

# SUPPLEMENT TO The Signs of the Times.

VOLUME 4.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, FIFTH-DAY, DECEMBER 19, 1878.

NUMBER 48.

## Farewell, Old Year.

A long farewell, old year, to thee,  
With thy days of sorrow, thy days of glee;  
We part with thee regretfully.

How many who greeted us with thy dawn,  
In life's twilight gray, in the flush of morn,  
From their place in our circle to-day are gone.

On the lone hillside, 'neath the cyprus bough,  
Their lifework closed, they are sleeping now,  
The seal of death on each pallid brow.

Perchance ere long we too may stand,  
With failing heart and powerless hand,  
Beside the gate of the silent land.

What promise of life would we leave unbroken?  
What words we have said would we have unspoken?  
What shall we ask for as sign or token?

To-day let the noble deed be wrought,  
To-day be uttered the kindly thought,  
To-day be the precious token sought.

We are sweeping on with life's rushing river—  
Our frail boat thrills like an aspen quiver—  
On to the sea of the vast forever.

Would'st thou, fellow-sailor, the storm outside?  
Choose the Mighty One as thy friend and guide,  
For the raging torrent is deep and wide.

Wreck not thy hopes on the shifting sand,  
Nor stay thy course at an earthly strand:  
Seek thou a port in the better land.

There's a fount thy soul thirst to allay,  
There are treasures that know naught of decay,  
There the loved pass not from thy grasp away.

Soon shall the weary there find release,  
Soon shall the soul's deep yearnings cease,  
In joy unending, and perfect peace.

Farewell, old year, a glad farewell;  
Thy faintly dying echoes tell,  
We are nearing the land where our fond hopes  
dwell. —Mary A. Davis.

## Hold The Fort.

BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN, AND OAKLAND,  
CALIFORNIA.

BATTLE CREEK, Mich., and Oakland, Cal., are the two great fortresses of our cause on the Western Continent. The first is the headquarters and center of our world-wide operations. At Battle Creek is located our oldest and largest Publishing House, our College, and our Sanitarium. This fort has been held twenty-three years the present month. Here at Battle Creek, many a hard battle for truth and the right has been fought, and as many triumphant victories have been won. The last grand effort of our people at this important point is the erection of a house of worship which will not only convene the present congregation, but which will comfortably take in the future audience of Battle Creek. Thank God, that in his good providence we are connected with a cause whose growth makes it necessary to form and execute plans for the near future two or three times as large as the present demands.

The dedication of the Tabernacle at Battle Creek will be deferred till the first of May, for the reasons that follow:—

1. The house should not be presented to the Lord dedicated to his service with heavy debts upon it. On New Year's day there will be a general effort of our people, wherever they may be located, to raise the means necessary to pay for the house.

2. It is desired that Mrs. W. and the writer should be present at the dedication, which would be a great pleasure to us. We shall close our work here in Texas with a camp-meeting the last of

April, then go to Battle Creek and attend some of the early camp-meetings before going to Colorado to spend the summer.

3. Our General Conference should be held before northern camp and tent meetings commence. Spring is the time to lay our plans, and make a distribution of laborers for the tent season. Then we can hold all those general meetings or business sessions of our institutions which do not require a two-thirds vote of stockholders to choose officers. This is not only the best and only proper time to hold these annual meetings, but by holding them in the spring our autumn general camp-meeting will be greatly relieved from business labor and care. At the opening of the General Conference the Tabernacle at Battle Creek, can be dedicated.

Oakland, Cal., is the headquarters of all our work on the Pacific coast. There is located the most perfect and complete Publishing House on the coast. We have added to a first-class printing establishment, a complete bindery, stereotyping, electrotyping, and type foundry, where the most improved styles and qualities of the types are manufactured. This fort must be held at all hazards. When we take into the account the youth of the cause on the Pacific coast, its growth is a marvel. But there is a heavy debt on the Oakland church, which that good people can never lift. They are the poorest and most liberal church on the continent, yet this position is the most important, excepting the Battle Creek church only. Of the financial condition of things at Oakland, our son, J. E. White, writing November 29, says:

"I write you about a matter that is troubling me considerably. That is our church. There is a debt of \$8,000 on it at present, and there is not the remotest prospect of the Oakland church, if left to itself, ever paying the debt. The church is poor and, struggle as it may, can hardly pay interest and running expenses, which amount to \$1,200 a year. There are only two or three in the church who are worth anything at all, and they pay the least.

"The Christians (Campbellites) want a church and ours suits them. They spoke of buying it once before, and I spoke against it. I told the brethren I thought it would be a terrible disgrace to sell, but as I could not see any way out more than they could, I withdrew my objection.

"I can see the situation just as plainly now as if we had reached the time. Unless outside help comes in, the Oakland church must go either by sale or by the holders of the mortgage taking it. It would be a distressing thing to have anything like that take place. I write to you, hoping you can propose some solution to the difficulty.

"The Office, by the closest and most rigid economy can pull through. But it is absolutely unprepared for any draft to be made on it. Finances are the closest here that I have known them to be.

"In regard to hard times, in addition to ordinary hard times they have just had the greatest crash in the stock market that California ever knew. This of course unsettles all California.

"Many in our church are out of employment, and the most are scarcely making expenses. In four months there is \$2,-

000 due from the church to the bank. They might as well try to fly as to think of paying it."

To the foregoing, Mrs. W. responds in the following stirring words:—

"DEAR SON: We received your letter in reference to the Oakland church. I am glad you wrote us in regard to the situation of things there. I am sure the building of the meeting-house in Oakland was none too soon. There were willing hearts among the believers who were poor. They made great sacrifices in order to raise means to invest in the Oakland church. Their zeal and self-sacrifice shall not be in vain.

"That meeting-house shall not be sold. The building of the house was of God. I hope our brethren and sisters will not murmur as did the children of Israel when brought up facing the Red sea, the Egyptians behind them and impassable mountains shutting them in. It was at this crisis the Lord said to Moses, 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward.' As they obeyed, the Red sea parted before them and they went through it in the path God had prepared for them.

"We say to you in Oakland, believe and do all you can, and you will see the salvation of God. Let all murmurings and questioning doubts cease. Let your complaints be turned to prayer and faith and works. I say that house shall not be sold. I will first sell my house on the corner of Castro and Eleventh streets, and put every dollar of the avails into the church to clear it of debt. Sell our houses? yes, yes indeed, rather than the house that has been dedicated to God.

"Wait, work, and pray. We will exert our influence and do what we can. Every foot of room in that house will be needed yet. Oakland is a missionary field, and always will be. The truth will prevail in Oakland. It may take time, but it will take hold of hearts there. Believe, work, hope, and pray. Cling to God with all your might.

"Let all in the office and in the church at Oakland show a still greater spirit of self-sacrifice than they have manifested, and God will work with your efforts. Lift the burdens willingly, and we will not let the matter rest till we see you free from embarrassment. Help shall come. If we cannot sell our property, we will use our influence to interest others to do all they can. Sell that church? Never, never. I tell you many prayers were offered while it was being erected. You will come out all right.

"Be not faithless, but believing. There are those who have money upon the Pacific coast; let them come up to the help of the Lord and make their offerings to God. Some in California have shown that they had greater confidence in unbelievers than in those whom God has honored by connecting them with his cause.

"These have trusted their money to men of no principle, while the cause of God was wading heavily for the want of means. If any appeal is made to them, they respond by presenting their narrow ideas and selfish views. Too much money, they say, has been expended in buildings and in facilities for the spread of the truth. They are afraid that they shall lose their money if entrusted to the treasury of God, but the Lord has shown his displeasure at their course in suffering losses to occur. They have not saving faith; money is their god. The Lord has entrusted to them means, to use in the advancement of his cause, but their covetous spirit grasps it and will not let it go back to him to whom it belongs.

"Sister Rowland has made most earnest efforts to help when and where she could. May the Lord open ways before her, that she may be able to dispose of her property and invest a portion of it in the cause of God. At the greatest inconvenience to herself, she mortgaged her property and raised two thousand dollars to help in the SIGNS office when it was most needed. This noble act on her part is an expression of her confidence in the work and cause of God. She will not lose her reward. If others would show similar commendable zeal and faith, the cause of truth would not be embarrassed as it now is.

"We hope those who have means trusted out to strangers will see that God's cause may be benefited by its use. It was placed in their hands by the Lord, to test them and prove them, to see if they will render back to the Master his own when he shall call for it. Means were given them, not to hoard or to use for themselves. Those who are murmuring and complaining at the outlay of means in the Publishing House and in the meeting-house, had better be at work to act their part, lest they shall be found wanting by acting the part of Meroz. God gave commandment, 'Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord, against the mighty.'

"Let not your offerings to advance the cause of God be stinted. If there is any stint and meagre arrangements and inferior works to be seen and felt anywhere, let it be in your own houses and your own dress, and not in the house of God or in the facilities which are needed to push forward the work of God."

Our house of worship at Oakland, dedicated to the worship of God by a people who fear him and keep his commandments, be sold to a people who trample that law beneath their feet? Never! No! never!

We need just such a house at that important post at present. In the near future a larger one will be demanded. Its location is excellent. <

The future growth of the cause in such a city as Oakland depends very much upon a central, commodious, and neat house of worship, such as now exists in that city. We have a good home at Healdsburg, Cal., and, as Mrs. W. says of her property in Oakland, that shall be sold, and the avails be used to help pay the debt upon the Oakland house rather than it be sold. That house can be, must be, and shall be cleared from debt. And we propose the following:—

1. By holiday gifts. Let there be a Christmas tree in every church in California, to be covered all over with fruit in the form of cash, all the way from a dime to one hundred dollars. Let the California Conference have one, and when this fruit shall be gathered let the sum be put into the hands of the treasurer of the Oakland church. Will J. E. White put on that tree one hundred dollars for his father, and the same for his mother, and draw the two hundred from our deposits at the Pacific Press. The Oakland church, though poor, should be first to make an unparalleled effort at this time. They have the first interest in this enterprise.

2. To feel a very great interest in the house of worship at the heart of the work on the Pacific coast. We mention each and every church in the State of California. We call on you to help us to hold the fort.

3. The State Conference itself. That should now give two hundred dollars to the Oakland church as a Christmas present. Let it be hung upon the Oakland tree. This debt once lifted, that church will be forward to put every dollar of their systematic benevolence into the State treasury. And last, we mention the scattered brethren and friends of the cause. To all we say, Have your Christmas gifts ready by the 24th. Every brother, sister, and Sabbath-school scholar in the State should help.

4. By donations. Wednesday, January 1, 1879, is appointed by the General Conference Committee as a day of humiliation, confession of sins, fasting and prayer, as will be seen in this week's issue of the SIGNS. On that day let there be a full attendance of our people everywhere at their respective places of worship. On that occasion let all our people take into consideration the payment of the debt on the Oakland house during the year 1879. This can be done; and we suggest the following, which if carried out will accomplish the most worthy object: Let all, great and small, rich and poor, pledge what they can give monthly during the year for the Oakland house. Mrs. W. and the writer pledge three hundred dollars, or twenty-five dollars each month, making in all an even two thousand dollars we shall have put into that house.

Those who should feel an interest to lift this burden for the church located at the heart of the work rank thus:—

1. The Oakland church. The members of that church should set an example. Those connected with the Publishing House should pledge a considerable share of their monthly earnings. The same should be done by others who have not families to support. Let the year 1879 be one of great sacrifice to that people, and God will let his blessings fall upon them.

2. Sister churches in the State and on the coast generally. Oakland is your headquarters, your fort. Hold it! Let the history of 1879 make a record of the fact that every church in California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Dakota, and wherever they may be on the Pacific Coast States and Territories, give cheerfully and liberally to assist their sister at Oakland, Cal. And let the California Conference pledge at least twenty-five dollars to be paid monthly during 1879.

3. Our people everywhere. Beloved brethren, when assembled at your several places of public worship on the first day of January, 1879, you will be waited upon by the proper persons and presented a paper to pledge what you will give of your own *free will* for the aforesaid object. You will have a living interest in the work everywhere, but especially at the great center. It will be a pleasure to you to join us in rescuing the house of worship at Oakland, which otherwise must pass into the hands of our and the Lord's enemies. You who have hitherto responded to our appeals liberally will not draw back now. Let every dollar of the eight thousand be pledged on the very day set apart for humiliation, confession and prayer, and those vows which are in accordance with the will of God and sanctified reason. Commence the year right and each

month pay your vows to the Lord relative to this object, promptly.

4. Then let money be loaned without interest to meet present or soon coming demands. Let all who can loan money without interest until the tenth day of December, 1879, in sums of not less than twenty-five dollars, and all who can pay their pledges three months in advance, forward the same immediately to Elder James White, Denison, Texas, Box P, either in drafts, money orders, or by express, and for the money loaned, we will give our own individual note to be sent by return mail.

Relative to the Battle Creek Tabernacle we would say, let there be a Christmas tree in every church in the land, and on the tree let fruit be found in the form of cash from ten cents up to one hundred dollars. Will W. C. White please put on the tree for Battle Creek one hundred dollars for each of his parents, for the Tabernacle, and have it charged to our account.

Then at the special meeting of New Year's fast day let the matter be closed up as follows:—

1. Each one should make up \$1.20, the sum total of one dime a month each for one year. Some have paid all, others part, and more have paid nothing.

2. Pledges of donations should be taken from those who can add to their \$1.20, sums all the way up to one hundred dollars, and payments should then be paid in full or in part as far as possible, and while our brethren in the wide field everywhere are urgently invited to give their free will offerings to help lift the debt on the house of worship at Oakland, our brethren in California and in the Pacific Coast States and Territories, are as urgently invited to fill their quota of dimes for the Tabernacle.

JAMES WHITE.

Denison, Texas, Dec. 8, 1878.

#### Sabbath-School Contributions.

At the last general camp-meeting at Battle Creek, Mich., a resolution was passed by the General Sabbath-school Association, recommending the practice of each member's contributing a penny or more to the funds of the Sabbath-school on each Sabbath day. This was discussed to considerable length before its adoption, many of our leading brethren speaking in its favor.

We think this is a move in the right direction, and one that will recommend itself to all our schools. Every successful Sabbath-school is continually in need of means for various objects. It needs maps of Scripture lands, Sabbath-school papers, lesson sheets, and books, a call-bell, Class Records, a Secretary's Record, song books, library books and the like. The lesson books and song books should generally be purchased by the individuals who use them, but the maps, blank books, etc., must be paid for from a general Sabbath-school fund. Question books should be furnished free of charge to those whose parents are too poor to buy them. The poor children are the very ones who should be sought out and induced to attend the Sabbath-school; but if these things cannot be provided for them, they will seldom come.

From this all can readily see the necessity of raising a general Sabbath-school fund, and the question at once arises, How shall it be obtained?

It will not do to take it out of the systematic benevolence, and if we depend upon our older brethren and sisters to raise it by larger donations, we generally find that it is not done at all.

Is it suggested that each one contribute a certain amount each week, and that this be paid in on some other day beside the Sabbath? With nine-tenths of our people this is impracticable. Our little churches are much scattered. The members live from three to seven miles

from the place of meeting, and seldom meet together except upon the Sabbath day. And it would be too expensive for the collector to go all through the country to the homes of these children and gather up their contributions.

If it be said that these contributions can be laid aside weekly at home, and brought to the treasurer at the business quarterly meeting on Sunday, we reply that this also is impracticable. Children do not look so far ahead. They get tired of waiting so long, and then, too, they are the very ones who do not attend business meetings.

The plan suggested is simple, easy to be accomplished; and if the offerings are brought with the right motives, these Sabbath contributions will prove not only a help to the school, but a blessing to the scholars, especially the younger children. We have seen this plan tried, and find that it adds greatly to the interest which the children have in attending the Sabbath-school.

They come to the Sabbath-school and quietly drop their pennies into a little box. There is no buying, no selling, no financial transaction. It is wholly in harmony with the Sabbath day. Indeed on looking into the word of God, we find that the Lord directed that more offerings should be made to him upon the Sabbath day than upon any other day of the week. Other days they were to offer one lamb in the morning and one at night; but upon the Sabbath day a double offering was to be made. Thus the Lord says: "And on the Sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof: this is the burnt-offering, of every Sabbath, besides the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering." Num. 28:9, 10.

Christ says that the priests were blameless, and why? because it was done for the Lord. It was an offering to him upon his day. One of the most acceptable acts of worship to God is that of presenting an offering to him. This is repeatedly declared in the Bible.

Some have expressed a fear that this offering upon the Sabbath day will open the way for business transactions, and that the sacredness of the day will be lost in the minds of the children, but this need not be so if parents will properly instruct their children. There is no business transaction about it. It is simply presenting a little offering to the Lord, and should tend to enhance the sacredness of the Sabbath in the minds of the children.

We therefore recommend that all our Sabbath-schools throughout the Conference begin with the first Sabbath in January to carry this into practice. Let each Sabbath-school have a little box with an opening into which a penny can be dropped, and let every one who chooses drop in his penny; it is a free-will offering, and should be presented as such. Let the treasurer take charge of the money thus received.

We suggest that in case of very poor children the wealthier brethren from time to time give them pennies to lay aside for this purpose.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

NOTE.—We are much in favor of teaching the little ones to bring their offerings every Sabbath morning. But many of them are not able to give more than a penny a week, and in California no pennies are used. Some concession has been made here to hard times. Nickels, or five cent pieces, are now in circulation. A nickel on the first Sabbath of the month would be the nearest possible to the plan recommended.

#### Report of the National Sabbath-School.\*

In order to show the importance of the Sabbath-school work, and to give our people generally an idea of how Sabbath-schools should be conducted, it was thought best to devote one hour and a half Sabbath morning to a regular Sabbath-school in which all who were attending the meeting should join.

Accordingly, on Friday teachers were appointed, several hundred extra lesson sheets for children and for youth were printed and distributed throughout the camp, and all—old and young—were requested to prepare themselves upon the first lesson of the sheet, and to attend the school.

Sabbath morning large cards, bearing the number of the divisions, were tacked up in different parts of the tent, and smaller cards, bearing the names of the teachers, were tacked on the ends of the seats that they and their classes were to occupy, so that the teachers, who came early, had no difficulty in finding their places.

As the scholars came in, a number of ushers, who had been chosen, made the first division of the people, dividing them, according to their age, into three divisions; children, youth, and adults, and passing them further into the tent, the superintendents placed them in classes of about twenty each. In this manner about fifteen hundred pupils were seated and classified as quickly as possible, and about five hundred, who did not desire to take part in the school, were left on the outer border of the tent, most of whom were compelled to stand up.

The school was opened promptly at 9 o'clock with singing. Prayer was offered by Eld. James White, after which the Secretary's report of the last Battle Creek school was read. Following the reading of this report were the class recitations. This was an interesting point in the school. There were seventy teachers, thirty of whom were ministers, and the remaining forty were, with a few exceptions, the regular teachers of the Battle Creek Sabbath-school. Those of our ministers who did not take part in the recitations spent the time in watching the general working of the school. At the conclusion of the recitations all joined in singing the familiar song, "Pull for the Shore."

Next in order came the general exercises, which consisted in publicly questioning the fourth, fifth, and the children's divisions. During the class recitations, the names of the members of these divisions had been written upon cards and given to the Secretary, who called the names as the Superintendent asked the questions; and each person whose name was called responded by rising and answering the question asked.

The fourth and fifth divisions, which were composed principally of young men and women, put considerable energy and life into their recitations; but the children's division was the most interesting of all. It was composed of about three hundred wide-awake, interesting children, all of whom seemed eager to answer every question. The superintendent, seeing this, gave them the privilege of answering in concert, when the answers came with that vim and simplicity which children alone can give.

The remarks of Sister White at the close of the general exercises were expressive of deep feeling for the youth of our people. Elder J. H. Waggoner spoke directly to the teachers, setting before them some excellent thoughts on how to conduct classes, how to get students interested, and how to make their work effectual.

Following Elder Waggoner, Brother W. C. White spoke of the *object* of the school and of the importance of maintaining promptness in attendance.

Professor G. H. Bell spoke in a general manner concerning the work of Sabbath-schools, and after revealing the secret of all success (hard work), called upon Brother J. E. White, of California, who spoke of the importance of thoroughness in studying the Sabbath-school lessons, the manner of studying and reciting them, and of the Sabbath-school being a good place to gain *general* as well as scriptural knowledge. After these general remarks, the school closed with singing.

D. W. REAVIS.

Sec. of B. C. Sabbath-school.

\* Held in connection with the National Camp-meeting at Battle Creek, Mich., Oct. 2-14, 1878.