



Second Sabbath

# The Evidence of True Discipleship

**H**erein is my Father glorified,' said Jesus, 'that ye bear much fruit.' God desires to manifest through you the holiness, the benevolence, the compassion, of His own character. Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples labor to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him. 'If ye abide in me,' He says, 'and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' It is through the Word that Christ abides in His followers.

"This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live 'by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' Matt. 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ.

"In this last meeting with His disciples, the great desire which Christ expressed for them was that they might love one another as He had loved them. Again and again He spoke of this. 'These things I command you,' He said repeatedly, 'that ye love one another.' His very first injunction when alone with them in the upper chamber was, 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.'

"To the disciples this commandment was new; for they had not loved one another as Christ had loved them. He saw that new ideas and impulses must control them; that new principles must be practiced by them; through His life and death they were to receive a new conception of love. The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-denying, self-sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another.

#### **LOVE IS THE PROOF**

"This love is the evidence of their discipleship. 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,' said Jesus, 'if ye have love one to another. When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart.

"This love, manifested in the church, will surely stir the wrath of Satan. Christ did not mark out for His disciples an easy path. 'If the world hate you,' He said, 'ye know that it

hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.' The gospel is to be carried forward by aggressive warfare, in the midst of opposition, peril, loss, and suffering. But those who do this work are only following in their Master's steps.

#### **POWER TO DEFEAT SATAN**

"As the world's Redeemer, Christ was constantly confronted with apparent failure. He, the messenger of mercy to our world, seemed to do little of the work He longed to do in uplifting and saving. Satanic influences were constantly working to oppose His way. But He would not be discouraged. Through the prophecy of Isaiah He declares, 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. . . . Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.'

"It is to Christ that the promise is given, 'Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth. . . . Thus saith the Lord: . . . I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show

## “When men are bound . . . by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence.”

yourselves. . . . They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.’ Isa. 49:4, 5, 7-10.

“Upon this word Jesus rested, and He gave Satan no advantage. When the last steps of Christ’s humiliation were to be taken, when the deepest sorrow was closing about His soul, He said to His disciples, ‘The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.’ ‘The prince of this world is judged.’ Now shall he be cast out. John 14:30; 16:11; 12:31.

“With prophetic eye Christ traced the scenes to take place in His last great conflict. He knew that when He should exclaim, ‘It is finished,’ all heaven would triumph. His ear caught the distant music and the shouts of victory in the heavenly courts. He knew that the knell of Satan’s empire would then be sounded, and the name of Christ would be heralded from world to world throughout the universe.

“Christ rejoiced that He could do more for His followers than they could ask or think. He spoke with assurance, knowing that an almighty decree had been given before the world was made. He knew that truth, armed with the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit, would conquer in the contest with evil; and that the bloodstained banner would wave

triumphantly over His followers. He knew that the life of His trusting disciples would be like His, a series of uninterrupted victories, not seen to be such here, but recognized as such in the great hereafter.

### A FAITH LIKE HIS

“‘These things I have spoken unto you,’ He said, ‘that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.’ Christ did not fail, neither was He discouraged, and His followers are to manifest a faith of the same enduring nature. They are to live as He lived, and work as He worked, because they depend on Him as the great Master Worker. Courage, energy, and perseverance they must possess. Though apparent impossibilities obstruct their way, by His grace they are to go forward.

“Instead of deploring difficulties, they are called upon to surmount them. They are to despair of nothing, and to hope for everything. With the golden chain of His matchless love Christ has bound them to the throne of God. It is His purpose that the highest influence in the universe, emanating from the source of all power, shall be theirs. They are to have power to resist evil, power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master, power that will enable them to overcome as Christ overcame.

“Christ designs that heaven’s order, heaven’s plan of government, heaven’s divine harmony, shall be represented in His church on earth. Thus in His people He is glorified. Through them the Sun of Righteousness will shine in undimmed luster to the world. Christ has given to His church ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession.

“He has bestowed upon His people capabilities and blessings

that they may represent His own sufficiency. The church, endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depositary, in which the riches of His mercy, His grace, and His love are to appear in full and final display. Christ looks upon His people in their purity and perfection, as the reward of His humiliation, and the supplement of His glory—Christ, the great Center, from whom radiates all glory.

“With strong, hopeful words the Saviour ended His instruction. Then He poured out the burden of His soul in prayer for His disciples. Lifting His eyes to heaven, He said, ‘Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.’” ©

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This article is excerpted from *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940), pp. 677-680. Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.

### Questions for Reflection

1. How do we represent Christ’s character to the world?
2. Discuss the idea of “living as He lived, working as He worked.” How did Christ’s purpose affect the way He lived and worked?
3. What are some weapons we can use to combat discouragement and fear when faced with temptation?