not have been properly appreciated, nor would it have strengthened their hearts sufficiently to bear reproach, contumely, imprisonment, and death if need be.

[1054] Their senses were not to become so infatuated with the glories of heaven that they would lose sight of the character of Christ on earth, which they were to copy in themselves. They were to keep distinctly before their minds the beauty and majesty of His life, the perfect harmony of all His attributes, and the mysterious union of the divine and human in His nature. It was better that the earthly acquaintance of the disciples with their Saviour should end in the solemn, quiet, and sublime manner in which it did. His visible ascent from the world was in harmony with the meekness and quiet of His life ([The Spirit of Prophecy 3:254, 255](#)).

11. Holy Humanity Taken to Heaven—Christ ascended to heaven, bearing a sanctified, holy humanity. He took this humanity with Him into the heavenly courts, and through the eternal ages He will bear it, as the One who has redeemed every human being in the city of God ([The Review and Herald, March 9, 1905](#)).

(John 12:45; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3.) A Personal Saviour—Christ came as a personal Saviour to the world. He represented a personal God. He ascended on high as a personal Saviour,

and will come again as He ascended to heaven—a personal Saviour ([Manuscript 86, 1898](#)).

([Matthew 28:20](#); [14:2, 3](#); [John 16:24](#); [Hebrews 9:24](#).) **A New View of Heaven**—What a source of joy to the disciples to know that they had such a Friend in heaven to plead in their behalf! Through the visible ascension of Christ all their views and contemplation of heaven are changed. Their minds had formerly dwelt upon it as a region of unlimited space, tenanted by spirits without substance. Now heaven was connected with the thought of Jesus, whom they had loved and revered above all others, with whom they had conversed and journeyed, whom they had handled, even in His resurrected body, who had spoken hope and comfort to their hearts, and who, while the words were upon His lips, had been taken up before their eyes, the tones of His voice coming back to them as the cloudy chariot of angels received Him: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Heaven could no longer appear to them as an indefinite, incomprehensible space, filled with intangible spirits. They now looked upon it as their future home, where mansions were being prepared for them by their loving Redeemer. Prayer was clothed with a new interest, since it was a communion with their Saviour. With new and thrilling emotions and a firm confidence that their prayer would be answered, they gathered in the upper chamber to offer their petitions and to claim the promise of the Saviour, who had said, “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” They prayed in the name of Jesus.

They had a gospel to preach—Christ in human form, a man of sorrows; Christ in humiliation, taken by wicked hands and crucified; Christ resurrected, and ascended to heaven, into the presence of God, to be man’s Advocate; Christ to come again with power and great glory in the clouds of heaven ([The Spirit of Prophecy 3:262, 263](#)).

14. Faith of Jesus’ Brothers Established—[[Acts 1:9-14](#) quoted.] “And with his brethren.” These had lost much because of their unbelief. They had been among the number who doubted when Jesus appeared in Galilee. But they now firmly believed that Jesus was the Son of God, the promised Messiah. Their faith was established ([Letter 115, 1904](#)).

26 (Joshua 7:16-18). No Faith in Casting Lots—Let none be led from the sound, sensible principles that God has laid down for the guidance of His people, to depend for direction on any such device as the tossing up of a coin. Such a course is well pleasing to the enemy of souls; for he works to control the coin, and through its agency works out his plans. Let none be so easily deceived as to place confidence in any such tests. Let none belittle their experience by resorting to cheap devices for direction in important matters connected with the work of God.

The Lord works in no haphazard way. Seek Him most earnestly in prayer. He will impress the mind, and will give tongue and utterance. The people of God are to be educated not to trust in human inventions and uncertain tests as a means of learning God's will concerning them. Satan and his agencies are always ready to step into any opening to be found that will lead souls away from the pure principles of the Word of God. The people who are led and taught of God will give no place to devisings for which there is not a "Thus saith the Lord" (SpT, Ser. B, No. 17, p. 28).

I have no faith in casting lots. We have in the Bible a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in regard to all church duties.... Read your Bibles with much prayer. Do not try to humble others, but humble yourselves before God, and deal gently with one another. To cast lots for the officers of the church is not in God's order ([Letter 37, 1900](#)).

Chapter 2

[1055]

Read and Present Acts 2—Let us read and receive and present to others the second chapter of the book of Acts. We need a deeper piety and the sincere meekness of the Great Teacher. I am instructed ... that the whole book of Acts is our lesson book. All of us need to humble our own individual hearts, and be converted daily. ([Letter 32, 1910](#)).

1-4 (Acts 1:8, 9; Ephesians 4:8). Christ's Promise Fulfilled—The time had now come. The Spirit had been waiting for the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. For ten days the disciples offered their petitions for the outpouring of the Spirit, and Christ in heaven added His intercession. This was the occasion of His ascension and inauguration, a jubilee in heaven. He had ascended on high, leading captivity captive, and He now claimed the gift of the Spirit, that He might pour it out upon His disciples ([The Southern Work, November 28, 1905](#)).

Heaven's Reservoir of Power not Locked—[[Acts 2:1-4](#) quoted.] God is willing to give us a similar blessing, when we seek for it as earnestly.

The Lord did not lock the reservoir of heaven after pouring His Spirit upon the early disciples. We also may receive of the fullness of His blessing. Heaven is full of the treasures of His grace, and those who come to God in faith may claim all that He has promised. If we do not have His power, it is because of our spiritual lethargy, our indifference, our indolence. Let us come out of this formality and deadness ([The Review and Herald, June 4, 1889](#)).

(Hosea 6:3; Joel 2:23, 28, 29; Zechariah 10:1; Revelation 18:1.) Pentecost Repeated With Greater Power—It is with an earnest longing that I look forward to the time when the events of the day of Pentecost shall be repeated with even greater power than on that occasion. John says, "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his

glory.” Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue.

God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve Him, and can touch the lips with a live coal from off the altar, and cause them to become eloquent with His praise. Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the wonderful truths of God’s Word. The stammering tongue will be unloosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth. May the Lord help His people to cleanse the soul temple from every defilement, and to maintain such a close connection with Him that they may be partakers of the latter rain when it shall be poured out ([The Review and Herald, July 20, 1886](#)).

1-4, 14, 41 (Ephesians 4:30). A Harvest From Christ’s Sowing—In the work that was accomplished on the day of Pentecost, we may see what can be done by the exercise of faith. Those who believed in Christ were sealed by the Holy Spirit. As the disciples were assembled together, “there came a sound ... as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” And Peter stood up among them and spoke with mighty power. Among those who listened to him were devout Jews, who were sincere in their belief. But the power that accompanied the words of the speaker convinced them that Christ was indeed the Messiah. What a mighty work was accomplished! Three thousand were converted in one day.

The seed had been sown by the greatest Teacher the world had ever known. For three and a half years the Son of God had sojourned in the land of Judea, proclaiming the message of the gospel of truth and working with mighty signs and wonders. The seed had been sown, and after His ascension the great ingathering took place. More were converted by one sermon on the day of Pentecost than were converted during all the years of Christ’s ministry. So mightily will God work when men give themselves to the control of the Spirit ([Manuscript 85, 1903](#)).

1-12 (Acts 4:13). Second Edition of Christ’s Teaching—After the disciples had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the priests and rulers marveled at the words which they spake, for they knew them as unlearned and ignorant men. But they took knowledge of

them that they had been with Jesus

Their teaching was a second edition of the teachings of Christ, the utterance of simple, grand truths that flashed light into darkened minds, and converted thousands in a day. The disciples began to understand that Christ was their Advocate in the heavenly courts, and that He was glorified. They could speak because the Holy Spirit gave them utterance ([Manuscript 32, 1900](#)).

17, 18. See [EGW comment on Joel 2:28, 29](#).

Chapter 3

17. No Excuse for Willful Ignorance—“I wot that through ignorance ye did it,” said Peter; but this ignorance did not excuse the action; for they had had great light granted unto them. The statement is made that had they known that He was the Prince of life, they would not have crucified Him. But why did they not know?—because they chose not to know. They had no interest to search and study, and their ignorance proved their eternal ruin. They had had the strongest evidence on which to base their faith, and they were under obligation to God to accept the evidence He had given them. Their unbelief made them guilty of the blood of the only begotten Son of the infinite God ([Manuscript 9, 1898](#)).

Chapter 4

12. See [EGW comment on 1 Timothy 2:5](#).
13. See [EGW comment on Acts 2:1-12](#).

Chapter 5

1-11. Sacredness of Vows and Pledges—The people need to be impressed with the sacredness of their vows and pledges to the cause of God. Such pledges are not generally held to be as obligatory as a promissory note from man to man. But is a promise less sacred and binding because it is made to God? Because it lacks some technical terms, and cannot be enforced by law, will the Christian disregard the obligation to which he has given his word? No legal note or bond is more obligatory than a pledge made to the cause of God ([The Review and Herald, May 23, 1893](#)).

29. What Does God Say?—We are not to inquire, What is the practice of men? or, What is the custom of the world? We are not to ask, How shall I act in order to have the approval of men? or, What will the world tolerate? The question of intense interest to every soul is, What hath God said? We are to read His Word and obey it, not swerving one jot or tittle from its requirements, but acting irrespective of human traditions and jurisdiction ([The Review and Herald, October 1, 1895](#)).

31 (Romans 2:4). Repentance the Gift of Christ—[[Acts 5:31](#) quoted.] Repentance is as much the gift of Christ as is forgiveness, and it cannot be found in the heart where Jesus has not been at work. We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ. Christ draws the sinner by the exhibition of His love upon the cross, and this softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition and repentance in the soul ([The Review and Herald, April 1, 1890](#)).

Chapter 6

1-7. Responsibilities in God's Work to Be Shared—The Lord here gives us an example of the care that should be exercised when choosing men for His service. In this case, one man was not made the only burden bearer of great responsibilities. Seven men were chosen, and they were to be closely united in their work ([Manuscript 91, 1899](#)).

Chapter 7

22. See [EGW comment on Exodus 2:11](#).

Chapter 8

4. See [EGW comment on Acts 18:2](#).

9-24 (2 Peter 1:14, 15). Paul and Peter Martyred in Rome—

The apostles Paul and Peter were for many years widely separated in their labors, it being the work of Paul to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, while Peter labored especially for the Jews. But in the providence of God, both were to bear witness for Christ in the world's metropolis, and upon its soil both were to shed their blood as the seed of a vast harvest of saints and martyrs.

About the time of Paul's second arrest, Peter also was apprehended and thrust into prison. He had made himself especially obnoxious to the authorities by his zeal and success in exposing the deceptions and defeating the plots of Simon Magus the sorcerer, who had followed him to Rome to oppose and hinder the work of the gospel. Nero was a believer in magic, and had patronized Simon. He was therefore greatly incensed against the apostle, and was thus prompted to order his arrest ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 328](#)).

[1057]

27. An Example of Obedience—When God pointed out to Philip his work, the disciple did not say, "The Lord does not mean that." No; "he arose and went." He had learned the lesson of conformity to God's will. He realized that every soul is precious in the sight of God, and that angels are sent to bring those who are seeking for light into touch with those who can help them.

Today as then angels are waiting to lead men to their fellow men.... In the experience of Philip and the Ethiopian is presented the work to which the Lord calls His people ([The Review and Herald, March 2, 1911](#)).

Chapter 9

1, 2. The New Faith Flourished in Damascus—In Damascus the new faith seemed to have acquired fresh life and energy. The work of suppression must be begun there, and Saul was selected for this work ([The Youth's Instructor, November 15, 1900](#)).

(Chs. 22:4; 26:11.) Saul Deluded and Deceived—Saul had an abundance of energy and zeal to work out an erroneous faith in persecuting the saints of God, confining them in prisons and putting them to death. Although his hand did not do the work of murder, yet he had a voice in the decisions and zealously sustained them. He prepared the way, and gave up the believers of the gospel into hands that took their lives. In reference to his zeal Paul himself says, I was “exceedingly mad against them.” “I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.”

“Yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,” Saul went, not to the lower, ignorant class, but to the highest religionists in the world, the men who acted a part in putting Christ to death, the men who possessed the spirit and sentiment of Caiaphas and his confederacy. These great men, thought Saul, if they had religious, determined helpers, could certainly put down this little handful of fanatical men. So to the high priest Saul went, “and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.” Christ permitted this, and many, very many lost their lives for their belief in Him.

Paul honestly thought that he was persecuting a weak, ignorant, fanatical sect. He did not realize that he himself was the one deluded and deceived, and following ignorantly under the banner of the prince of darkness ([Manuscript 142, 1897](#)).

1-4 (Acts 26:9; 1 Corinthians 15:9). Saul's Unbelief Honest, but Not Excusable—The mind that resists the truth will see everything in a perverted light. It will be fastened in the sure toils of the enemy, and view things in the light of the enemy.

Saul of Tarsus was an example of this. He had no moral right to be an unbeliever. But he had chosen to accept the opinions of men rather than the counsel of God. He had the prophecies pointing to the Messiah, but the sayings of the rabbis, the words of men, were preferred. In his own wisdom, Saul knew not God nor Jesus Christ, whom He had sent. Afterward in repeating his experience, he declared that he thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Saul was honest in his unbelief. His was no pretension, and Jesus arrested him in his career and showed him on whose side he was working. The persecutor accepted the words of Christ, and was converted from infidelity to faith in Christ.

Saul did not treat with indifference the unbelief which had led him to follow in Satan's track, and cause the suffering and death of the most precious of earth—those of whom the world was not worthy. He did not plead that his error of judgment was excusable. Long after his conversion he spoke of himself as the chief of sinners. "For I am the least of the apostles," he said, "that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." He did not make one excuse for his cruel course in following faithfully the impression of a conscience that was false ([Manuscript 9, 1898](#)). [1058]

3-6. See [EGW comment on 1 Corinthians 2:1-5](#).

3-9. Made Blind That He Might See—What a humiliation it was to Paul to know that all the time he was using his powers against the truth, thinking he was doing God's service, he was persecuting Christ. When the Saviour revealed Himself to Paul in the bright beams of His glory, he was filled with abhorrence for his work and for himself. The power of Christ's glory might have destroyed him, but Paul was a prisoner of hope. He was made physically blind by the glory of the presence of Him whom he had blasphemed, but it was that he might have spiritual sight, that he might be awakened from the lethargy that had stupefied and deadened his perceptions. His conscience, aroused, now worked with self-accusing energy. The zeal of his work, his earnest resistance of the light shining upon him through God's messengers, now brought condemnation upon his soul, and he was filled with bitter remorse. He no longer saw himself as righteous, but condemned by the law in thought, in spirit, and in deeds. He saw himself a sinner, utterly lost, without the Saviour he had been persecuting. In the days and nights of his blindness he

had time for reflection, and he cast himself all helpless and hopeless upon Christ, the only one who could pardon him and clothe him with righteousness ([Manuscript 23, 1899](#)).

6. Divine and Human Cooperation Necessary—Always the Lord gives the human agent his work. Here is the divine and the human cooperation. There is man working in obedience to divine light given. If Saul had said, Lord, I am not at all inclined to follow your specified directions to work out my own salvation, then should the Lord have let ten times the light shine upon Saul, it would have been useless. It is man's work to cooperate with the divine. And it is the very hardest, sternest conflict which comes with the purpose and hour of great resolve and decision of the human to incline the will and way to God's will and God's way.... The character will determine the nature of the resolve and the action. The doing is not in accordance with the feeling or the inclination, but with the known will of our Father which is in heaven. Follow and obey the leadings of the Holy Spirit ([Letter 135, 1898](#)).

8, 9 (2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Galatians 6:17). “**The Marks of the Lord Jesus.**”—He [Paul] was ever to carry about with him in the body the marks of Christ's glory, in his eyes, which had been blinded by the heavenly light ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 34](#)).

18, 19. Paul's Baptism—Paul was baptized by Ananias in the river of Damascus. He was then strengthened by food, and immediately began to preach Jesus to the believers in the city, the very ones whom he had set out from Jerusalem with the purpose of destroying ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 32](#)).

25-27 (Galatians 1:17, 18). **Two Grand Characters Meet**—The gates of the city were vigilantly guarded, day and night, to cut off his escape. The anxiety of the disciples drew them to God in prayer; there was little sleeping among them, as they were busy in devising ways and means for the escape of the chosen apostle. Finally they conceived a plan by which he was let down from a window and lowered over the wall in a basket at night. In this humiliating manner Paul made his escape from Damascus.

He now proceeded to Jerusalem, wishing to become acquainted with the apostles there, and especially with Peter. He was very anxious to meet the Galilean fishermen who had lived and prayed and conversed with Christ upon earth....

He attempted to join himself to his brethren, the disciples; but great was his grief and disappointment when he found that they would not receive him as one of their number. They remembered his former persecutions, and suspected him of acting a part to deceive and destroy them. True, they had heard of his wonderful conversion, but as he had immediately retired into Arabia, and they had heard nothing definite of him further, they had not credited the rumor of his great change.

Barnabas, who had liberally contributed of his means to sustain the cause of Christ and to relieve the necessities of the poor, had been acquainted with Paul when he opposed the believers. He now came forward and renewed that acquaintance, heard the testimony of Paul in regard to his miraculous conversion, and his experience from that time. He fully believed and received Paul, took him by the hand, and led him into the presence of the apostles. He related his experience which he had just heard—that Jesus had personally appeared to Paul while on his way to Damascus; that He had talked with him; that Paul had recovered his sight in answer to the prayers of Ananias, and had afterward maintained in the synagogue of the city that Jesus was the Son of God. [1059]

The apostles no longer hesitated; they could not withstand God. Peter and James, who at that time were the only apostles in Jerusalem, gave the right hand of fellowship to the once-fierce persecutor of their faith; and he was now as much beloved and respected as he had formerly been feared and avoided. Here the two grand characters of the new faith met—Peter, one of the chosen companions of Christ while He was upon earth; and Paul, a Pharisee, who, since the ascension of Jesus, had met Him face to face, and had talked with Him, and had also seen Him in vision, and the nature of His work in heaven ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 34-36](#)).

Chapter 10

Heaven Is Near to the Seeker of Souls—In the tenth chapter of Acts we have still another instance of the ministration of heavenly angels, resulting in the conversion of Cornelius and his company. Let these chapters [8-10] be read, and receive special attention. In them we see that heaven is much nearer to the Christian who is engaged in the work of soulsaving than many suppose. We should learn through them also the lesson of God's regard for every human being, and that each should treat his fellow man as one of the Lord's instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His work in the earth ([Manuscript 17, 1908](#)).

1-4 (Philippians 4:18). Prayer and Almsgiving as Sweet Incense—[[Acts 10:1-4](#) quoted.] It is a wonderful favor for any man in this life to be commended of God as was Cornelius. And what was the ground of this approval?—"Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God."

Neither prayer nor almsgiving has any virtue in itself to recommend the sinner to God; the grace of Christ, through His atoning sacrifice, can alone renew the heart and make our service acceptable to God. This grace had moved upon the heart of Cornelius. The Spirit of Christ had spoken to his soul; Jesus had drawn him, and he had yielded to the drawing. His prayers and alms were not urged or extorted from him; they were not a price he was seeking to pay in order to secure heaven; but they were the fruit of love and gratitude to God.

Such prayer from a sincere heart ascends as incense before the Lord; and offerings to His cause and gifts to the needy and suffering are a sacrifice well pleasing to Him. Thus the gifts of the Philippian brethren who ministered to the needs of the apostle Paul while a prisoner at Rome, are said to be "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God."

Prayer and almsgiving are closely linked together—the expression of love to God and to our fellow men. They are the out-working

of the two great principles of the divine law, “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”; and, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Thus while our gifts cannot recommend us to God or earn His favor, they are an evidence that we have received the grace of Christ. They are a test of the sincerity of our profession of love ([The Review and Herald, May 9, 1893](#)).

1-6 (Hebrews 1:14). Ministering Angels Note Each Individual—That same Holy Watcher who says, I know Abraham, knew Cornelius also, and sent His angel with a message to the man who had received and improved all the light God had given him. The angel said, “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter.” Then the specific directions are given, “He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” Thus the angel of the Lord works to bring Cornelius in connection with the human agent through whom he might receive greater light. Study the whole chapter carefully and see the simplicity of the whole transaction. Then consider that the Lord knows every one of us by name, and just where we live, and the spirit we possess, and every act of our life. The ministering angels are passing through the churches, noting our faithfulness in our individual line of duty ([Letter 20a, 1893](#)).

[1060]

Earnest Seekers Not Left in Darkness—Here we are given positive evidence that the Lord does not leave in darkness those who follow all the light given them, but sends His angels to communicate with them. Cornelius was living in accordance with the instruction given in the Old Testament Scriptures, and the Lord sent a messenger to tell him what to do.

God could have given Cornelius all the instruction he needed by the angel, but this was not His plan. His purpose was to place Cornelius in connection with those who had been receiving knowledge from on high, whose work it was to impart this knowledge to those seeking for light. Thus God always deals with His people....

Cornelius obeyed the instruction given. He united with the church, and became a useful and influential laborer together with God ([Manuscript 67, 1900](#)).

God Uses His Appointed Agencies—[Acts 10:1-4 quoted.] The angel did not give him the light that he might have given him, but directed him to take a course whereby he might come into connection with one who could tell him precious truth.... [Acts 10:5, 6 quoted.]

Cornelius implicitly obeyed the instruction, and the same angel went to Peter, and gave him his instructions. This chapter [Acts 10] has much precious counsel in it for us, and we should study it with humble attention. When the Lord has His appointed agencies whereby He gives help to souls, and men disrespect these agencies, and refuse to receive help from them, and decide that they will be directly taught of God, the Lord does not gratify their desire. The man who takes such a position is in danger of taking up with the voices of strangers, and of being led into false paths. Both Cornelius and Peter were instructed what they were to do, and they obeyed the angel's word. Cornelius gathered his household together to hear the message of light from Peter. If he had said, I will not be taught of any man, the angel of God would have left him to himself; but this was not his attitude (*The Review and Herald, October 10, 1893*).

Many Today Like Cornelius—There are many today who are in the same position as Cornelius. They are living up to the light they have received, and God speaks to them, as He spoke to Cornelius, and brings them by His appointed agencies to the place where they will receive the truth into good and honest hearts. God reveals Himself to those who are striving to form characters that He can approve. The prayers of those who fear Him, who recognize their obligations to Him, are heard and answered. The Lord takes special notice of those who walk in the light that He has given them, who testify by their deeds that they are trying to honor God. Through a Peter He will present the pearl of great price, and through a Cornelius and his family many souls will be brought to the light (*The Review and Herald, August 8, 1899*).

By the wonderful works of God, Cornelius was led to bring his energetic, faithful life into connection with the disciples of Christ. Thus shall it be in the last days. Many will prize the wisdom of God above any earthly advantage, and will obey the Word of God as the supreme standard. These will be led to great light. These will come to the knowledge of the truth, and will seek to get this light of truth before those of their acquaintance who like themselves are

anxious for the truth. Thus they become conscientious light bearers to the world. Themselves constrained by the love of God, they will constrain others, and will improve every opportunity to invite and urge others to come and see the beauty of the truth, and to give their abilities to advance the work of God ([Manuscript 97, 1898](#)).

Some who are numbered among merchants and princes will take their position to obey the truth. God's eye has been upon such as they have acted according to the light they have had, maintaining their integrity. Cornelius ... maintained his religious experience, strictly walking in accordance with the light he had received. God had His eye upon him, and He sent His angel with a message to him. The heavenly messenger passed by the self-righteous ones, came to Cornelius, and called him by name ([Manuscript 97, 1898](#)).

Much is said concerning our duty to the neglected poor. Should not some attention be given to the neglected rich? Many look upon this class as hopeless, and they do little to open the eyes of those who, blinded and dazed by the glitter of earthly glory, have lost eternity out of their reckoning. Thousands of wealthy men have gone to the grave unwarned. But indifferent as they may appear, many among the rich are soul burdened....

[1061]

Riches and worldly honor cannot satisfy the soul. Many among the rich are longing for some divine assurance, some spiritual hope. Many long for something that will bring to an end the monotony of their aimless life. Many in official life feel their need of something which they have not. Few among them go to church, for they feel that they receive little benefit. The teaching they hear does not touch the heart. Shall we make no special appeal to them?

God calls for earnest, humble workers, who will carry the gospel to the higher classes. It is by no casual, accidental touch that the wealthy, world-loving souls can be drawn to Christ. Decided personal effort must be put forth by men and women imbued with the missionary spirit, those who will not fail nor be discouraged ([The Review and Herald, April 6, 1911](#)).

Chapter 12

6. Peter Ready to Yield Up His Life—The apostle was not intimidated by the situation. Since his reinstatement after his denial of Christ, he had unflinchingly braved danger, and had shown a noble courage and boldness in preaching a crucified, risen, and ascended Saviour. As he lay in his cell he called to mind the words that Christ had spoken to him: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.” Peter believed that the time had come for him to yield up his life for Christ’s sake ([The Review and Herald, April 27, 1911](#)).

Chapter 14

17. See [EGW comment on Romans 1:20, 21](#).

Chapter 15

1, 5 (Romans 2:24-29; Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:14-17; Titus 1:9-11). Circumcision of No Value After the Cross—[Titus 1:9-11, 13, 14 quoted.] There were those in Paul's day who were constantly dwelling upon circumcision, and they could bring plenty of proof from the Bible to show its obligation on the Jews; but this teaching was of no consequence at this time; for Christ had died upon Calvary's cross, and circumcision in the flesh could not be of any further value.

The typical service and the ceremonies connected with it were abolished at the cross. The great antitypical Lamb of God had become an offering for guilty man, and the shadow ceased in the substance. Paul was seeking to bring the minds of men to the great truth for the time; but these who claimed to be followers of Jesus were wholly absorbed in teaching the tradition of the Jews, and the obligation of circumcision ([The Review and Herald, May 29, 1888](#)).

4-29. See [EGW comment on Galatians 2:1-10](#).

11 (Galatians 3:8; 1 Corinthians 10:4). Only One Gospel—There is no such contrast as is often claimed to exist between the Old and the New Testament, the law of God and the gospel of Christ, the requirements of the Jewish and those of the Christian dispensation. Every soul saved in the former dispensation was saved by Christ as verily as we are saved by Him today. Patriarchs and prophets were Christians. The gospel promise was given to the first pair in Eden, when they had by transgression separated themselves from God. The gospel was preached to Abraham. The Hebrews all drank of that spiritual Rock, which was Christ ([The Signs of the Times, September 14, 1882](#)).

(Exodus 13:21, 22; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4; 1 Timothy 2:5.) Christ's Blood Avails for Us as for Israel—Shrouded in the pillar of cloud, the world's Redeemer held communion with Israel. Let us not say, then, that they had not Christ. When the people thirsted in the wilderness, and gave themselves up to murmuring and com-

plaint, Christ was to them what He is to us—a Saviour full of tender compassion, the Mediator between them and God. After we have done our part to cleanse the soul temple from the defilement of sin, Christ's blood avails for us, as it did for ancient Israel ([The Youth's Instructor, July 18, 1901](#)).

Chapter 16

1-3. See [EGW comment on 2 Timothy 3:14, 15](#).

14 (2 Corinthians 8:12). Light for Those Who Are Willing— God's Spirit can only enlighten the understanding of those who are willing to be enlightened. We read that God opened the ears of Lydia, so that she attended to the message spoken by Paul. To declare the whole counsel of God and all that was essential for Lydia to receive—this was the part Paul was to act in her conversion; and then the God of all grace exercised His power, leading the soul in the right way. God and the human agent cooperated, and the work was wholly successful ([Letter 150, 1900](#)).

Chapter 17

22-29. See [EGW comment on Romans 1:20-25](#).

22-34. See [EGW comment on 1 Corinthians 2:1-5](#).

28 ([John 5:17](#); [Colossians 1:17](#); [Hebrews 1:3](#); see [EGW comment on Genesis 2:7](#)). **God Constantly at Work in Nature**—God is perpetually at work in nature. She is His servant, directed as He pleases. Nature in her work testifies of the intelligent presence and active agency of a Being who moves in all His works according to His will. It is not by an original power inherent in nature that year by year the earth produces its bounties and the world keeps up its continual march around the sun. The hand of infinite power is perpetually at work guiding this planet. It is God’s power momentarily exercised that keeps it in position in its rotations. The God of heaven is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears and every flower blooms. It is not as the result of a mechanism, that, once set in motion, continues its work, that the pulse beats and breath follows breath. In God we live and move and have our being. Every breath, every throb of the heart, is the continual evidence of the power of an ever-present God. It is God that maketh the sun to rise in the heavens. He openeth the windows of heaven and giveth rain. He maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains. “He giveth snow like wool: and scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.” “When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, ... he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.” Although the Lord has ceased His work in creating, He is constantly employed in upholding and using as His servants the things which He has made. Said Christ, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” ([Manuscript 4, 1882](#)).

34 ([1 Corinthians 2:1-4](#)). **Simplicity of the Gospel vs. Learning of the World**—At the close of his labors he [Paul] looked for the results of his work. Out of the large assembly that had listened to his eloquent words, only three had been converted to the faith. He

then decided that from that time he would maintain the simplicity of the gospel. He was convinced that the learning of the world was powerless to move the hearts of men, but that the gospel was the power of God to salvation ([The Review and Herald, August 3, 1911](#)).

Chapter 18

1-3 (2 Corinthians 10:1, 7, 8; see EGW comment on Acts 20:17-35). The Apostles Counseled Over Methods of Labor—

When Paul came to Corinth, he solicited work from Aquila. The apostles counseled and prayed together, and decided that they would preach the gospel as it should be preached, in disinterested love for the souls who were perishing for lack of knowledge. Paul would work at tentmaking, and teach his fellow laborers to work with their hands, so that in any emergency they could support themselves. Some of his ministering brethren presented such a course as inconsistent, saying that by so doing they would lose their influence as ministers of the gospel. The tenth chapter of Second Corinthians records the difficulties Paul had to contend with, and his vindication of his course. God had placed special honor upon Paul. He had given him his credentials, and had laid upon him weighty responsibility. And the apostle writes, “I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you,”—because he humbled himself to do mechanical work—“but being absent am bold toward you” [2 Corinthians 10:7, 8 quoted] (RH March 6, 1900).

(Acts 20:33, 34; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8.) Paul Resorted to His Trade—Paul ... abode with them [Aquila and Priscilla]; and having in his youth learned their trade of making tents, which were much used in that warm climate, he worked at this business for his own support....

[1063]

Paul was highly educated, and was admired for his genius and eloquence. He was chosen by his countrymen as a member of the Sanhedrim, and was a rabbi of distinguished ability; yet his education had not been considered complete until he had served an apprenticeship at some useful trade. He rejoiced that he was able to support himself by manual labor, and frequently declared that his own hands had ministered to his necessities. While in a city of strangers, he would not be chargeable to anyone. When his means

had been expended to advance the cause of Christ, he resorted to his trade in order to gain a livelihood ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 99, 100](#)).

Although feeble in health, he [Paul] labored during the day in serving the cause of Christ, and then toiled a large part of the night, and frequently all night, that he might provide for his own and others' necessities ([The Youth's Instructor, February 27, 1902](#)).

A Skilled Workman—Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, learned the trade of tentmaking. There were higher and lower branches of tentmaking. Paul learned the higher branches, and he could also work at the common branches when circumstances required. Tentmaking did not bring returns so quickly as some other occupations, and at times it was only by the strictest economy that Paul could supply his necessities ([The Review and Herald, March 6, 1900](#)).

An Educator—Paul was an educator. He preached the gospel with his voice, and in his intelligent labor he preached it with his hands. He educated others in the same way in which he had been educated by one who was regarded as the wisest of human teachers. As Paul worked quickly and skillfully with his hands, he related to his fellow workers the specifications Christ had given Moses in regard to the building of the tabernacle. He showed them that the skill and wisdom and genius brought into that work were given by God to be used to His glory. He taught them that supreme honor is to be given to God ([The Review and Herald, March 6, 1900](#)).

2 (Acts 8:4; Romans 1:7, 8). Opposition Did Not Silence Gospel—After the ascension of Christ, the apostles went everywhere preaching the Word. They bore witness to Christ's work as a teacher and healer. Their testimony in Jerusalem, in Rome, and in other places was positive and powerful. The Jews, who refused to receive the truth, could but acknowledge that a powerful influence attended Christ's followers, because the Holy Spirit accompanied them. This created greater opposition; but notwithstanding the opposition, twenty years after the crucifixion of Christ there was a live, earnest church in Rome. This church was strong and zealous, and the Lord worked for it.

The envy and rage of the Jews against the Christians knew no bounds, and the unbelieving residents were constantly stirred up.

They made complaints that the Christian Jews were disorderly, and dangerous to the public good. Constantly they were setting in motion something that would stir up strife. This caused the Christians to be banished from Rome. Among those banished, were Aquila and Priscilla, who went to Corinth, and there established a business as manufacturers of tents ([The Review and Herald, March 6, 1900](#)).

24-26. Learned Apollos Instructed by Humble Tentmakers—Apollos ... had received the highest Grecian culture, and was a scholar and an orator.... Aquila and Priscilla listened to him, and saw that his teachings were defective. He had not a thorough knowledge of the mission of Christ, His resurrection and ascension, and of the work of His Spirit, the Comforter which He sent down to remain with His people during His absence. They accordingly sent for Apollos, and the educated orator received instruction from them with grateful surprise and joy. Through their teachings he obtained a clearer understanding of the Scriptures, and became one of the ablest defenders of the Christian church. Thus a thorough scholar and brilliant orator learned the way of the Lord more perfectly from the teachings of a Christian man and woman whose humble employment was that of tentmaking ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 119](#)).

Chapter 19

[1064] **11, 12, 17 (Luke 8:46). Miracles No Encouragement to Blind Superstition**—As Paul was brought in direct contact with the idolatrous inhabitants of Ephesus, the power of God was strikingly displayed through him. The apostles were not always able to work miracles at will. The Lord granted His servants this special power as the progress of His cause or the honor of His name required. Like Moses and Aaron at the court of Pharaoh, the apostle had now to maintain the truth against the lying wonders of the magicians; hence the miracles he wrought were of a different character from those which he had heretofore performed. As the hem of Christ’s garment had communicated healing power to her who sought relief by the touch of faith, so on this occasion, garments were made the means of cure to all that believed; “diseases departed from them, and evil spirits went out of them.” Yet these miracles gave no encouragement to blind superstition. When Jesus felt the touch of the suffering woman, He exclaimed, “Virtue is gone out of *me*.” So the Scripture declares that the Lord wrought miracles by the hand of Paul, and that the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified, and not the name of Paul ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 135](#)).

19. Value of the Books Sacrificed—When the books had been consumed, they proceeded to reckon up the value of the sacrifice. It was estimated at fifty thousand pieces of silver, equal to about ten thousand dollars ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 137](#)).

33. See [EGW comment on 2 Timothy 4:13, 14](#).

Chapter 20

17-35 (Acts 18:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8). An All-round Minister—His [Paul's] toil-worn hands, as he presented them before the people, bore testimony that he was not chargeable to any man for his support. They detracted nothing, he deemed, from the force of his pathetic appeals, sensible, intelligent, and eloquent beyond those of any other man who had acted a part in the Christian ministry.

In [Acts 20:17-35](#) we see outlined the character of a Christian minister who faithfully performed his duty. He was an all-round minister. We do not think it is obligatory on all ministers to do in all respects as Paul did. Yet we say to all that Paul was a Christian gentleman of the highest type. His example shows that mechanical toil does not necessarily lessen the influence of anyone, that working with the hands in any honorable employment should not make a man coarse and rough and discourteous ([The Youth's Instructor, January 31, 1901](#)).

30 (2 Timothy 4:3, 4; 2 Peter 2:1). Strangle Unstable Theories—From the light given me of the Lord, men will arise speaking perverse things. Yea, already they have been working and speaking things which God has never revealed, bringing sacred truth upon a level with common things. Issues have been and will continue to be made of men's conceited fallacies, not of truth. The devisings of men's minds will invent tests that are no tests at all, that when the true test shall be made prominent, it shall be considered on a par with the man-made tests that have been of no value. We may expect that everything will be brought in and mingled with sound doctrine, but by clear, spiritual discernment, by the heavenly anointing, we must distinguish the sacred from the common which is being brought in to confuse faith and sound judgment and demerit the great, grand, testing truth for this time....

Never, never was there a time when the truth will suffer more from being misrepresented, belittled, demerited through the per-

verse disputings of men than in these last days. Men have brought themselves in with their heterogeneous mass of heresies which they represent as oracles for the people. The people are charmed with some strange, new thing, and are not wise in experience to discern the character of ideas that men may frame up as something. But to call it something of great consequence and tie it to the oracles of God does not make it truth. Oh, how this rebukes the low standard of piety in the churches. Men who want to present something original will conjure up things new and strange, and without consideration will step forward on these unstable theories that have been woven together as a precious theory. And present it as a life and death question....

[1065] We have the truth, the solid truth in the Word of God, and all these speculations and theories would better be strangled in the cradle rather than nourished and brought to prominence. We are to hear the voice of God from His revealed Word, the sure word of prophecy. Those who will magnify themselves and seek to do some wonderful thing would better come to a sound mind ([Letter 136a, 1898](#)).

(Psalm 119:126, 127; 1 Timothy 4:1.) Traitors to Truth Become Her Worst Persecutors—Much so-called Christianity passes for genuine, faithful soundness, but it is because those who profess it have no persecution to endure for the truth's sake. When the day comes when the law of God is made void, and the church is sifted by the fiery trials that are to try all that live upon the earth, a great proportion of those who are supposed to be genuine will give heed to seducing spirits, and will turn traitors and betray sacred trusts. They will prove our very worst persecutors. "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;" and many will give heed to seducing spirits.

Those who have lived on the flesh and blood of the Son of God—His Holy Word—will be strengthened, rooted, and grounded in the faith. They will see increased evidence why they should prize and obey the Word of God. With David, they will say, "They have made void thy law. Therefore love I thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold." While others count them dross, they will arise to defend the faith. All who study their convenience, their pleasure,

their enjoyment, will not stand in their trial ([The Review and Herald, June 8, 1897](#)).

33, 34. See [EGW comment on Acts 18:1-3](#).

Chapter 21

20-26 (Galatians 2:11, 12). Paul's Advisers Not Infallible—

This concession was not in harmony with his teachings nor with the firm integrity of his character. His advisers were not infallible. Though some of these men wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, yet when not under its direct influence they sometimes erred. It will be remembered that on one occasion Paul withstood Peter to the face because he was acting a double part ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 214](#)).

39 (Acts 22:3, 25-28). Paul's Background—His [Paul's] father was a man of reputation. He was a Cilician, but still a Roman citizen; for Paul declares that he was freeborn. Others obtained this freedom with a great sum, but Paul was freeborn. Paul had been educated by the most learned teachers of the age. He had been taught by Gamaliel. Paul was a rabbi and a statesman. He was a member of the Sanhedrim ([Manuscript 95, 1899](#)).

Chapter 22

3, 4. See [EGW comment on 1 Corinthians 2:1-5](#).

3, 25-28. See [EGW comment on Acts 21:39](#).

4. See [EGW comment on Acts 9:1, 2](#).

5-16 (Acts 26:9-16). Paul Never Forgot His Remarkable Conversion—The apostle could never forget his conversion from a persecutor of all who believe on Christ, to a believer in Him. What a bearing this conversion had on all his afterlife! What an encouragement it was as he worked on the side of Him whom he once ridiculed and despised. He could never forget the assurance conveyed to him in the first part of his ministry. He could speak intelligently because he had an experience, a personal knowledge, of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had a living, abiding faith, for he cultivated a sense of the presence of Christ in all his works. He received strength in prayer, and as a faithful soldier of Christ he ever looked to his Captain for orders. No amount of obstacles piled up before him, could cause him to regard the work as an impossibility, for he realized that “all things are possible to them that believe” ([Manuscript 114, 1897](#)).

In every place where the apostle Paul was called to go after his conversion, he gave a vivid presentation of the ministration of heavenly angels in his conversion ([Manuscript 29, 1900](#)).

Chapter 23

3. An Inspired Denunciation—Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Paul uttered a prophetic denunciation similar to that which Christ had uttered in rebuking the hypocrisy of the Jews. The judgment pronounced by the apostle was terribly fulfilled when the iniquitous and hypocritical high priest was murdered by assassins in the Jewish war ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 222](#)).

[1066] **20-23. Lysias Feared for His Own Safety**—Lysias gladly improved this opportunity to get Paul off his hands.... A short time previous, a Roman knight of far higher rank than Lysias himself, had been violently taken and dragged by the maddened Jews around the walls of Jerusalem and finally beheaded, because he received a bribe from the Samaritans. Upon the suspicion of similar crimes, other high officials had been imprisoned and disgraced. Should Paul be murdered, the chief captain might be charged with having been bribed to connive at his death. There was now sufficient reason to send him away secretly, and thus get rid of an embarrassing responsibility ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 227](#)).

Chapter 24

2, 3. Felix Base and Contemptible—Tertullus here descended to barefaced falsehood. The character of Felix was base and contemptible....

An example of the unbridled licentiousness that stained his character is seen in his alliance with Drusilla, which was consummated about this time. Through the deceptive arts of Simon Magus, a Cyprian sorcerer, Felix had induced this princess to leave her husband and to become his wife. Drusilla was young and beautiful, and, moreover, a Jewess. She was devotedly attached to her husband, who had made a great sacrifice to obtain her hand. There was little indeed to induce her to forgo her strongest prejudices and to bring upon herself the abhorrence of her nation for the sake of forming an adulterous connection with a cruel and elderly profligate. Yet the satanic devices of the conjurer and the betrayer succeeded, and Felix accomplished his purpose ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 235, 236](#)).

22. Felix Not Deceived Regarding Paul—Felix himself had so long resided at Caesarea—where the Christian religion had been known for many years—that he had a better knowledge of that religion than the Jews supposed, and he was not deceived by their representations ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 239](#)).

27. Strife in Caesarea; Felix Removed—Toward the close of this time there arose a fearful strife among the population of Caesarea. There had been frequent disputes, which had become a settled feud, between the Jews and the Greeks, concerning their respective rights and privileges in the city. All the splendor of Caesarea, its temples, its palaces, and its amphitheater, were due to the ambition of the first Herod. Even the harbor, to which Caesarea owed all its prosperity and importance, had been constructed by him at an immense outlay of money and labor. The Jewish inhabitants were numerous and wealthy, and they claimed the city as theirs,

because their king had done so much for it. The Greeks, with equal persistency, maintained their right to the precedence.

Near the close of the two years, these dissensions led to a fierce combat in the market place, resulting in the defeat of the Greeks. Felix, who sided with the Gentile faction, came with his troops and ordered the Jews to disperse. The command was not instantly obeyed by the victorious party, and he ordered his soldiers to fall upon them. Glad of an opportunity to indulge their hatred of the Jews, they executed the order in the most merciless manner, and many were put to death. As if this were not enough, Felix, whose animosity toward the Jews had increased every year, now gave his soldiers liberty to rob the houses of the wealthy.

These daring acts of injustice and cruelty could not pass unnoticed. The Jews made a formal complaint against Felix, and he was summoned to Rome to answer their charges. He well knew that his course of extortion and oppression had given them abundant ground for complaint, but he still hoped to conciliate them. Hence, though he had a sincere respect for Paul, he decided to gratify their malice by leaving him a prisoner. But all his efforts were in vain; though he escaped banishment or death, he was removed from office, and deprived of the greater part of his ill-gotten wealth. Drusilla, the partner of his guilt, afterward perished, with their only son, in the eruption of Vesuvius. His own days were ended in disgrace and obscurity ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 245, 246](#)).

Chapter 26

9. See [EGW comment on Acts 9:1-4](#).

9-16. See [EGW comment on Acts 22:5-16](#).

11. See [EGW comment on Acts 9:1, 2](#).

26-28. What Were Agrippa's Thoughts?—Did the mind of Agrippa at these words revert to the past history of his family, and their fruitless efforts against Him whom Paul was preaching? Did he think of his great-grandfather Herod, and the massacre of the innocent children of Bethlehem? of his great-uncle Antipas, and the murder of John the Baptist? of his own father, Agrippa I, and the martyrdom of the apostle James? Did he see in the disasters which speedily befell these kings an evidence of the displeasure of God in consequence of their crimes against His servants? Did the pomp and display of that day remind Agrippa of the time when his own father, a monarch more powerful than he, stood in that same city, attired in glittering robes, while the people shouted that he was a god? Had he forgotten how, even before the admiring shouts had died away, vengeance, swift and terrible, had befallen the vainglorious king? Something of all this flitted across Agrippa's memory; but his vanity was flattered by the brilliant scene before him, and pride and self-importance banished all nobler thoughts ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 255, 256](#)). [1067]

Chapter 28

1, 2. A Praise Service on a Stormy Morning—When the roll was called, not one was missing. Nearly three hundred souls—sailors, soldiers, passengers, and prisoners—stood that stormy November morning upon the shore of the island of Melita. And there were some that joined with Paul and his brethren in giving thanks to God, who had preserved their lives and brought them safe to land through the perils of the great deep ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 270](#)).

* * * * *

Romans

Chapter 1

1. The Beginning of Paul's Apostleship—Paul regarded the occasion of his formal ordination as marking the beginning of a new and important epoch in his lifework. It was from the time of this solemn ceremony, when, just before he was to depart on his first missionary journey, he was “separated unto the gospel of God,” that he afterward dated the beginning of his apostleship in the Christian church ([The Review and Herald, May 11, 1911](#)).

7, 8 (see [EGW comment on Acts 18:2](#)). **A Strong Church in Rome**—Notwithstanding the opposition, twenty years after the crucifixion of Christ there was a live, earnest church in Rome. This church was strong and zealous, and the Lord worked for it ([The Review and Herald, March 6, 1900](#)).

14 ([Matthew 28:19, 20](#)). **Debtor Through Accepting Christ**—In what sense was Paul debtor both to the Jew and to the Greek? To him had been given the commission, as it is given to every disciple of Christ, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” In accepting Christ, Paul accepted this commission. He realized that upon him rested the obligation of laboring for all classes of men—for Jew and Gentile, learned and unlearned, for those occupying high positions and for those in the most lowly walks of life ([Letter 262, 1903](#)).

17. A Growing Understanding of Faith—The righteousness of Christ is revealed from faith to faith; that is, from your present faith to an increased understanding of that faith which works by love and purifies the soul ([The Review and Herald, September 18, 1908](#)).

20. See [EGW comment on Romans 12:1, 2](#).

20, 21 ([Acts 14:17](#)). **Nature Acts as a Silent Preacher**—The material world is under God's control. The laws that govern all nature are obeyed by nature. Everything speaks and acts the will of

the Creator. The clouds, the rain, the dew, the sunshine, the showers, the wind, the storm, all are under the supervision of God, and yield implicit obedience to him who employs them. The tiny spear of grass bursts its way through the earth, first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. The Lord uses these, His obedient servants, to do His will. The fruit is first seen in the bud, enclosing the future pear, peach, or apple, and the Lord develops these in their proper season, because they do not resist His working. They do not oppose the order of His arrangements. His works, as seen in the natural world, are not one half comprehended or appreciated. These silent preachers will teach human beings their lessons, if they will only be attentive hearers ([Letter 131, 1897](#)).

[1068]

20-25 (Psalm 19:1-3; Acts 17:22-29; 1 Corinthians 1:21; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3). Nature's Revelation Imperfect—The most difficult and humiliating lesson that man has to learn is his own inefficiency in depending upon human wisdom, and the sure failure of his own efforts to read nature correctly. Sin has obscured his vision, and of himself he cannot interpret nature without placing it above God. He cannot discern in it God, or Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. He is in the same position as were the Athenians, who erected their altars for the worship of nature. Standing in the midst of Mars' Hill, Paul presented before the people of Athens the majesty of the living God in contrast with their idolatrous worship. [[Acts 17:22-29](#) quoted.]

Those who have a true knowledge of God will not become so infatuated with the laws of matter or the operations of nature as to overlook, or refuse to acknowledge, the continual working of God in nature. Nature is not God, nor was it ever God. The voice of nature testifies of God, but nature is not God. As His created work, it simply bears a testimony to God's power. Deity is the author of nature. The natural world has, in itself, no power but that which God supplies.

There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son. [[Hebrews 1:1, 2; Psalm 19:1-3](#) quoted.] ...

The ancient philosophers prided themselves on their superior knowledge. Let us read the inspired apostle's understanding of the matter. "Professing themselves to be wise," he says, "they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image

made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.... Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator.” In its human wisdom the world cannot know God. Its wise men gather an imperfect knowledge of God from His created works, and then in their foolishness they exalt nature and the laws of nature above nature’s God. Those who have not a knowledge of God through an acceptance of the revelation He has made of Himself in Christ, will obtain only an imperfect knowledge of Him in nature; and this knowledge, so far from bringing the whole being into conformity to His will, will make men idolaters. Professing themselves to be wise, they will become fools.

Those who think they can obtain a knowledge of God aside from His Representative, whom the Word declares is “the express image of his person,” will need to become fools in their own estimation before they can be wise. It is impossible to gain a perfect knowledge of God from nature alone; for nature itself is imperfect. In its imperfection it cannot represent God, it cannot reveal the character of God in its moral perfection. But Christ came as a personal Saviour to the world. He represented a personal God. As a personal Saviour, He ascended on high; and He will come again as He ascended to heaven—a personal Saviour. He is the express image of the Father’s person. “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” ([The Review and Herald, November 8, 1898](#)).

Chapter 2

4 (Acts 5:31). Repentance the First Fruits of the Spirit's Working—Repentance for sin is the first fruits of the working of the Holy Spirit in the life. It is the only process by which infinite purity reflects the image of Christ in His redeemed subjects. In Christ all fullness dwells. Science that is not in harmony with Him is of no value. He teaches us to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. This knowledge is the highest science that any man can reach ([Manuscript 28, 1905](#)).

(John 14:26.) The Spirit Presents Truths of the Old and New Testaments—In bringing men to repentance, it is not the office work of the Holy Spirit to reveal new truths, but to present to the mind and urge upon the conscience the precious lessons which Christ has given in the Old and New Testaments ([Manuscript 32, 1900](#)).

[1069]

6. See [EGW comment on Galatians 6:7, 8](#).

24-29. See [EGW comment on Acts 15:1, 5](#).

Chapter 3

19 (Matthew 27:21; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Jude 15; Revelation 20:12, 13). The Tattered Shreds of Human Reasoning—The whole world stands condemned before the great moral standard of righteousness. In the great day of judgment every soul that has lived on the earth will receive sentence in accordance as to whether his deeds have been good or evil in the light of the law of God. Every mouth will be stopped as the cross with its dying Victim shall be presented, and its real bearing shall be seen by every mind that has been sin blinded and corrupted. Sinners will stand condemned before the cross, with its mysterious Victim bowing beneath the infinite burden of human transgression. How quickly will be swept away every subterfuge, every lying excuse! Human apostasy will appear in its heinous character. Men will see what their choice has been. They will then understand that they have chosen Barabbas instead of Christ, the Prince of Peace.

The mystery of the incarnation and the crucifixion will be plainly discerned; for it will be presented before the mind's eye, and every condemned soul will read what has been the character of his rejection of truth. All will understand that they have erred from the truth by receiving the misinterpretations and bewitching lies of Satan instead of "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." They read the announcement, "Thou, O man, hast chosen to stand under the banner of the great rebel, Satan, and in so doing thou hast destroyed thyself." Whatever may have been the endowment of talent, whatever may have been the supposed wisdom, the rejecter of truth has then no ability to turn unto God. The door is shut, as was the door of the ark in Noah's day.

The great men of earth will then understand that they have surrendered mind and heart to ensnaring philosophy which pleased the carnal heart. Hope and grace and every inducement had been held out by One who loved them, and gave His life for them, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,

but they refused the love of God. Their lofty opinions, their human reasonings, were extolled; they declared themselves sufficient in themselves to understand divine mysteries, and they thought their own powers of discrimination were strong enough to discern truth for themselves. They fell an easy prey to Satan's subtlety, for he presented before them specious errors in human philosophy, which has an infatuation for human minds. They turned from the Source of all wisdom, and worshiped intellect. The message and the messengers of God were criticized and discarded as beneath their human, lofty ideas. The invitations of mercy were made a jest, and they denied the divinity of Jesus Christ and derided the idea of His pre-existence before He assumed human nature. But the tattered shreds of human reasoning will be found to be only as ropes of sand in the great day of God ([The Signs of the Times, March 7, 1895](#)).

Wicked Will Feel Agony of Cross—Those who reject the mercy so freely proffered, will yet be made to know the worth of that which they have despised. They will feel the agony which Christ endured upon the cross to purchase redemption for all who would receive it. And they will then realize what they have lost—eternal life and the immortal inheritance ([The Review and Herald, September 4, 1883](#)).

(Matthew 7:23; 27:40, 42; Romans 14:11; 15; Revelation 1:7; 6:15-17.) Indescribable Confusion of the Wicked—When sinners are compelled to look upon Him who clothed His divinity with humanity, and who still wears this garb, their confusion is indescribable. The scales fall from their eyes, and they see that which before they would not see. They realize what they might have been had they received Christ, and improved the opportunities granted them. They see the law which they have spurned, exalted even as God's throne is exalted. They see God Himself giving reverence to His law.

What a scene that will be! No pen can describe it! The accumulated guilt of the world will be laid bare, and the voice of the Judge will be heard saying to the wicked, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

[1070]

Then those who pierced Christ will remember how they slighted His love and abused His compassion; how they chose in His stead Barabbas, a robber and murderer; how they crowned the Saviour

with thorns, and caused Him to be scourged and crucified; how, in the agony of His death on the cross, they taunted Him, saying, “Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.” “He saved others; himself he cannot save.” They will seem to hear again His voice of entreaty. Every tone of solicitude will vibrate as distinctly in their ears as when the Saviour spoke to them. Every act of insult and mockery done to Christ will be as fresh in their memory as when the satanic deeds were done.

They will call on the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. “The wrath of the Lamb”—One who ever showed Himself full of tenderness, patience, and long-suffering, who, having given Himself up as the sacrificial offering, was led as a lamb to the slaughter, to save sinners from the doom now falling upon them because they would not allow Him to take away their guilt ([The Review and Herald, June 18, 1901](#)).

19-28 (Galatians 2:16, 17; 3:10-13, 24). No Saving Properties in the Law—I would call on all who would win heaven, to take warning. Do not devote your precious probationary time to sewing together fig leaves to cover the nakedness which is the result of sin. As you look into the Lord’s great moral looking glass, His holy law, His standard of character, do not for a moment suppose that it can cleanse you. There are no saving properties in the law. It cannot pardon the transgressor. The penalty must be exacted. The Lord does not save sinners by abolishing His law, the foundation of His government in heaven and in earth. The punishment has been endured by the sinner’s substitute. Not that God is cruel and merciless, and Christ so merciful that He died on Calvary’s cross to abolish a law so arbitrary that it needed to be extinguished, crucified between two thieves. The throne of God must not bear one stain of crime, one taint of sin. In the councils of heaven, before the world was created, the Father and the Son covenanted together that if man proved disloyal to God, Christ, one with the Father, would take the place of the transgressor, and suffer the penalty of justice that must fall upon him ([Manuscript 145, 1897](#)).

(Romans 5:1.) “This Is Justification by Faith.”—As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ’s atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and

the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God's will, and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory.

Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety. The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: "This is My child. I relieve him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy—eternal life—because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son." Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness, stands faultless before God.

The sinner may err, but he is not cast off without mercy. His only hope, however, is repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Father's prerogative to forgive our transgressions and sins, because Christ has taken upon Himself our guilt and relieved us, imputing to us His own righteousness. His sacrifice satisfies fully the demands of justice.

Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God's boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly undeserving. He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins. Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal ([Manuscript 21, 1891](#)).

[1071]

A Sign to the World—Justification by faith in Christ will be made manifest in transformation of character. This is the sign to the world of the truth of the doctrines we profess. The daily evidence that we are a living church is seen in the fact that we are practicing the Word. A living testimony goes forth to the world in consistent Christian action.

It declares to a world apostatized that there is a people who believe that our safety is in clinging to the Bible. This testimony is in unmistakable distinction from that of the great apostate church,

which adopts human wisdom and authority in place of the wisdom and authority of God ([Letter 83, 1896](#)).

20. See [EGW comment on 1 John 3:4](#).

20-31 ([Galatians 6:14](#); [Ephesians 2:8, 9](#); [Titus 3:5](#); [Hebrews 7:25](#); [Revelation 22:17](#)). **With Humble Hearts Survey the Atonement**—Let no one take the limited, narrow position that any of the works of man can help in the least possible way to liquidate the debt of his transgression. This is a fatal deception. If you would understand it, you must cease haggling over your pet ideas, and with humble hearts survey the atonement.

This matter is so dimly comprehended that thousands upon thousands claiming to be sons of God are children of the wicked one, because they will depend on their own works. God always demanded good works, the law demands it, but because man placed himself in sin where his good works were valueless, Jesus' righteousness alone can avail. Christ is able to save to the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

All that man can possibly do toward his own salvation is to accept the invitation, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." No sin can be committed by man for which satisfaction has not been met on Calvary. Thus the cross, in earnest appeals, continually proffers to the sinner a thorough expiation ([Manuscript 50, 1900](#)).

24-26 (see [EGW comment on Romans 5:11](#)). **The Father Abundantly Satisfied**—The atonement that has been made for us by Christ is wholly and abundantly satisfactory to the Father. God can be just, and yet the justifier of those who believe ([Manuscript 28, 1905](#)).

([Romans 5:1](#).) Justification Means Complete Pardon—[[Romans 3:24-26](#) quoted.] Here the truth is laid out in plain lines. This mercy and goodness is wholly undeserved. The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God's forgiving grace.

There is nothing in faith that makes it our saviour. Faith cannot remove our guilt. Christ is the power of God unto salvation to all

them that believe. The justification comes through the merits of Jesus Christ. He has paid the price for the sinner's redemption. Yet it is only through faith in His blood that Jesus can justify the believer.

The sinner cannot depend upon his own good works as a means of justification. He must come to the point where he will renounce all his sin, and embrace one degree of light after another as it shines upon his pathway. He simply grasps by faith the free and ample provision made in the blood of Christ. He believes the promises of God, which through Christ are made unto him sanctification and righteousness and redemption. And if he follows Jesus, he will walk humbly in the light, rejoicing in the light and diffusing that light to others. Being justified by faith, he carries cheerfulness with him in his obedience in all his life. Peace with God is the result of what Christ is to him. The souls who are in subordination to God, who honor Him, and are doers of His Word, will receive divine enlightenment. In the precious Word of God there is purity and loftiness as well as beauty that, unless assisted by God, the highest powers of man cannot attain to ([The Signs of the Times, May 19, 1898](#)).

(Psalm 18:35; 85:10; Psalm 89:14; Revelation 4:3; see EGW comment on John 3:16.) The Mingling of Judgment and Mercy—As the bow in the cloud is formed by the union of the sunlight and the shower, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents the combined power of mercy and justice. It is not justice alone that is to be maintained; for this would eclipse the glory of the rainbow of promise above the throne; man could see only the penalty of the law. Were there no justice, no penalty, there would be no stability to the government of God.

[1072]

It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation full and complete. It is the blending of the two that leads us, as we view the world's Redeemer and the law of Jehovah, to exclaim, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." We know that the gospel is a perfect and complete system, revealing the immutability of the law of God. It inspires the heart with hope, and with love for God. Mercy invites us to enter through the gates into the city of God, and justice is sacrificed to accord to every obedient soul full privileges as a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King.

If we were defective in character, we could not pass the gates that mercy has opened to the obedient; for justice stands at the entrance, and demands holiness, purity, in all who would see God. Were justice extinct, and were it possible for divine mercy to open the gates to the whole race, irrespective of character, there would be a worse condition of disaffection and rebellion in heaven than before Satan was expelled. The peace, happiness, and harmony of heaven would be broken up. The change from earth to heaven will not change men's characters; the happiness of the redeemed in heaven results from the characters formed in this life, after the image of Christ. The saints in heaven will first have been saints on earth.

The salvation that Christ made such a sacrifice to gain for man, is that which is alone of value, that which saves from sin—the cause of all the misery and woe in our world. Mercy extended to the sinner is constantly drawing him to Jesus. If he responds, coming in penitence with confession, in faith laying hold of the hope set before him in the gospel, God will not despise the broken and contrite heart. Thus the law of God is not weakened, but the power of sin is broken, and the scepter of mercy is extended to the penitent sinner ([Letter 1f, 1890](#)).

24-28 (see [EGW comment on Galatians 2:16](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:3](#)). **Speculations About Righteousness by Faith**—Many commit the error of trying to define minutely the fine points of distinction between justification and sanctification. Into the definitions of these two terms they often bring their own ideas and speculations. Why try to be more minute than is Inspiration on the vital question of righteousness by faith? Why try to work out every minute point, as if the salvation of the soul depended upon all having exactly your understanding of this matter? All cannot see in the same line of vision ([Manuscript 21, 1891](#)).

25. See [EGW comment on Romans 7:12](#).

27. See [EGW comment on Ephesians 2:8, 9](#).

28. See [EGW comment on Romans 4:3, 4](#).

31 ([Romans 6:15](#); [1 Samuel 15:22](#); [Revelation 22:14](#); see [EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 3:7-18](#); [Ephesians 2:14-16](#); [Revelation 2:6](#)). **God's Standard Has Not Changed**—The gospel of good news was not to be interpreted as allowing men to live in continued rebellion against God by transgressing His just and holy

law. Why cannot those who claim to understand the Scriptures, see that God's requirement under grace is just the same He made in Eden—perfect obedience to His law. In the judgment, God will ask those who profess to be Christians, Why did you claim to believe in My Son, and continue to transgress My law? Who required this at your hands—to trample upon My rules of righteousness? “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” The gospel of the New Testament is not the Old Testament standard lowered to meet the sinner and save him in his sins. God requires of all His subjects obedience, entire obedience to all His commandments. He demands now as ever perfect righteousness as the only title to heaven. Christ is our hope and our refuge. His righteousness is imputed only to the obedient. Let us accept it through faith, that the Father shall find in us no sin. But those who have trampled on the holy law will have no right to claim that righteousness. O that we might view the immensity of the plan of salvation as obedient children to all God's requirements, believing that we have peace with God through Jesus Christ, our atoning sacrifice ([The Review and Herald, September 21, 1886](#))! [1073]

(1 John 2:4.) Faith Manifested by Works of Obedience—God requires at this time just what He required of the holy pair in Eden, perfect obedience to His requirements. His law remains the same in all ages. The great standard of righteousness presented in the Old Testament is not lowered in the New. It is not the work of the gospel to weaken the claims of God's holy law, but to bring men up where they can keep its precepts.

The faith in Christ which saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. “Believe, believe,” is their cry; “only believe in Christ, and you will be saved. It is all you have to do.” While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God. Faith is manifested by works. And the apostle John declares, “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar” ([The Review and Herald, October 5, 1886](#)).

Disconnect the Law and the Gospel?—The enemy has ever labored to disconnect the law and the gospel. They go hand in hand ([Manuscript 11, 1893](#)).

We honor both the Father and the Son when we talk about the law. The Father gave us the law, and the Son died to magnify it and make it honorable ([Manuscript 5, 1885](#)).

It is impossible for us to exalt the law of Jehovah unless we take hold of the righteousness of Jesus Christ ([Manuscript 5, 1889](#)).

The law of Jehovah is the tree, the gospel is the fragrant blossoms and fruit which it bears ([Letter 119, 1897](#)).

Chapter 4

3-5 (chs. 3:28; 5:1; Ephesians 2:8). Faith Lays Hold of Christ's Righteousness—Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ's perfect obedience instead of the sinner's transgression and defection. When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then according to His unfulfilling promises, God pardons his sin and justifies him freely. The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his substitute and surety, has died for him, is his atonement and righteousness.

“Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Righteousness is obedience to the law. The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it. The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner's account. Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son. This is how faith is accounted righteousness ([The Review and Herald, November 4, 1890](#)).

Chapter 5

1 (chs [3:19-28](#); [4:3-5](#); [Galatians 2:16](#); [Hebrews 11:1](#); see [EGW comment on Galatians 5:6](#)). **Faith the Means, Not the End**—Faith is not the ground of our salvation, but it is the great blessing—the eye that sees, the ear that hears, the feet that run, the hand that grasps. It is the means, not the end. If Christ gave His life to save sinners, why shall I not take that blessing? My faith grasps it, and thus my faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. Thus resting and believing, I have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ ([Letter 329a, 1905](#)).

(2 Corinthians 5:7.) Faith and Feeling Distinct—Faith and feeling are as distinct as the east is from the west. Faith is not dependent on feeling. We must earnestly cry to God in faith, feeling or no feeling, and then live our prayers. Our assurance and evidence is God's word, and after we have asked we must believe without doubting. I praise Thee, O God, I praise Thee. Thou hast not failed me in the performance of Thy word. Thou has revealed Thyself unto me, and I am Thine to do Thy will ([Letter 7, 1892](#)).

[1074]

Simplicity and Power of Faith—Faith is simple in its operation and powerful in its results. Many professed Christians, who have a knowledge of the sacred Word, and believe its truth, fail in the childlike trust that is essential to the religion of Jesus. They do not reach out with that peculiar touch that brings the virtue of healing to the soul ([Redemption: The Miracles of Christ, page 97](#)).

11 (Romans 3:24-26). A Divine Remedy for Sin—The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters ([Letter 406, 1906](#)).

12-19 (Matthew 4:1-11; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15). Strength in Cooperating With God—[[Romans 5:12, 18, 19](#) quoted.] The apostle contrasts the

disobedience of Adam and the full, entire obedience of Christ. Think of what Christ's obedience means to us! It means that in His strength we too may obey. Christ was a human being. He served His heavenly Father with all the strength of His human nature. He has a twofold nature, at once human and divine. He is both God and man.

Christ came to this world to show us what God can do and what we can do in cooperation with God. In human flesh He went into the wilderness to be tempted by the enemy. He knows what it is to hunger and thirst. He knows the weakness and the infirmities of the flesh. He was tempted in all points like as we are tempted.

Our ransom has been paid by our Saviour. No one need be enslaved by Satan. Christ stands before us as our divine example, our all-powerful Helper. We have been bought with a price that it is impossible to compute. Who can measure the goodness and mercy of redeeming love ([Manuscript 76, 1903](#))?

Christ a Free Moral Agent—The second Adam was a free moral agent, held responsible for His conduct. Surrounded by intensely subtle and misleading influences, He was much less favorably situated than was the first Adam to lead a sinless life. Yet in the midst of sinners He resisted every temptation to sin, and maintained His innocency. He was ever sinless ([The Southern Work, September 29, 1903](#)).

Man on Vantage Ground With God—As related to the first Adam, men receive from him nothing but guilt and the sentence of death. But Christ steps in and passes over the ground where Adam fell, enduring every test in man's behalf. He redeems Adam's disgraceful failure and fall by coming forth from the trial untarnished. This places man on vantage ground with God. It places him where, through accepting Christ as his Saviour, he becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Thus he becomes connected with God and Christ ([Letter 68, 1899](#)).

Chapter 6

1-4 (Matthew 28:19; 2 Peter 1:2, 5-7). Baptism a Mutual Pledge—In baptism we are given to the Lord as a vessel to be used. Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Self is by profession dead to a life of sin. The waters cover the candidate, and in the presence of the whole heavenly universe the mutual pledge is made. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, man is laid in his watery grave, buried with Christ in baptism, and raised from the water to live the new life of loyalty to God. The three great powers in heaven are witnesses; they are invisible but present.

In the first chapter of Second Peter is presented the progressive work in the Christian life. The whole chapter is a lesson of deep importance. If man, in acquiring the Christian graces, works on the plan of addition, God has pledged Himself to work in his behalf upon the plan of multiplication. “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.” The work is laid out before every soul that has acknowledged his faith in Jesus Christ by baptism, and has become a receiver of the pledge from the three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (*Manuscript 57, 1900*).

Faithfulness to Our Baptismal Vows—Faithfulness to our baptismal vows gives the heart preparation needful for saving souls (*The Review and Herald, May 26, 1904*).

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(2 Corinthians 6:17, 18; 7:1; Colossians 3:1.) Imprint of God Received by Baptism—Christ made baptism the entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Those who receive the ordinance of baptism thereby make a public declaration that they have renounced the world, and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King.

Those who do this are to make all worldly considerations secondary to their new relations. Publicly they have declared that they

will no longer live in pride and self-indulgence. Christ enjoins those who receive this ordinance to remember that they are bound by a solemn covenant to live to the Lord. They are to use for Him all their entrusted capabilities, never losing the realization that they bear God's sign of obedience to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, that they are subjects of Christ's kingdom, partakers of the divine nature. They are to surrender all they have and are to God, employing all their gifts to His name's glory.

Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have accepted the invitation, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Let those who received the imprint of God by baptism heed these words, remembering that upon them the Lord has placed His signature, declaring them to be His sons and daughters.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, powers infinite and omniscient, receive those who truly enter into covenant relation with God. They are present at every baptism, to receive the candidates who have renounced the world and have received Christ into the soul temple. These candidates have entered into the family of God, and their names are inscribed in the Lamb's book of life ([Manuscript 27a, 1900](#)).

A Door of Communication With Heaven—At our baptism we pledged ourselves to break all connection with Satan and his agencies, and to put heart and mind and soul into the work of extending the kingdom of God. All heaven is working for this object. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are pledged to cooperate with sanctified human instrumentalities. If we are true to our vow, there is opened to us a door of communication with heaven—a door that no human hand or satanic agency can close ([The Review and Herald, May 17, 1906](#)).

Many Buried Alive—The new birth is a rare experience in this age of the world. This is the reason why there are so many perplexities in the churches. Many, so many, who assume the name of Christ are unsanctified and unholy. They have been baptized, but they were buried alive. Self did not die, and therefore they did not rise to newness of life in Christ ([Manuscript 148, 1897](#)).

(2 Corinthians 6:17.) Baptism Not Graduation—Every opportunity, every advantage, every privilege, has been given to us to gain a rich Christian experience; but we do not learn everything all at once. There must be a growth. Many, having learned a little in school, think they are ready to graduate. They think they know about all that is worth knowing. We are not to think that as soon as we are baptized we are ready to graduate from the school of Christ. When we have accepted Christ, and in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit have pledged ourselves to serve God, the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit—the three dignitaries and powers of heaven—pledge themselves that every facility shall be given to us if we carry out our baptismal vows to “come out from among them, and be ... separate, ... and touch not the unclean thing.” When we are true to our vows, He says, “I will receive you” ([Manuscript 85, 1901](#)).

3, 4. See [EGW comment on Deuteronomy 26:18](#).

3-5. See [EGW comment on Mark 16:1, 2](#).

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15. See [EGW comment on Romans 3:31](#).

19, 22 (1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:7; Hebrews 12:14). Wholeness to God—Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others ([Manuscript 33, 1911](#)).

23. A Voice Heard in Heaven—Transgression placed the whole world in jeopardy, under the death sentence. But in heaven there was heard a voice saying, “I have found a ransom” ([Letter 22, 1900](#)).

Chapter 7

7. See [EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 3:7-18](#).

7-9 (Philippians 3:5, 6; James 1:23-25). Paul's Marvelous Change—Paul says that “as touching the law”—as far as outward acts were concerned—he was “blameless”, but when the spiritual character of the law was discerned, when he looked into the holy mirror, he saw himself a sinner. Judged by a human standard, he had abstained from sin, but when he looked into the depths of God's law, and saw himself as God saw him, he bowed in humiliation, and confessed his guilt. He did not go away from the mirror and forget what manner of man he was, but he exercised genuine repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He was washed, he was cleansed. He says, “I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”

Sin then appeared in its true hideousness, and his self-esteem was gone. He became humble. He no longer ascribed goodness and merit to himself. He ceased to think more highly of himself than he ought, and he ascribed all the glory to God. He was no longer ambitious for greatness. He ceased to want to avenge himself, and was no longer sensitive to reproach, neglect, or contempt. He no longer sought earthly alliance, station, or honor. He did not pull others down to uplift himself. He became gentle, condescending, meek and lowly of heart, because he had learned his lesson in the school of Christ. He talked of Jesus and His matchless love, and grew more and more into His image. He bent his whole energy to win souls to Christ. When trial came upon him because of his unselfish labor for souls, he bowed in prayer, and his love for them increased. His life was hid with Christ in God, and he loved Jesus with all the ardor of his nature. Every church was dear to him; every church member was a person of interest to him; for he looked upon

every soul as the purchase of the blood of Christ ([The Review and Herald, July 22, 1890](#)).

9. God’s Law Did Not Die—The apostle Paul, in relating his experience, presents an important truth concerning the work to be wrought in conversion. He says, “I was alive without the law once”—he felt no condemnation; “but when the commandment came,” when the law of God was urged upon his conscience, “sin revived, and I died.” Then he saw himself a sinner, condemned by the divine law. Mark, it was Paul, and not the law, that died ([The Spirit of Prophecy 4:297](#)).

12 (Romans 3:25; Ephesians 1:7). The Law Holds Its Dignity—Through the plan of salvation the law holds its dignity in condemning the sinner, and the sinner can be saved through the propitiation of Christ for our sins, “in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” The law is not changed in any particular to meet man in his fallen condition. It remains what it ever has been—holy, just, and good ([The Review and Herald, May 23, 1899](#)).

Chapter 8

11 ([Matthew 26:39](#); [Luke 22:42, 43](#); see [EGW comment on 1 Corinthians 15:20, 40-52](#)). **A Cup of Blessing**—“But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” O how precious are these words to every bereaved soul! Christ is our Guide and Comforter, who comforts us in all our tribulations. When He gives us a bitter draught to drink, He also holds a cup of blessing to our lips. He fills the heart with submission, with joy and peace in believing, and enables us to say submissively, Not my will, but Thy will, O Lord, be done ([Letter 65a, 1894](#)).

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13. See [EGW comment on 1 Corinthians 9:24-27](#).

15-21 ([1 Timothy 1:9, 10](#); [1:22-25](#); see [EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 3:6-9](#)). **Not Obedient, but Transgressors, Under Bondage**—Paul in his Epistle to Timothy describes the very men who are under the bondage of the law. They are the transgressors of the law. He names them lawless, disobedient, sinners, unholy, profane, murderers, adulterers, liars, and all who depart from sound doctrine. [1 Timothy 1:9, 10](#).

The law of God is the mirror to show man the defects in his character. But it is not pleasant to those who take pleasure in unrighteousness to see their moral deformity. They do not prize this faithful mirror, because it reveals to them their sins. Therefore, instead of instituting a war against their carnal minds, they war against the true and faithful mirror, given them by Jehovah for the very purpose that they may not be deceived, but that they may have revealed to them the defects in their character.

Should the discovery of these defects lead them to hate the mirror, or to hate themselves? Should they put away the mirror which discovers these defects? No; the sins which they cherish, which the faithful mirror shows them as existing in their characters, will close before them the portals of heaven, unless they are put

away, and they become perfect before God ([The Review and Herald, March 8, 1870](#)).

(Galatians 4:24-31; 5:1.) Obedience Not Bondage—No one who believes in Jesus Christ is under bondage to the law of God; for His law is a law of life, not of death, to those who obey its precepts. All who comprehend the spirituality of the law, all who realize its power as a detector of sin, are in just as helpless a condition as is Satan himself, unless they accept the atonement provided for them in the remedial sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who is our atonement—at-one-ment with God.

Through faith in Christ obedience to every principle of the law is made possible ([Manuscript 122, 1901](#)).

(Galatians 3:6-9.) The Bondage of Legal Religion—The spirit of bondage is engendered by seeking to live in accordance with legal religion, through striving to fulfill the claims of the law in our own strength. There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus. The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us today, through which we have hope. Abraham looked unto Jesus, who is also the Author and the Finisher of our faith ([The Youth's Instructor, September 22, 1892](#)).

17 (Galatians 4:7). Privileges for God's Obedient Children—God loves His obedient children. He has a kingdom prepared, not for disloyal subjects, but for His children whom He has tested and tried in a world marred and corrupted by sin. As obedient children, we have the privilege of relationship with God. "If children," He says, "then heirs" to an immortal inheritance.... Christ and His people are one ([Letter 119, 1897](#)).

18. See [EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 4:17, 18](#).

22. See [EGW comment on Genesis 3:17, 18](#).

26. See [EGW comment on Matthew 3:13-17](#).

26, 34 (Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 7:24-28; 8:1, 2; Hebrews 9:24; 1 John 2:1; Revelation 8:3, 4; see EGW comment on Acts 1:11; Hebrews 7:25). Intercession of Christ and His Spirit—Christ Jesus is represented as continually standing at the altar, momentarily offering up the sacrifice for the sins of the world. He is a minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. The typical shadows of the Jewish tabernacle no longer pos-

sess any virtue. A daily and yearly typical atonement is no longer to be made, but the atoning sacrifice through a mediator is essential because of the constant commission of sin. Jesus is officiating in the presence of God, offering up His shed blood, as it had been a lamb slain. Jesus presents the oblation offered for every offense and every shortcoming of the sinner.

Christ, our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit are constantly interceding in man's behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit striking the cords of the soul in holy memories, [1078] awakening the music of the heart.

The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary; but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor who is at God's right hand presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned.

O, that all may see that everything in obedience, in penitence, in praise and thanksgiving must be placed upon the glowing fire of the righteousness of Christ. The fragrance of this righteousness ascends like a cloud around the mercy seat ([Manuscript 50, 1900](#)).

29 (2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:10). Moral Image of God Restored Through Christ—Though the moral image of God was almost obliterated by the sin of Adam, through the merits and power of Jesus it may be renewed. Man may stand with the moral image of God in his character; for Jesus will give it to him. Unless

the moral image of God is seen in man, he can never enter the city of God as a conqueror ([The Review and Herald, June 10, 1890](#)).

29, 30. See [EGW comment on Ephesians 1:4, 5, 11](#).

34 ([Hebrews 7:25](#); [2:1](#); see [EGW comment on Matthew 28:18](#)). **Kept by Christ's Intercessions**—Everyone who will break from the slavery and service of Satan, and will stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel will be kept by Christ's intercessions. Christ, as our Mediator, at the right hand of the Father, ever keeps us in view, for it is as necessary that He should keep us by His intercessions as that He should redeem us with His blood. If He lets go His hold of us for one moment, Satan stands ready to destroy. Those purchased by His blood, He now keeps by His intercession ([Manuscript 73, 1893](#)).

([Ephesians 5:2](#); [Hebrews 7:25-27](#); [9:23-26](#); [Hebrews 13:15](#); [Revelation 8:3, 4](#).) **Constant Need of Christ's Intercession**—Christ was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. In the service of the Jewish priesthood we are continually reminded of the sacrifice and intercession of Christ. All who come to Christ today are to remember that His merit is the incense that mingles with the prayers of those who repent of their sins and receive pardon and mercy and grace. Our need of Christ's intercession is constant. Day by day, morning and evening, the humble heart needs to offer up prayers to which will be returned answers of grace and peace and joy. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifice God is well pleased" ([Manuscript 14, 1901](#)).

([John 14:6](#); [1 Timothy 2:5](#); [Hebrews 9:11-14](#).) **Clothed With His Priestly Vestments**—Christ is the connecting link between God and man. He has promised His personal intercession by employing His name. He places the whole virtue of His righteousness on the side of the suppliant. Christ pleads for man, and man, in need of divine help, pleads for himself in the presence of God, using the power of the influence of the One who gave His life for the world. As we acknowledge before God our appreciation of Christ's merits, fragrance is given to our intercessions. Oh, who can value this great mercy and love! As we approach God through the virtue of Christ's merits, we are clothed with His priestly vestments. He places us

close by His side, encircling us with His human arm, while with His divine arm He grasps the throne of the Infinite. He puts His merits, as sweet incense, in a censer in our hands, in order to encourage our petitions. He promises to hear and answer our supplications.

Yes, Christ has become the medium of prayer between man and God. He also has become the medium of blessing between God and man. He has combined divinity and humanity. Men are to be co-laborers with God in the salvation of their own souls, and then make earnest, persevering, untiring efforts to save those who are ready to perish ([Letter 22, 1898](#)).

[1079]

Chapter 9

5. See [EGW comment on John 1:1-3](#).

Chapter 10

5. See [EGW comment on Deuteronomy 6:6-9](#).

Chapter 11

Jews Not to Be Ignored—The work for the Jews, as outlined in the eleventh chapter of Romans, is a work that is to be treated with special wisdom. It is a work that must not be ignored. The wisdom of God must come to our people. In all wisdom and righteousness we must clear the King's highway. The Jews are to be given every opportunity of coming to the light ([Letter 96, 1910](#)).

4-6 (Ephesians 1:4, 5, 11; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:10). Complying With Conditions of Election—If we comply with the conditions the Lord has made, we shall secure our election to salvation. Perfect obedience to His commandments is the evidence that we love God, and are not hardened in sin.

Christ has a church in every age. There are in the church those who are not made any better by their connection with it. They themselves break the terms of their election. Obedience to the commandments of God gives us a right to the privileges of His church ([Manuscript 166, 1898](#)).

5 (John 15:4). The Only Election in the Bible—[[John 15:4](#) quoted.] Now here are the most precious jewels of truth for every individual soul of us. Here is the only election in the Bible, and you can prove yourself elected of Christ by being faithful; you can prove yourself the chosen of Christ by abiding in the vine ([Manuscript 43, 1894](#)).

33 (Job 11:7; 1 Corinthians 2:7-14; see EGW comment on Job 38; 1 Corinthians 13:12). A Boundary Where Man's Resources Cease—It is the duty and privilege of all to use reason as far as man's finite faculties can go; but there is a boundary where man's resources must cease. There are many things that can never be reasoned out by the strongest intellect or discerned by the most penetrating mind. Philosophy cannot determine the ways and works of God; the human mind cannot measure infinity.

Jehovah is the fountain of all wisdom, of all truth, of all knowledge. There are high attainments that man can reach in this life

through the wisdom that God imparts; but there is an infinity beyond that will be the study and the joy of the saints throughout eternal ages. Man can now only linger upon the borders of that vast expanse, and let imagination take its flight. Finite man cannot fathom the deep things of God; for spiritual things are spiritually discerned. The human mind cannot comprehend the wisdom and power of God ([The Review and Herald, December 29, 1896](#)).

(John 17:3.) Avoiding Guesswork in the Quest for God—Human talent and human conjecture have tried by searching to find out God. But guesswork has proved itself to be guesswork. Man cannot by searching find out God. This problem has not been given to human beings. All that man needs to know and can know of God has been revealed in His Word and in the life of His Son, the great Teacher.

Let men remember that they have a Ruler in the heavens, a God who will not be trifled with. He who puts his reason to the stretch in an effort to exalt himself and to delineate God, will find that he might far better have stood as a humble suppliant before God, confessing himself to be only an erring human being.

God cannot be understood by men. His ways and works are past finding out. In regard to the revelations that He has made of Himself in His Word, we may talk, but other than this, let us say of Him, Thou art God, and Thy ways are past finding out.

There is a knowledge of God and of Christ which all who are saved must have. “This is life eternal,” Christ said, “that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

The question for us to study is, What is truth—the truth for this time, which is to be cherished, loved, honored, and obeyed? The devotees of science have been defeated and disheartened in their effort to find out God. What they need to inquire is, What is truth ([Manuscript 124, 1903](#))?

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Chapter 12

A Sermon Written for Our Instruction—A study of the twelfth chapter of Romans would be of profit to us. It is a sermon by the apostle Paul, written for our instruction ([Manuscript 50, 1903](#)).

1. See [EGW comment on Exodus 20:1-17](#).

1, 2 (Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1-4). God's Works Are His Teachers—[[Romans 12:1, 2](#) quoted.] What does God accomplish, and what does He demand of us individually in the work of saving ourselves? God works in us by the light of His truth, which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. The Scriptures refer to the works of God as they are revealed in our world, as so many teachers whose voices have gone out through the whole earth, proclaiming the attributes of God. The mind must see the truth, and the will bend to its claims, when it is presented to us based upon scriptural evidence ([Manuscript 49, 1898](#)).

2 (1 Corinthians 4:9; Philippians 2:12, 13). Good Fruits the Proof—Man, fallen man, may be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that he can “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” How does he prove this? By the Holy Spirit taking possession of his mind, spirit, heart, and character. Where does the proving come in? “We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” A real work is wrought by the Holy Spirit upon the human character, and its fruits are seen.

Just as a good tree will bear good fruit, so will the tree that is actually planted in the Lord's garden produce good fruit unto eternal life. Besetting sins are overcome; evil thoughts are not allowed in the mind; evil habits are purged from the soul temple. The tendencies which have been biased in a wrong direction are turned in a right direction. Wrong dispositions and feelings are changed, new principles of action supplied, and there is a new standard of character. Holy tempers and sanctified emotions are now the fruit

borne upon the Christian tree. An entire transformation has taken place. This is the work to be wrought.

We see by experience that in our own human strength, resolutions and purposes are of no avail. Must we, then, give up our determined efforts? No; although our experience testifies that we cannot possibly do this work ourselves, help has been laid upon One who is mighty to do it for us. But the only way we can secure the help of God is to put ourselves wholly in His hands, and trust Him to work for us. As we lay hold of Him by faith, He does the work. The believer can only trust. As God works, we can work, trusting in Him and doing His will ([Manuscript 1a, 1890](#)).

3. Seeds of Self-glory Produce a Sure Harvest—[[Romans 12:3, 10, 9](#) quoted.] ... The forms of unbelief are varied, for Satan watches every opportunity to crowd in some of his attributes. There is in the natural heart a tendency to be exalted or puffed up if success attends the efforts put forth. But self-exaltation can find no place in the work of God. Whatever your intelligence, however earnestly and zealously you may labor, unless you put away your own tendencies to pride, and submit to be guided by the Spirit of God, you will be on losing ground.

Spiritual death in the soul is evidenced by spiritual pride and a crippled experience; those who have such an experience seldom make straight paths for their feet. If pride is nourished, the very qualities of the mind which grace, if received, would make a blessing, become contaminated. The very victories which would have been a savor of life unto life, if the glory had been given to God, become tarnished by self-glory. These may seem to be little things, unworthy of notice, but the seed thus scattered brings forth a sure harvest. It is these little sins, so common that they are often unnoticed, that Satan uses in his service ([Manuscript 47, 1896](#)).

(Hebrews 11:1.) Faith Is God's Gift—Faith earns nothing for us; it is the gift of God, which we may receive and cherish by making Christ our personal Saviour. We may refuse the gift, and talk doubts, and become unhappy by cherishing unbelief. But this will grow into an impassable barrier, shutting us away from the Spirit of God and closing our hearts to His light and His love ([The Signs of the Times, May 19, 1898](#)).

[1081]

11. See [EGW comment on Mark 12:30](#).

12. See [EGW comment on Nehemiah 2:4](#).

17 (2 Corinthians 8:21; 1 Peter 2:12). The Honest Are His Jewels Forever—Truthfulness and frankness should be ever cherished by all who claim to be followers of Christ. God and the right should be the motto. Deal honestly and righteously in this present evil world. Some will be honest when they see that honesty will not endanger their worldly interests, but all who act from this principle will have their names blotted out of the book of life.

Strict honesty must be cultivated. We can go through the world but once; we cannot come back to rectify any mistakes; therefore every move made should be with godly fear and careful consideration. Honesty and policy will not harmonize; either policy will be subdued, and truth and honesty hold the lines of control, or policy will take the lines, and honesty cease to direct. Both cannot act together; they can never be in agreement. When God makes up His jewels, the true, the frank, the honest, will be His chosen ones, His treasures. Angels are preparing crowns for such, and light from the throne of God will be reflected in its splendor from these star-gemmed diadems ([The Review and Herald, December 29, 1896](#)).

19 (Psalm 119:126; Luke 18:1-7; Revelation 6:9). Protector and Avenger—When the defiance of God’s law is almost universal, when His people are pressed in affliction by their fellow men, God will interpose. Then will the voice be heard from the graves of martyrs, represented by the souls that John saw slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, which they held—then the prayer will ascend from every true child of God: “It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law.”

The fervent prayers of His people will be answered; for God loves to have His people seek Him with all the heart, and depend upon Him as their deliverer. He will be sought unto to do these things for His people, and He will arise as their protector and avenger. “Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him” ([The Review and Herald, December 21, 1897](#))?

Chapter 13

1. God, the Ruler of All Nations—Who, then, is to be regarded as the Ruler of the nations?—The Lord God Omnipotent. All kings, all rulers, all nations, are His, under His rule and government ([Manuscript 119, 1903](#)).

1-7. Rulers Are God's Servants—One of the most deplorable things upon the earth is the fact that there are passionate governors and unjust judges. They forget that they are under the authority of the great Governor, the all-wise God, and that He is above every ruler, prince, governor, or king.

Rulers are God's servants, and they are to serve their time as His apprentices. It is for their good that they faithfully follow the plain "Thus saith the Lord," keeping the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. They are to exercise their powers without partiality and without hypocrisy, refusing to be bought or sold, scorning all bribes, and standing in moral independence and dignity before God. They are not to connive at one act of dishonesty or injustice. They are not to do a base, unjust action themselves, nor to sustain others in acts of oppression. Wise rulers will not permit the people to be oppressed because of the envy and jealousy of those who disregard the law of God.... All need to keep eternity in view, and not to act in such a way that God cannot ratify their judgment in the courts of heaven ([The Review and Herald, October 1, 1895](#)).

14. No Doubtful Piety Among True Believers—Sincere Christians have no doubtful piety. They have put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and have made no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. They are constantly looking to Jesus for His orders, as a servant looks to His master, or as a maid looks to her mistress. Wheresoever God's providence may lead, they stand ready to go. They take no glory to themselves. They do not call anything they have—learning, talents, property—their own, but regard themselves as only stewards of the manifold grace of Christ, and servants to the church for Christ's sake. These are messengers of the Lord, a light amid the

darkness. Their hearts throb in unison with the great heart of Christ ([Manuscript 1a, 1890](#)).

Chapter 14

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10. See [EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 5:10](#).
11. See [EGW comment on Romans 3:19](#).

Chapter 16

25 (Ephesians 3:9-11; Colossians 1:26, 27; see EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 12:1-4). **The Eternal Purposes of God**—God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make His purposes to fit circumstances, but He allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but He knew that such a condition would exist. The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven—this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages. And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity (*The Signs of the Times*, March 25, 1897).

(Genesis 3:15, Ephesians 3:9-11; Colossians 1:26, 27; see EGW comment on Jeremiah 23:28.) **The Mystery Hid for Eternal Ages**—The incarnation of Christ is a mystery. The union of divinity with humanity is a mystery indeed, hidden with God, “even the mystery which hath been hid from ages.” It was kept in eternal silence by Jehovah, and was first revealed in Eden, by the prophecy that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head, and that he should bruise His heel.

To present to the world this mystery that God kept in silence for eternal ages before the world was created, before man was created, was the part that Christ was to act in the work He entered upon when He came to this earth. And this wonderful mystery, the incarnation of Christ and the atonement that He made, must be declared to every son and daughter of Adam.... His sufferings perfectly fulfilled the claims of the law of God (*The Signs of the Times*, January 30, 1912).

(1 Timothy 3:16.) **Mystery of All Mysteries**—The incarnation of Christ is the mystery of all mysteries (*Letter 276*, 1904).

* * * * *

1 Corinthians

Chapters 1-3

Lessons for Every Church—The third chapter of First Corinthians should be read with careful and prayerful consideration by every church member. The first and second chapters of this epistle prepare the way for the third, and in this are lessons for every church in our world. The cause of their difficulties is plainly revealed ([Manuscript 74, 1899](#)).

Chapter 1

1. See [EGW comment on 1 Corinthians 9:13-18](#).

1-8. Guard the Church Against Deception—The instruction in this epistle is addressed to the church of God at Corinth, and directed to be sent to every place where there were companies of saints who had faith in Jesus Christ. As members of the church of Christ, they are said to be “sanctified in Christ Jesus,” and “called to be saints.” By baptism they pledged themselves to a ministry of good works in seeking to save others who knew not the truth.

The church at Corinth was largely made up of Gentiles. Paul had labored earnestly among them, and had brought them to a knowledge of the truth. But after Paul had left them, false teachers had arisen, who had questioned the apostleship and ministry of Paul. They spoke contemptuously of him, and tried to make comparisons between themselves and him that would belittle him in the eyes of the church.

Paul did not seek to exalt himself. But when falsehoods threatened to destroy the effects of his ministry, faithfulness to his mission made it necessary for him to honor God by vindicating his character and magnifying his office. He claims to have a divine mission—that he is “called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.”

Paul had been called to his work by the Prince of life. While Paul had been engaged in the work of cruelly persecuting the followers of Christ, the Saviour had appeared to him and called him to be an apostle to the Gentiles. As an apostle of our Lord, he felt a sacred responsibility for the welfare of the church in Corinth. Under his administration they had not only received but they had taught the truth to others. They had been so enriched as to come behind in no gift. They had been brought into near and dear relation to Christ.

Paul could not, by silence, allow himself to be driven from the field by false teachers—teachers who would introduce false sentiments and theories that might lead honest souls away from the truth. The churches must be guarded, and warned against deception.

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Christ gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, that He might purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. His church must be kept free from all false doctrine ([Manuscript 46, 1905](#)).

10. Unity in Diversity—The strength of God’s people lies in their union with Him through His only-begotten Son, and their union with one another. There are no two leaves of a tree precisely alike; neither do all minds run in the same direction. But while this is so, there may be unity in diversity. Christ is our root, and all who are grafted into this root will bear the fruit which Christ bore. They will reveal the fragrance of His character in the talent of speech, in the cultivation of hospitality, of kindness, of Christian courtesy and heavenly politeness.

Look at the flowers in a carpet, and notice the different colored threads. All are not pink, all are not green, all are not blue. A variety of colors are woven together to perfect the pattern. So it is in the design of God. He has a purpose in placing us where we must learn to live as individuals. We are not all fitted to do the same kind of work, but each man’s work is designed by God to help make up His plan ([The Review and Herald, July 4, 1899](#)).

10-13. See [EGW comment on Galatians 5:1, 2](#).

13. Christ the Uniting Stone—Paul asks, “Is Christ divided?” Have we not one spiritual Head? Christ has been the uniting stone, the chief cornerstone, in all ages. The patriarchs, the Levitical priesthood, and Christians of today, all have their center in Him. He is all and in all ([The Review and Herald, January 3, 1899](#)).

21. See [EGW comment on Romans 1:20-25](#).

25-29. God Measures Not by Man’s Standard—Because of the pride and ambition of the children of men, God has chosen to perform His mighty works by the most simple and humble means. It is not the men whom the world honors as great, talented, or brilliant, that God selects. He chooses those who will work in meekness and simplicity, acknowledging Him as their leader and their source of strength. He would have us make Him our protector and our guide in all the duties and affairs of life....

The Majesty of heaven works by whom He will. His providence sometimes selects the humblest instruments to do the greatest work, for His power is revealed through the weakness of men. We have

our standard of reckoning, and by it we pronounce one thing great, and another small; but God estimates not according to the standard of men; He does not graduate His scale by theirs. We are not to suppose that what is great to us must be great to God, and what is small to us must be small to Him ([The Signs of the Times, July 14, 1881](#)).

Chapter 2

1-3. Be Afraid of Self—The apostle Paul could meet eloquence with eloquence, logic with logic; he could intelligently enter into all controversies. But was he satisfied with this worldly knowledge? He writes: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

Here is a very important lesson. We need to understand our whereabouts. We need to understand that the highest education ever given to mortals develops a spirit of humility, for it reveals how much more there is yet to learn.

[1084] The more you learn, the more you will see the necessity of putting your whole mind and interest into learning for Christ’s sake. Why are you learning? Are you acquiring knowledge so as to become intelligent in the truth? If that is your object, be assured that you will hide self in Jesus Christ.

“And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.” Paul was a very great teacher; yet he felt that without the Spirit of God working with him, all the education he might obtain would be of little account. We need to have this same experience; we need to be afraid of ourselves. We need individually to sit at the feet of Jesus, and listen to His words of instruction ([Manuscript 84, 1901](#)).

1-4. See [EGW comment on Acts 17:34](#).

1-5 ([Acts 9:3-6; 22:3, 4](#)). **Instruction for the Church Today**— [[1 Corinthians 2:1-5](#) quoted.] Paul was not an unlearned man, but the preaching of Christ was a new gospel to him. It was a work entirely different from that he had engaged in when he hunted the believers from place to place and persecuted them even “unto the death.” But Christ had revealed Himself to Paul in a remarkable manner at his conversion. At the gate of Damascus the vision of the Crucified

One changed the whole current of his life. The persecutor became a disciple, the teacher a learner.

From that time Paul was a truly converted man. God gave him a special work to do for the cause of Christianity. His instruction in his letters to the churches of his day is instruction for the church of God to the end of time ([Letter 332, 1907](#)).

Eloquence in Simplicity—[[1 Corinthians 2:1-5](#) quoted.] Paul did not come to the churches as an orator or as a scientific philosopher. He did not seek merely to please the ear by flowery words and phrases. In eloquent simplicity he proclaimed the things that had been revealed to him. He was able to speak with power and authority, for he frequently received instruction from God in vision [[1 Corinthians 1:6-10](#) quoted] ([Manuscript 46, 1905](#)).

(Acts 17:22-34.) Spiritual Power Not in Human Wisdom—[[1 Corinthians 2:1-9](#) quoted.] The apostle Paul had all the privileges of a Roman citizen. He was not behind in the Hebrew education, for he had learned at the feet of Gamaliel; but all this did not enable him to reach the highest standard. With all this scientific and literary education, he was, until Christ was revealed to him, in as complete darkness as are many at this time. Paul became fully conscious that to know Jesus Christ by an experimental knowledge was for his present and eternal good. He saw the necessity of reaching a high standard.

It had been Paul's custom to adopt an oratorical style in his preaching. He was a man fitted to speak before kings, before the great and learned men of Athens, and his intellectual acquirements were often of value to him in preparing the way for the gospel. He tried to do this in Athens, meeting eloquence with eloquence, philosophy with philosophy, and logic with logic; but he failed to meet with the success he had hoped for. His aftersight led him to understand that there was something needed above human wisdom. God taught him that something above the world's wisdom must come to him. He must receive his power from a higher source. In order to convict and convert sinners, the Spirit of God must come into his work and sanctify every spiritual development. He must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God ([The Review and Herald, July 18, 1899](#)).

2 (Galatians 6:14). The One Central Truth of the Scriptures—There is one great central truth to be kept ever before the mind in the searching of the Scriptures—Christ and Him crucified. Every other truth is invested with influence and power corresponding to its relation to this theme. It is only in the light of the cross that we can discern the exalted character of the law of God. The soul palsied by sin can be endowed with life only through the work wrought out upon the cross by the Author of our salvation ([Manuscript 31, 1890](#)).

4 (1 Corinthians 4:9). Faithful Preachers a Spectacle to the World—Our work for this time is not to be done by enticing words of man’s wisdom, such as were used by heathen orators to gain applause. Speak in the demonstration of the Spirit, and with the power which God alone can impart. The testing truths for this time are to be proclaimed by men whose lips have been touched with a live coal from off God’s altar. Such preaching will be a decided contrast [1085] to the preaching usually heard. Faithful, God-sent messengers are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men, not because they place themselves in high positions, but because they show that they are strengthened and helped by the Spirit ([Manuscript 165, 1899](#)).

7-14. See [EGW comment on Romans 11:33](#).

9 (Ephesians 1:17, 18). Educating the Imagination—You need to dwell upon the assurances of God’s Word, to hold them before the mind’s eye. Point by point, day by day, repeat the lessons there given, over and over, until you learn the bearing and import of them. We see a little today, and by meditation and prayer, more tomorrow. And thus little by little we take in the gracious promises until we can almost comprehend their full significance.

Oh, how much we lose by not educating the imagination to dwell upon divine things, rather than upon the earthly! We may give fullest scope to the imagination, and yet, “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” Fresh wonders will be revealed to the mind the more closely we apply it to divine things. We lose much by not talking more of Jesus and of heaven, the saints’ inheritance. The more we contemplate heavenly things, the more new delights we shall see, and the more will our hearts be brimful of thanks to our beneficent Creator ([Letter 4, 1885](#)).

14. Truth Versus Worldly Wisdom—Precious jewels of truth, that are of the highest value to the meek and lowly ones who believe in Christ, are as foolishness to him who is wise in the world's estimation. But truth, eternal truth, is ever present with the true believer. The Spirit is the appointed instructor of such a soul, his guide, his continual strength and righteousness ([Manuscript 29, 1899](#)).

16. The Law an Expression of God's Idea—The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness, seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression.

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.

The law is an expression of God's idea. When we receive it in Christ, it becomes our idea. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin ([Letter 96, 1896](#)).

Chapter 3

1, 2 (Hebrews 5:9-12). Why Many Fail in Character Building—[Hebrews 5:9-12 quoted.] Paul could not speak to the Jewish converts as plainly as he desired regarding the mystery of godliness. Because of their spiritual weakness, their lack of perception, he could not utter the truth, which, could they have heard aright, with intelligent comprehension, would have been to them a savor of life unto life.

The fault was not with their instructors, but with themselves. They were dull of understanding. Abundant advantages had been given them. They could have increased in understanding regarding Christ, His work, His power to save to the uttermost all who come to Him. But they had not pressed onward and upward, improving their opportunity to learn more and still more of the Saviour. Because they had not received in faith the truths imparted to them, their memory was weak. They could not retain in their minds the truths essential to success in character-building.

The apostle calls their attention to their fault in this respect, which had become their spiritual infirmity. Their misconceptions gave them an indistinct view of Christ's power to make His people a praise in the earth ([The Review and Herald, June 16, 1903](#)).

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1-3. Spiritual Dwarfs—Paul longed to speak to the church in Corinth of spiritual things. But to his sorrow he found it in great weakness. The church members could not even bear to hear the truth concerning themselves. [1 Corinthians 3:1, 2 quoted.] The Spiritual growth of this people was so dwarfed that a plain “Thus saith the Lord” was an offense to them. Paul knew that by giving them the truth he would be ranked as an accuser and faultfinder ([Manuscript 74, 1899](#)).

2. Living on a Low Level—[1 Corinthians 3:1-3 quoted.] Those addressed in these words had not been feeding on Christ, and therefore they were not advanced in spiritual knowledge. Paul said, “I have fed you with milk”—the plainest, most simple truths, suit-

able for converts young in the faith; “not with meat”—the solid, nourishing, spiritual food suited to those who have made progress in a knowledge of divine things. They were living on a low level, dwelling on the surface truths which call for no thought, no deep research ([Manuscript 70, 1901](#)).

4-9. Ministers Not to Be Idolized—There can be no stronger evidence in churches that the truths of the Bible have not sanctified the receivers than their attachment to some favorite minister, and their unwillingness to accept and be profited by the labors of some other teacher who is sent to them in the providence of God. The Lord sends help to His church as they need, not as they choose; for short-sighted mortals cannot discern what is for their best good. It is seldom that one minister has all the qualifications necessary to perfect any one church in all the requirements of Christianity; therefore God sends other ministers to follow him, one after another, each one possessing some qualifications in which the others were deficient.

The church should gratefully accept these servants of Christ, even as they would accept their Master Himself. They should seek to derive all the benefit possible from the instruction which ministers may give them from the Word of God. But the ministers themselves are not to be idolized; there should be no religious pets and favorites among the people; it is the truths they bring which are to be accepted, and appreciated in the meekness of humility ([Redemption: The Teachings of Paul, pages 74, 75](#)).

5, 6. The Lord Our Efficiency—The Lord desires us to distinguish between the means and the instrument. [[1 Corinthians 3:5, 6](#) quoted.] The human agent is only the instrument; it is to the Lord he owes his efficiency. He must cooperate with divine power ([Letter 150, 1900](#)).

9 (2 Corinthians 10:4; see EGW comment on Genesis 2:7; Romans 12:2). God Provides the Weapons—“We are laborers together with God.” He provides us with all the facilities, all the spiritual weapons necessary for the pulling down of Satan’s strongholds. Present the truth as it is in Jesus. Let the tones of your voice express the love of God. Lead, but never drive. Approach the most obstinate in a spirit of kindness and affection. Dip your words into the oil of

grace, and let them flow forth from your lips in love ([Letter 105, 1893](#)).

Divine Culture Will Be Given—The Lord will give divine culture to those who are laborers together with Him. To be a laborer together with God means to strive and wrestle to grow up into Christ's likeness. It is Satan who makes it necessary for us to strive. Those who will keep the eye fixed upon the life of the Lord Jesus will gain an abundant entrance into His spiritual temple ([Letter 5, 1900](#).)

Feeble Plants Receive Special Care—“Ye are God's husbandry.” As one takes pleasure in the cultivation of a garden, so the Lord takes pleasure in His believing sons and daughters. A garden demands constant labor. The weeds must be removed; new plants must be set out; branches that are making too rapid a development must be pruned back. So the Lord works for His garden, the plants of the Lord. He cannot take pleasure in any development that does not reveal the graces of the character of Christ. The blood of Christ has made men and women God's precious charge. Then how careful each one should be not to manifest too much freedom in pulling up the plants the Lord has placed in His garden. Some plants are so feeble that they have hardly any life in them, and for these the Lord has a special care ([Manuscript 39, 1896](#)).

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Learning the Trade of Character Building—“Ye are God's building.” You are representatives of the great Master Worker. God forbid that we should neglect to learn the trade of character building. The course to be pursued in this work is not according to the ideas of the world; the fashioning is not similar to the fashioning of the world. Those who enter the work of God without hiding self in Christ will soon disconnect themselves from the Master's building ([Manuscript 165, 1899](#)).

Let Christ Direct—In your work of character building be sure that Christ is your director. It makes a great difference whether you are laborers together with God or whether you are laborers together against God; whether it is your highest ambition to magnify God or to magnify yourself and your plans. Christ declares, “Without me ye can do nothing”—nothing that will be approved by God. Study your motives carefully, and make sure that you are not working in your own wisdom, apart from Christ ([Manuscript 102, 1903](#)).

A Temple Honored by God and Man—With pure, noble, upright deeds every man is to build. The result of his work will be a symmetrical structure, a fair temple honored by God and men ([Manuscript 153, 1903](#)).

9-15. Each Man Has His Post of Duty—We should carefully weigh the matters relative to the work we take up. Will this work be a blessing to souls? God has not given us work merely to keep us busy, but for His name's glory. Many are busily engaged gathering wood, hay, stubble. But this will all be consumed, leaving nothing to prepare souls for that great day when every work is to be tried by fire. Many will find that the work that has occupied their time and attention has perished with the using, and that they themselves have barely been saved, as by fire.

Such a result as this is not after God's order. By God's appointment each man has his post of duty. The careful, prayerful inquiry is to be made, What duty is assigned us individually, as men and women under accountability to God? And whether our labor be wholly limited to spiritual things, or whether it is temporal and spiritual combined, we are to faithfully discharge our work. Things secular and things sacred must be combined, but spiritual things are not to be hidden by secular matters.

Christ requires the service of the whole being, the physical, mental, and moral powers combined. These are to be enlisted in God's service. Man is to remember that God has the ownership of all, and that his pursuits are invested with a sacredness that they did not possess before he enlisted in the army of the Lord. Every action is to be a consecrated action, for it occupies God's entrusted talent of time. Holiness unto the Lord is inscribed on all the actions of such a one, because his whole being is brought under subjection to God.

No business is to be undertaken, even in ordinary life, if it is corrupting in its influence upon the senses. We are in the Lord's training school, and He has His own appointed means whereby we may be brought into His service, so that His name may be glorified by the work we do in this world. Many are troubled because they are not working directly for the advancement of God's kingdom. But the humblest work must not be ignored. If it is honest work, it is a blessing, and may lead to the higher parts of the work. Those who

do this work need not accuse themselves of uselessness in the great household of God. This is not necessary, for theirs is a work that someone must do ([Manuscript 49, 1898](#)).

11. The Living Foundation Stone—God will not accept the most splendid service, or the most brilliant talent, unless it is laid upon, and connected with, the living foundation stone; for this alone gives true value to the ability possessed, and makes it a living service to God. We may look back through centuries, and see the living stones gleaming like jets of light through the rubbish of moral darkness, errors, and superstition. These precious jewels shine with continually increasing luster, not alone for time, but for eternity ([Redemption: The Teachings of Paul, page 80](#)).

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11-13 (see [EGW comment on Psalm 144:12](#)). Gold of Faith Imperishable—It makes every difference what material is used in the character building. The long-expected day of God will soon test every man's work. "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." As fire reveals the difference between gold, silver, and precious stones, and wood, hay, and stubble, so the day of judgment will test characters, showing the difference between characters formed after Christ's likeness and characters formed after the likeness of the selfish heart. All selfishness, all false religion, will then appear as it is. The worthless material will be consumed; but the gold of true, simple, humble faith will never lose its value. It can never be consumed; for it is imperishable. One hour of transgression will be seen to be a great loss, while the fear of the Lord will be seen to be the beginning of wisdom. The pleasure of self-indulgence will perish as stubble, while the gold of steadfast principle, maintained at any cost, will endure forever ([The Review and Herald, December 11, 1900](#)).

13. See [EGW comment on Jeremiah 23:28; Revelation 20:12, 13](#).

16-23. See [EGW comment on 1 Thessalonians 5:23](#).

Chapter 4

9 (see [EGW comment on 1 Corinthians 2:4](#); [Romans 12:2](#)).
Every Victory a Gem in the Crown of Life—The Christian is a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. Singular?—Yes; he has a most singular, peculiar character, because his life is worked out after the divine similitude.

The inhabitants of unfallen worlds and of the heavenly universe are watching with an intense interest the conflict between good and evil. They rejoice as Satan's subtleties, one after another, are discerned and met with "It is written," as Christ met them in His conflict with the wily foe. Every victory gained is a gem in the crown of life. In the day of victory all the universe of heaven triumphs. The harps of the angels send forth the most precious music, accompanying the melody of the voice ([Letter 5, 1900](#)).

Chapter 6

19, 20. God Claims the Heart's Throne—God has bought us, and He claims a throne in each heart. Our minds and bodies must be subordinated to Him, and the natural habits and appetites must be made subservient to the higher wants of the soul. But we can place no dependence upon ourselves in this work. We cannot with safety follow our own guidance. The Holy Spirit must renew and sanctify us. In God's service there must be no halfway work. (SpT, Series A, No. 7, p. 39).

20. See [EGW comment on Exodus 16; 3; 2 Peter 1:10](#).

Chapter 9

13-18 (1 Corinthians 1:1). Working for Souls, Not for Money—Paul did not vacillate. He was established and grounded in the faith. But as far as possible he sought to make himself one with those for whom he labored.

As a gospel minister, it was Paul's privilege to claim a support from those for whom he labored. But though he became the servant of all, yet he worked with his hands to support himself, that none might find occasion to charge him with selfishness. He did not receive wages for his labor, though as a minister of the gospel this was his right. Thus he made it evident that he was working for souls, not for money.

“What is my reward then?” he asks. “Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.”

Paul did not depend upon man for his ordination. He had received from the Lord his commission and ordination. He regarded his ministerial labor as a privilege. To him it was not a duty performed in return for money. He labored for the souls of men. “For though I preach the gospel,” he said, “I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me: yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” He studied constantly how to make his testimony of the greatest effect. He sought the approval of God.

Would that today men might be found with faith to do as Paul did, men who would preach the gospel, not looking to men for their reward, but willing to receive their reward in souls ([Manuscript 74, 1903](#)).

20-23. Paul's Manner of Labor—[[1 Corinthians 9:20-23](#) quoted.] We know that the apostle did not sacrifice one jot of principle. He did not allow himself to be led away by the sophistry and maxims of men. He was not to coincide with the suppositions and assurances of men who were teaching for doctrine the commandments of men; because iniquity and transgression were in the ascendancy

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and advancing, he did not allow his love to wax cold. All zeal and earnestness are to be retained; but at the same time some features of our faith, if expressed, would, by the elements with which you have to deal, arouse prejudice at once.

Paul could be as zealous as any of the most zealous, in his allegiance to the law of God, and show that he was perfectly familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. He could dwell upon the types and shadows that typified Christ; he could exalt Christ, and tell all about Christ and His special work in behalf of humanity, and what a field he had to explore. He could advance most precious light upon the prophecies, that they had not seen; and yet he would not offend them. Thus the foundation was laid nicely, that when the time came that their spirits softened, he could say in the language of John, Behold in Jesus Christ, who was made flesh, and dwelt among us, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.

To the Gentiles, he preached Christ as their only hope of salvation, but did not at first have anything to say upon the law. But after their hearts were warmed with the presentation of Christ as the gift of God to our world, and what was comprehended in the work of the Redeemer in the costly sacrifice to manifest the love of God to man, in the most eloquent simplicity he showed that love for all mankind—Jew and Gentile—that they might be saved by surrendering their hearts to Him. Thus when, melted and subdued, they gave themselves to the Lord, he presented the law of God as the test of their obedience. This was the manner of his working—adapting his methods to win souls. Had he been abrupt and unskillful in handling the Word, he would not have reached either Jew or Gentile.

He led the Gentiles along to view the stupendous truths of the love of God, who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us; and how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? The question was asked why such an immense sacrifice was required, and then he went back to the types, and down through the Old Testament Scripture, revealing Christ in the law, and they were converted to Christ and to the law (SpT, Series A, No. 6, pp. 54, 55).

24-27 (1 Peter 2:11). A Contest in Which All May Win—[1 Corinthians 9:24-27 quoted.] This glorious contest is before us. The apostle seeks to inspire us to enter into a noble emulation, a competition in which will be seen no selfishness, unfairness, or

underhanded work. We are to use every spiritual nerve and muscle in the contest for the crown of life. No one who does his best will fail in this contest.

All who seek for the prize are to place themselves under strict discipline. “Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.” Those who enter into a contest of physical strength for a corruptible prize realize the necessity of rigid abstinence from every indulgence that would weaken the physical powers. They eat simple food at regular hours.

How much more should those who enter for the gospel race, restrain themselves from the unlawful indulgence of appetite and “abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” They must be temperate at all times. The same restraint that gives them the power to obtain the victory at one time will, if practiced constantly, give them a great advantage in the race for the crown of life ([Manuscript 74, 1903](#)).

(Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5.) Under Discipline to God— [[1 Corinthians 9:24-27](#) quoted.] Thus Paul presents the conditions which God imposes upon every soul who enlists in His service. The apostle fears for himself, lest he shall fail of bearing the examination test, and be found wanting, and he places himself under severe training. So the Christian today needs to keep strict guard over his appetite. He needs to subject himself to severe training, that he may not run uncertainly or at random, without seeing his standard and striving to reach it. He must obey the laws of God. The physical, mental, and moral powers must be kept in the most perfect condition if he would obtain the approval of God. “I keep under my body,” the apostle says. This means literally to beat back its desires and impulses and passions by severe discipline, even as did those competing for an earthly prize ([Manuscript 93, 1899](#)).

27 (see [EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 12:1-4](#)). Paul on Guard— [[1 Corinthians 9:26, 27](#) quoted.] Paul was ever on the watch lest evil propensities should get the better of him. He guarded well his appetites and passions and evil propensities ([Letter 27, 1906](#)).

[1090]

Chapter 10

4. See [EGW comment on Acts 15:11](#).
12. See [EGW comment on 1 Kings 11:1-4; Matthew 26:31-35](#).

Chapter 11

18-34 (Matthew 26:26-29). The Lord's Supper Perverted—The Corinthians were departing widely from the simplicity of the faith and the harmony of the church. They continued to assemble for worship, but with hearts that were estranged from one another. They had perverted the true meaning of the Lord's Supper, patterning in a great degree after idolatrous feasts. They came together to celebrate the sufferings and death of Christ, but turned the occasion into a period of feasting and selfish enjoyment.

It had become customary, before partaking of the communion, to unite in a social meal. Families professing the faith brought their own food to the place of meeting, and ate it without courteously waiting for the others to be ready. The holy institution of the Lord's Supper was, for the wealthy, turned into a gluttonous feast; while the poor were made to blush when their meager fare was brought in contrast with the costly viands of their rich brethren.

Paul rebukes the Corinthians for making the house of God a place of feasting and revelry, like a company of idolaters: "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?" The public religious feasts of the Greeks had been conducted in this way, and it was by following the counsels of false teachers that the Christians had been led to imitate their example. These teachers had begun by assuring them that it was not wrong to attend idolatrous feasts, and had finally introduced similar practices into the Christian church.

Paul proceeded to give the order and object of the Lord's Supper, and then warned his brethren against perverting this sacred ordinance (*Sketches from the Life of Paul*, 170, 171).

23-26 (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19, 20). The Only Correct Representation—The broken bread and pure juice of the grape are to represent the broken body and spilled blood of the Son of God. Bread that is leavened must not come on the communion table; unleavened bread is the only correct representa-

tion of the Lord's Supper. Nothing fermented is to be used. Only the pure fruit of the vine and the unleavened bread are to be used ([The Review and Herald, June 7, 1898](#)).

25. See [EGW comment on Matthew 26:28](#).

26 (see [EGW comment on Mark 16:1, 2](#)). **Frequency of the Lord's Supper**—The salvation of men depends upon a continual application to their hearts of the cleansing blood of Christ. Therefore, the Lord's Supper was not to be observed only occasionally or yearly, but more frequently than the annual passover. This solemn ordinance commemorates a far greater event than the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. That deliverance was typical of the great atonement which Christ made by the sacrifice of His own life for the final deliverance of His people ([Spiritual Gifts 3:228](#)).

28. See [EGW comment on John 13:14, 15](#).

Chapter 12

4-6, 12 (Ephesians 4:4-13). Each Member to Work in His Appointed Place—[1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 12 quoted.] The vine has many branches, but though all the branches are different, they do not quarrel. In diversity there is unity. All the branches obtain their nourishment from one source. This is an illustration of the unity that is to exist among Christ's followers. In their different lines of work they all have but one Head. The same Spirit, in different ways, works through them. There is harmonious action, though the gifts differ. Study this chapter. You will see from it that the man who is truly united with Christ will never act as though he were a complete whole in himself....

The perfection of the church depends not on each member being fashioned exactly alike. God calls for each one to take his proper place, to stand in his lot to do his appointed work according to the ability which has been given him ([Letter 19, 1901](#)).

Two Chapters to Be Memorized—The 12th and 13th chapters of 1st Corinthians should be committed to memory, written in the mind and heart. Through His servant Paul, the Lord has placed before us these subjects for our consideration, and those who have the privilege of being brought together in church capacity will be united, understandingly and intelligently. The figure of the members which compose the body represents the church of God and the relation its members should sustain to one another ([Manuscript 82, 1898](#)).

[1091]

27. See [EGW comment on Hebrews 8:1, 2](#).

Chapter 13

Read This Chapter Every Day—The Lord desires me to call the attention of His people to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Read this chapter every day, and from it obtain comfort and strength. Learn from it the value that God places on sanctified, heaven-born love, and let the lesson that it teaches come home to your hearts. Learn that Christlike love is of heavenly birth, and that without it all other qualifications are worthless ([The Review and Herald, July 21, 1904](#)).

An Expression of Obedience—In the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians the apostle Paul defines true Christlike love.... This chapter is an expression of the obedience of all who love God and keep His commandments. It is brought into action in the life of every true believer ([Letter 156, 1900](#)).

1. God Holds the Balances—It is not the ready speaker, the sharp intellect, that counts with God. It is the earnest purpose, the deep piety, the love of truth, the fear of God, that has a telling influence. A testimony from the heart, coming from lips in which is no guile, full of faith and humble trust, though given by a stammering tongue, is accounted of God as precious as gold; while the smart speech, the eloquent oratory, of the one to whom is entrusted large talents, but who is wanting in truthfulness, in steadfast purpose, in purity, in unselfishness, are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. He may say witty things, he may relate amusing anecdotes, he may play upon the feelings; but the spirit of Jesus is not in it. All these things may please unsanctified hearts, but God holds in His hands the balances that weigh the words, the spirit, the sincerity, the devotion, and He pronounces it altogether lighter than vanity ([Letter 38, 1890](#)).

5. See [EGW comment on Proverbs 16:32](#).

12 (Romans 11:33; Ephesians 2:7; Revelation 7:16, 17; 22:4; see EGW comment on 1 Corinthians 15:20, 42-52). Mysteries to Be Unfolded in Heaven—But many mysteries yet remain unrevealed. How much that is acknowledged to be truth is mysterious

and unexplainable to the human mind! How dark seem the dispensations of Providence! What necessity there is for implicit faith and trust in God's moral government! We are ready to say with Paul, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

We are not now sufficiently advanced in spiritual attainments to comprehend the mysteries of God. But when we shall compose the family of heaven, these mysteries will be unfolded before us. Of the members of that family John writes: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." "And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."

Then much will be revealed in explanation of matters upon which God now keeps silence because we have not gathered up and appreciated that which has been made known of the eternal mysteries. The ways of Providence will be made clear; the mysteries of grace through Christ will be unfolded. That which the mind cannot now grasp, which is hard to be understood, will be explained. We shall see order in that which has seemed unexplainable; wisdom in everything withheld; goodness and gracious mercy in everything imparted. Truth will be unfolded to the mind, free from obscurity, in a single line, and its brightness will be enduring. The heart will be made to sing for joy. Controversies will be forever ended, and all difficulties will be solved (*The Signs of the Times, January 30, 1912*).

13. Love, the Most Valued Attribute—The attribute that Christ appreciates most in man is charity (love) out of a pure heart. This is the fruit borne upon the Christian tree (*Manuscript 16, 1892*).

A Plant of Heavenly Origin—Love is a plant of heavenly origin, and if we would have it flourish in our hearts, we must cultivate it daily. Mildness, gentleness, long-suffering, not being easily provoked, bearing all things, enduring all things—these are the fruits upon the precious tree of love (*The Review and Herald, June 5, 1888*).

[1092]

Chapter 15

6. Sacred Facts Immortalized—After His resurrection, Christ did not show Himself to any save His followers, but testimony in regard to His resurrection was not wanting. It came from various sources, from the five hundred who assembled in Galilee to see their risen Lord. This testimony could not be quenched. The sacred facts of Christ's resurrection were immortalized ([Manuscript 115, 1897](#)).

Countenance as the Face of God—After His resurrection, Christ met with His disciples in Galilee. At the time appointed, about five hundred disciples were assembled on the mountainside. Suddenly Jesus stood among them. No one could tell whence or how He came. Many who were present had never before seen Him; but in His hands and feet they beheld the marks of the crucifixion; His countenance was as the face of God, and when they saw Him they worshiped Him ([Letter 115, 1904](#)).

9. See [EGW comment on Acts 9:1-4](#).

20 (Leviticus 23:10, 11). Christ the Antitypical Wave-Sheaf—It was to the glory of God that the Prince of life should be the first fruits, the antitype of the typical wavesheaf. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

...

Christ was the first fruits of them that slept. This very scene, the resurrection of Christ from the dead, was observed in type by the Jews at one of their sacred feasts.... They came up to the Temple when the first fruits had been gathered in, and held a feast of thanksgiving. The first fruits of the harvest crop were sacredly dedicated to the Lord. That crop was not to be appropriated for the benefit of man. The first ripe fruit was dedicated as a thank offering to God. He was acknowledged as the Lord of the harvest. When the first heads of grain ripened in the field, they were carefully gathered, and when the people went up to Jerusalem, they were presented to the Lord, waving the ripened sheaf before Him as a thank offering.

After this ceremony the sickle could be put to the wheat, and it could be gathered into sheaves ([Manuscript 115, 1897](#)).

20, 42-52 (1 Corinthians 13:12; Romans 8:11). A Sample of the Final Resurrection—The resurrection of Jesus was a sample of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The risen body of the Saviour, His deportment, the accents of His speech, were all familiar to His followers. In like manner will those who sleep in Jesus rise again. We shall know our friends even as the disciples knew Jesus. Though they may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured in this mortal life, yet in their resurrected and glorified body their individual identity will be perfectly preserved, and we shall recognize, in the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, the lineaments of those we love ([The Spirit of Prophecy 3:219](#)).

22, 45 (Romans 5:12-19; see EGW comment on John 1:1-3, 14; Revelation 1:8). Sinner Given a Second Trial—As representative of the fallen race, Christ passed over the same ground on which Adam stumbled and fell. By a life of perfect obedience to God's law, Christ redeemed man from the penalty of Adam's disgraceful fall. Man has violated God's law. Only for those who return to their allegiance to God, only for those who obey the law that they have violated, will the blood of Christ avail. Christ will never become a party to sin. Bearing the penalty of the law, He gives the sinner another chance, a second trial. He opens a way whereby the sinner can be reinstated in God's favor. Christ bears the penalty of man's past transgressions, and by imparting to man His righteousness, makes it possible for man to keep God's holy law ([Manuscript 126, 1901](#)).

(Revelation 1:8; 22:13.) The Alpha and Omega—When the students of prophecy shall set their hearts to know the truths of Revelation, they will realize what an importance is attached to this search. Christ Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the Genesis of the Old Testament, and the Revelation of the New. Both meet together in Christ. Adam and God are reconciled by the obedience of the second Adam, who accomplished the work of overcoming the temptations of Satan and redeeming Adam's disgraceful failure and fall. [1093]

The two Adams will meet in Paradise and embrace each other, while the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, and all who have refused the opportunities and privileges given to them at such

infinite cost, and have not returned to their loyalty, will be shut out of Paradise ([Manuscript 33, 1897](#)).

42-52 (1 Corinthians 13:12). Personality Preserved in a New Body—Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character. God in His own time will call forth the dead, giving again the breath of life, and bidding the dry bones live. The same form will come forth, but it will be free from disease and every defect. It lives again bearing the same individuality of features, so that friend will recognize friend. There is no law of God in nature which shows that God gives back the same identical particles of matter which composed the body before death. God shall give the righteous dead a body that will please Him.

Paul illustrates this subject by the kernel of grain sown in the field. The planted kernel decays, but there comes forth a new kernel. The natural substance in the grain that decays is never raised as before, but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him. A much finer material will compose the human body, for it is a new creation, a new birth. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body ([Manuscript 76, 1900](#)).

51-55 (Isaiah 65:17; Matthew 25:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Revelation 5:12; 21:4). The Finishing Touch of Immortality—We have a living, risen Saviour. He burst the fetters of the tomb after He had lain there three days, and in triumph. He proclaimed over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, “I am the resurrection and the life.” And He is coming. Are we getting ready for Him? Are we ready so that if we shall fall asleep, we can do so with hope in Jesus Christ? Are you laboring for the salvation of your brothers and sisters? The Life-giver is soon to come. The Life-giver is coming to break the fetters of the tomb. He is to bring forth the captives and proclaim, “I am the resurrection and the life.” There stands the risen host. The last thought was of death and its pangs. The last thoughts they had were of the grave and the tomb, but now they proclaim, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” The pangs of death were the last things they felt. “O death, where is thy sting?”

The last thing they acknowledged was the pangs of death. When they awake the pain is all gone....

Here they stand, and the finishing touch of immortality is put upon them, and they go up to meet their Lord in the air. The gates of the city of God swing back upon their hinges, and the nations that have kept the truth enter in. There are the columns of angels on either side, and the ransomed of God walk in through the cherubims and seraphims. Christ bids them welcome and puts upon them His benediction. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." What is that joy? He sees of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied.

That is what we labor for. Here is one, who in the night season we pleaded with God on his behalf. There is one that we talked with on his dying bed, and he hung his helpless soul upon Jesus. Here is one who was a poor drunkard. We tried to get his eyes fixed upon Him who is mighty to save and we told him that Christ could give him the victory. There are the crowns of immortal glory upon their heads, and then the redeemed cast their glittering crowns at the feet of Jesus; and then the angelic choir strikes the note of victory, and the angels in the two columns take up the song, and the redeemed host join as though they had been singing the song on the earth, and they have been.

Oh, what music! There is not an inharmonious note. Every voice proclaims, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." He sees of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied. Do you think anyone there will take time to tell of his trials and terrible difficulties? "The former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" ([Manuscript 18, 1894](#)).

* * * * *

2 Corinthians

[1094]

Chapter 2

4. Paul a Friend of the Erring—The apostle Paul found it necessary to reprove wrong in the church, but he did not lose his self-control in reproofing error. He anxiously explains the reason of his action. How carefully he wrought so as to leave the impression that he was a friend of the erring! He made them understand that it cost him pain to give them pain. He left the impression upon their minds that his interest was identified with theirs [2 Corinthians 2:4 quoted] (Letter 16a, 1895).

11 (Ephesians 6:12; see EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; 13:5). Give Satan No Advantage—In the conflict with satanic agencies there are decisive moments that determine the victory either on the side of God or on the side of the prince of this world. If those engaged in the warfare are not wide awake, earnest, vigilant, praying for wisdom, watching unto prayer, ... Satan comes off victor, when he might have been vanquished by the armies of the Lord.... God's faithful sentinels are to give the evil powers no advantage....

We have unseen foes to meet, evil men are agents for the powers of darkness to work through, and without spiritual discernment the soul will be ignorant of Satan's devices, and be ensnared and stumble and fall. He who would overcome must hold fast to Christ. He must not look back, but keep the eye ever upward. Mount up by the Mediator, keeping hold of the Mediator, reaching upward to one line of work after another, making no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

There is no such thing as our entering the heavenly portals through indulgence and folly, amusement, selfishness, but only by constant watchfulness and unceasing prayer. Spiritual vigilance on our part individually is the price of safety. Swerve not to Satan's side a single inch, lest he gain advantage over you (Letter 47, 1893).

14-17. The Boldness of a Sanctified Conscience—[2 Corinthians 2:14-17 quoted.] These words of Paul do not denote a spiritual pride, but a deep knowledge of Christ. As one of God's messengers

sent to confirm the truth of the Word, he knew what was truth; and with the boldness of a sanctified conscience he gloried in that knowledge. He knew that he was called of God to preach the gospel with all the assurance which his confidence in the message gave him. He was called to be God's ambassador to the people, and he preached the gospel as one who was called ([Manuscript 43, 1907](#)).

Chapter 3

6-9 (Romans 8:15-21; see EGW comment on Hebrews 8:6, 7). The Law Ordained to Life—The law of God, spoken in awful grandeur from Sinai, is the utterance of condemnation to the sinner. It is the province of the law to condemn, but there is in it no power to pardon or to redeem. It is ordained to life; those who walk in harmony with its precepts will receive the reward of obedience. But it brings bondage and death to those who remain under its condemnation. (*The Review and Herald*, April 22, 1902).

7. See *EGW comment on Exodus 34:29*.

7-11 (Galatians 3:19; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 9:9-12; 10:1-7). A Twofold System of Law—God's people, whom He calls His peculiar treasure, were privileged with a two-fold system of law; the moral and the ceremonial. The one, pointing back to creation to keep in remembrance the living God who made the world, whose claims are binding upon all men in every dispensation, and which will exist through all time and eternity. The other, given because of man's transgression of the moral law, the obedience to which consisted in sacrifices and offerings pointing to the future redemption. Each is clear and distinct from the other.

[1095] From the creation the moral law was an essential part of God's divine plan, and was as unchangeable as Himself. The ceremonial law was to answer a particular purpose in Christ's plan for the salvation of the race. The typical system of sacrifices and offerings was established that through these services the sinner might discern the great offering, Christ. But the Jews were so blinded by pride and sin that but few of them could see farther than the death of beasts as an atonement for sin; and when Christ, whom these offerings prefigured, came, they could not discern Him. The ceremonial law was glorious; it was the provision made by Jesus Christ in counsel with His Father, to aid in the salvation of the race. The whole arrangement of the typical system was founded on Christ. Adam saw Christ prefigured in the innocent beast suffering the penalty of

his transgression of Jehovah's law ([The Review and Herald, May 6, 1875](#)).

Two Laws Bear Stamp of Divinity—Paul desires his brethren to see that the great glory of a sin-pardoning Saviour gave significance to the entire Jewish economy. He desired them to see also that when Christ came to the world, and died as man's sacrifice, type met antitype.

After Christ died on the cross as a sin offering the ceremonial law could have no force. Yet it was connected with the moral law, and was glorious. The whole bore the stamp of divinity, and expressed the holiness, justice, and righteousness of God. And if the ministration of the dispensation to be done away was glorious, how much more must the reality be glorious, when Christ was revealed, giving His life-giving, sanctifying, Spirit to all who believe ([The Review and Herald, April 22, 1902](#))?

The Ministration of Death—The holy law of God is both brief and comprehensive; for it is easily understood and remembered; and yet it is an expression of the will of God. Its comprehensiveness is summed up in the following words: "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.... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "This do, and thou shalt live." "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord."...

If the transgressor is to be treated according to the letter of this covenant, then there is no hope for the fallen race; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. The fallen race of Adam can behold nothing else in the letter of this covenant than the ministration of death; and death will be the reward of everyone who is seeking vainly to fashion a righteousness of his own that will fulfill the claims of the law. By His word God has bound Himself to execute the penalty of the law on all transgressors. Again and again men commit sin, and yet they do not seem to believe that they must suffer the penalty for breaking the law ([The Signs of the Times, September 5, 1892](#)).

(Hebrews 8:5.) Ceremonies of Jewish Law Prophetic—The gospel of Christ reflects glory upon the Jewish age. It sheds light upon the whole Jewish economy, and gives significance to the cere-

monial law. The tabernacle, or temple, of God on earth was a pattern of the original in heaven. All the ceremonies of the Jewish law were prophetic, typical of mysteries in the plan of redemption.

The rites and ceremonies of the law were given by Christ Himself, who, enshrouded in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, was the leader of the hosts of Israel; and this law should be treated with great respect, for it is sacred. Even after it was no longer to be observed, Paul presented it before the Jews in its true position and value, showing its place in the plan of redemption and its relation to the work of Christ; and the great apostle pronounces this law glorious, worthy of its divine Originator. That which was to be done away was glorious, but it was not the law instituted by God for the government of His family in heaven and on earth; for as long as the heavens shall remain, so long shall the law of the Lord endure ([The Signs of the Times, July 29, 1886](#)).

(Revelation 22:14.) Glory Gives Way to Greater Glory—There is no discord between the Old Testament and the New. In the Old Testament we find the gospel of a coming Saviour; in the New Testament we have the gospel of a Saviour revealed as the prophecies had foretold. While the Old Testament is constantly pointing forward to the true offering, the New Testament shows that the Saviour prefigured by the typical offerings has come. The dim glory of the Jewish age has been succeeded by the brighter, clearer glory of the Christian age. But not once has Christ stated that His coming destroyed the claims of God's law. On the contrary, in the very last message to His church, by way of Patmos, He pronounces a benediction upon those who keep His Father's law: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" ([The Signs of the Times, July 29, 1886](#)).

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7-17. The Moral Law Glorified by Christ—The types and shadows of the sacrificial service, with the prophecies, gave the Israelites a veiled, indistinct view of the mercy and grace to be brought to the world by the revelation of Christ. To Moses was unfolded the significance of the types and shadows pointing to Christ. He saw to the end of that which was to be done away when, at the death of Christ, type met antitype. He saw that only through Christ can man keep the moral law. By transgression of this law

man brought sin into the world, and with sin came death. Christ became the propitiation for man's sin. He proffered His perfection of character in the place of man's sinfulness. He took upon Himself the curse of disobedience. The sacrifices and offerings pointed forward to the sacrifice He was to make. The slain lamb typified the Lamb that was to take away the sin of the world.

It was seeing the object of that which was to be done away, seeing Christ as revealed in the law, that illumined the face of Moses. The ministration of the law, written and engraved in stone, was a ministration of death. Without Christ, the transgressor was left under its curse, with no hope of pardon. The ministration had of itself no glory, but the promised Saviour, revealed in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law, made the moral law glorious ([The Review and Herald, April 22, 1902](#)).

7-18 (Romans 3:31; 7:7; Galatians 3:13). Christ's Glory Revealed in His Law—Christ bore the curse of the law, suffering its penalty, carrying to completion the plan whereby man was to be placed where he could keep God's law, and be accepted through the merits of the Redeemer; and by His sacrifice glory was shed upon the law. Then the glory of that which is not to be done away—God's law of ten commandments, His standard of righteousness—was plainly seen by all who saw to the end of that which was done away.

“We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Christ is the sinner's advocate. Those who accept His gospel behold Him with open face. They see the relation of His mission to the law, and they acknowledge God's wisdom and glory as revealed by the Saviour. The glory of Christ is revealed in the law, which is a transcript of His character, and His transforming efficacy is felt upon the soul until men become changed to His likeness. They are made partakers of the divine nature, and grow more and more like their Saviour, advancing step by step in conformity to the will of God, till they reach perfection.

The law and the gospel are in perfect harmony. Each upholds the other. In all its majesty the law confronts the conscience, causing the sinner to feel his need of Christ as the propitiation for sin. The gospel recognizes the power and immutability of the law. “I had not known sin, but by the law,” Paul declares. The sense of sin, urged

home by the law, drives the sinner to the Saviour. In his need man may present the mighty arguments furnished by the cross of Calvary. He may claim the righteousness of Christ; for it is imparted to every repentant sinner ([The Review and Herald, April 22, 1902](#)).

12-15 (see [EGW comment on Exodus 34:29-33](#)). **The Veil of Unbelief**—[[2 Corinthians 3:12-15](#) quoted.] The Jews refused to accept Christ as the Messiah, and they cannot see that their ceremonies are meaningless, that the sacrifices and offerings have lost their significance. The veil drawn by themselves in stubborn unbelief is still before their minds. It would be removed if they would accept Christ, the righteousness of the law.

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Many in the Christian world also have a veil before their eyes and heart. They do not see to the end of that which was done away. They do not see that it was only the ceremonial law which was abrogated at the death of Christ. They claim that the moral law was nailed to the cross. Heavy is the veil that darkens their understanding. The hearts of many are at war with God. They are not subject to His law. Only as they shall come into harmony with the rule of His government can Christ be of any avail to them. They may talk of Christ as their Saviour; but He will finally say to them, I know you not. You have not exercised genuine repentance toward God for the transgression of His holy law, and you cannot have genuine faith in Me, for it was My mission to exalt God's law....

The moral law was never a type or a shadow. It existed before man's creation, and will endure as long as God's throne remains. God could not change or alter one precept of His law in order to save man; for the law is the foundation of His government. It is unchangeable, unalterable, infinite, and eternal. In order for man to be saved, and for the honor of the law to be maintained, it was necessary for the Son of God to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin. He who knew no sin became sin for us. He died for us on Calvary. His death shows the wonderful love of God for man, and the immutability of His law ([The Review and Herald, April 22, 1902](#)).

14, 16. Christ's Death Lifts the Veil—The death of Jesus Christ for the redemption of man lifts the veil and reflects a flood of light back hundreds of years, upon the whole institution of the Jewish system of religion. Without the death of Christ all this system was

meaningless. The Jews reject Christ, and therefore their whole system of religion is to them indefinite, unexplainable, and uncertain. They attach as much importance to shadowy ceremonies of types which have met their antitype as they do to the law of the ten commandments, which was not a shadow, but a reality as enduring as the throne of Jehovah. The death of Christ elevates the Jewish system of types and ordinances, showing that they were of divine appointment, and for the purpose of keeping faith alive in the hearts of His people (*The Review and Herald*, May 6, 1875).

18 (Hebrews 12:2; see EGW comment on Psalm 19:14; Romans 8:29; Ephesians 4:20-24; Colossians 3:10; Revelation 7:4-17). The Matchless Charms of Jesus—Look to Christ, behold the attractive loveliness of His character, and by beholding you will become changed into His likeness. The mist that intervenes between Christ and the soul will be rolled back as we by faith look past the hellish shadow of Satan and see God's glory in His law, and the righteousness of Christ.

Satan is seeking to veil Jesus from our sight, to eclipse His light; for when we get even a glimpse of His glory, we are attracted to Him. Sin hides from our view the matchless charms of Jesus; prejudice, selfishness, self-righteousness, and passion blind our eyes, so that we do not discern the Saviour. Oh, if we would by faith draw nigh to God, He would reveal to us His glory, which is His character, and the praise of God would flow forth from human hearts and be sounded by human voices. Then we would forever cease to give glory to Satan by sinning against God and talking doubt and unbelief. We should no longer stumble along, grumbling and mourning, and covering the altar of God with our tears (*Manuscript 16*, 1890).

(Genesis 5:24; Ephesians 4:13, 15). Too Near the Lowlands of Earth—It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said He would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. That is, the character of the one who thus beholds Christ is so like His, that one looking at him sees Christ's own character shining out as from a mirror. Imperceptibly to ourselves we are changed day by day from our own ways and will into the ways and will of Christ, into the loveliness of His character. Thus we grow up into Christ, and unconsciously reflect His image.

Professed Christians keep altogether too near the lowlands of earth. Their eyes are trained to see only commonplace things, and their minds dwell upon the things their eyes behold. Their religious experience is often shallow and unsatisfying, and their words are light and valueless. How can such reflect the image of Christ? How can they send forth the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness into all the dark places of the earth? To be a Christian is to be Christlike.

[1098] Enoch kept the Lord ever before him, and the Inspired Word says that he “walked with God.” He made Christ his constant companion. He was in the world, and performed his duties to the world; but he was ever under the influence of Jesus. He reflected Christ’s character, exhibiting the same qualities of goodness, mercy, tender compassion, sympathy, forbearance, meekness, humility, and love. His association with Christ day by day transformed him into the image of Him with whom he was so intimately connected. Day by day he was growing away from his own way into Christ’s way, the heavenly, the divine, in his thoughts and feelings. He was constantly inquiring, Is this the way of the Lord? His was a constant growth, and he had fellowship with the Father and the Son. This is genuine sanctification ([The Review and Herald, April 28, 1891](#)).

Behold Christ by Studying His Life—[[2 Corinthians 3:18](#) quoted.] Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character. By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him. The image of Christ is cherished, and it captivates the whole being ([Manuscript 148, 1897](#)).

Striving to Become Christlike—Beholding Christ for the purpose of becoming like Him, the seeker after truth sees the perfection of the principles of God’s law, and he becomes dissatisfied with everything but perfection. Hiding his life in the life of Christ, he sees that the holiness of the divine law is revealed in the character of Christ, and more and more earnestly he strives to be like Him. A warfare may be expected at any time, for the tempter sees that he is losing one of his subjects. A battle must be fought with the

attributes which Satan has been strengthening for his own use. The human agent sees what he has to contend with—a strange power opposed to the idea of attaining the perfection that Christ holds out. But with Christ there is saving power that will gain for him victory in the conflict. The Saviour will strengthen and help him as he comes pleading for grace and efficiency ([Manuscript 89, 1903](#)).

Clearing the Moral Atmosphere—When Christ is loved more than self, the Saviour’s beautiful image is reflected in the believer...

Until self is laid upon the altar of sacrifice, Christ will not be reflected in the character. When self is buried, and Christ occupies the throne of the heart, there will be a revelation of principles that will clear the moral atmosphere surrounding the soul ([Letter 108, 1899](#)).

Human Peculiarities Will Disappear—The Holy Spirit has been prevented from coming in to mold and fashion heart and mind, because men suppose that they understand best how to form their own characters. And they think that they may safely form their characters after their own model. But there is only one model after which human character is to be formed—the character of Christ. Those who behold the Saviour are changed from glory to greater glory. When men will consent to submit to Christ’s will, to be partakers of the divine nature, their crooked, human peculiarities will disappear. When they decide that they will retain their own peculiarities and disagreeable traits of character, Satan takes them and places his yoke on them, using them to do his service. He uses their talents for selfish purposes, causing them to set an example so disagreeable, so un-Christlike, that they become a reproach to the cause of God ([Manuscript 102, 1903](#)).

([Song of Solomon 5:10, 16](#); [Hebrews 12:2](#).) Approaching the Perfect Pattern—As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself serious defects; his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees the necessity for radical changes in his life. Still he studies with a desire to become like his great Exemplar. He catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master. By beholding, by “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith,” he becomes changed into the same image.

It is not by looking away from Him that we imitate the life of Jesus, but by talking of Him, by dwelling upon His perfections,

[1099] by seeking to refine the taste and elevate the character, by trying—through faith and love, and by earnest, persevering effort—to approach the perfect Pattern. By having a knowledge of Christ—His words, His habits, and His lessons of instruction—we borrow the virtues of the character we have so closely studied, and become imbued with the spirit we have so much admired. Jesus becomes to us “the chiefest among ten thousand,” the One “altogether lovely” ([The Review and Herald, March 15, 1887](#)).

Christ Will Draw His Image on the Soul—When the soul is brought into close relationship with the great Author of light and truth, impressions are made upon it revealing its true position before God. Then self will die, pride will be laid low, and Christ will draw His own image in deeper lines upon the soul ([Manuscript 1a, 1890](#)).

Chapter 4

3-6 (2 Corinthians 2:11; 15:3). Satan's Bewitching Power—Justice demands that sin be not merely pardoned, but the death penalty must be executed. God, in the gift of His only-begotten Son, met both these requirements. By dying in man's stead, Christ exhausted the penalty and provided a pardon.

Man through sin has been severed from the life of God. His soul is palsied through the machinations of Satan, the author of sin. Of himself he is incapable of sensing sin, incapable of appreciating and appropriating the divine nature. Were it brought within his reach there is nothing in it that his natural heart would desire it. The bewitching power of Satan is upon him. All the ingenious subterfuges the devil can suggest are presented to his mind to prevent every good impulse. Every faculty and power given him of God has been used as a weapon against the divine Benefactor. So, although He loves him, God cannot safely impart to him the gifts and blessings He desires to bestow.

But God will not be defeated by Satan. He sent His Son into the world, that through His taking the human form and nature, humanity and divinity combined in Him would elevate man in the scale of moral value with God.

There is no other way for man's salvation. "Without me," says Christ, "ye can do nothing." Through Christ, and Christ alone, the springs of life can vitalize man's nature, transform his tastes, and set his affections flowing toward heaven. Through the union of the divine with the human nature, Christ could enlighten the understanding and infuse His life-giving properties through the soul dead in trespasses and sins (*Manuscript 50, 1900*).

17, 18 (Romans 8:18; 1 Peter 1:6, 7; see EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 12:4). Trials God's Workmen—[2 Corinthians 4:17, 18 quoted.] If Paul, troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, could call his trials light afflictions, of what has the Christian of today to complain? How trifling are our trials in comparison with

Paul's many afflictions! They are not worthy to be compared with the eternal weight of glory awaiting the overcomer. They are God's workmen, ordained for the perfection of character. However great the deprivation and suffering of the Christian, however dark and inscrutable may seem the way of Providence, he is to rejoice in the Lord, knowing that all is working for his good ([The Review and Herald, May 6, 1902](#)).

I have been shown that in the future we shall see how closely all our trials were connected with our salvation, and how these light afflictions worked out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" ([Letter 5, 1880](#)).

The Eternal Weight of Glory—The years of self-denial, of privation, of trial, affliction, and persecution that Paul endured, he called a moment. The things of the present time were not considered worth mentioning when compared with the eternal weight of glory that awaited them when the warfare should be over. These very afflictions were God's workmen, ordained for the perfection of Christian character. Whatever may be the circumstances of the Christian, however dark and mysterious may be the ways of Providence, however great his deprivation and suffering, he may look away from them all to the unseen and the eternal. He has the blessed assurance that all things are working for his good....

[1100] The Holy Spirit irradiated the soul of Paul with light from heaven, and he was assured that he had an interest in the purchased possession reserved for the faithful. Paul's language was strong. He was not able to find words of sufficient force to express the excellency of that glory, honor, and immortality which believers would receive when Christ should come. Compared with the scene upon which his mind's eye was dwelling, all temporal afflictions were but momentary, light afflictions, unworthy of thought. Viewed in the light of the cross, the things of this life were vanity and emptiness. The glory that attracted him was substantial, weighty, durable, beyond the power of language to describe.

Yet Paul comes as near to expressing it as he can, that the imagination may grasp the reality as far as is possible to finite minds. It was a weight of glory, a fullness of God, knowledge that was measureless. It was an eternal weight of glory. And yet Paul feels that his language is tame. It falls short of expressing the reality.

He reaches out for words more expressive. The boldest figures of speech would fall far short of the truth. He seeks the broadest terms which human language can supply, that the imagination may grasp in some degree the superlative excellency of the glory to be given the final overcomer.

Holiness, dignity, honor, and felicity in the presence of God are things now unseen except by the eye of faith. But the things which are seen, worldly honor, worldly pleasure, riches, and glory, are eclipsed by the excellency, the beauty, and resplendent glory of the things now unseen. The things of this world are temporal, enduring only for a time, while the things which are not seen are eternal, enduring through endless ages. To secure this infinite treasure is to gain everything and lose nothing ([Manuscript 58, 1900](#)).

18 (Colossians 3:2; Hebrews 11:27; see [EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18](#)). Seeing Him Who Is Invisible—Our minds take the level of the things on which our thoughts dwell, and if we think upon earthly things, we shall fail to take the impress of that which is heavenly. We would be greatly benefited by contemplating the mercy, goodness, and love of God; but we sustain great loss by dwelling upon those things which are earthly and temporal. We allow sorrow and care and perplexity to attract our minds to earth, and we magnify a molehill into a mountain....

Temporal things are not to engage our whole attention, or engross our minds until our thoughts are entirely of the earth and the earthly. We are to train, discipline, and educate the mind so that we may think in a heavenly channel, that we may dwell on things unseen and eternal, which will be discerned by spiritual vision. It is by seeing Him who is invisible that we may obtain strength of mind and vigor of spirit ([The Signs of the Times, January 9, 1893](#)).

Chapter 5

7. See [EGW comment on Romans 5:1](#).

10 (John 5:22; Romans 14:10; see [EGW comment on Romans 3:19](#)). **Christ the Judge**—God designed that the Prince of sufferers in humanity should be judge of the whole world. He who submitted to be arraigned before an earthly tribunal, He who came from the heavenly courts to save man from eternal death, He whom men despised, rejected, and upon whom they heaped all the contempt of which human beings inspired by Satan are capable, He who suffered the ignominious death of the cross—He alone was to pronounce the sentence of reward or of punishment ([Manuscript 39, 1898](#)).

11 (Psalm 119:53; Hebrews 4:1). **A Proper Fear of God**— [[Hebrews 4:1](#) quoted.] The Lord would have His people trust in Him and abide in His love, but that does not mean that we shall have no fear or misgivings. Some seem to think that if a man has a wholesome fear of the judgments of God, it is a proof that he is destitute of faith; but this is not so.

A proper fear of God, in believing His threatenings, works the peaceable fruits of righteousness, by causing the trembling soul to flee to Jesus. Many ought to have this spirit today, and turn to the Lord with humble contrition, for the Lord has not given so many terrible threatenings, pronounced so severe judgments in His Word, simply to have them recorded, but He means what He says. One says, “Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law,” Paul says, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” ([The Review and Herald, October 21, 1890](#)).

[1101] **14 (John 13:34; 1 John 4:7, 8).** **Love the Decision of a Sanctified Will**—The love of Christ in the heart is what is needed. Self is in need of being crucified. When self is submerged in Christ, true love springs forth spontaneously. It is not an emotion or an impulse, but a decision of a sanctified will. It consists not in feeling, but in the transformation of the whole heart, soul, and character, which is

dead to self and alive unto God. Our Lord and Saviour asks us to give ourselves to Him. Surrendering self to God is all He requires, giving ourselves to Him to be employed as He sees fit. Until we come to this point of surrender, we shall not work happily, usefully, or successfully anywhere ([Letter 97, 1898](#)).

17 (John 1:12, 13; 3:5-8). Grace Not Inherited—The old nature, born of blood and the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The old ways, the hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up; for grace is not inherited. The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies. Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ. When men who claim to be Christians retain all their natural defects of character and disposition, in what does their position differ from that of the worldling? They do not appreciate the truth as a sanctifier, a refiner. They have not been born again ([The Review and Herald, April 12, 1892](#)).

(1 John 2:6; Revelation 3:14-17.) Pure Religion an Imitation of Christ—Pure religion is an imitation of Christ. A religion that is built on self-confidence and selfishness is worthless. The true Christian is a follower of Christ. This following means walking in the light. The heart must be opened to receive the heavenly guest. As long as the heart is closed against His entrance, there can be in it no abiding peace. No sunshine can flood the chambers of the soul temple, breaking through the mist and cloud.

God makes no compromise with sin. A genuine conversion changes hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong. The religion of God is a firm fabric, composed of innumerable threads, and woven together with tact and skill. Only the wisdom which comes from God can make this fabric complete. There are a great many kinds of cloth which at first have a fine appearance, but they cannot endure the test. They wash out. The colors are not fast. Under the heat of summer they fade away and are lost. The cloth cannot endure rough handling.

So it is with the religion of many. When the warp and woof of character will not stand the test of trial, the material of which it is composed is worthless. The efforts made to patch the old with a

new piece do not better the condition of things; for the old, flimsy material breaks away from the new, leaving the rent much larger than before. Patching will not do. The only way is to discard the old garment altogether, and procure one entirely new.

Christ's plan is the only safe one. He declares, "Behold, I make all things new." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Christ gives man no encouragement to think that He will accept a patchwork character, made up mostly of self, with a little of Christ. This is the condition of the Laodicean church. At first there seems to be some of self and some of Christ. But soon it is all of self and none of Christ. The root of selfishness is revealed. It continues to grow, striking its roots deeper and deeper, till its branches are covered with objectionable fruit. Christ looks with pitying tenderness on all who have combination characters. Those with such a character have a connection with Christ so frail that it is utterly worthless ([Letter 105, 1893](#)).

Patchwork Character Not Acceptable—[[2 Corinthians 5:17](#) quoted.] The patchwork religion is not of the least value with God. He requires the whole heart. No part of it is to be reserved for the development of hereditary or cultivated tendencies to evil. To be harsh, to be severe, too self-important, selfish, to look out for one's own selfish interest and yet be zealous that others shall deal unselfishly is a religion which is an abomination to God. Many have just such an experience daily, but it is a misrepresentation of the character of Christ ([Letter 31a, 1894](#)).

[1102] **19 (John 1:18). Satan Sees in Christ a Manifestation of God's Character**—There stood in the world One who was a perfect representative of the Father, One whose character and practices refuted Satan's misrepresentation of God. Satan had charged upon God the attribute he himself possessed. Now in Christ he saw God revealed in His true character—a compassionate, merciful Father, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Him in repentance, and have eternal life ([The Signs of the Times, June 9, 1898](#)).

20. See [EGW comment on 1 Corinthians 3:9](#).

21. See [EGW comment on John 1:14](#).

Chapter 6

14-18 (see [EGW comment on Judges 2:2](#)). **Out of the World, Into God's Family**—Those who come out of the world in spirit and in all practice may regard themselves as sons and daughters of God. They may believe His Word as a child believes every word of his parents. Every promise is sure to him that believes. Those who unite with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who show by their lives that they are no longer following the course they followed before they united with these divine instrumentalities, will receive the wisdom from above. They will not depend on human wisdom. In order to deal righteously with the world, as members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King, Christians must feel their need of a power which comes only from the heavenly agencies who have pledged themselves to work in their behalf.

After we have formed a union with the great threefold power, we shall regard our duty toward the members of God's family with a much more sacred awe than we have ever done before. This is a phase of religious reform that very few appreciate. Those who seek to answer the prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," will seek by living pure, sanctified lives to show to the world how the will of God is done in heaven ([Manuscript 11, 1901](#)).

17 (see [EGW comment on Isaiah 8:12](#)). **The Sifting Instrument**—The world is the instrument that sifts the church and tests the genuineness of its members. The world holds out inducements that, when accepted, place the believer where his life is not in harmony with his profession....

If you go forward toward heaven, the world will rub hard against you. At every step you will have to urge your way against Satan and his evil angels, and against all who transgress God's law. Earthly authorities will interpose. You will meet tribulations, bruising of the spirit, hard speeches, ridicule, persecutions. Men will require your conformity to laws and customs that would render you disloyal to

God. Here is where God's people find the cross in the way to life ([Manuscript 3, 1885](#)).

17, 18 (Colossians 3:2; see [EGW comment on Proverbs 1:10; Romans 6:1-4](#)). Sever Every Earthly Tendril—Many professed Christians are well represented by the vine that is trailing upon the ground and entwining its tendrils about the roots and rubbish that lie in its path. To all such the message comes, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” There are conditions to meet if we would be blessed and honored by God. We are to separate from the world, and refuse to touch those things that will separate our affections from God. God has the first and highest claims upon His people. Set your affections upon Him and upon heavenly things. Your tendrils must be severed from everything earthly.

You are exhorted to touch not the unclean thing; for in touching this, you will yourself become unclean. It is impossible for you to unite with those who are corrupt, and still remain pure. “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?” God and Christ and the heavenly host would have man know that if he unites with the corrupt, he will become corrupt. Ample provision has been made that we may be raised from the lowlands of earth, and have our affections fastened upon God and upon heavenly things ([The Review and Herald, January 2, 1900](#)).

Chapter 8

1-8. Example of Others an Inducement to Giving—When a people have an earnest longing to help where help is needed in advancing the cause of God in any line, the Lord will impart to these consecrated, unselfish ones a heart to give gladly, as if it was a privilege. God moved on these Macedonians in their deep poverty to bestow liberally that their example might be recorded, thus leading others to exercise the same beneficence. [1103]

Encouraged by this movement, which showed the special working of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of the believers, Paul requested Titus to visit the Corinthian church and finish the collection which they had proposed and had already begun. He was anxious that they should perform that which they had promised through the grace of God working upon their hearts.

Lest they should be outstripped in liberality by the comparatively poor Macedonian churches, Paul not only writes to them, but sends Titus to attend to the collection. The apostle greatly desired to see in the believers symmetry of Christian character. He desired them to give evidence of their love and prove the sincerity of their faith. As disciples in full belief of the truth, he longed to see in them a lively sense of their obligation and accountability to God for the gospel. He desired that it should work in them as the power of God, and that they should bear testimony to its work by yielding fruit to the honor of God. As Christians under the control of God they were with all diligence to discharge every duty....

Paul laid no command upon the Corinthian brethren. But he set before them the necessity of the church at Jerusalem, and showed what others had given who had fewer advantages and less ability than had the Corinthians. He presented the example of others, to induce them to give ([Manuscript 12, 1900](#)).

6. Ministers to Teach Liberality—There is a lesson also in this chapter to those who are working in the cause of God. Paul says, “We desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in

you the same grace also”—that is, make you to abound in the grace of liberality. A responsibility rests upon the ministers of Christ to educate the churches to be liberal. Even the poor are to have a part in presenting their offerings to God. They are to be sharers of the grace of Christ in denying self to help those whose need is more pressing than their own. Why should the poor saints be denied the blessing of giving to aid those who are still poorer than themselves (MS 28, 1894)?

9. Christ’s Poverty a Part of His Great Sacrifice—The apostle called upon them to consider the example of Christ. The Commander of heaven gave Himself to a life of humiliation and poverty that He might stand side by side with the fallen race, to restore the moral image of God in man. The Lord Jesus was willing to become poor, that through His humiliation and His death on the cross He might pay the ransom for us.

Whether rich or poor, we must never forget that the poverty of Christ was a part of His legacy in humanity. It was not alone His betrayal in the garden or His agony upon the cross that constituted the atonement. The humiliation of which His poverty formed a part was included in His great sacrifice. The whole series of sorrows which compassed humanity Christ bore upon His divine soul ([Manuscript 12, 1900](#)).

([Matthew 11:28](#); [Philippians 2:5-8](#).) Why Christ Came as a Poor Man—When the plan of redemption was laid, it was decided that Christ should not appear in accordance with His divine character; for then He could not associate with the distressed and the suffering. He must come as a poor man. He could have appeared in accordance with His exalted station in the heavenly courts; but no, He must reach to the very lowest depths of human suffering and poverty, that His voice might be heard by the burdened and disappointed, that to the weary, sinsick soul He might reveal Himself as the Restorer, the desire of all nations, the Rest-giver. And to those who are longing for rest and peace today just as truly as to those who listened to His words in Judea, He is saying, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” ([Manuscript 14, 1897](#)).

Christ’s Poverty Paul’s Mighty Argument—Here was the apostle’s mighty argument. It is not the commandment of Paul, but of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Son of God had left His heavenly

home, with its riches and honor and glory, and clothed His divinity with humanity—not to live in the palaces of kings, without care or labor, and to be supplied with all the conveniences which human nature naturally craves. In the councils of heaven He had chosen to stand in the ranks of the poor and oppressed, to take His part with the humble workers, and learn the trade of His earthly parent, which was that of a carpenter, a builder. He came to the world to be a reconstructor of character, and He brought into all His work of building the perfection which He desired to bring into the characters He was transforming by His divine power. [1104]

Paul presents his pattern, his ideal. Christ had given Himself to a life of poverty that they might become rich in heavenly treasure. He would refresh their memories in regard to the sacrifice made in their behalf. Christ was commander in the heavenly courts, yet He took the lowest place in this world. He was rich, yet for our sakes, He became poor. It was not spiritual riches that He left behind; He was always abounding in the gifts of the Spirit. But He was of poor parentage. The world never saw its Lord wealthy ([Manuscript 98, 1899](#)).

Rich in Attainments—Christ, the Majesty of heaven, became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. Not rich merely in endowments, but rich in attainments.

These are the riches that Christ earnestly longs that His followers shall possess. As the true seeker after the truth reads the Word, and opens his mind to receive the Word, he longs after truth with his whole heart. The love, the pity, the tenderness, the courtesy, the Christian politeness, which will be the elements in the heavenly mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for those that love Him, take possession of his soul. His purpose is steadfast. He is determined to stand on the side of righteousness. Truth has found its way into the heart, and is planted there by the Holy Spirit, who is the truth. When truth takes hold of the heart, the man gives sure evidence of this by becoming a steward of the grace of Christ ([Manuscript 7, 1898](#)).

12. See [EGW comment on Acts 16:14](#).

16-18, 23. Titus Journeys to Corinth—Paul's testimony was accepted as of great weight, because of the many revelations he had received. He knew better than did many others of the necessities of various places. But Paul was unwilling to take personal charge of

the raising of this contribution. He had been largely instrumental in causing it to be raised, but, lest any should find occasion to speak evil, Titus and his companions ... made the journey to Corinth; for there was no safe way of transporting money at that time ([Manuscript 101, 1906](#)).

16-22. Paul Commends Titus to the Corinthians—Titus has been so successful in raising gifts among the churches in Macedonia that Paul desired him to visit Corinth and continue in the same work. Another brother, “whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches,” and still another “whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things,” were sent to accompany Titus. Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians commending to them these brethren who had so willingly undertaken such a difficult task. In this letter he reminded them of an effort that had been put forth a year previous to raise a contribution at Corinth ([Manuscript 101, 1906](#)).

21. See [EGW comment on Romans 12:17](#).

Chapters 8, 9

Let not selfish motives lead you to withhold the funds that are needed in unworked fields. When we are tempted to withhold that which is needed in foreign fields, let us study the eighth and ninth chapters of Second Corinthians, and learn to emulate the liberal spirit which made the Macedonians willing to give “beyond their power” to the cause that called for their assistance ([Manuscript 11, 1908](#)).

Chapter 9

2. A Thousand Torches Kindled—Those who occupy positions of influence and responsibility in the church should be foremost in the work of God. If they move reluctantly, others will not move at all. But their zeal will provoke very many. When their light burns brightly, a thousand torches will be kindled at the flame ([The Southern Work, April 5, 1904](#)).

6 (1 Timothy 6:19; Hebrews 11:26). How Bright the Crown?—The reward, the glories of heaven, bestowed upon the overcomers, will be proportionate to the degree in which they have represented the character of Christ to the world. “He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.” Thank God that it is our privilege to sow on earth the seed that will be harvested in eternity. The crown of life will be bright or dim, will glitter with many stars, or be lighted by few gems, in accordance with our own course of action.

Day by day we may be laying up a good foundation against the time to come. By self-denial, by the exercise of the missionary spirit, by crowding all the good works possible into our life, by seeking so to represent Christ in character that we shall win many souls to the truth, we shall have respect unto the recompense of reward. It rests with us to walk in the light, to make the most of every opportunity and privilege, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so we shall work the works of Christ, and ensure for ourselves treasure in the heavens ([The Review and Herald, January 29, 1895](#)).

7. Giving Grudgingly Mocks God—It were better not to give at all than to give grudgingly; for if we impart of our means when we have not the spirit to give freely, we mock God. Let us bear in mind that we are dealing with One upon whom we depend for every blessing, One who reads every thought of the heart, every purpose of the mind ([The Review and Herald, May 15, 1900](#)).

Chapter 10

1, 7, 8. See [EGW comment on Acts 18:1-3](#).

4. See [EGW comment on 1 Corinthians 3:9](#).

5 (Colossians 3:10). Every Faculty to Reflect the Divine Mind—It was a wonderful thing for God to create man, to make mind. The glory of God is to be revealed in the creation of man in God's image and in his redemption. One soul is of more value than a world. God created man that every faculty might be the faculty of the divine mind. The Lord Jesus Christ is the author of our being, and He is also the author of our redemption, and everyone who will enter the kingdom of God will develop a character that is the counterpart of the character of God. None can dwell with God in the holy heaven but those who bear His likeness. Those who are to be redeemed are to be overcomers; they are to be elevated, pure, one with Christ ([Letter 55, 1895](#)).

God the Author of Every Noble Thought—Will men and women consider how God regards the creatures He has made? He formed man's mind. We do not think one noble thought that does not come from Him. He knows all the mysterious workings of the human mind, for did He not make it? God sees that sin has debased and degraded man, but He looks upon him with pity and compassion; for He sees that Satan has him in his power ([Manuscript 56, 1889](#)).

The Power of Intellect—Intellect ennobled, purified, heaven directed, is the universal power to build up the kingdom of God. Intellect perverted, has exactly the opposite influence; it is a corrupting of the human power given in trust to be multiplied in earnest labor for good. It deceives and destroys. God has given sufficient endowments to make men capable and wise to carry forward, and strongly and graciously to represent, the Lord's wonderful works to all those who love Him and obey His commandments ([Manuscript 63, 1900](#)).

Yielded to Whom?—Satan cannot touch the mind or intellect unless we yield it to him ([Manuscript 17, 1893](#)).

The devil will use your mind if you give it to him ([Manuscript 2, 1893](#)).

Chapter 11

Judging Not Man's Prerogative—The 11th chapter of 2 Corinthians contains much instruction. It reveals to us that men who are liable to view matters after human eyesight may make very grave mistakes if they engage in a work that God has not appointed, but condemned. That work is to criticize, to climb upon the judgment seat, and pronounce sentence. How much better would it be for the spiritual advancement of such to look well to their own shortcomings and defects of character through watchful examination of their own hearts, to try to remove from them the beam of faultfinding, of evil surmising, of evil speaking, of bearing false witness, of hatred, and accusing of the brethren ([Manuscript 142, 1897](#)).

14 ([Matthew 24:24](#); [10:4](#); see [EGW comment on Ephesians 6:10-12](#)). **Meeting Satan's Crowning Deception**—Satan came as an angel of light in the wilderness of temptation to deceive Christ; and he does not come to man in a hideous form, as he is sometimes represented, but as an angel of light. He will come personating Jesus Christ, working mighty miracles; and men will fall down and worship him as Jesus Christ. We shall be commanded to worship this being, whom the world will glorify as Christ. What shall we do?—Tell them that Christ has warned us against just such a foe, who is man's worst enemy, yet who claims to be God; and that when Christ shall make His appearance, it will be with power and great glory, accompanied by ten thousand times ten thousand angels and thousands of thousands; and that when He shall come, we shall know His voice ([The Review and Herald, December 18, 1888](#)).

[1106]

([Matthew 7:15](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:7-12](#).) An Unfailing Test—Satan has come down in these last days to work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. His satanic majesty works miracles in the sight of false prophets, in the sight of men, claiming that he is indeed Christ Himself. Satan gives his power to those who are aiding him in his deceptions; therefore those who claim to have the great power of God can only be discerned by the

great detector, the law of Jehovah. The Lord tells us if it were possible they would deceive the very elect. The sheep's clothing seems so real, so genuine, that the wolf can be discerned only as we go to God's great moral standard and there find that they are transgressors of the law of Jehovah ([The Review and Herald, August 25, 1885](#)).

Preparing for the Final Act—This world is a theater. The actors, the inhabitants of the world, are preparing to act their part in the last great drama. God is lost sight of. There is no unity of purpose, except as parties of men confederate to gain their ends. God is looking on. His purposes in regard to His rebellious subjects will be fulfilled. The world has not been given into the hands of men, though God is permitting the elements of confusion and disorder to bear sway for a season. A power from beneath is working to bring about the last great scenes in the drama—Satan coming as Christ, and working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are binding themselves together in secret societies. Those who are yielding to the passion for confederation are working out the plans of the enemy. The cause will be followed by the effect ([Letter 141, 1902](#)).

(Ephesians 6:10-12.) Constant Vigilance Demanded—[[Ephesians 6:10-12](#) quoted.] Every one who has enlisted under the blood-stained banner of Christ has entered upon a warfare that demands constant vigilance. Satan is determined to keep up the warfare to the end. Coming as an angel of light, claiming to be the Christ, he will deceive the world. But his triumph will be short. No storm or tempest can move those whose feet are planted on the principles of eternal truth. They will be able to stand in this time of almost universal apostasy ([Manuscript 74, 1903](#)).

14, 15. See [EGW comment on Matthew 7:21-23](#).

23-30. Paul's Indomitable Courage—Gain courage from the experience of the apostle Paul. He had many trials. He was an unwearied worker, and traveled constantly, sometimes through inhospitable regions, sometimes on the water, in storm and tempest. Far harder than ours was his lot, for traveling then had not the conveniences that it has now. But Paul allowed nothing to hinder him from his work ([Letter 107, 1904](#)).

Chapter 12

1 (Philippians 3:8). Paul Taught by the Holy Spirit—The apostle Paul, who had received many revelations from the Lord, met difficulties from various sources, and amid all his conflicts and discouragements he did not lose his trust and confidence in God. Under the special tuition of the Holy Spirit, his judgment was purified, refined, elevated, sanctified. The devisings of human beings and of the enemy against him were to him a means of discipline and education, and he declares that thus he gained most excellent knowledge, because he made the Lord Jesus his dependence. “Yea doubtless,” he declares, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” How greatly this gospel enriches the garden of the soul, enabling it to produce most precious fruit ([Letter 127, 1903](#))!

1-4. Paul’s Preaching With Power—Through Paul God has given many wonderful lessons for our instruction. In his visions Paul saw many things not lawful for a man to utter. But many other things which he saw in the heavenly courts were woven into his teachings. The truth flashed from his lips as a sharp, two-edged sword. The impressions made upon his mind by the Holy Spirit were strong and vivid, and they were presented to the people in a way that no one else could present them. Paul spoke in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power ([Letter 105, 1901](#)).

[1107]

(1 Corinthians 9:27.) Paul Remained Humble—The apostle Paul was highly honored of God, being taken in holy vision to the third heaven, where he looked upon scenes whose glories might not be revealed to mortals. Yet all this did not lead him to boastfulness or self-confidence. He realized the importance of constant watchfulness and self-denial, and plainly declares, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” ([The Review and Herald, May 3, 1881](#)).

(Philippians 3:12; 1 Timothy 1:15.) Paul had a very humble opinion of his own advancement in the Christian life. He says, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.” He speaks of himself as the chief of sinners. Yet Paul had been highly honored of the Lord. He had been taken, in holy vision, to the third heaven, and had there received revelations of divine glory which he could not be permitted to make known (*The Signs of the Times*, January 11, 1883).

(Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:8, 9; Colossians 1:26.) Hidden Mysteries Revealed—Mysteries which had been hidden for ages were revealed to him [Paul], and as much as he could bear of the workings of God, and of His dealings with human minds, was made known. The Lord told Paul that he must preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Light was to be given to the Gentiles. This is a mystery which had been hidden for ages (*The Signs of the Times*, January 30, 1912).

4 (2 Corinthians 4:17, 18). Glories of Heaven Indescribable—Paul had a view of heaven, and in discoursing on the glories there, the very best thing he could do was to not try to describe them. He tells us that eye had not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for those that love Him. So you may put your imagination to the stretch, you may try to the very best of your abilities to take in and consider the eternal weight of glory, and yet your finite senses, faint and weary with the effort, cannot grasp it, for there is an infinity beyond. It takes all of eternity to unfold the glories and bring out the precious treasures of the Word of God (*Manuscript 13*, 1888).

7-9 (see EGW comment on Acts 9:8, 9). Paul’s Affliction Not Removed—Paul had a bodily affliction; his eyesight was bad. He thought that by earnest prayer the difficulty might be removed. But the Lord had His own purpose, and He said to Paul, Speak to Me no more of this matter. My grace is sufficient. It will enable you to bear the infirmity (*Letter 207*, 1899).

Painful Impediments in Paul’s Work—A deep sadness still rested upon the mind and heart of Paul because of his apprehensions concerning the Corinthian church. While at Philippi he commenced his second epistle to them, for they hung as a heavy weight upon his soul. The depression of spirits from which the apostle suffered

was, however, attributable in a great degree to bodily infirmities, which made him very restless when not engaged in active service. But when working for the salvation of souls, he rose superior to physical debility. He felt that the disease under which he suffered was a terrible impediment to him in his great work, and repeatedly besought the Lord to relieve him. God did not see fit to answer his prayers in this respect, though He gave him assurance that divine grace should be sufficient for him ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 175, 176](#)).

Chapter 13

5 (2 Corinthians 2:11). Satan's Little Wedges—Those who have no time to give attention to their own souls, to examine themselves daily whether they be in the love of God, and place themselves in the channel of light, will have time to give to the suggestions of Satan, and the working out of his plans.

Satan will insinuate himself by little wedges, that widen as they make a place for themselves. The specious devices of Satan will be brought into the special work of God at this time ([Manuscript 16, 1890](#)).

* * * * *

Galatians

[1108]

Chapter 1

6, 7. Trouble in Galatia—In almost every church there were some members who were Jews by birth. To these converts the Jewish teachers found ready access, and through them gained a foothold in the churches. It was impossible, by scriptural arguments, to overthrow the doctrines taught by Paul; hence they resorted to the most unscrupulous measures to counteract his influence and weaken his authority. They declared that he had not been a disciple of Jesus, and had received no commission from Him; yet he had presumed to teach doctrines directly opposed to those held by Peter, James, and the other apostles. Thus the emissaries of Judaism succeeded in alienating many of the Christian converts from their teacher in the gospel. Having gained this point, they induced them to return to the observance of the ceremonial law as essential to salvation. Faith in Christ, and obedience to the law of ten commandments, were regarded as of minor importance. Division, heresy, and sensualism were rapidly gaining ground among the believers in Galatia.

Paul's soul was stirred as he saw the evils that threatened speedily to destroy these churches. He immediately wrote to the Galatians, exposing their false theories, and with great severity rebuking those who had departed from the faith ([Sketches from the Life of Paul, 188, 189](#)).

17, 18. See [EGW comment on Acts 9:25-27](#).

Chapter 2

1-10 (Acts 15:4-29). The Wisdom of Paul—Paul ... describes the visit which he made to Jerusalem to secure a settlement of the very questions which are now agitating the churches of Galatia, as to whether the Gentiles should submit to circumcision and keep the ceremonial law. This was the only instance in which he had deferred to the judgment of the other apostles as superior to his own. He had first sought a private interview, in which he set the matter in all its bearings before the leading apostles, Peter, James, and John. With far-seeing wisdom, he concluded that if these men could be led to take a right position, everything would be gained. Had he first presented the question before the whole council, there would have been a division of sentiment. The strong prejudice already excited because he had not enforced circumcision on the Gentiles, would have led many to take a stand against him. Thus the object of his visit would have been defeated, and his usefulness greatly hindered. But the three leading apostles, against whom no such prejudice existed, having themselves been won to the true position, brought the matter before the council, and won from all a concurrence in the decision to leave the Gentiles free from the obligations of the ceremonial law (*Sketches from the Life of Paul*, 192, 193).

11, 12 (James 1:8; see EGW comment on Acts 21:20-26). When Strong Men Waver—Even the best of men, if left to themselves, will make grave blunders. The more responsibilities placed upon the human agent, the higher his position to dictate and control, the more mischief he is sure to do in perverting minds and hearts if he does not carefully follow the way of the Lord. At Antioch Peter failed in the principles of integrity. Paul had to withstand his subverting influence face to face. This is recorded that others may profit by it, and that the lesson may be a solemn warning to the men in high places, that they may not fail in integrity, but keep close to principle.

[1109]

After all the failures of Peter, after his fall and restoration, his long course of service, his intimate acquaintance with Christ, his knowledge of Christ's pure, straightforward practice of principle; after all the instruction he had received, all the gifts and knowledge and great influence in preaching and teaching the Word, is it not strange that he should dissemble and evade the principles of the gospel, for fear of man, or in order to gain his esteem? Is it not strange that he should waver, and be two-sided in his position? May God give every man a sense of his own personal helplessness to steer his own vessel straight and safely into the harbor. The grace of Christ is essential every day. His matchless grace alone can save our feet from falling ([Manuscript 122, 1897](#)).

16 (Galatians 3:10-13, 24; Romans 3:19-28; 5:1). No Room for Self-sufficiency—We are justified by faith. The soul who understands the meaning of these words will never be self-sufficient. We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves. The Holy Spirit is our efficiency in the work of character building, in forming characters after the divine similitude. When we think ourselves capable of molding our own experience, we make a great mistake. We can never of ourselves obtain the victory over temptation. But those who have genuine faith in Christ will be worked by the Holy Spirit. The soul in whose heart faith abides will grow into a beautiful temple for the Lord. He is directed by the grace of Christ. Just in proportion as he depends on the Holy Spirit's teaching he will grow ([Manuscript 8, 1900](#)).

20 (Philippians 1:21; Colossians 3:3; see EGW comment on Revelation 3:1). The Greatest Work in the World—Everything good in men and women is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit teaches us to reveal righteousness in our lives. The greatest work that can be done in our world is to glorify God by living the character of Christ. God will make perfect only those who will die to self. Those who are willing to do this can say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" ([Manuscript 16, 1900](#)).

Chapter 3

6-9. See [EGW comment on Romans 8:15](#).

8. See [EGW comment on Genesis 12:2, 3; Acts 15:11](#).

10-13. See [EGW comment on Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:19-28](#).

13. See [EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 3:7-18; Hebrews 13:11-13](#).

19. See [EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 3:7-11](#).

24 (Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:19-28). **The Law Points to Christ**—The law has no power to pardon the transgressor, but it points him to Christ Jesus, who says to him, I will take your sin and bear it Myself, if you will accept Me as your substitute and surety. Return to your allegiance, and I will impute to you My righteousness ([The Review and Herald, May 7, 1901](#)).

Which Law Is the Schoolmaster?—I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments.

Christ was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. The death of Abel was in consequence of Cain's refusing to accept God's plan in the school of obedience, to be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, typified by the sacrificial offerings pointing to Christ. Cain refused the shedding of blood, which symbolized the blood of Christ to be shed for the world. This whole ceremony was prepared by God, and Christ became the foundation of the whole system. This is the beginning of its work as the schoolmaster to bring sinful human agents to a consideration of Christ.

All who did service in connection with the sanctuary were being educated constantly in regard to the intervention of Christ in behalf of the human race. This service was designed to create in every heart a love for the law of God, which is the law of His kingdom. The sacrificial offering was to be an object lesson of the love of God revealed in Christ—in the suffering, dying victim, who took upon

Himself the sin of which man was guilty, the innocent being made sin for us.

In the contemplation of this great theme of salvation, we see Christ's work. Not only the promised gift of the Spirit, but also the nature and character of this sacrifice and intervention, is a subject which should create in our hearts elevated, sacred, high ideas of the law of God, which holds its claims upon every human agency. The violation of that law in the small act of eating of the forbidden fruit, brought upon man and upon the earth the consequence of disobedience to the holy law of God. The nature of the intervention should ever make man afraid to do the smallest action in disobedience to God's requirement.

There should be a clear understanding of that which constitutes sin, and we should avoid the least approach to step over the boundaries from obedience to disobedience.

[1110] God would have every member of His creation understand the great work of the infinite Son of God in giving His life for the salvation of the world. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not."

When he sees in Christ the embodiment of infinite and disinterested love and benevolence, there is awakened in the heart of the sinner a thankful disposition to follow where Christ is drawing ([Manuscript 87, 1900](#)).

Especially the Moral Law—"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. The law reveals sin to us, and causes us to feel our need of Christ, and to flee unto Him for pardon and peace by exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ....

The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the

immutable principles of righteousness seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression.

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.

The law is an expression of God's idea. When we receive it in Christ, it becomes our idea. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin ([Manuscript 23a, 1896](#)).

The Relation of the Two Laws—It is not so essential to understand the precise particulars in regard to the relation of the two laws. It is of far greater consequence that we know whether we are transgressing the law of God, whether we stand in obedience or disobedience before the holy precepts ([Letter 165, 1901](#)).

24-26 (Galatians 6:14; 1 John 3:4). Christ the Only Remedy—When the mind is drawn to the cross of Calvary, Christ by imperfect sight is discerned on the shameful cross. Why did He die? In consequence of sin. What is sin? The transgression of the law. Then the eyes are open to see the character of sin. The law is broken but cannot pardon the transgressor. It is our schoolmaster, condemning to punishment. Where is the remedy? The law drives us to Christ, who was hanged upon the cross that He might be able to impart His righteousness to fallen, sinful man and thus present men to His Father in His righteous character ([Manuscript 50, 1900](#)).

Chapter 4

7. See [EGW comment on Romans 8:17](#).

24-31. See [EGW comment on Romans 8:15-21](#).

Chapter 5

1. See [EGW comment on Romans 8:15-21](#).

1, 2 (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). The Controversy Over Circumcision—Factions also were beginning to rise through the influence of Judaizing teachers, who urged that the converts to Christianity should observe the ceremonial law in the matter of circumcision. They still maintained that the original Israel were the exalted and privileged children of Abraham, and were entitled to all the promises made to him. They sincerely thought that in taking this medium ground between Jew and Christian, they would succeed in removing the odium which attached to Christianity, and would gather in large numbers of the Jews.

They vindicated their position, which was in opposition to that of Paul, by showing that the course of the apostle, in receiving the Gentiles into the church without circumcision, prevented more Jews from accepting the faith than there were accessions from the Gentiles. Thus they excused their opposition to the results of the calm deliberations of God's acknowledged servants. They refused to admit that the work of Christ embraced the whole world. They claimed that He was the Saviour of the Hebrews alone; therefore they maintained that the Gentiles should receive circumcision before being admitted to the privileges of the church of Christ. [1111]

After the decision of the council at Jerusalem concerning this question, many were still of this opinion, but did not then push their opposition any farther. The council had, on that occasion, decided that the converts from the Jewish church might observe the ordinances of the Mosaic law if they chose, while those ordinances should not be made obligatory upon converts from the Gentiles. The opposing class now took advantage of this, to urge a distinction between the observers of the ceremonial law and those who did not observe it, holding that the latter were farther from God than the former.

Paul's indignation was stirred. His voice was raised in stern rebuke: "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." The party maintaining that Christianity was valueless without circumcision arrayed themselves against the apostle, and he had to meet them in every church which he founded or visited: in Jerusalem, Antioch, Galatia, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome. God urged him out to the great work of preaching Christ, and Him crucified; circumcision or uncircumcision was nothing. The Judaizing party looked upon Paul as an apostate, bent upon breaking down the partition wall which God had established between the Israelites and the world. They visited every church which he had organized, creating divisions. Holding that the end would justify the means, they circulated false charges against the apostle, and endeavored to bring him into disrepute. As Paul, in visiting the churches, followed after these zealous and unscrupulous opposers, he met many who viewed him with distrust, and some who even despised his labors.

These divisions in regard to the ceremonial law, and the relative merits of the different ministers teaching the doctrine of Christ, caused the apostle much anxiety and hard labor [1 Corinthians 1:10-13 quoted] ([Sketches from the Life of Paul](#), 121, 122).

6 (Philippians 2:12; 1 Timothy 6:12; Titus 2:14; James 2:14-20; 1 Peter 1:22; Revelation 2:2; see EGW comment on Titus 1:9-11). Bible Religion Means Constant Work—Genuine faith always works by love. When you look to Calvary it is not to quiet your soul in the non-performance of duty, not to compose yourself to sleep, but to create faith in Jesus, faith that will work, purifying the soul from the slime of selfishness. When we lay hold of Christ by faith, our work has just begun. Every man has corrupt and sinful habits that must be overcome by vigorous warfare. Every soul is required to fight the fight of faith. If one is a follower of Christ, he cannot be sharp in deal, he cannot be hardhearted, devoid of sympathy. He cannot be coarse in his speech. He cannot be full of pomposity and self-esteem. He cannot be overbearing, nor can he use harsh words, and censure and condemn.

The labor of love springs from the work of faith. Bible religion means constant work. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,

for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” We are to be zealous of good works; be careful to maintain good works. And the true Witness says, “I know thy works.”

While it is true that our busy activities will not in themselves ensure salvation, it is also true that faith which unites us to Christ will stir the soul to activity ([Manuscript 16, 1890](#)).

17 (Ephesians 6:12). Stern Conflicts in the Christian Life—The life of the Christian is not all smooth. He has stern conflicts to meet. Severe temptations assail him. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” The nearer we come to the close of this earth’s history, the more delusive and ensnaring will be the attacks of the enemy. His attacks will grow fiercer and more frequent. Those who resist light and truth will become more hardened and unimpressible, and more bitter against those who love God and keep His commandments ([Manuscript 33, 1911](#)).

22, 23 (Ephesians 5:9). The Indwelling of the Spirit—The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. We do not see Christ and speak to Him, but His Holy Spirit is just as near us in one place as in another. It works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of the Spirit reveal the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith ([Manuscript 41, 1897](#)). [1112]

Chapter 6

1, 2 (Hebrews 12:12, 13). Working in the Spirit of Meekness—[Galatians 6:1 quoted.] The restoring is to be done, not in a proud, officious, masterly manner, but in the spirit of meekness. Do not cast your brother aside, saying. He has disappointed me, and I shall not try to help him [Galatians 6:2 quoted] (Manuscript 117a, 1901).

7. See EGW comment on Exodus 4:21; 20:16.

7, 8 (Romans 2:6; see EGW comment on Judges 16). The Harvest of Resistance—The Spirit of God keeps evil under the control of conscience. When man exalts himself above the influence of the Spirit, he reaps a harvest of iniquity. Over such a man the Spirit has less and less influence to restrain him from sowing seeds of disobedience. Warnings have less and less power over him. He gradually loses his fear of God. He sows to the flesh; he will reap corruption. The harvest of the seed that he himself has sown, is ripening. He has a contempt for God's holy commandments. His heart of flesh becomes a heart of stone. Resistance to truth confirms him in iniquity. It is because men sowed seeds of evil, that lawlessness, crime, and violence prevailed in the antediluvian world.

All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against man. He does not make man spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable man to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force man to receive truth. He leaves him free to choose the good or to choose the evil. If man resists evidence that is sufficient to guide his judgment in the right direction, and chooses evil once, he will do this more readily the second time. The third time he will still more eagerly withdraw himself from God and choose to stand on the side of Satan. And in this course he will continue until he is confirmed in evil, and believes the lie he has cherished as truth. His resistance has produced its harvest (Manuscript 126, 1901).

(Revelation 3:21.) A Life and Death Question—[Galatians 6:7, 8 quoted.] Wonderful truth! This is a two-edged sword which cuts both ways. This life and death question is before the whole human race. The choice we make in this life will be our choice through all eternity. We shall receive either eternal life or eternal death. There is no middle ground, no second probation. We are called upon to overcome in this life as Christ overcame. Heaven has provided us with abundant opportunities and privileges, so that we may overcome as Christ overcame, and sit down with Him on His throne. But in order to be overcomers, there must be in our lives no petting of fleshly inclinations. All selfishness must be cut out by the roots (Letter 156, 1900).

14 (see EGW comment on Galatians 3:24-26; John 3:14-17; 12:32; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Revelation 12:10). The Cross the Source of Power—We behold in the cross of Christ our efficiency, our inexhaustible source of power (Letter 129, 1898).

The Guarantee of Success—Behold in the cross of Christ the only sure guarantee for individual excellence and success. And the more the heart is wrapped up in Christ, the more secure is the treasure in the eternal world (Letter 129, 1897).

(Philippians 1:21.) Paul a Living Example for Every Christian—Paul was a living example of what every true Christian should be. He lived for God's glory. His words come sounding down the line to our time: "For to me to live is Christ." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." He who was once a persecutor of Christ in the person of His saints now holds up before the world the cross of Christ. Paul's heart burned with a love for souls, and he gave all his energies for the conversion of men. There never lived a more self-denying, earnest, persevering worker. His life was Christ; he worked the works of Christ. All the blessings he received were prized as so many advantages to be used in blessing others (The Review and Herald, May 29, 1900).

[1113]

(Isaiah 45:21, 22; Matthew 16:24; John 1:29.) Look and Live—Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." Will not our church members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Saviour, in whom their hopes of eternal life

are centered? This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer. If we can awaken an interest in men's minds that will cause them to fix their eyes on Christ, we may step aside, and ask them only to continue to fix their eyes upon the Lamb of God. They thus receive their lesson. Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. He whose eyes are fixed on Jesus will leave all. He will die to selfishness. He will believe in all the Word of God, which is so gloriously and wonderfully exalted in Christ.

As the sinner sees Jesus as He is, an all compassionate Saviour, hope and assurance take possession of his soul. The helpless soul is cast without any reservation upon Jesus. None can bear away from the vision of Christ Jesus crucified a lingering doubt. Unbelief is gone ([Manuscript 49, 1898](#)).

(Psalm 85:10; see [EGW comment on James 2:13](#).) The Cross of Christ Moves the World—The cross of Calvary challenges, and will finally vanquish every earthly and hellish power. In the cross all influence centers, and from it all influence goes forth. It is the great center of attraction; for on it Christ gave up His life for the human race. This sacrifice was offered for the purpose of restoring man to his original perfection. Yea, more, it was offered to give him an entire transformation of character, making him more than a conqueror.

Those who in the strength of Christ overcome the great enemy of God and man, will occupy a position in the heavenly courts above angels who have never fallen.

Christ declares, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." If the cross does not find an influence in its favor, it creates an influence. Through generation succeeding generation, the truth for this time is revealed as present truth. Christ on the cross was the medium whereby mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. This is the means that is to move the world ([Manuscript 56, 1899](#)).

17. See [EGW comment on Acts 9:8, 9](#).

Ephesians

Chapter 1

Precious Instruction for All—The whole of this first chapter of Ephesians contains precious instruction for every soul ([Manuscript 110, 1903](#)).

1. See [EGW comment on Revelation 2:1-5](#).

3-6 (John 1:12; Colossians 1:26, 27; 2:2, 3, 10). The Gospel Is True Science—[[Ephesians 1:3-6](#) quoted.] These divine heights the true believer may reach. All who will may see the mystery of godliness. But it is only through a correct understanding of Christ's mission and work that the possibility of being complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved, is brought within our reach. His long human arm embraces the human family; His divine arm grasps the throne of the Infinite, that man may have the benefit of the infinite sacrifice made in his behalf. And to as many as receive Him, He gives the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

[1114] There are many who are too exalted in their own opinion to receive this mystery. There is a science that the Most High would have these great men understand; but they cannot see the Truth, the Life, the Light of the world. Human science is not divine enlightenment. Divine science is the demonstration of the Spirit of God, inspiring implicit faith in Him. The men of the world suppose this faith to be beneath the notice of their great and intelligent minds, something too low to give attention to; but here they make a great mistake. It is altogether too high for their human intelligence to reach.

The gospel message is far from being opposed to true knowledge and intellectual attainments. It is itself true science, true intellectual knowledge. True wisdom is infinitely above the comprehension of the worldly wise. The hidden wisdom, which is Christ formed within, the hope of glory, is a wisdom high as heaven. The deep principles of godliness are sublime and eternal. A Christian experience alone can help us to understand this problem, and obtain the treasures of knowledge which have been hidden in the counsels of

God, but are now made known to all who have a vital connection with Christ. All who will may know of the doctrine ([The Review and Herald, July 18, 1899](#)).

4. See [EGW comment on 2 Peter 1:10](#).

4, 5, 11 (Romans 8:29, 30; 1 Peter 1:2). God's Predestination—The Father sets His love upon His elect people who live in the midst of men. These are the people whom Christ has redeemed by the price of His own blood; and because they respond to the drawing of Christ, through the sovereign mercy of God, they are elected to be saved as His obedient children. Upon them is manifested the free grace of God, the love wherewith He hath loved them. Everyone who will humble himself as a little child, who will receive and obey the Word of God with a child's simplicity, will be among the elect of God....

[[Ephesians 1:2-11](#) quoted.]

In the council of heaven, provision was made that men, though transgressors, should not perish in their disobedience, but, through faith in Christ as their substitute and surety, might become the elect of God, predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will. God wills that all men should be saved; for ample provision has been made, in giving His only-begotten Son to pay man's ransom. Those who perish will perish because they refuse to be adopted as children of God through Christ Jesus ([The Signs of the Times, January 2, 1893](#)).

Eternal Covenant Given to Abraham—[[Ephesians 1:3-5](#) quoted.] Before the foundations of the earth were laid the covenant was made that all who were obedient, all who should through the abundant grace provided become holy in character and without blame before God by appropriating that grace, should be children of God. This covenant, made from eternity, was given to Abraham nineteen hundred years before Christ came. With what interest and what intensity did Christ in humanity study the human race to see if they would avail themselves of the provision offered ([Manuscript 9, 1896](#)).

(Ezekiel 18:20-24; 33:12-16; Romans 11:4-6; 1:2; 2 Peter 1:10; 2:15-21.) No Unconditional Election—[[2 Peter 1:2-10](#) quoted.] Here is the condition of the only saving election in the Word of God. We are to become partakers of the divine nature,

having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. We are to add grace to grace, and the promise is, “If ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

There is no such thing in the Word of God as unconditional election—once in grace, always in grace. In the second chapter of Second Peter the subject is made plain and distinct. After a history of some who followed an evil course, the explanation is given: “which have forsaken the right way, ... following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.” ... [2 Peter 2:15-20 quoted.] Here is a class of whom the apostle warns, “For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” ...

[1115]

There is truth to be received if souls are saved. The keeping of the commandments of God is life eternal to the receiver. But the Scriptures make it plain that those who once knew the way of life and rejoiced in the truth are in danger of falling through apostasy, and being lost. Therefore there is need of a decided, daily conversion to God.

All who seek to sustain the doctrine of election, once in grace, always in grace, do this against a plain, “Thus saith the Lord.” ... [Ezekiel 18:21; 33:13 quoted.]

Those who have been truly converted have been buried with Christ in the likeness of His death, and raised from the watery grave in the likeness of His resurrection, to walk in newness of life. By faithful obedience to the truth they are to make their calling and election sure (*Manuscript 57, 1900*).

6 (Ephesians 2:7; see EGW comment on Matthew 3:16, 17; Luke 17:10; Ephesians 1:20, 21; Hebrews 4:15, 16; 9:24). Exalting Christ’s Character—The most gifted men on the earth could all find abundant employment, from now until the judgment, for all their God-given powers, in exalting the character of Christ. But they would still fail to present Him as He is. The mysteries of redemption, embracing Christ’s divine-human character, His incarnation, His atonement for sin, could employ the pens and the highest mental powers of the wisest men from now until Christ shall be revealed in

the clouds of heaven in power and great glory. But though these men should seek with all their power to give a representation of Christ and His work, the representation would fall far short of the reality....

The theme of redemption will employ the minds and tongues of the redeemed through everlasting ages. The reflection of the glory of God will shine forth forever and ever from the Saviour's face ([Letter 280, 1904](#)).

7. See [EGW comment on Ephesians 4:7; Romans 7:12](#).

13. See [EGW comment on Ezekiel 9:2-4](#).

15, 16. See [EGW comment on Revelation 2:1-5](#).

17, 18. See [EGW comment on 1 Corinthians 2:9](#).

18. See [EGW comment on Zechariah 9:16](#).

20, 21. (verse 6; Hebrews 1:3). Accepted in the Beloved—
The Father gave all honor to His Son, seating Him at His right hand, far above all principalities and powers. He expressed His great joy and delight in receiving the crucified One, and crowning Him with glory and honor.

And all the favors He has shown to His Son in His acceptance of the great atonement, are shown to His people. Those who have united their interests in love with Christ are accepted in the Beloved. They suffered with Christ in His deepest humiliation, and His glorification is of great interest to them, because they are accepted in Him. God loves them as He loves His Son. Christ, Emmanuel, stands between God and the believer, revealing the glory of God to His chosen ones, and covering their defects and transgressions with the garments of His own spotless righteousness ([Manuscript 128, 1897](#)).

Chapter 2

1-6. See [EGW comment on 2 Peter 1:4](#).

4-6. Quickening Power of Christ—[[Ephesians 2:4-6](#) quoted.] As God raised Christ from the dead, that He might bring life and immortality to light through the gospel, and thus save His people from their sins, so Christ has raised fallen human beings from spiritual death, quickening them with His life, filling their hearts with hope and joy ([Manuscript 89, 1903](#)).

5, 6. See [EGW comment on Revelation 5:6](#).

7 (see [EGW comment on Ephesians 1:6](#); [1 Corinthians 13:12](#)). **A Theme for Study in Eternity**—It will take the whole of eternity for man to understand the plan of redemption. It will open to him line upon line; here a little and there a little ([Manuscript 21, 1895](#)).

7, 8. See [EGW comment on Ephesians 4:7](#).

8. See [EGW comment on Genesis 12:2, 3](#); [Romans 4:3-5](#); [1 Peter 1:22](#).

8, 9 ([Romans 3:27](#); see [EGW comment on Luke 17:10](#); [Romans 3:20-31](#)). **Boasting Out of Place**—[[Ephesians 2:8, 9](#) quoted.] Human beings are in continual danger of boasting, of exalting self. Thus they reveal their weakness....

The great change that is seen in the life of a sinner after his conversion is not brought about through any human goodness; therefore all human boasting is entirely out of place ([Manuscript 36, 1904](#)).

14, 15. See [EGW comment on Matthew 27:51](#).

14-16 ([Colossians 2:14-17](#); see [EGW comment on Acts 15:1, 5](#)). **Ceremonies End at the Cross**—The ceremonies connected with the services of the temple, prefiguring Christ in types and shadows, were taken away at the time of the crucifixion, because on the cross type met antitype in the death of the true and perfect offering, the Lamb of God ([Manuscript 72, 1901](#)).

[1116]

(Romans 3:31.) Christ, Not the Law, Crucified—The law of the ten commandments lives and will live through the eternal ages.

The need for the service of sacrifices and offerings ceased when type met antitype in the death of Christ. In Him the shadow reached the substance. The Lamb of God was the complete and perfect offering.

The law of God will maintain its exalted character as long as the throne of Jehovah endures. This law is the expression of God's character.... Types and shadows, offerings and sacrifices had no virtue after Christ's death on the cross; but God's law was not crucified with Christ. Had it been, Satan would have gained all that he attempted to gain in heaven. For this attempt he was expelled from the heavenly courts. He fell, taking with him the angels he had deceived. And today he is deceiving human beings in regard to the law of God ([Manuscript 167, 1898](#)).

(1 John 3:4.) An Infamous Lie of Satan—God did not make the infinite sacrifice of giving His only-begotten Son to our world, to secure for man the privilege of breaking the commandments of God in this life and in the future eternal life. This is an infamous lie originated by Satan, which must be made to appear in its false, deceitful character. This law that Satan so much desires to have regarded null and void, is the great moral standard of righteousness. Any violation of it is an act of transgression against God, and will be visited with the penalty of the divine law. To all the inhabitants of the world who make void the law of Jehovah, and continue to live in transgression, death must surely come ([Manuscript 72, 1901](#)).

18 (chs. 1:6; 3:12; Hebrews 4:15, 16; 9:14). The Merits of Christ's Name—We have access to God through the merits of the name of Christ, and God invites us to bring to Him our trials and temptations; for He understands them all. He would not have us pour out our woes to human ears. Through the blood of Christ we may come to the throne of grace, and find grace to help in time of need. We may come with assurance, saying, "My acceptance is in the Beloved." "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." As an earthly parent encourages his child to come to him at all times, so the Lord encourages us to lay before Him our wants and perplexities, our gratitude and love. Every promise is sure. Jesus is our Surety and Mediator, and has placed at our command every resource, that we may have a perfect character. The blood of Christ in ever-abiding efficacy is our only

hope; for through His merits alone we have pardon and peace. When the efficiency of the blood of Christ becomes a reality to the soul through faith in Christ, the believer will let his light shine forth in good works, in bringing forth fruits unto righteousness ([The Youth's Instructor, September 22, 1892](#)).

19-21 (1 Peter 2:4, 5). Lusterless Stones Without Value—When I meditate upon this fountain of living power from which we may freely draw, I mourn that so many are losing the delight they might have in considering His goodness. To be sons and daughters of God, growing into an holy temple to the Lord, “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;” “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone”—this is our privilege.

How amazed is heaven at the present condition of the church that could be so much to the world if every stone were in its proper place, a living stone to emit light! A stone that does not shine is worthless. That which constitutes the value of our churches is not dead, lusterless stones, but living stones, stones that catch the bright beams from the Chief Cornerstone, even the Sun of Righteousness—the bright glory in which are combined the beams of mercy and truth that have met together, of righteousness and peace that have kissed each other ([Letter 15, 1892](#)).

19-22. See [EGW comment on 1 Kings 6:7](#).

Chapter 3

8, 9. See [EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 12:1-4](#).

9. See [EGW comment on Philippians 2:5-8](#).

9-11. See [EGW comment on Romans 16:25](#).

[1117]

12. See [EGW comment on Hebrews 4:15, 16](#).

15. See [EGW comment on Genesis 1:26](#).

17-19. See [EGW comment on 1 John 3:1](#).

Chapter 4

A Lesson to Learn and Practice—I point you to the words of the apostle Paul in the fourth chapter of Ephesians. This whole chapter is a lesson that God desires us to learn and practice ([Manuscript 55, 1903](#)).

The Means of Unity Explained—In the fourth chapter of Ephesians the plan of God is so plainly and simply revealed that all His children may lay hold upon the truth. Here the means which He has appointed to keep unity in His church, that its members may reveal to the world a healthy religious experience, is plainly declared ([Manuscript 67, 1907](#)).

4-13. See [EGW comment on 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 12](#).

7 (chs. 1:7; 2:7, 8; Romans 3:24; Titus 2:11). What Is Grace?—The Lord saw our fallen condition; He saw our need of grace, and because He loved our souls, He has given us grace and peace. Grace means favor to one who is undeserving, to one who is lost. The fact that we are sinners, instead of shutting us away from the mercy and love of God, makes the exercise of His love to us a positive necessity in order that we may be saved ([The Signs of the Times, June 5, 1893](#)).

8. See [EGW comment on Acts 1:9](#).

13. See [EGW comment on Proverbs 4:23; Philipians 1:21](#).

13, 15. See [EGW comment on v. 30; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Revelation 18:1](#).

15. See [EGW comment on 2 Peter 3:18](#).

20-24 (Hebrews 12:14; see EGW comment on 1 Thessalonians 4:3). The Secret of Holiness—No man receives holiness as a birthright, or as a gift from any other human being. Holiness is the gift of God through Christ. Those who receive the Saviour become sons of God. They are His spiritual children, born again, renewed in righteousness and true holiness. Their minds are changed. With clearer vision they behold eternal realities. They are adopted into God's family, and they become conformed to His likeness, changed

by His Spirit from glory to glory. From cherishing supreme love for self, they come to cherish supreme love for God and for Christ....

Accepting Christ as a personal Saviour, and following His example of self-denial—this is the secret of holiness ([The Signs of the Times, December 17, 1902](#)).

(2 Corinthians 3:18.) Grace Essential Every Day and Hour—The sanctification of the soul is accomplished through steadfastly beholding Him [Christ] by faith as the only-begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth. The power of truth is to transform heart and character. Its effect is not like a dash of color here and there upon the canvas; the whole character is to be transformed, the image of Christ is to be revealed in words and actions. A new nature is imparted. Man is renewed after the image of Christ in righteousness and true holiness.... The grace of Christ is essential every day, every hour. Unless it is with us continually, the inconsistencies of the natural heart will appear and the life will present a divided service. The character is to be full of grace and truth. Wherever the religion of Christ works, it will brighten and sweeten every detail of life with more than an earthly joy and a higher than earthly peace ([Letter 2a, 1892](#)).

29. No Corrupt Communication—We are counseled to let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth; but a corrupt communication is not simply something that is vile and vulgar. It is any communication that will eclipse from the mind the view of Christ, that will blot from the soul true sympathy and love. It is a communication in which the love of Christ is not expressed, but rather sentiments of an un-Christlike character ([Letter 43, 1895](#)).

30 (Colossians 2:10; Revelation 7:2, 3; 14:1-4; see EGW comment on Ezekiel 9:2-4; Acts 2:1-4, 14, 41). Reaching the Mark of Perfection—The mighty power of the Holy Spirit works an entire transformation in the character of the human agent, making him a new creature in Christ Jesus. When a man is filled with the Spirit, the more severely he is tested and tried, the more clearly he proves that he is a representative of Christ. The peace that dwells in the soul is seen on the countenance. The words and actions express the love of the Saviour. There is no striving for the highest place. Self is renounced. The name of Jesus is written on all that is said and done.

[1118]

We may talk of the blessings of the Holy Spirit, but unless we prepare ourselves for its reception, of what avail are our works? Are we striving with all our power to attain to the stature of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for His fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us—the perfection of His character? When the Lord’s people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, “It is finished” ([The Review and Herald, June 10, 1902](#)).

32. Kind Words Never Lost—It should be our aim to bring all the pleasantness possible into our lives, and to do all the kindness possible to those around us. Kind words are never lost. Jesus records them as if spoken to Himself. Sow the seeds of kindness, of love, and of tenderness, and they will blossom and bear fruit ([Manuscript 33, 1911](#)).

Chapter 5

2 (see [EGW comment on Romans 8:26, 34](#); [Revelation 8:3, 4](#)). **The Acceptable Offering**—The offering that is made to God without a spirit of reverence and gratitude, He does not accept. It is the humble, grateful, reverential heart that makes the offering as a sweet-smelling savor, acceptable to God. The children of Israel might have given all their substance, but given in a spirit of self-sufficiency or Pharisaism, as though God were indebted to them for their favors, their offerings would have been unaccepted, and utterly condemned by Him. It is our privilege, by diligently trading on our Lord's goods, to increase our store, so that we may impart to those who have fallen into distress. Thus we become the Lord's right hand to work out His benevolent purposes ([Manuscript 67, 1907](#)).

2, 27. Christ's Life an Oblation to God—"Christ also hath loved us," writes Paul, "and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." This is the oblation of a life-gift in our behalf, that we may be all that He desires us to be—representatives of Him, expressing the fragrance of His character, His own pure thoughts, His divine attributes as manifested in His sanctified human life, in order that others may behold Him in His human form, and, comprehending God's wonderful design, be led to desire to be like Christ—pure, undefiled, wholly acceptable to God, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ([Manuscript 159, 1903](#)).

9. See [EGW comment on Galatians 5:22, 23](#).

23-25. See [EGW comment on Revelation 19:7-9](#).

25 ([John 1:4](#); [Revelation 2:1](#); [21:23](#)). **Only One Source of Light**—Christ "loved the church, and gave himself for it." It is the purchase of His blood. The divine Son of God is seen walking amid the seven golden candlesticks. Jesus Himself supplies the oil to these burning lamps. He it is that kindles the flame. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

No candlestick, no church, shines of itself. From Christ emanates all its light. The church in heaven today is only the complement of

the church on earth; but it is higher, grander—perfect. The same divine illumination is to continue through eternal ages. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof. No church can have light if it fails to diffuse the glory it receives from the throne of God ([Manuscript 1a, 1890](#)).

25-27 (Malachi 3:17). The Case Which Contains His Jewels—The church of Christ is very precious in His sight. It is the case which contains His jewels, the fold which encloses His flock ([Manuscript 115, 1899](#)).

27 (John 14:15). Reaching the Condition of Sinlessness—Those only who through faith in Christ obey all of God's commandments will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression. They testify to their love of Christ by obeying all His precepts ([Manuscript 122, 1901](#)).

Chapter 6

4 (Colossians 3:20, 21). More Powerful Than Sermons—Parents, God desires you to make your family a sample of the family in heaven. Guard your children. Be kind and tender with them. Father, mother, and children are to be joined together with the golden links of love. One well-ordered, well-disciplined family is a greater power in demonstrating the efficiency of Christianity than all the sermons in the world. When fathers and mothers realize how their children copy them, they will watch carefully every word and gesture ([Manuscript 31, 1901](#)).

10-12 (see [EGW comment on 2 Corinthians 11:14](#); [Revelation 12:17](#)). **Battling With Unseen Powers**—[[Ephesians 6:10-18](#) quoted.] In the Word of God are represented two contending parties that influence and control human agencies in our world. Constantly these parties are working with every human being. Those who are under God's control and who are influenced by the heavenly angels, will be able to discern the crafty workings of the unseen powers of darkness. Those who desire to be in harmony with the heavenly agencies should be intensely in earnest to do God's will. They must give no place whatever to Satan and his angels. [1119]

But unless we are constantly on guard, we shall be overcome by the enemy. Although a solemn revelation of God's will concerning us has been revealed to all, yet a knowledge of His will does not set aside the necessity of offering earnest supplications to Him for help, and of diligently seeking to cooperate with Him in answering the prayers offered. He accomplishes His purposes through human instrumentalities ([Manuscript 95, 1903](#)).

11. Complete Armor Essential—God wants every one to stand with the whole armor on, ready for the great review ([Manuscript 63, 1908](#)).

11-17. The Breastplate of Righteousness—We must put on every piece of the armor, and then stand firm. The Lord has honored us by choosing us as His soldiers. Let us fight bravely for Him,

maintaining the right in every transaction. Rectitude in all things is essential to the welfare of the soul. As you strive for the victory over your own inclinations, He will help you by His Holy Spirit to be circumspect in every action, that you may give no occasion for the enemy to speak evil of the truth. Put on as your breastplate that divinely protected righteousness which it is the privilege of all to wear. This will protect your spiritual life ([The Youth's Instructor, September 12, 1901](#)).

Angels Near to Protect Us—If we have on the heavenly armor, we shall find that the assaults of the enemy will not have power over us. Angels of God will be round about us to protect us ([The Review and Herald, May 25, 1905](#)).

12 (Ezekiel 28:17; Revelation 12:7-9; see [EGW comment on Psalm 17:13; 2 Corinthians 2:11; Galatians 5:17; Revelation 16:13-16](#)). **A Battle Against Principalities and Powers**—Could human beings know the number of the evil angels, could they know their devices and their activity, there would be far less pride and frivolity. Satan is the prince of demons. The evil angels over whom he rules do his bidding. Through them he multiplies his agencies throughout the world. He instigates all the evil that exists in our world.

But though the principalities and powers of darkness are both many in number and unceasing in activity, yet the Christian should never feel hopeless or discouraged. He may not hope to escape temptation through any lack of satanic efficiency. He who sent a legion to torture one human being cannot be repulsed by human wisdom or power alone.

Speaking of Satan, the Lord declares that he abode not in the truth. Once he was beautiful, radiant in light. But God's Word declares of him, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty."

Satan instigated others to rebel, and after they were cast out of heaven he bound them together in a confederacy to do all the evil possible to man, as the only means of striking God. Excluded from heaven, he resolved to be avenged by injuring the workmanship of God. Around the standard of rebellion that he planted, evil workers of all generations have rallied. Evil angels have united with evil men in a warfare against Christ's kingdom.

Satan's aim had been to reproduce his own character in human beings. No sooner was man created than Satan resolved to efface in him the image of God, and to place his stamp where God's should be. And he has succeeded in instilling into the heart of man the spirit of envy, of hatred, of ambition. In this world he has set up a kingdom of darkness, of which he, the leader in guilt, is prince. He desired to usurp the throne of God. Failing in this, he has worked in darkness, in crookedness, in deception, to usurp his place in the hearts of men. He has set up his throne between God and man, to appropriate the adoration that belongs to God alone ([Manuscript 33, 1911](#)).

(Hebrews 1:14.) Under Whose Control?—I want you to consider what kind of a position we should be left in if we had not the ministry of holy angels.... “We wrestle not against flesh and blood.” We meet the opposition of men, but there is someone behind that opposition. It is the prince of the powers of darkness with his evil angels that are constantly at work, and we want to consider, all of us, that our warfare is “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.”

[1120]

Who is it that is ruling the world today, and who is it that have chosen to stand under the banner of the prince of darkness? Why, it is nearly the whole world at large. All the world that have not accepted Jesus Christ have chosen for their leader the prince of darkness; and just as soon as they stand under his banner, they have connection with evil angels. Either the evil angels or the angels of God are controlling the minds of men. Our minds are given to the control of God, or to the control of the powers of darkness; and it will be well for us to inquire where we are standing today—whether under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel, or under the black banner of the powers of darkness.

We must make every preparation in our power in order to resist the enemy of souls. Every provision has been made; everything in God's plan has been arranged so that man should not be left to his own impulses, to his own finite powers, to carry on the warfare against the powers of darkness in his own finite strength; because he would certainly fail if he were thus left to himself (MS 1, 1890).

(Psalm 34:7.) Faithful Sentinels on Guard—There are good and evil angels. Satan is ever on the alert to deceive and mislead.

He is using every enchantment to allure men into the broad road of disobedience. He is working to confuse the senses with erroneous sentiments, and remove the landmarks by placing his false inscription on the signposts which God has established to point the right way. It is because these evil agencies are striving to eclipse every ray of light from the soul that heavenly beings are appointed to do their work of ministry, to guide, guard, and control those who shall be heirs of salvation. None need despair because of the inherited tendencies to evil, but when the Spirit of God convicts of sin, the wrongdoer must repent and confess and forsake the evil. Faithful sentinels are on guard to direct souls in right paths ([Manuscript 8, 1900](#)).

Constant Warfare of the Angels—If the curtain could be rolled back, and each one could discern the constant activities of the heavenly family to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from Satan's seductive wiles, lest in their careless attitude they should be led astray through satanic strategy, they would lose a large degree of their self-confidence and self-assurance. They would see that the armies of heaven are in continual warfare with satanic agencies, to obtain victories in behalf of those who do not sense their danger, and who are passing on in unconscious indifference ([Manuscript 32, 1900](#)).

16. See [EGW comment on Colossians 3:3](#).