

THE PRESENT TRUTH

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“Jesus Our Efficiency”

Workers for Christ are never to think, much less to speak, of failure in their work. The Lord Jesus is our efficiency in all things; His Spirit is to be our inspiration; and as we place ourselves in His hands, to be channels of light, our means of doing good will never be exhausted. We may draw upon His fulness, and receive of that grace which has no limit. {Gospel Workers, p. 19}

When we give ourselves wholly to God, and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure. {Christ's Object Lessons, p. 363}

When God opens the way for the accomplishment of a certain work, and gives assurance of success, the chosen instrumentality must do all in his power to bring about the promised result. In proportion to the enthusiasm and perseverance with which the work is carried forward, will be the success given. {Prophets and Kings, p. 263}

It is not the capabilities you now possess, or ever will have, that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do, and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given to you. {Christ's Object Lessons, p. 146}

The great controversy between Christ and Satan, that has been carried forward for nearly six thousand years, is soon to close; and the wicked one redoubles his efforts to defeat the work of Christ in man's behalf and to fasten souls in his snares. To hold the people in darkness and impenitence till the Saviour's mediation is ended, and there is no longer a sacrifice for sin, is the object which he seeks to accomplish.

When there is no special effort made to resist his power, when indifference prevails in the church and the world, Satan is not concerned; for he is in no danger of losing those whom he is leading captive at his will. But when the attention is called to eternal things, and souls are inquiring, "What must I do to be saved?" he is on the ground, seeking to match his power against the power of Christ and to counteract the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The Scriptures declare that upon one occasion, when the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them (Job 1:6), not to bow before the Eternal King, but to further his own malicious designs against the righteous. With the same object he is in attendance when men assemble for the worship of God. Though hidden from sight, he is working with all diligence to control the minds of the worshipers. Like a skillful general he lays his plans beforehand. As he sees the messenger of God searching the Scriptures, he takes note of the subject to be presented to the people. Then he employs all his cunning and shrewdness so to control circumstances that the message may not reach those whom he is deceiving on that very point. The one who most needs the warning will be urged into some business transaction which requires his presence, or will by some other means be prevented from hearing the words that might prove to him a savor of life unto life.

Again, Satan sees the Lord's servants burdened because of the spiritual darkness that enshrouds the people. He hears their earnest prayers for divine grace and power to break the spell of indifference, carelessness, and indolence. Then with renewed zeal he plies his arts. He tempts men to the indulgence of appetite or to some other form of self-gratification, and thus benumbs their sensibilities so that they fail to hear the very things which they most need to learn.

Satan well knows that all whom he can lead to neglect prayer and the searching of the Scriptures, will be overcome by his attacks. Therefore he invents every possible device to engross the mind. There has ever been a class professing godliness, who, instead of following on to know the truth, make it their religion to seek some fault of character or error of faith in those with whom they do not agree. Such are Satan's right-hand helpers. Accusers of the brethren are not few, and they are always active when God is at work and His servants are rendering Him true homage. They will put a false coloring upon the words and acts of those who love and obey the truth. They will represent the most earnest, zealous, self-denying servants of Christ as deceived or deceivers. It is their work to misrepresent the motives of every true and noble deed, to circulate insinuations, and arouse suspicion in the minds of the inexperienced. In every conceivable manner they will seek to cause that which is pure and righteous to be regarded as foul and deceptive.

But none need be deceived concerning them. It may be readily seen whose children they are, whose example they follow, and whose work they do. "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Matthew 7:16. Their course resembles that of Satan, the envenomed slanderer, "the accuser of our brethren." Revelation 12:10.

The great deceiver has many agents ready to present any and every kind of error to ensnare souls--heresies prepared to suit the

that will encourage doubt and unbelief, and hinder all who desire to see the work of God advance and to advance with it. Many who have no real faith in God or in His word assent to some principles of truth and pass as Christians, and thus they are enabled to introduce their errors as Scriptural doctrines.

The position that it is of no consequence what men believe is one of Satan's most successful deceptions. He knows that the truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver; therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute false theories, fables, another gospel. From the beginning the servants of God have contended against false teachers, not merely as vicious men, but as inculcators of falsehoods that were fatal to the soul. Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, firmly and fearlessly opposed those who were turning men from the word of God. That liberality which regards a correct religious faith as unimportant found no favor with these holy defenders of the truth.

The vague and fanciful interpretations of Scripture, and the many conflicting theories concerning religious faith, that are found in the Christian world are the work of our great adversary to confuse minds so that they shall not discern the truth. And the discord and division which exist among the churches of Christendom are in a great measure due to the prevailing custom of wresting the Scriptures to support a favorite theory. Instead of carefully studying God's word with humility of heart to obtain a knowledge of His will, many seek only to discover something odd or original.

In order to sustain erroneous doctrines or unchristian practices, some will seize upon passages of Scripture separated from the context, perhaps quoting half of a single verse as proving their point, when the remaining portion would show the meaning to be quite the opposite. With the cunning of the serpent they entrench themselves behind disconnected utterances construed to suit their carnal desires. Thus do many willfully pervert the word of God. Others, who have an active imagination, seize upon the figures and symbols of Holy Writ, interpret them to suit their fancy, with little regard to the testimony of Scripture as its own interpreter, and then they present their vagaries as the teachings of the Bible.

Whenever the study of the Scriptures is entered upon without a prayerful, humble, teachable spirit, the plainest and simplest as well as the most difficult passages will be wrested from their true meaning. The papal leaders select such portions of Scripture as best serve their purpose, interpret to suit themselves, and then present these to the people, while they deny them the privilege of studying the Bible and understanding its sacred truths for themselves. The whole Bible should be given to the people just as it reads. It would be better for them not to have Bible instruction at all than to have the teaching of the Scriptures thus grossly misrepresented.

The Bible was designed to be a guide to all who wish to become acquainted with the will of their Maker. God gave to men the sure word of prophecy; angels and even Christ Himself came to make known to Daniel and John the things that must shortly come to pass. Those important matters that concern our salvation were not left involved in mystery. They were not revealed in such a way as to perplex and mislead the honest seeker after truth. Said the Lord by the prophet Habakkuk: "Write the vision, and make it plain, . . . that he may run that readeth it." Habakkuk 2:2. The word of God is plain to all who study it with a prayerful heart. Every truly honest soul will come to the light of truth. "Light is sown for the righteous." Psalm 97:11. And no church can advance in holiness unless its members are earnestly seeking for truth as for hid treasure.

By the cry, Liberality, men are blinded to the devices of their adversary, while he is all the time working steadily for the accomplishment of his object. As he succeeds in supplanting the Bible by human speculations, the law of God is set aside, and the churches are under the bondage of sin while they claim to be free.

To many, scientific research has become a curse. God has permitted a flood of light to be poured upon the world in discoveries in science and art; but even the greatest minds, if not guided by the word of God in their research, become bewildered in their attempts to investigate the relations of science and revelation.

Human knowledge of both material and spiritual things is partial and imperfect; therefore many are unable to harmonize their views of science with Scripture statements. Many accept mere theories and speculations as scientific facts, and they think that God's word is to be tested by the teachings of "science falsely so called." 1 Timothy 6:20. The Creator and His works are beyond their comprehension; and because they cannot explain these by natural laws, Bible history is regarded as unreliable. Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments too often go a step further and doubt the existence of God and attribute infinite power to nature. Having let go their anchor, they are left to beat about upon the rocks of infidelity.

Thus many err from the faith and are seduced by the devil. Men have endeavored to be wiser than their Creator; human philosophy has attempted to search out and explain mysteries which will never be revealed through the eternal ages. If men would but search and understand what God had made known of Himself and His purposes, they would obtain such a view of the glory, majesty, and power of Jehovah that they would realize their own littleness and would be content with that which has been revealed for themselves and their children.

It is a masterpiece of Satan's deceptions to keep the minds of men searching and conjecturing in regard to that which God has not made known and which He does not intend that we shall understand. It was thus that Lucifer lost his place in heaven. He became dissatisfied because all the secrets of God's purposes were not confided to him, and he entirely disregarded that which was revealed concerning his own work in the lofty position assigned him. By arousing the same discontent in the angels under his

command, he caused their fall. Now he seeks to imbue the minds of men with the same spirit and to lead them also to disregard the direct commands of God. {Great Controversy Pg. 518-523}

The Two Crowns

In the vision given me in Battle Creek, October 25th, 1861, I was shown this earth, dark and gloomy. Said the angel, "Look carefully!" Then I was shown the people upon the earth: some were surrounded with angels of God, others were in total darkness, surrounded by evil angels. I saw an arm reached down from heaven, holding a golden scepter. On the top of the scepter was a crown studded with diamonds. Every diamond emitted light, bright, clear, and beautiful. Inscribed upon the crown were these words, "All who win me are happy, and shall have everlasting life."

Below this crown was another scepter upon which was also placed a crown, in the center of which were jewels, gold, and silver, which reflected some light. The inscription upon the crown was, "Earthly treasure—Riches is power. All who win me have honor and fame." I saw a vast multitude rushing forward to obtain this crown. They were clamorous. Some in their eagerness seemed bereft of their reason. They would thrust one another, crowding back those who were weaker than they, and trample upon those who in their haste fell. Many eagerly seized hold of the treasures within the crown, and held them fast. The heads of some were as white as silver, and their faces were furrowed with care and anxiety. Their own relatives, bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, they regarded not: but, as appealing looks were turned to them, they held their treasures the firmer, as though fearful, in an unguarded moment, they should lose a little, or divide with them. Their eager eyes would often fasten upon the earthly crown, and count and recount its treasures. Images of want and wretchedness appeared in that multitude, and looked wishfully at the treasures there, and turned hopelessly away as the stronger overpowered and drove back the weaker. Yet they could not give it up thus; but with a multitude of deformed, sickly, and aged, sought to press their way to the earthly crown. Some died in seeking to reach it. Others fell just in the act of taking hold of it. Many but just laid hold of it when they fell. Dead bodies strewed the ground, yet on rushed the multitude, trampling over the fallen and dead bodies of their companions. Every one who reached the crown possessed a share in it, and were loudly applauded by an interested company standing around it.

A large company of evil angels were very busy. Satan was in their midst, and all looked with the most exulting satisfaction upon the company struggling for the crown. Satan seemed to throw a peculiar charm upon those who eagerly sought it. Many who sought this earthly crown were professed Christians. Some of them seemed to have a little light. They would look wishfully upon the heavenly crown, and often seemed charmed with its beauty, yet could obtain no true sense of its value and glory. While one hand was reaching forth languidly for the heavenly, the other was reached eagerly for the earthly, determined to possess that, and in their earnest pursuit for the earthly, they lost sight of the heavenly. They were left in darkness, yet they were anxiously groping about to secure the earthly crown. Some became disgusted with the company who sought it so eagerly, and they seemed to have a sense of their danger, and turned from it, and earnestly sought for the heavenly crown. The countenances of such soon changed from dark to light, from gloom to cheerfulness and holy joy.

A company I then saw pressing through the crowds of people with their eyes intently fixed upon the heavenly crown. As they earnestly urged their way through the disorderly crowd, angels attended them, and made room through the dense throng for them to advance. As they neared the heavenly crown, the light emanating from it shone upon them, and around them, dispelling their darkness, and growing clearer and brighter, until they seemed to be transformed, and resembled the angels. They cast not one lingering look upon the earthly crown. Those who were in pursuit of the earthly, mocked them, and threw black balls after them, which did them no injury while their eyes were fixed upon the heavenly crown. But those who turned their attention to the black balls were stained with them. The following scripture was presented before me:

Matt. vii, 19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters; for he will either hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Then that which I had seen was explained to me as follows: The multitude which were shown me, who were so eagerly striving for the earthly crown, were those who love this world's treasure, and are deceived and flattered with its short-lived attractions. Some I saw who professed to be the followers of Jesus, are so ambitious to obtain earthly treasures, that they lose their love for heaven, act like the world, and are accounted of Heaven as of the world. They profess to be seeking an immortal crown, a treasure in the heavens; but their interest and principal study is to acquire earthly treasures. Those who have their treasures in this world, and love their riches, cannot love Jesus. They may think that they are right, and, although they cling to what they have, with a miser's grasp, you cannot make them see it, or feel that they love money more than the cause of truth, or the heavenly treasure.

"If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness," There was a point of time in the experience of such, when the light given them was not cherished, and it became darkness. Said the angel, "Ye cannot love and worship the treasures of earth, and have the true riches."

The young man came to Jesus and said unto him [Matt. xix], "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus gave him his choice, to part with his possessions and have eternal life, or retain them, and lose it. His riches were of greater value to him than the heavenly treasure. The condition, that he must part with his treasures, and give to the poor, in order to be a follower of Christ, and have eternal life, chilled his desire, and he went away sorrowful.

Those who were shown me clamorous for the earthly crown, were those who will resort to any means to acquire property. They become insane upon that point. Their whole thoughts and energies are directed for earthly riches. They trample upon the rights of others, and oppress the poor, and the hireling in his wages. If they can take advantage of those who are less shrewd, and poorer than they, and manage to increase their riches, they will not hesitate a moment to oppress them, and even see them brought to beggary.

The men whose heads were white with age, and their faces furrowed with care, who were eagerly grasping the treasures within the crown, were the aged who have but a few years before them. Yet they were eager to secure their earthly treasures. The nearer they came to the grave, the more anxious they were to cling to them. Their own relatives were not benefited. The members of their own families were permitted to labor beyond their strength to save a little money. They did not use it for others' good, or for their own. It was enough for them to know that they had it. When their duty to the poor, and the wants of God's cause are presented before them, they are sorrowful. They would gladly accept the gift of everlasting life, but are not willing that it should cost them any thing. The conditions are too hard. But Abraham would not withhold his only son. He could sacrifice this child of promise to obey God more easily than many would sacrifice some of their earthly possessions.

It was painful to see those, who should be ripening for glory, and daily fitting for immortality, exerting all their strength to keep their earthly treasures. Such, I saw, could not value the heavenly treasure. Their strong affections for the earthly, cause them to show by their works that they do not esteem the heavenly inheritance enough to make any sacrifice for it.

The "young man" manifested a willingness to keep the commandments, yet our Lord told him that he lacked one thing. He desired eternal life, but loved his possessions more. Many are self-deceived. They have not sought for truth as for hid treasures. Their energies and powers are not put to the best account. Their minds, which might be illuminated with heaven's light, are perplexed and troubled. Mark iv, 19. "The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." "Such," said the angel, "are without excuse." I saw the light waning away from them. They did not desire to understand the solemn, important truths for this time, and they thought they were well off without understanding them. Their light went out, and they were groping in darkness.

The multitude of deformed and sickly, pressing for the earthly crown, are those whose interests and treasures are in this world, and, although they are disappointed on every side, they will not place their affections on heaven, and secure to themselves a treasure and home there. They fail of the earthly, yet while in pursuit of it, lose the heavenly. Notwithstanding the disappointment, and unhappy life, and death, of those who were wholly bent upon obtaining earthly riches, others follow the same course in their pursuit for earthly treasures. They rush madly on, disregarding the miserable end of those whose example they are following.

All those who reached the crown, and possessed a share in it, and who were applauded, are those who obtained that which was the whole aim of their life,—riches. And they received that honor which the world bestows upon those who are rich. They have influence in the world. Satan and his evil angels are satisfied. They know that such are surely theirs, and while they are living in rebellion against God, they are Satan's powerful agents.

Those who became disgusted with the company clamoring for the earthly crown, are those who have marked the life and end of those striving for earthly riches, and have seen they were never satisfied, that they were unhappy, and they became alarmed, and separated themselves from that unhappy class, and sought the true and durable riches.

Those who were urging their way through the crowd for the heavenly crown, attended by holy angels, were shown me to be God's faithful people. Angels led them on, and they were inspired with zeal to press forward for the heavenly treasure.

The black balls which were shown me thrown after the saints, were the reproachful falsehoods put in circulation concerning God's people, by those who love and make a lie. The greatest care should be taken to live a blameless life, and abstain from all appearance of evil, and then move boldly forward, and pay no regard to the reproachful falsehoods of the wicked. While the eyes of the righteous are fixed upon the heavenly, priceless treasure, they will be more and more like Christ, and will be transformed, and fitted for translation. {Review and Herald, May 20, 1862}