

Workers Together With Christ

“Let him that heareth say, Come” (Revelation 22:17).

“When Christ went away, He gave to every man his work. This rests upon every one of us.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 18, 1888.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 820–828.

1. Our First Interest

- a. What should be the first interest of every Christian? Of what does evangelistic ministry consist? Revelation 22:17.
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“Whatever one’s calling in life, his first interest should be to win souls for Christ. He may not be able to speak to congregations, but he can work for individuals. . . . Nigh and afar off are souls weighed down by a sense of guilt. It is not hardship, toil, or poverty that degrades humanity. It is guilt, wrongdoing. This brings unrest and dissatisfaction. Christ would have His servants minister to sin-sick souls.

“The disciples were to begin their work where they were. The hardest and most unpromising field was not to be passed by. So every one of Christ’s workers is to begin where he is. In our own families may be souls hungry for sympathy, starving for the bread of life. There may be children to be trained for Christ. There are heathen at our very doors. Let us do faithfully the work that is nearest. Then let our efforts be extended as far as God’s hand may lead the way.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 822.

- a. Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

1. Our First Interest

- b. In what sense should every Christian feel constrained by the love of Christ? 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15, 19.
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b. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

2. Learning in the School of Christ

- a. Why and how are we to be workers together with Christ? 2 Corinthians 6:1.
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“We are to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 824.

- a. 2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

2. Learning in the School of Christ

- b. How may we be more efficient coworkers in the plan of salvation? Colossians 1:9, 10.
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“Mechanics, lawyers, merchants, men of all trades and professions, are educated for the line of business they hope to enter. It is their policy to make themselves as efficient as possible. Go to the milliner or the dressmaker, and she will tell you how long she toiled before she had a thorough knowledge of her business. The architect will tell you how long it took him to understand how to plan a tasteful, commodious building. And so it is in all the callings that men follow.

“Should the servants of Christ show less diligence in preparing for a work infinitely more important? Should they be ignorant of the ways and means to be employed in winning souls? . . .

“It is a lamentable fact that the advancement of the cause is hindered by the dearth of educated laborers. Many are wanting in moral and intellectual qualifications.”—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 92, 93.

- b. Colossians 1:9-10 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

2. Learning in the School of Christ

- c. How can we “go on unto perfection” in the school of Christ? Philippians 3:12–14; Hebrews 6:1.
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“The cause of God calls for all-round men, who can devise, plan, build up, and organize. And those who appreciate the probabilities and possibilities of the work for this time, will seek by earnest study to obtain all the knowledge they can from the Word, to use in ministering to needy, sin-sick souls. A minister should never think that he has learned enough, and may now relax his efforts.”—Ibid., p. 94.

c. Philippians 3:12-14 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in

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3. Searching For the Lost Sheep

- a. What question did Jesus ask certain men who invested money in flocks and herds? Luke 15:4.
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“In the parable [of the lost sheep] the shepherd goes out to search for one sheep—the very least that can be numbered. So if there had been but one lost soul, Christ would have died for that one.

“The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most helpless of all creatures. It must be sought for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back. So with the soul that has wandered away from God; he is as helpless as the lost sheep, and unless divine love had come to his rescue he could never find his way to God.”—*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 187.

- a. Luke 15:4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

3. Searching For the Lost Sheep

- b. How does a true colaborer of Christ act and feel when one of his sheep is missing? Luke 15:5, 6.
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“The shepherd who discovers that one of his sheep is missing does not look carelessly upon the flock that is safely housed, and say, ‘I have ninety and nine, and it will cost me too much trouble to go in search of the straying one. Let him come back, and I will open the door of the sheepfold, and let him in.’ No; no sooner does the sheep go astray than the shepherd is filled with grief and anxiety. He counts and recounts the flock. When he is sure that one sheep is lost, he slumbers not. He leaves the ninety and nine within the fold and goes in search of the straying sheep. The darker and more tempestuous the night and the more perilous the way, the greater is the shepherd’s anxiety and the more earnest his search. He makes every effort to find that one lost sheep.”—Ibid., pp. 187, 188.

- b. Luke 15:5-6 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

3. Searching For the Lost Sheep

c. What is the meaning of 1 John 3:1; 4:19?

“We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent.”—*Ibid.*, p. 189.

c. 1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.
1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

4. The Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son

- a. What does the lost coin mentioned in the parable represent? Luke 15:8, 9.
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“The lost coin represents those who . . . have no sense of their condition. . . . Their souls are in peril, but they are unconscious and unconcerned. . . . Even those who are indifferent to the claims of God are the objects of His pitying love. They are to be sought for that they may be brought back to God. . . .

“This parable has a lesson to families. In the household there is often great carelessness concerning the souls of its members. Among their number may be one who is estranged from God; but how little anxiety is felt lest in the family relationship there be lost one of God’s entrusted gifts. ”—*Christ Object Lessons*, pp. 193, 194.

- a. Luke 15:8-9 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? 9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

4. The Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son

- b. In the parable, what two tasks were required of the housewife in order to find the lost coin? Luke 15:8 (second part).
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“The woman in the parable searches diligently for her lost coin. . . . She will not cease her efforts until that piece is found. So in the family if one member is lost to God every means should be used for his recovery. . . . Let there be diligent, careful self-examination. . . . See if there is not some mistake, some error in management, by which that soul is confirmed in impenitence.”—Ibid., p. 194.

- b. Luke 15:8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? (second part).

4. The Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son

- c. How does the Lord deal with modern prodigal sons and daughters? Luke 15:11–32. What lesson should we learn from the attitude of the elder brother?

“When you see yourselves as sinners saved only by the love of your heavenly Father, you will have tender pity for others who are suffering in sin. . . . When the ice of selfishness is melted from your hearts, you will be in sympathy with God and will share His joy in the saving of the lost. . . .

“[Your brother] is bound to you by the closest ties; for God recognizes him as a son. Deny your relationship to him, and you show that you are but a hireling in the household, not a child in the family of God.”—Ibid., pp. 210, 211.

c. Luke 15:11-32 And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. 25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. 28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. 29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. 31 And he said unto him, Son,

thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. 32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

5. The Work of Gospel Ministers

- a. Define the main work of a gospel minister. 2 Corinthians 12:10; 2 Timothy 3:10, 11; 4:5.
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“The work of the gospel minister is ‘to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God’ (Ephesians 3:9). If one entering upon this work chooses the least self-sacrificing part, contenting himself with preaching, and leaving the work of personal ministry for someone else, his labors will not be acceptable to God. Souls for whom Christ died are perishing for want of well-directed, personal labor; and he has mistaken his calling who, entering upon the ministry, is unwilling to do the personal work that the care of the flock demands.

“The spirit of the true shepherd is one of self-forgetfulness. . . . By the preaching of the word and by personal ministry in the homes of the people, he learns their needs, their sorrows, their trials; and, cooperating with the great Burden Bearer, he shares their afflictions, comforts their distresses, relieves their soul hunger, and wins their hearts to God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 527.

a. 2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

2 Timothy 3:10-11 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

2 Timothy 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

5. The Work of Gospel Ministers

b. What other qualities are essential in ministry? James 3:1, 2, 13–18.

“There is tactful work for the undershepherd to do as he is called to meet alienation, bitterness, envy, and jealousy in the church, and he will need to labor in the spirit of Christ to set things in order.”—*Ibid.*, p. 526.

b. James 3:1-2 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. 2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

James 3:13-18 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. 14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. What does it mean to be constrained by the love of Christ?
- b. What type of education does the gospel minister need and why?
- c. How does a true colaborer of Christ act and feel when a sheep is missing from the flock?
- d. Which qualities are often forgotten as requirements in the gospel ministry?
- e. How essential are tact and wisdom in the gospel ministry?