

Study Guide to the Christian Service

April 2015

1st Week.

Dates: March 29 to April 4, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 46.2- 49.1

An Impressive Dream

In a dream given me September 29, 1886, I was walking with a large company who were looking for berries. There were many young men and women in the company who were to help in gathering the fruit. We seemed to be in a city, for there was very little vacant ground; but around the city there were open fields, beautiful groves, and cultivated gardens. A large wagon laden with provisions for our company went before us.{ChS 46.2}

Soon the wagon halted, and the party scattered in every direction to look for fruit. All around the wagon were both high and low bushes, bearing large, beautiful whortleberries; but the company were all looking too far away to see them. I began to gather the fruit near by, but very carefully, for fear of picking the green berries, which were so mingled with the ripe fruit that I could pick only one or two berries from a cluster.{ChS 46.3}

Some of the nice large berries had fallen to the ground, and were half consumed by worms and insects. "Oh," thought I, "if this field had only been entered before, all this precious fruit might have been saved! But it is too late now. I will, however, pick these from the ground, and see if there is any good in them. Even if the whole berry is spoiled, I can at least show the brethren what they might have found if they had not been too late."{ChS 46.4}

Just then two or three of the party came sauntering around where I was. They were chatting, and seemed to be much occupied with each other's company. Seeing me, they said, "We have looked everywhere, and can find no fruit." They looked with astonishment at the quantity I had. I said, "There are more to be gathered from these bushes." They began picking, but soon stopped, saying, "It is not fair for us to pick here; you found this spot, and the fruit is yours." But I replied, "That makes no difference. Gather wherever you can find anything. This is God's field, and these are His berries; it is your privilege to pick them."{ChS 47.1}

But soon I seemed to be alone again. Every little while I heard talking and laughing at the wagon. I called out to those who were there, "What are you doing?" They answered, "We could not find any berries, and as we were tired and hungry, we thought we would come to the wagon and take a lunch. After we have rested awhile, we will go out again."{ChS 47.2}

"But," I said, "you have brought in nothing as yet. You are eating up all our supplies, without giving us any more. I cannot eat now; there is too much fruit to be picked. You did not find it because you did not look close enough. It does not hang on the outside of the bushes, you must search for it. True, you cannot pick it by handfuls; but by looking carefully among the green berries, you will find very choice fruit."{ChS 47.3}

My small pail was soon full of berries, and I took them to the wagon. Said I, "This is the nicest fruit that I ever picked, and I gathered it near by, while you have wearied yourselves by searching at a distance without success."{ChS 47.4}

Then all came to see my fruit. They said, "These are high-bush berries, firm and good. We did not think we could find anything on the high bushes, so we hunted for low-bush berries only, and found but few of these."{ChS 47.5}

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Then I said, "Will you take care of these berries, and then go with me to look for more fruit on the high bushes?" But they had made no preparation to care for the fruit. There were dishes and sacks in abundance but they had been used to hold food. I became tired of waiting, and finally asked, "Did you not come to gather fruit? Then why are you not prepared to take care of it?" {ChS 47.6}

One responded, "Sister White, we did not really expect to find any fruit where there were so many houses, and so much going on; but as you seemed so anxious to gather fruit, we decided to come with you. We thought we would bring enough to eat, and would enjoy the recreation, if we did not gather any fruit." {ChS 48.1}

I answered, "I cannot understand this kind of work. I shall go to the bushes again at once. The day is already far spent, soon the night will be here, in which we can gather no fruit." Some went with me, but others remained by the wagon to eat. {ChS 48.2}

In one place a little company had collected, and were busily talking about something in which they seemed much interested. I drew near, and found that a little child in a woman's arms had attracted their attention. I said, "You have but a little time, and might better work while you can." {ChS 48.3}

The attention of many was attracted by a young man and a young woman who were running a race to the wagon. On reaching it, they were so tired that they had to sit down and rest. Others also had thrown themselves down on the grass to rest. {ChS 48.4}

Thus the day wore on, and very little was accomplished. At last I said: "Brethren, you call this an unsuccessful expedition. If this is the way you work, I do not wonder at your lack of success. Your success or failure depends upon the way you take hold of the work. There are berries here; for I have found them. Some of you have been searching the low bushes in vain; others have found a few berries; but the high bushes have been passed by, simply because you did not *expect* to find fruit on them. You see that the fruit which I have gathered is large and ripe. In a little while other berries will ripen, and we can go over the bushes again. This is the way in which I was taught to gather fruit. If you had searched near the wagon. You might have found fruit as well as I. {ChS 48.5}

"The lesson that you have this day given to those who are just learning how to do this kind of work, will be copied by them. The Lord has placed these fruit-bearing bushes right in the midst of these thickly settled places, and He expects you to find them. But you have been altogether too much engaged in eating, and amusing yourselves. You did not come to the field with an earnest determination to find fruit. {ChS 48.6}

"You must hereafter work with more zeal and earnestness, and with an altogether different object in view, or your labors will never be successful. By working in the right way, you will teach the younger workers that such matters as eating and recreation are of minor importance. It has been hard work to bring the wagon of supplies to the ground, but you have thought more of the supplies than of the fruit you ought to carry home as the result of your labors. You should be diligent, first to pick the berries nearest you, and then to search for those farther away; after that you can return and work near by again, and thus you will be successful."—Gospel Workers, 136-139. {ChS 49.1}

Questions to Ponder- April 4, 2015

1. What application can you take from this dream to your local Church?

2nd Week.

Dates: April 5 to 11, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 49.2- 54.1

The Test to Be Met

In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But, it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. In the daytime we look toward heaven, but do not see stars. They are there, fixed in the firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine luster.{ChS 49.2}

The time is not far distant, when the test will come to every soul.... In this time, the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy, will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.—Testimonies for the Church 5:80, 81.{ChS 49.3}

Chapter 4—World Conditions Facing the Christian Worker

The World Drama

The world is a theater; the actors, its inhabitants, are preparing to act their part in the last great drama. With the great masses of mankind, there is no unity, except as men confederate to accomplish their selfish purposes. God is looking on. His purposes in regard to His rebellious subjects will be fulfilled. The world has not been given into the hands of men, though God is permitting the elements of confusion and disorder to bear sway for a season. A power from beneath is working to bring about the last great scenes in the drama,—Satan coming as Christ, and working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are binding themselves together in secret societies. Those who are yielding to the passion for confederation are working out the plans of the enemy. The cause will be followed by the effect.—Testimonies for the Church 8:27, 28.{ChS 50.1}

Last Act of the Drama

Never did this message apply with greater force than it applies today. More and more the world is setting at naught the claims of God. Men have become bold in transgression. The wickedness of the inhabitants of the world has almost filled up the measure of their iniquity. This earth has almost reached the place where God will permit the destroyer to work his will upon it. The substitution of the laws of men for the law of God, the exaltation, by merely human authority, of Sunday in place of the Bible Sabbath, is the last act in the drama. When this substitution becomes universal, God will reveal Himself. He will arise in His majesty to shake terribly the earth. He will come out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity, and the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.—Testimonies for the Church 7:141.{ChS 50.2}

The Crisis of the Ages

We are standing on the threshold of the crisis of the ages. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another,—fire, and flood, and earthquake, with war and bloodshed. We are

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not to be surprised at this time by events both great and decisive; for the angel of mercy cannot remain much longer to shelter the impenitent.—Prophets and Kings, 278.{ChS 51.1}

The crisis is stealing gradually upon us. The sun shines in the heavens, passing over its usual round, and the heavens still declare the glory of God. Men are still eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage. Merchants are still buying and selling. Men are jostling one against another, contending for the highest place. Pleasure lovers are still crowding to theaters, horse races, gambling hells. The highest excitement prevails, yet probation's hour is fast closing, and every case is about to be eternally decided. Satan sees that his time is short. He has set all his agencies at work that men may be deceived, deluded, occupied, and entranced until the day of probation shall be ended, and the door of mercy forever shut.—The Southern Watchman, October 3, 1905.{ChS 51.2}

Transgression has almost reached its limit. Confusion fills the world, and a great terror is soon to come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise.—Testimonies for the Church 8:28.{ChS 51.3}

In this time of prevailing iniquity we may know that the last great crisis is at hand. When the defiance of God's law is almost universal, when His people are oppressed and afflicted by their fellow men, the Lord will interpose.—Christ's Object Lessons, 178.{ChS 51.4}

We are standing upon the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecies are fulfilling. Strange, eventful history is being recorded in the books of heaven. Everything in our world is in agitation. There are wars, and rumors of wars. The nations are angry, and the time of the dead has come, that they should be judged. Events are changing to bring about the day of God which hasteth greatly. Only a moment of time, as it were, yet remains. But while already nation is rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, there is not now a general engagement. As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle.—Testimonies for the Church 6:14. {ChS 51.5}

Questions to Ponder April 11, 2015

1. What can we do to not be deceived in "The Crisis of the Ages"?

3rd Week.

Dates: April 12 to 18, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 52.1- 54.1

Restraining Spirit of God Being Withdrawn

The restraining Spirit of God is even now being withdrawn from the world. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, fire and flood, disasters by sea and land, follow each other in quick succession. Science seeks to explain all these. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there shall be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.—Testimonies for the Church 6:408.{ChS 52.1}

The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth. Plagues and judgments are already falling upon the despisers of the grace of God. The calamities by land and sea, the unsettled state of society, the alarms of war, are portentous. They forecast approaching events of the greatest magnitude. The agencies of evil are combining their forces, and consolidating. They are strengthening for the last great crisis. Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.—Testimonies for the Church 9:11.{ChS 52.2}

The time is at hand when there will be sorrow in the world that no human balm can heal. The Spirit of God is being withdrawn. Disasters by sea and by land follow one another in quick succession. How frequently we hear of earthquakes and tornadoes, of destruction by fire and flood, with great loss of life and property! Apparently these calamities are capricious outbreaks of disorganized, unregulated forces of nature, wholly beyond the control of man; but in them all, God's purpose may be read. They are among the agencies by which He seeks to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger.—Prophets and Kings, 277. {ChS 52.3}

The World a Pesthouse

Men in their blindness boast of wonderful progress and enlightenment; but the heavenly watchers see the earth filled with corruption and violence. Because of sin the atmosphere of our world has become as the atmosphere of a pesthouse.—Testimonies for the Church 6:10, 11.{ChS 53.1}

An Epidemic of Crime

We are living in the midst of an "epidemic of crime," at which thoughtful, God-fearing men everywhere stand aghast. The corruption that prevails, it is beyond the power of the human pen to describe. Every day brings fresh revelations of political strife, bribery, and fraud. Every day brings its heart-sickening record of violence and lawlessness, of indifference to human suffering, of brutal, fiendish destruction of human life. Every day testifies to the increase of insanity, murder, and suicide. Who can doubt that satanic agencies are at work among men with increasing activity to distract and corrupt the mind, and defile and destroy the body?—The Ministry of Healing, 142, 143.{ChS 53.2}

The spirit of anarchy is permeating all nations, and the outbreaks that from time to time excite the horror of the world are but indications of the pent-up fires of passion and lawlessness that, having once escaped control, will fill the earth with woe and desolation. The picture which Inspiration has given of the antediluvian world, represents too truly the condition to which modern society is fast hastening. Even now, in the present century, and in professedly Christian lands, there are crimes daily perpetrated, as black and terrible as those for which the old-world sinners were destroyed. Before the flood, God sent Noah to warn the world, that the people might

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be led to repentance, and thus escape the threatened destruction. As the time of Christ's second appearing draws near, the Lord sends His servants with a warning to the world to prepare for that great event. Multitudes have been living in transgression of God's law, and now He in mercy calls them to obey its sacred precepts. All who will put away their sins by repentance toward God and faith in Christ, are offered pardon.—Patriarchs and Prophets, 102. {ChS 53.3}

The condition of things in the world shows that troublous times are right upon us. The daily papers are full of indications of a terrible conflict in the near future. Bold robberies are of frequent occurrence. Strikes are common. Thefts and murders are committed on every hand. Men possessed of demons are taking the lives of men, women, and little children. Men have become infatuated with vice, and every species of evil prevails.—Testimonies for the Church 9:11.{ChS 54.1}

Questions to Ponder April 18, 2015

1. Is there any Divine purpose in the earthly calamities and disasters?

4th Week.

Dates: April 19 to 25, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 54.2- 56.1

The Archdeceiver at Work

At the present time, when the end of all things earthly is rapidly approaching, Satan is putting forth desperate efforts to ensnare the world. He is devising many plans to occupy minds, and to divert attention from the truths essential to salvation. In every city his agencies are busily organizing into parties those who are opposed to the law of God. The archdeceiver is at work to introduce elements of confusion and rebellion, and men are being fired with a zeal that is not according to knowledge.—The Acts of the Apostles, 219.{ChS 54.2}

Satan is a diligent Bible student. He knows that his time is short, and he seeks at every point to counterwork the work of the Lord upon this earth.—Testimonies for the Church 9:16.{ChS 54.3}

Satan is now seeking to hold God's people in a state of inactivity, to keep them from acting their part in spreading the truth, that they may at last be weighed in the balance and found wanting.—Testimonies for the Church 1:260.{ChS 54.4}

World Stirred With the Spirit of War

The world is stirred with the spirit of war. The prophecy of the eleventh chapter of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place.—Testimonies for the Church 9:14.{ChS 54.5}

I was shown the inhabitants of the earth in the utmost confusion. War, bloodshed, privation, want, famine, and pestilence were abroad in the land.... My attention was then called from the scene. There seemed to be a little time of peace. Once more the inhabitants of the earth were presented before me; and again everything was in the utmost confusion. Strife, war, and bloodshed, with famine and pestilence, raged everywhere. Other nations were engaged in this war and confusion. War caused famine. Want and bloodshed caused pestilence. And then men's hearts failed them for fear, "and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth."—Testimonies for the Church 1:268.{ChS 55.1}

Spiritual Darkness

This is a time of spiritual darkness in the churches of the world. Ignorance of divine things has hidden God and the truth from view. The forces of evil are gathering in strength. Satan flatters his coworkers that he will do a work that will captivate the world. While partial inactivity has come upon the church, Satan and his hosts are intensely active. The professed Christian churches are not converting the world; for they are themselves corrupted with selfishness and pride, and need to feel the converting power of God in their midst before they can lead others to a purer or higher standard.—Testimonies for the Church 9:65.{ChS 55.2}

In our day, as of old, the vital truths of God's word are set aside for human theories and speculations. Many professed ministers of the gospel do not accept the whole Bible as the inspired word. One wise man rejects one portion; another questions another part. They set up their judgment as superior to the Word; and the Scripture which they do teach rests upon their own authority. Its divine authenticity is destroyed. Thus the seeds of infidelity are sown broadcast; for the people become confused, and know not what to believe. There are many beliefs that the mind has no right to entertain.—Christ's Object Lessons, 39.{ChS 55.3}

Wickedness is reaching a height never before attained, and yet many ministers of the gospel are crying, "Peace and safety." But God's faithful messengers are to go steadily forward with their work. Clothed with the panoply of heaven, they are to advance fearlessly and victoriously, never

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ceasing their warfare until every soul within their reach shall have received the message of truth for this time.—The Acts of the Apostles, 220. {ChS 55.4}

There is a cause for alarm in the condition of the religious world today. God's mercy has been trifled with. The multitude make void the law of Jehovah, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Infidelity prevails in many of the churches in our land; not infidelity in its broadest sense,—an open denial of the Bible,—but an infidelity that is robed in the garb of Christianity, while it is undermining faith in the Bible as a revelation from God. Fervent devotion and vital piety have given place to hollow formalism. As the result, apostasy and sensualism prevail. Christ declared, "As it was in the days of Lot, ... even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." The daily record of passing events testifies to the fulfillment of His words. The world is fast becoming ripe for destruction. Soon the judgments of God are to be poured out, and sin and sinners are to be consumed.—Patriarchs and Prophets, 166.{ChS 56.1}

Questions to Ponder April 25, 2015

1. What can we do against Satan's plans to keep the Church in "A State of Inactivity"?

5th Week.

Dates: April 26 to May 2, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 56.2- 57.2

Separating the Wheat From the Tares

The time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have had no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter.—Testimonies for the Church 9:97.{ChS 56.2}

Soon the battle will be waged fiercely between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. Soon everything that can be shaken will be shaken, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain.—Testimonies for the Church 9:15, 16.{ChS 56.3}

In the time of distress and perplexity of nations there will be many who have not given themselves wholly to the corrupting influences of the world and the service of Satan, who will humble themselves before God, and turn to Him with their whole heart and find acceptance and pardon.—Testimonies for the Church 1:269. {ChS 56.4}

There are many who are reading the Scriptures who cannot understand their true import. All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in.—The Acts of the Apostles, 109.{ChS 57.1}

Lessons From Elijah's Experience

From Elijah's experience during those days of discouragement and apparent defeat, there are many lessons to be drawn,—lessons invaluable to the servants of God in this age, marked as it is by general departure from right. The apostasy prevailing today is similar to that which in the prophet's day overspread Israel. In the exaltation of the human above the divine, in the praise of popular leaders, in the worship of mammon, and in the placing of the teachings of science above the truths of revelation, multitudes today are following after Baal. Doubt and unbelief are exercising their baleful influence over mind and heart, and many are substituting for the oracles of God the theories of men. It is publicly taught that we have reached a time when human reason should be exalted above the teachings of the Word. The law of God, the divine standard of righteousness, is declared to be of no effect. The enemy of all truth is working with deceptive power to cause men and women to place human institutions where God should be, and to forget that which was ordained for the happiness and salvation of mankind. Yet this apostasy, widespread as it has come to be, is not universal. Not all in the world are lawless and sinful; not all have taken sides with the enemy. God has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal, many who long to understand more fully in regard to Christ and the law, many who are hoping against hope that Jesus will come soon to end the reign of sin and death. And there are many who have been worshiping Baal ignorantly, but with whom the Spirit of God is still striving.—Prophets and Kings, 170, 171.{ChS 57.2}

Questions to Ponder May 2, 2015

1. What does the follow statement motivate us to do? *“In the time of distress and perplexity of nations there will be many who have not given themselves wholly to the corrupting influences of the world and the service of Satan, who will humble themselves before God, and turn to Him with their whole heart and find acceptance and pardon”*