

The Signs

Matthew 24:29

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Study Given by W.D. Frazee—November 11,

One hundred twenty-seven years ago tomorrow night people went to bed and when they woke up, the stars were falling. Many of them were awakened in the early hours of the morning of the thirteenth. Those who happened to be out and saw it awakened others. Soon there were hundreds of thousands of people looking up into the sky. One hundred twenty-seven years ago tomorrow night. You and I know that that was a fulfillment of Jesus' promise. Don't we? Yes.

Before we turn to Matthew 24 where those promises are, I would like to call your attention to this significant statement in the book *Gospel Workers* page 148.

“Ministers should present the sure word of prophecy as the foundation of the faith of Seventh-day Adventists. ... The 24th chapter of Matthew is presented to me again and again as something that is to be brought to the attention of all. We are today living in the time when the predictions of this chapter are fulfilling. Let our ministers and teachers explain these prophecies to those whom they instruct. Let them leave out of their discourses matters of minor consequence, and present the truths that will decide the destiny of souls”
Gospel Workers, 1915 edition, page 148.

This is on the menu, friends. This is on the menu. As we are tomorrow evening entering into the 127th anniversary of this historic sign hung out in the heavens, I thought that it would be very appropriate for us to spend this vesper hour in the study of our Lord's great prophecy in Matthew 24, noting especially what He says that focuses on our time.

You remember it begins with Jesus seated on the Mount of Olives and the disciples coming to Him asking when His prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem would be fulfilled, and what the sign of His coming would be and the end of the world. In their minds it was all one. His coming, the end of the world, and the destruction of Jerusalem.

But Jesus, in the 24th chapter of Matthew, covers both points. He gives definite events in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem, which we will not notice tonight, some of those have another fulfillment down here today. But coming down to the 29th verse, He deals specifically with the question they had asked, “What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Matthew 24:3.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” Matthew 24:29-31.

And then He says, “Learn a parable of the fig tree.” Now, they had asked Him for signs of His coming. I want to call your attention to this fact, dear friends, that while in a sense there are many signs of the coming of Jesus, yet, in another sense, there are three.

Listen. The three specific signs that Jesus gave as recorded here are the darkening of the sun, the darkening of the moon, and the falling of the stars. And just to bring that to our attention, I would like to notice this statement here in *Desire of Ages*, page 631. And with that we will put *Great Controversy*, page 333 and 334.

“The Savior gives signs of His coming, and more than this, He fixes the time when the first of these signs shall appear: ‘Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened...’” *Desire of Ages*, page 631.

And so forth. So, according to *Desire of Ages* page 631, the first of the signs was what? The darkening of the sun. Jesus fixed the time for the first of those signs to appear. When was it? Immediately after the tribulation of those days. Mark makes it more specific.

“But in those days after the tribulation, the sun shall be darkened...” Mark 13:24.

The days ended in 1798. The persecution ceased about 1773 to 1776, and immediately after, May 19, 1780, the great Dark day occurred. The darkening of the sun, and of course, the darkening of the moon the next night.

Now what was the first sign according to this statement? The darkening of the sun.

“The Savior gives signs of His coming, and more than this, He fixes the time when the first of these signs shall appear”
Desire of Ages, page 631.

Now in *Great Controversy*, page 333, we read that in 1833, two years after William Miller began to present in public his message concerning the coming of Jesus, the last of the signs appeared which was promised by Jesus as the tokens of His return. You will find that on page 333. Then on the next page, 334, after a vivid description of the following stars, it adds:

“Thus was displayed the last of those signs of His coming, concerning which Jesus bade His disciples: ‘When ye shall see all these things, *know* that it is near, even at the doors.’”
Great Controversy, page 334.

Now I want to ask you, friends, if the first sign was the darkening of the sun, and the last sign was the falling of the stars, how many are there? There are three. What was the middle one? The darkening of the moon. That is it.

Now as I say, don't misunderstand me, it is not improper to speak of all these world conditions as signs of Jesus coming. The capitol and labor problems, the wars and rumors of wars, the earthquakes, the disobedience to parents, the breakup of the home, and so on and on and on. They are signs of Jesus coming in the sense that they are evidences that the world is getting ripe for destruction, and that the coming of Jesus is near.

But, His signs, specifically, were hung up in the heavens. Man had nothing to do with them. They were hung out on purpose, deliberately, by Jesus as tokens of His return. And may I say, I am very sorry as occasionally I see and hear of efforts to spoil the force of those signs of Jesus' coming by bringing in ideas that there have been many dark days and many fallings of the stars.

I am very happy, dear friends, that you and I are in a movement that has inspiration from the skies. We have a message from heaven. The same Jesus, mark this point, who would put out those signs in the sky, that same Jesus has told us through the testimony of Jesus that He did it, and when He did it exactly. So I believe Him, friends. So I am not looking for evidence that those signs are strung along again and again thus to confuse the mind, and to eliminate the clarity and force of these statements. No, friends, I am not interested in that.

I believe with all my heart that when Jesus said He would give signs, and that those who saw them would know that He was near, even at the doors, I believe He meant just what He said, and that He did just what He said. He did it. When the 19th of May in 1780 came, the Dark Day was there. The next night the moon was darkened. And on the night of November 12, the morning of November 13, 1833, the falling of the stars took place, and oh what a great display it was friends.

I wonder if we have any idea of what really took place that night. Now there have been other times before and since when stars have fallen. I suppose all of us have seen a few falling stars. Anybody who has seen twelve in the sky at once has seen quite a sight. Probably many of you have lived all your lives and never saw more than two or three in the air at once. But on that night, the Boston astronomer, Professor Ahmstead of Yale University estimated that there were no less than two hundred thousand visible in the air at once. Two hundred thousand! And he said that as fast as those fell, there were more falling. So that that night they fell literally by the millions, dear friends.

Some observers compared them to the drops of rain in a rain storm. Others to flakes of snow in a snow storm. They kept falling, falling, falling. They made an

impression upon all people, all classes of society. I have a very interesting picture here, a photograph of a great buffalo hide on which the Indians kept their records. Every year they put down something in their picture language that represented what to them was the great event of that year.

What do you suppose they have got written down here in their picture language for 1833? The thing in that year that impressed the Indians was the falling of the stars. The government book that records this, in writing up that year, says the stars fell as the Indians all agree. It impressed the Indians.

I have here a photostatic copy of a New York newspaper. The issue of November 20, 1833. Just a week after the falling stars. There is an old wood cut picture of the falling stars. And an article telling about it as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. New York newspaper.

I had an interesting experience several years ago when I was a young man in San Francisco just training in this medical evangelistic work, I used to go out in the afternoons to visit people. One Sunday afternoon I was out visiting in a certain home where there was some people that were interested in our meetings, and I met a relative of the family who was visiting their who was an infidel.

I was just glad to get the change to study with him the prophecies of Daniel to show him how the prophecies had been fulfilled. We went on down through Daniel 2, and then on into Matthew 24. The way my mind went, when you got through Daniel 2, you went to Matthew 24.

Well, I will never forget that Sunday afternoon because when we got down to the point of the falling stars in Matthew 24 just as we have read it here, and I started to tell him about it after having told him about the dark day, he reached over to the side of his chair and said, "Why, that is in the morning paper."

Sure enough, in the Sunday issue of the San Francisco examiner of that day, and I still have the paper, You may be sure I got it, and the infidel was the one that gave it to me. Here is a great picture of the falling of the stars, and the article is by Doctor Lewis of the United States Naval Observatory of Washington, D.C.

This is what Doctor Lewis says:

"For three hours it seemed as if the world was on fire. And incessant display of dazzlingly brilliant luminosities was kept up in the whole heavens. It was computed that not less than two hundred fifty thousand meteors were at the same time visible above the horizon of Boston"

Doctor Lewis speaks of it as the most magnificent and impressive meteoric shower that has ever been seen that appeared over the greater part of the United States.

Well, dear friends, we could spend much of this hour tonight just reading testimony after testimony, witness after witness, article after article, dealing with the

vivid descriptions of this magnificent sign that Jesus hung out in the heavens. I trust that we will never get beyond the glow of those falling stars, my friends. We need to be ever walking in the light that shines from those flaming meteors.

The early advent people did. And oh, I trust that we have not gotten so far away that those lights appear to us rather dull and dim at this time. They ought to shine more brilliantly to us tonight, than they did back there. As we shall see.

Very well, friends, now I come back here to Matthew 24, and I want you to notice what Jesus says to His disciples. He is speaking to them as representing His people in all ages who would watch for His appearing, and especially who would notice these signs. Having brought us down through the tribulation, and the darkening of the sun, and the moon, and the following of the stars, He introduces next His coming.

Perhaps I should notice just that expression in the latter part of the 29th verse, and the early part of the 30th because some might wonder why those are not included in the signs. I read the verses as Jesus spoke them.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and *the powers of the heavens shall be shaken*: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” Matthew 24:29-30.

Some might say, “Well, isn’t the shaking of the powers of heaven one of the signs?” No. It is not. If you go to the sixth chapter of Revelation you will see that the shaking of the powers of the heavens here is presented in the fourteenth verse of the sixth chapter, the next thing after the falling stars. Here it says:

“And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places” Revelation 6:14.

And then the kings, and so forth, look up and see Jesus coming. That cannot be a sign of Jesus coming in a sense that these others are because it takes place in immediate connection with His appearing. When the heavens are shaken and the voice of God speaks and then the heavens are rolled together like a scroll and the cloud appears, there is nothing about that to constitute a sign of Jesus’ coming, only in the sense that the prelude to His immediate appearance is right there. That is all. And the same with that statement “then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.” Notice, that isn’t a sign that He is coming, it is a sign that He is here. Quite a difference.

The signs that Jesus’ disciples were looking for, and the signs that He was talking to them about when He talked about the darkening of the sun and the moon and the falling of the stars were signs that His coming is near. Those signs, not

these directly at the time of His appearing, but these signs that show that His coming is near, how many were there? Three. And the first we read in plain language is what? The darkening of the sun. And then follows the darkening of the moon, and the last, and it is called, the last is what? The falling of the stars. It is called it twice in *Great Controversy* page 333 and page 334. So it isn't a slip of the tongue or a slip of the pen. There is a point made of it. It is repeated. And it is emphasized by repetition that the last of the signs was that great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833.

Alright. Now we go back to Matthew 24:32.

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree” Matthew 24:32.

Now. Well you say, “When is the now?” We will read and we will find out when the now is.

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near...” *Ibid.*, verse 32.

The margin says that He is near.

“...*even* at the doors” *Ibid.*, verse 33.

Now when does Jesus say that you know that summer is near? When the fig tree does what? Puts its leaves out. Then you what? Then you know that summer is near. So likewise, He says, when you see what? All these things. Do what? Know that He is near, even at the doors.

When is the time to learn the *parable* of the fig tree? When you see what? The signs. How many are there? Three. Now when have you seen all of them? When you see which one? The last one. Have you seen them all till you have seen the last? No. You haven't seen them all until you have seen the last. But when you have seen the last one, you have seen what? You have seen all of them. And then it is time to learn what? Learn the parable of the fig tree.

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh: So likewise ye, when...” *Ibid.*, verses 32, 33.

When what?

“...when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors” *Ibid.*, verse 33.

Now I want to ask you something? Where was Jesus then on the morning of November 13, 1833? He was near, wasn't He? Yes. Did He want anybody to know it? Yes. Who did He want to know it? Everybody. Everybody that was looking at the sign He had given. Was that His intention? Yes. That is what He says.

“...when ye shall see all these things, know that [He] is near,
even at the doors” *Ibid.*, verse 33.

Now sometimes I hear the thought expressed that it is those who see them by faith that Jesus is talking about here. And really, I used to have the idea that men and thought and taught from that idea that it was long after the falling stars before people caught on to what it all meant. No.

“Many who witnessed the falling of the stars, looked upon it
as a herald of the coming judgment” *Great Controversy*,
page 334.

I showed you a photostatic copy of the New York newspaper one week after the falling of the stars, and there is a picture of the falling of the stars, and Bible verses on the falling of the stars to show that it is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Did Jesus hang out the sign to people that would look at it and know what it meant? Yes. Sure, friends. And Miller who had begun two years before to preach the coming of the Jesus, why he at once called attention to it. How it must have thrilled that dear man preaching the advent of Jesus from the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, and our Lord's prophecy, and lo, and behold, two years after He begins to preach here comes the sign, the great sign, the falling stars. How it must have thrilled his audiences, friends, because the people that listened to him, they had all seen it. See what power it gave to that great Advent movement of the thirties and the forties a century and more ago.

Yes, friends, Jesus didn't wait for decades and decades to make clear to His people what it all meant. The people that were right there on the ground saw it. They recognized it as a fulfillment of prophecy. They applied the parable of the fig tree. They learned it. They knew that Jesus coming was near, even at the doors.

There is just one trouble with all this we have studied so far tonight. And you know what it is, don't you? He hasn't come. That is the only trouble with it. And I see that some people get anxious and try to help God out. I mean, they try to help Him out of the problem of what He said here. But probably we had better leave it just the way He put it. Probably we had better leave it just the way He said it, friends.

I don't mean by that we shouldn't study it, and I don't mean by that that we shouldn't try to find out what the problem is. But the problem is not in what He said. And the problem is not finding some new application of the prophecy because the signs have already been put out and have been witnessed to by the inspired testimony of Jesus to this people. That is all clear.

I wonder what the problem is? Well, let's look at it a little bit. Let's go back to the wording of Jesus' statement.

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that [He] is..." *Ibid.*, verses 32, 33.

Where?

"...near..." *Ibid.*, verse 33.

How near?

"...even at the doors" *Ibid.*, verse 33.

Now suppose, friends, we go back there to the morning of November 13, 1833. And we have read this verses many times, and we read them again that morning. We say Jesus is where? He is near. How near? Even at the doors.

Perhaps I can illustrate it this way. Suppose we have been looking out the door here, I mean, out the window looking for somebody. We are looking, and finally, way down the road we see them. I wonder how long before he will be here? Well, we think he is going to be here now in about ten minutes. He is walking down there. We can see him way down the road there. It will take him about ten minutes.

So pretty soon we look out again, and we say, "How long do you think it will be?" Well, it shouldn't take him more than five minutes now to get here. And finally we look out and he is just coming up the walk. Just coming up the walk to the door. How long is it going to be now? Oh, he is right here. Almost here. And then we look out the window and he is just coming up on the porch and there he is, right outside the porch at the door.

I want to ask you something, friends, what would you think of people that would sit down there in the living room and begin to have a study on how long it would take him to get here? How long do you think it is going to be? How near is he when he is at the door? As near as he can ever get until what? Until the door is opened. Is that right? Yes.

You can't measure that time. That has been the great problem. People have been trying to measure time to figure how long it would be after 1833. How long could it be? How long? All the while Jesus is where? Just as near as He can ever get until when? Until the door is opened.

Now I submit to you, friends, that that is not just a play on words. That is the picture. That is the situation. And in some ways it is the saddest situation that this universe has ever beheld. For all heaven has been ready and waiting for decades, more than half a century has gone by since Jesus was already to come and end it all.

Why do I say more than half a century? Well, I am not dealing with speculation, friends. You know that very soon after the falling stars the 2,300 days ended in 1844 and Jesus went into the most holy place to cleanse the sanctuary, make the final atonement, blot out the sins of his people, seal them, and come and take them home.

And you know, if you have read what is written, that God intended that that should all be done very quickly. And God intended, we don't have to speculate on it, says so in plain language, God intended to do with the people that saw the falling stars and heard Miller, and Hymes, and Litch, and Fitch, and White, and Bates preach. Those were the ones that God intended to do all that with. That was His intention. We are not left in doubt about that.

"It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. ... The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years" *Evangelism*, page 696.

That was written, friends, in 1883. Seventeen years later God's messenger wrote:

"Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, page 450.

That was written, dear friends, sixty years ago. Three years later at the General Conference in Oakland, you will find this in *Evangelism*, page 694, God's servant said:

"I know that if the people of God had preserved a living connection with Him, if they had obeyed His Word, they would today be in the heavenly Canaan" *Evangelism*, page 694.

So when Jesus hung out the signs back there in the heavens that He was near, even at the doors, He meant just that, friends. He wasn't playing with us. He wasn't fooling us. He meant just what He said. He was near, even at the doors, and He has been ready to finish things up all these years.

Now I want to ask you something. If that is true, and I have read it here from God's messenger, if that is true then two things follow. You can see they must follow. One is, dear friends, that the thing which has delayed His coming is something that He doesn't have yet. And the other thing that follows is that He wants it so much that He is going to keep on waiting until He gets it. For if the mere

passing of time would have brought Him, He would have come long ago. Wouldn't He? Yes. That is clear, friends.

Oh, there is something He is waiting for. Do you know what it is that He is waiting for, friends? Well, I will tell you what He is waiting for. Turn over to Revelation the nineteenth chapter and you will see it. Verses 7 and 8.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready” Revelation 19:7.

That is the church.

“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” *Ibid*, verse 8.

The sad truth is, friends, that the reason the bridegroom hasn't come is that the bride doesn't have her dress on yet. That is right. She is still in the dressing room. Or at least that is where she ought to be, getting dressed. And the Bridegroom is not going to come and surprise here unprepared. If He had ever had any intention of doing that, He could have done it long ago.

When the bride is ready, the Bridegroom will come. And He will never come until then. All the charts in the world won't make Him come. All the mathematical figuring won't make Him come. All the speculation won't make Him come. There is just one thing, friends, that will cause Him to come. And that is for a prepared bride to open the door and say, “Come in, dear Lord, come in.”

And since you and I are part of God's people, you and I have the opportunity to hasten His coming. We are told that very plainly.

“It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 8, page 22.

Now we often here it said from Matthew 24:14 that before Jesus comes what must be accomplished? The Gospel must be given where? To all the world. That is true. The two things belong together—the giving of the Gospel to all the world, and the perfecting of the people that reflect the image of Jesus fully. Those two things go hand in hand. In the providence of God, they will both be accomplished together. Both be accomplished together.

But I want to say this, friends, if it were possible to fully proclaim the advent message to every soul in this world to make clear what the message teaches, and if that itself would bring the coming of Jesus, God could have angels write it on the sky

or visit people personally. The great thing, the vital thing, which delays the coming of Jesus is the ripening of the fruit of character among His people.

I do not want to minimize the matter of giving the Gospel to the world. It is vital. It is important. But it will be done, friends, fast, very fast when God's people are prepared to receive the fullness of His Spirit in the latter rain, and it will never be done until then. It will take the latter rain, loud cry power to actually finish the work. And so it is for that that we should pray and set our hearts in earnest supplication.

Now, let's go back to Matthew 24. I want you to notice how Jesus knowing that there would be delays; I want you to notice how He warns us concerning that. He tells us in the 36th verse that of that day and hour no man knows. Then He says it will be like the days of Noah. **Thirty-seven, 38, and thirty-nine.** Back there, they kept right on doing the ordinary things, eating, drinking, and marrying and so forth until the day that Noah entered into the ark. Jesus says, They "knew not until the flood came and took them all away." So, He says, it will be down here today.

Then the **42nd verse because of that He says watch. Again in the 44th verse He says be ready because "in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."** And then in **verses 45 and** onward He presents to us two kinds of servants in this **waiting/watching time.** One class, He says, are faithful and wise and they give the household what? Meat in due season. That is food at the right time. He pronounces a blessing upon them.

And then in the 48th verse He speaks of the evil servant that says something in His heart. What is it? "My Lord delayeth His coming." And what does he do as the result of thinking that kind of thought? He does two things. He smites his fellow servants, and what else? He eats and drinks with the drunken. No, he doesn't say, "My Lord delays His coming." Where does he say that? In his heart. He doesn't speak it out loud. That wouldn't be a wise thing to do among Adventists. Would it? No. But where does he say it? In his heart. He doesn't say it out loud.

But that attitude is shown by his faultfinding and criticism concerning those who are given the household meat in due season, and also his eating and drinking with the drunken. In other words, friends, in the practical affairs of life he demonstrates that his mind is on this world rather than on the coming of the Lord. Is that it? Yes.

Now I want to bring you some very practical things tonight. We might close right at this point and go home, and all feel perhaps that we had been blessed and lifted up, but I believe, friends, that along with being lifted up, we need to get down to earth and deal with some very practical things. I want to read you a little statement from *Series B*, number 9, page 36. This is a printed testimony of Ellen G. White. This is a message she gave in 1907 to the members of the Oakland Church.

Now this is of interest to me because years later I held a series of meetings in this very church that she is speaking of their building here. But I am going to read what she wrote way back there in 1907. I want you to listen carefully because what we are studying tonight is about the near coming of Jesus and how we can show

whether we believe He is coming soon, or whether we show that we are in our hearts saying what? My Lord delayeth His coming.

Now I didn't write this, friends. It was written when I was only a year old. This is an inspired testimony that came to the Oakland church in California.

"I must write to you regarding your proposed church building. I am pleased with the site you have selected. ... I have been bidden to give you words of warning regarding the meeting-house that you will build. This is a time for you to examine yourselves to see if you are standing in the right position regarding this matter. In Oakland we need a church building. Soon a simple and inexpensive place of worship should be erected. In this the brethren and sisters in Oakland are to show that they fear the Lord by refusing to build a stylish and costly church. We are living in perilous times; judgment is to follow judgment. Let us now reveal in our works that we believe that the time of God's judgments is come, that we are approaching the day when there will be no certainty regarding anything in this world. By our works as well as our testimony we are to tell that the end of all things is at hand. We are to take heed to the warnings given in the calamity that has overtaken San Francisco" *Series B*, number 9, pages 36 and 37. (See also *Testimonies to the Church Regarding Individual Responsibility and Christian Unity*, page 37.)

What is that? The year before that terrible earthquake had shaken down San Francisco.

"Our brethren and sisters in Oakland must not give the people of San Francisco cause to think that Seventh-day Adventists feel secure. But that is what they would understand your action to mean if at this time you should erect a large and costly meeting-house. The great earthquake of San Francisco is to be followed by earthquakes in other places...One thing will be plainly developed at this time, one question will be clearly settled,- whether we are solid Christians, or merely professors...Let our works be such that men can see that we are but sojourners here; that we are seeking a better country, even a heavenly" *Ibid.*, pages 36 and 37.

Then on page 38, notice how this statement broadens what I have just read. It takes it far beyond Oakland and California.

"At this time the building of costly meeting-houses in any place is not in accordance with our faith" *Ibid.*, page 38.

May I repeat that? I deliberately withholding any comments on these statements. I am reading them just as they occur in this testimony.

“At this time the building of costly meeting-houses in any place is not in accordance with our faith. There are many places where meeting-houses will soon have to be built; therefore we should not put large sums of money in any one place” *Ibid.*, page 38.

I leave that with you. Now I come to something else for I want to ask you something, friends. If our belief in the near coming of Jesus is to find expression in the kind of meeting houses we put up, what about the kind of houses we put up to live in? Would it have any bearing on that?

“I speak to the church at Battle Creek: What testimony are you bearing to the world? As your course was presented before me, I was pointed to the dwellings recently erected by our people in that city. These buildings are so many monuments of your unbelief of the doctrines which you profess to hold. They are preaching sermons more effective than any delivered from the pulpit. I saw worldlings point to them with jesting and ridicule, as a denial of our faith. They proclaimed that which the owners have been saying in their hearts: ‘My Lord delayeth His coming.’” *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, page 188.

I was up in Battle Creek a few weeks ago. I went over to one of the streets and I saw one of the houses that this is talking about. Of course, friends, it doesn't look as modern as the ones that are being built now, but I can tell you this, friends, there is a lot of people I don't think would think it very expensive or luxurious now. The very houses that this is talking about. Why?

Oh, somebody says, “Brother Frazee, you must remember times have changed.” They certainly have. They certainly have. And now it is become common place to lay out thousands and tens of thousands of dollars merely for a place to tarry a little while until Jesus comes. Of course, if we knew He was coming right away, it would make a difference, wouldn't it? Yes. But we don't know. We don't know.

Now don't misunderstand me, friends, and I must tell you I don't know of any subject I could speak on where there is more possibility of misunderstanding than this one. But I am speaking about because it is the time to speak. But I say, do not misunderstand me, cheap, shoddy work, slovenly put together houses, leaning boards and pieces of bark and tin together to make what might be called a pilgrim shanty, that isn't what God is calling us to do at all, or anything remotely like that, friends.

There is plenty room between these warnings against extravagance and luxury on the one hand, and the earnest exhortations to plainness, neatness, taste, order, good building on the other. There is plenty of room, friends. All the room we

need, but not room enough to justify the investment of millions of dollars in the way that it is being done today, friends. God is going to have a people who, in their buildings, their dress, their furniture, everything reveal the fact that they believe that Jesus is coming soon.

Now if we don't know how to do that, we had better learn how, friends, because that is our assignment. If we do not know how to make our buildings, our dress, our furniture, our churches, our institutions, if we do not know how to make them neat, attractive, properly put up, and at the same time, their whole atmosphere be, "why here are people that believe that Jesus is coming soon." If we don't know how to do that, we need to address ourselves to that problem.

And on the one hand I repeat, I warn you against thinking or interpreting that anybody ought to think that the remedy is in being cheap or shoddy, slipshod, or anything of that kind. Nothing like that, friends. That only defeats the purpose of God. But oh that God may help us not to be infected with the worship of materialism which is characterizing this present time.

I read on in this chapter in Volume Five. This is page 189.

"I looked upon the dress and listened to the conversation of many who profess the truth... Dress and conversation reveal that which is most treasured by those who claim to be pilgrims and strangers on the earth. 'They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.' Puritan plainness and simplicity should mark the dwellings and apparel of all who believe the solemn truths for this time. All means needlessly expended in dress or in the adorning of our houses is a waste of our Lord's money. It is defrauding the cause of God for the gratification of pride... Those who have Christ ruling within will feel no desire to imitate the world's display. They will carry everywhere the standard of the cross" *Ibid.*, page 189.

I was reading not long ago an interesting statement that Sister White wrote about locating an institution. Notice how again the urgency of the nearness of the coming of Jesus was in the heart of God's servant.

"God wants us to be out where we can have the advantages of nature in every respect, in the air and in the scenery. If we can get a place that is completed or partially finished, that will be better than to put up a large building just now, when we know that the end is near, and every city is to be turned upside down every way" *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 1, page 248.

Now notice, she didn't say that no buildings were to be put up. We know from other statements buildings are to be put up. But do you catch the note of urgency in our message? That is the thing I want you to get. She said, Jesus is coming. The cities are going to be shaken. Judgments are going to fall on the world, and so, in

locating institutions, if we can find places where the buildings are already up, let's get into them and get to work. That is picture. The urgency of the thing. That is what I pray that God may grip our hearts with tonight, friends.

Now, not all of us here tonight have anything to do with putting up buildings, but we all have to do with finishing the job of developing characters for the appearing of our Lord. And Jesus, as He looks down from heaven, is longing to see the bride here on earth anxious for the appearing of the Bridegroom. It is those that look for Him that He will appear to without sin unto salvation. They are the ones that looking up into the sky will say, "This is the Lord. We have waited for Him."

Oh that God may help us individually, friends, every time we spend a dollar, whether it is for food, or for clothes to put on, or for literature to read, or to share with others. For education. For buildings. Whatever it is, friends, let us be sure that that dollar, directly or indirectly is witnessing to our faith in the coming of the Son of God. That is our privilege. It is not to high a standard. That can be, friends.

And let us not judge others. If we do that, we only put ourselves in the condemnation of the servant who smites His fellow servants. God has not given us a measuring rod to go around and measure other people with. But that shouldn't keep us from measuring ourselves, should it? No. It should lead us with humility on our knees to say, "Dear Lord, how do you want me to spend my money? How do you want me to spend my time? And, oh that God may help us to live this life, this pilgrim life, so effectively, so attractively that those who are honest in heart shall be drawn into and say, "We want to go with you to the kingdom of God."

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