An Appeal

This is a must-read for all. These excerpts were taken from Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 217-235. Please make the time to read this message in its entirety.

I am filled with sadness when I think of our condition as a people. The Lord has not closed heaven to us, but our own course of continual backsliding has separated us from God. Pride, covetousness, and love of the world have lived in the heart without fear of banishment or condemnation. Grievous and presumptuous sins have dwelt among us. And yet the general opinion is that the church is flourishing and that peace and spiritual prosperity are in all her borders. The church has turned back from following Christ her Leader and is steadily retreating toward Egypt. Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. Doubt, and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere. Satan would have it thus. … The testimonies are unread and unappreciated. God has spoken to you. Light has been shining from His word and from the testimonies, and both have been slighted and disregarded. The result is apparent in the lack of purity and devotion and earnest faith among us.

Let each put the question to his own heart: “How have we fallen into this state of spiritual feebleness and dissension? Have we not been seeking the friendship and applause of the world rather than the presence of Christ and a deeper knowledge of His will?” Examine your own hearts, judge your own course. Consider what associates you are choosing. Do you seek the company of the wise, or are you willing to choose worldly associates, companions who fear not God and obey not the gospel?

Are your recreations such as to impart moral and spiritual vigor? Will they lead to purity of thought and action? Impurity is today widespread, even among the professed followers of Christ. Many are eagerly participating in worldly, demoralizing amusements which God’s word forbids. Thus they sever their connection with God and rank themselves with the pleasure lovers of the world. The sins that destroyed the antediluvians and the cities of the plain exist today not merely in heathen lands, not only among popular professors of Christianity, but with some who profess to be looking for the coming of the Son of man. If God should present these sins before you as they appear in His sight, you would be filled with shame and terror.

And what has caused this alarming condition? Many have accepted the theory of the truth who have had no true conversion. There are few who feel
true sorrow for sin, who have deep, pungent convictions of the depravity of the unregenerate nature. The heart of stone is not exchanged for a heart of flesh. Few are willing to fall upon the Rock and be broken.

We may flatter ourselves ... that our moral character has been correct and we need not humble ourselves before God like the common sinner. But we must be content to enter into life in the very same way as the chief of sinners. We must renounce our own righteousness and plead for the righteousness of Christ to be imputed to us. We must depend wholly upon Christ for our strength. Self must die. We must acknowledge that all we have is from the exceeding riches of divine grace. Let this be the language of our hearts: “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth’s sake.”

Genuine faith is followed by love, and love by obedience. All the powers and passions of the converted man are brought under the control of Christ. His Spirit is a renewing power, transforming to the divine image all who will receive it. Very many follow on in their own ways and indulge their sinful desires and yet profess to be disciples of Christ. They have never submitted their hearts to God....

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.” He feels that he is the purchase of the blood of Christ and bound by the most solemn vows to glorify God in his body and in his spirit, which are God’s. The love of sin and the love of self are subdued in him. He daily asks: “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” The true Christian will never complain that the yoke of Christ is galling to the neck. He accounts the service of Jesus as the truest freedom. The law of God is his delight. Instead of seeking to bring down the divine commands, to accord with his deficiencies, he is constantly striving to rise to the level of their perfection.

Communion with Christ—how unspeakably precious! Such communion it is our privilege to enjoy if we will seek it, if we will make any sacrifice to secure it. When the early disciples heard the words of Christ, they felt their need of Him. They sought, they found, they followed Him. They were with Him in the house, at the table, in the closet, in the field. They were with Him as pupils with a teacher, daily receiving from His lips lessons of holy truth. They looked to Him as servants to their master, to learn their duty. They served Him cheerfully, gladly. They followed Him, as soldiers follow their commander, fighting the good fight of faith. “And they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

“He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.” “Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” This conformity to Jesus will not be unobserved by the world. It is a subject of notice and comment. The Christian may not be conscious of the great change; for the more closely he resembles Christ in character the more humble will be his opinion of himself; but it will be seen and felt by all around him. Those who have had the deepest experience in the things of God are the farthest removed from pride or self-exaltation. They have the humblest thoughts of self, and the most exalted conceptions of the glory and excellence of Christ. They feel that the lowest place in His service is too honorable for them.

My brethren, God is grieved with your envying and jealousies, your bitterness and dissension. In all these things you are yielding obedience to Satan and not to Christ. When we see men firm in principle, fearless in duty, zealous in the cause of God, yet humble and lowly, gentle and tender, patient toward all, ready to forgive, manifesting love for souls for whom Christ died, we do not need to inquire: Are they Christians? They give unmistakable evidence that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him. When men reveal the opposite traits, when they are proud, vain, frivolous, worldly-minded, avaricious, unkind, censorious, we need not be told with whom they are associating, who is their most intimate friend. They may not believe in witchcraft; but, notwithstanding this, they are holding communion with an evil spirit.

As a people we are sadly destitute of faith and love. Our efforts are altogether too feeble for the time of peril in which we live. The pride and self-indulgence, the impiety and iniquity, by which we are surrounded have an influence upon us. Few realize the importance of shunning, so far as possible, all associations unfriendly to religious life. In choosing their surroundings, few make their spiritual prosperity the first consideration.

Parents flock with their families to the cities because they fancy it easier to obtain a livelihood there than in the country. The children, having nothing to do when not in school, obtain a street education. From evil associates they acquire habits of vice and dissipation. The parents see all this; but it will require a sacrifice to correct their error, and they stay where they are until Satan gains full control of their children. Better sacrifice any and every worldly convenience, protect your children from the most free, open, and hearty committal of yourselves and your family to God.

My brethren, you are disregarding the most sacred claims of God by your neglect to consecrate yourselves...
and your children to Him. Many of you are reposing in false security, absorbed in selfish interests, and attracted by earthly treasures. You fear no evil. Danger seems a great way off. You will be deceived, deluded, to your eternal ruin unless you arouse and with penitence and deep humiliation return unto the Lord.

Again and again has the voice from heaven addressed you. Will you obey this voice? Will you heed the counsel of the True Witness to seek the gold tried in the fire, the white raiment, and the eyesalve? The gold is faith and love, the white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the eyesalve is that spiritual discernment which will enable you to see the wiles of Satan and shun them, to detect sin and abhor it, to see truth and obey it.

The deadly lethargy of the world is paralyzing your senses. Sin no longer appears repulsive because you are blinded by Satan. The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. “Escape for thy life” is the warning from the angels of God. Other voices are heard saying: “Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm.” Those who are at ease in Zion cry “Peace and safety,” while heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor. The young, the frivolous, the pleasure loving, consider these warnings as idle tales and turn from them with a jest. Parents are inclined to think their children about right in the matter, and all sleep on at ease. Thus it was at the destruction of the old world and when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire. On the night prior to their destruction the cities of the plain rioted in pleasure. Lot was derided for his fears and warnings. But it was these scoffers that perished in the flames. That very night the door of mercy was forever closed to the wicked, careless inhabitants of Sodom.

It is God who holds in His hands the destiny of souls. He will not always be mocked; He will not always be trifled with. Already His judgments are in the land. Fierce and awful tempests leave destruction and death in their wake. The devouring fire lays low the desolate forest and the crowded city. Storm and shipwreck await those who journey upon the deep. Accident and calamity threaten all who travel upon the land. Hurricanes, earthquakes, sword and famine, follow in quick succession. Yet the hearts of men are hardened. They recognize not the warning voice of God. They will not flee to the only refuge from the gathering storm.

Many who have been placed upon the walls of Zion, to watch with eagle eye for the approach of danger and lift the voice of warning, are themselves asleep. The very ones who should be most active and vigilant in this hour of peril are neglecting their duty and bringing upon themselves the blood of souls.

My brethren, beware of the evil heart of unbelief. The word of God is plain and close in its restrictions; it interferes with your selfish indulgence; therefore you do not obey it. The testimonies of His Spirit call your attention to the Scriptures, point out your defects of character, and rebuke your sins; therefore you do not heed them. And to justify your carnal, ease-loving course you begin to doubt whether the testimonies are from God. If you would obey their teachings you would be assured of their divine origin. Remember, your unbelief does not affect their truthfulness. If they are from God they will stand. Those who seek to lessen the faith of God’s people in these testimonies … are fighting against God. It is not the instrument whom you slight and insult, but God, who has spoken to you in these warnings and reproofs.

In the instruction given by our Saviour to His disciples are words of admonition especially applicable to us: “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.” Watch, pray, work—this is the true life of faith. “Pray always;” that is, be ever in the spirit of prayer, and then you will be in readiness for your Lord’s coming.

Jesus took upon Himself man’s nature, that He might leave a pattern for humanity, complete, perfect. He proposes to make us like Himself, true in every purpose, feeling, and thought—true in heart, soul, and life. This is Christianity. Our fallen nature must be purified, ennobled, consecrated by obedience to the truth. Christian faith will never harmonize with worldly principles; Christian integrity is opposed to all deception and pretense. The man who cherishes the most of Christ’s love in the soul, who reflects the Saviour’s image most perfectly, is in the sight of God the truest, most noble, most honorable man upon the earth.
American Union Conference Fees

It’s time to start planning for the American Union Conference. The chart below gives accommodation prices (prices do not include meal costs). To see accommodation photos and descriptions, visit www.cohuttasprings.com. More information, along with meal costs, directions, and registration information, will be included in next month’s AUNL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodations</th>
<th>Prices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Motel Room (2 Queen Beds)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All rooms include a private bath, telephone, wi-fi, microwave, and refrigerator.</td>
<td>$109.00 per night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King/Queen Balcony Rooms</td>
<td>$115.00 per night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suite with Balcony</td>
<td>$150.00 per night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalet 1 (6-10 people) 4 bedrooms</td>
<td>$259.00 per night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalet 2 (6-12 people) 4 bedrooms</td>
<td>$289.00 per night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalet 3 (10-16 people) 6 bedrooms</td>
<td>$349.00 per night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabins (1-12 or 24 people)</td>
<td>$75 - $150 per cabin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp Lodge Rooms (4-8 people)</td>
<td>$75.00 per night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV Sites (8 available)</td>
<td>$25.00 per night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tent Sites</td>
<td>$5.00 per person per night</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chalets require minimum two-night stay on weekends
Pet rooms are available with a $75 charge per stay

2011 Calendar

- August 23-24, 2011: American Union Delegates’ Meetings
- August 24-27, 2011: American Union Conference at Cohutta Springs Campground in Crandall, Georgia