

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Third Quarter 2016: *The Role of the Church in the Community*

#### Lesson 13 “How Shall We Wait?”

#### Read for this week’s study

Matthew 24:35–25:46; 2 Peter 3; James 2:14–26; John 4:35–38; 1 Corinthians 3:6–8; Revelation 21:1–4.

#### Memory Text

“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Romans 12:11–13, NIV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. While We Wait for Jesus
- III. Revival and Reformation While We Wait
- IV. The Mission of the Church While We Wait
- V. Preparing for the Final Harvest While We Wait
- VI. The Wait Is Over
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Our Lord is coming back; that we know. The crucial issue for us is: What are we doing while we wait? On that answer hangs the destiny of souls.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What assumptions determine the kind of answer we give to this question? Where does the idea come from that the destiny of souls hangs on what I do? If **my** salvation is not based on or dependent on what I do, how is somebody else’s salvation based on what I do?
3. “In this discourse, the first 35 verses in Matthew 24 motivate us to take the signs seriously, but Jesus also tells us how we are to wait for ‘the end of the age’ (Matthew 24:3, NIV). In other words, we just don’t sit there and wait for Him to come as we would sit at a bus stop and wait for the bus. No, we are given plenty to do as we wait for the Lord’s second advent.” (Sunday’s lesson)

4. “Each one of four parables in Matthew 24:36–25:46 talks about what God’s people should be doing as they await the second coming of Jesus. Summarize the essence of what the Lord is telling us here. Then we need to ask ourselves, both individually and as a church: *How well are we following the Lord’s instructions for us in each of these parables?*” (Sunday’s lesson)
5. “The foolish virgins needed to increase their capacity for the Holy Spirit in their lives. When we humble ourselves, die to self, unselfishly pray, study God’s Word, and lovingly share it with others in word and loving deeds, we increase our capacity for an infilling of the Holy Spirit in latter rain power.” (Monday’s lesson) Is that the intention of the text? A parable has one clear lesson. What is the lesson of the parable of the ten virgins? Is it that we should work harder?
6. “As a church we also need revival and reformation in our attitudes and methods. We need revival and reformation in our attitude and actions toward ‘the least of these.’” (Monday’s lesson)
7. “How can we guard ourselves against complacency in regard to the second coming of Jesus? That is, as the years go by, how can we always keep before ourselves the reality and urgency of the Lord’s return?” (Monday’s lesson) What actually drives our action? If it is the urgency of Christ’s return, how healthy and how sustainable is that? Is Christian life more like a dash or a marathon?
8. “The work of outreach is like the work of a farmer [see 1 Corinthians 3:6-8]. We might not all be doing the same tasks, but that work is still a crucial part of the process of reaching out and winning souls.” (Wednesday’s lesson) What do you understand about the role of spiritual gifts and how that relates to community? Why do you think that none of us possesses all the gifts?
9. “Many years ago, English author Charles Dickens wrote a book called *A Tale of Two Cities*. Those two cities were London and Paris. In a sense, it could be said that the Bible is also a tale of two cities. In this case, the two cities are Babylon and Jerusalem.” (Thursday’s lesson) What is the essence of the tale of Babylon and Jerusalem? Why is it that institutionalizing both of them can be dangerous? What is our BQ (=Babylonian Quotient)?
10. “By the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 5) the church’s role in compassionate restoration has changed to jubilant celebration (see Revelation 5:13, 14).” (Thursday’s lesson) How do you understand those words?
11. “The great question for Christians is not ‘Do works have a role in the Christian faith?’ Of course they do. Instead, the question is ‘If works cannot save us, then what is their role in the Christian faith?’” (Friday’s lesson) Is that really the great question of Christianity? Or was that a great question of medieval Christianity? Is the essence of Christian faith about doing or being? Being that is patterned after the ultimate Being and His character?
12. Think about people that go to your local church. Real people you know. If new people came to your church, found Christ and turned out to be just like people who

are already in your church, would that change the world and hasten Jesus' second coming? If seekers became followers, what kind of people would they become? What kind of people are we reproducing?

13. Do we really expect people to change beyond changing the day of rest they keep, food they eat and percentage of their income that they contribute to charitable causes? Do we expect them to be more loving, gracious, tolerant and kind? Do we expect them to love their family and each other more, to serve those who are less privileged? Do we expect them to have greater concern for people who speak a different language than they do, or for persons of a different culture or color? Do we expect that now they will welcome into their church even people who are different from them? Do we expect they will not be judgmental or easily irritated? (Philippians 2:14-16) Do we expect them to make an effort to understand cultures different from their own, to care for people who do not think like they do and to love them passionately?
14. What kind of God are we preaching? What kind of community are we becoming? In the end, God will have a community that He can present to the universe and say, "They have said of Me what is right. Here they are and I am proud of them!" (cf. Matthew 23:15 & Revelation 14:12)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

There is more recorded about Satan's deception of God's chosen people on this earth in the Promised Land. You remember that after the discipline of Babylon and the great revival and reformation that took place under Ezra and Nehemiah, God's people in the Promised Land never worshipped idols again. Oh, how they read their Bibles, and paid their tithe, and watched their diet, and were so very careful not to be contaminated by association with unbelievers. Oh, how they waited for the coming of their Messiah, the Christ. You see, they all were eager Adventists. More than that, they were Seventh-day Adventists, weren't they?

Yet, when Christ came to live among them, they denounced his picture of the Father as heretical and unbiblical. How could that be possible? They even said the Son of God had a devil to be so describing his Father. Look at the words in John 8:48. By the way, when we refer to the Jews, remember that Jesus was a Jew. Paul was a Jew. The apostles were Jews. The wonderful prophets were Jews. Where would we be but for the Jews? I hope we don't sound disrespectful when we look at how their failings were so similar to ours.

"The Jews answered him, 'Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?'" (NIV) Think of saying that the Lord had a demon to be so describing God! While they said that the Lord had a devil, they seemed so devout, so eager to be known as God's true people, even working hard to win others to the truth. You recall the very serious words of Jesus

himself as he commented on the worldwide evangelistic efforts of his people in those days. Look at Matthew 23:15, 23, 24:

How terrible for you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees! You hypocrites! You sail the seas and cross whole countries to win one convert, and when you succeed, you make him twice as deserving of going to hell as you yourselves are [of course, they would win the convert to keep the Sabbath and all those other things. But he might be a son of hell, as other versions say. So the Lord goes on to speak of how devout they were and how they subscribed to every detail of the blueprint]! You give to God one tenth even of the seasoning herbs, such as mint, dill, and cumin, but you neglect to obey the really important teachings of the Law, such as justice, mercy, and honesty [they had accepted Satan's picture of God and missed the whole point of God's use of these emergency measures and what God really wanted]. Blind guides! You strain a fly out of your drink but swallow a camel! (GNB)

In all of this they were so concerned to be God's obedient saints. This caused a very serious problem for them on crucifixion Friday. It's mentioned in John 18:28, the next passage on the list:

Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness [as they understood the blueprint required], the Jews did not enter the palace [you see], they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. (GNB)

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #17, "Satan's Final Effort to Deceive" recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/17MMCAG>

Look, if we obey God from fear because we do not know him well, in our very obedience we could become his worst enemies. And if we engineered a great revival and reformation in the Adventist Church, we really got the blue print out, really straightened out our way of life, and did not at the same time give more attention to the truth about our God, we could turn Adventists, as the Jews were turned, into his enemies. It's that serious. I mean, look at their Sabbath keeping, their tithe paying, their health reforming, they even strained gnats out of their goats milk lest they violate the rules of health reform, but they hated him, and quoted Scriptures to defend their opposition against him. Forbid we should ever do it. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Understanding the Mission of the Church, #1, recorded September, 1983, Camp AuSable, Michigan} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/1MMUTMOTC>

Now as you look over those three messages, there are many terms that call for explanation. But they are all discussed elsewhere in the Bible. That is why we really need all previous sixty-five books to understand the sixty-sixth. Some of these terms though, you may recall, we discussed in earlier conversations, such as the first word of the first angel: *fear*, fear God. You recall in our conversation “There is No Need to Be Afraid of God”, that when the context so indicates, this is not terror. This is reverence. This could be translated “revere God,” “honor God”. Surely with the angel bringing good news, he wouldn’t bring the good news that we should be *terrified* of God. So a number of versions have ventured to do so and I would agree with them, “Honor God, Reverence God”. That can indeed be the meaning of fear.

But surely there is much fearsome wording in these three angels’ messages. If this is God’s last pleading with his children, would it be better perhaps to have just the first angel’s message, and then the last sentence of number three? If this is pleading with us to trust him, might it have been better to just have it say, “Honor God. Give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the seas, and the springs of water.” And then go straight to, “This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.” Why do we need all that fearsome wording in between? Wouldn’t that have seemed more like pleading?

Of course, we must note the sequence of what has gone before, particularly Revelation 12, 13, and then 14. You recall that Chapter 12 describes the war, and all the efforts of Satan to deceive both angels and men. Then Chapter 13 describes Satan’s final efforts to deceive, which is the subject for our conversation next time. This time, in his final effort, he is primarily seeking to deceive the people living on this planet. Chapter 13 describes Satan’s almost complete success. The whole world worships him, except for a certain few. It even describes the powers and the organizations that Satan works through in order to accomplish his deceptive purposes. These powers and organizations are represented by certain symbols in the customary biblical way that we are familiar with. More than that, near the end of Chapter 13 that describes his final campaign, his loyal followers are pictured as bearing a certain mark of their preference for him and their trust in him—that mark that is notoriously known as the “*mark of the beast.*”

Then comes chapter 14, God’s last pleading with his children, the three final messages of warning and invitation that are the subject of our conversation this evening. Knowing what has gone before one is not so surprised to find the fearsome words of warning in the second and third angel’s messages. But we should always note when we read these three that the first angel comes with good news. He comes with the everlasting gospel. And as you know, gospel means good news. Notice that he doesn’t come with new information. God’s last appeal is not something new. It is not something additional. It is the everlasting good news. For this good news has always been the truth. It will always remain the truth. It will always remain the basis of our faith and trust, and freedom for eternity. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio

series, Conversations About God, #16, “God’s Last Pleading with His Children” recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>*

Lou: You gave a good deal of emphasis on the gospel, the word “gospel,” meaning “good news”. Still, it’s hard to see how the second angel’s message and the third is really good news.

Graham: Well, it also is very sad. Victory in the great controversy—there is great joy on the one hand, but God is going to lose vast numbers of his children. I see him crying and smiling at the same time at the end. “We’ve won, but look how many we have lost.” I just wouldn’t want people to think the second angel is good news because the other side has taken a good beating, and the third angel is good news because at last the people who hurt me are going to be burned, and I’m going to watch with deep satisfaction. I hope no one thinks it is good news in that way. But there is another way in which it’s good news. The news is in the third angel’s message; God is not torturing his children to death. If the death of Christ tells us how the wicked will die, God did not torture his Son to death. He sadly gave him up, as he will give up the wicked in the end. That is also important good news. But you are right; it’s not totally good news. It’s also very sad.

Lou: To look at it from the other way, if the gospel, as I think you were saying this evening, includes all three of these messages, then shouldn’t we while preaching the gospel say a great deal more about the destruction of the wicked—because the third message has something to say about that?

Graham: Yes, at least two reasons come to mind. Number one, we say we preach the three angels’ messages; then we’ve got to preach number three, which is about destruction. But how can you preach the cross? If that’s to demonstrate how the sinner dies, how can you preach the cross without preaching the destruction of the wicked? Or to turn it the other way around, to preach the third angel’s message is to explain why Jesus died and how he died. So it’s the message of the cross. And that’s why we sometimes speak of the third angel’s message as even being salvation by faith or righteousness by faith. It’s only if we preach it aright, only if the third angel’s message raises serious enough questions about the death of the wicked, that we go to the cross to find out by observing how Jesus died.

Lou: Why and how.

Graham: Why and how, and how the Father is involved.

Lou: Rather than God destroying in anger.

Graham: Yes, because the cross says there is no need to be afraid of God. He did not torture his Son. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #16 with Lou

Venden, "God's Last Pleading with His Children" recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*  
<http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

About a century and a half ago there arose in various parts of the world, the growing conviction that the coming of Christ was very near. You know the history about how Bible students in many different churches began to see in certain remarkable events the fulfillment of some of the signs that Jesus had given to his disciples in Matthew 24, next on our sheet. Matthew 24:29: "The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky." (NIV)

They saw in the darkening of the sun on May 19, 1780, and in the remarkable falling of the stars on November 13, 1833, combined with their study of certain other lines of prophecy in Daniel and Revelation, lines that pointed to the dates 1798 and 1844 as being the dates of certain important events. They saw in all these things an accumulation of evidence, signs, and indications that the long-looked-for advent was very near. We do know that it is a historical fact that the great second-advent movement began at that time. Though some are now puzzled about the signs and the dates, it is an incontrovertible fact of history that that was when the great second-advent movement did begin. The time when it began is the time when all those remarkable signs and prophetic periods seemed to come together. It is not just one date, one event, one piece of evidence. It's all that evidence combined. That's the way God has always sought to convince us throughout the history of the conflict. Not to have a little here and a little there, but an accumulation of evidence.

Some of those eager adventists were led by their study of the times and the evidences to begin giving special attention to the messages of the three angels in Revelation 14. They came to the conclusion that the time had arrived for these three messages of warning and invitation to be given to the whole world. A very bold venture they undertook, and the excitement and the disappointment of those days is all part of religious history. There are still thousands, even millions of Christians the world around who agree that those early adventists had indeed seen God's signal that the second coming was near. They didn't read it correctly at first. It was not a signal to pack for the trip up to heaven. It was rather a call from God to prepare the whole world for his coming. That's why we are still here, because we haven't done it yet.

Now it is true that time has continued much longer than early adventists expected. The signs that so stirred them are now well over a hundred years old. In fact, the first of the signs, the darkening of the sun and the turning of the moon to blood on May 19, 1780—that sign is now 204 years old. But are we surprised? Are we even ashamed, that our God would be willing to wait this long?

Are we concerned about our reputation or his? The good news, the gospel; it's not about us.

Sometimes I think we make that mistake. The good news is not about us. The good news is about our God. Now if by our failure to complete our task we may have contributed to the long delay, then we deserve to be ashamed. But the longer God waits, the more gracious he looks. His delay only confirms the good news. I think the delay should lead us to speak with pride of our God and not to make the awful mistake that Jonah made.

You see God needs better spokesmen than Jonah proved to be. Reluctant teachers of the truth, moved only by fear or obligation, are themselves a very sad denial of the good news. God is waiting for people who look eagerly for the coming of the day of God, and work to hasten it on. But I've quoted Peter. Look at 2 Peter 3:12, on the Bible Reference Sheet. He advised, way back in the first century: "Look eagerly for the coming of the Day of God and work to hasten it on." (NEB). {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #19, "How Soon Will the Conflict be Over?" 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/19MMCAG>

Lou: The second question I want to raise follows on from this. In the book of Revelation, it describes God as resurrecting the wicked at the end of the Millennium. Now, why does God do this? They are the wicked. They are lost anyway. Why not just leave them asleep? Isn't that harsh?

Graham: I imagine the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah arising and looking around and saying, "Here we go again!" It seems cruel and inhuman, doesn't it, to resurrect them? There has to be a purpose. By the way, the word "Millennium" is another Latin word that you won't find anywhere in Scripture, like "justification," or "sanctification."

Lou: Should I say "a thousand years?" That's in the Bible, isn't it?

Graham: It's Latin. "*Mille*" is a thousand, and "*annus*" is a year. We know the word "*annus*" as in A.D., *Anno Domini*, the year of the Lord. So "millennium" is a thousand years. And it's true, at the end of the thousand years between the Second Coming of Christ and the Third Coming, between the resurrection of the righteous and then the resurrection of the wicked the rebels are resurrected, to be sure. Why would God do that? What suffering! How terrible to see loved ones out there. God would only do this if it would say something of very great importance that would contribute to our understanding and the security of the universe. One thing we'll see if we should wonder why Uncle Bill is not in the Kingdom. Uncle Bill who said, "If you just prove it to me, I'd come in." And there is Uncle Bill out there. And here's the New Jerusalem. Here's Christ in his human form. Here's all the evidence, and Uncle Bill is not moved one bit. In fact, Revelation goes on to say that Satan moves among these rebels who have been resurrected

and he deceives them into marching against the New Jerusalem as if to destroy Christ again. And you say, “God, your diagnosis was right. More time, more evidence would have done no good for Uncle Bill.”

Lou: So that resurrection is a part of the essential demonstration.

Graham: It’s a confirmation.

Lou: That God is bringing peace. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #20 with Lou Venden, “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>*

I think those of us who “grow up,” who may be alive to see Christ come, we will have been so settled into the truth that we can see the seven last plagues and not become afraid of God. We might be ready to see this. But think of all the babes in the truth who have been saved from the foot of Mt. Sinai. Think of the thief on the cross. Think of all the others who have not had time and evidence to become confirmed in this. Everyone must be ready for that awesome day when God may call to us, to everybody who will be inside the New Jerusalem that day, when God says, “Children, you know what’s coming next. Do you want to come out to the wall and watch? Or do you want to hide in the basement somewhere? You know I’m about to give my rebellious children up, and untold numbers of them are going to die. And you know why I’ve waited so long.” And so we stand, perhaps, and watch our God, as fire comes down from Heaven and the glory of him who is love will consume all that is out of harmony. And we know, because we are convinced about this, that as the wicked die, God will be crying, “Why will you die? How can I give you up? How can I let you go?” He’s no more angry with them than he was with his Son as he gave him up in Gethsemane and on Calvary. And then when it’s all over, God would turn to us and say, “How awful that was. But children, I have one last question to ask you all: Have I made you afraid? Because if I have, I’ve let it happen too soon, and I would have waited longer.” But hopefully we will be so settled into the truth that we will be able to say to God, and maybe get a little closer and say, “It’s all right, God. There was no other way.” And then there is peace forever, in spite of that awful end. Are we ready to see that and not be made afraid? Because if it makes us afraid, then we’ll serve him from fear, and the obedience of fear produces the character of a rebel, and God still has the seeds of sin in his universe and he has not won the war.

Lou: We are back where it began. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #20 with Lou Venden, “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>*

## Recommended Listening:

Conversations About God #16 “God’s Last Pleading with His Children” is available at:

<http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

## Further Study with Ellen White

The long night of gloom is trying, but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God’s unwillingness to have His people perish, has been the reason of so long delay.—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 194. (1868) {Ev 694.2}

Jesus said: “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast 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. {RH, March 22, 1892 par. 5}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures. {COL 60.1}

To the consecrated worker there is wonderful consolation in the knowledge that even Christ during His life on earth sought His Father daily for fresh supplies of needed grace; and from this communion with God He went forth to strengthen and bless others. Behold the Son of God bowed in prayer to His Father! Though He is the Son of God, He strengthens His faith by prayer, and by communion with heaven gathers to Himself power to resist evil and to minister to the needs of men. As the Elder Brother of our race He knows the necessities of those who, compassed with infirmity and living in a world of sin and temptation, still desire to serve Him. He knows that the messengers whom He sees fit to send are weak, erring men; but to all who give themselves wholly to His service He promises divine aid. His own example is an assurance that earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith—faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work—will avail to bring to men the Holy Spirit’s aid in the battle against sin. {AA 56.1}

Every worker who follows the example of Christ will be prepared to receive and use the power that God has promised to His church for the ripening of earth’s harvest. Morning by morning, as the heralds of the gospel kneel before the Lord and renew their vows of consecration to Him, He will grant them the presence of His Spirit, with its reviving, sanctifying power. As they go

forth to the day's duties, they have the assurance that the unseen agency of the Holy Spirit enables them to be "laborers together with God." {AA 56.2}

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth. {COL 415.3}

Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "Behold your God." The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. {COL 415.5}

The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works—in words of truth and deeds of holiness. {COL 416.1}

Christ, the outshining of the Father's glory, came to the world as its light. He came to represent God to men, and of Him it is written that He was anointed "with the Holy Ghost and with power," and "went about doing good." Acts 10:38. In the synagogue at Nazareth He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18, 19. This was the work He commissioned His disciples to do. "Ye are the light of the world," He said. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:14, 16. {COL 416.2}

It is the love of God continually transferred to man that enables him to impart light. Into the hearts of all who are united to God by faith the golden oil of love flows freely, to shine out again in good works, in real, heartfelt service for God. {COL 418.5}

In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained all of heaven's resources. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit. {COL 419.1}

Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Emmanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. He desires that we shall reveal His own joy in our lives. {COL 419.3}

The indwelling of the Spirit will be shown by the outflowing of heavenly love. The divine fullness will flow through the consecrated human agent, to be given forth to others. {COL 419.4}

The Sun of Righteousness has “healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2. So from every true disciple is to be diffused an influence for life, courage, helpfulness, and true healing. {COL 419.5}

The angels of heaven are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. We know not now who they are; it is not yet made manifest who shall overcome, and share the inheritance of the saints in light; but angels of heaven are passing throughout the length and breadth of the earth, seeking to comfort the sorrowing, to protect the imperiled, to win the hearts of men to Christ. Not one is neglected or passed by. God is no respecter of persons, and He has an equal care for all the souls He has created. {DA 639.1}

Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, “Love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts. {DA 641.3}

The religion of Christ never degrades the receiver. It never makes him coarse or rough, discourteous or self-important, passionate or hardhearted. On the contrary, it refines the taste, sanctifies the judgment, and purifies and ennobles the thoughts, bringing them into captivity to Jesus Christ. {CT 365.1}

God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. The living God has given in His holy law a transcript of His character. The greatest Teacher the world has ever known is Jesus Christ; and what is the standard He has given for all who believe in Him? “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48. As God is perfect in His high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere. {CT 365.2}

The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness. There is opened before us a path of continual advancement. We have an object to reach, a standard to gain, which includes everything good and pure and noble and elevated. There should be continual striving and constant progress onward and upward toward perfection of character. . . . {CT 365.3}

Without the divine working, man can do no good thing. God calls every man to repentance, yet man cannot even repent unless the Holy Spirit works upon his heart. But the Lord wants no man to wait until he thinks he has repented before he takes steps toward Jesus. The Saviour is continually drawing men to repentance; they need only to submit to be drawn, and their hearts will be melted in penitence. {CT 365.4}

It is that men may understand the joy of forgiveness, the peace of God, that Christ draws them through the manifestation of His love. If they respond to His drawing, yielding their hearts to His grace, He will lead them on step by step, to a full knowledge of Himself, and this is life eternal. {1SM 323.2}

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, Let your light shine. If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord's glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence. {COL 420.1}

The revelation of His own glory in the form of humanity will bring heaven so near to men that the beauty adorning the inner temple will be seen in every soul in whom the Saviour dwells. Men will be captivated by the glory of an abiding Christ. And in currents of praise and thanksgiving from the many souls thus won to God, glory will flow back to the great Giver. {COL 420.2}

A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or trace all the chain of circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. Christ said to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8. Like the wind, which is invisible, yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the Spirit of God in its work upon the human heart. That regenerating power, which no human eye can see, begets a new life in the soul; it creates a new being in the image of God. While the work of the Spirit is silent and imperceptible, its effects are manifest. If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact. While we cannot do anything to change our hearts or to bring ourselves into harmony with God; while we must not trust at all to ourselves or our good works, our lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are. The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts. {SC 57.2}

The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man's sanctification, and man is to co-operate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them. {AA 532.2}

And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. {GC 678.1}