

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Fourth Quarter 2018: *Oneness in Christ*

### Lesson 11 *Unity in Worship*

#### Read for this week's study

Revelation 4:8, 11; Matthew 4:8, 9; Daniel 3:8–18; Revelation 14:9; Revelation 14:6, 7; Acts 4:23–31.

#### Memory Text

“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’ ” (Revelation 14:6, 7, NKJV).

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

- I. Introduction
- II. Worshiping our Creator and Redeemer
- III. False Worship
- IV. The First Angel's Message
- V. Bible Study and Fellowship
- VI. Breaking of Bread and Prayer
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The church of Jesus Christ is by definition a worshiping community, called into being by God to be “a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5, NKJV). Gratitude to God expressed in community worship transforms people's hearts and minds into the character of God and prepares them for service. This week's lesson focuses on the meaning of worship and how it preserves unity among believers in Jesus.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. As created beings we ultimately end up worshiping and as fallen human beings, we can worship either God or things, positions, status or something else. Everybody will end up worshiping somebody or something. The question is: Does your worship lift you up or bring you down?

3. What is worship and why is it important? What is the meaning and purpose behind it?
4. “Worship is a response of our faith in God for His mighty works: first, for creating us, and, second, for redeeming us. In worship we give to God the adoration, reverence, praise, love, and obedience we believe He is worthy to receive.” (Sunday’s lesson) Therefore, the way you worship depends on your picture of God.
5. Christian worship is the intentional turning to God and seeing all the greatness, goodness and glory that belongs to Him. Worship is giving God the place that rightfully belongs to Him.
6. “Satan seeks to establish a false system of worship, one that takes people away from the true God and, even if subtly, direct worship toward himself.” (Monday’s lesson). In what ways can we be tempted into worshiping someone or something else other than God? How might false worship be a more subtle threat than we realize?
7. What is the significance of the first angel’s message, and what it says about God? Why is there a reference to worship in this message? (Tuesday’s lesson)
8. Why is it that worship, at the end of time, is identified as a key issue in the great controversy over the allegiance of the human race?
9. “From the earliest moments of the church, worship has been characterized by the centrality of the study of the Word of God given to us by the apostles. The first Christians were faithful in studying the Scriptures for what it said about Jesus the Messiah. They were in constant fellowship to share with one another the blessings God had given them and to encourage each other in their spiritual walk with God. In the Word they mined the sacred truths that became the foundation of their message to the world.” (Wednesday’s lesson) Why are fellowship and conversational study of the Bible important parts of worship?
10. “And they continued steadfastly . . . in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42, NKJV). How is this significant in the context of worship? Does it add another dimension in our understanding?
11. If “worship is responding to all that God is with all that we are”, what implications are there for us personally, and in our daily lives within our communities?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But this brilliant, most trusted, even revered angel, set out to undermine trust in God by circulating misinformation and lies about our heavenly Father. And thus he became—not a bearer of light and a teacher of truth, but a bearer of lies, even *The Adversary*. And the name that means adversary is *Satan*. You can see why we shouldn’t call him Lucifer any longer. He no longer bears light, but lies. His real name is Satan—the opponent, the adversary.

And how this adversary worked among the angels! In his pretentiously pious manner he insinuated that God himself was an untrustworthy liar. And specifically he charged that God

was arbitrary—not respectful of the freedom of his children; that God was exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe. And thus he hoped to turn the angels away from God, and win them to worship *him*, himself. It seems unbelievable that a creature could presume to think of himself as God, and suggest that angels worship him. But that Satan is actually capable of such insanity, look at the scripture that's second on this Bible Reference Sheet, in Isaiah 14:12-14. And this is mentioned other places in the Bible:

How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star [your favorite version may read “Lucifer” there, perhaps. It’s exactly the same word. I chose a version that would have “Day Star” to remind us that this is one of the names of Christ—Lucifer, Morning Star, Day Star.] How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far north [where the gods are pictured as gathering]; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.” (RSV)

He even asked his creator to get down on his knees in the wilderness of temptation and worship his own creature. Look in Matthew 4:8-11; the next one on the Reference Sheet:

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him [the devil speaking, a mere creature], “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me” [a created being asking his creator to worship him!]. Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’” Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him. (RSV)

The angels watched that whole experience. They must have been stunned to see one of themselves asking God to get down on His knees and worship. And then, as to the charges that God is selfish and an untrustworthy liar, Satan wasted no time in sharing those accusations that he presented to the angels, with our first parents. {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>*

But now under pressure, Moses let God down. He misrepresented God as vengeful, unforgiving, and severe. And that was precisely Satan’s sin in the beginning, the sin that is the most devastating of all.

God has honored his friend Moses ever since. He even personally buried him and resurrected him, and later sent him down to comfort his Son on the mount of transfiguration. But God had to go on record before the eyes of the onlooking universe as to the terrible seriousness of

Moses' sin. It wasn't just that he disobeyed, or by smiting the rock he had "spoiled a symbol." He had, to be sure. But Moses had broken faith with God. He hadn't shown himself to be God's trusted, trusting friend. And that's the essence of sin.

How many of us have committed the same sin? How many of us have hurt our own children, and others who trust us to tell the truth about our God? Have you apologized lately to God for ever putting him in a bad light and suggesting that he's not the kind of person we know him to be?

Moses repented (as we know) and became a better friend of God than ever before. But so many people have continued to mistrust. What happens—what are the results?

Not "what are the penalties?"

What are the results of centuries of rebellion and mistrust? Well, look at Romans 3 in the collection. Romans 3:10-18. What makes this quotation so significant is that it's made up of six Old Testament passages. One from Isaiah, and five from the Psalms:

As the Scriptures say: "There is no one who is righteous, no one who is wise or who worships God. All have turned away from God; they have all gone wrong; no one does what is right, not even one. Their words are full of deadly deceit; wicked lies roll off their tongues, and dangerous threats, like snake's poison, from their lips; their speech is filled with bitter curses. They are quick to hurt and kill; they leave ruin and destruction wherever they go. They have not known the path of peace, nor have they learned reverence for God." (GNB)

And then going right on into Romans 1:21-24, and then 28-32. Paul says:

They know God [he says there's no excuse if you don't know God—he's revealed himself], but they do not give him the honor that belongs to him, nor do they thank him. Instead, their thoughts have become complete nonsense, and their empty minds are filled with darkness. They say they are wise, but they are fools; instead of worshipping the immortal God, they worship images made to look like mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. . . .

And Egyptians even worshipped crocodiles. They even worshipped beetles. And think what that does to a person. We'll study this on a later evening. But Hosea says (in a text I didn't include tonight) that it is a law that we become like the object of our worship. His exact words are, "When Israel came to Mt. Peor, they began to worship Baal, and soon became as disgusting as the god they loved." That's the devastating consequence of worshipping a false picture of God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #2, "What Went Wrong in God's Universe?" 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/2MMCAG>*

To some of us, the most important information we have to share with our fellow human beings around this planet is this truth about the way God runs his universe and what he wants of his children.

We need to share this more urgently than ever before as we humans, all together, face the closing events of human history. Because before Christ returns, the Bible describes—in fact Jesus describes—a time of confusion and deception such as the world has never seen. All of that will be leading up to Satan’s final attempt to win the whole world to worship him, to trust him. He even asked Jesus to get down on his knees and worship him in the wilderness of temptation. Revelation thirteen says that when Satan’s campaign is over, the whole world will be worshipping him, except those few who have not been deceived. So it should not surprise us, if we are as near the end as we believe we are, that we find ourselves surrounded on all sides by conflicting claims to religious authority. Certainly the development of modern media has made us more aware of this than ever before. As we see and listen to all these conflicting claims, how often they are supported by position, or power, or miracles, or claims of special communications from the Lord.

How Satan would enjoy it if he could turn God’s friends on this planet against their heavenly Father!

Or even more seriously, how he would love to deceive God’s friends even as they continue professing to be his commandment keeping people. That would be the most destructive. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7, “The Question Of Authority” recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>

Lou: But what difference does it make what kind of person I believe God to be? Now that’s a bit of a different question, but it’s related. So long as I submit to his authority. If I just say, “God has said it; I believe it; that’s it.”

Graham: Well, I think of two illustrations that come quickly to mind since we’ve talked of Saul. The conception of God that Saul had led him to conduct his evangelism the way he did before the Damascus road. In God’s name he imprisoned people and he had them stoned to death.

When he got the true picture of God on the Damascus road so dramatically (and by the way, it suggests it didn’t have to take a lifetime), I think Saul proceeded from the foot of Sinai to the mouth of the cave in a few minutes. He really grew up in a hurry there. Paul changed his picture of God and he changed his whole method of evangelism.

Lou: So you’re saying that the picture inevitably affects everything.

Graham: Everything: the way we worship, the way we witness to others, the way we behave. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #7 with Lou Venden, “The Question Of Authority” recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>

When you consider Satan’s picture of God and his threats to his children, the adversary has made God look even more cruel than old King Nebuchadnezzar and his burning fiery furnace.

You recall how in the book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar built that very large idol and he issued an order that everyone was to get down on his knees at the given signal and worship his god. Anyone who refused to worship the image was to be thrown into the burning fiery furnace. You remember what happened to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. We recoil in horror at such cruel tyranny. “You either submit to my god or I will throw you into the burning fiery furnace.”

And yet somehow, many of us find it possible to accept a God who is described as doing the very same thing. Would that God say to us, “On your knees, worship me, or I’ll throw you into the burning fiery furnace”? But it is even worse than that. God does not want what Nebuchadnezzar was willing to settle for. Nebuchadnezzar simply demanded submission: “on your knees.” God asks for our love and our trust. Then he is caricatured as saying, “But if you will not love and trust me, then I will throw you into the burning fiery furnace. And I won’t burn you as briefly as Nebuchadnezzar did. I will burn you forever and forever.” Does it make sense? Is it acceptable? I love Ellen White’s words. “Such thoughts destroy human reason.”

Of course, surely gentle Jesus would say no such thing, would he? Is it the Father who is the fearsome one who would issue such a threat? And if the Father is the fearsome member of the Trinity, is that why the Son came to die? Was it to assuage, and appease, and propitiate the wrath of the offended member of the Trinity? I hope no one is believing what I am saying! Is this why Jesus had to go up quickly on resurrection Sunday—to begin to intercede with the fearsome member of the Trinity, who could never find it in his own heart to forgive his unbelieving children, unless he were begged to by the most sympathetic member of the three? How one’s understanding of the death of the wicked affects one’s picture of God, and one’s understanding of the plan of salvation! {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #9, “There is No Need to be Afraid of God” recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/9MMCAG>

For example, in the narrow view; and lest that sound disrespectful and unrealistic, by the narrow view I mean the view that is preoccupied with what God has done for you and me. And that might be perfectly understandable in the lives of some of us. We still even have our tents pitched at the foot of Sinai. We have no right to tell anybody where he should have his tent pitched. But in the narrower view that is preoccupied with our own salvation, consistently the seventh-day Sabbath is presented as a mere test of obedience. But in the larger view, in the setting of the great controversy over the character of God, the Sabbath is God's gift to us, to remind us of the answers in the great controversy. To remind us of all the things he revealed about himself, and about freedom, and about his unselfishness in the Garden of Eden. How he even shared his creative power with us, and enabled us to create little people in our own image.

Magnificent was the revelation given during creation week, and the Sabbath was given to remind us of those truths. But then when we lost our freedom, and God gave it back to us again, he says in the other version of the Ten Commandments, which has just as much authority as the Exodus one, the Sabbath was given to remind us of how God rescued us from Egyptian bondage. Sabbath is a monument to freedom. And then at the end of crucifixion week, when the ultimate questions about God were answered by the way Jesus suffered and died, the next day was a seventh-day Sabbath, and the whole universe paused, earth time, to think and to remember and to celebrate the answer that God gave. The Sabbath is even described in the Bible as a type and a foretaste of the final rest to come. Instead of the Sabbath being a mere test of obedience, it becomes a great aid to us, and a time of celebration of the truth that is the basis of our trust, and the basis of our freedom. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Larger View*, #1, recorded October, 1982, Monterey, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMLVIEW>*

Yet Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for us; Mark 2:27. It was not to be a mere test of obedience, but rather to be a help. I believe that the great purpose of the Sabbath is to remind us of the truth that is the basis of our faith; the very truth that does set us free.

In the first place, the Bible tells us in Exodus 20 and Exodus 31, that the Sabbath is designed to serve as a reminder that God created us; that we are his creatures. But to be more specific according to Colossians 1:16, the one who created us was none other than Christ himself. The seventh day Sabbath reminds us that the one who came to save us is also the one who made us in the beginning. The gentle Jesus who died on Calvary is also the supreme, all powerful creator of the universe. God did not send some subordinate person to die for us. The Creator came himself one who is equal with God, for he is God. By keeping holy the seventh day Sabbath, we acknowledge our faith in Jesus as not only our Savior, but also our Creator and our God.

A second way in which the seventh-day Sabbath serves to strengthen faith is mentioned in Exodus 31:13 and Exodus 20:12, 20. There we're told the Sabbath is designed to remind us that God is the one who sanctifies us. Our sanctification includes not just forgiveness, but the healing of the damage sin has done. It means the harmonious development of our physical, mental and spiritual powers, until the image of God, in which we were originally created, is perfectly restored. The observance of the seventh day Sabbath is an acknowledgement that only the Creator can perform such a marvelous work of healing and transformation. Just as he created us in the beginning, so he has the power to re-create us now. Surely it is no less a miracle of creation to restore fallen human beings than it was to create them perfect in the beginning. No wonder David prayed as he did after his sad experience with Bathsheba, "Create in me a clean heart, O God" Psalm 51:10.

Now some seek to accomplish this transformation by themselves by rigorous obedience, self-discipline and self-denial. The Sabbath comes each week to remind us that only by faith in our Creator can the healing work be done. It's strange that Sabbath keeping should be thought to be a legalistic act; a denial of true faith. Actually, Sabbath keeping done in the right spirit is a denial of legalism, a denial that we can save ourselves. It's an acknowledgment that only by faith in the one who created us in the beginning can we possibly be healed and re-created now. And what a perversion it is to suggest that seventh day Sabbath keeping is legalism; except that we can turn it around that way, and it has been done.

A third way in which the Sabbath serves to remind us of the truth and strengthen our faith in God is mentioned in Hebrews chapter four. There the Sabbath is described as a type and a foretaste of the final rest and restoration to come. Just as God rested from his labors at the end of creation week so there remains a Sabbath like rest; the Greek says a '*sabbatismos*'. You can almost hear the meaning of the word. "There remains there a Sabbath like rest for the people of God. When the children of Israel marched into the land of Canaan, they failed to enter into God's rest," the apostle says, "because of lack of faith. They possessed the Promised Land but they did not enjoy the Sabbath like rest that faith brings." Just remember the book of Judges. Would you call that the Sabbath like rest? That is not God's intention. "But those who maintain their faith in Christ may begin to enjoy this rest even in this life and they will enter into it fully when they are admitted to the heavenly Canaan and Eden is restored." So by keeping holy the seventh day Sabbath, we acknowledge our anticipation of this Sabbath like rest to come. We acknowledge our faith in the second coming of Christ and the re-creation of all things.

There are more of course, but these three focuses or purposes of the Sabbath answer the three great questions that have stood in the minds of thinking people—the three great quests of philosophy. Where have we come from? Why are we here? And where do we go after we die?

But mankind has paid a heavy price for neglecting the Sabbath, or substituting another day. For without the Sabbath to provide the answers to the three great questions of life, other solutions

have been substituted. Where have we come from? Without the seventh day Sabbath to remind us that in the beginning Christ created us, room has been left for the substitution of the theory of the evolutionary origin of the human race. Or as others say more scientifically, we don't know where we've come from.

Why are we here? How do we attain to the greatest good in life? Without the seventh day Sabbath to remind us that righteousness and salvation come by faith in Jesus Christ, room has been left for the substitution of the fundamental error of righteousness by works. Or as others have said more carelessly, we don't know why we're here. So let's eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die!

And where do we go after we die? Without the seventh day Sabbath to point forward to the second coming, to the rewards of faith and the results of sin, room has been left for the substitution of the belief in the natural immortality of the soul. Or as others prefer to say, we don't know where we go after we die. So again, let's eat, drink and be merry.

Incidentally, those three substitute answers; aren't they almost universally held? And not just in Christianity. Belief in the natural immortality of the soul is shared by almost everybody. The idea that salvation comes by works—Ellen White states that is the fundamental error of every false religious system, salvation by works. There are all kinds of substitute explanations as to where we came from that put God in a bad light, or that make of no effect the plan of salvation. But all three of these substitutions wipe out all the significance of the plan of salvation. This is why the seventh day Sabbath is so vital a part of God's last message to the world. The main difference between the many religions in the world and true Christianity lies in the answers to these three great quests.

We also speak of the seventh day Sabbath as being the seal of God and we all want to be sealed at the end. In what sense do you understand the seventh day Sabbath to be the seal of God? In what sense could it be? Would it be possible to be observing the seventh day Sabbath at the end and be on the wrong side in the great controversy? It's happened before. Is the mere refraining from work from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown evidence that one has the seal of God?

If to be "sealed" means to be so settled into the truth about God, both intellectually and spiritually, that one cannot be moved, then obviously there have been many people who appeared to observe the seventh day Sabbath who were not settled into the truth. In fact they had accepted the lie. The men who crucified Christ didn't work from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown. Would you say they had the seal of God? So in what sense could the seventh day Sabbath be the seal, do you think? The Sabbath really does sum up this truth about God. It answers the questions about life, and the questions about God; they go right together in a package, don't they? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Faith, Righteousness

and Salvation, #13 “Faith and the seventh-day Sabbath”, recorded April, 1975, Lynwood, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*  
<http://pkp.cc/13MMFRS> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/14MMFRS> (Part 2)

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. No one who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy’s power. It is true that Satan is a powerful being; but, thank God, we have a mighty Saviour, who cast out the evil one from heaven. {MH 94.3}

The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy intelligences, all waiting to do His will. Through channels which we cannot discern He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. But it is in this speck of a world, in the souls that He gave His only-begotten Son to save, that His interest and the interest of all heaven is centered. God is bending from His throne to hear the cry of the oppressed. To every sincere prayer He answers, “Here am I.” He uplifts the distressed and downtrodden. In all our afflictions He is afflicted. In every temptation and every trial the angel of His presence is near to deliver. {DA 356.3}

Christ undertook to redeem man and to rescue the world from the grasp of Satan. The great controversy begun in heaven was to be decided in the very world, on the very same field, that Satan claimed as his. {PP 69.2}

It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. Thus faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. The soul that responds to the grace of God shall be like a watered garden. His health shall spring forth speedily; his light shall rise in obscurity, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon him. Let us then remember the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the multitude of His tender mercies. {DA 348.2}

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence. Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward. {GC 555.1}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. {8T 19.1}

In the Bible the will of God is revealed. The truths of the Word of God are the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin has clouded the understanding, is removed. The words, "A new heart also will I give you," mean, "A new mind will I give you." A change of heart is always attended by a clear conviction of Christian duty, an understanding of truth. He who gives the Scriptures close, prayerful attention will gain clear comprehension and sound judgment, as if in turning to God he had reached a higher plane of intelligence. {RH, December 18, 1913 par. 8}

The Bible with its precious gems of truth was not written for the scholar alone. On the contrary, it was designed for the common people; and the interpretation given by the common people, when aided by the Holy Spirit, accords best with the truth as it is in Jesus. The great truths necessary for salvation are made clear as the noonday, and none will mistake and lose their way except those who follow their own judgment instead of the plainly revealed will of God. {5T 331.2}

The Holy Spirit loves to address the youth, and to discover to them the treasures and beauties of God's word. The promises spoken by the great Teacher will captivate the senses and animate the soul with spiritual power that is divine. There will grow in the fruitful mind a familiarity with divine things that will be as a barricade against temptation. {COL 132.3}

The words of truth will grow in importance, and assume a breadth and fullness of meaning of which we have never dreamed. The beauty and riches of the word have a transforming influence on mind and character. The light of heavenly love will fall upon the heart as an inspiration. {COL 132.4}

The appreciation of the Bible grows with its study. Whichever way the student may turn, he will find displayed the infinite wisdom and love of God. {COL 132.5}

Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, exert his mental powers to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal

life. . . . We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. . . . We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures. {RH, March 8, 1887 par. 1}

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

Satan has ability to suggest doubts and devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue and mark of intelligence in them to be unbelieving and questioning, and quibbling. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and teachable spirit. All should decide from the weight of evidence. {RH, September 16, 1873 par. 10}

The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition and worship they know not what. {5T 707.1}

There is no excuse for any one in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. {RH, December 20, 1892 par. 1}

Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. Sincerity will never save a soul from the consequences of believing an error. Without sincerity there is no true religion, but sincerity in a false religion will never save a man. I may be perfectly sincere in following a wrong road, but that will not make it the right road, or bring me to the place I wished to reach. The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good,

that which bears the divine credentials, which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action.—Letter 12, 1890. {2SM 56.1}

We must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us. We are to counsel together, and to be subject one to another; but at the same time we are to exercise the ability God has given us, in order to learn what is truth. Each one of us must look to God for divine enlightenment. We must individually develop a character that will stand the test in the day of God. {TM 109.4}

The Bible is its own expositor. Scripture is to be compared with scripture. The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. {Ed 190.2}

Those who seek God in secret telling the Lord their needs and pleading for help, will not plead in vain. "Thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly." As we make Christ our daily companion we shall feel that the powers of an unseen world are all around us; and by looking unto Jesus we shall become assimilated to His image. By beholding we become changed. The character is softened, refined, and ennobled for the heavenly kingdom. The sure result of our intercourse and fellowship with our Lord will be to increase piety, purity, and fervor. There will be a growing intelligence in prayer. We are receiving a divine education, and this is illustrated in a life of diligence and zeal. {Pr 183.2}

We may commune with God in our hearts; we may walk in companionship with Christ. When engaged in our daily labor, we may breathe out our heart's desire, inaudible to any human ear; but that word cannot die away into silence, nor can it be lost. Nothing can drown the soul's desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the noise of machinery. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard. {Pr 188.1}

At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. {DA 669.4}

We should contemplate God in nature—study His character in the work of His hands. The mind is strengthened by becoming acquainted with God, by reading His attributes in the things which He has made. As we behold the beauty and grandeur in the works of nature, our affections go out after God; and though our souls are awed and our spirit subdued, our souls are invigorated by coming in contact with the Infinite through His marvelous works. Communion with God through humble prayer develops and strengthens the mental and moral faculties, and spiritual powers increase by cultivating thoughts upon spiritual things.—YI, July 13, 1893. {2MCP 732.3}

The way to the throne of God is always open. You cannot always be on your knees in prayer, but your silent petitions may constantly ascend to God for strength and guidance. When tempted, as you will be, you may flee to the secret place of the Most High. His everlasting arms will be underneath you.—(*Counsels on Health*, 362.) {Pr 179.4}

Make your requests known to your Maker. Never is one repulsed who comes to Him with a contrite heart. Not one sincere prayer is lost. Amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being. We pour out our heart's desire in our closets, we breathe a prayer as we walk by the way, and our words reach the throne of the Monarch of the universe. They may be inaudible to any human ear, but they cannot die away into silence, nor can they be lost through the activities of business that are going on. Nothing can drown the soul's desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the confusion of the multitude, to the heavenly courts. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard. You who feel the most unworthy, fear not to commit your case to God. {HP 82.4}

There is a mighty power in prayer. Our great adversary is constantly seeking to keep the troubled soul away from God. An appeal to Heaven by the humblest saint is more to be dreaded by Satan than the decrees of cabinets or the mandates of kings. {HP 82.5}

It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask. {ML 15.5}