

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Third Quarter 2016: *The Role of the Church in the Community*
Lesson 5 “Jesus on Community Outreach”

Read for this week’s study

Luke 4:16–19, 10:25–37; Matthew 5:13; Isaiah 2:8; John 4:35–38; Matthew 13:3–9.

Memory Text

“Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people” (Matthew 4:23, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Jesus’ Mission Statement
- III. Loving Your Neighbor
- IV. The Whole Recipe
- V. On Being a Farmer
- VI. Church Planting
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Matthew 4:23. What are the three main components of Jesus’ ministry? Which of the three did He spend the most time at in the four gospels? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Luke 4:16-21. Jesus quotes from Isaiah 61:1-4. What was Jesus proclaiming in His use of Isaiah? What is the context of the Isaiah passage (see Isaiah 61:5)? What does Jesus leave out in His quotation of Isaiah 61? What is the “acceptable year of the Lord” (Leviticus 25:8-17, 23)? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Luke 10:25-37. What is the message in this passage regarding the question of helping those in need? What are the implications for modern-day emergency medicine? Who IS my neighbor today? What are some common prejudices that might hinder us from being the kind of neighbor Jesus is talking about here? (Monday’s lesson)
4. Read Matthew 5:13. Since reference is made to “savor” it is likely this reference to salt is a food and taste metaphor. What must one do before salt becomes useful in improving flavor? How is it possible for salt to lose its savor? What happens when

- too much salt is mixed into the food? What picture of God does a toxic church portray? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Read Deuteronomy 12:30. What implications does this have for interfaith dialogue? Read Deuteronomy 31:14-23. What is the relationship between the commissioning of Joshua and the horrifying prediction of Israel's behavior under Joshua's rule? What are the implications for religious leadership today? What does the appointment of Joshua under such circumstances tell us about God? (Tuesday's lesson)
 6. Read John 4:35-38. What is Jesus telling us here about the different steps needed in reaching others for and about God? Read Matthew 9:35-38. What does the need for harvesters tell us about God? Read Matthew 13:3-9. What can a church do in a community to soften "hard ground" and remove "rocks" and "thorns?" What is Jesus' own explanation for these obstacles to the gospel (Matthew 13:18-23)? (Wednesday's lesson)
 7. Read Matthew 10:5-10. Why would Jesus send His disciples out into the surrounding towns and villages without any resources? (Thursday's lesson)
 8. The lesson quotes Ellen White as saying, "Unless the church is the light of the world, it is darkness." Is this statement true in an absolute sense or is it something of an exaggeration for effect? In what ways is the church "darkness" to many in the younger generation today? (Friday's lesson)
 9. How can we mingle with the world in a way that does others good while at the same time not getting so caught up in it that we lose our own way? (Friday's lesson)
 10. What is politics? Are there situations in which we need to be in the political arena in order to best minister to the community? If so, what are they, and how do we operate in ways so that we don't compromise our gospel commission? How can we influence the political discussion without being sidetracked by it?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now, we've all grown up knowing that Isaiah was the "gospel prophet", gospel meaning good news. Did you notice many places where he merits that title? For example, in Isaiah 61. Look at the words of the prophet in 61:1:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me [I thought he didn't come until Pentecost. Did you notice how often the Holy Spirit is working here in the Old Testament? Over and over again. He's always been at work], because the LORD has anointed me to bring good tidings [the gospel] to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives [you notice, God stands for freedom. The truth will set you free. The Good News will bring liberty], and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, [and so on.]

And then look at 8:

For I, the LORD, love justice, I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them [these are words of restoration at the end of this prophecy that speaks of Israel's many failures and how God is sadly going to have to let them go to discipline. But those who trust me I will in the end fulfill my promises to their father Abraham]. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 - Isaiah, recorded 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/33MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/34MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

We did talk about the Apocrypha and the anticipations of the Messiah in some of the Apocryphal books, when we talked about the period between the Testaments. And do you remember when he fed the five thousand, or maybe more accurately the fifteen or twenty or twenty-five thousand. When he began to talk about his real mission—which was not going to be free food and free medicine—they left him. They welcomed *that* kind of thing, but not what he had really come to reveal. Do you remember his triumphal entry? How thrilled they were. At last! Now! And then they abandoned him within a few hours afterward. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Acts, recorded April, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

And we have a message to offer on the subject of the destruction of the wicked, on the death that is the result of sin. Where do we find the answer? Well, did anybody ever die that death? Only one, at the cross. So we have to take people precisely where Billy Graham takes them, it's where we should all join no matter where we're coming from. He's right, let's go to the cross, but let's listen more carefully. Let's watch more closely. Did the Father torture his Son for eternity? Did he torture him as long as he deserved? Did he lay a hand on him at all? But did he die? That's Gethsemane. Then he was strengthened to go out to Calvary and he went through it again. Did the Father torture his Son for eternity? Did he torture him for as long as he deserved? He just gave him up.

But was he tortured? By whom? By those who did not know God. But understanding that God had said “love and obey me or I’ll kill you”, and they were prepared to kill people who didn’t love and obey God, to stone them. Look at Paul; he was willing to do that. That’s the kind of God they worshiped because they had that picture of God; they even tortured his Son to death! And the universe got the message. If we obey God with a false conception of our Heavenly Father, we might as we seek to obey, become his enemies. Then it is crucial to know the truth about God as we seek to obey him. They must go together.

No wonder that article then, “the only way in which God could set and keep men right was to reveal the truth about his character. The whole purpose of Christ’s mission on earth was to reveal the truth about his Father’s character that he was an altogether different person than Satan had made him out to be.” And just before he was crucified he said, “Father I have finished the work you gave me to do. I have made your character manifest to men.”

And the title is “God Made Manifest in Christ.”

Now that article, as you know, has never been quoted anywhere because it doesn’t fit a certain model I guess. But in the trust, great controversy model that’s the best statement I know of. It’s magnificent. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Three Angels’ Messages, #5, recorded October, 1981, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/5MM3ANGELSM>*

Is there evidence and demonstration in Scripture that God not only forgives us, but he will treat us as if we have always been his loyal children? Look how God spoke to Solomon about his father David, in 1 Kings 9:3, 4: “The Lord said to him [Solomon] . . . `If you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did. . . .’” (NIV) Integrity of heart? Uprightness? Think of all the things that David did! And yet, because David had been set right with God and had been won back to trust and had received a new heart and a right spirit, God describes sinful David as if he had always been his loyal son. He did it to David. He is willing to do it to every one of us. Now, that is the meaning of the experience of justification. And since that Latin term, justification, has come to have such a narrow, legal connotation in theological circles, I suggest we offer a substitution, another term such as, “set right,” or “put right” with our God. Jesus came to bring peace with our God. Not by paying some legal penalty so God would not have to kill us after all. Jesus brought peace with God by showing the truth about our God; that there is no need to be afraid. God will indeed give up those who refuse to trust him, who turn down the truth, who are unwilling to listen and let him save and heal them. And they will die, not as penalty, but as consequence. God absolutely will not torture to death his dying children. Guess where *that* idea came from.

And Jesus also brought peace, not by assuring us that he would be our friend in court, but rather by showing us that there is no need for him to plead with the Father in our behalf, for the Father is just as much our friend. So, truly, the only way to set us right and keep us right and restore us back to peace with God, was for Jesus to come and demonstrate, at great cost, the truth about his Father. As one of God's best friends has written, "The whole purpose of Christ's mission on this earth was to set men right by revealing the truth about God's character." This is the great truth that sets us free. This is the truth that brings everlasting peace throughout the universe.

We know what it cost to demonstrate this truth. You recall Conversation number eight, "The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence," the meaning of Christ's suffering and death. You remember Colossians 1:20, the next text on the reference sheet: "Through Him God chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself, making peace through the shedding of his blood upon the cross." (NEB) Christ died for the whole universe, even for loyal angels, to answer their questions. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #11, "At Peace With Our Heavenly Father" recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/20MMCAG>*

This liberating law is clearly identified in James' Epistle. "You will be doing the right thing if you obey the law of the Kingdom, which is found in the scripture, 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' But if you treat people according to their outward appearance, you are guilty of sin, and the Law condemns you as a lawbreaker. Whoever breaks one commandment is guilty of breaking them all. For the same one who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not commit murder.' Even if you do not commit adultery, you have become a lawbreaker if you commit murder" (verses 8–11, GNT).

This royal law of liberty is quite clearly the same law given to Israel amid the thunder and lightning of Mount Sinai. Sometimes it is suggested that the law of love is first found in the New Testament. But Moses taught the people, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might," and "You shall not hate your brother in your heart,... but you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:17, 18). Moses went even further: "Do not mistreat foreigners who are living in your land. Treat them as you would a fellow Israelite, and love them as you love yourselves" (verses 33, 34, gnt).

When a lawyer asked Jesus, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" the Lord simply quoted the teachings of Moses (Matthew 22:34–40). Paul understood the Decalogue in the same way. After listing several of the Ten Commandments, he summarized by saying that "he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.... Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:8, 10).

Then, to help us understand the meaning of real love, Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 13. “Love is patient; love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; never selfish, not quick to take offence. Love keeps no score of wrongs; does not gloat over other men’s sins, but delights in the truth. There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, and its endurance” (verses 4–7, NEB).

How the translators of the New Testament have searched for the best way to express the meaning of Paul’s Greek words in this famous passage! Here is Phillips’ version: “This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience—it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive: it is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.

“Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy. It does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, it shares the joy of those who live by the truth.

“Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything. Love never fails.”

Imagine living in a society where the life of every citizen can be described by the Ten Commandments and 1 Corinthians 13! No one ever kills or hates or lies or steals; no one even wants to hurt anyone else. All regard each other with unfeigned love, trust, and respect. There is no need for prisons, no police on every corner. Our wives and daughters can walk the streets alone at any hour. Everyone is perfectly safe and free.

This is why God’s law is called the royal law of liberty. God is not asking us to do anything that is not for our best good. He values nothing higher than our freedom. Think of the price he has paid to give us back our freedom once again! But there can be no freedom without order and self-discipline, mutual love and complete trustworthiness. {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 115-117. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-11>

COMMENT: Who is our brother?

That’s a good question! Because that was asked of Jesus, you remember. “Who is my neighbor? Who is my brother?” And his answer was to tell the story of the Good Samaritan. Now, who is our brother? Anybody in need. Anyone else created in the image of God. Everybody. The angels are our brothers. Everybody else is our brother.

Are only good people our brothers? We’ve discussed this before. Are only good children members of the family? Is this the way you report the number of children you have? It depends on the latest check into their virtue. You have six children, and currently four are good, so you

say, "I have four children this week." Next week, "I have five." Next week you have only two. No, we own up to all our children, don't we? God owns up to all his children. Lucifer is one of his children.

COMMENT: You can dislike what somebody does, but you have to love the person, anyway.

Hasn't that been a great relief to make that distinction? You can say you love somebody; doesn't mean you like what they do! In support of that, you remember the comment that when Jesus was being tormented near the end of his life--for people whom he had come to save to be behaving like beasts was nauseating to him. Ellen White uses several strong words there. It was disgusting to him; revolting to him. And yet he was willing to die for them. He loved them, but he did not like what they were doing. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – 1, 2, & 3 John & Jude*, recorded August, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/77MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/78MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man's well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever. {Ed 76.4}

Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. He came to teach how these principles are to be developed and applied. {Ed 77.1}

Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which the flesh is heir. He has represented him as a God who delights in the sufferings of his creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and dethrone the human reason. {RH, November 17, 1891 par. 5}

Heaven, looking down, and seeing the delusions into which men were led, knew that a divine Instructor must come to earth. Men in ignorance and moral darkness must have light, spiritual light; for the world knew not God, and he must be revealed to their understanding. Truth looked down from heaven, and saw not the reflection of her image; for dense clouds of moral darkness and gloom enveloped the world, and the Lord Jesus alone was able to roll back the clouds; for he was the light of the world. By his presence he could dissipate the gloomy shadow

that Satan had cast between man and God. Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Through the accumulated misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character.

{RH, November 17, 1891 par. 6}

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might worship him in spirit and in truth. Christ revealed to men the fact that the strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature. Christ came to the world to sow it with truth. He held the keys to all the treasures of wisdom, and was able to open doors to science, and to reveal undiscovered stores of knowledge, were it essential to salvation. He presented to men that which was exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the paternal love of the Father, who “so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” {RH, November 17, 1891 par. 7}

Though the Jews had the Scriptures which testified of Christ, they were not able to discern Christ in the Scriptures; and although we have the Old and the New Testament, men wrest the Scriptures to evade their truths; and in their interpretations of the Scriptures, they teach, as did the Pharisees, the maxims and traditions of men for the commandments of God. In Christ’s day the religious leaders had so long presented human ideas before the people, that the teaching of Christ was in every way opposed to their theories and practice. His sermon on the mount virtually contradicted the doctrines of the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees. They had so misrepresented God that He was looked upon as a stern judge, incapable of compassion, mercy, and love. They presented to the people endless maxims and traditions as proceeding from God, when they had no “Thus saith the Lord” for their authority. Though they professed to know and to worship the true and living God, they wholly misrepresented Him; and the character of God, as represented by His Son, was as an original subject, a new gift to the world. Christ made every effort so to sweep away the misrepresentations of Satan, that the confidence of man in the love of God might be restored. He taught man to address the Supreme Ruler of the universe by the new name—“Our Father.” This name signifies His true relation to us, and when spoken in sincerity by human lips, it is music in the ears of God. Christ leads us to the throne of God by a new and living way, to present Him to us in His paternal love.—*Review and Herald*, Sept. 11, 1894. {FE 309.1}

Christ possessed the same nature that man possesses. He was tempted in all points like as man is tempted. The same power by which He obeyed is at man’s command. {TMK 292.6}

The infinite love of God has been manifested in the gift of His only-begotten Son to redeem a lost race. Christ came to the earth to reveal to men the character of His Father, and His life was filled with deeds of divine tenderness and compassion. {PP 469.2}

Up to the time of Christ's first advent, men worshiped cruel, despotic gods. Even the Jewish mind was reached through fear and not love. Christ's mission on the earth was to reveal to men that God was not a despot but a heavenly Father, full of love and mercy for His children.—MS 132, 1902. {1MCP 183.1}

Christ came to reveal to a fallen race the love of God. He, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of the brightness of His divinity, and came to live on this earth as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. No man has seen God at any time, except as He is revealed through Christ. {UL 334.5}

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, veiling His glory and humbling Himself, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed in unfolding its record of His own condescending grace. In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father. But language seems to be so feeble! I refrain, and with John exclaim, "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" [1 John 3:1].—Letter 83, 1895.

The sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity. Gospel religion is Christ in the life—a living, active principle. It is the grace of Christ revealed in character and wrought out in good works. The principles of the gospel cannot be disconnected from any department of practical life. Every line of Christian experience and labor is to be a representation of the life of Christ. {COL 384.1}

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, that seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederate with evil angels bring suffering upon their fellow men, in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. {DA 487.3}

Often He met those who had drifted under Satan's control, and who had no power to break from his snare. To such a one, discouraged, sick, tempted, fallen, Jesus would speak words of

tenderest pity, words that were needed and could be understood. Others He met who were fighting a hand-to-hand battle with the adversary of souls. These He encouraged to persevere, assuring them that they would win; for angels of God were on their side and would give them the victory. {MH 26.1}

At the table of the publicans He sat as an honored guest, by His sympathy and social kindness showing that He recognized the dignity of humanity; and men longed to become worthy of His confidence. Upon their thirsty hearts His words fell with blessed, life-giving power. New impulses were awakened, and to these outcasts of society there opened the possibility of a new life. {MH 26.2}

Though He was a Jew, Jesus mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of His nation. In face of their prejudices He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept with them under their roofs, ate with them at their tables,—partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands,—taught in their streets, and treated them with the utmost kindness and courtesy. And while He drew their hearts to Him by the tie of human sympathy, His divine grace brought to them the salvation which the Jews rejected. {MH 26.3}

The Saviour made each work of healing an occasion of implanting divine principles in the mind and soul. This was the purpose of His work. He imparted earthly blessings, that He might incline the hearts of men to receive the gospel of His grace. {LHU 92.2}

So unlike the explanations of Scripture given by the scribes and Pharisees was Christ's teaching, that the attention of the people was arrested. The rabbis dwelt upon tradition, upon human theory and speculation. Often that which men had taught and written about the Scripture was put in place of the Scripture itself. The subject of Christ's teaching was the Word of God. He met questioners with a plain, "It is written," "What saith the Scripture?" "How readeest thou?" At every opportunity, when an interest was awakened by either friend or foe, He presented the Word. With clearness and power He proclaimed the gospel message. His words shed a flood of light on the teachings of patriarchs and prophets, and the Scriptures came to men as a new revelation. Never before had His hearers perceived in the Word of God such depth of meaning. {LHU 92.4}

Never was there such an evangelist as Christ. He was the Majesty of heaven, but He humbled Himself to take our nature, that He might meet men where they were. To all people, rich and poor, free and bond, Christ, the Messenger of the covenant, brought the tidings of salvation. His fame as the great Healer spread throughout Palestine. The sick came to the places through which He would pass, that they might call on Him for help. Hither, too, came many anxious to hear His words and to receive a touch of His hand. Thus He went from city to city, from town to town, preaching the gospel and healing the sick—the King of glory in the lowly garb of humanity. {LHU 92.5}

He attended the great yearly festivals of the nation, and to the multitude absorbed in outward ceremony He spoke of heavenly things, bringing eternity within their view. To all he brought treasures from the storehouse of wisdom. He spoke to them in language so simple that they could not fail of understanding. . . .With tender, courteous grace, He ministered to the sin-sick soul, bringing healing and strength (*Gospel Workers*, pp. 43-45). {LHU 92.6}

And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator. {SC 79.1}

God might have committed the message of the gospel, and all the work of loving ministry, to the heavenly angels. He might have employed other means for accomplishing His purpose. But in His infinite love He chose to make us co-workers with Himself, with Christ and the angels, that we might share the blessing, the joy, the spiritual uplifting, which results from this unselfish ministry. {SC 79.2}

God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image. {DA 294.4}

It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts. {COL 419.2}

Angelic agencies, though invisible, are cooperating with visible human agencies, forming a relief association with men. The very angels who, when Satan was seeking the supremacy, fought the battle in the heavenly courts and triumphed on the side of God, the very angels who shouted for joy over the creation of our world and over the creation of our first parents to inhabit the earth, the angels who witnessed the fall of man and his expulsion from his Eden home—these very heavenly messengers are most intensely interested to work in union with the fallen, redeemed race for the salvation of human beings perishing in their sins. {HP 102.3}

Human agencies are the hands of heavenly instrumentalities, for heavenly angels employ human hands in practical ministry. . . . By uniting with these powers that are omnipotent, we

are benefited by their higher education and experience. Thus, as we become partakers of the divine nature and separate selfishness from our lives, special talents for helping one another are granted us. . . . {HP 102.4}

By imparting to others the love and tenderness which God has so abundantly bestowed on us, we are to let our light shine. We should put every gift of God to the best possible use, making it a producer of good. To God we can give nothing which is not already His, but we can help the suffering ones around us. We can supply them with the necessities of this life, and at the same time speak to them of the wonderful love of God. {RC 198.5}

Christ's church is to be a blessing, and its members are to be blessed as they bless others. The object of God in choosing a people before all the world was not only that He might adopt them as His sons and daughters, but that through them He might confer on the world the benefits of divine illumination. When the Lord chose Abraham it was not simply to be the special friend of God, but to be a medium of the precious and peculiar privileges the Lord desired to bestow upon the nations. He was to be a light amid the moral darkness of his surroundings. {RC 205.2}

Whenever God blesses His children with light and truth, it is not only that they may have the gift of eternal life, but that those around them may also be spiritually enlightened. . . . "Ye are the salt of the earth." And when God makes His children salt, it is not only for their own preservation, but that they may be agents in preserving others. {RC 205.3}

"The sower soweth the word." Christ came to sow the world with truth. Ever since the fall of man, Satan has been sowing the seeds of error. It was by a lie that he first gained control over men, and thus he still works to overthrow God's kingdom in the earth and to bring men under his power. A sower from a higher world, Christ came to sow the seeds of truth. He who had stood in the councils of God, who had dwelt in the innermost sanctuary of the Eternal, could bring to men the pure principles of truth. Ever since the fall of man, Christ had been the Revealer of truth to the world. By Him the incorruptible seed, "the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever," is communicated to men. 1 Peter 1:23. In that first promise spoken to our fallen race in Eden, Christ was sowing the gospel seed. But it is to His personal ministry among men and to the work which He thus established that the parable of the sower especially applies. {COL 37.1}