

Religious Liberty

1888

Formerly Undated Ms 64. This manuscript is published in entirety in 1SAT 78-92.

Dear Brethren and Sisters:

I have been much burdened in regard to movements that are now in progress for the enforcement of Sunday observance. It has been shown to me that Satan has been working earnestly to carry out his designs to restrict religious liberty. Plans of serious import to the people of God are advancing in an underhand manner among the clergymen of various denominations, and the object of this secret maneuvering is to win popular favor for the enforcement of Sunday sacredness. If the people can be led to favor a Sunday law, then the clergy intend to exert their united influence to obtain a religious amendment to the Constitution and compel the nation to keep Sunday. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 1

There are many who, if they understood the spirit and the result of religious legislation, would not do anything to forward in the least the movement for Sunday enforcement. But while Satan has been making a success of his plans, the people of God have failed at their post. God had an earnest work for them to do, for the honor of His law and the religious liberty of the people are at stake. Yet the watchmen failed to discern the deceptions of the enemy that they might give the trumpet a certain sound in season to have some decided influence. The minds of the people of God have been bewildered, and they have not discerned that Satan was stealing a march upon them, exulting that he could employ their voice and pen upon matters of minor importance and so keep them from warning the people of their danger 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 2

At the time of the trouble in the church and college at Battle Creek in 1882, I was in Healdsburg, California, and my soul was in agony as I pleaded with God to arouse His people that they might not be ignorant of Satan's devices. God would have us see and realize the weakness and depravity of men and put our entire trust in Him. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." [Ephesians 6:12, 13.] 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 3

There are many who are at ease, who are, as it were, asleep. They say, “If prophecy has foretold the enforcement of Sunday observance, the law will surely be enacted,” and having come to this conclusion, they sit down in calm expectation of the event, comforting themselves with the thought that God will protect His people in the day of trouble. But God will not save us if we make no effort to do the work He has committed to our charge. We must be found faithfully guarding the outposts, watching as vigilant soldiers, lest Satan shall gain an advantage which it is our duty to prevent. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 4

We should diligently study the Word of God and pray in faith that God will restrain the powers of darkness, for as yet the message has gone to comparatively few, and the world is to be lightened with its glory. The present truth—the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus—has not yet been sounded as it must be. There are many almost within the shadow of our own doors for whose salvation no personal effort has ever been made. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 5

We are not prepared for the time when our work must close. We must take a firm stand that we will not reverence the first day of the week as the Sabbath, for it is not the day that was blessed and sanctified by Jehovah, and in reverencing Sunday we should place ourselves on the side of the great deceiver. The controversy for the Sabbath will open the subject to the people, and an opportunity will be given that the claims of the genuine Sabbath may be presented. Blindness and disloyalty to God so prevail that His law is made void, but the Psalmist says of such a condition, “It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law.” [Psalm 119:126.] 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 6

It is time for God’s people to work as never before because of the increase of wickedness. The God-fearing, commandment-keeping people should be diligent, not only in prayer, but in action; and this will bring the truth before those who have never heard it. The world is overborne with falsehood and iniquity, and those whom God has made the depositaries of His law and of the pure religion of Jesus must be determined to let their light shine. If they do nothing to disabuse the minds of the people, and through ignorance of the truth our legislators should abjure the principles of Protestantism and give countenance and support to the Roman fallacy, the spurious Sabbath, God will hold His people, who have had great light, responsible for their lack of diligence and faithfulness. But if the subject of religious legislation is judiciously and intelligently laid before the people, and they see that through Sunday enforcement the Roman apostasy would be reenacted by the Christian world and that the tyranny of past ages would be repeated, then whatever comes, we shall have done our duty. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 7

The man of sin thinks to change times and laws. He is exalting himself above God in trying to compel the conscience. But God's people should work with persevering energy to let their light shine upon the people in regard to the law and thus to withstand the enemies of God and His truth. When the law of God has been made void and apostasy becomes a national sin, the Lord will work in behalf of His people. Their extremity will be His opportunity. He will manifest His power in behalf of His church. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 8

When in Healdsburg the Lord wrought upon me mightily. I could not rest, and I asked the Lord to give me strength to meet my brethren again in General Conference, and I would set these things plainly before them. I would not shun to declare to them the whole counsel of God. While you have been allowing your minds to be diverted from the very work that God would have you do and have been doing that which He has not called you to do, Satan has exulted and has carried on his work with all diligence. You have neglected the testimonies that the Lord in mercy sent to incline your feet in the right path. Some of you have utterly refused these words of warning. You have been strong in your own ideas, set in your own ways, and you would not heed reproof or receive correction. The powers of darkness were mustering their forces. Satan was stirring men with a power from beneath that he might outgeneral the armies of Israel and take the field. We have lost much time and many precious opportunities, and Satan has had things his own way. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 9

I promised the Lord that if He would give me His presence I would attend the next General Conference and would speak the words He should give me. I felt that if I was permitted to stand before you again, I must have the presence of God with me as Moses had when he led the children of Israel through the wilderness, that my words might have power with you who have been partially blind to the importance of our time and work. I felt that I would make every effort in my power to urge our brethren to seek the Lord while He is to be found, to call upon Him while He is near. I would show them that unless they were imbued with the Spirit of God they could do no good in their work. Their coldness, their lukewarmness was an offense to God. They must walk in Christ's light or Satan would put his blinder before their eyes and they would call light darkness and darkness light. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 10

I tell you now that you must have divine enlightenment. If you do not seek this, Satan will set up his hellish banner right in your homes, and you will be so blinded to the real nature of his deceptions that you reverence it as the banner of Christ. If you seek God with contrition of soul, His angels will be round about you and will

minister to you, helping you to discern between the sacred and the common. But a nominal faith, a nominal religion, will find no favor with God. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 11

It has been clearly presented before me that many who now preach the truth have never been converted. They need to have Christ the hope of glory formed within them. They need pure, undefiled religion, then they will not glorify poor, erring, mortal man to his injury and with loss to their own souls. We need, oh so much we need the deep movings of the Spirit of God in all our hearts! 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 12

My brethren, we must have Jesus enthroned within, and self must die. We must be baptized with the Holy Spirit, and then we shall not sit down, saying unconcernedly, "What is to be will be. Prophecy must be fulfilled." Oh awake, I pray you, awake, for you bear the most sacred responsibilities! As faithful watchmen you should see the sword coming and give the warning, that men and women may not pursue a course through ignorance that they would avoid if they knew the truth. The Lord has enlightened us in regard to what is coming upon the earth that we may enlighten others, and we shall not be held guiltless if we are content to sit at ease with folded hands and quibble over matters of minor importance. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 13

The minds of many have been engrossed with contentions, and they have rejected the light given through the testimonies because it did not agree with their own opinions. God will not work a miracle to convince these rebellious ones of the truth of the testimonies and compel them to acknowledge His message. He has given sufficient evidence for their faith, and it is only the stubbornness of the natural heart that prevents them from acknowledging the light. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 14

God does not force any man into His service. Every soul must decide for himself whether or not he will fall on the Rock and be broken. Heaven has been amazed to see the spiritual stupidity that has prevailed. You need individually to open your proud hearts to the Spirit of God. You need to have your intellectual ability sanctified to the service of God. The transforming power of God must be upon you that your minds may be renewed by the Holy Spirit, that you may have the mind that was in Christ. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 15

If the watchmen sleep under an opiate of Satan's and do not recognize the voice of the true Shepherd and do not take up the warning, I tell you, in the fear of God,

they will be charged with the blood of souls. The watchmen must be wide-awake, men who will not slumber at their post of duty, day nor night. They must give the trumpet a certain sound that the people may shun the evil and choose the good. Stupidity and careless indifference cannot be excused. On every side of us there are breakers and hidden rocks which will dash our bark in pieces and leave us helpless wrecks unless we make God our refuge and help. Every soul should now be distrustful of self. Our own ways, our own plans and ideas may not be such as God can approve. We must keep the way of the Lord to do His will, making Him our counselor, and then in faith work away from self. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 16

Light must come to the people through agents whom God shall choose, who will give the note of warning that none may be in ignorance of the purposes of God or the devices of Satan. At the great heart of the work Satan will use his hellish arts to the utmost. He will seek in every possible way to interpose himself between the people and God and shut away the light that God would have come to His children. It is his design to keep them in ignorance of what shall come upon the earth. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 17

All should be prepared to hear the signal trumpet of the watchman and be ready to pass the word along the walls of Zion that the people may prepare themselves for the conflict. The people must not be left to stumble their way along in darkness, not knowing what is before them and unprepared for the great issues that are coming. There is a work to be done for this time in fitting a people to stand in the day of trouble, and all must act their part in this work. They must be clothed with the righteousness of Christ and be so fortified by the truth that the delusions of Satan shall not be accepted by them as genuine manifestations of the power of God. 5LtMs, Ms 18, 1888, par. 18

Brethren, years have passed in which every professed follower of Christ should have been engaged in most earnest work to press back the armies of the powers of darkness. Years have been lost because the people of God were not closely connected with the source of all power. For years past every soldier of Christ should have been equipped for the warfare, prepared to meet and avert the dangers that threaten our liberties. The Word of God is to be our defense. We are to search the Scriptures as never before. We are to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints and turn from our dependence upon man. We are to idolize no man, exalt no man, but let God be our fear and our dread.

I call upon you as Christ's ambassadors, to take your feet out of the path they are now in, for it is not the path of duty or of safety. Repent before God that you have

not been faithful watchmen, standing unitedly in the work for the salvation of souls. Tell the people the time of night. Tell the faithful and true that the morning cometh; tell the slothful and ease-loving and those who are working on the enemy's side, that the night cometh. Years have been lost, but will you now awake? Will those in responsible positions take in the situation, or will they, by their indifference and inactivity, say to the people, "Peace and safety"? [1 Thessalonians 5:3.] May God help every one to come up to the help of the Lord now. The watchmen have been asleep, but may God grant that they may not sleep the sleep of death. Let all who are standing upon the walls of Zion give the trumpet a certain sound.

It is a solemn time for God's people, but if they stand close by the bleeding side of Jesus, He will be their defense. He will open ways that the message of light may come to the great men, to authors and lawmakers. They will have opportunities of which you do not now dream, and some of them will boldly advocate the claims of God's downtrodden law.

The Word of the Lord has come to us in positive notes. Will you hear and obey? Says the prophet Isaiah, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." [Isaiah 58:1.] Who is doing this at this time? Because of the backslidings of God's people, living faith has become almost extinct. The deep movings of the Spirit of God are not manifested among us as God would be pleased to manifest His grace. How long will this state of things continue?

Instead of increased power as we enter the perils of the last days, weakness, dissension, and strife for supremacy are apparent. But if we had a connection with the God of heaven, we should be mighty in Him, and yet we would walk with all lowliness of mind, having self hid in Jesus. But now both spiritual and natural feebleness and death are depriving us of workers. God alone, by His Holy Spirit, can arouse us from the slumber of death. There is now need of earnest working men and women who will seek for the salvation of souls; for Satan as a powerful general has taken the field, and in this last remnant of time he is working through all conceivable methods to close the door against light that God would have come to His people. He is sweeping the whole world into his ranks, and the few who are faithful to God's requirements are the only ones who can ever withstand him; and even these he is trying to overcome. Much upon these things has been shown to me, but I can only present a few ideas to you.

Go to God for yourselves; pray for divine enlightenment that you may know that you do know what is truth, that when the wonderful miracle-working power of Satan shall be displayed, and the enemy shall come as an angel of light, you may distinguish between the genuine work of God and the imitative work of the powers of darkness.

Ministers may do a great work for God if Jesus abides in the heart by faith. “Without me,” says Christ, “ye can do nothing.” [John 15:5.] I would that I had the power to present before you your sacred, solemn responsibility. Unless you fall upon the Rock and are broken, unless Christ shall put His mold upon you, these words will not be heeded. You are too self-sufficient, too self-satisfied to feel that such words are needed. But they are truth. Has not God made you the depositaries of His message? And has He not additional truth to reveal to His people if they will carefully search for it as for hid treasure?

The ministers of God should be able to bring forth from the treasure house of His Word things new and old. “Educate, educate, educate,” said the angel. “Give the people the truth. Lift up Jesus before them. Lead them in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. Give them line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little. Never cease to study the Bible for yourselves that you may in an intelligent manner present to the understanding of the people that which is to be.”

The word was spoken to me, “Speak to the people all the words that I shall give thee. Wake up the mighty men. Let them become fully aroused that they may with pen and voice stir up the people to whom God has given great light, that they may let their light shine forth in clear, steady rays to the world. A world is to be warned; and when the third angel’s message goes forth with a loud cry, minds will be fully prepared to make decisions for or against the truth. The great charge is to be made by Satan and his evil angels, united with evil men who will fix their destiny by making void the law of God in the face of convincing evidence from His Word that it is unchangeable and eternal.”

The very time of which the prophet has written will come, and the mighty cry of the third angel will be heard in the earth; His glory will lighten the world, and the message will triumph; but those who do not walk in its light will not triumph with it.

It is now too late in the day for men to please and glorify themselves. Ministers of God, it is too late to be contending for the supremacy. The solemn time has come

when ministers should be weeping between the porch and the altar, crying, “Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach.” [Joel 2:17.] It is a day when, instead of lifting up their souls in self-sufficiency, ministers and people should be confessing their sins before God and one another. The law of God is made void, and even among those who advocate its binding claims are some who break its sacred precepts.

The Bible will be opened from house to house, and men and women will find access to these homes, and minds will be opened to receive the Word of God; and when the crisis comes, many will be prepared to make right decisions even in the face of the formidable difficulties that will be brought about through the deceptive miracles of Satan. Although these will confess the truth and become workers with Christ at the eleventh hour, they will receive equal wages with those who have wrought through the whole day.

There will be an army of steadfast believers who will stand as firm as a rock through the last test. But where in that army are those who have been standard-bearers? Where are those whose voices have sounded in proclaiming the truth to the sinning? Some of them are not there. We look for them; but in the time of shaking they have been unable to stand and have passed over to the enemy’s ranks.

Christ says to him who feels his weakness, “Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.” [Isaiah 27:5.] The power of God is waiting the demand of earnest faith.

The Lord Jesus has been coming near to us in this conference. I thank God for the heart-breaking I have seen in the ministers’ prayer meetings. The Lord has been moving upon the hearts of ministers that they might lay hold of His strength. But for some reason the very ones who most need the influence of these meetings have not been present. The very ones who most need to drink at the fountain of life, who ought to stand in the forefront in our ranks, have not received the power that God has been willing to bestow upon them. The future will tell the results of failing to improve these precious morning meetings. Day after day has passed, and some have not humbled their souls before God. Oh, will the Lord pass them by? They are the ones most in need of hearing every word the Lord has for them.

Those who would now help souls destitute of wisdom, sanctification, and righteousness must themselves have on the whole armor of Christ’s righteousness; for we can never lead the people to an experience of which we are not partakers. Those who have not tasted of the rich blessing of God will make little of the

blessings that others have received. The light which God is giving to His people may be slighted, refused, rejected, but it is thus treated at great peril to men's souls. Brethren, God is working for us; and I feel deeply in earnest that not one ray of heaven-sent light may be regarded with indifference. God's communication to man is to be appreciated and cherished. If we do not appreciate the light of heaven, it will be our condemnation; our position will be similar to that of the Jews when they rejected the Lord of life and glory.

I hope the words I have spoken will not go out of your hearts like water out of a leaky vessel. I have not spoken to you my own words. I promised the Lord that if I were permitted to meet with you again, I would not withhold the truth although it might not please you all. I know there are some that will be benefitted, and in the day of reward the faithful overseer, the faithful shepherd of the flock, will receive a crown of glory. I entreat you, for Christ's sake, do not let the spirit of the enemy take possession of you and the work be marred in consequence in your hands.

We very much desire the help of Elder Littlejohn. God has not released him from the work. We very much desire that Elder Smith shall have the power of the grace of Christ with him at every step, that he shall have Christ as his counselor; for Satan will surely seek to leave upon his mind impressions that will be detrimental not only to his own soul, but to the flock of God. He has had a part in the work almost from its very beginning. The third angel's message will triumph. [Oh,] that Elder Smith may triumph with it, and may have the full assurance of God's approval in all his work! He is in danger of making wrong moves, and it will be, with his temperament, exceedingly hard for him to acknowledge that he has erred.

The work of God is precious in every particular, and it is to go forth to the churches in all its divine fullness. Elder Smith and Elder Littlejohn can communicate the reasons of our faith in a clear and understanding manner which will interest and instruct minds, and if they have a living connection with Jesus, power will attend their labors. God has entrusted to Brother Smith the treasures of His truth, but he has naught wherein to boast because of this. He must walk humbly with God, and God will work with him and for him. He needs to drink deep draughts of the living water, not occasionally but continually, that he may present the fulfillment of prophecy with power and fervency. Increased light will shine upon all the grand truths of prophecy, and they will be seen in freshness and brilliancy because the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness will illuminate the whole.

Do we believe that we are coming to the crisis, that we are living in the very last scenes of the earth's history? Will we now awaken and do the work which this time calls for, or will we wait till the things which I have presented come upon us? God will make Brother Smith strong in His strength if he will walk, not in the counsel of men, but in the counsel of the Holy One of Israel.

My husband, myself, and Brother Smith have been united in the work for many years. From his youth, Brother Smith has been engaged in the work, and it has become a part of his being. He knows our labor and is acquainted with the work that God has given me to do, and, like John, he can speak of the things which he has seen and the things that he has heard and the experience he has had in relation to the work God has given me to do. And this witness Satan will strive most earnestly to silence, that he may better obtain access to minds by making of none effect the testimonies of the Spirit of God.

Brethren and sisters, the Lord wants to impart to us increased light. He desires that we shall have distinct revealings of His glory, that ministers and people shall become strong in His strength. When the angel was about to unfold to Daniel the intensely interesting prophecies to be recorded for us who are to witness their fulfillment, the angel said, "Be strong, yea, be strong." [Daniel 10:19.] We are to receive the very same glory that was revealed to Daniel because it is for God's people in these last days that they may give the trumpet a certain sound.

God help us to work unitedly and as we never have worked before, is my prayer. There is need now of faithful Calebs whose voices will be heard in clear, ringing notes, saying of the immortal inheritance, "Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able." [Numbers 13:30.] We need now the courage of God's faithful servant of old. Not one wavering, uncertain note should come from the watchers' trumpets. They must be true to the sacred, solemn work that has been entrusted to them and lead the flock of God in right pathways onward and upward to victory.