

Accountability for Light.

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By Mrs. E. G. White.

When Christ was on earth, he stood as the representative of humanity. He was on trial in behalf of man, and the test was made in his experience as to the possibility that humanity could overcome through divine power. God created man in his own image, but Satan had determined to obliterate that image, and deface from the soul the impress of the character of God. He determined to make man wholly like himself. Christ was the brightness of his Father's glory; and because of this, Satan hated him. He set every ingenious device at work to tarnish the glory of Christ, and lead him into sin. The spotlessness of Christ's life, the unstained purity of his character, brought against him the most intense hatred. Though Satan was upon his track every moment, seeking to overcome him, Jesus said, He "hath nothing in me." He determined that he would not respond to the temptations of the enemy. The Son of God was obedient to every jot and tittle of the law, and left a perfect pattern for man to copy through divine strength. Jesus looked forward to the triumph and joy that man might attain through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The followers of Christ were not to be left to their human weakness. He said to his disciples, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

It is through the mighty agency of the Holy Spirit that the government of Satan is to be subdued and subjected. It is the Holy Spirit that convinces of sin, and expels it from the soul by the consent of the human agent. The mind is then brought under a new law, and that law is the royal law of liberty. Jesus came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul; for sin can triumph only when the liberty of the soul is extinguished. Jesus reached to the very depth of human woe and misery, and his love attracts man to himself. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, he lifts the mind up from its degradation, and fastens it upon the eternal reality. Through the merits of Christ man may be able to exercise the noblest powers of his being, and expel sin from his soul.

Concerning the advent of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Now read carefully, that you may discern what is the work of the Holy Spirit. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believed not on me." If they do not believe on Jesus as a personal Saviour, they have no promise of salvation; for it is through faith in Christ alone that there is hope for the lost. "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." From the time he ascended to his Father, he has represented man, as his surety and substitute. The Father looks upon the Son in the perfection of his character, as one who has borne the penalty for sin, and has wrought perfect righteousness for the

repenting soul, and he is reconciled to all who believe in Christ as one fully able to save from sin.

It is essential that we who are fallen through sin, shall put on the robe of Christ's righteousness which has been prepared for us. The Holy Spirit was to convince "of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." The unfallen worlds have watched the conflict and trial of the Son of God in behalf of humanity. They have seen the crooked working of him who was once highly exalted of God, but who was expelled from heaven with a large number of angels, who has made this world the stage of his action, the field of his controversy against God. In heaven he complained against the law of God, declaring it unnecessary and arbitrary. He misrepresented the Lord Jehovah, and the high Commander of heaven. He claimed that he was above law, and maintained that right was upon his side; but he has fully made manifest that the principles he advocated were evil and injurious. It has been proved that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."

We are exhorted in the inspired records to "receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your soul." A mere casual faith in the word is not enough; it must be received into the heart, ingrafted in the very character. It is only when this is the case that we have that faith which works by love, and purifies the soul. Then open wide the door of the heart for the entrance of sacred, solemn truth. The psalmist says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." It is as we render obedience to the command of God that we have light and peace. As we make the testimonies of God our delight, we have guidance and counsel. We then eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, and find that his words are spirit and life.

As we walk in the commandments of God, we follow on in the way cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. The faithful of all ages have walked in this path, and they have shone as lights in the world. In this age the light transmitted from them has been shining with increased brightness upon the path of those who are walking in darkness. Some have received the truth, believed and obeyed it. The light of the third angel's message has penetrated into many a darkened mind. The light of the wisdom, the goodness, the mercy, and love of God has been shining forth through his holy word. We are not in the place where our fathers were. Advanced light is shining upon us in these last days. We cannot be accepted of God; we cannot honor him by rendering the same service, doing the same work that our fathers did. In order to be accounted guiltless before God, we must be as faithful in our time in following and obeying our light, as they were faithful in following and obeying the light that shone upon them. Of every individual member of his church, our heavenly Father requires faith and fruits according to the grace and light given. God cannot accept less. Every soul should place himself where the light

will shine upon him. He should treasure every ray, that he may brighten and bless the souls of others with the heaven-sent radiance.

The darkness of the world is great, and individually we shall have light just to the degree to which we improve it. We are to keep the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," by disseminating the light of truth that has blessed our souls, to those who sit in darkness. Every soul is accountable for the talents intrusted. As a church, as individuals, we are to stand upon the elevated, holy ground where the truth has placed us. We are to represent to the world in character and unity the accumulated light which shines upon us in these last days. If we were blind, we should have no sin in neglecting to diffuse the light; for we would not then see our privilege in reference to our own souls and the souls of our children and neighbors. Every soul to whom the Lord has granted light will be accountable for the light, and will be expected to walk in the light according to the degree of grace and truth given him.

Many have gone into their graves in full faith that Sunday was the Sabbath. Through his deceptive power, Satan made of none effect the fourth commandment, and men taught for doctrine the commandments of men. Sunday, the child of papacy, has been accepted and nourished and cherished by the religious world. They have looked upon Sunday as the Sabbath, the sanctified day of rest, when there is not a particle of Scriptural evidence to justify the claim of this spurious Sabbath. Through the agency of the man of sin, men have been led to exalt Sunday where the Sabbath of the Lord alone should be exalted. The Lord God of hosts is to be exalted, and his law is to be honored. In this day he has sent special light. The third angel is represented as flying in the midst of heaven, heralding to the inhabitants of the world the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The third angel's message is to go everywhere. It is to be proclaimed by the human agent, and it becomes every one who hears to be attentive to the heaven-sent message, and in no case to be careless, to refuse to hear or receive it; for it is a message from God to man. If we are rational beings, and the light has come to us, we shall be held accountable for it. But those who have not had the light which is now shining upon the people of God concerning the Sabbath question, will not be accountable for the light; for it has never been brought before them, and they have died without condemnation.

Christ said of the Jews, "If I had not come and done among you works which no other man did, ye would not have sin, but now you have no cloak for your sins." "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

It is plainly stated in the Scriptures that if the whole congregation sin through ignorance, the priests shall make an atonement for the sins when they are made apparent, and the sin of ignorance shall be forgiven. The work of Jesus is to forgive the sins of the past, but if light comes from heaven to the church, and men refuse the light because its acceptance involves a cross, then they stand guilty before God; for they have made it manifest that they love the world more than they love Christ and the truth. Those who have an opportunity to hear the truth, and yet take no pains to hear or understand it, thinking that if they do not hear, they will not be accountable, will be judged guilty before God the same as if they had heard and rejected. There will be no excuse for those who choose to go in error when they might understand what is truth. In his sufferings and death Jesus has made atonement for all sins of ignorance, but there is no provision made for wilful blindness. Those who have hid their eyes from the truth lest they should be convinced, must exercise repentance toward God for the transgression of his law, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, that their sins of ignorance in the transgression of the Sabbath may be forgiven.

Let none plead as an excuse for not keeping the Sabbath, that their fathers died accepted of God when keeping the first day of the week. No doubt they were accepted; for they did not sin against the light that is shining upon you in your day. God would have us walk in the light which shines upon us. We are to appreciate the truth that is presented to our understanding; for if we do not walk in the light, it becomes darkness, and our darkness will be proportionate to the light that is given.

We shall not be held accountable for the light that has not reached our perception, but for that which we have resisted and refused. A man could not apprehend the truth which had never been presented to him, and therefore could not be condemned for light he had never had. But if he had opportunity to hear the message, and to become acquainted with the truth, and yet refused to improve his opportunity, he will be among the number of whom Christ said, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." Those who deliberately place themselves where they will not have an opportunity of hearing the truth, will be reckoned among those who have heard the truth, and persistently resisted its evidences.