

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2018: *Stewardship: Motives of the Heart*

Lesson 5 “Stewards After Eden”

Read for this week’s study

Isaiah 22:14–18; 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2; Colossians 2:2, 3; Ephesians 6:13–17; 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Memory Text

“On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts” (1 Thessalonians 2:4, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Stewards in the Old Testament
- III. Stewards in the New Testament
- IV. Stewards of the Mysteries of God
- V. Stewards of Spiritual Truth
- VI. Our Responsibility as Stewards
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Adam and Eve’s first job involved stewardship (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15). How does the concept of stewardship help shift our focus from the world and its materialistic values to a focus on the Creator and His mission for us? What do you think the lesson means when it talks about being good stewards of spiritual truths? How DO you manage spiritual things? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. One of the best ways to understand the biblical concept of stewardship is to study the example of biblical stewards like Eliezer and Joseph. What kind of relationship did Eliezer and Joseph have with their employers (Genesis 24:34-38; 39:4)? What can we learn from the relationship between Joseph and his steward (Genesis 43:19; 44:1)? Read Isaiah 22:14-18. How did Shebna abuse his position as steward to the king of Judah? How do these OT stories illustrate the relationship we can and should have with God? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Luke 12:45-48; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; Titus 1:7-9 and 1 Peter 4:10. How do these New Testament texts describe the role of a steward? Read Luke 16:1-15. What does this parable teach us about faithfulness and loyalty in a steward? How does the

delay in the master's return affect the work of his steward (Luke 12:45)? How should it affect ours? (Monday's lesson)

4. According to Colossians 2:2-3 and 1 Timothy 3:16, we are stewards of the "mystery" of God. What is that mystery and what does it tell us about God? What does it tell us about ourselves that aspects of God are a "mystery"? What are the implications of Deuteronomy 29:29? If we are stewards of the gospel, what does that imply about our responsibilities? What does it tell us about God that He would allow us to safeguard things we only partly understand? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Read Ephesians 6:13-17. What do these texts say that God has given to us and we are to be stewards of? How do we put on the armor of God and what does that have to do with stewardship? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. According to the lesson, one of the key traits of stewards is the willingness to accept responsibility. What does that mean? What are the implications of 2 Corinthians 5:10 for the concept of stewardship? (Thursday's lesson)
7. The lesson for this week makes the primary point that we are stewards, not only of material resources, but also of spiritual resources. A major spiritual resource is the picture of God that many Seventh-day Adventists have developed in light of the cosmic conflict theme in the Bible. Based on your own experience and the statements that follow in the handout, how can we as individuals or as a group be better stewards of the truth about God? (Friday's lesson)
8. How did Adam's statement in Genesis 3:12 undermine the stewardship role God has given to him (Genesis 1:16-18)? How can we learn to avoid blaming others when we make a mistake? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

That is why many Christians still symbolize the newness of this experience, the beginning of the healing, by baptism by immersion. Of course, at this stage, the Christian is just a beginner. Paul calls him a babe in the truth who needs a great deal of protection. Yet even at that beginning stage, God treats us as if we had never sinned, as if we had always been his loyal children.

Does that mean that since he is so generous, we are supposed to remain babes in the truth? Does God want us to grow up to perfection and maturity? You know from the biblical record, it disturbed Paul a great deal when even after a few months, he found that the Christian converts were staying as babes in the truth. When a person is physically retarded, we become very worried, don't we? When a person is mentally retarded, we are even more concerned. But when a person is spiritually retarded, we say, "Isn't that precious? Isn't that sweet? He still has the faith of a little child." The most serious of all conditions is to be spiritually retarded.

How the Bible comments about this! Look at Hebrews 5, the next on the sheet. 5:11-6:12, where the apostle says to new converts a few months later:

Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truth of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature [or perfect], who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity. (NIV)

It is time to grow up. And put right with that Paul's advice to the believers in Ephesus. Ephesians 4:11, 13-15:

His gifts were made that Christians might arrive at real maturity. . . . We are not meant to remain as children, at the mercy of every chance wind of teaching, and of the jockeying of men who are expert in the crafty presentation of lies. But we are meant to speak the truth in love, and to grow up in every way into Christ. (Phillips)

In fact, Ephesians says the whole purpose of the church is to help people grow up to perfection and maturity. The Bible explains why. Daniel 12, Revelation, the warnings of Christ, and of Paul, tell us that we face a time of confusion and deception such as the world has never seen. If we are still babes in the truth, we will never survive. And so God in mercy waits for us to grow up, and to be as settled into the truth as Job was. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #14, "God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done" 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/14MMCAG>*

The apostles were all dead, save one. And he was the elderly John, now a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos. What good news was there, to encourage the early Christians?

And you could count on God when things were that bleak, to send a message of encouragement and enlightenment and explanation to his people. He surely wouldn't send a book of mysteries and dates and schedules of events that they could not possibly understand. Rather, that sixty-sixth book that he did send, the book of Revelation (which means clarification, not mystification), is an invitation to discouraged early Christians to look a little higher—to take the *larger view* of things. To see how they've all been caught up in a vast great controversy that affects the whole universe! And that it's a controversy over God's own character and government. And then to read on and see that God has already won this war, and the angels all agree with him. To see that this is the good news. And then to read on and realize that God is inviting *us* to join in the celebration; and then to go out to the world and invite all others who are willing to listen, to join in God's victory in the war. And then we Christians might not seem so much on the defensive all the time; we have good news to tell. There's no way God

and his side can lose. And should we not *join the winning side?* is the invitation in that sixty-sixth book.

And the book also says that you can count on God to wait until this truth about him—this good news about his character and government—has been spread all over the world. Because God is the kind of person who will wait until his children have had an opportunity to understand the issues in the war; and to be ready for the awesome events the Bible describes as taking place before Jesus' return. To see and to present the plan of salvation in the larger setting of the great controversy over the character and government of God is, I believe, the highest privilege of God's friends on this planet today. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, "The Conflict In God's Family" recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>*

When God lived among us in human form, he was God, and he didn't say, "Give me your questions, here are the answers and I expect you to believe it" because it could have been the devil masquerading as Christ. God himself led them through the evidence and when they had come to an intelligent confidence based upon unquestionable evidence he was satisfied, then he revealed who he was. Now think what that says about our God and the way he runs his universe. He does not ask us to believe without evidence and I'd like to go into that a little later on. But think what it says about our methods.

If Adventists are going to finish the work, they will become the best explainers of the evidence. In other words, we won't just leave the details of Bible instruction to the folk we call the Bible workers or the Bible instructors. Every loyal member of the family worth his salt will be a Bible instructor and able to explain the Scriptures as Philip in the chariot. That's our mission. We should be the best Bible teaching explainers in the whole world. If we want to be known for anything other than the picture of God, our highest calling would be to be very careful, accurate, and interesting explainers of the content of the sixty-six books. That would be, I think, the highest thing we could aspire to. {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>*

Read the gospels, how simple they are. In fact, Jesus has been somewhat despised because of the simplicity of his theology. I can quote you publications which say if you want to understand righteousness by faith don't read Christ, read Paul. He was the theologian, Christ was not. Christ came to offer the atonement; Paul is the one who explains. Have you not read this? Start

with Paul, then Christ, then the Old Testament, a hierarchy of values like that. So in righteousness by faith I deliberately start with the gospels now. If you want to know how to be saved consult God himself, God the Son, and then work out to those who sought to understand and with inspiration they explained beautifully.

And the reason why Paul sounds so legal in his explanation is, as he explains in Romans, I'm taking this same message that I admire so much that Jesus spoke and used many agricultural illustrations to explain it, I'm speaking to you who know law, remember in Romans? And so he uses legal pictures. And we've made the legal picture the only picture. There are many, many pictures in the Bible. Jesus preferred the Prodigal Son but some of us who are preoccupied with our legal understanding because of the traditional belief in the tortures of hell prefer the legal illustrations of the Plan of Salvation, and see those standing out superior to all the others. If I'm going to take illustrations as of prime importance I'm going to take the ones the Lord used and work out from there. That's what Paul did and we can do it too. {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>*

Why are we Adventists so concerned about what the world thinks about Adventists? And not concerned about what the world thinks about God?

When we had a chance to advertise in the *Reader's Digest*, it was well done, but it was all about us. I'd love to see an article that we Adventists deem it as our highest of all privileges to bear witness to the truth about God. If you look closely at us you'll find lots of things that aren't worth looking at. We're all his patients, He's the doctor. But look at *him*. And I wish we were known for our picture of God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, *We've Camped Around This Mountain Long Enough*, #2, recorded July, 1989, South Dakota Conference Ministers Meeting} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/2MMCAMPED>*

What if Jesus would say when you get to the kingdom, "Would you like now to come and see the Father?" What would you say? Would you say, "Well, if you'll go with me." Will he say, "Shame on you, how did you get in in the first place? You haven't accepted my testimony." No, he would meet us where we are and say, "I know you're scared of the Father. I'll go with you." And so with Jesus there to protect us, Jesus our friend, we go where the Father is. And as you come into his glorious presence you stand there looking at your feet, be appropriate wouldn't it, and there comes a terrifying voice? No there comes a voice as musical as the voice of Jesus. And the kind voice says, "You can look at me now." And you look up and lo the face is just as

kind as the face of Jesus. And you say, “Oh I’m so sorry, God. I’m so sorry I didn’t picture you that way. I know Jesus said you were that way, said if we’ve seen him we’ve seen you and you love us just as much as he does.” And God says, “Doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter. Now you know the truth. Now can we be friends?” And I think many of us will go to Heaven from the foot of Sinai.

Now if we’ve been at Sinai because we’re stubborn, stubbornness will keep us out of Heaven. But if we’ve stayed at Sinai because the local minister, maybe, hasn’t helped us see it more clearly, I mean the Lord knows our sincerity. And some will arrive in the kingdom saying, “Jesus, if you’ll go with me and be my friend to protect me I’m willing to go see the Father” he won’t hold that against us. He’s willing to wait. And there will be some happy moments in the hereafter when we hear God say, “Now can we be friends?”

But why should we wait? And I think that’s the significant thing about Adventism in the last days that we will give that final message of friendship. Will that make God seem weak? God is infinitely powerful but an equally gracious person who would rather treat us not as servants but as friends. That is the testimony of Jesus and how dare we go around saying, “We are the remnant church because we have the testimony of Jesus” if we don’t accept John 15:15 and 16:26. And this is exciting because I believe this is what we have to offer the millions of Christians the world around who’ve come part way but still worship a God who says, “Love and obey me or I’ll burn you in hell forever.” And in England it has turned most of the people against God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, *We’ve Camped Around This Mountain Long Enough*, #5, recorded July, 1989, South Dakota Conference Ministers Meeting} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/5MMCAMPED>

Lou: That’s fascinating. Now, you used the word “mystery religion,” and I’ve come across that in historical references, but it reminds me; didn’t Paul himself speak of Christianity as, “Great is the mystery of godliness”?

Graham: Yes. That’s right. I think he was using it on purpose. It’s not that God has kept it a secret. It’s true, he hasn’t been able to reveal it all. But one of the major differences between a mystery religion and Christianity was this: When you were initiated into one of the mysteries, you were sworn never to tell anybody. Whereas, the Christian “mystery” was to be told to everybody. So he loved calling Christianity a mystery and then telling everybody everything about it. So we have a “revealed” mystery. And his hearers would probably understand that and would be rather struck with the contrast. We have the most important information in the universe, and you might think we would want to keep it secret. No, we want to tell everybody. Go and tell this mystery to the whole world.

Lou: But was the actual Greek word that was used, the same word?

Graham: Yes. *Musterion*. "Mystery" comes from it.

Lou: Paul is referring to it as something that we wouldn't have figured out on our own, but God gave it to us and we want to tell it to everyone.

Graham: The thing that would strike them the most is that it is not a secret.

Lou: Whereas the others . . .

Graham: They would not be allowed to tell; it's amazing we know anything about them.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #17 with Lou Venden, "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>

Sometimes, this patience of God that's mentioned so many, many times in the sixty-six books, has been misunderstood to mean that we can go on sinning with impunity because our God is simply too kind and too patient to discipline us or to turn us over to destructive consequences. You remember Paul warned how serious an error that can be, this error of presuming on the kindness of God. Look at Romans 2:4: "Are you, perhaps, misinterpreting God's generosity and patient mercy toward you as weakness on his part? Don't you realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?" (Phillips) An excellent translation of that famous verse.

Now sometimes God's patience has even puzzled his trusting children. You recall that in the days of Habakkuk, they cried out to God, "Why don't you do something? Why don't you come and rescue us and help us in our predicament?" They even were in despair that God seemed to be doing nothing. And so the prophet Habakkuk was sent to urge them not to give up their faith, but to trust God enough to be willing to wait and let God work out his plans in his own good time. Micah said the problem often is that we simply don't understand God's plan. Let us trust him as we seek to understand it more and give him time to do it in his own time and in his own way. I wish we could have included all of Habakkuk in our Bible Reference Sheet, but just looking at Habakkuk 2:3.

The prophet sums up his message by saying: "It may seem slow in coming, but wait for it; it will certainly take place." (GNB) In fact, God's first message to Habakkuk was, "I am doing something, but you wouldn't believe it if I told you." Habakkuk said, "Try me, Lord. Tell me." And the Lord did. And Habakkuk indicated that he was willing to wait. That's the source of that great verse, "The just, the righteous, God's friends, will live in faith, in trust." That verse was not written about forgiveness. It was written about trusting God enough to be willing to wait. That

great verse that Paul picked up in Romans is a most appropriate one for those who wonder why the Lord still waits.

In these last days, God's patience even gives his enemies an opportunity to misinterpret his graciousness as weakness, even to scoff at God's apparent inability to bring the conflict to a successful conclusion. And here I wish we could have included the whole of 2 Peter 3. But look first at 2 Peter 3:3, 4, where Peter warns that:

In the last days there will come men who scoff at religion and live self-indulgent lives, and they will say: "Where now is the promise of his coming? Our fathers have been laid to their rest, but still everything continues as it has always been since the world began." (NEB)

Doesn't that sound like the familiar doctrine of uniformitarianism? Nothing has ever changed and nothing ever will. But Peter goes on to explain the real reason for the delay. In 2 Peter 3:9, the next verse on the list:

It is not that the Lord is slow in fulfilling his promise as some suppose, but that he is very patient with you, because it is not his will for any to be lost, but for all to come to repentance. (NEB)

Then Peter, if you could read on in the chapter, refers to Paul's earlier advice in Romans 2:4, higher on our Bible Reference Sheet for today. He writes in his letter, "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience with us, is our salvation." Our beloved Paul wrote this in his letter, I'm sure referring to Romans 2:4. {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>

Further Study with Ellen White

When we are faithful in making God known, our impulses will be under divine supervision, and we shall make steady growth, spiritually and intellectually. {UL 81.4}

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, humbling Himself, veiling His glory, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed. . . . 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. {TMK 338.4}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, "Thou

shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.” Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {Ed 16.1}

Like the first is the second commandment—“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Matthew 22:39. The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty. More and more fully do we become partakers of the divine nature. We are fitted for heaven, for we receive heaven into our hearts. {Ed 16.2}

Salt is valued for its preservative properties; and when God calls His children salt, He would teach them that His purpose in making them the subjects of His grace is that they may become agents in saving 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 the world might receive the grace that bringeth salvation. Titus 2:11. When the Lord chose Abraham, it was not simply to be the special friend of God, but to be a medium of the peculiar privileges the Lord desired to bestow upon the nations. Jesus, in that last prayer with His disciples before His crucifixion, said, “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” John 17:19. In like manner Christians who are purified through the truth will possess saving qualities that preserve the world from utter moral corruption. {MB 35.2}

Salt must be mingled with the substance to which it is added; it must penetrate and infuse in order to preserve. So it is through personal contact and association that men are reached by the saving power of the gospel. They are not saved in masses, but as individuals. Personal influence is a power. We must come close to those whom we desire to benefit. {MB 36.1}

The savor of the salt represents the vital power of the Christian—the love of Jesus in the heart, the righteousness of Christ pervading the life. The love of Christ is diffusive and aggressive. If it is dwelling in us, it will flow out to others. We shall come close to them till their hearts are warmed by our unselfish interest and love. The sincere believers diffuse vital energy, which is penetrating and imparts new moral power to the souls for whom they labor. It is not the power of the man himself, but the power of the Holy Spirit that does the transforming work. {MB 36.2}

Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven’s chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from

all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christ-like life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls. {DA 347.3}

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory. {DA 758.2}

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and results of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 12}

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

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}

We are not to think of God only as a judge, and to forget him as our loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this; for our whole spiritual life will be molded by our conceptions of God's character. {RH, April 5, 1887 par. 10}

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. . . . Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions. {Ed 17.2}

The means by which we can overcome the wicked one is that by which Christ overcame,—the power of the word. God does not control our minds without our consent; but if we desire to know and to do His will, His promises are ours: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching." John 8:32; 7:17, R. V. Through faith in these promises, every man may be delivered from the snares of error and the control of sin. {DA 258.5}

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ. "The truth shall make you free;" and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration to one's self,—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is "the law of liberty." James 2:12. {DA 466.5}

It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, who seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederated with evil angels sometimes 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. {AA 541.1}

God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith. {MB 76.3}

Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience. {TMK 57.2}

Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. {MB 142.1}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}