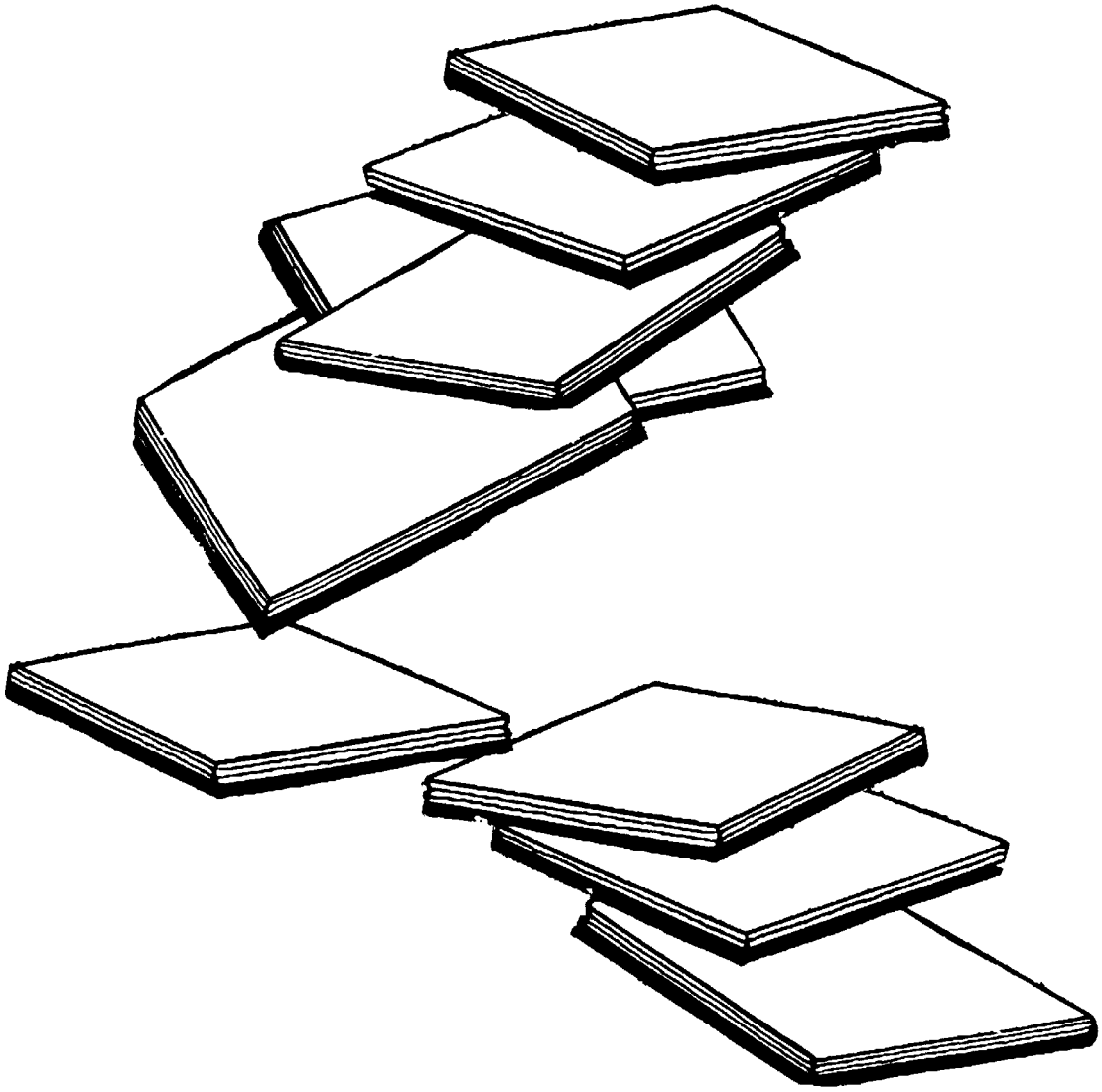
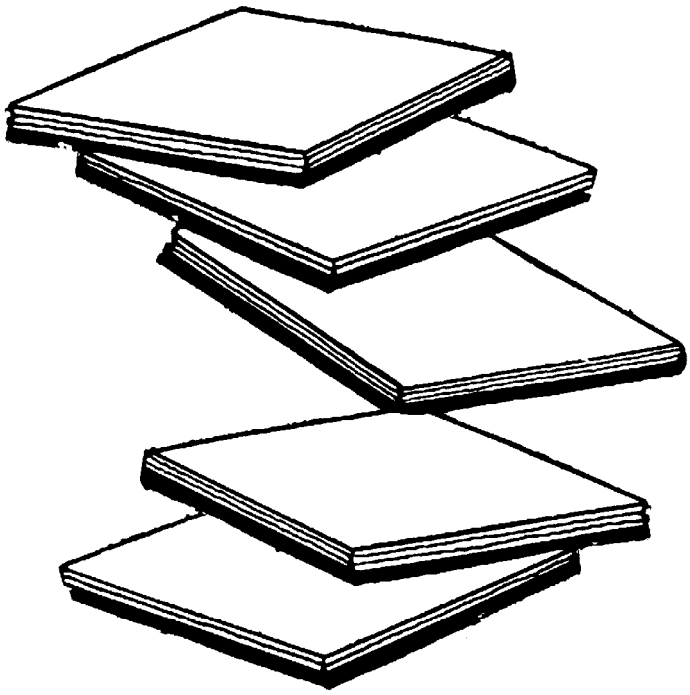
7 – Teach Truth

"Books, Books, Books"



"The Bible....used as a textbook...
will be found far more effective than any other book
in guiding wisely in the affairs of this life,
as well as in aiding the soul to climb the ladder
that reaches to heaven."
Counsels to Teachers 448

"...Of making many books
there is no end."
Ecclesiastes 12:12



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SonLight

7 - Teach Truth
"Books, Books, Books"

Introduction

"The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd" (Ecclesiastes 12:11).

> Goads" are
> "a pointed instrument;
> point of a spear.
> See Hebrews 4:12
> and Ephesians 6:17."
> (*Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary*)

"As I see the danger that threatens the youth from improper reading I cannot forbear to present still further the warnings given me in regard to this great evil.

"The harm that results to the workers from handling matter of an objectionable character is too little realized. Their attention is arrested and their interest aroused by the subject matter with which they are dealing. Sentences are imprinted in the memory. Thoughts are suggested. Almost unconsciously the reader is influenced by the spirit of the writer, and mind and character receive an impress for evil. There are some who have little faith and little power of self-control, and it is difficult for them to banish the thoughts suggested by such literature." (*7 Testimonies* 203)

"The Bible contains all that is needful for the saving of the soul, and at the same time it is adapted to strengthen and discipline the mind. Used as a textbook in our schools, it will be found far more effective than any other book in guiding wisely in the affairs of this life, as well as in aiding the soul to climb the ladder that reaches to heaven. The Bible gives the true seeker an advanced mental drill; he comes from the contemplation of divine things with his faculties enriched. Self is humbled, while God and His truth are exalted. It is because men are unacquainted with the truths of the Bible that there is so much lifting up of man and so little honor given to God." (*Counsels to Teachers* 448)

Fiction

General and Cheap

"Cheap works of fiction do not profit. They impart no real knowledge; they inspire no great and good purpose; they kindle in the heart no earnest desires for purity; they excite no soul hunger for righteousness. On the contrary, they take time which should be given to the practical duties of life and to the service of God—time which should be devoted to prayer, to visiting the sick, caring for the needy, and educating yourself for a useful life." (*The Youth's Instructor* 9-10-1884)

"...There is a multitude of fiction writers, luring to pleasant dreams in palaces of ease. These writers may not be open to the charge of immorality, yet their work is no less really fraught with evil. It is robbing thousands upon thousands of the time and energy and self-discipline demanded by the stern problems of life." (*Education* 227)

"By fostering love for mere amusement, the reading of fiction creates a distaste for life's practical duties. Through its exciting, intoxicating power it is not infrequently a cause of both mental and physical disease. Many a miserable, neglected home, many a lifelong invalid, many an inmate of the insane asylum, has become such through the habit of novel reading." (*The Ministry of Healing* 446)

"What havoc has this love for light reading wrought with the mind! How it has destroyed the principles of sincerity and true godliness, which lie at the foundation of a symmetrical character. It is like a slow poison taken into the system, which will sooner or later reveal its bitter effects. When a wrong impression is left upon the mind in youth, a mark is made, not on sand, but on enduring rock." (*5 Testimonies* 545)

"We are living in a time when everything that is false and superficial is exalted above the real, the natural, and the enduring. The mind must be kept free from everything that would lead it in a wrong direction. It should not be encumbered with trashy stories, which do not add strength to the mental powers. The thoughts will be of the same character as the food we provide for the mind." (*5 Testimonies* 544)

High Class

"Even fiction which contains no suggestion of impurity, and which may be intended to teach excellent principles, is harmful. It encourages the habit of hasty and superficial reading merely for the story. Thus it tends to destroy the power of connected and vigorous thought; it unfits the soul to contemplate the great problems of duty and destiny." (*The Ministry of Healing* 445-446)

"There are works of fiction that were written for the purpose of teaching truth or exposing some great evil. Some of these works have accomplished good. Yet they have also wrought untold harm. They contain statements and highly wrought pen pictures that excite the imagination and give rise to a train of thought which is full of danger, especially to the youth. The scenes described are lived over and over again in their thoughts. Such reading unfits the mind for usefulness and disqualifies it for spiritual exercise. It destroys interest in the Bible. Heavenly things find little place in the thoughts. As the mind dwells upon the scenes of impurity portrayed, passion is aroused, and the end is sin." (*The Ministry of Healing* 445)

"It is often urged that in order to win the youth from sensational or worthless literature, we should supply them with a better class of fiction. This is like trying to cure the drunkard by giving him, in the place of whisky or brandy, the milder intoxicants, such as wine, beer, or cider. The use of these would continually foster the appetite for stronger stimulants. The only safety for the inebriate, and the only safeguard for the temperate man, is total abstinence. For the lover of fiction the same rule holds true. Total abstinence is his only safety." (*The Ministry of Healing* 446)

Continued Newspaper Stories, Novels, Love Stories, Romance

"I am troubled to see in Sabbath-keeping families periodicals and newspapers containing continued stories that leave no impress of good upon the minds of the children and youth. I have watched those whose taste for fiction has been thus cultivated." (*Review and Herald* 11-9-1886)

"It is Satan's work to present to our youth newspaper stories and storybooks that fascinate the senses and thus destroy their relish for the word of God." (5 *Testimonies* 517)

"You have...encouraged the reading of storybooks; these, and papers with continued stories, lying upon your table, have educated the taste of your daughter until she is a mental inebriate and needs a stronger power, a firmer will than her own, to control her." (*5 Testimonies* 506)

"The course that many parents pursue in allowing their children to be indolent and to gratify their desire for reading romance is unfitting them for real life. Novel and storybook reading are the greatest evils in which youth can indulge. Novel and love-story readers always fail to make good, practical mothers. They are air-castle builders, living in an unreal, an imaginary world. They become sentimental and have sick fancies. Their artificial life spoils them for anything useful. They are dwarfed in intellect, although they may flatter themselves that they are superior in mind and manners. Exercise in household labor is of the greatest advantage to young girls." (*3 Testimonies* 152)

"There is [a]...class of books—love stories and frivolous, exciting tales—which are a curse to everyone who reads them, even though the author may attach a good moral." (*Counsels to Teachers* 134)

"Works of romance, frivolous, exciting tales, are, in hardly less degree, a curse to the reader. The author may profess to teach a moral lesson, throughout his work he may interweave religious sentiments; but often these serve only to veil the folly and worthlessness beneath." (*The Ministry of Healing* 445)

Religious Novels

"Could a large share of the books published be consumed, a plague would be stayed that is doing a fearful work upon mind and heart. Love stories, frivolous and exciting tales, and even that class of books called religious novels—books in which the author attaches to his story a moral lesson—are a curse to the readers. Religious sentiments may be woven all through a story book, but, in most cases, Satan is but clothed in angel-robes, the more effectively to deceive and allure. None are so confirmed in right principles, none so secure from temptation, that they are safe in reading these stories." (*The Youth's Instructor* 10-9-1902)

"Often religious statements are woven all through these books, but in most cases Satan is but clothed in angel robes to deceive and allure the unsuspicious. The practice of story reading is one of

the means employed by Satan to destroy souls. It produces a false, unhealthy excitement, fevers the imagination, unfits the mind for usefulness, and disqualifies it for any spiritual exercise. It weans the soul from prayer and from the love of spiritual things." (*Counsels to Teachers* 134)

Murder Stories, Frivolous, Exciting Tales, Sensational Stories

"Almost every family takes one or more secular papers, and these frequently contain love stories and exciting tales of villainy and murder which injure the minds of all who read them." (4 *Testimonies* 599)

"Many of the popular publications of the day are filled with sensational stories that are educating the youth in wickedness and leading them in the path to perdition. Mere children in years are old in a knowledge of crime. They are incited to evil by the tales they read. In imagination they act over the deeds portrayed, until their ambition is aroused to see what they can do in committing crime and evading punishment.

"...Frivolous, exciting tales, are, in hardly less degree, a curse to the reader." (*The Ministry of Healing* 444-445)

"With the cultivation of an appetite for sensational stories, the mental taste is perverted, and the mind is not satisfied unless fed upon this unwholesome food. I can think of no more fitting name for those who indulge in such reading than mental inebriates." (*Counsels to Teachers* 134)

"Those who indulge the habit of racing through an exciting story are simply crippling their mental strength and disqualifying their minds for vigorous thought and research." (*Counsels to Teachers* 135)

"Books on sensational topics, published and circulated as a money-making scheme, might better never be read by the youth. There is a satanic fascination in such books. The heartsickening recital of crimes and atrocities has a bewitching power upon many, exciting them to see what they can do to bring themselves into notice, even by the wickedest deeds." (*Counsels to Teachers* 133)

"Dear youth, cease to read the magazines containing stories. Put away every novel. In the days of Paul, those who were converted at Ephesus burned their magical

books. We would do well to clear our houses of all the story magazines and the publications containing ridiculous pictures—representations originated by satanic agencies." (*The Youth's Instructor* 8-14-1906)

Funny Papers

"We would do well to clear our houses of all the story magazines and the publications containing ridiculous pictures—representations originated by satanic agencies. The youth can not afford to poison their minds with such things." (*The Youth's Instructor* 8-14-1906)

Myths and Fairy Tales

"In the education of children and youth, fairy tales, myths, and fictitious stories are now given a large place. Books of this character are used in the schools, and they are to be found in many homes. How can Christian parents permit their children to use books so filled with falsehood? When the children ask the meaning of stories so contrary to the teaching of their parents, the answer is that the stories are not true; but this does not do away with the evil results of their use. The ideas presented in these books mislead the children. They impart false views of life and beget and foster a desire for the unreal." (*The Ministry of Healing* 446-447)

"Never should books containing a perversion of truth be placed in the hands of children or youth. Let not our children, in the very process of obtaining an education, receive ideas that will prove to be seeds of sin. If those with mature minds had nothing to do with such books, they would themselves be far safer, and their example and influence on the right side would make it far less difficult to guard the youth from temptation." (*The Ministry of Healing* 447)

Examples, Specific

"...*Uncle Tom's Cabin*. That book did good in its day to those who needed an awakening in regard to their false ideas of slavery; but we are standing upon the very borders of the eternal world, where such stories are not needed in the preparation for eternal life." (*5 Testimonies* 519)

"I was much surprised to read your recommendation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin, Robinson Crusoe*, and such books. You are in danger of becoming somewhat careless in your writing. It would be well to give thought and careful study to whatever is to be immortalized in print.

I am really alarmed to see that your spiritual eyesight is not more clear in the matter of selecting and recommending reading for our youth. I know that the recommendation in our papers of such infatuating books as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* will in many minds justify the reading of other books which are nothing but fiction." (*5 Testimonies* 516)

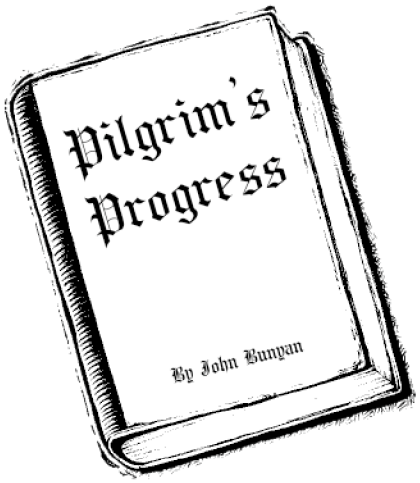
"It seems wonderfully strange to me, considering all I have written in regard to the reading of exciting stories, to see a recommendation from your pen to read *Robinson Crusoe, Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and *Aesop's Fables*. My brother, you made a mistake in writing that article. If these books are among those which you have for sale, I beg of you never to offer them again to our youth." (*5 Testimonies* 519)

"Parents are asleep as to the importance of this subject. Instead of recommending your children to read *Robinson Crusoe* or fascinating stories even of real life, such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, open to them the Scriptures, and have hours of reading God's word and searching the Scriptures for evidences of His truth." (*Review and Herald* 11-9-1886)

John Bunyan Not Included in Previous

"In a loathsome dungeon crowded with profligates and felons, John Bunyan breathed the very atmosphere of heaven; and there he wrote his wonderful allegory of the pilgrim's journey from the land of destruction to the celestial city. For over two hundred years that voice from Bedford jail has spoken with thrilling power to the hearts of men. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* have guided many feet into the path of life." (*The Great Controversy* 252)

(See references to Bunyan in: *9 Testimonies* 217 "Allegory;" *Christ's Object Lessons* 236 "Redeemed from sinful life.")



Infidel, Skeptic, and Pagan Books

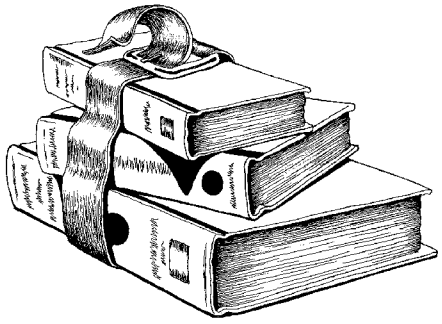
Infidel" means
"unbelieving,
disbelieving the inspiration
of Scripture or divine institution
of Christianity."

"Skeptic" means
"one who doubts the truth
and reality of any principle
or system of principles
or doctrines; doubting."
(*Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary*)

"Suffer not yourselves to open the lids of a book that is questionable. There is a hellish fascination in the literature of Satan. It is the powerful battery by which he tears down a simple religious faith. Never feel that you are strong enough to read infidel books; for they contain a poison like that of asps. They can do you no good, and will assuredly do you harm. In reading them, you are inhaling the miasmas of hell. They will be to your soul like a corrupt stream of water, defiling the mind, keeping it in the mazes of skepticism, and making it earthly and sensual. These books are written by men whom Satan employs as his agents; and by this means he designs to confuse the mind, withdraw the affections from God, and rob your Creator of the reverence and gratitude which His works demand." (*The Youth's Instructor* 9-10-1884)

"Those who claim to be Christians, who profess to believe the truth, and yet drink at the polluted fountains of infidelity, and by precept and example draw others away from the cold, snow-waters of Lebanon, are fools though they profess themselves to be wise." (*Review and Herald* 11-10-1891)

"Those who value their salvation should shun infidel writings as they would shun the leprosy." (*Counsels to Teachers* 136)



Textbooks in Our Schools

Special Cautions to Teachers and Students

"...Those supposed great authors, who give to our schools their text-books for study, are received and glorified, even though they have no vital connection with God. By such study man has been led away from God into forbidden paths; minds have been wearied to death through unnecessary work in trying to obtain that which is to them as the knowledge which Adam and Eve disobeyed God in obtaining." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 150)

"The light shining upon those who have eyes to see, cannot be mingled with the darkness of heresy and error found in many of the text-books recommended to the students in our colleges. Both teachers and pupils have thought that in order to obtain an education, it was necessary to study the productions of writers who teach infidelity, because their works contain some bright gems of thought. But who was the originator of these gems of thought? It was God and God alone; for He is the source of all light. Are not all things essential for the health and growth of the spiritual and moral nature found in the pages of Holy Writ?" (*Review and Herald* 11-10-1891)

"The works of the most intellectual skeptic are works of a mind prostituted to the service of the enemy, and shall those who claim to be reformers, who seek to lead the children and youth in the right way, in the path cast up, imagine that God will be pleased with having them present to the youth that which will misrepresent His character, placing Him in a false light before the young? Shall the sentiments of unbelievers, the expressions of dissolute men, be advocated as worthy of the student's attention, because they are the productions of men whom the world admires as great thinkers? Shall men professing to believe in God, gather from these unsanctified authors their expressions and sentiments, and treasure them up as precious jewels to be stored away among the riches of the mind?—God forbid." (*Review and Herald* 11-17-1891)

"Shall those who have known the oracles of God recommend our students to study the books that express pagan or infidel sentiments, that they may become intelligent? Satan has his agents, educated after his methods, inspired by his

spirit, and adapted to do his works; but shall we co-operate with them? Shall we, as Christians, recommend the works of his agents as valuable, even essential to the attainment of an education?" (*Review and Herald* 11-10-1891)

"Why should we wade through the mass of error contained in the works of pagans and infidels, for the sake of obtaining the benefit of a few intellectual truths, when all truth is at our command?...

"Evil angels are ever on the alert that they may exalt before the minds of the youth that which will do them injury, and as books expressing infidel and pagan sentiments are read, these unseen agents of evil seek to impress those who study them with the spirit of questioning and unbelief." (*Review and Herald* 11-10-1891)

"No teacher in our schools should suggest the idea that, in order to have the right discipline, it is essential to study text-books expressing pagan and infidel sentiments. Students who are thus educated, are not competent to become educators in their turn; for they are filled with the subtle sophistries of the enemy. The study of works that in any way express infidel sentiments is like handling black coals; for a man cannot be undefiled in mind who thinks along the line of skepticism. In going to such sources for knowledge, are we not turning away from the snow of Lebanon to drink from the turbid water of the valley?" (*Review and Herald* 11-10-1891)

"In the night season I was in a large company where the subject of education was agitating the minds of all present. Many were bringing up objections to changing the character of the education which has long been in vogue. One who has long been our instructor was speaking to the people. He said: 'The subject of education should interest the whole Seventh-day Adventist body. The decisions regarding the character of our schoolwork should not be left wholly to principals and teachers.'

"Some were strenuously urging the study of infidel authors and were recommending the very books which the Lord has condemned, and which, therefore, should not in any way be sanctioned. After much earnest conversation and discussion our instructor stepped forward, and, taking in his hand books that had been earnestly advocated as essential to a higher education, he said: 'Do you find in these authors sentiments and principles that make it altogether safe to place them in the hands of students? Human minds

are easily charmed by Satan's lies; and these works produce a distaste for the contemplation of the word of God, which, if received and appreciated, will ensure eternal life to the receiver. You are creatures of habit and should remember that right habits are blessings both in their effect on your own character and in their influence for good over others; but wrong habits, when once established, exercise a despotic power and bring minds into bondage. If you had never read one word in these books you would today be far better able to comprehend that Book which, above all other books, is worthy to be studied, and which gives the only correct ideas regarding higher education.

" 'The fact that it has been customary to include these authors among your lesson books, and that this custom is hoary with age, is no argument in its favor. Long use does not necessarily recommend these books as safe or essential. They have led thousands where Satan led Adam and Eve—to the tree of knowledge of which God has forbidden us to eat. They have led students to forsake the study of the Scriptures for a line of study that is not essential. If students thus educated are ever fitted to work for souls, they will have to unlearn much that they have learned. They will find the unlearning a difficult work; for objectionable ideas have taken root in their minds like weeds in a garden, and as a result some will never be able to distinguish between right and wrong. The good and the evil have been mingled in their education. The faces of men have been uplifted for them to behold, and the theories of men have been exalted; so that as they attempt to teach others, the little truth which they are able to repeat is interwoven with the opinions and sayings and doings of men. The words of men who give evidence that they have not a practical knowledge of Christ should find no place in our schools. They will be hindrances to proper education.

" 'You have the word of the living God, and for the asking you may have the gift of the Holy Spirit to make that word a power to those who believe and obey. The Holy Spirit's work is to guide into all truth. When you depend on the word of the living God with heart and mind and soul, the channel of communication will be unobstructed. Deep, earnest study of the word under the guidance of the Holy Spirit will give you fresh manna, and the same Spirit will make its use effectual. The exertion made by the youth to discipline the mind for high and holy aspirations will be rewarded. Those who make persevering efforts in this direction,

putting the mind to the task of comprehending God's word, are prepared to be laborers together with God.

" 'The world acknowledges as teachers some whom God cannot endorse as safe instructors. By these the Bible is discarded, and the productions of infidel authors are recommended as if they contained those sentiments which should be woven into the character. What can you expect from the sowing of this kind of seed? In the study of these objectionable books the minds of teachers as well as of students become corrupted, and the enemy sows his tares. It cannot be otherwise. By drinking of an impure fountain, poison is introduced into the system. Inexperienced youth taken over this line of study receive impressions which lead their thoughts into channels that are fatal to piety. Youth who have been sent to our schools have learned from books which were thought to be safe because they were used and encouraged in the schools of the world. But from the worldly schools thus followed many students have gone forth infidels because of the study of these very books.

" 'Why have you not extolled the word of God above every human production? Is it not enough to keep close to the Author of all truth? Are you not satisfied to draw water fresh from the streams of Lebanon? God has living fountains from which to refresh the thirsty soul, and stores of precious food with which to strengthen the spirituality. Learn of Him, and He will enable you to give to those who ask a reason of the hope that is within you. Have you thought that a better knowledge of what the Lord has said would have a deleterious effect upon teachers and students?'

"There was a hush in the assembly, and conviction came upon each heart. Men who had thought themselves wise and strong saw that they were weak and lacking in the knowledge of that Book which concerns the eternal destiny of the human soul.

"The messenger of God then took from the hands of several teachers those books which they had been making their study, some of which had been written by infidel authors and contained infidel sentiments, and laid them aside, saying: 'There never has been a time in your lives when the study of these books was for your present good and advancement, or for your future, eternal good. Why will you fill your shelves with books that divert the mind from Christ? Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? Christ calls you: *"Learn of*

me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.' You need to eat of the Bread of life which came down from heaven. You need to be more diligent students of the Holy Scriptures and to drink from the living Fountain. Draw, draw from Christ in earnest prayer. Obtain a daily experience in eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God. Human authors can never supply your great need for this time; but by beholding Christ, the Author and Finisher of your faith, you will be changed into His likeness.'

"Placing the Bible in their hands, he continued: 'You have little knowledge of this book. You know not the Scriptures nor the power of God, nor do you understand the deep importance of the message to be borne to a perishing world. The time past has shown that both teachers and students know very little in regard to the awful truths which are living issues for this time. Should the third angel's message be proclaimed in all lines to many who stand as educators, it would not be understood by them. Had you the knowledge which comes from God, your whole being would proclaim the truth of the living God to a world dead in trespasses and sins. But books and papers that contain little of present truth are exalted, and men are becoming too wise to follow a *'Thus saith the Lord.'*

" 'By every teacher in our schools the only true God is to be uplifted, but many of the watchmen are asleep. They are as the blind leading the blind. Yet the day of the Lord is right upon us. As a thief it is coming with stealthy tread, and it will take unawares all who are not watching. Who among our teachers are awake and as faithful stewards of the grace of God are giving the trumpet a certain sound? Who are proclaiming the message of the third angel, calling the world to make ready for the great day of God? The message we bear has the seal of the living God.'

"Pointing to the Bible he said: 'The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are to be combined in the work of fitting a people to stand in the day of the Lord. Earnestly improve your present opportunities. Make the word of the living God your lessonbook. If this had always been done, students lost to the cause of God would now be missionaries. Jehovah is the only true God, and He is to be reverenced and worshiped. Those who respect the words of infidel authors and lead students to look upon these books as essential in their education lessen their faith in God. The tone, the spirit, the influence of these books is deleterious to those who depend on them for knowledge. Influences have been brought to bear upon the

students that have led them to look away from Christ, the Light of the world, and evil angels rejoice that those who profess to know God deny Him as He has been thus denied in our schools. The Sun of Righteousness has been shining upon the church to dispel the darkness and to call the attention of God's people to the preparation essential for those who would shine as lights in the world. Those who receive this light will comprehend it; those who do not receive it will walk in darkness, knowing not at what they stumble. The soul is never safe unless it is under the divine guidance. Then it will be led into all truth. The word of Christ will fall with living power upon obedient hearts; and through the application of divine truth the perfect image of God will be reproduced, and in heaven it will be said: *'Ye are complete in him'* (Colossians 2:10).'" (*6 Testimonies* 162-167)

"Some of our teachers have been charmed with the sentiments of infidel authors. In a representation given me, I saw one holding in his hand one of these books and recommending it to our teachers as a book from which real help could be obtained along educational lines. Another was holding in His hand books of an altogether different character. He placed His hand upon the one who had recommended the infidel author, and said, 'Advice of the kind you have given is opening the door for Satan with his sophistries to find easy entrance to your school. These books contain sentiments that your students should be instructed to avoid. Human minds are easily charmed with studies that lead to infidelity. These books produce in the minds of the students a distaste for the study of the word of God, which is eternal life to all who follow its instruction. Such books should not find entrance into any school where the youth are being taught to be learners of the greatest of teachers.'" (*Counsels to Teachers* 401)

"Many students have left school unable to receive the word of God with the reverence and respect that they gave it before they entered, their faith eclipsed in the effort to excel in the various studies. The Bible has not been made a standard matter in their education, but books mixed with infidelity and propagating unsound theories have been placed before them." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 150)

"I have some matters which I wish to present before you in regard to education. The teachers in our schools have great respect for authors and books that are current in most of our educational institutions. All heaven has been looking upon

our institutions of learning, and asking you, What is the chaff to the wheat? The Lord has given us the most precious instructions in His word, teaching us what characters we must form in this life to prepare us for the future, immortal life. It has been the custom to exalt books and authors that do not present the proper foundation for true education. From what source did these authors obtain their wisdom, a large share of which does not deserve our respect, even if the authors are regarded as being wise men? Have they taken their lessons from the greatest Teacher that the world ever knew? If not, they are decidedly in the fault. Those who are preparing for the heavenly abodes should be recommended to make the Bible their chief book of study.

"These popular authors have not pointed out to the students the way that leads to eternal life. *'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent'* (John 17:3). The authors of the books current in our schools are recommended and exalted as learned men; their education is in every way deficient, unless they themselves have been educated in the school of Christ, and by practical knowledge bear witness to the word of God as the most essential study for children and youth. *'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'* Books should have been prepared to place in the hands of students that would educate them to have a sincere, reverent love for truth and steadfast integrity. The class of studies which are positively essential in the formation of character to give them a preparation for the future life should be kept ever before them. Christ should be uplifted as the first great teacher, the only-begotten Son of God, who was with the Father from eternal ages....

"The prophecies are to be studied, and the life of Christ compared with the writings of the prophets. He identifies Himself with the prophecies, stating over and over again, They wrote of Me; they testify of Me. The Bible is the only book giving a positive description of Christ Jesus; and if every human being would study it as his lesson book, and obey it, not a soul would be lost.

"All the rays of light shining in the Scriptures point to Jesus Christ, and testify of Him, linking together the Old and New Testament Scriptures. Christ is presented as the author and finisher of their faith, Himself the one in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered. *'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever*

believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

"What book can begin to compare with the Bible? It is essential for every child, for youth, and for those of mature age to understand; for it is the word of God, the word to guide all the human family to heaven. Then why does not the word from God contain the chief elements which constitute education? Uninspired authors are placed in the hands of children and youth in our schools as lesson books—books from which they are to be educated. They are kept before the youth, taking up their precious time in studying those things which they can never use. Many books have been introduced into the schools which should never have been placed there. These books do not in any sense voice the words of John, *'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'* The whole line of study in our schools should be to prepare a people for the future, immortal life....

"How necessary that this mine of truth be explored, and the precious treasures of truth be discovered and secured as rich jewels. The incarnation of Christ, His divinity, His atonement, His wonderful life in heaven as our advocate, the office of the Holy Spirit—all these living, vital themes of Christianity are revealed from Genesis to Revelation. The golden links of truth form a chain of evangelical truth, and the first, and staple, is found in the great teachings of Christ Jesus. Why, then, should not the Scriptures be ennobled and exalted in every school in our land?...

"The doctrines of grace and truth are not really understood by the larger number of our students and church members. Blindness of mind has happened to Israel. For human agents to misconstrue and put a forced, half truthful, and mystical construction upon the oracles of God, is an act which endangers their own souls, and the souls of others....

"How many can truthfully answer this question, What is the essential education for this time? Education means much more than many suppose. True education embraces physical, mental, and moral training, in order that all the powers shall be fitted for the best development, to do service for God, and to work for the uplifting of humanity. To seek for self-recognition, for self-glorification, will leave the human agent destitute of the Spirit of God, destitute of that grace which will make him a useful, efficient worker for Christ. Those who desire only to glorify God will not be striving to bring their supposed merits

into notice, or striving for recognition, or for the highest place. They that hear the call of the world's Redeemer, and obey that call, will be recognized as a distinct, self-sacrificing, holy people....

"The youth are in need of educators who shall keep the word of God ever before them in living principles. If they will keep Bible precepts ever as their textbook, they will have greater influence over the youth; for the teachers will be learners, having a living touch with God. All the time they are inculcating ideas and principles that will lead to a greater knowledge of God, and earnest, growing faith in their behalf in the blood of Jesus, and the power and efficiency of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to keep them from falling; because they are constantly seeking the strongholds of a healthful and well-balanced Christian experience, carrying with them qualifications for future usefulness, and intelligence, and piety. The teachers see and feel that they must labor not to dwarf and taint the minds of their associates, with a sickly half-religious service. There is need of separating from our educational institutions an erroneous, polluted literature, so that ideas will not be received as seeds of sin. Let none suppose that education means a study of books that will lead to the reception of ideas of authors that will sow seed and spring up to bear fruit that must be bound up in bundles with the world, separating them from the Source of all wisdom, all efficiency, and all power, leaving them the sport of Satan's arch-deceiving power. A pure education for youth in our schools, undiluted with heathen philosophy, is a positive necessity in literary lines." (*Fundamentals of Christian Education* 381-387)

Literature In Our Schools

"There is need of separating from our educational institutions an erroneous, polluted literature, so that ideas will not be received as seeds of sin. Let none suppose that education means a study of books that will lead to the reception of ideas of authors that will sow seed and spring up to bear fruit that must be bound up in bundles with the world, separating them from the Source of all wisdom, all efficiency, and all power, leaving them the sport of Satan's arch-deceiving power. A pure education for youth in our schools, undiluted with heathen philosophy, is a positive necessity in literary lines." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 238-239)

"Many books of no real value, books that are exciting and unhealthful are recommended, or at

least permitted to be used, because of their supposed literary value. Why should we direct our children to drink of these polluted streams when they may have free access to the pure fountains of the word of God?" (*Education* 188)

"A mass of tradition, with merely a semblance of truth, is being brought into education, which will never fit the learner to live in this life so that he may obtain the higher immortal life. The literature placed in our schools, written by infidels and so-called wise men, does not contain the education that students should have. It is not essential that they shall be educated in these lines in order to graduate from these schools to the school which is in heaven." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 6)

"In the study of language and literature, from what fountains are the youth taught to drink?—From the wells of paganism; from springs fed by the corruptions of ancient heathendom. They are bidden to study authors, of whom, without dispute, it is declared that they have no regard for the principles of morality.

"And of how many modern authors also might the same be said! With how many are grace and beauty of language but a disguise for principles that in their real deformity would repel the reader!" (*Education* 226-227)

"A pure education for youth in our schools, undiluted with heathen philosophy, is a positive necessity in literary lines." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 239)

"The word is the great lesson book for the students in our schools. The Bible teaches the whole will of God concerning the sons and daughters of Adam. The Bible is the rule of life, teaching us of the character we must form for the future, immortal life. Our faith, our practise, may make us living epistles, known and read of all men. Men need not the dim light of tradition and custom to make the Scriptures comprehensible. It is just as sensible to suppose that the sun, shining in the heavens at noonday, needs the glimmerings of the torchlight of earth to increase its glory. The fables or the utterances of priest or of ministers, are not needed to save the student from error. Consult the divine Oracle, and you have light. In the Bible every duty is made plain, every lesson is comprehensible, able to fit men with a preparation for eternal life. The gift of Christ and the illumination of the Holy Spirit reveal to us the Father and the Son. The word is

exactly adapted to make men and women and youth wise unto salvation. In the word is the science of salvation plainly revealed. *'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' 'Search the Scriptures,'* for therein is the counsel of God, the voice of God speaking to the soul." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 228-229)

Examples, Specific, of Skeptic and Infidel Authors

"Byron had intellectual conception and depth of thought, but he was not a man according to God's standard. He was an agent of Satan." (*4 Testimonies* 519)

God says, "Give no place to the agents of Satan...." (*Review and Herald* 11-10-1891)

"Gibbon the skeptic, and many others whom God endowed with giant minds, and whom the world called great men, rallied under the banner of Satan and used the gifts of God for the perversion of truth and the destruction of the souls of men." (*4 Testimonies* 520)

God says, "Let not the works of skeptics appear on your library shelves...." (*Review and Herald* 11-10-1891)

"There is [a]...class of books that you should avoid—the productions of such infidel writers as Paine and Ingersoll. These are often urged upon you with the taunt that you are a coward, and afraid to read them. Frankly tell these enemies who would tempt you—for enemies they are, however much they may profess to be your friends—that you will obey God, and take the Bible as your guide. Tell them that you are afraid to read these books; that your faith in the word of God is now altogether too weak, and you want it increased and strengthened instead of diminished; and that you do not want to come in such close contact with the father of lies." (*The Youth's Instructor* 9-10-1884)

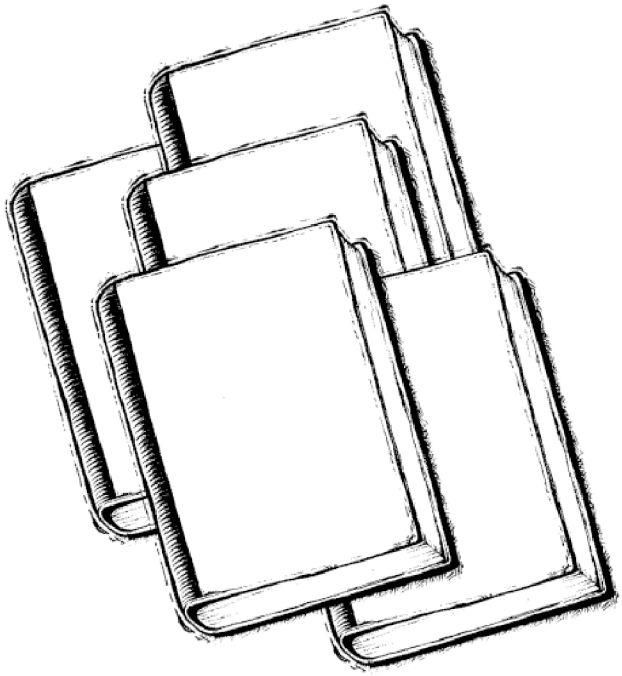
"It matters not whom Satan makes to speak, if his object is only accomplished. He was intimately connected with Paine upon earth, aiding him in his work, and it is an easy thing for him to know the very words and the handwriting of one who served him so faithfully and accomplished his purposes so well. Satan dictated much of Paine's writings...." (*Early Writings* 264-265)

"...Thomas Paine, who, while living, was a devoted servant of the evil one." (*Early Writings* 91)

"Let believers in the truth for this time, turn away from authors that teach infidelity. Let not the works of skeptics appear on your library shelves, where your children can have access to them. Let those who have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, no longer deem it an essential feature of a good education to have a knowledge of the writings of those who deny the existence of God, and pour contempt upon His holy word. Give no place to the agents of Satan, since there is nothing by which to vindicate their doings; a clean thing cannot come out of an unclean." (*Review and Herald* 11-10-1891)

"There is great need of elevating the standard of righteousness in our schools, to give instruction after God's order. Should Christ enter our institutions for the education of the youth, He would cleanse them as He cleansed the temple, banishing many things that have a defiling influence. Many of the books which the youth study would be expelled, and their places would be filled with others that would inculcate substantial knowledge, and abound in sentiments which might be treasured in the heart, in precepts that might govern the conduct." (*Review and Herald* 11-17-1891)

"The Lord expects our teachers to expel from our schools those books that teach sentiments which are not in accordance with His Word, and to give place to those books that are of the highest value. The Lord designs that the teachers in our schools shall excel in wisdom the wisdom of the world, because they study His wisdom. God will be honored when the teachers in our schools, from the highest grades to the lowest, show to the world that a more than human wisdom is theirs, because the Master Teacher is standing at their head." (*Review and Herald* 11-7-1907)



Specific Cautions in Lines of Study

Dangers in Research and Scientific Study

"Very little of the research which is so wearying to the mind furnishes that which will help one to be a successful laborer for souls." (*The Ministry of Healing* 442-443)

"...In too many schools of our day God's word is set aside. Other subjects occupy the mind. The study of infidel authors holds a large place in the educational system. Skeptical sentiments are interwoven in the matter placed in school books. Scientific research becomes misleading, because its discoveries are misinterpreted and perverted. The word of God is compared with the supposed teachings of science, and is made to appear uncertain and untrustworthy. Thus the seeds of doubt are planted in the minds of the youth, and in time of temptation they spring up. When faith in God's word is lost, the soul has no guide, no safeguard." (*Christ's Object Lessons* 41)

"In the study of science, as generally pursued, there are dangers equally great. Evolution and its kindred errors are taught in schools of every grade, from the kindergarten to the college. Thus the study of science, which should impart a knowledge of God, is so mingled with the speculations and theories of men that it tends to infidelity." (*Education* 227)

"The minds of the young have been occupied with books of science and philosophy, where the thorns of skepticism have been only partially concealed; with vague, fanciful fairy stories; or with the works of authors, who, although they may write on Scripture subjects, weave in their own fanciful interpretations. The teaching of such books is as seed sown in the heart. It grows and bears fruit, and a plentiful harvest of infidelity is reaped; and the result is seen in the depravity of the human family." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 60-61)

"We need to guard continually against those books which contain sophistry in regard to geology and other branches of science. Before the theories of men of science are presented to immature students, they need to be carefully sifted from every trace of infidel suggestions. One tiny seed of infidelity sown by a teacher in the heart of a student may spring up and bring forth a harvest of unbelief. The sophistries

regarding God and nature that are flooding the world with skepticism are the inspiration of the fallen foe. Satan is a Bible student. He knows the truths that are essential for salvation, and it is his study to divert minds from these truths. Let our teachers beware lest they echo the falsehoods of the enemy of God and man." (*Counsels to Teachers* 390)

Greek and Latin Classics

"In the colleges and universities thousands of youth devote a large part of the best years of life to the study of Greek and Latin. And while they are engaged in these studies, mind and character are molded by the evil sentiments of pagan literature, the reading of which is generally regarded as an essential part of the study of these languages.

"Those who are conversant with the classics declare that 'the Greek tragedies are full of incest, murder, and human sacrifices to lustful and revengeful gods.' Far better would it be for the world were the education gained from such sources to be dispensed with. *'Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?'* (Proverbs 6:28). *'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one'* (Job 14:4). Can we then expect the youth to develop Christian character while their education is molded by the teaching of those who set at defiance the principles of the law of God?" (*The Ministry of Healing* 443)

"There are callings in which a knowledge of Greek and Latin is needed. Some must study these languages. But the knowledge of them essential for practical uses might be gained without a study of literature that is corrupt and corrupting.

"And a knowledge of Greek and Latin is not needed by many. The study of dead languages should be made secondary to a study of those subjects that teach the right use of all the powers of body and mind. It is folly for students to devote their time to the acquirement of dead languages or of book knowledge in any line, to the neglect of a training for life's practical duties.

"What do students carry with them when they leave school? Where are they going? What are they to do? Have they the knowledge that will enable them to teach others? Have they been educated to be true fathers and mothers? Can they stand at the head of a family as wise instructors? The only education worthy of the name is that which leads young men and young women to be Christlike, which fits them to bear life's responsibilities,

fits them to stand at the head of their families. Such an education is not to be acquired by a study of heathen classics." (*The Ministry of Healing* 444)

History

"The enormities, the cruelties, the licentious practices, portrayed in some of the strictly historical writings, have acted as leaven on many minds, leading to the commission of similar acts." (*Counsels to Teachers* 133)

"...History, as commonly studied, is concerned with man's achievements, his victories in battle, his success in attaining power and greatness. God's agency in the affairs of men is lost sight of. Few study the working out of His purpose in the rise and fall of nations." (*The Ministry of Healing* 442)

"As a preparation for Christian work, many think it essential to acquire an extensive knowledge of historical and theological writings. They suppose that this knowledge will be an aid to them in teaching the gospel. But their laborious study of the opinions of men tends to the enfeebling of their ministry, rather than to its strengthening." (*The Ministry of Healing* 441)

"The world is flooded with books on general information, and men apply their minds in searching uninspired histories; but they neglect the most wonderful book that can give them the most correct ideas and ample understanding." (*Review and Herald* 2-25-1896)

"There is a study of history that is not to be condemned. Sacred history was one of the studies in the schools of the prophets. In the record of His dealings with the nations were traced the footsteps of Jehovah. So today we are to consider the dealings of God with the nations of the earth. We are to see in history the fulfillment of prophecy, to study the workings of Providence in the great reformatory movements, and to understand the progress of events in the marshaling of the nations for the final conflict of the great controversy." (*The Ministry of Healing* 441-442)

"How many books are there concerning war and bloodshed, which mislead the youth! As they read, Satan stands at their side to inspire them with the spirit of the warrior of whom they read, and their blood becomes heated in their veins, and they are stirred up to do cruel actions. How numerous are immoral books, which lead to unholy desires, and fire the passions of the heart, and lead away from all

that is pure and holy!" (*The Youth's Instructor* 11-16-1893)

Commentaries

"The commentaries written about the Word do not all agree. Often they come into collision with one another. God does not ask us to be guided by them. It is His Word with which we have to deal. All can search this Word for themselves. And they may know that the teaching of this precious book is unchangeable. The opinions of human beings differ, but the Bible always says the same thing. The Word of God is from everlasting to everlasting." (*The Upward Look* 52)

"Many think that they must consult commentaries on the Scriptures in order to understand the meaning of the word of God, and we would not take the position that commentaries should not be studied; but it will take much discernment to discover the truth of God under the mass of the words of men." (*Review and Herald* 12-1-1891)

Theology

"We are neglecting our salvation if we give authors who have but a confused idea of what religion means, the most conspicuous place and devoted respect, and make the Bible secondary. Those who have been enlightened in reference to the truth for these last days will not find instruction in the books generally studied today, in regard to the things which are coming upon our world; but the Bible is full of the knowledge of God, and is competent to educate the student for usefulness in this life and for the eternal life." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 179)

"And, to a great degree, theology, as studied and taught, is but a record of human speculation, serving only to 'darken counsel by words without knowledge.' Too often the motive in accumulating these many books is not so much a desire to obtain food for mind and soul, as it is an ambition to become acquainted with philosophers and theologians, a desire to present Christianity to the people in learned terms and propositions." (*The Ministry of Healing* 442)

"There is danger that the false sentiments expressed in the books that they have been reading will sometimes be interwoven by our ministers, teachers, and editors with their arguments, discourses, and publications, under the belief that they are the same in principle as the teachings of the Spirit of truth." (*9 Testimonies* 68)

Bible Study

"The prophecies are to be studied, and the life of Christ compared with the writings of the prophets. He identifies Himself with the prophecies, stating over and over again, They wrote of Me; they testify of Me. The Bible is the only book giving a positive description of Christ Jesus; and if every human being would study it as his lesson book, and obey it, not a soul would be lost." (*Fundamentals of Christian Education* 382)

"Even Bible study, as too often conducted in the schools, is robbing the world of the priceless treasure of the word of God. The work of 'higher criticism,' in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation; it is robbing God's word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives." (*Education* 227)

"We should come with reverence to the study of the Bible, feeling that we are in the presence of God. All lightness and trifling should be laid aside. While some portions of the word are easily understood, the true meaning of other parts is not so readily discerned. There must be patient study and meditation and earnest prayer. Every student, as he opens the Scriptures, should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit; and the promise is sure that it will be given." (*Testimonies to Ministers* 107-108)

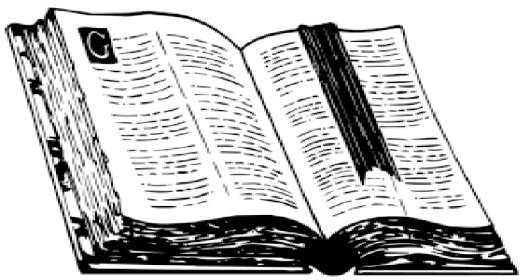
"The Bible should never be studied without prayer." (*The Great Controversy* 599)

"The Bible should not be brought into our schools to be sandwiched in between infidelity. The Bible must be made the groundwork and subject-matter of education. It is true that we know much more of the word of the living God than we knew in the past, but there is still much more to be learned. It should be used as the word of the living God, and esteemed as first, and last, and best in everything. Then will be seen true spiritual growth. The students will develop healthy religious characters, because they eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God. But unless watched and nurtured, the health of the soul decays. Keep in the channel of light. Study the Bible. Those who serve God faithfully will be blessed. He who permits no faithful work to go unrewarded will crown every act of loyalty and integrity with special tokens of His love and approbation." (*Review and Herald* 8-17-1897)

"I have some matters which I wish to present before you in regard

to education. The teachers in our schools have great respect for authors and books that are current in most of our educational institutions. All heaven has been looking upon our institutions of learning, and asking you, What is the chaff to the wheat? The Lord has given us the most precious instructions in His word, teaching us what characters we must form in this life to prepare us for the future, immortal life. It has been the custom to exalt books and authors that do not present the proper foundation for true education. From what source did these authors obtain their wisdom, a large share of which does not deserve our respect, even if the authors are regarded as being wise men? Have they taken their lessons from the greatest Teacher that the world ever knew? If not, they are decidedly in the fault. Those who are preparing for the heavenly abodes should be recommended to make the Bible their chief book of study." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 229-230)

"It is of immense importance, in the light of the lessons of Christ, that every human being should study the Scriptures, that he may be convinced in whom his hopes of eternal life are centered. The Bible should ever have been made the great, grand book of study, which has come down to us from heaven, and is the word of life. Should that book which tells us what we must do in order to be saved, be set aside in a corner, and human productions be exalted as the great wisdom in education? The very knowledge children and youth need to obtain for usefulness in this life, and that they may carry with them in the future life, is found in the word of God. But this is not encouraged and presented before them as the most essential knowledge, and as that which will give the most correct information of the true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. There are gods many and doctrines many. There are maxims and commandments placed before our youth as the commandments of God. It is impossible for them to understand what is truth, what is the sacred, and what is the common, only as they understand the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 233)



General Cautions

Impractical

"It is not well to crowd the mind with a class of studies that require intense application, but that are not brought into use in practical life." (*8 Testimonies* 311)

Intemperate

"Intemperate habits of reading have an effect upon the brain similar to that which intemperate habits of eating and drinking have upon the body." (*Counsels to Teachers* 134-135)

"The gathering together of many books for study too often interposes between God and man a mass of knowledge that weakens the mind and makes it incapable of assimilating that which it has already received. The mind becomes dyspeptic." (*7 Testimonies* 205)

Secular

"The word of God is the most perfect educational book in our world. Yet in our colleges and schools, books produced by human intellect have been presented for the study of our students, and the Book of books, which God has given to men to be an infallible guide, has been made a secondary matter. Human productions have been used as most essential, and the word of God has been studied simply to give flavor to other studies." (*Review and Herald* 2-25-1896)

Uninspired

"Uninspired authors are placed in the hands of children and youth in our schools as lesson books—books from which they are to be educated. They are kept before the youth, taking up their precious time in studying those things which they can never use. Many books have been introduced into the schools which should never have been placed there. These books do not in any sense voice the words of John, *'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'* The whole line of study in our schools should be to prepare a people for the future, immortal life." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 232)

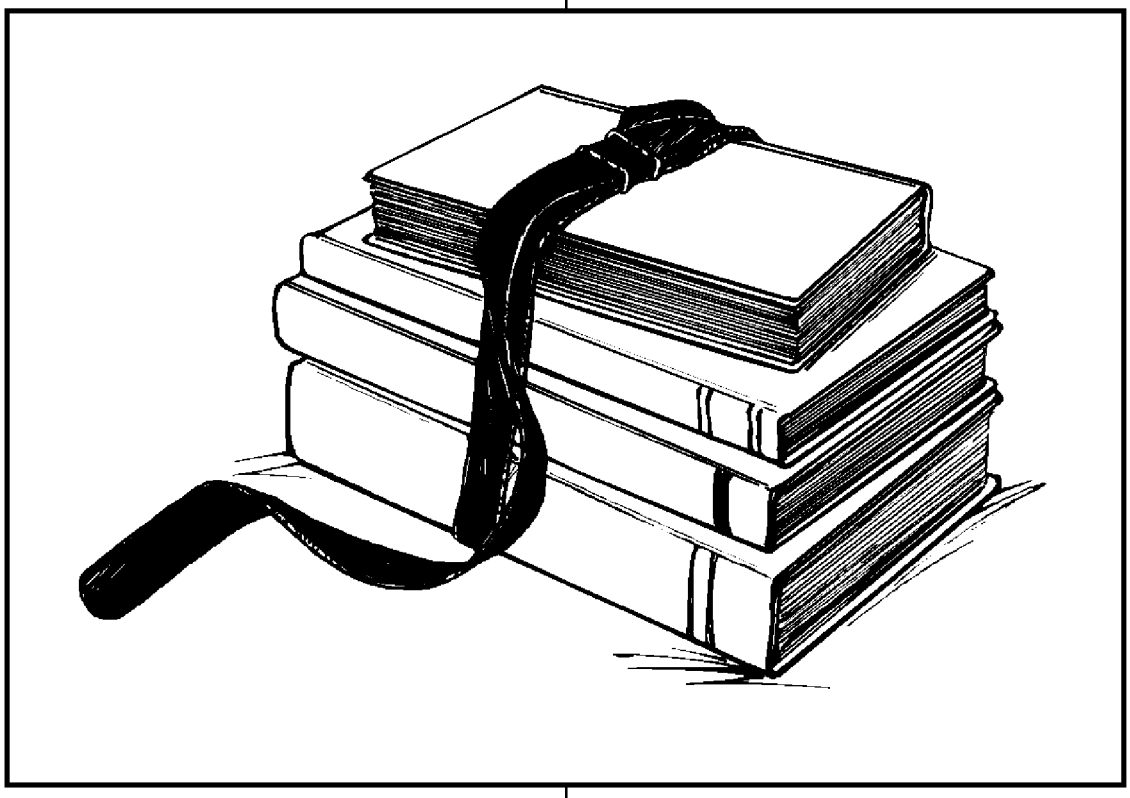
Confusing

"It is a mistake to put into the hands of the youth books that perplex and confuse them. The reason

sometimes given for this study is that the teacher has passed over this ground, and the student must follow. But if teachers were receiving light and wisdom from the divine Teacher, they would look at this matter in a very different way. They would measure the relative importance of the things to be learned in school. The common, essential branches of education would be more thoroughly taught, and the word of God would be esteemed as the bread sent down from heaven, which sustains all spiritual life." (*Counsels to Teachers* 390)

Hasty

"We pride ourselves on the wide distribution of literature; but the multiplication of books, even books that in themselves are not harmful, may be a positive evil. With the immense tide of printed matter constantly pouring from the press, old and young form the habit of reading hastily and superficially, and the mind loses its power of connected and vigorous thought." (*Education* 189)



Results

"Mental inebriates" means
"to disorder the senses;
to stupefy or to make furious
or frantic; to produce effects
like those of liquor,
which are various
in different constitutions."
(*Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary*)

"What shall our children read? is a serious question, and demands a serious answer. I am troubled to see in Sabbath-keeping families periodicals and newspapers containing continued stories that leave no impress of good upon the minds of the children and youth. I have watched those whose taste for fiction has been thus cultivated. They have had the privilege of listening to the truth, of becoming acquainted with the reasons of our faith; but they have grown to maturer years destitute of true piety and practical godliness. These dear youth need so much to put into their character-building the very best material—the love and fear of God and a knowledge of Christ. They should copy His example in denying self, in living to do good, and in obeying all God's commands. Christ says, *'I have kept my Father's commandments.'*

"But many know little or nothing of the reasons of our faith, and have little of an intelligent knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. The mind is feasted upon sensational stories, and the brain is excited just according to the food given it. They live in an unreal world, and are unfitted for the practical duties of life. I have observed children allowed to come up in this way. Whether at home or abroad, they are restless or dreamy, and are unable to converse save upon the most commonplace subjects. Religious thought and conversation is a channel quite foreign to their minds. I have felt sincere pity for these souls when I have considered how much they were losing by neglecting opportunities for knowledge of the religion of Jesus Christ, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. How much precious time is wasted in which they might be studying the Pattern of true goodness and loveliness of character! They might become like Jesus, pure and undefiled in a world of fierce temptation, reflecting the rays of light from the character of our blessed Example. Thus confessing Jesus to the world, they would reveal on whose side they stand.

"But when an appetite for reading exciting, sensational stories is cultivated, and the habit of reading any and every thing that is to be had, is established, the moral taste is perverted, and the mind is unsatisfied unless fed upon this trashy, unwholesome food. I am pained to see young men and women thus ruining their usefulness in this life, and failing to obtain an experience that will prepare them for an eternal life in heavenly society. I can think of no more fit name for them than mental inebriates. Intemperate habits of reading have a similar effect upon the brain to intemperance in eating or drinking.

"I am personally acquainted with some who have lost the healthful tone of the brain through wrong habits of reading; and they will go through life with a diseased imagination, magnifying every little grievance. Things which a sound, sensible mind would not notice, will become to them unendurable trials and insurmountable obstacles, and life will be to them a constant shadow. The nerves of the brain are constantly and unnecessarily taxed by this passion for reading. The nobler powers of the mind, adapted to higher pursuits and contemplation, are educated to be contented with commonplace, yes, worse than commonplace, things, and are thus abused, debased, and dwarfed. Those who indulge the habit of racing through an exciting story, are simply crippling their mental strength, and disqualifying their minds for vigorous thought and research. When the intellect is fed and stimulated upon this depraving food, the thoughts become impure and sensual. Youth and even those of mature age have been afflicted with paralysis from no other cause than excess in reading. The nerve power of the brain was kept constantly excited, until the delicate machinery became worn and refused to act, some of its fine mechanism gave way, and paralysis was the result. There are men and women now in the decline of life who have never recovered from the effect of intemperance in reading. The habit, formed in early years, grew with their growth, and strengthened with their strength. Determined efforts to overcome this sin of abusing the God-given power of intellect were partially successful; but many have never recovered the vigor of mind God bestowed upon them.

"Others continue as they began. All desire to be practical Christians ends with the wish; for they cannot be truly Christ-like, and continue feeding mind and soul upon the class of literature they have chosen. Professedly obeying God and loving His word, they are

crowding their minds with all kinds of sensational reading, until their moral powers are perverted, they become useless in the world, and God is dishonored. I have seen Sabbath-keeping young ladies fairly unhappy unless they had on hand some new novel or some paper with an exciting, fascinating story. During their leisure moments the mind craved stimulation, as the drunkard craves intoxicating drink. These youth manifested no devotion; no heavenly light reflected upon their associates to lead them to the Fount of knowledge. They had no deep religious experience. If this class of reading had not been constantly before them, there might have been some hope of their reforming; but they craved it constantly, and must have it.

"Persons who indulge the habit of story-reading make no progress mentally or morally. The time so devoted is worse than wasted. The gospel seed that is sown in the heart remains unfruitful, or is choked by the weeds sown by such reading. Seed that does not spring up and bear fruit loses its power of germinating. The fig-tree which bore no fruit was doomed to be cut down, condemned as an encumbrance to the very soil it occupied. God requires healthy growth of every tree in the garden of the Lord. But story-reading dwarfs the intellect. Childhood and youth are the time to begin to store the mind, but not with the chips and dirt found in modern newspapers and sensational literature. The mind should be guarded carefully. Nothing should be allowed to enter that will harm or destroy its healthy vigor. But to prevent this, it should be preoccupied with good seed, which, springing to life, will bring forth fruit-bearing branches. If all kinds of seed are sown—good and bad indiscriminately—the mind's soil will be impoverished and demoralized by a wild and noxious growth. Weeds of every kind will flourish, and good seed attain no growth at all. A field left uncultivated speedily produces a rank growth of thistles and tangled vines, which exhaust the soil and are worthless to the owner. The ground is full of seeds blown and carried by the wind from every quarter; and if it is left uncultivated, they spring up to life spontaneously, choking every precious fruit-bearing plant that is struggling for existence. If the field were tilled and sown to grain, these valueless weeds would be extinguished, and could not flourish.

"The similarity between an uncultivated field and an untrained mind is striking. Children and youth already have in their minds and hearts corrupt seed, ready to

spring up and bear its perverting harvest; and the greatest care and watchfulness are needed in cultivating and storing the mind with precious seeds of Bible truth. The children should be educated to reject trashy, exciting tales, and turn to sensible reading that will train their minds to be interested in Bible story, history, and arguments. If their imagination becomes excited by feeding it upon highly-wrought fictitious stories, they will have no desire to search the Scriptures or obtain a knowledge of truth to impart to others. Truth is what our youth should read and study, not fiction—truth to be practiced every day, that truth which Christ prayed might sanctify His disciples.

"When the mind is stored with Bible truth, its principles take deep root in the soul, and the preference and tastes become wedded to truth, and there is no desire for debasing, exciting literature, that enfeebles the moral powers, and wrecks the faculties God has bestowed for usefulness. Bible knowledge will prove an antidote for the poisonous insinuations received through unguarded reading.

"Parents are asleep as to the importance of this subject. Instead of recommending your children to read *Robinson Crusoe* or fascinating stories even of real life, such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, open to them the Scriptures, and have hours of reading God's word and searching the Scriptures for evidences of His truth. Parents can choose, if they will, whether or not their children's minds shall be filled with pure and holy thoughts and sentiments; but their tastes must be disciplined and educated with the greatest care. They must commence early to unfold the Scriptures before the expanding minds of their children, that proper habits and tastes may be formed. The Bible would not be neglected as it is if parents would take the proper course in teaching it to their families. The elements of evil cannot be exterminated except by the introduction of food for pure, solid thought.

"The Bible should be a book for study. The precious pearls of truth do not lie upon the surface, to be found by a careless, uninterested reader. Christ knew what was best for us, of whatever age, when He commanded us, *'Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.'* Jesus, the greatest teacher the world ever knew, would have men and women and children and youth reach the highest standard of excellence of character. He would have them become fully developed mentally, morally, and physically.

"The Holy Bible is neglected in many homes because so many other things are allowed to crowd it out. Center tables are covered with fictitious literature, newspapers, magazines, albums, and trinkets; and although the Book of books may be there also, its covers are seldom if ever opened by the younger members of the household, because of the ever-present temptation in the form of some alluring tale. Love for solid thought and reading is little cultivated by such literature.

"Men who are under the power of the evil one, are inspired by him to write overwrought fictitious stories, with which our world is flooded. In this they are fulfilling Satan's own plan; for if left to itself, the mind naturally chooses such food, to the neglect of the important saving truths of God's word. Our youth and children, and even those of mature age, should firmly pledge themselves to abstain from indulgence in reading the fascinating novels and sensational literature of the day. They delude the imagination, and fill the mind with such an amount of trash that there is no room for storing the sacred utterances of the prophets and apostles, who wrote as they were moved upon by the Holy Spirit.

"The Lord, in His great mercy, has revealed to us in the Scriptures His rules of holy living, His commandments, and His laws. He tells us therein the sins to shun; He explains to us the plan of salvation, and points out the way to heaven. If they obey His injunction to *'search the Scriptures,'* none need be ignorant of these things. The actual progress of the soul in virtue and divine knowledge, is by the plan of addition—adding constantly the graces which Christ made an infinite sacrifice to bring within the reach of all. We are finite; but we are to have a sense of the infinite. The mind must be taxed contemplating God and His wonderful plan for our salvation. The soul will thus be lifted above commonplace things, and fastened upon things that are eternal. The thought that we are in God's world, and in the presence of the great Creator of the universe, who made man in His own image, after His own likeness, will lift the mind into broader, higher fields for meditation than any fictitious story. The thought that God's eye is watching us, that He loves us, and cared so much for fallen man as to give His dearly beloved Son to redeem us, that we might not miserably perish, is a great one; and whoever opens His heart to the acceptance and contemplation of these great themes, will never be satisfied with trivial, sensational subjects.

"Light and truth are within the reach of all and those who have the knowledge of the truth are to be as light in darkness; but if they do not set their minds to searching God's word, Satan will find chaff to fill their minds, leaving no room for the growth of the precious seed of truth. Amid the perils of these latter days, every individual member of the church should understand the reasons of his hope and faith, which are not difficult of comprehension if the mind is only kept free from the perverting and paralyzing influence of modern romance and fiction. There is work for the brain to do if we would grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then let us labor most earnestly to impress and urge upon our children the necessity of understanding the reasons of our faith. We are surrounded with temptations so disguised that they allure while they taint and corrupt the soul. Satan varies his enticements to suit different minds; and he takes advantage of every circumstance to make his plans for a soul's destruction successful.

"God inspired holy men to record for our benefit instruction concerning these dangers that beset our salvation, and how to escape them. The great needs of the soul will be felt upon becoming acquainted with God's word. The Bible declares that obedience to all God's commandments is essential to our salvation. It teaches us our duty to Him, and His will concerning us. We are pointed to the cross of Calvary, and the voice of God says, Look in faith upon Him whom your sins have pierced, and live. Direct the eye of faith to the Lamb of God, and the sins that bruised the blessed body and broke the tender heart of God's dear Son will become hateful and abhorrent. The heart must realize its sins and repent of them. If there is faith in the pardoning blood of Jesus, who is full of compassion and divine love, gratitude and heavenly joy will fill the heart. Confidence in the power of Christ to save will steal into the soul, and thoughts of heavenly things will fill the mind. Jesus, precious Jesus, will become the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. Have we individually opened the door of our hearts to welcome the blessed Redeemer? If we have, we shall find no satisfaction in feeding upon husks; for we feast with Christ, and He feasts with us. Nothing more is wanted for the soul's comfort or salvation.

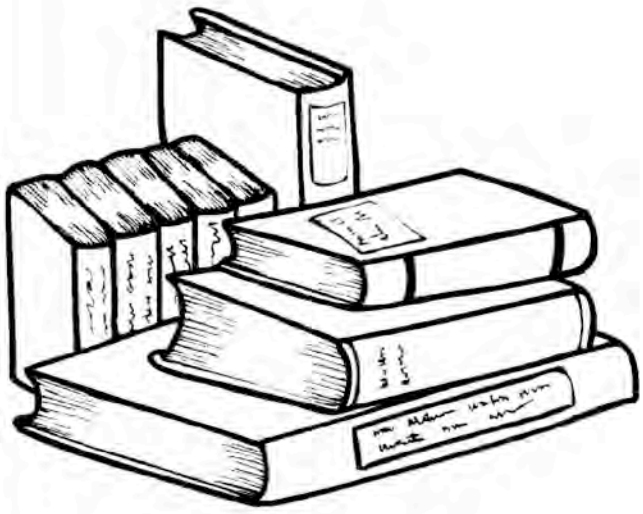
"I call upon the children and youth to empty their minds of

foolish vanities, and make Jesus their everlasting friend. Be sure you have a well-grounded hope. Nothing short of this should satisfy the soul. Make no mistake, for we are working for eternal results. It is insanity to be quiet and at ease as so many are at the present time, having no assurance that they are indeed sons and daughters of God. Eternal interests are at stake. Put away that story, fall upon your knees in prayer for strength to overcome temptations, and devote your time to searching the Bible. And when Jesus reveals Himself to you as a sin-pardoning Saviour, reflect the heavenly radiance upon others. You need not remain in suspense; true light shines from God's word upon all hearts that are open to receive its precious rays; and it is your privilege to say, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' The Spirit will bear witness with your spirit that you are indeed children of God. You may commune with Christ, who will be within you a hope of glory. This is true religion. All else is deception, a delusion. Let us open our hearts to its influence, that when Christ comes, we may be ready to receive Him in joy and peace." (*Review and Herald* 11-9-1886)

"Blindness of mind has happened to Israel." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 236)

Warning

"Just as soon as you begin to think you are big men, and that you are so large that you can comprehend and pick out all that is precious in infidel authors, and leave out all that is vile, then you are wise above that which is written.... The devil is right by your side, and the evil angels are there. The devil is a great deal smarter than you are, and you cannot see what he is driving at. He will so cunningly interweave his sentiments with the thoughts of these writers, that it will be impossible to distinguish the error which they contain." (*This Day With God* 217)



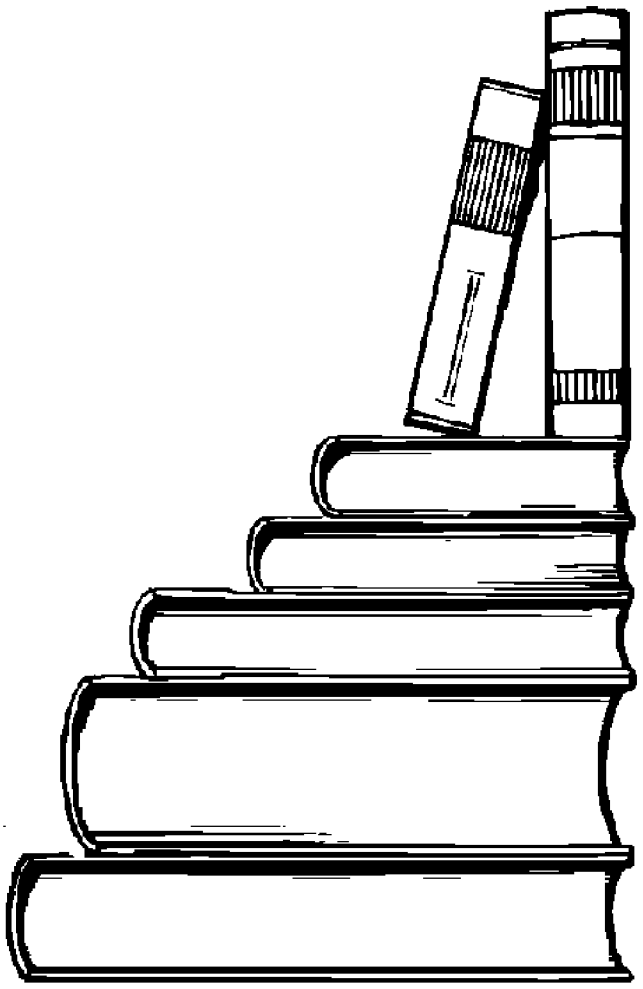
Guiding Principles

"Suffer not yourselves to open the lids of a book that is questionable." (*The Youth's Instructor* 9-10-1884)

"Allow no taunts, no threats, no sneering remarks, to induce you to violate your conscience in the least particular, and thus open a door whereby Satan can come in and control the mind." (*The Youth's Instructor* 9-10-1884)

" 'No man can serve two masters.' We cannot serve God with a divided heart. Bible religion is not one influence among many others; its influence is to be supreme, pervading and controlling every other. It is not to be like a dash of color brushed here and there upon the canvas, but it is to pervade the whole life, as if the canvas were dipped into the color, until every thread of the fabric were dyed a deep, unfading hue.

" *'If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.'* Purity and steadfastness of purpose are the conditions of receiving light from God. He who desires to know the truth must be willing to accept all that it reveals. He can make no compromise with error. To be wavering and halfhearted in allegiance to truth is to choose the darkness of error and satanic delusion." (*The Desire of Ages* 312-313)



Conclusion

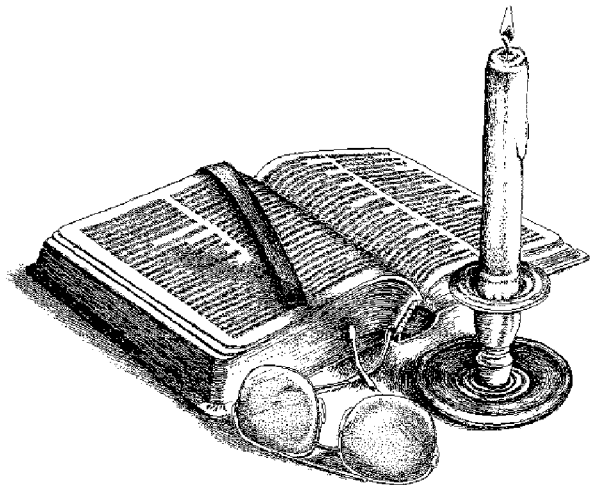
"The youth are in need of educators who shall keep the word of God ever before them in living principles. If they will keep Bible precepts ever as their text-book, they will have greater influence over the youth; for the teachers will be learners, having a living touch with God. All the time they are inculcating ideas and principles that will lead to a greater knowledge of God, and earnest, growing faith in their behalf in the blood of Jesus, and the power and efficiency of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to keep them from falling; because they are constantly seeking the strongholds of a healthful and well-balanced Christian experience, carrying with them qualifications for future usefulness, and intelligence, and piety. The teachers see and feel that they must labor not to dwarf and taint the minds of their associates, with a sickly half-religious service. There is need of separating from our educational institutions an erroneous, polluted literature, so that ideas will not be received as seeds of sin." (*Special Testimonies on Education* 238)

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

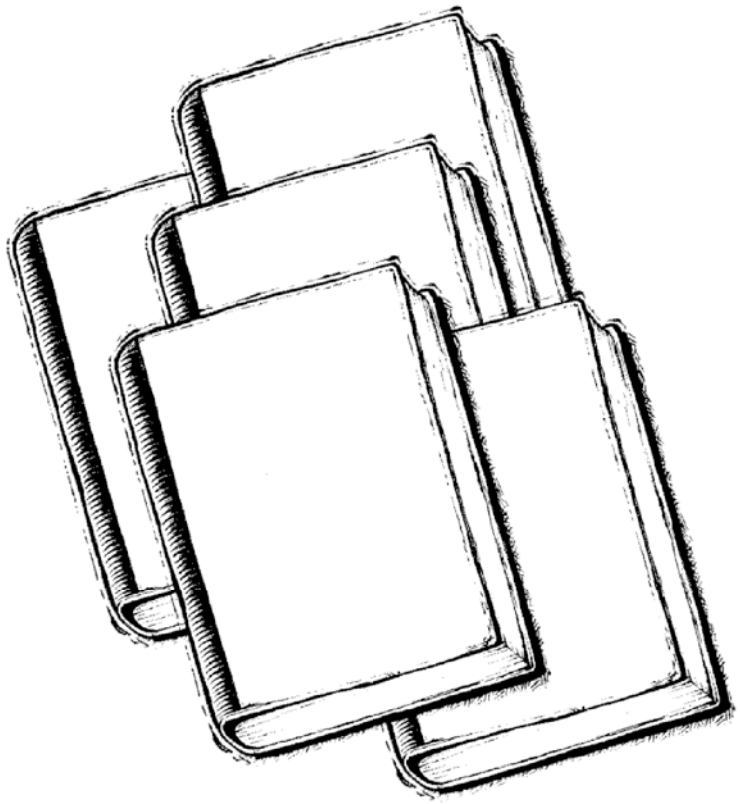
Types of Books

"Many books require no thought
from those who read them,
and for a very simple reason—
they made no such demand upon those who wrote them.
Those works, therefore, are the most valuable
that set our thinking faculties in the fullest operation.
For as the solar light calls forth all the latent powers
and dormant principles of vegetation contained in the kernel,
but which, without such a stimulus,
would neither have struck root downward,
nor borne fruit upward,
so it is with light that is intellectual.
It calls forth and awakens into energy
those latent principles of thought in minds which,
without this stimulus reflection would not have matured."

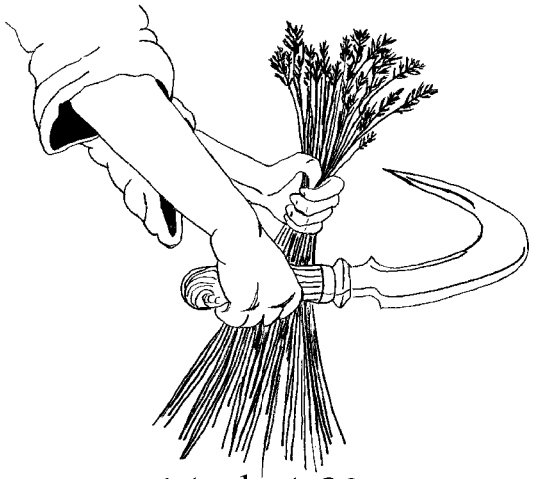
—Colton



"Suffer not yourselves
to open the lids of a book
that is questionable."
Youth Instructor 9-10-1884



"Search the Scriptures;
for in them ye think ye have eternal life:
and they are they which testify of me."
John 5:39



Mark 4:29