

MR No. 19—Personal Work

1MR 13

You must educate and train yourselves to visit every family that you can possibly get access to. The results of this work will testify that it is the most profitable work a gospel minister can do. Letter 18, 1893, p. 3. (To Elder and Mrs. A. G. Daniells, May 11, 1893.) 1MR 13.1

If one-half of the time usually spent in making a public effort were devoted to house-to-house teaching, till the people had become acquainted with the religious sincerity of the workers and with the reasons of their faith, it would be much better. After this work had been done, it could be decided whether a more expensive effort would be advisable.... 1MR 13.2

If half the time now spent in preaching were given to house-to-house labor, favorable results would be seen. Much good would be accomplished by the workers who could come close to the people. The time spent in quietly visiting families, and when there speaking to God in prayer, singing His praise, and explaining His Word, will often do more good than a public effort. 1MR 13.3

Many times minds are impressed with tenfold [more] force by personal appeals than by any other kind of labor. The family that is visited in this way is spoken to personally. The members are not in a promiscuous assembly where they can apply to their neighbors the truths which they hear. They themselves are spoken to earnestly and with a kindhearted solicitude. They are allowed to express their objections freely, and these objections can each be met with a “Thus saith the Lord.” Letter 95, 1896, pp. 2, 3. (To Elder G. B. Starr, August 11, 1896.) 1MR 13.4

House-to-house labor, searching for souls, hunting for the lost sheep, is the most essential work that can be done. Letter 137, 1898, p. 3. (To Brethren Irwin, Evans, Smith and Jones, April 21, 1898.) 1MR 14.1

Let them put forth personal effort. Let them come into families, and become acquainted with the members of the church. They will obtain far more inspiration from God in this kind of work than in any study of books.—Manuscript 52, 1898, 10. (“The Work Required of God's People,” n. d.) 1MR 14.2

If one-half of the sermonizing were done, and double the amount of personal labor given to souls in their homes and in the congregations, a result would be seen that would be surprising.—Manuscript 139, 1897, 8. (“The Work Before God's People,” n. d.) 1MR 14.3

After the meetings are through, there should be a personal investigation with each one on the ground. Each one should be asked how he is going to take these things, if he is going to make a personal application of them. And then you should watch and see if there is an interest in this one or that. 1MR 14.4

Five words spoken to them privately will do more than the whole discourse has done. But you can do more than that: You can show love, and kindness and courtesy; and in doing that you remove prejudice.—Manuscript 19, 1890, 6. (“Mrs. White's Talk before the General Conference Committee, July 14, 1890, Lake Goguaac.”) 1MR 14.5

Personal religion reaches a low standard because there is more preaching than personal effort to guide the souls of men by careful instruction. Christ presented lessons in the conversation by the fireside that were of practical interest. He did not dwell upon the doctrine when a soul was in perplexity, as to how to find Him and to be made acquainted with His constraining love, which can alone enable the soul to discern the unpopular truth. Bear in mind that heart must come close to heart in warm, genial persuasion and entreaty, that they may enlighten as to how to believe and how to receive the promises of God. Letter 6b, 1890, p. 5. (To “My dear Brethren and Sisters,” n. d.) 1MR 14.6

Every day we are to exercise personal activity in seeking the salvation of souls perishing in their sins. We must seek with all humility of heart to stir up our church members, to show them the necessity of personal active labor, of personal consecration and devotion, and arouse in them an earnest desire to save souls that are perishing in sin.—Manuscript 45, 1904, 1. (“That They All May Be One,” May 14, 1904.) 1MR 15.1

After the warning message has been given, let those who are specially interested be called to the tent by themselves, and there labor for their conversion. This kind of labor is missionary work of the highest order. Letter 86, 1900, p. 6. (To Elder A. G. Daniells, June 18, 1900.) 1MR 15.2

He will deal tenderly with every heart, realizing that the Spirit will impress the truth on those who are susceptible to divine impressions. Never will he be vehement in his manner. Every word spoken will have a softening, subduing

influence.—Manuscript 127, 1902, 7. (“Words to Ministers, September 16, 1902.) 1MR 15.3

When we have an assurance which is bright and clear of our own salvation, we shall exhibit cheerfulness, and joyfulness, which becomes every follower of Jesus Christ. The softening, subduing influence of the love of God, brought into practical life, will make impressions upon minds that will be a savor of life unto life. But a harsh denunciatory life spirit, if manifested, will turn many souls away from the truth into the ranks of the enemy. Solemn thought! To deal patiently with the tempted, requires us to battle with self. Letter 1a, 1894, pp. 2, 3. (To Brother and Sister Gates, January 1, 1894.) 1MR 15.4

You can do evangelistic work successfully only by following the example of the great Teacher. He came to this earth, and in His ministry showed us how to labor for the salvation of souls. Letter 193, 1903, p. 2. (To E. E. Franke, September 1, 1903.) 1MR 16.1

Christ's way of presenting truth cannot be improved upon. Letter 123, 1903, p. 2. (To James Edson and Emma White, June 25, 1903.) 1MR 16.2

Every soul who has accepted this truth should make personal efforts for the salvation of friends and relatives and neighbors. Letter 42a, 1893, p. 2. (To Elder S. N. Haskell, n. d.) 1MR 16.3

Carefully select your subject, make your discourses short and important points of doctrine very plain. Take up one point at a time in a discourse. Make it strong and clear and plain, with reasons drawn from the Word of God that all may understand. Your discourses should be short. When you preach at great length the mind of the hearer cannot grasp one quarter of what you say. Letter 47, 1886, pp. 2, 3. (To Brother Bourdeau, June 5, 1886.) 1MR 16.4

The Prince of teachers sought access to the people by the pathway of their most familiar associations. He presented the truth in such a way that ever after it was to His hearers intertwined with their most hallowed recollections and sympathies. He taught in a way that made them feel the completeness of His identification with their interests and happiness. His instruction was so simple, His illustrations so appropriate, His words so sympathetic and so cheerful, that His hearers were charmed. Letter 213, 1902, p. 4. (To Those in Positions of Responsibility in the St. Helena Sanitarium, November 3, 1902.) 1MR 16.5

Those who in their work for God depend on worldly plans for gaining success will make a failure. Letter 48, 1902, p. 3. (To Elder and Mrs. E. E. Franke, March 19, 1902.) 1MR 17.1

He should cut off from his meetings everything that has a semblance of theatrical display; for such outward appearances give no strength to the message that he bears. When the Lord can cooperate with him, his work will not need to be done in so expensive a manner. He will not need then to go to so much expense in advertising his meetings. He will not place so much dependence on the musical program. This part of his services is conducted more after the order of a concert in a theater than a song service in a religious meeting. Letter 49, 1902, p. 7. (To Elder and Mrs. S. N. Haskell, February 5, 1902.) 1MR 17.2

In the meetings held, the singing should not be neglected. God can be glorified by this part of the service. And when singers offer their services they should be accepted. But money should not be used to hire singers. Often the singing of simple hymns by the congregation has a charm that is not possessed by the singing of a choir, however skilled it may be. Letter 49, 1902, p. 9. (To Elder and Mrs. S. N. Haskell, February 5, 1902.) 1MR 17.3

Throw off all appearance of apathy, and lead the people to think that there is life or death in these solemn questions, according as they shall receive or reject them. As you present testing truth, ask often, who is now willing, as they have heard the words of God pointing out their duty, to consecrate their hearts and minds, with all their affections, to Christ Jesus. Letter 8, 1893, p. 5. (To Brother and Sister Baker, February 9, 1896.) 1MR 17.4

Now, just now, we are to proclaim present truth, with assurance and with power. Do not strike one dolorous note; do not sing funeral hymns. Letter 311, 1905, p. 8. (To Brethren Daniells and Prescott and their Associates, October 20, 1905.) 1MR 18.1

Christ is to be preached, not controversially, but affirmatively. Take your stand without controversy. Let not your words at any time be uncertain. The Word of the living God is to be the foundation of our faith. Gather up the strongest affirmative statements regarding the atonement made by Christ for the sins of the world. Show the necessity for this atonement, and tell men and women that they may be saved if they will repent and return to their loyalty to God's law. Gather all the affirmatives and proofs that make the gospel the glad tidings of salvation to all who receive and

believe on Christ as a personal Saviour. Letter 65, 1905, p. 4. (To Elder A. T. Jones, February 13, 1905.) 1MR 18.2

God says to His workers everywhere, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.” We need to feel the importance of proclaiming the gospel message with earnestness and fervor, not with tame, lifeless utterance. Our testimony is not to be borne in smothered tones. It is to be clear, decided, stirring. The messengers must know the life and power of salvation. Letter 21, 1903, p. 6. (To “Those who at the Last General Conference Chose Australia as Their Field of Labor,” January 6, 1903.) 1MR 18.3

The more plain and simple the truth in regard to true conversion is made to appear, and the oftener it is repeated, the greater power you will have with the people. Letter 44, 1900, p. 1. (To Brother and Sister E. W. Farnsworth, March 29, 1900.) 1MR 19.1

Many think that the work of the minister consists in sermonizing, but in this they are mistaken. There is a work to be done from house to house. In this way many will be brought to a knowledge of the truth. Through the instrumentality of the earnest worker, souls ready to die will be imbued with the Spirit of Christ. The work of coming close to individual souls is neglected. The churches are ready to die for want of the right kind of labor. Church members should receive an education in the things of God that will give them a deep and living experience, enabling them to bring their thoughts into subjection to the divine will. The minister should visit them in their homes, talking and praying with them in earnestness and humility.—Manuscript 2, 1883, 2. (“Words to Ministers,” November 1883.) 1MR 19.2

The Lord calls for a converted ministry,—a ministry that will meet the people where they are, that will agree with them wherever they can, but that will not deny the truth. We are not to keep ourselves shut within the four walls, so that our light cannot come to others. There is common ground where we may meet those not of our faith, where we may agree in principles and in regard to the lessons of Christ. Few will become combative over these holy principles.—Manuscript 104, 1898, 11. (“Christ's Manner of Teaching,” n. d.) 1MR 19.3

Approach the people in a persuasive, kindly manner, full of cheerfulness and love for Christ. Letter 60, 1903, p. 1. (To Brother and Sister Rice, April 19, 1903.) 1MR 20.1

Christ gave Himself to a shameful, agonizing death, showing His great travail of soul to save the perishing ones. O, Christ is able, Christ is willing, Christ is longing to save all who will come unto Him. Talk to souls in peril, and get them to behold Jesus upon the cross dying to make it possible for Him to pardon. Talk to the sinner with your own heart overflowing with the tender, pitying love of Christ. Let there be deep earnestness, but not a harsh, loud note should be heard in the voice of one who is trying to win the soul to look and live. First have your own soul consecrated to God. As you look upon our Intercessor in heaven, let your heart be broken. Then, softened and subdued, you can address repenting sinners as one who realizes the power of redeeming love. Pray with these souls, by faith laying them at the foot of the cross; carry their minds up with your mind, and fix the eye of faith where you look, upon Jesus, the Sin-bearer. Get them to look away from their poor sinful selves to the Saviour, and the victory is won. They behold for themselves the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. They see the way, the truth, and the life. The Sun of Righteousness sheds its bright beams into the heart. The strong tide of redeeming love pours into the parched and thirsty soul, and the sinner is saved to Jesus Christ. Letter 77, 1895, p. 4. (To the Workers in Sydney, Australia, November 14, 1895.) 1MR 20.2

We may do much in a short time if we will work as Christ worked. We may reflect with profit upon His manner of teaching. He sought to meet the minds of the common people. His style was plain, simple, comprehensive. He took His illustrations from the scenes with which His hearers were most familiar. By the things of nature, He illustrated truths of eternal importance, thus connecting heaven and earth.—Manuscript 24, 1903, 3. (“The Trial Volume of the *Review*,” n. d.) 1MR 20.3

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” 1MR 21.1

These words of Christ mark out our work for today. We are to preach the gospel in all parts of the world. By putting to use in the service of God every capability we possess, we may honor Him. Sanctified by God, we are to do our part in fulfilling the commission that Christ gave to His disciples. 1MR 21.2

We should study the life of Christ, as recorded in the Bible, and seek to follow His methods of labor. If we follow our human plans, we shall hinder instead of help the

work. “He that is not with Me,” said Christ, “is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.” Our will must be in subjection to the divine will. Our ways must be patterned after Christ's ways.—Manuscript 57, 1903, 1. (“An Appeal for Consecration and Service,” n. d.) 1MR 21.3

Christ's teaching was simplicity itself. He taught as one having authority. The Jews looked for and claimed that the first advent of Christ should be with all the representations of glory which should attend His second advent. The great Teacher proclaimed the truth to humanity, many of whom could not be educated in the schools of the rabbis, neither in Greek philosophy. Jesus uttered truth in a plain, direct manner, giving vital force and impressiveness to all His utterances. Had He raised His voice to an unnatural key, as is customary with many preachers in this day, the pathos and melody of the human voice would have been lost, and much of the force of the truth destroyed.... 1MR 21.4

In His discourses Christ did not bring many things before them at once, lest He might confuse their minds. He made every point clear and distinct. He did not disdain the repetition of old and familiar truths in prophecies if they would serve His purpose to inculcate ideas.... 1MR 22.1

As Christ presented these truths to minds, He broke up their accustomed train of thought as little as possible. Nevertheless a new and transforming economy of truth must be woven into their experience. He, therefore, aroused their minds by presenting truth through the agency of their most familiar associations. He used illustrations in His teaching which called into activity their most hallowed recollections and sympathies, that He might reach the inner temple of the soul. Identifying Himself with their interests, He drew His illustrations from the great book of nature, using objects with which they were familiar. The lily of the field, the seed sown by the sower, the springing up of the seed, and the harvesting of the grain, the birds of the air,—all these figures He used from which to present divine truth; for those would remind them of His lessons whenever they should afterward look upon them.—Manuscript 25, 1890, 4-6. (Untitled Ms, n. d.) 1MR 22.2

With this power is combined the tenderest compassion for those who are in darkness. But for the love felt and expressed in every look, in the tones of His voice, He would not have attracted the large congregations that He did. Letter 28, 1892, p. 2. (To P. W. B. Wessels, July, 1892.) 1MR 22.3

Many will hear the message, but will refuse to heed; nevertheless the warning is to be given to all in clear, plain tones. Not only is the truth to be presented in public

assemblies; house-to house work is to be done. Let this work go forward in the name of the Lord. Those who engage in it have the heavenly angels as their companions. They will resist the attacks made by the enemy on those who are cooperating with God. Letter 140, 1903, (To “My Dear Brethren,” July 5, 1903.) 1MR 23.1

In Christ's parable of the talents are included all responsible human agents, from the humblest and poorest in this world's goods to those who are entrusted with talents of means and of intellect. Even those who faithfully use the least of talents will hear from the Saviour's lips the words of commendation, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” The value that God places on the least of talents is shown by the reward He gives for its right use,—eternal life. To every faithful steward He will say, “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” 1MR 23.2

The Lord gives talents proportionate to the several capabilities of His children. To every man is given his work. Those who do their duty to the best of their ability, using their talent aright, are doing a much needed work, a work that hundreds of others could do if they only would. Letter 122, 1902, pp. 5, 6. (To James E. White, June 12, 1902.) 1MR 23.3