

Drama and the SDA Church:

Appendix 5

Letter 5, 1888

(To Brother Morse, Dec. 26, 1888.)

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ENACTED SCENES

1. I have risen at three o'clock this morning to write you a few lines. I was pleased with the 2.
lighthouse, and the scene which had required so much painstaking effort was one which could 3.
have been made most impressive, but failed to be made as forcible and striking as it might have 4.
been when it cost so much time and labor in preparing it. The part acted by the children was 5.
good. The reading was appropriate. Then if there had been good, solid talk on that occasion 6.
in regard to children and teachers in the Sabbath schools laboring earnestly for the salvation 7.
of the souls of the children under your charge, presenting the most acceptable offering to Jesus, 8.
the gift of their own hearts, and impressive remarks, short and right to the point, [on] how they 9.
could do this, would it not have been in keeping with the work we have been trying to do in the 10.
church?

11. Every stroke now should be in harmony for the one great purpose, preparing of the hearts, that
12. individually pupils and teachers should be as a light set on a candlestick that it may give light
13. to all that are in the house, which would be carrying out the idea strikingly of a lighthouse 14.
guiding souls that they may not make shipwreck of faith. Can you tell me what marked 15.
impression the two poems rehearsed by the two ladies on the stand would have to do with this 16.
work?

17. The singing was after the order we would expect it to be in any theatrical performance, but not
18. one word to be distinguished. Certainly the tempest-tossed ship would be wrecked upon the 19.
rocks if there were no more light coming from the lighthouse than was seen in the exercises. I 20.
must say I was pained at these things, so out of order with the very work of reformation we 21.
were trying to carry forward in the church and with our institutions, that I should have felt better
22. if I had not been present. This was an occasion that should have been gotten up not only for the
23. Sabbath school children, but words should have been spoken that would have deepened the 24.
impression of a necessity of seeking for the favor of that Saviour who loved them and gave 25.
Himself for them. If [only] the precious hymns had been sung, "Rock of ages, cleft for me, let 26.
me hide myself in Thee," and "Jesus lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly, while the 27.
billows near me roll, while the tempest still is high." Whose souls were inspired with new and 28.
fresh zeal for the Master in those songs sung whose virtue was in the different performances of
29. the singer?

30. While these painstaking efforts were being made to get up the performances, meetings were 31.
being held of the deepest interest which should have engaged the attention, and which called 32.
for the presence of every soul lest they should lose something of the message the Master had 33.
sent to them. Now this Christmas has passed into eternity with its burden of record, and we are 34.
anxious to see the result of it. Will it make those who acted their part in it more spiritual 35.
minded? Will it increase their sense of obligation to our heavenly Father who sent His Son into 36.
the world at such an infinite sacrifice to save fallen man from utter ruin? Was the mind 37.
awakened to grasp God because of His great love wherewith He has loved us?

38. We hope, now that Christmas is in the past, that those who have put forth so much painstaking
39. effort will now manifest a decided zeal, and earnest, disinterested effort for the salvation of the
40. souls of the teachers in the Sabbath school, that in their turn they may each labor for the 41.
salvation of the souls in their classes, to give them personal instruction as to what they must do
42. to be saved. We hope that they will find time to labor in simplicity and in sincerity for the souls
43. of those under their care, and that they will pray with them, and for them, that they may give to
44. Jesus the precious offering of their own souls, that they may make literally true the symbol of
45. the lighthouse in the beams of light shining forth from their own strong efforts in the name of
46. Jesus, which should be put forth in love, they themselves grasping the rays of light to diffuse
47. this light to others, and that there shall be no settling down to a surface work. Show just as great
48. skill and aptitude in winning souls to Jesus as you have shown in painstaking effort for this 49.
occasion just past. Point them in your efforts, with heart and soul enlisted, to the Star that shine 50.
out to the morally-darkened heaven at this time, even the Light of the world. Let your light shine
51. that the tempest-tossed souls may set their eyes upon it and escape the rocks that are concealed
52. beneath the surface of the water. Temptations are lying in wait to deceive them; souls are 53.
oppressed with guilt, ready to sink into despair. Labor to save them; point them to Jesus who 54.
so loved them that He gave His life for them. . . .

55. The Light of the world is shining upon us that we might absorb the divine rays and let this light
56. shine upon others in good works that many souls shall be led to glorify our Father which is in
57. heaven. He is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to 58.
repentance, and it grieves the heart of Jesus that so many refuse the offers of His mercy and 59.
matchless love.

60. Will all who acted an interested part in the program of last evening work as zealously and 61.
interestedly to show themselves approved unto God in doing their work for the Master, that they 62.
may show themselves intelligent workmen that need not to be ashamed? Oh, let the teachers in
63. the Sabbath school be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the message for this time, carrying
64. that message into all their labor. There are souls to be saved, and while in the Sabbath school
65. work there has been much form and a great amount of precious time occupied in reading of 66.
reports and records, there has been but little time to really let light shine forth in clear, steady 67.
rays in the very instruction needed to save the souls of the children and youth. Less elaborate 68.
speeches, less lengthy remarks, and plain, pointed truth presented, not one word uttered to 69.
exhibit profound knowledge, not one word in any speech, but the greatest evidence of real 70.
knowledge is the great simplicity. All who have taken knowledge of Jesus Christ will imitate 71.
Him in their manner of instruction.