

The Birth of a Missionary

MEMORY VERSE: “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35).

“Jesus had begun to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to the world. Though He was a Jew, He mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of His nation.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 193.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 182–187.

1. NEW LIFE, NEW PRIORITIES

Sunday, Feb 23

a. Upon recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, what did the Samaritan woman immediately do? John 4:28, 29.

John 4:28, 29

The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, **29** Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

“The woman had been filled with joy as she listened to Christ’s words. The wonderful revelation was almost overpowering. Leaving her waterpot, she returned to the city, to carry the message to others. Jesus knew why she had gone. Leaving her waterpot spoke unmistakably as to the effect of His words. It was the earnest desire of her soul to obtain the living water; and she forgot her errand to the well, she forgot the Saviour’s thirst, which she had purposed to supply. With heart overflowing with gladness, she hastened on her way, to impart to others the precious light she had received.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 191.

b. What did the inhabitants of Sychar do when they heard the testimony of their fellow citizen? John 4:30.

John 4:30

Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

“[The woman’s] words touched their hearts. There was a new expression on her face, a change in her whole appearance. They were interested to see Jesus.”—*Ibid.*

2. THE HARVEST AND THE REAPERS

Monday, Feb 24

a. As Jesus saw the inhabitants of Sychar coming, what did He say to His disciples? John 4:35–38.

John 4:35–38

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. **36** And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. **37** And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. **38** I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

“ ‘He that reapeth,’ He said, ‘receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.’ Here Christ points out the sacred service owed to God by those who receive the gospel. They are to be His living agencies. He requires their individual service. And whether we sow or reap, we are working for God. One scatters the seed; another gathers in the harvest; and both the sower and the reaper receive wages. They rejoice together in the reward of their labor.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 191, 192.

b. What was the effect of the woman’s testimony about Christ—and what can we learn from the impact it had? John 4:39.

John 4:39

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

“When we are united to Christ, we have the mind of Christ. Purity and love shine forth in the character, meekness and truth control the life. The very expression of the countenance is changed. Christ abiding in the soul exerts a transforming power, and the outward aspect bears witness to the peace and joy that reign within. We drink in the love of Christ, as the branch draws nourishment from the vine. If we are grafted in Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the Living Vine, we shall give evidence of the fact by bearing rich clusters of living fruit. If we are connected with the Light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world. . . .

“By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. He passes from death unto life; he becomes spiritual and discerns spiritual things. The wisdom of God enlightens his mind, and he beholds wondrous things out of His law. As a man is converted by the truth, the work of transformation of character goes on.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 337, 338.

3. THE PRESENCE OF JESUS IN SAMARIA

Tuesday, Feb 25

a. What petition did the Samaritans make to Jesus—and why? John 4:40.

John 4:40

So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

b. Describe the result of Christ’s time in Samaria. John 4:41.

John 4:41

And many more believed because of his own word;

“In the words spoken to the woman at the well, good seed had been sown, and how quickly the harvest was received. The Samaritans came and heard Jesus, and believed on Him. Crowding about Him at the well, they plied Him with questions, and eagerly received His explanations of many things that had been obscure to them. As they listened, their perplexity began to clear away. They were like a people in great darkness tracing up a sudden ray of light till they had found the day. But they were not satisfied with this short conference. They were anxious to hear more, and to have their friends also listen to this wonderful teacher. They invited Him to their city, and begged Him to remain with them. For two days He tarried in Samaria, and many more believed on Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 192.

“Christ revealed God to His disciples in a way that performed in their hearts a special work, such as He has long been urging us to allow Him to do in our hearts. There are many who, in dwelling too largely upon theory, have lost sight of the living power of the Saviour’s example. They have lost sight of Him as the humble, self-denying worker. What they need is to behold Jesus. Daily we need the fresh revealing of His presence.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 302.

c. What did many Samaritans declare after having accepted Jesus as the Messiah? John 4:42.

John 4:42

And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

“The Pharisees despised the simplicity of Jesus. They ignored His miracles, and demanded a sign that He was the Son of God. But the Samaritans asked no sign, and Jesus performed no miracles among them, save in revealing the secrets of her life to the woman at the well. Yet many received Him. In their new joy they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.’ ”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 192, 193.

4. THE POWER OF PROPHECY

Wednesday, Feb 26

a. Upon what prophecy did the Samaritans base their faith in the promised Messiah? Genesis 49:10.

Genesis 49:10

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

“The Samaritans believed that the Messiah was to come as the Redeemer, not only of the Jews, but of the world. The Holy Spirit through Moses had foretold Him as a prophet sent from God. Through Jacob it had been declared that unto Him should the gathering of the people be; and through Abraham, that in Him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. On these scriptures the people of Samaria based their faith in the Messiah. The fact that the Jews had misinterpreted the later prophets, attributing to the first advent the glory of Christ’s second coming, had led the Samaritans to discard all the sacred writings except those given through Moses. But as the Saviour swept away these false interpretations, many accepted the later prophecies and the words of Christ Himself in regard to the kingdom of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 193.

b. What can we today learn from the fact that the Samaritans were amazingly open to the truth? Ecclesiastes 11:4, 5.

Ecclesiastes 11:4, 5

He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. **5** As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

“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*, p. 109.

c. What do individuals become when they truly receive Christ? Give examples. Mark 5:18–20; 7:31–37.

Mark 5:18–20

And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. **19** Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. **20** And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

Mark 7:31–37

And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. **32** And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. **33** And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; **34** And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. **35** And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. **36** And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; **37** And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

“[Christ’s] Spirit will develop in man all that will ennoble the character and dignify the nature. It will build man up for the glory of God in body and soul and spirit. . . . And souls that have been degraded into instruments of Satan are still through the power of Christ transformed into messengers of righteousness, and sent forth by the Son of God to tell what ‘great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.’”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 341.

5. CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES

Thursday, Feb 27

a. What lessons do we learn from the Samaritan woman? 1 John 1:1–3; 2 Corinthians 5:14 (first part).

1 John 1:1–3

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; **2** (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) **3** That which

we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:14

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

“As soon as she had found the Saviour the Samaritan woman brought others to Him. She proved herself a more effective missionary than His own disciples. The disciples saw nothing in Samaria to indicate that it was an encouraging field. Their thoughts were fixed upon a great work to be done in the future. They did not see that right around them was a harvest to be gathered. But through the woman whom they despised, a whole cityful were brought to hear the Saviour. She carried the light at once to her countrymen.

“This woman represents the working of a practical faith in Christ. Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195.

b. How is this experience to motivate us today? Ecclesiastes 11:6.

Ecclesiastes 11:6

In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

“We need not go to foreign lands to become missionaries for God. All around us are fields ‘white already to harvest,’ and whoever will may gather ‘fruit unto life eternal.’ God calls upon many in Battle Creek who are dying of spiritual sloth to go where their labor is needed in His cause. Move out of Battle Creek, even if it requires a pecuniary sacrifice. Go somewhere to be a blessing to others. Go where you can strengthen some weak church. Put to use the powers which God has given you.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 187.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Friday, Feb 28

- 1. What did the woman do when she saw Jesus as the only Saviour?**
- 2. Explain what is meant by fields being white already for the harvest.**
- 3. How many days did Jesus remain with the Samaritans?**
- 4. What testimony did the Samaritans give concerning Jesus?**
- 5. What happens to people as soon as they receive Jesus into their lives?**

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 182–187.

Our Saviour represents Himself as a man taking his journey into a far country, who left his house in charge of chosen servants, giving to every man his work. Every Christian has something to do in the service of his Master. We are not to seek our own ease or convenience, but rather to make the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom our first consideration. Unselfish efforts to help and bless our fellow men will not only evince our

love for Jesus, but will keep us near Him in dependence and faith, and our own souls will be constantly growing in grace and in a knowledge of the truth. **(5T 182.1)**

God has scattered His children in various communities that the light of truth may be kept shining amid the moral darkness that enshrouds the earth. The deeper the darkness around us, the greater the need that our light should shine for God. We may be placed in circumstances of great difficulty and trial, but this does not prove that we are not in the very position assigned us by Providence. Among the Christians at Rome in Paul's day the apostle mentions them "that are of Caesar's household." Philippians 4:22. Nowhere could the moral atmosphere be more unfavorable to Christianity than at that Roman court under the cruel and profligate Nero. Yet those who had, while in the emperor's service, accepted Christ did not feel at liberty, after their conversion, to leave their post of duty. In the face of seductive temptations, fierce opposition, and appalling dangers they were faithful witnesses for Christ. **(5T 182.2)**

Whoever will rely wholly upon divine grace may make his life a constant testimony for the truth. No one is so situated that he cannot be a true and faithful Christian. However great the obstacles, all who are determined to obey God will find the way opening as they go forward. **(5T 182.3)**

Those who maintain their fidelity to God in the midst of opposing influences are gaining an experience of the highest value. Their strength increases with every obstacle surmounted, every temptation overcome. This fact is often overlooked. When a person has received the truth, mistaken friends fear to expose him to any test or trial, and they immediately endeavor to secure for him an easier position. He goes to some place where all are in harmony with him. But is his spiritual strength increased thereby? In many cases not. He comes to have as little real stamina as a hothouse plant. He ceases to watch; his faith becomes weak; he is neither growing in grace himself nor aiding others. **(5T 183.1)**

Do any shrink from maintaining the truth in the midst of unbelief and opposition? I ask them to call to mind the believers in Nero's household; consider the depravity and persecution which they encountered, and gather from their example a lesson of courage, fortitude, and faith. **(5T 183.2)**

It may at times be advisable for those who are young in the faith to be withdrawn from great temptations or opposition and to be placed where they can enjoy the care and counsel of experienced Christians. But it should be ever kept before their minds that the Christian life is a constant warfare; that the indulgence of sloth or indolence will be fatal to success. **(5T 183.3)**

We should not, after accepting the truth, unite with those who oppose it, nor in any manner place ourselves where it will be difficult for us to live out our faith. But should anyone while thus situated receive the truth, he should weigh the matter carefully before leaving his position. It may be the design of Providence that his influence and example shall bring others to the knowledge of the truth. **(5T 183.4)**

Many are connected in family relations with opposers of the faith. These believers are often subjected to great trials, but by divine grace they may glorify God by obedience to the truth. **(5T 184.1)**

As servants of Christ we should be faithful in the position where God sees that we can render most efficient service. If opportunities of greater usefulness are presented to us, we should accept them at the Master's bidding, and His approving smile will be upon us. But we should fear to leave our appointed work unless the Lord clearly indicates our duty to serve Him in another field. **(5T 184.2)**

Different qualifications are needed for different departments of the work. The carpenter is not fitted to work at the anvil, nor the blacksmith to use the plane. The merchant would be out of place beside the sickbed, and the doctor in the counting room. Those who become weary with the work which God has committed to them, and place themselves in positions where they cannot or will not work, will be accounted slothful servants. "To every man his work." Mark 13:34. Not one is excused. **(5T 184.3)**

Our duty to act as missionaries for God in the very position where He has placed us has been greatly overlooked by us as a people. Many are eagerly turning from present duties and opportunities to some wider field; many imagine that in some other position they would find it less difficult to obey the truth. Our larger churches are looked upon as enjoying great advantages, and there is among our people a growing tendency to leave their special post of duty and move to Battle Creek or to the vicinity of some other large church. This practice not only threatens the prosperity and even the life of our smaller churches, but it is preventing us from doing the very work which God has given us to do, and is destroying our spirituality and usefulness as a people. **(5T 184.4)**

From nearly all our churches in Michigan, and, to some extent, from other states, our brethren and sisters have been crowding into Battle Creek. Many of them were efficient helpers in smaller churches, and their removal has greatly weakened those little companies; in some cases the church has thus been completely disorganized. **(5T 184.5)**

Have those who moved to Battle Creek proved a help to the church? As the matter was presented before me, I looked to see who were bearing a living testimony for God, who were feeling a burden for the youth, who were visiting from house to house, praying with families and laboring for their spiritual interests. I saw that this work had been neglected. On coming to this large church, many feel that they have no part to act. Hence they fold their hands and shun all responsibility and effort. **(5T 185.1)**

There are some who come here merely to secure financial benefit. This class are a heavy burden to the church. They are cumberers of the ground, their unproductive boughs shutting from other trees the glory of heaven's sunlight. **(5T 185.2)**

It is not pleasing to God that so many of our ministers should settle at Battle Creek. If their families were scattered in different parts of the field, they might be far more useful. It is true that the minister spends but a short time at home, yet there are many places where that time would be of far greater benefit to the cause of God. **(5T 185.3)**

The Lord says to many at Battle Creek: What doest thou here? What account can you render for leaving your appointed work and becoming a hindrance rather than a help to the church? **(5T 185.4)**

Brethren, I entreat you to compare your own spiritual state as it now is with what it was when you were actively engaged in the cause of Christ. While helping and encouraging the church you were gaining a useful experience and keeping your own souls in the love of God. As you have ceased to work for others, has not your own love grown cold and your zeal languid? And how is it with your children? Are they more firmly established in the truth and more devoted to God than before coming to this large church? **(5T 185.5)**

The influence exerted by some who have long been connected with the work of God is fatal to spirituality and devotion. These gospel-hardened youth have surrounded themselves with an atmosphere of worldliness, irreverence, and infidelity. Dare you risk the effect of such associations upon your children? It would be better for them never to obtain an education than to acquire it at the sacrifice of principle and the blessing of God. **(5T 186.1)**

Among the youth who come to Battle Creek there are some who maintain their fidelity to God in the midst of temptation, but the number is small. Many who come here with confidence in the truth, in the Bible, and in religion have been led astray by irreligious associates and have returned to their homes doubting every truth which we as a people hold dear. **(5T 186.2)**

Let all our brethren who contemplate removing to Battle Creek, or sending their children here, consider the matter well before taking this step. Unless the forces at this great center are keeping the fort, unless the faith and devotion of the church are proportioned to her privileges and opportunities, this is the most dangerous position which you can choose. I have seen the condition of this church as angels look upon it. There is a spiritual deception upon both the people and the watchmen. They maintain the forms of religion, but lack the abiding principles of righteousness. Unless there is a decided change, a marked transformation in this church, the school here should be removed to some other locality. **(5T 186.3)**

Had the youth who have lived here for years improved their privileges, several who are now skeptics would have devoted themselves to the work of the ministry. But they have considered it an evidence of intellectual superiority to doubt the truth and have been proud of their independence in cherishing infidelity. They have done despite to the Spirit of grace and have trampled upon the blood of Christ. **(5T 186.4)**

Where are the missionaries who should be raised up at the heart of the work? From twenty to fifty should be sent out from Battle Creek every year to carry the truth to those who sit in darkness. But piety is at so low an ebb, the spirit of devotion is so weak, worldliness and selfishness so prevalent, that the moral atmosphere begets a lethargy fatal to missionary zeal. **(5T 187.1)**

We need not go to foreign lands to become missionaries for God. All around us are fields "white already to harvest," and whoever will may gather "fruit unto life eternal." John 4:35, 36. God calls upon many in Battle Creek who are dying of spiritual

sloth to go where their labor is needed in His cause. Move out of Battle Creek, even if it requires a pecuniary sacrifice. Go somewhere to be a blessing to others. Go where you can strengthen some weak church. Put to use the powers which God has given you. **(5T 187.2)**

Shake off your spiritual lethargy. Work with all your might to save your own souls and the souls of others. It is no time now to cry, “Peace and safety.” 1 Thessalonians 5:3. It is not silver-tongued orators that are needed to give this message. The truth in all its pointed severity must be spoken. Men of action are needed—men who will labor with earnest, ceaseless energy for the purifying of the church and the warning of the world. **(5T 187.3)**

A great work is to be accomplished; broader plans must be laid; a voice must go forth to arouse the nations. Men whose faith is weak and wavering are not the ones to carry forward the work at this important crisis. We need the courage of heroes and the faith of martyrs. **(5T 187.4)**