

Ellen G. White Estate

TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH — NO.31

ELLEN G. WHITE

**TESTIMONY FOR
THE CHURCH.
— No.31**

Ellen G. White

1882

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About the Author

Ellen G. White (1827-1915) is considered the most widely translated American author, her works having been published in more than 160 languages. She wrote more than 100,000 pages on a wide variety of spiritual and practical topics. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she exalted Jesus and pointed to the Scriptures as the basis of one's faith.

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TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH.

CAMP-MEETING ADDRESS.

BOULDER, Colorado, Sept. 25, 1881.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS WHO SHALL ASSEMBLE
AT THE MICHIGAN CAMP-MEETING:—*

I FEEL a deeper interest in this meeting than in any other that has been held this season. Michigan has not had the labor which she should have had. God has planted important institutions among you, and this brings upon you greater responsibilities than upon any other Conference in the whole field. Great light has been given you, and few have responded to it; yet my heart goes out in tender solicitude for our beloved people in Michigan. The warning that the Son of man is soon to come in the clouds of heaven, has become to many a familiar tale. They have left the waiting, watching position. The selfish, worldly spirit manifested in the life, reveals the sentiment of the heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming." Some are enveloped in so great darkness that they openly express their unbelief, notwithstanding our Saviour's declaration, that all such are unfaithful servants, and their portion shall be with hypocrites and unbelievers.

[6] Our ministers are not doing their whole duty. The attention of the people should be called to the momentous event which is so near at hand. The signs of the times should be kept fresh before their minds. The prophetic visions of Daniel and John foretell a period of moral darkness and declension; but at the time of the end,—the time in which we are now living, the vision was to speak and not lie. When the signs predicted begin to come to pass, the waiting, watching ones are bidden to look up, and lift up their heads and rejoice because their redemption draweth nigh.

When these things are dwelt upon as they should be, scoffers will be developed who walk after their own lusts, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things

*This appeal was written for the Michigan camp-meeting, but being forgotten at that time, was read before the General Conference, December, 1881.

continue as they were from the beginning of the creation? ” But “ when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them.” “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.” Thank God, all will not be rocked to sleep in the cradle of carnal security. There will be faithful ones who will discern the signs of the times. While a large number professing present truth will deny their faith by their works, there will be some who will endure unto the end.

The same spirit of selfishness, of conformity to the practices of the world, exists in our day as in Noah’s. Many who profess to be children of God, follow their worldly pursuits with an intensity that gives the lie to their profession. They will be planting and building buying and selling, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the last moment of their probation. This is the condition of a large number of our own people. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. To but few can it be said, “ You are the children of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness.”

My soul is burdened as I see the great want of spirituality among us. The fashions and customs of the world, pride, love of amusement, love of display, extravagance in dress, in houses, in lands,—these are robbing the treasury of God, turning to the gratification of self the means which should be used to send forth the light of truth to the world. Selfish purposes are made the first consideration. The work of qualifying men to labor for the salvation of souls, is not considered of so great consequence as worldly enterprises. Souls are perishing for want of knowledge. Those who have had the light of present truth, and yet feel no spirit of labor to warn their fellow men of the coming Judgment, must give an account to God for their neglect of duty. The blood of souls will be upon their garments.

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The old standard-bearers are fainting and falling. Our young men have not been educated to feel their accountability to God; little inducement is presented for them to labor in the cause, and they enter the fields that promise the largest remuneration, with the least toil and responsibility. As a people, we are not advancing in spirituality as we near the end. We do not realize the magnitude and importance of the work before us. Hence our plans are not becoming wider

and more comprehensive. There is a sad lack of men and women prepared to carry forward the increasing work for this time.

We are not doing one-twentieth part of what God requires us to do. There has been a departure from the simplicity of the work, making it intricate, difficult to understand, and difficult to execute. The judgment and wisdom of man rather than of God, has too often guided and controlled. Many feel that they have not time to watch for souls as they that must give account. And what excuse will they render for this neglect of the important work which was theirs to do?

At our College, young men should be educated in as careful and thorough a manner as possible that they may be prepared to labor for God. This was the object for which the institution was brought into existence. Our brethren abroad should feel an interest not only to sustain but to guard the College, that it may not be turned away from its design, and molded after other institutions of the kind. The religious interest should be constantly guarded. Time is drawing to a close. Eternity is near. The great harvest is to be gathered. What are we doing to prepare for this work ?

The leading men in our College should be men of piety and devotion. They should make the Bible the rule and guide of life, giving heed to the sure word of prophecy as to a “ light which shineth in a dark place.” Not one of us should dare to be off guard for a moment; for “in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.” It is only those who continue faithful in well-doing, that shall reap the reward. Much that has no part in Christ, is allowed a place among us. Unconsecrated ministers, professors and teachers, assist Satan to plant his banner in our very strongholds.

The design of our College has been stated again and again, yet many are so blinded by the god of this world that its real object is not understood. God designed that young men should there be drawn to him, that they should there obtain a preparation to preach the gospel of Christ, to bring out of the exhaustless treasury of God’s word things both new and old, for the instruction and edification of the people. Teachers and professors should have a vivid sense of the perils of this time, and the work that must be accomplished to prepare a people to stand in the day of God.

Some of the teachers have been scattering from Christ, instead of gathering with him. By their own example they lead those under

their charge to adopt the customs and habits of worldlings. They link the hands of the students with fashionable, amusement-loving unbelievers, and carry them an advance step toward the world and away from Christ. And they do this in the face of warnings from Heaven, —not only those given to the people in general, but personal appeals to themselves. The anger of the Lord is kindled for these things.

God will test the fidelity of his people. Many of the mistakes that are made by the professed servants of God are in consequence of their self-love, their desire for approval, their thirst for popularity. [9] Blinded in this manner, they do not realize that they are elements of darkness, rather than of light. “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” These are the conditions upon which we may be acknowledged as the sons of God,—separation from the world, and renunciation of those things which delude, and fascinate, and ensnare.

The apostle Paul declares that it is impossible for the children of God to unite with worldlings: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” This does not refer to marriage alone; any intimate relation of confidence and copartnership with those who have no love for God or the truth, is a snare.

The apostle continues: “For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ? and what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” In consideration of these facts, he exclaims, “ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate.” “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

If we comply with the conditions, the Lord will fulfill to us his promises. But there is a work for us to do, which we should in no wise neglect. In the strength of Jesus, we can perform it aright. We

may press ever onward and upward, constantly growing in grace and in a knowledge of the truth.

[10] The children of the light and of the day are not to gather about them the shades of night and darkness which encompass the workers of iniquity. On the contrary, they are to stand faithfully at their post of duty, as light bearers, gathering light from God to shed upon those in darkness. The Lord requires Ms people to maintain their integrity, touching not—that is, imitating not—the practices of the ungodly.

Christians will be in this world “ a peculiar people; an holy nation, showing forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light.” This light is not to grow dim, but to shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Christ’s standard-bearers are never to be off duty. They have a vigilant foe who is waiting and watching to take the fort. Some of Christ’s professed watchmen have invited the enemy into their stronghold, have mingled with them, and in their efforts to please have broken down the distinction between the children of God and the children of Satan.

The Lord never designed that our College should imitate other institutions of learning. The religious element should be the controlling power. If unbelievers choose this influence, it is well; if those who are in darkness choose to come to the light, it is as God would have it. But to relax our vigilance, and let the worldly element take the lead in order to secure students, is contrary to the will of God. The strength of our College is in keeping the religious element in the ascendancy. When teachers or professors shall sacrifice religious principle to please a worldly, amusement-loving class, they should be considered unfaithful to their trust, and should be discharged.

[11] The thrilling truth that has been sounding in our ears for many years, “The Lord is at hand, be ye also ready,” is no less the truth to-day than when we first heard the message. The dearest interests of the church and people of God, and the destiny of an impenitent and ungodly world, for time and for eternity, are here involved. We are all Judgment bound. “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain [unto the coming of the Lord] shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so

shall we ever be with the Lord.” Christ will then be revealed from heaven, “taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel.”

These momentous events are nigh at hand, yet many who profess to believe the truth, are asleep. They will surely be numbered with the unfaithful servant, who saith in his heart, “My Lord delayeth his coming,” if they remain in their present position of friendship with the world. It is only to those who are waiting in hope and faith, that Christ will appear, without sin unto salvation. Many have the theory of the truth, who know not the power of godliness. If the word of God dwelt in the heart, it would control the life. Faith, purity, and conformity to the will of God, would testify to its sanctifying power.

RESPONSIBILITY OF MINISTERS.

A solemn responsibility rests upon the watchmen. How careful should they be rightly to understand and explain the word of God. “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.” Says the prophet Ezekiel: “The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman; if, when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then, whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his

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way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”

The responsibility of the watchmen of to-day, is as much greater than in the days of the prophet, as our light is clearer, and our privileges and opportunities greater than theirs. It is the minister’s duty to warn every man, to teach every man, in all meekness and wisdom. He is not to conform to the practices of the world, but, as God’s servant, he must contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Satan is constantly at work to break down the strongholds which debar him from free access to souls; and, while our ministers are no more spiritually minded, while they do not connect closely with God, the enemy has great advantage, and the Lord holds the watchman accountable for his success.

I would, at this time, sound the note of warning to those who shall assemble at our camp-meeting. The end of all things is at hand. My brethren, ministers, and laymen, I have been shown you must work in a different manner from what you have been in the habit of working. Pride, envy, self-importance, and unsanctified independence, have marred your labors. When men permit themselves to be flattered and exalted by Satan, the Lord can do little for them or through them.

[13] To what un-measured humiliation did the Son of man descend, that he might elevate humanity! Workers for God, not the ministers only, but the people, need the meekness and lowliness of Christ, if they would benefit their fellow-men. As God, our Saviour humbled himself, when he took upon him man’s nature. But he went lower still. As a man, “he humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross.” Would that I could find language wherewith to present these thoughts before you. Would that the vail could be rent away, and you could see the cause of your spiritual weakness. Would that you could conceive of the rich supplies of grace and power awaiting your demand. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, will be filled. We must exercise greater faith in calling upon God for all needed blessings. We must strive, agonize, to enter in at the strait gate.

Says Christ, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” I testify to you, my dear brethren, ministers, and people, you

have not yet learned this lesson. Christ endured shame and agony and death for us. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Bear reproach and abuse without retaliation, without a spirit of revenge. Jesus died, not only to make atonement for us, but to be our pattern. Oh, wondrous condescension! matchless love! As you look upon the Prince of Life upon the cross, can you cherish selfishness? Can you indulge hatred or revenge ?

Let the proud spirit bow in humiliation. Let the hard heart be broken. No longer pet and pity and exalt self. Look, O look, upon Him whom our sins have pierced. See him, descending step by step the path of humiliation, to lift us up; abasing himself till he could go no lower, and all to save us who were fallen by sin! Why will we be so indifferent, so cold, so formal, so proud, so self-sufficient?

Who of us is faithfully following the Pattern? Who of us has instituted and continued the warfare against pride of heart? Who of us has, in good earnest, brought himself to wrestle with selfishness, until it should no longer dwell in the heart, and be revealed in the life ? Would to God the lessons given us, as we view the cross of Christ, and see the signs fulfilling which bring us near to the Judgment, might be so impressed upon our hearts as to render us more humble, more self-denying, more kind to one another, less self-caring, less critical, and more willing to bear one another's burdens, than we are to-day. [14]

I have been shown that, as a people, we are departing from the simplicity of the faith, and from the purity of the gospel. Many are in great peril. Unless they change their course, they will be severed from the True Vine, as useless branches. Brethren and sisters, I have been shown that we are standing upon the threshold of the eternal world. We need now to gain victories at every step. Every good deed is as a seed sown, to bear fruit unto eternal life. Every success gained, places us on a higher round of the ladder of progress, and gives us spiritual strength for fresh victories. Every right action prepares the way for its repetition.

Some are closing their probation; and is it well with them ? have they obtained a fitness for the future life? Will not their record show wasted opportunities, neglected privileges, a life of selfishness and worldliness, that has borne no fruit to the glory of God? And how much of the work which the Master has left for us to do, has been

left undone. All around us are souls to be warned; but how often has the time been occupied in self-serving, and the record gone up to God of souls passing to their graves, unwarned and unsaved.

[15] The Lord still has purposes of mercy toward us. There is room for repentance. We may become the beloved of God. I entreat you who have put far off the appearing of our Lord, commence now the work of redeeming the time. Study the word of God. Let all at this meeting make a covenant with God, to put away light and trifling conversation, and frivolous, unimportant reading; and, for the coming year, diligently and prayerfully study the Bible, that you may be able to give to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is within you, with meekness and fear. Will you not, without delay, tumble your hearts before God, and repent of your backslidings ?

Let none entertain the thought that I regret or take back any plain testimony I have borne to individuals or to the people. If I have erred anywhere, it is in not rebuking sin more decidedly and firmly. Some of the brethren have taken the responsibility of criticising my work, and proposing an easier way to correct wrongs. To these persons I would say, I take God's way, and not yours. What I have said or written in testimony or reproof, has not been too plainly expressed.

God has given me my work, and I must meet it at the Judgment. Those who have chosen their own way, who have risen up against the plain testimonies given them, and have sought to shake the faith of others in them, must settle the matter with God. I take back nothing. I soften nothing to suit their ideas, or to excuse their defects of character. I have not spoken as plainly as the case required. Those who would, in any way, lessen the force of the sharp reproofs which God has given me to speak, must meet their work at the Judgment.

[16] Within a few weeks past, standing face to face with death, I have had a near look into eternity. If the Lord is pleased to raise me from my present state of feebleness, I hope, in the grace and strength that comes from above, to speak with fidelity the words which he gives me to speak. All through my life, it has been terribly hard for me to hurt the feelings of any, or disturb their self-deception, as I deliver the testimonies given me of God. It is contrary to my nature. It costs me great pain, and many sleepless nights. To those who have taken the responsibility to reprove me, and, in their finite judgment, to

propose a way which appears wiser to them, I repeat, I do not accept your efforts. Leave me with God, and let him teach me. I will take the words from the Lord, and speak them to the people. I do not expect that all will accept the reproof, and reform their lives; but I must discharge my duty all the same. I will walk in humility before God, doing my work for time and for eternity.

God has not given my brethren the work that he has given me. It has been urged that my manner of giving reproof in public, has led others to be sharp and critical and severe. If so, they must settle that matter with the Lord. If others take a responsibility which God has not laid upon them; if they disregard the instructions he has given them, again and again, through the humble instrument of his choice, to be kind, patient, and forbearing, they alone must answer for the results. With a sorrow-burdened heart, I have performed my unpleasant duty to my dearest friends, not daring to please myself by withholding reproof, even from my husband; and I shall not be less faithful in warning others, whether they will hear or forbear. When I am speaking to the people, I say much that I have not premeditated. The Spirit of the Lord frequently comes upon me. I seem to be carried out of, and away from, myself; the life and character of different persons are clearly presented before my mind. I see their errors and dangers, and feel compelled to speak of what is thus brought before me. I dare not resist the Spirit of God.

I know that some are displeased with my testimony. It does not suit their proud, unconsecrated hearts. I feel more and more deeply the loss which our people have sustained by their failure to accept and obey the light which God has given them. My younger brethren in the ministry, I entreat you to reflect more upon your solemn responsibility. If consecrated to God, you may exert a powerful influence for good, in the church and the world; but you lack heartfelt piety and devotion. God has sent you to be a light to the world by your good works, as well as by your words and theories. But many of you may truly be represented by the foolish virgins, who had do oil in their lamps.

My brethren, heed the reproof and counsel of the True Witness, and God will work for you and with you. Your enemies may be strong and determined but One mightier than they will be your

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helper. Let the light shine, and it will do its work. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

* * * * *

OUR COLLEGE.*

There is danger that our College will be turned away from its original design. God's purpose has been made known, that our people should have an opportunity to study the sciences, and at the same time to learn the requirements of his word. Biblical lectures should be given; the study of the Scriptures should have the first place in our system of education.

Students are sent from a great distance to attend the College at Battle Creek for the very purpose of receiving instructions from the lectures on Bible sub-jects. But for one or two years past there has been an effort to mold our school after other colleges. When this is done, we can give no encouragement to parents to send their children to Battle Creek College. The moral and religious influences should not be put in the background. In times past, God has worked with the efforts of the teachers, and many souls have seen the truth and embraced it, and have gone to their homes to live henceforth for God, as the result of their connection with the College. As they saw that Bible study was made a part of their education, they were led to regard it as a matter of greater interest and importance. [18]

Too little attention has been given to the education of young men for the ministry. This was the primary object to be secured in the establishment of the College. In no case should this be ignored or regarded as a matter of secondary importance. For several years, however, but few have gone forth from that institution prepared to teach the truth to others. Some who came at great expense, with the ministry in view, have been encouraged by the teachers to take a thorough course of study which would occupy a number of years, and in order to obtain means to carry out these plans, have entered the canvassing field, and given up all thought of preaching. This is entirely wrong. We have not many years to work, and teachers and principal should be imbued with the Spirit of God, and work in

*Read in college Hall, December, 1881, before Conference delegates, and leading workers in Review and Herald Office, Sanitarium, college.

harmony with his revealed will, instead of carrying out their own plans. We are losing much every year because we do not heed what God has said upon these points.

Our College is designed of God to meet the advancing wants for this time of peril and demoralization. The study of books only, cannot give students the discipline they need. A broader foundation must be laid. The College was not brought into existence to bear the stamp of any one man's mind. Teachers and principal should work together as brethren. They should consult together, and also counsel with ministers and responsible men, and above all else, seek wisdom from above, that all their decisions in reference to the school may be such as will be approved of God.

[19] To give students a knowledge of books merely is not the purpose of the institution. Such education can be obtained at any college in the land, I was shown that it is Satan's purpose to prevent the attainment of the very object for which the College was established. Hindered by his devices, its managers reason after the manner of the world, and copy its plans, and imitate its customs. But in thus doing, they will not meet the mind of the Spirit of God.

A more comprehensive education is needed,—an education which will demand from teachers and principal, such thought and effort as mere instruction in the sciences does not require. The character must receive proper discipline for its fullest and noblest development. The students should receive at College, such training as will enable them to maintain a respectable, honest, virtuous standing in society, against the demoralizing influences which are corrupting the youth.

It would be well could there be connected with our College, land for cultivation, and also work-shops, under the charge of men competent to instruct the students in the various departments of physical labor. Much is lost by a neglect to unite physical with mental taxation. The leisure hours of the students are often occupied with frivolous pleasures, which weaken physical, mental, and moral powers. Under the debasing power of sensual indulgence, or the untimely excitement of courtship and marriage, many students fail to reach that height of mental development which they might otherwise have attained.

The young should every day be impressed with a sense of their obligation to God. His law is continually violated, even by the children of religious parents. Some of these very youth frequent haunts of dissipation, and the powers of mind and body suffer in consequence. This class lead others to follow their pernicious ways. Thus, while principal and teachers are giving instruction in the sciences, Satan, with hellish cunning, is exerting every energy to gain control of the minds of the pupils, and lead them down to ruin. [20]

Generally speaking, the youth have but little moral strength. This is the result of neglected education in childhood. A knowledge of the character of God, and our obligations to him, should not be regarded as a matter of minor consequence. The religion of the Bible is the only safeguard for the young. Morality and religion should receive special attention in our educational institutions.

THE BIBLE AS A TEXT BOOK.

No other study will so ennoble every thought, feeling, and aspiration, as the study of the Scriptures. This sacred word is the will of God revealed to men. Here we may learn what God expects of the beings formed in his image. Here we learn how to improve the present life, and how to secure the future life. No other book can satisfy the questionings of the mind, and the craving of the heart. By obtaining a knowledge of God's word, and giving heed thereto, men may rise from the lowest depths of ignorance and degradation, to become the sons of God, the associates of sinless angels.

A clear conception of what God is, and what he requires us to be, will give us humble views of self. He who studies aright the sacred word, will learn that human intellect is not omnipotent; that, without the help which none but God can give, human strength and wisdom are but weakness and ignorance.

As an educating power, the Bible is without a rival. Nothing will so impart vigor to all the faculties as requiring students to grasp the stupendous truths of revelation. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. If occupied with common-place matters only, to the exclusion of grand and lofty themes, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to

grapple with difficult problems, or put to the stretch to comprehend important truths, it will, after a time, almost lose the power of growth.

[21] The Bible is the most comprehensive and the most instructive history which men possess. It came fresh from the fountain of eternal truth, and a Divine hand has preserved its purity through all the ages. Its bright rays shine into the far distant past, where human research seeks vainly to penetrate. In God's word alone we find an authentic account of creation. Here we behold the power that laid the foundation of the earth, and that stretched out the heavens. Here only, can we find a history of our race, unsullied by human prejudice or human pride.

In the word of God, the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration. Here we may hold communion with patriarchs and prophets, and listen to the voice of the Eternal as he speaks with men. Here we behold the Majesty of Heaven, as he humbled himself to become our substitute and surety, to cope single-handed with the powers of darkness, and to gain the victory in our behalf. A reverent contemplation of such themes as these, cannot fail to soften, purify, and ennoble the heart, and, at the same time, to inspire the mind with new strength and vigor.

If morality and religion are to live in a school, it must be through a knowledge of God's word. Some may urge that if religious teaching is to be made prominent, our school will become unpopular; that those who are not of our faith will not patronize the College. Very well, then, let them go to other colleges, where they will find a system of education that suits their taste. Our school was established, not merely to teach the sciences, but for the purpose of giving instruction in the great principles of God's word, and in the practical duties of every-day life.

[22] This is the education so much needed at the present time. If a worldly influence is to bear sway in our school, then sell it out to worldlings, and let them take the entire control; and those who have invested their means in that institution will establish another school, to be conducted, not upon the plan of popular schools, nor according to the desires of principal and teachers, but upon the plan which God has specified.

In the name of my Master, I entreat all who stand in responsible positions in that school, to be men of God. When the Lord requires

us to be distinct and peculiar, how can we crave popularity, or seek to imitate the customs and practices of the world? God has declared his purpose to have one college in the land where the Bible shall have its proper place in the education of the youth. Will we do our part to carry out that purpose?

It may seem that the teaching of God's word has but little effect on the minds and hearts of many students; but, if the teacher's work has been wrought in God, some lessons of divine truth will linger in the memory of the most careless. The Holy Spirit will water the seed sown, and often it will spring up after many days, and bear fruit to the glory of God.

Satan is constantly seeking to divert the attention of the people from the Bible. The words of God to men, which should receive our first attention, are neglected for the utterances of human wisdom. How can He, who is infinite in power and wisdom, bear thus with the presumption and effrontery of men!

Through the medium of the press, knowledge of every kind is placed within the reach of all; and yet, how large a share of every community are depraved in morals, and superficial in mental attainments. If the people would but become Bible readers, Bible students, we would see a different state of things.

In an age like ours, in which iniquity abounds, and God's character and his law are alike regarded with contempt, special care must be taken to teach the youth to study, to reverence and obey the divine will as revealed to man. The fear of the Lord is fading from the minds of our youth, because of their neglect of Bible study.

Principal and teachers should have a living connection with God, and should stand, firmly and fearlessly, as witnesses for him. Never from cowardice or worldly policy, let the word of God be placed in the background. Students will be profited intellectually, as well as morally and spiritually, by its study. [23]

OBJECT OF THE COLLEGE.

Our College stands to-day in a position that God does not approve. I have been shown the dangers that threaten this important institution. If its responsible men seek to reach the world's standard,

if they copy the plans and methods of other colleges, the frown of God will be upon our school.

The time has come for me to speak decidedly. The purpose of God in the establishment of our College has been plainly stated. There is an urgent demand for laborers in the gospel field. Young men who design to enter the ministry cannot spend a number of years in obtaining an education. Teachers should have been able to comprehend the situation and adapt their instruction to the wants of this class. Special advantages should have been given them for a brief yet comprehensive study of the branches most needed to fit them for their work. But I have been shown that this has not been accomplished.

Bro. — could have done a much better work than he has done for those who were to be ministers. God is not pleased with his course in this matter. He has not adapted himself to the situation. Men who have left their fields of labor at a considerable sacrifice to learn what they could in a short time, have not always received that help and encouragement which they should have had. Men who have reached mature years, even the meridian of life, and who have families of their own, have been subjected to unnecessary embarrassment. Bro. — is himself extremely sensitive, but he does not realize that others [24] can feel the sting of ridicule, sarcasm, or censure, as keenly as he. In this he has wounded his brethren and displeased God.

TEACHERS IN THE COLLEGE.

There is a work to be done for every teacher in our College. Not one is free from selfishness. If the moral and religious character of the teachers were what it should be, a better influence would be exerted upon the students. The teachers do not seek individually to perform their own work, with an eye single to the glory of God. Instead of looking to Jesus, and copying his life and character, they look to self, and aim too much to meet a human standard. I wish I could impress upon every teacher a full sense of his responsibility for the influence which he exerts upon the young. Satan is untiring in his efforts to secure the service of our youth. With great care he is laying his snare for the inexperienced feet. The people of God should jealously guard against his devices.

God is the embodiment of benevolence, mercy, and love. Those who are truly connected with him, cannot be at variance with one another. His Spirit ruling in the heart will create harmony, love, and unity. The opposite of this is seen among the children of Satan. It is his work to stir up envy, strife, and jealousy. In the name of my Master, I ask the professed followers of Christ, What fruit do you bear?

In the system of instruction used in the common schools, the most essential part of education is neglected, viz., the religion of the Bible. Education not only affects to a great degree the life of the student in this world, but its influence extends to eternity. How important, then, that the teachers be persons capable of exerting a right influence. They should be men and women of religious experience, daily receiving divine light to impart to their pupils.

But the teacher should not be expected to do the parent's work. [25] There has been, with many parents, a fearful neglect of duty. Like Eli, they fail to exercise proper restraint; and then they send their undisciplined children to College, to receive the training which the parents should have given them at home. The teachers have a task which but few appreciate. If they succeed in reforming these wayward youth, they receive but little credit. If the youth choose the society of the evil-disposed, and go on from bad to worse, then the teachers are censured, and the school denounced.

In many cases, the censure justly belongs to the parents. They had the first and most favorable opportunity to control and train their children, when the spirit was teachable, and the mind and heart easily impressed. But through the slothfulness of the parents, the children are permitted to follow their own will, until they become hardened in an evil course.

Let parents study less of the world, and more of Christ; let them put forth less effort to imitate the customs and fashions of the world, and devote more time and effort to molding the minds and character of their children according to the Divine Model. Then they could send forth their sons and daughters, fortified by pure morals and a noble purpose, to receive an education for positions of usefulness and trust. Teachers who are controlled by the love and fear of God, could lead such youth still onward and upward, training them to be a blessing to the world, and an honor to their Creator.

Connected with God, every instructor will exert an influence to lead his pupils to study God's word, and to obey his law. He will direct their minds to the contemplation of eternal interests, opening before them vast fields for thought, grand and ennobling themes, which the most vigorous intellect may put forth all its powers to grasp, and yet feel that there is an infinity beyond.

[26] The evils of self-esteem, and an unsanctified independence, which most impair our usefulness, and which will prove our ruin, if not overcome, spring from selfishness. "Counsel together," is the message which has been, again and again, repeated to me by the angel of God. By influencing one man's judgment, Satan may endeavor to control matters to suit himself. He may succeed in misleading the minds of two persons; but, when several consult together, there is more safety. Every plan will be more closely criticised; every advance move more carefully studied. Hence, there will be less danger of precipitate, ill-advised moves, which would bring confusion, perplexity, and defeat. In union there is strength. In division, there is weakness and defeat

God is leading out a people, and preparing them for translation. Are we, who are acting a part in this work, standing as sentinels for God? Are we seeking to work unitedly? Are we willing to become servants of all? Are we following our great Exemplar?

Fellow-laborers, we are each sowing seed in the fields of life. As is the seed, so will be the harvest. If we sow distrust, envy, jealousy, self-love, bitterness of thought and feeling, we shall reap bitterness to our own souls. If we manifest kindness, love, tender thought for the feelings of others, we shall receive the same in return.

The teacher who is severe, critical, over-bearing, heedless of others feelings, must expect the same spirit to be manifested toward himself. He who wishes to preserve his own dignity and self-respect, must be careful not to wound needlessly the self-respect of others. This rule should be sacredly observed toward the dullest, the youngest, the most blundering scholars. What God intends to do with those apparently uninteresting youth, you do not know. He has, in the past, accepted persons no more promising or attractive, to do a great work for him. His Spirit, moving upon the heart, has [27] aroused every faculty to vigorous action. The Lord saw in those rough, unhewn stones, precious material, that would stand the test

of storm and heat and pressure. God seeth not as man sees. He judges not from appearance, but he searches the heart, and judges righteously.

The teacher should ever conduct himself as a Christian gentleman. He should ever stand in the attitude of a friend and counselor to his pupils. If all our people—teachers, ministers, and lay members—would cultivate the spirit of Christian courtesy, they would far more readily find access to the hearts of the people; many more would be led to examine and receive the truth. When every teacher shall forget self, and feel a deep interest in the success and prosperity of his pupils, realizing that they are God's property, and that he must render an account for his influence upon their minds and character, then we shall have a school in which angels will love to linger. Jesus will look approvingly upon the work of the teachers, and will send his grace into the hearts of the students.

Our College at Battle Creek, is a place where the younger members of the Lord's family are to be trained according to God's plan of growth and development. They should be impressed with the idea that they are created in the image of their Maker, and that Christ is the pattern which they are to follow. Our brethren permit their minds to take too narrow and too low a range. They do not keep the divine plan ever in view, but are fixing their eyes upon worldly models. Look up, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and then labor that your pupils may be conformed to that perfect character.

If you lower the standard in order to secure popularity and an increase of numbers, and then make this increase a cause of rejoicing, you show great blindness. If numbers were evidence of success, Satan might claim the pre-eminence; for, in this world, his followers are largely in the majority. It is the degree of moral power pervading the College, that is a test of its prosperity. It is the virtue, intelligence, and piety of the people composing our churches, not their numbers, that should be a source of joy and thankfulness.

Without the influence of divine grace, education will prove no real advantage; the learner becomes proud, vain, and bigoted. But that education which is received under the ennobling, refining influence of the Great Teacher, will elevate man in the scale of moral value with God. It will enable him to subdue pride and passion,

and to walk humbly before God, as dependent upon him for every capability, every opportunity, and every privilege.

I speak to the workers in our College: You must not only profess to be Christians, but you must exemplify the character of Christ. Let the wisdom from above pervade all your instruction. In a world of moral darkness and corruption, let it be seen that the spirit by which you are moved to action is from above, not from beneath. While you rely wholly upon your own strength and wisdom, your best efforts will accomplish little. If you are prompted by love to God, his law being your foundation, your work will be enduring. While the hay, wood, and stubble are consumed, your work will stand the test. The youth placed under your care, you must meet again, around the great white throne. If you permit your uncultivated manners, or uncontrolled tempers, to bear sway, and thus fail to influence these youth for their eternal good, you must, at that day, meet the grave consequences of your work. By a knowledge of the divine law, and obedience to its precepts, men may become the sons of God. By violation of that law, they become servants of Satan. On the one hand, they may rise to any height of moral excellence, or, on the other hand, they may descend to any depth of iniquity and degradation. The workers in our College should manifest a zeal and earnestness proportionate to the value of the prize at stake—the souls of their students, the approval of God, eternal life, and the joys of the redeemed.

As co-laborers with Christ, with so favorable opportunities to impart the knowledge of God, our teachers should labor as if inspired from above. The hearts of the youth are not hardened, nor their ideas and opinions stereotyped, as are those of older persons. They may be won to Christ by your holy demeanor, your devotion, your Christ-like walk. It would be much better to crowd them less in the study of the sciences, and give them more time for religious privileges. Here a grave mistake has been made.

The object of God in bringing the College into existence, has been lost sight of. Ministers of the gospel have so far shown their want of wisdom from above, as to unite a worldly element with the College; they have joined with the enemies of God and the truth, in providing entertainments for the students. In thus misleading the youth, they have done a work for Satan. That work, with all its

results, they must meet again at the bar of God. Those who pursue such a course, show that they cannot be trusted. After the evil work has been done, they may confess their error; but can they as easily gather up the influence they have exerted? Will the well-done be spoken to those who have been false to their trust? These unfaithful men have not built upon the Eternal Rock. Their foundation will prove to be sliding sand. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whoso will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God."

No limit can be set to our influence. One thoughtless act may prove the ruin of many souls. The course of every worker in our College is making impressions upon the minds of the young, and these are borne away to be reproduced in others. It should be the teacher's aim to prepare every youth under his care to be a blessing to the world. This object should never be lost sight of. There are some who profess to be working for Christ, yet occasionally go over to the side of Satan and do his work. Can the Saviour pronounce these good and faithful servants? Are they as watchmen giving the trumpet a certain sound? [30]

Every man will at the Judgment receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil. Our Saviour bids us, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." If we encounter difficulties, and in Christ's strength overcome them; if we meet enemies, and in Christ's strength put them to flight; if we accept responsibilities, and in Christ's strength discharge them faithfully, we are gaining a precious experience. We learn, as we could not otherwise have learned, that our Saviour is a present help in every time of need.

There is a great work to be done in our College, a work which demands the co-operation of every teacher; and it is displeasing to God for one to discourage another. But nearly all seem to forget that Satan is an accuser of the brethren, and they unite with the enemy in his work. While professed Christians are contending, Satan is laying his snares for the inexperienced feet of children and youth. Those who have had a religious experience should seek to shield the young from his devices. They should never forget that they themselves were once enchanted with the pleasures of sin. We need the mercy and forbearance of God every hour, and how unbecoming for us to

be impatient with the errors of the inexperienced youth. So long as God bears with them, dare we, fellow-sinners, cast them off?

[31] We should ever look upon the youth as the purchase of the blood of Christ. As such they have demands upon our love, our patience, and our sympathy. If we would follow Jesus, we cannot re-strict our interest and affection to ourselves and our own families; we cannot give our time and attention to temporal matters, and forget the eternal interests of those around us. I have been shown that it is the result of our own selfishness that there are not one hundred young men where now there is one engaged in earnest labor for the salvation of their fellow-men. "Love one another as I have loved you," is the command of Jesus. Look at his self-denial; behold the manner of love he has bestowed upon us; and then seek to imitate the Pattern.

There have been many things displeasing to God in the young men and young women who have acted as teachers at our College. You have been so absorbed in yourselves, and so devoid of spirituality, that you could not lead the youth to holiness and Heaven. Many have returned to their home more decided in their impenitence because of your lack of love for God and Christ. Walking without the spirit of Jesus, you have encouraged irreligion, lightness, and unkindness, in that you have indulged these evils yourselves. The result of this course you do not realize—souls are lost, that might have been saved.

Many have strong feelings against Bro. — They accuse him of unkindness, harshness, and severity. But some of the very ones who would condemn him, are no less guilty themselves. "Let him that is without sin, cast the first stone. Bro. — has not always moved wisely, and he has been hard to convince where he has not taken the best course. He has not been as willing to receive counsel, and to modify his methods of instruction, and his manner of dealing with his students, as he should have been. But those who would condemn him because of his defects, could in their turn be justly condemned. Every man has his peculiar defects of character. One may be free from the weakness which he sees in his brother, yet he may at the same time have faults which are far more grievous in the sight of God.

This unfeeling criticism of one another is wholly Satanic. I was shown Bro. — deserves respect for the good which he has done. Let him be dealt with tenderly. He has performed the labor which three men should have shared. Let those who are so eagerly searching for his faults, recount what they have done in comparison with him. He toiled when others were seeking rest and pleasure. He is worn; God would have him lay off some of these extra burdens for a while. He has so many things to divide his time and attention, he can do justice to none. [32]

Bro. — should not permit his combative spirit to be aroused and lead him to self-justification. He has given occasion for dissatisfaction. The Lord has presented this before him in testimony.

Students should not be encouraged in their fault-finding. This complaining spirit will increase as it is encouraged, and students will feel at liberty to criticise the teachers who do not meet their liking, and a spirit of dissatisfaction and strife will rapidly increase. This must be frowned down, until it shall become extinct. Shall this evil be corrected? Will teachers put away their desire for the supremacy? Will they labor in humility, in love, and harmony? Time will tell.

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PARENTAL TRAINING.

I HAVE been shown that very many of the parents who profess to believe the solemn message for this time, have not trained their children for God. They have not restrained themselves, and have been irritated with anyone who attempted to restrain them. They have not by living faith daily bound their children upon the altar of the Lord. Many of these youth have been allowed to transgress the fourth commandment, by seeking their own pleasure upon God's holy day. They have felt no compunctions of conscience in going about the streets on the Sabbath for their own amusement. Many go [33] where they please, and do what they please, and their parents are so fearful of displeasing them that, imitating the management of Eli, they lay no com-mands upon them.

These youth finally lose all respect for the Sabbath, and have no relish for religious meetings or for sacred and eternal things. If their parents mildly remonstrate with them, they shield themselves by telling of the faults of some of the church members. In place of silencing the first approach to anything of the kind, the parents think just as their children think; if this one or that one were perfect, their children would be right. Instead of this, they should teach them that the sins of others are no excuse for them. Christ is the only true pattern. The wrongs of many would not excuse one wrong in them, or lessen in the least their guilt. God has given them one standard, perfect, noble, elevated. This they must meet, irrespective of the course which others may pursue. But many parents seem to lose reason and judgment in their fondness for their children, and through these indulged, selfish, mismanaged youth, Satan in turn works effectually to ruin the parents. I was referred to the wrath of God which came upon the incredulous and disobedient of ancient Israel. Their duty to instruct their children was plainly enjoined upon them. It is just as binding upon believing parents in this generation. "Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark

sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.”

Children are what their parents make them, by their instruction, discipline, and example. Hence the overwhelming importance of parental faithfulness in training the young for the service of God. Children should early be taught the sacredness of religious obligations. This is a most important part of their education. Our duty to God should be performed before any other. The strict observance of God’s law, from principle, should be taught and enforced. “ For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children. That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.”

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Here is seen the great responsibility devolving upon parents. Children who are allowed to come up to manhood or womanhood with the will undisciplined and the passions uncontrolled, will generally in after life pursue a course which God condemns. These are eager for frivolous enjoyments and irreligious associates. They have been allowed to neglect religious duties, and indulge the inclinations of the carnal heart, and, as a consequence, Satan controls the mind and principles. In — —, parents have given him ample room thus to work. Most of the backsliding from God that has occurred in that place has come in consequence of the parents’ neglect to train their children to a conscientious, religious life. The condition of these children is lamentable. They profess to be Christians, but their parents have not taken upon themselves the burden of teaching them how to be Christians,—how to recount the mercies of God, how to praise him, how to exemplify in their lives the life of Christ.

When these children enter school and associate with other students, those who have been really trying to be Christians are ashamed to act out their faith in the presence of those who have had so much

[35] light. They are ashamed to appear singular, and deny inclination, and so they throw away their armor at the very time when it is most needed, when the powers of darkness are working through these irreligious companions to lead them away from Christ. They enter upon a path that is full of danger without the protection and support of religious principle, because they think it will be difficult or unpleasant to carry their religion with them to the school-room, the play-ground, and into all their associations. Thus they lay bare their soul to the shafts of Satan. Where are the guardians of these youth? Who have taken a firm hold of the throne of God with one hand, while with the other they encircle these youth to draw them to Christ? It is just here that these children need to know the power of religion, need to be held back with a firm hand.

Many of those who have so long rejected divine guidance and guardianship are rushing on in the path of levity and selfish pleasure, yea, more, into baser acts and defilement of the body. As a consequence, their minds are polluted, and religion is distasteful to them. Some have gone so far in this downward course, and followed so earnestly in the path of the Sodomites, that they are to-day nigh unto cursing, and the voice of reproof and warning is lost upon them. They will never be redeemed, and the parents are guilty of their ruin. The debasing enjoyments for which they have made such an enormous sacrifice—health, peace of mind, and eternal life—are bitterness in the end.

[36] Parents, for Christ's sake do not blunder in your most important work, that of molding the characters of your children for time and for eternity. An error on your part in neglect of faithful instruction, or in the indulgence of that unwise affection which blinds your eyes to their defects and prevents you from giving them proper restraint, will prove their ruin. Your course may give a wrong direction to all their future career. You determine for them what they will be and what they will do for Christ, for men, and for their own souls.

Deal honestly and faithfully with your children. Work bravely and patiently. Fear no crosses, spare no time or labor, burden or suffering. The future of your children will testify the character of your work. Fidelity to Christ on your part can be better expressed in the symmetrical character of your children than in any other way. They are Christ's property, bought with his own blood. If their

influence is wholly on the side of Christ they are his co-laborers, helping others to find the path of life. If you neglect your God-given work, your unwise course of discipline places them among the class who scatter from Christ and strengthen the kingdom of darkness.

I speak the things I know, I testify to you the things which I have seen when I say there is among our youth, among educated young men of professedly Christian parents, a grievous offense in the sight of God, which is so common that it constitutes one of the signs of the last days. It is so full of evil tendencies as to call for decided exposure and denunciation. It is the sin of regarding with levity or contempt their early vows of consecration to God. In a religious interest the Holy Spirit moved upon them to take their stand wholly under the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel. But the parents were so far from God themselves, so busily engaged in worldly business, or so filled with doubts and dissatisfaction in regard to their own religious experience, that they were wholly unfitted to give them instruction. These youth, in their inexperience, needed a wise, firm hand to point out the right way and to bar with counsel and restraint the wrong way.

A religious life should be shown to be in marked contrast to a life of worldliness and pleasure-seeking. He who would be the disciple of Christ must take up the cross and bear it after Jesus. Our Saviour lived not to please himself neither must we. High spiritual attainments will require entire consecration to God. But this instruction has not been given the youth because it would contradict the life of the parents. Therefore the children have been left to gain a knowledge of the Christian life as best they could. When tempted to seek the society of worldlings, and participate in worldly amusements, the fond parents, disliking to deny them any indulgence, have—if they have said or done anything in the matter—taken a position so indefinite and undecided that the children have judged for themselves that the course they desired to pursue was in keeping with the Christian life and character.

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Having once started in this way, they usually continue in it until the worldly element prevails, and they sneer at their former convictions. They despise the simplicity manifested when their hearts were tender, and they find excuse to elude the sacred claims of the church and of the crucified Redeemer. This class can never become

what they might have been had not the convictions of conscience been stifled, the holiest, tenderest affections blunted. If in after years they become followers of Christ, they will still bear the sears which irreverence for sacred things has made upon their souls.

Parents do not see these things. They do not foresee the result of their course. They do not feel that their children need the tenderest culture, the most careful discipline in the divine life. They do not look upon them as being in a peculiar sense the property of Christ, the purchase of his blood, the trophies of his grace, and as such, skillful instruments in God's hands to be used for the upbuilding of his kingdom. Satan is ever seeking to wrest these youth from the hands of Christ, and parents do not discern that the great adversary is planting his hellish banners close by their sides. They are so blinded they think it is the banner of Christ.

[38] By ambition or indolence, skepticism or self-indulgence, Satan allures the young from the narrow path of holiness cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. They do not generally leave this path all at once. They are won away by degrees. Having taken one wrong step, they lose the witness of the Spirit to their acceptance with God. Thus they fall into a state of discouragement and distrust. They dislike religious services because conscience condemns them. They have fallen into the snare of Satan, and there is only one way of escape. They must retrace their steps and with humility of soul confess and forsake their half-hearted course. Let them renew their first experience which they have made light of, cherish every divine aspiration, and let those holy emotions which God's Spirit only can inspire, reign in their souls. Faith in Christ's power will impart strength to sustain, and light to guide.

This practical instruction in religious experience is what Christian parents should be prepared to give their children. God requires this of you, and you neglect your duty if you fail to perform this work. Instruct your children in regard to God's chosen methods of discipline and the conditions of success in the Christian life. Teach them that they cannot serve God and have their minds absorbed in overcareful provision for this life; but do not let them cherish the thought that they have no need to toil, and may spend their leisure moments in idleness. God's word is plain on this point. Jesus, the Majesty of Heaven, has left an example for the youth. He toiled in

the workshop at Nazareth for his daily bread. He was subject to his parents, and sought not to control his own time or to follow his own will. By a life of easy indulgence a youth can never attain to real excellence as a man or as a Christian. God does not promise us ease, honor, or wealth in his service, but he assures us that all needed blessings will be ours, "with persecutions," and in the world to come "life everlasting." Nothing less than entire consecration to his service will Christ accept. This is the lesson which every one of us must learn.

Those who study the Bible, counsel with God, and rely upon Christ, will be enabled to act wisely at all times, and under all circumstances. Good principles will be illustrated in actual life. Only let the truth for this time be cordially received, and become the basis of character, and it will produce steadfastness of purpose, which the allurements of pleasure, the fickleness of custom, the contempt of the world-loving, and the heart's own clamors for self-indulgence, are powerless to influence. Conscience must be first enlightened, the will must be brought into subjection. The love of truth and righteousness must reign in the soul, and a character will appear which Heaven can approve. [39]

We have marked illustrations of the sustaining power of firm, religious principle. Even the fear of death could not make the fainting David drink of the water of Bethlehem, to obtain which, valiant men had risked their lives. The gaping lions' den could not keep Daniel from his daily prayers, nor could the fiery furnace induce Shadrach and his companions to fall down before the idol which Nebuchadnezzar set up. Young men who have firm principles, will eschew pleasure, defy pain, and brave even the lions' den and the heated fiery furnace, rather than be found untrue to God. Mark the character of Joseph. Virtue was severely tested, but its triumph was complete. At every point the noble youth endured the test. The same lofty, unbending principle appeared at every trial. The Lord was with him, and his word was law.

Such firmness and untarnished principle shines brightest in contrast with the feebleness and inefficiency of the youth of this age. With but few exceptions, they are vacillating, varying with every change of circumstance and surroundings, one thing to-day, and another to-morrow. Let the attractions of pleasure or selfish grat-

[40] ification be presented, and conscience will be sacrificed to gain the coveted indulgence. Can such a person be trusted? Never! In the absence of temptation he may carry himself with such seeming propriety that your doubts and suspicions appear unjust; but let opportunity be pre-sented, and he will betray your confidence. He is unsound at heart. Just at the time when firmness and principle are most required, you will find him giving way, and, if he does not become an Arnold or a Judas, it is because he lacks a fitting opportunity.

Parents, it should be your first concern to obey the call of duty, and enter, heart and soul, into the work God has given you to do. If you fail in everything else, be thorough, be efficient here. If your children come forth from the home training pure and virtuous; if they fill the least and lowest place in God's great plan of good for the world, your life can never be called a failure, and can never be reviewed with remorse.

The idea that we must submit to ways of perverse children, is a mistake. Elisha, at the very commencement of his work, was mocked and derided by the youth of Bethel. He was a man of great mildness, but the Spirit of God impelled him to pronounce a curse upon those railers. They had heard of Elijah's ascension, and they made this solemn event the subject of jeers. Elisha evinced that he was not to be trifled with, by old or young, in his sacred calling. When they told him he had better go up, as Elijah had done before him, he cursed them in the name of the Lord. The awful judgment that came upon them, was of God. After this, Elisha had no further trouble in his mission. For fifty years he passed in and out of the gate of Bethel, and went to and fro from city to city, passing through crowds of the worst and rudest of idle, dissolute youth, but no one ever mocked him, or made light of his qualifications as the prophet of the Most High. This one instance of terrible severity in the commencement of his career, was sufficient to command respect through his whole life. Had he allowed the mockery to pass unnoticed, he might have been ridiculed, reviled, and even murdered, by the rabble, and his mission to instruct and save the nation in its great peril, would have been defeated.

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Even kindness must have its limits. Authority must be sustained by a firm severity, or it will be received by many with mockery and

contempt. The so called tenderness, the coaxing and the indulgence used towards youth, by parents and guardians, is the worst evil which can come upon them. Firmness, decision, positive requirements, are essential in every family. Parents, take up your neglected responsibilities; educate your children after God's plan, "showing forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

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IMPORTANT TESTIMONY.

HEALDSBURG, Cal., March 28, 1882.

DEAR BRO. —: Your letter was received in due time. While I was glad to hear from you, I was made sad, as I read its contents. I had received similar letters from Sr. —, and from Bro. —. But I have had no communications from Bro. — or any one who sustains him. From your own letters I learn the course which you have pursued, in the proceedings against Bro. —.

I am not surprised that such a state of things should exist in Battle Creek, but I am pained to find you, my much esteemed brother, involved in this matter, on the wrong side, with those whom I know God is not leading. Some of these persons are honest, but they are deceived. They have received their impressions from another source than the Spirit of God.

[42] I have been careful not to express my opinion to individuals concerning important matters; for unjust advantage is often taken of what I say, even in the most confidential manner. Persons set themselves to work to draw out remarks from me on various points, and then they distort and misrepresent, and make my words express ideas and opinions altogether different from what I hold. But this they must meet at the bar of God.

On the occurrence of your present difficulties, I determined to keep silent, I thought it might be best to let matters develop, that those who had been so ready to censure my husband might see that the spirit of murmuring existed in their own hearts, and was still active, now that the man of whom they had complained was silently sleeping in the grave.

I knew that a crisis must come. God has given this people plain and pointed testimonies to prevent this state of things. Had they obeyed the voice of the Holy Spirit in warning, counsel, and entreaty, they would now enjoy unity and peace. But these testimonies have not been heeded by those who professed to believe them, and as a

result there has been a wide departure from God, and the withdrawal of his blessing.

To effect the salvation of men, God employs various agencies. He speaks to them by his word, and by his ministers, and he sends by the Holy Spirit messages of warning, reproof, and instruction. These means are designed to enlighten the understanding of the people, to reveal to them their duty and their sins, and the blessings which they may receive; to awaken in them a sense of spiritual want, that they may go to Christ and find in him the grace they need. But many choose to follow their own way, instead of God's way. They are not reconciled to God, neither can be, until self is crucified, and Christ lives in the heart by faith.

Every individual, by his own act, either puts Christ from him by refusing to cherish his spirit and follow his example, or he enters into a personal union with Christ by self-renunciation, faith, and obedience. We must, each for himself, choose Christ, because he has first chosen us. This union with Christ is to be formed by those who are naturally at enmity with him. It is a relation of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud heart. This is close work, and many who profess to be followers of Christ know nothing of it. They nominally accept the Saviour, but not as the sole ruler of their hearts. [43]

Some feel their need of the atonement, and with the recognition of this need, and the desire for a change of heart, a struggle begins. To renounce their own will, perhaps their chosen objects of affection or pursuit, requires an effort, at which many hesitate, and falter and turn back. Yet this battle must be fought by every heart that is truly converted. We must war against temptations without and within. We must gain the victory over self, crucify the affections and lusts; and then begins the union of the soul with Christ. As the dry and apparently lifeless branch is grafted into the living tree, so may we become living branches of the True Vine. And the fruit which was borne by Christ, will be borne by all his followers. After this union is formed, it can be preserved only by continual, earnest painstaking effort. Christ exercises his power to preserve and guard this sacred tie, and the dependent, helpless sinner must act his part with untiring energy, or Satan by his cruel, cunning power will separate him from Christ.

Every Christian must stand on guard continually, watching every avenue of the soul where Satan might find access. He must pray for divine help, and at the same time resolutely resist every inclination to sin. By courage, by faith, by persevering toil, he can conquer. But let him remember that to gain the victory Christ must abide in him, and he in Christ.

[44] A union of believers with Christ, will as a natural result lead to a union with one another, which bond of union is the most enduring upon earth. We are one in Christ, as Christ is one with the Father. Christians are branches, and only branches, in the Living Vine. One branch is not to borrow its sustenance from another. Our life must come from the parent vine. It is only by personal union with Christ, by communion with him daily, hourly, that we can bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

There has come into the church at Battle Creek a spirit that has no part in Christ. It is not a zeal for the truth, not a love for the will of God as revealed in his word. It is a self-righteous spirit. It leads you to exalt self above Jesus, and to regard your own opinions and ideas as more important than union with Christ and union with one another. You are sadly lacking in brotherly love. You are a backslidden church. To know the truth, to claim union with Christ, and yet not to bring forth fruit, not to live in the exercise of constant faith—this hardens the heart in disobedience and self-confidence. Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness, all depend on our union with Christ, and the degree of faith we exercise in him. Here is the source of our power in the world.

Many of you are seeking honor of one another. But what is the honor or the approval of man, to one who regards himself as a son of God, a joint-heir with Christ? What are the pleasures of this world, to him who is daily a sharer in the love of Christ which passes knowledge? What are the contempt and opposition of man, to him whom God accepts through Jesus Christ? Selfishness can no more live in the heart that is exercising faith in Christ, than light and darkness can exist together. Spiritual coldness, sloth, pride and cowardice, alike shrink from the presence of faith. Can those who are as closely united with Christ as the branch to the vine, talk of and to every one but Jesus?

Are you in Christ? Not if you do not acknowledge yourselves erring, helpless, condemned sinners. Not if you are exalting and glorifying self. If there is any good in you, it is wholly attributable to the mercy of a compassionate Saviour. Your birth, your reputation, your wealth, your talents, your virtues, your piety, your philanthropy, or anything else in you or connected with you, will not form a bond of union between your soul and Christ. Your connection with the church, the manner in which your brethren regard you, will be of no avail, unless you believe in Christ. It is not enough to believe *about* him; you must believe in him. You must rely wholly upon his saving grace.

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Many of you at Battle Creek are living without prayer, without thoughts of Christ, and without exalting him before those around you. You have no words to exalt Christ; you do no deeds that honor him. Many of you are as truly strangers to Christ as though you had never heard his name. You have not the peace of Christ; for you have no true ground for peace. You have no communion with God, because you are not united to Christ. Said our Saviour, "No man cometh to the Father but by me. You are not useful in the cause of Christ. " Except ye abide in me," says Jesus, "Ye can do nothing"—nothing in God's sight, nothing that Christ will accept at your hands. Without Christ, you can have nothing but a delusive hope; for he himself declares, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned."

Advancement in Christian experience is characterized by increasing humility, as the result of increasing knowledge. Every one who is united to Christ, will depart from all iniquity. I tell you, in the fear of God, I have been shown that many of you will fail of everlasting life, because you are building your hopes of Heaven on a false foundation. God is leaving you to yourselves, "to humble thee, to prove thee, and to know what is in thine heart." You have neglected the Scriptures. You despise and reject the testimonies, because they reprove your darling sins, and disturb your self-complacency. When Christ is cherished in the heart, his likeness will be revealed in the life. Humility will reign where pride was once predominant. Submission, meekness, patience, will soften down the rugged features of a naturally perverse, impetuous disposition.

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Love to Jesus will be manifested in love to his people. It is not fitful, not spasmodic, but calm, and deep, and strong. The life of the Christian will be divested of all pretense, free from all affectation, artifice and falsehood. It is earnest, true, sublime. Christ speaks in every word. He is seen in every deed. The life is radiant with the light of an indwelling Saviour. In converse with God, and in happy contemplation of heavenly things, the soul is preparing for Heaven, and laboring to gather other souls into the fold of Christ. Our Saviour is able and willing to do for us more than we can ask or even think.

The church at Battle Creek need a self-abasing, unpretending spirit. I have been shown that many are cherishing an unholy desire for the supremacy. Many love to be flattered, and are jealously watching for slights or neglect. There is a hard, unforgiving spirit. There is envy, strife, emulation.

Nothing is more essential to communion with God than the most profound humility. "I dwell," says the High and Holy One, "with him that is contrite and of a humble spirit." While you are so eagerly striving to be first, remember that you will be last in the favor of God, if you fail to cherish a meek and lowly spirit. Pride of heart will cause many to fail where they might have made a success. "Before honor is humility, and the humble in spirit is greater than the proud in spirit." "When Ephraim spake tremblingly, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died." "Many are called, but few chosen." Many hear the invitation of mercy, are tested and proved; but few are sealed with the seal of the living God. Few will humble themselves as a little child, that they may enter the kingdom of Heaven.

[47] Few receive the grace of Christ with self-abasement, with a deep and permanent sense of their unworthiness. They cannot bear the manifestations of the power of God, for this would encourage in them self-esteem, pride, and envy. This is why the Lord can do so little for us now. God would have you individually seek for the perfection of love and humility in your own hearts. Bestow your chief care upon yourselves, cultivate those excellencies of character which will fit you for the society of the pure and the holy.

You all need the converting power of God. You need to seek him for yourselves. For your soul's sake, neglect this work no longer. All

your trouble grows out of your separation from God. Your disunion and dissension are the fruit of an unchristian character.

I had thought to remain silent, and let you go on until you should see and abhor the sinfulness of your course; but backsliding from God produces hardness of heart and blindness of mind, and there is less and less perception of their true condition, until the grace of God is finally withdrawn, as from the Jewish nation.

I wish my position to be clearly understood. I have no sympathy with the course that has been pursued toward Bro. —. The enemy has encouraged feelings of hatred in the hearts of many. The errors committed by him have been reported from one person to another, constantly growing in magnitude, as busy, gossiping tongues added fuel to the fire. Parents who have never felt the care which they should feel for the souls of their children, and who have never given them proper restraint and instruction, are the very ones who manifest the most bitter opposition when their children are restrained, reproved, or corrected at school. Some of these children are a disgrace to the church, and a disgrace to the name of Adventists.

The parents despised reproof themselves, and despised the reproof given to their children, and were not careful to conceal this from them. The sin of the parents began with their mismanagement at home. The souls of some of these children will be lost, because they did not receive instruction from God's word, and did not become Christians at home. Instead of sympathizing with their children in a perverse course, the parents should have reproved them, and sustained the faithful teacher. These parents were not united to Christ themselves, and this is the reason of their terrible neglect of duty. That which they have sown, they will also reap. They are sure of a harvest.

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In the school, Bro. — has not only been burdened by the wrong course of the children, but by the injudicious management of the parents, which produced and nurtured hatred of restraint. Overwork, unceasing care, with no help at home, but rather a constant irritation, have caused him at times to lose self-control, and to act injudiciously. Some have taken advantage of this, and faults of minor consequence have been made to appear like grave sins.

The class of professed Sabbath-keepers who try to form a union between Christ and Belial, who take hold of the truth with one hand

and of the world with the other, have surrounded their children and clouded the church with an atmosphere entirely foreign to religion and the Spirit of Christ. They dared not openly oppose the claims of truth. They dared not take a bold stand, and say they did not believe the testimonies; but, while nominally believing both, they have obeyed neither. By their course of action they have denied both. They desire the Lord to fulfill to them his promises; but they refuse to comply with the conditions on which these promises are based. They will not relinquish every rival for Christ. Under the preaching of the word, there is a partial suppression of worldliness, but no radical change of the affections. Worldly desires, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, ultimately gain the victory. This class are all professed Christians. Their names are [49] on the church books. They live for a time a seemingly religious life, and then yield their hearts, too often finally, to the predominating influence of the world.

Whatever may be Bro. —'s faults, your course is unjustifiable and unchristian. You have gone back over his history for years, and have searched out everything that was unfavorable, every shadow of evil, and have made him an offender for a word. You have brought all the powers you could command to sustain yourselves in your course as accusers. Remember, God will deal in the same manner with every one of you. "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Those who have taken part in this disgraceful proceeding will meet their work again. What influence do you think your course will have upon the students, who have ever been impatient of restraint? How will these things affect their character and their life history?

What say the testimonies concerning these things] Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. The prevalence of a sinful desire shows the delusion of the soul. Every indulgence of that desire strengthens the soul's aversion to God. The pains of duty and the pleasures of sin are the cords with which Satan binds men in his snares. Those who would rather die than perform a wrong act are the only ones who will be found faithful.

A child may receive sound religious instruction; but if parents, teachers, or guardians permit his character to be biased by a wrong

habit, that habit, if not overcome, will become a predominant power, and the child is lost.

The testimony borne to you by the Spirit of God is, Parley not with the enemy. Kill the thorns, or they will kill you. Break up the fallow ground of the heart. Let the work go deep and thorough. Let the plowshare of truth tear out the weeds and briers.

Said Christ to the angry, accusing Pharisees, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." Were those sinless who were so ready to accuse and condemn Bro. —? Were their characters and lives to be searched as closely and publicly as they have searched Bro. —'s, some of them would appear far worse than they have tried to represent him. [50]

I dare not longer remain silent. I speak to you and to the church at Battle Creek. You have made a great mistake. You have treated with injustice one to whom you and your children owe a debt of gratitude, which you do not realize. You are responsible for the influence you have exerted upon the College. Peace has come, because the students have had their own way. In another crisis, they will be as determined and persevering as they have been on this occasion; and, if they find as able an advocate as they have found in Bro. —, they may again accomplish their purpose. God has been speaking to teachers and students and church members, but you have cast his words behind you. You have thought best to take your own course, irrespective of consequences.

God has given us, as a people, warnings, reproofs, and cautions, on the right hand and on the left, to lead us away from worldly customs and worldly policy. He requires us to be peculiar in faith and in character, to meet a standard far in advance of worldlings. Bro. — came among you, unacquainted with the Lord's dealings with us. Having newly come to the faith, he had almost everything to learn. Yet you have unhesitatingly coincided with his judgment. You have sanctioned in him a spirit and course of action that have naught of Christ.

You have encouraged in the students a spirit of criticism, which God's Spirit has sought to repress. You have led them to betray confidence. There are not a few young persons among us who are indebted for most valuable traits of character to the knowledge and principles received from Bro. —. To his train-ing, many owe

[51] much of their usefulness, not only in the Sabbath-school, but in various other branches of our work. Yet your influence encouraged ingratitude, and has led students to despise the things that they should cherish.

Those who have not the peculiar trials to which another is subjected, may flatter themselves that they are better than he. But place them in the furnace of trial, and they might not endure it nearly as well as the one they censure and misjudge. How little we can know of the heart-anguish of another. How few understand another's circumstances. Hence the difficulty of giving wise counsel. What may appear to us to be appropriate, may, in reality, be quite the reverse.

Bro. — has been an earnest seeker after knowledge. He has sought to impress upon the students that they are responsible for their time, their talents, their opportunities. It is impossible for a man to have so much care, and carry so heavy responsibilities, without becoming hurried, weary, and nervous. Those who refuse to accept burdens which will tax their strength to the utmost, know nothing of the pressure brought to bear upon those who must bear these burdens.

There are some in the College who have looked only for what has been unfortunate and disagreeable in their acquaintance with Bro. —. These persons have not that noble, Christ-like spirit, that thinketh no evil. They have made the most of every inconsiderate word or act, and have recalled these at a time when envy, prejudice, and jealousy, were active in unchristian hearts.

A writer has said that "envy's memory is nothing but a row of hooks to hang up grudges on." There are many in the world who consider it an evidence of superiority to recount the things and persons that they "cannot bear," rather than the things and persons that they are attracted to. Not so did the great apostle. He exhorts his brethren, "Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, [52] whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Envy is not merely a perverseness of temper, but a distemper, which disorders all the faculties. It began with Satan. He desired to be first in Heaven, and, because he could not have all the power and glory he sought, he rebelled against the government of God. He

envied our first parents, and tempted them to sin, and thus ruined them and all the human race.

The envious man shuts his eyes to the good qualities and noble deeds of others. He is always ready to disparage and misrepresent that which is excellent. Men often confess and forsake other faults; but there is little to be hoped for from the envious man. Since to envy a person is to admit that he is a superior, pride will not permit any concession. If an attempt be made to convince the envious person of his sin, he becomes even more bitter against the object of his passion, and too often he remains incurable.

The envious man diffuses poison wherever he goes, alienating friends, and stirring up hatred and rebellion against God and man. He seeks to be thought best and greatest, not by putting forth heroic, self-denying efforts to reach the goal of excellence himself, but by standing where he is, and diminishing the merit due to the efforts of others.

Envy has been cherished in the hearts of some in the church as well as in the College. God is displeased at your course. I entreat you, for Christ's sake, never treat another as you have treated Bro. —. A noble nature does not exult in causing others pain, or delight in discovering their deficiencies. A disciple of Christ will turn away with loathing from the feast of scandal. Some who have been active on this occasion, are repeating the course pursued toward one of the Lord's servants in affliction, one who had sacrificed health and strength in their service. The Lord vindicated the cause of the oppressed, and turned the light of his countenance upon his suffering servant. I then saw that God would prove these persons again, as he has now done, to reveal what was in their hearts. [53]

When David had sinned, God granted him his choice, to receive his punishment from God, or at the hand of man. The repentant king chose to fall into the hand of God. The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. Erring, sinful man, who can himself be kept in the right path only by the power of God, is yet hard-hearted, unforgiving toward his erring brother. My brethren at Battle Creek, what account will you render at the bar of God? Great light has come to you, in reproofs, warnings, and entreaties. How have you spurned its Heaven-sent rays!

The tongue that delights in mischief, the babbling tongue that says, Report, and I will report it, is declared by the apostle James to be set on fire of hell. It scatters fire-brands on every side. What cares the vender of gossip that he defames the innocent? He will not stay his evil work, though he destroy hope and courage in those who are already sinking under their burdens. He cares only to indulge his scandal-loving propensity. Even professed Christians close their eyes to all that is pure, honest, noble, and lovely, and treasure up whatever is objectionable and disagreeable, and publish it to the world.

[54] You have yourselves thrown open the doors for Satan to come in. You have given him an honored place at you investigation, or inquisition meetings. But you have shown no respect for the excellencies of a character established by years of faithfulness. Jealous, revengeful tongues have colored acts and motives, to suit their own ideas. They have made black appear white, and white black. When remonstrated with for their statements, some have said, "It is true." Admitting that the fact stated is true, does that justify your course? No, no. If God should take all the accusations that might in truth be brought against you, and should braid them into a scourge to punish you, your wounds would be more and deeper than those which you have inflicted on Bro. — Even facts may be so stated as to convey a false impression. You have no right to gather up every report against him, and use them to ruin his reputation and destroy his usefulness. Should the Lord manifest toward you the same spirit which you have manifested toward your brother, you would be destroyed without mercy. Have you no compunctions of conscience? I fear not. The time has not yet come for this Satanic spell to lose its power. If Bro. — were all that you represent him to be—which I know he is not—your course would still be unjustifiable.

When we listen to a reproach against our brother, we take up that reproach. To the question, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" the psalmist answered, "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor."

What a world of gossip would be prevented, if every man would remember that those who tell him the faults of others, will as freely

publish his faults at a favorable opportunity. We should endeavor to think well of all men, especially our brethren, until compelled to think otherwise. We should not hastily credit evil reports. These are often the result of envy or misunderstanding, or they may proceed from exaggeration or a partial disclosure of facts. Jealousy and suspicion, once allowed a place, will sow themselves broadcast, like thistle-down. Should a brother go astray, then is the time to show your real interest in him. Go to him kindly, pray with and for him, remembering the infinite price which Christ has paid for his redemption. In this way you may save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins. [55]

A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood, sinking like a barbed arrow into some heart, inflicting an incurable wound. Thus a doubt, a reproach, may be cast upon one by whom God would accomplish a good work, and his influence is blighted, his usefulness destroyed. Among some species of animals, if one of their number is wounded, and falls, he is at once set upon and torn in pieces by his fellows. The same cruel spirit is indulged by men and women who bear the name of Christians. They manifest a Pharisaical zeal to stone others less guilty than themselves. There are some who point to other's faults and failures to divert attention from their own, or to gain credit for great zeal for God and the church.

A few weeks since, I was in a dream brought into one of your meetings for investigation. I heard the testimonies borne by students against Bro. —. Those very students had received great benefit from his thorough, faithful instruction. Once they could hardly say enough in his praise. Then it was popular to esteem him. But now the current was setting the other way. These persons have developed their true character. I saw an angel with a ponderous book open, in which he wrote every testimony given. Opposite each testimony were traced the sins, defects, and errors of the one who bore it. Then there was recorded the great benefit which these individuals had received from Bro. —'s labors.

We, as a people, are reaping the fruit of Bro. —'s hard labor. There is not a man among us who has devoted more time and thought to his work than has Bro. —. He has felt that he had no one to sustain him, and has felt grateful for any encouragement.

[56] One of the great objects to be secured in the establishment of the College was the separation of our youth from the spirit and influence of the world, from its customs, its follies, and its idolatry. The College was to build a barrier against the immorality of the present age, which makes the world as corrupt as in the days of Noah. The young are bewitched with the mania for courtship and marriage. Love-sick sentimentalism prevails. Great vigilance and tact are needed to guard the youth from these wrong influences. Many parents are blind to the tendencies of their children. Some parents have stated to me, with great satisfaction, that their sons or daughters had no desire for the attentions of the opposite sex, when in fact these children were at the same time secretly giving or receiving such attentions, and the parents were so much absorbed in worldliness and gossip that they knew nothing about the matter.

The primary object of our College was to afford young men an opportunity to study for the ministry, and to prepare young persons of both sexes to become workers in the various branches of the cause. These students needed a knowledge of the common branches of education, and above all else, of the word of God. Here our school has been deficient. There has not been a man devoted to God, to give himself to this branch of the work. Young men moved upon by the Spirit of God to give themselves to the ministry, have come to the College for this purpose, and have been disappointed. Adequate preparation for this class has not been made, and some of the teachers, knowing this, have advised the youth to take other studies, and fit themselves for other pursuits. If these youth were not firm in their purpose, they were induced to give up all idea of studying for the ministry.

[57] Such is the result of the influence exerted by unsanctified teachers, who labor merely for wages, who are not imbued with the Spirit of God, and have no union with Christ. No one has been more active in this work than Bro. —. The Bible should be one of the principal subjects of study. This book, which tells us how to spend the present life, that we may secure the future, immortal life, is of more value to students than any other. We have but a brief period in which to become acquainted with its truths. But the one who had made God's word a study, and who could more than any other teacher have

helped the young to gain a knowledge of the Scriptures, has been separated from the school.

Professors and teachers have not understood the design of the College. We have put in means and thought and labor to make it what God would have it. The will and judgment of those who are almost wholly ignorant of the way in which God has led us as a people, should not have a controlling influence in that College. The Lord has repeatedly shown that we should not pattern after the popular schools. Ministers of other denominations spend years in obtaining an education. Our young men must obtain theirs in a short time. Where there is now one minister, there should be twenty, whom our College had prepared with God's help, to enter the gospel field.

Many of our younger ministers, and some of more mature experience, are neglecting the word of God, and also despising the testimonies of his Spirit. They do not know what the testimonies contain, and do not wish to know. They do not wish to discover and correct their defects of character. Many parents do not themselves seek instruction from the testimonies, and of course they cannot impart it to their children. They show their contempt for the light which God has given, by going directly contrary to his instructions. Those at the heart of the work have set the example.

You have published your contentions to the world. Do you think you stand, as a people, in a more favorable light in Battle Creek? Christ prayed that his disciples might be one, as he was one with the Father, that the world might know that God had sent him. What testimony have you borne, during the past few months? The Lord is looking into every heart. He weighs our motives. He will try every soul. Who will bear the test?

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THE TESTIMONIES SLIGHTED.

HEALDSBURG, Cal., June 20, 1882.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS IN BATTLE CREEK: I understand that the testimony* which I sent to Bro. —, with the request that it be read to the church, was withheld from you for several weeks after it was received by him. Before sending that testimony my mind was so impressed by the Spirit of God that I had no rest day or night until I wrote to you. It was not a work that I would have chosen for myself. Before my husband's death I decided that it was not my duty to bear testimony to any one in reproof of wrong, or in vindication of right, because advantage was taken of my words to deal harshly with the erring, and to unwisely exalt others whose course I had not in any degree sustained. Many explained the testimonies to suit themselves. The truth of God is not in harmony with the traditions of men, nor does it conform to their opinions. Like its divine Author, it is unchangeable, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Those who separate from God will call darkness light, and error truth. But darkness will never prove itself to be light, nor will error become truth.

[59] The minds of many have been so darkened and confused by worldly customs, worldly practices, and worldly influences, that all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error, seems destroyed. I had little hope that my words would be understood, but when the Lord moved upon me so decidedly I could not resist his Spirit. Knowing that you were involving yourselves in the snares of Satan, I felt that the danger was too great for me to keep silent.

For years the Lord has been presenting the situation of the church before you. Again and again reproofs and warnings have been given. Oct. 23, 1879, the Lord gave me a most impressive testimony in regard to the church in Battle Creek. During the last months I was

*Reference is here made to the preceding article.

with you, I carried a heavy burden for the church, while those who should have felt to the very depths of their soul, were comparatively easy and unconcerned. I knew not what to do, or what to say. I had no confidence in the course which many were pursuing; for they were doing the very things which the Lord had warned them not to do.

That God who knows their spiritual condition declares, They have cherished evil, and separated from me. They have gone astray every one of them. Not one is guiltless. They have forsaken me, the Fountain of living waters; and have hewed out to them broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Many have corrupted their ways before me. Envy, hatred of one another, jealousy, evil surmising, emulation, strife, bitterness, is the fruit that they bear. And they will not heed the testimony that I send them. They will not see their perverse ways, and be converted that I should heal them.

Many are looking with self-complacency upon the long years during which they have advocated the truth. They now feel that they are entitled to a reward for their past trials and obedience. But this genuine experience in the things of God in the past, makes them more guilty before him for not preserving their integrity and going forward to perfection. The faithfulness for the past year will never atone for the neglect of the present year. A man's truthfulness yesterday will not atone for his falsehood to-day.

Many excused their disregard of the testimonies by saying, " Sr. White is influenced by her husband, the testimonies are molded by Ms spirit and judgment." Others were seeking to gain something from me which they could construe to justify their course, or to give them influence. It was then I decided that nothing more should go from my pen until the converting power of God was seen in the church. But the Lord placed the burden upon my soul. I labored for you earnestly. How much this cost both my husband and myself, eternity will tell. Have I not a knowledge of the state of the church, when the Lord has presented their case before me again and again for years? Repeated warnings have been given, yet there has been no decided change.

I saw that the frown of God was upon his people for their assimilation to the world. I saw that the children of Bro. — have been a snare to him. Their ideas and opinions, their feelings and statements,

had an influence upon his mind, and blinded his judgment. These youth are strongly inclined to infidelity. The mother's want of faith and trust in God has been given as an inheritance to her children. Her devotion to them is greater than her devotion to God. The father has neglected his duty. The result of their wrong course is revealed in their children.

As I spoke to the church, I tried to impress upon parents their solemn obligation to their children, because I knew the state of these youth, and what tendencies had made them what they are. But the word was not received. I know what burdens I bore in the last of my labors among you. I would never have thus tasked my strength to the utmost, had I not seen your peril. I longed to arouse you to humble your hearts before God, to return to him with penitence and faith.

[61] Yet now when I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of you declare it to be merely the opinion of Sr. White. You have thereby insulted the Spirit of God. You know how the Lord has manifested himself through the spirit of prophecy. Past, present, and future have passed before me. I have been shown faces that I had never seen, and years afterward I knew them when I saw them. I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind; and I have written at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent, and, arriving at a crisis, have saved great disaster to the cause of God. This has been my work for many years. A power has impelled me to reprove and rebuke wrongs that I had not thought of. Is this work of the last thirty-six years from above, or from beneath t

Suppose—as some would make it appear, incorrectly however—that I was influenced to write as I did by letters received from members of the church. How was it with the apostle Paul ? The news he received through the household of Chloe concerning the condition of the church at Corinth was what caused him to write his first epistle to that church. Private letters had come to him stating the facts as they existed, and in his answer he laid down general principles which if heeded would correct the existing evils. With great tenderness and wisdom he exhorts them to all speak the same things, that there be no divisions among them.

Paul was an inspired apostle, yet the Lord did not reveal to him at all times just the condition of his people. Those who were interested in the prosperity of the church, and saw evils creeping in, presented the matter before him, and from the light which he had previously received he was prepared to judge of the true character of these developments. Because the Lord had not given him a new revelation for that special time, those who were really seeking light, did not cast Ms message aside as only a common letter. No, indeed. The Lord had shown him the difficulties and dangers which would arise in the churches, that when they should develop, he might know just how to treat them.

He was set for the defense of the church. He was to watch for souls as one that must render account to God, and should he not take notice of the reports concerning their state of anarchy and division? Most assuredly; and the reproof he sent them was written just as much under the inspiration of the Spirit of God as were any of his epistles. But when these reproofs came, some would not be corrected. They took the position that God had not spoken to them through Paul, that he had merely given them his opinion as a man, and they regarded their own judgment as good as that of Paul. [62]

So it is with many among our people who have drifted away from the old landmarks, and who have followed their own understanding. What a great relief it would be to such could they quiet their conscience with the belief that my work is not of God. But your unbelief will not change the facts in the case. You are defective in character, in moral and religious experience. Close your eyes to the fact if you will; but this does not make you one particle more perfect. The only remedy is to wash in the blood of the Lamb.

If you seek to turn aside the counsel of God to suit yourselves; if you lessen the confidence of God's people in the testimonies he has sent them, you are rebelling against God as certainly as were Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. You have their history. You know how stubborn they were in their own opinions. They decided that their judgment was better than that of Moses, and that Moses was doing great injury to Israel. Those who united with them were so set in their opinions, that, notwithstanding the judgments of God in a marked manner destroyed the leaders and the princes, the next morning the survivors came to Moses and said, "Ye have killed the

people of the Lord.” We see what fearful deception will come upon the human mind. How hard it is to convince souls that have become imbued with a spirit which is not of God. As Christ’s ambassador, I would say to you, Be careful what positions you take. This is [63] God’s work, and you must render to him an account for the manner in which you treat his message.

While standing over the dying bed of my husband, I knew that had others borne their part of the burdens, he might have lived. I then pleaded, with agony of soul, that those present might no longer grieve the Spirit of God by their hardness of heart. A few days later, I myself stood face to face with death. Then I had most clear revealings from God in regard to myself, and in regard to the church. In great weakness I bore to you my testimony, not knowing but it would be my last opportunity. Have you forgotten that solemn occasion? I can never forget it, for I seemed to be brought before the judgment seat of Christ. Your state of backsliding, your hardness of heart, your lack of harmony of love and spirituality, your departure from the simplicity and purity which God would have you preserve—I knew it all; I felt it all. Fault-finding, censuring, envy, strife for the highest place, was among you I had seen it, and to what it would lead. I feared that effort would cost me my life, but the interest I felt for you led me to speak. God spoke to you that day. Did it make any lasting impression?

When I went to Colorado, I was so burdened for you, that, in my weakness, I wrote many pages to be read at your camp-meeting. Weak and trembling, I arose at three o’clock in the morning, to write to you. God was speaking through clay. You might say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne.

[64] After I came to Oakland, I was weighed down with a sense of the condition of things at Battle Creek, and I, weak, powerless to help you. I knew that the leaven of unbelief was at work. Those who disregarded the plain injunctions of God’s word, were disregarding

the testimonies which urged them to give heed to that word. While visiting Healdsburg, last winter, I was much in prayer, and burdened with anxiety and grief. But the Lord swept back the darkness at one time while I was in prayer, and a great light filled the room. An angel of God was by my side, and I seemed to be in Battle Creek. I was in your councils; I heard words uttered, I saw and heard things that, if God willed, I wish could be forever blotted from my memory. My soul was so wounded, I knew not what to do or what to say. Some things I cannot mention. I was bidden to let no one know in regard to this, for much was yet to be developed.

I was told to gather up the light that had been given me, and let its rays shine forth to God's people. I have been doing this in articles in the papers. I arose at three o'clock nearly every morning, for months, and gathered the different items written after the last two testimonies were given me in Battle Creek. I wrote out these matters, and hurried them on to you; but I had neglected to take proper care of myself, and the result was that I sank under the burden; my writings were not all finished to reach you at the General Conference.

Again, while in prayer, the Lord revealed himself. I was once more in Battle Creek. I was in many houses, and heard your words around your tables. The particulars, I have no liberty now to relate. I hope never to be called to mention them. I had also several most striking dreams.

What voice will you acknowledge as the voice of God? What power has the Lord in reserve to correct your errors, and show you your course as it is? What power to work in the church? If you refuse to believe until every shadow of un-certainty, and every possibility of doubt is removed, you will never believe. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge, will never yield to faith. Faith rests upon evidence, not demonstration. The Lord requires us to obey the voice of duty, when there are other voices all around us urging us to pursue an opposite course. It requires earnest attention from us to distinguish the voice which speaks for God. We must resist and conquer inclination, and obey the voice of conscience, without parleying or compromise, lest its promptings cease, and will and impulse control. The word of the Lord comes to us all who have not resisted his Spirit by determining not to hear and obey. This voice is heard in warnings, in counsels, in reproof. It is the Lord's

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message of light to his people. If we wait for louder calls, or better opportunities, the light may be withdrawn, and we left in darkness.

By once neglecting to comply with the call of God's Spirit and his word, when obedience involves a cross, many have lost much—how much, they will never know till the books are opened at the final day. The pleadings of the Spirit, neglected to-day because pleasure or inclination leads in an opposite direction, may be powerless to convince, or even impress, to-morrow. To improve the opportunities of the present, with prompt and willing hearts, is the only way to grow in grace and the knowledge of the truth. We should ever cherish a sense that, individually, we are standing before the Lord of hosts; no word, no act, no thought, even, should be indulged, to offend the eye of the Eternal One. We shall then have no fear of man or of earthly power, because a Monarch, whose empire is the universe, who holds in his hands our individual destinies for time and eternity, is taking cognizance of all our works. If we would feel that in every place we are the servants of the Most High, we would be more circumspect; our whole life would possess to us a meaning and a sacredness which earthly honors can never give.

The thoughts of the heart, the words of the lips, and every act of the life, will make our character more worthy, if the presence of God is continually felt. Let the language of the heart be, "Lo, God is here." Then the life will be pure, the character unspotted, the soul continually uplifted to the Lord. You have not pursued this course at Battle Creek. I have been shown that painful and contagious disease is upon you, which will produce spiritual death unless it is arrested.

Many are ruined by their desire for a life of ease and pleasure. Self-denial is disagreeable to them. They are constantly seeking to escape trials, that are inseparable from a course of fidelity to God. They set their hearts upon having the good things of this life. This is human success, but is it not won at the expense of future, eternal interests? The great business of life is to show ourselves to be true servants of God, loving righteousness, and hating iniquity. We should accept gratefully such measures of present happiness and present success as are found in the path of duty. Our greatest strength is realized when we feel and acknowledge our weakness. The greatest loss which any one of you in Battle Creek can suffer, is the loss of earnestness and persevering zeal to do right, the loss

of strength to resist temptation, the loss of faith in the principles of truth and duty.

Let no man flatter himself that he is a successful man unless he preserves the integrity of his con-science, giving himself wholly to the truth and to God. We should move steadily forward, never losing heart or hope in the good work, whatever trials beset our path, whatever moral darkness may encompass us. Patience, faith, and love for duty, are the lessons we must learn. Subduing self, and looking to Jesus, is an every-day work. The Lord will never forsake the soul that trusts in him, and seeks his aid. The crown of life is placed only upon the brow of the overcomer. There is, for every one, earnest, solemn work for God, while life lasts. As Satan's power increases, and his devices are multiplied, skill, aptness, and sharp generalship, should be exercised by those in charge of the flock of God. Not only have we each a work to do for our own souls, but we have also a duty to arouse others to gain eternal life.

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It pains me to say, my brethren, that your sinful neglect to walk in the light, has enshrouded you in darkness. You may now be honest in not recognizing and obeying the light; the doubts you have entertained, your neglect to heed the requirements of God, have blinded your perceptions so that darkness is now to you light, and light is darkness. God has bidden you to go forward to perfection. Christianity is a religion of progress. Light from God is full and ample, waiting our demand upon it. Whatever blessings the Lord may give, he has an infinite supply beyond, an inexhaustible store from which we may draw. Skepticism may treat the sacred claims of the gospel with jests, scoffing, and denial. The spirit of worldliness may contaminate the many and control the few; the cause of God may hold its ground only by great exertion and continual sacrifice, yet it will triumph finally.

The word is, Go forward; discharge your individual duty, and leave all consequences in the hands of God. If we move forward where Jesus leads the way, we shall see his triumph, we shall share his joy. We must share the conflicts, if we wear the crown of victory. Like Jesus, we must be made perfect through suffering. Had Christ's life been one of ease, then might we safely yield to sloth. Since his life was marked with continual self-denial, suffering, and self-sacrifice, we will make no complaint if we are partakers with him.

We can walk safely in the darkest path, if we have the Light of the world for our guide.

[68] The Lord is testing and proving you. He has counseled, admonished, and entreated. All these solemn admonitions will either make the church better, or decidedly worse. The oftener the Lord speaks, to correct or counsel, and you disregard his voice, the more disposed will you be to reject it again and again, till God says, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord, they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

Are you not halting between two opinions? Are you not neglecting to heed the light which God has given you? Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. You know not the time of your visitation. The great sin of the Jews was that of neglecting and rejecting present opportunities. As Jesus views the state of his professed followers to-day, he sees base ingratitude, hollow formalism, hypocritical insincerity, Pharisaical pride and apostasy.

[69] The tears which Christ shed on the crest of Olivet were for the impenitence and ingratitude of every individual to the close of time. He sees his love despised. The soul's temple courts have been converted into places of unholy traffic. Selfishness, mammon, malice, envy, pride, passion, are all cherished in the human heart. His warnings are rejected and ridiculed, his ambassadors are treated with indifference, their words seem as idle tales. Jesus has spoken by mercies, but these mercies have been unacknowledged; he has spoken by solemn warnings, but these warnings have been rejected.

I entreat you who have long professed the faith and who still pay outward homage to Christ, do not deceive your own souls. It is the whole heart that Jesus prizes. The loyalty of the soul is alone of

value in the sight of God. "If thou, even thou, hadst known in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace." "*Thou, even thou*"—Christ is at this moment addressing you personally, stooping from his throne, yearning with pitying tenderness over those who feel not their danger, who have no pity for themselves.

Many have a name to live, while they have become spiritually dead. These will one day say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name ? and in thy name cast out devils ? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Woe will be pronounced against thee, if thou loiter and linger until the Sun of Righteousness shall set; the blackness of eternal night will be thy portion. Oh that the cold, formal, worldly heart may be melted ! Christ shed not only tears for us, but his own blood. Will not these manifestations of his love arouse us to deep humiliation before God? It is humility and self-abasement that we need, to be approved of God.

The man whom God is leading will be dissatisfied with himself because the light from the perfect Man shines upon him. But those who lose sight of the Pattern, and place an undue estimate upon themselves, will see faults to criticise in others, they will be sharp, suspicious, condemnatory, they will be tearing others down to build themselves up.

When the Lord last presented your case before me, and made known to me that you had not regarded the light which had been given you, I was bidden to speak to you plainly in his name, for his anger was kindled against you. These words were spoken to me, [70] "Your work is appointed you of God. Many will not hear you, for they refused to hear the Great Teacher; many will not be corrected, for their ways are right in their own eyes. Yet bear to them the reproofs and warnings I shall give you, whether they will hear, or forbear."

I bear to you the testimony of the Lord. All will hear his voice who are willing to be corrected; but those who have been deceived by the enemy are not willing now to come to the light, lest their deeds shall be reprov'd. Many of you cannot discern the work and presence of God. You know not that it is he. The Lord is still gracious, willing to pardon all who turn to him with penitence and

faith. Said the Lord, Many know not at what they stumble. They heed not the voice of God, but follow the sight of their own eyes, and the understanding of their own hearts. Unbelief and skepticism have taken the place of faith. They have forsaken me.

I was shown that fathers and mothers have departed from their simplicity, and neglected the holy calling of the gospel. The Lord has admonished them not to corrupt themselves by adopting the customs and maxims of the world. Christ would have given them the unsearchable riches of his grace freely and abundantly, but they prove themselves unworthy.

Many are lifting up the soul unto vanity. No sooner does a person imagine that he possesses any talent which might be of use in the cause of God than he overestimates the gift, and is inclined to think too highly of himself, as though he were a pillar of the church. The work which he might do with acceptance, he leaves for someone else with less ability than he considers himself to possess. He thinks and talks of a higher station. He must let his light shine before men; but instead of grace, meekness, lowliness of mind, kindness, gentleness, and love shining in his life, self, important self, appears everywhere.

[71] The spirit of Christ should so control our character and conduct, that our influence may ever bless, encourage, and edify. Our thoughts, our words, our acts, should testify that we are born of God, and that the peace of Christ rules in our hearts. In this way we throw around us the gracious radiance of which the Saviour speaks when he enjoins upon us to let our light shine forth to men. Thus we are leaving a bright track heavenward. In this way, all who are connected with Christ may become more effectual preachers of righteousness than by the most able pulpit effort without this heavenly unction. Those light-bearers shed forth the purest radiance that are the least conscious of their own brightness, as those flowers diffuse the sweetest fragrance that make the least display.

Our people are making very dangerous mistakes. We cannot praise and flatter any man without doing him a great wrong; those who do this will meet with serious disappointment. They trust too fully to finite man, and not enough to God who never errs. The eager desire to urge men into public notice is an evidence of backsliding from God, and friendship with the world. It is the spirit which characterizes the present day. It shows that men have not the mind

of Jesus; spiritual blindness and poverty of soul have come upon them. Often persons of inferior minds look away from Jesus to a merely human standard, by which they are not made conscious of their own littleness, and hence have an undue estimate of their own capabilities and endowments. There is among us as a people an idolatry of human instrumentalities and mere human talent, and these even of a superficial character. We must die to self, and cherish humble, childlike faith. God's people have departed from their simplicity. They have not made God their strength, and they are weak and faint, spiritually.

I have been shown that the spirit of the world is fast leavening the church. You are following the same path as did ancient Israel. There is the same falling away from your holy calling as God's peculiar people. You are having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Your concord with unbelievers has provoked the Lord's displeasure. You know not the things that belong to your peace, and they are fast being hid from your eyes. Your neglect to follow the light will place you in a more unfavorable position than the Jews upon whom Christ pronounced a woe. [72]

I have been shown that unbelief in the testimonies has been steadily increasing as the people backslide from God. It is all through our ranks, all over the field. But few know what our churches are to experience. I saw that at present we are under divine forbearance; but no one can say how long this will continue. No one knows how great the mercy that has been exercised toward us. But few are heartily devoted to God. There are only a few who, like the stars in a tempestuous night, shine here and there among the clouds.

Many who complacently listen to the truths from God's word are dead spiritually, while they profess to live. For years they have come and gone in our congregations, but they seem only less and less sensible of the value of revealed truth. They do not hunger and thirst after righteousness. They have no relish for spiritual or divine things. They assent to the truth, but are not sanctified through it. Neither the word of God nor the testimonies of his Spirit make any lasting impression upon them. Just according to the light, the privileges, and opportunities which they have slighted, will be their condemnation. Many who preach the truth to others, are themselves cherishing iniquity. The entreaties of the Spirit of God, like divine melody,

the promises of his word so rich and abundant, its threatenings against idolatry and disobedience,—all are powerless to melt the world-hardened heart.

[73] Many of our people are lukewarm. They occupy the position of Meroz, neither for nor against, neither cold nor hot. They hear the words of Christ, but do them not. If they remain in this state, he will reject them with abhorrence. Many of those who have had great light, great opportunities, and every spiritual advantage, praise Christ and the world with the same breath. They bow themselves before God and mammon. They make merry with the children of the world, and yet claim to be blessed with the children of God. They wish to have Christ as their Saviour, but will not bear the cross and wear his yoke. May the Lord have mercy upon you; for if you go on in this way, nothing but evil can be prophesied concerning you.

The patience of God has an object, but you are defeating it. He is allowing a state of things to come that you would fain see counteracted by and by, but it will be too late. God commanded Elijah to anoint the cruel and deceitful Hazael king over Syria, that he might be a scourge to idolatrous Israel. Who knows whether God will not give you up to the deceptions you love? Who knows but that the preachers who are faithful, firm, and true may be the last who shall offer the gospel of peace to our unthankful churches? It may be that the destroyers are already training under the hand of Satan and only wait the departure of a few more standard-bearers to take their places, and with the voice of the false prophet cry, Peace, peace, when the Lord hath not spoken peace. I seldom weep, but now I find my eyes blinded with tears; they are falling upon my paper as I write. It may be that ere long all prophesyings among us will be at an end, and the voice which has stirred the people may no longer disturb their carnal slumbers.

[74] When God shall work his strange work on the earth, when holy hands bear the ark no longer, woe will be upon the people. Oh, that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! Oh, that our people may, as did Nineveh, repent with all their might and believe with all their heart, that God may turn away his fierce anger from them!

I am filled with pain and anguish as I see parents conforming to the world, and allowing their children to meet the worldly standard

at such a time as this. I am filled with horror as the condition of families professing present truth is opened before me. The profligacy of youth and even children is almost in-credible. Parents do not know that secret vice is destroying and defacing the image of God in their children. The sins which characterized the Sodomites exist among them. The parents are responsible; for they have not educated their children to love and obey God. They have not restrained them, nor diligently taught them the way of the Lord. They have allowed them to go out and to come in when they chose, and to associate with worldlings. These worldly influences which counteract parental teaching and authority are to be found largely in so-called good society. By their dress, looks, amusements, they surround themselves with an atmosphere which is opposed to Christ.

Our only safety is to stand as God's peculiar people. We must not yield one inch to the customs and fashions of this degenerate age; but stand in moral independence, making no compromise with its corrupt and idolatrous practices.

It will require courage and independence to rise above the religious standard of the Christian world. They do not follow the Saviour's example of self-denial; they make no sacrifice; they are constantly seeking to evade the cross which Christ declares to be the token of discipleship.

What can I say to arouse our people? I tell you not a few ministers who stand before the people to explain the Scriptures are defiled. Their hearts are corrupt, their hands unclean. Yet many are crying, Peace, peace; and the workers of iniquity are not alarmed. The Lord's hand is not shortened that he cannot save, nor his ear heavy [75] that he cannot hear; but it is our sins that have separated us from God. The church is corrupt because of her members who defile their bodies, and pollute their souls.

If all of those who come together for meetings of edification and prayer, could be regarded as true worshipers, then might we hope, though much would still remain to be done for us. But it is in vain to deceive ourselves. Tilings are far from being what the appearance would indicate. From a distant view much may appear beautiful, which, upon close examination, will be found full of deformities. The prevailing spirit of our time is that of infidelity and apostasy—a spirit of pretended illumination because of a knowledge of the

truth, but in reality of the blindest presumption. There is a spirit of opposition to the plain word of God, and to the testimony of his Spirit. There is a spirit of idolatrous exaltation of mere human reason above the revealed wisdom of God.

There are men among us in responsible positions who hold that the opinions of a few conceited philosophers, so-called, are more to be trusted than the truth of the Bible, or the testimonies of the Holy Spirit. Such a faith as that of Paul, Peter, or John, is considered old-fashioned, and insufferable at the present day. It is pronounced absurd, mystical, and unworthy of an intelligent mind.

God has shown me that these men are Hazaels to prove a scourge to our people. They are wise above what is written. This unbelief of the very truths of God's word because human judgment cannot comprehend the mysteries of his work, is found in every district, in all ranks of society. It is taught in most of our schools, and comes into the lessons of the nurseries. Thousands who profess to be Christians, give heed to lying spirits. Everywhere the spirit of darkness in the garb of religion will confront you.

[76] If all that appears to be divine life were such in reality; if all who profess to present the truth to the world were preaching for the truth, and not against it, and if they were men of God, guided by his Spirit, —then might we see something cheering amid the prevailing moral darkness. But the spirit of antichrist is prevailing to such an extent as never before. Well may we exclaim, "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men." I know that many think far too favorably of the present time. These ease-loving souls will be engulfed in the general ruin. Yet we do not despair. We have been inclined to think that where there are no faithful ministers, there can be no true Christians; but this is not the case. God has promised that where the shepherds are not true he will take charge of the flock himself. God has never made the flock wholly dependent upon human instrumentalities. But the days of purification of the church are hastening on apace. God will have a people pure and true. In the mighty sifting soon to take place, we shall be better able to measure the strength of Israel. The signs reveal that the time is near when the Lord will manifest that his fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor.

The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. Those who have rendered supreme homage to “science falsely so-called,” will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent, will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and he cannot use them. The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view. There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you. But, it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. In the daytime we look toward heaven, but do not see the stars. They are there, fixed in the firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine lustre.

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The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands, and conformed to worldly customs, will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time, the gold will be separated from the dross in the church. True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy, will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ’s righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.

When trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground, when multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true, then the hidden ones will be revealed to view, and with hosannas range under the banner of Christ. Those who have been timid and self-distrustful, will declare themselves openly for Christ

and his truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church, will be as David—willing to do and dare. The deeper the night for God's people, the more brilliant the stars. Satan will sorely harass the faithful, but, in the name of Jesus, they will come off more than conquerors. Then will the church of Christ appear "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

The seeds of truth that are being sown by missionary efforts, will then spring up, and blossom, and bear fruit. Souls will receive the truth who will endure tribulation, and praise God that they may suffer for Jesus. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." When the overflowing scourge shall pass through the earth, when the fan is purging Jehovah's floor, God will be the help of his people. The trophies of Satan may be exalted on high, but the faith of the pure and holy will not be daunted.

Elijah took Elisha from the plough, and threw upon him his mantle of consecration. The call to this great and solemn work was presented to men of learning and position; had these been little in their own eyes, and trusted fully in the Lord, he would have honored them with bearing his standard in triumph to the victory. But they separated from God, yielded to the influence of the world, and the Lord rejected them.

Many have exalted science, and lost sight of the God of science. This was not the case with the church in the purest times.

God will work a work in our day that but few anticipate. He will raise up and exalt among us those who are taught rather by the unction of his Spirit, than by the outward training of scientific institutions. These facilities are not to be despised or condemned; they are ordained of God, but they can furnish only the exterior qualifications. God will manifest that he is not dependent on learned, self-important mortals.

There are few really consecrated men among us; few who have fought and conquered in the battle with self. Real conversion is a decided change of feelings and motives; it is a virtual taking leave of worldly connections, a hastening from their spiritual atmosphere, a withdrawing from the controlling power of their thoughts, opinions, and influences. The separation causes pain and bitterness to both parties. It is the variance which Christ declares that he came to bring. But the converted will feel a continual longing desire that

their friends shall forsake all for Christ, knowing that unless they do, there will be a final and eternal separation. The true Christian cannot while with unbelieving friends, be light, and trifling. The value of the souls for whom Christ died, is too great.

“He that forsaketh not all that he hath,” says Jesus, “cannot be my disciple.” Whatever shall divert the affections from God, must be given up. Mammon is the idol of many. Its golden chain binds them to Satan. Reputation and worldly honor are worshiped by another class. The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility, is the idol of others. These are Satan’s snares, set for unwary feet. But these slavish bands must be broken; the flesh must be crucified with the affections and lusts. We cannot be half the Lord’s and half the world’s. We are not God’s people unless we are such entirely. Every weight, every besetting sin, must be laid aside. God’s watchmen will not cry, “Peace, peace,” when God has not spoken peace. The voice of the faithful watchmen will be heard: “Go ye out from hence, touch not the unclean. Go ye out of the midst of her. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.”

The church cannot measure herself by the world, nor by the opinion of men, nor by what she once was. Her faith and her position in the world as they now are, must be compared with what they would have been if her course had been continually onward and upward. The church will be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. If her moral character and spiritual state do not correspond with the benefits and blessings God has conferred upon her, she will be found wanting. The light has been shining clear and definite upon her pathway, and the light of 1882 calls her to an account. If her talents are unimproved, if her fruit is not perfect before God, if her light has become darkness, she is indeed found wanting. The knowledge of our state as God views it, seems to be hidden from us. We see, but perceive not; we hear, but do not understand; and we rest as unconcerned as if the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, rested upon our sanctuary. We profess to know God, and to believe the truth; but in works deny him. Our deeds are directly adverse to the principles of truth and righteousness, by which we profess to be governed.

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WORKERS IN OUR COLLEGE.

The very foundation of all true prosperity for our College, is a close union with God, on the part of teachers and students. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. His precepts should be acknowledged as the rule of life. In the Bible, the will of God is revealed to his children. Wherever it is read, in the family circle, the school, or the church, all should give quiet and devout attention, as if God were really present, and speaking to them.

A high religious standard has not always been maintained in our school. A majority of both teachers and students, are constantly seeking to keep their religion out of sight. Especially has this been the case since worldlings have patronized the College. Christ requires from all his followers, open, manly confessions of their faith. Each must take his position, and be what God designed he should be, a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. Every Christian is to be a light, not hid under a bushel or under a bed, but put on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house.

[81] The teachers in our College should not conform to worldly customs, or adopt worldly principles. The attributes which God prizes most, are charity and purity. These attributes should be cherished by every Christian. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." "We shall see him as he is; and every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

God has been moving upon the hearts of young men to devote themselves to the ministry. They have come to our College in the hope of finding advantages there which they could obtain nowhere else. But the solemn convictions of the Spirit of God have been lightly regarded by teachers who know but little of the worth of souls, and feel but little burden for their salvation, and they have endeavored to turn the youth from the path into which God had been seeking to lead them.

The compensation of well-qualified teachers, is much higher than that of our ministers; and the teacher does not labor nearly so hard, or subject himself to so great inconvenience, as the minister who gives himself wholly to the work. These things have been presented before the youth, and they have been encouraged to distrust God, and disbelieve his promises. Many have chosen the easier course, and have prepared themselves to teach the sciences, or to engage in some other employment, instead of preaching the truth.

Thus God's work has been hindered by unconsecrated teachers, who profess to believe the truth, but who have not the love of it in their hearts. The educated young man is taught to look upon his abilities as too precious to be devoted to the service of Christ. But has God no claims upon him ? Who gave the power to obtain this mental discipline, and these accomplishments ? Are they held on terms altogether independent of Jehovah ?

Many a youth who is ignorant of the world, ignorant of his own weakness, ignorant of the future, feels no need of a divine hand to point out his course. He considers himself fully competent to guide his own bark amid the breakers. Let such youth remember that wherever they may go, they are not beyond the domain of God. They are not free to choose what they will without consulting the will of their Creator. [82]

Talent is ever best developed and best appreciated where it is most needed. But this truth is overlooked by many eager aspirants for distinction. Though superficial in religious experience and mental attainments, their short-sighted ambition covets a higher sphere of action than that in which Providence has placed them. The Lord does not call them as he did Joseph and Daniel, to withstand the temptations of worldly honor and high station. But they force themselves into positions of danger, and desert the only post of duty for which they are fitted.

The Macedonian cry is coming to us from all directions. Send us laborers, is the urgent appeal from East and West. All around us are fields, "white already to harvest." "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal." Is it not folly to turn from these fields, to engage in a business that can yield only pecuniary gain? Christ wants no selfish workers, who are seeking only for the highest wages. He calls for those who are willing

to become poor for his sake, as he became poor for them. What were the inducements presented before Christ in this world? Insults, mockery, poverty, shame, rejection, betrayal, and crucifixion. Shall the under-shepherds seek for an easier lot than that of their Master?

[83] The word of God is a great simplifier of life's complicated pursuits. To every earnest seeker, it imparts a divine wisdom. We should never forget that we have been redeemed by suffering. It is the precious blood of Christ that makes atonement for us. By toil and sacrifice and peril, by losses of worldly goods, and in agony of soul, the gospel has been borne to the world. God calls young men in the vigor and strength of their youth, to share with him self-denial, sacrifice, and suffering. If they accept the call, he will make them his instruments to save souls for whom he died. But he would have them count the cost, and enter upon their work with a full knowledge of the conditions upon which they serve a crucified Redeemer.

I can hardly express my feelings when I think how God's purpose in the establishment of our College, has been disregarded. Those who have a form of godliness, are denying, by their unconsecrated lives, the power of the truth to make men wise unto salvation. Look at the history of the apostles, who suffered poverty, disgrace, abuse, and even death, for the truth's sake. They rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer for Christ.

If great results can be attained by great efforts and great suffering, who of us that are subjects of divine grace can refuse the sacrifice? The gospel of Christ includes in its requirements every soul that has heard the message of glad tidings. What shall we render unto God for all his benefits to us? His matchless mercy can never be repaid. We can, only by willing obedience and grateful service, testify our loyalty, and crown with honor our Redeemer.

I have no higher wish than to see our youth imbued with that spirit of pure religion which will lead them to take up the cross and follow Jesus. Go forth, young disciples of Christ, controlled by principle, clad in the robes of purity and righteousness. Your Saviour will guide you into the position best suited to your talents, and where you can be most useful. In the path of duty you may be sure of receiving grace sufficient for your day.

The preaching of the gospel is God's chosen agency for the salvation of souls. But our first work should be to bring our own

hearts into harmony with God, and then we are prepared to labor for others. In former days there was great searching of heart among our earnest workers. They counseled together, and united in humble, fervent prayer for divine guidance. There has been a decline in the true missionary spirit among ministers and teachers. Yet Christ's coming is nearer than when we believed. Every passing day leaves us one less to proclaim the message of warning so the world. Would that there were to-day more earnest intercession with God, greater humility, greater purity, and greater faith!

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All are in constant danger. I warn the church to beware of those who preach to others the word of life, but do not themselves cherish the spirit of humility and self-denial which it inculcates. Such men cannot be depended on in a crisis. They disregard the voice of God as readily as did Saul, and like him many stand ready to justify their course. When rebuked by the Lord through his prophet, Saul stoutly asserted that he had obeyed the voice of God; but the bleating sheep and lowing oxen testified that he had not. In the same manner do many to-day assert their loyalty to God, but their concerts and other pleasure gatherings, their worldly associations, their glorifying of self, and eager desire for popularity, all testify that they have not obeyed his voice. "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them."

That is a high standard which the gospel sets before us. The consistent Christian is not only a new but a noble creature in Christ Jesus. He is an unfailing light to show others the way to Heaven and to God. He who is drawing his life from Christ, will have no desire for the frivolous, unsatisfying enjoyments of the world.

Among the youth will be found great diversity of character and education. Some have lived in an element of arbitrary restraint and harshness, which has developed in them a spirit of obstinacy and defiance. Others have been household pets, allowed by over-fond parents to follow their own inclinations. Every defect has been excused, until their character is deformed. To deal successfully with these different minds, the teacher needs to exercise great tact and delicacy in management, as well as firmness in government.

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Dislike and even contempt for proper regulations will often be manifested. Some will exercise all their ingenuity in evading penalties, while others will display a reckless indifference to the conse-

quences of transgression. All this will call for more patience and greater exertion on the part of those who are entrusted with their education.

One of the greatest difficulties with which teachers have had to contend, is the failure on the part of parents to co-operate in administering the discipline of the College. If the parents would stand pledged to sustain the authority of the teacher, much insubordination, vice, and profligacy would be prevented. Parents should require their children to respect and obey rightful authority. They should labor with unremitting care and diligence to instruct, guide, and restrain their children, until right habits are firmly established. With such training the youth would be in subjection to the institutions of society, and the general restraints of moral obligation.

Both by precept and example, the young should be taught simplicity of dress and manners, industry, sobriety, and economy. Many students are extravagant in expending the means furnished them by their parents. They try to show themselves superior to their associates by a lavish use of money for display and self-indulgence. In some institutions of learning, this matter has been regarded of so great consequence that the dress of the student is prescribed and his use of money limited by law. But indulgent parents and indulged students will find some way to evade the law. We would resort to no such means. We ask Christian parents to take all those matters under [86] careful, prayerful consideration, to seek counsel from the word of God. and then endeavor to act in accordance with its teachings.

If facilities for manual labor were provided in connection with our school, and students were required to devote a portion of their time to some active employment, it would prove a safeguard against many of the evil influences that prevail in institutions of learning. Manly, useful occupations, substituted for frivolous and corrupting diversions, would give legitimate scope for the exuberance of youthful life, and would promote sobriety and stability of character. All possible effort should be made to encourage a desire for moral and physical, as well as mental improvement. If girls were taught how to cook, especially how to bake good bread, their education would be of far greater value. A knowledge of useful labor would prevent, to a great extent, that sickly sentimentalism which has been and is

still ruining thousands. The exercise of the muscles as well as the brain will encourage taste for the homely duties of practical life.

The present age is one of show and surface work in education. Bro. — possesses naturally a love for system and thoroughness, and these have become habit by lifelong training and discipline. He has been approved of God for this. His labors are of real worth because he will not allow students to be superficial. But in his very first efforts toward the establishment of a school, he encountered many obstacles. Had he been less resolute and persevering, he would have given up the struggle. Some of the parents neglected to sustain the school, and their children did not respect the teacher because he wore poor clothing. They allowed his appearance to prejudice them against him. This spirit of disrespect was rebuked of the Lord, and the teacher encouraged in his work. But the complaints and unwise reports carried home by the children, strengthened the prejudice of the parents. While Bro. — was seeking to inculcate true principles and establish right habits, over-indulged children were complaining of their taxing studies. These very ones, I was shown, were suffering because the mind was not sufficiently occupied with proper subjects. Their thoughts were upon demoralizing matters, and both mind and body were enfeebled through the habit of self-abuse. It was this vile practice, not over-study, that caused the frequent illness of these children, and prevented them from making the advancement which the parents desired. [87]

The Lord approved of the general course of Bro. —, as he was laying the foundation for the school which is now in operation. But the man has labored too hard, without a firm, blessed, strengthening home influence to lighten his burdens. Under the strain of over work, he has made some mistakes, not half so grievous, however, as those of persons who have cherished bitterness against him. In his connection with the youth, he has had to meet that spirit of rebellion and defiance which the apostle declares to be one of the signs of the last days.

Some of the teachers in the College have failed to realize the responsibility of their position. They have not themselves been learners in the school of Christ, and hence they have not been prepared to instruct others.

Among the students will be found some of idle, vicious habits. These will need reproof and discipline; but if they cannot be reformed, let them not be driven farther toward the pit by impatience and harshness. Teachers should ever remember that the youth under their charge are the purchase of the blood of Christ, and younger members of the Lord's family. Christ made an infinite sacrifice to redeem them. And teachers should feel that they are to stand as missionaries, to win these students to Jesus. If they are naturally combative, let them carefully guard against the indulgence of this trait. Those who have passed the critical period of youth, should [88] never forget the temptations and trials of early life, and how much they wanted sympathy, kindness, and love.

He who devotes himself to arduous public labor in the cause of humanity, often finds little time to devote to his own family, and, in one sense, is left almost without a family and without fireside, social influences. It has been thus with Bro. —. His mind has been constantly taxed. He had little opportunity to win the affections of his children, or to give them needed restraint and guidance.

There are many in the College who need a thorough conversion. Let none seek to discern the mote that is in their brother's eye, when they have a beam in their own eye. Each should cleanse his own soul temple from its defilement. Let envy and jealousy go with the accumulated rubbish. Exalted privileges and heavenly attainments, purchased for us at an immense cost, are freely presented for our acceptance. God holds us individually accountable for the measure of light and privileges he has given us. And if we refuse to render unto God the improvement of the talents committed to our trust, we forfeit his favor.

Prof. — would have served you well had he not been flattered by some and condemned by others. He became confused. He had traits of character that needed to be suppressed. In their enthusiasm, some have given him undue confidence and praise. You have placed the man where it will be difficult for him to recover himself, and find his true position. He has been sacrificed by both parties in the church, because they failed to heed the admonitions of the Spirit of God. This is injustice to him. He had newly come to the faith, and was not prepared for the developments which have been made.

How little we know of the bearing our acts will have upon the future history of ourselves and others. Many think it is of little importance what they do. It will do no harm for them to attend this concert, or unite with the world in that amusement, if they wish to do so. Thus Satan leads and controls their desires, and they do not consider that the results may be most momentous. It may be the link in the chain of events which binds a soul in the snare of Satan, and determines his eternal ruin. [89]

Every act, however small, has its place in the great drama of life. Consider that the desire for a single gratification of appetite introduced sin into our world, with its terrible consequences. Unhallowed marriages of the sons of God with the daughters of men, resulted in apostacy which ended in the destruction of the world by a flood. The most trifling act of self-indulgence has resulted in great revolutions. This is the case now. There are very few who are circumspect. Like the children of Israel, they will not take heed to words of counsel, but follow their own inclination. They unite with a worldly element in attending gatherings where they will be brought into notice, and thus lead the way and others follow. What has been done once will be done again by themselves and many others. Every step these take makes a lasting impression, not only on their own consciences and habits but upon those of others. This consideration gives awful dignity to human life.

My heart aches day after day and night after night for our churches. Many are progressing, but in the back track. "The path of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Their march is onward and upward. They progress from strength to strength, from grace to grace, and from glory to glory. This is the privilege of all our churches. But oh, how different has it been with them! They need divine illumination. They must face square about. I know what I say. Unless they shall become Christians indeed, they will go from weakness to weakness, divisions will increase, and many souls will be led to perdition.

All I can say to you is, Take up the light which God has given you, and follow it at any cost to your selves. This is your only safety. You have a work to do to come into harmony, and may the Lord help you to do it even if self is crucified. Gather up the rays of light that have been slighted and rejected. Gather them up with [90]

meekness, with trembling, and with fear. The sin of ancient Israel was in disregarding the expressed will of God and following their own way according to the leadings of unsanctified hearts. Modern Israel are fast following in their footsteps, and the displeasure of the Lord is as surely resting upon them.

It is never difficult to do what we love to do; but to take a course directly against our inclinations, is lifting a cross. Christ prayed that his disciples might be one, as he was one with the Father. This unity is the credentials of Christ to the world, that God sent him. When self-will is renounced in reference to matters, there will be a union of believers with Christ. This all should pray for, and work for determinedly, thus answering as far as possible the prayer of Christ for unity in his church.

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JEALOUSY AND FAULT-FINDING CONDEMNED.

IT pains me to say that there are unruly tongues among church members. There are false tongues, that feed on mischief. There are sly, whispering tongues. There is tattling, impertinent meddling, adroit quizzing. Among the lovers of gossip, some are actuated by curiosity, others by jealousy, many by hatred against those through whom God has spoken to reprove them. All these discordant elements are at work. Some conceal their real sentiments, while others are eager to publish all they know, or even suspect, of evil against another.

I saw that the very spirit of perjury, that would turn truth into falsehood, good into evil, and innocence into crime, is now active. Satan exults over the condition of God's professed people. While many are neglecting their own souls, they eagerly watch for an opportunity to criticise and condemn others. All have defects of character, and it is not hard to find something that jealousy can interpret to their injury. "Now," say these self-constituted judges, "we have *facts*. We will fasten upon them an accusation from which they cannot clear themselves." They wait for a fitting opportunity, and then produce their bundle of gossip, and bring forth their tidbits.

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In their efforts to carry a point, persons who have naturally a strong imagination, are in danger of deceiving themselves and deceiving others. They gather up unguarded expressions from another, not considering that words may be uttered hastily, and hence may not reflect the real sentiments of the speaker. But those unpremeditated remarks, often so trifling as to be unworthy of notice, are viewed through Satan's magnifying glass, pondered, and repeated, until mole hills become mountains. Separated from God, the surmisers of evil become the sport of temptation. They scarcely know the strength of their feelings or the effect of their words. While condemning the errors of others, they indulge far greater errors themselves. "Consistency is a jewel."

Is there no law of kindness to be observed? Have Christians been authorized of God to criticise and condemn one another? Is it honorable, or even honest, to win from the lips of another, under the guise of friendship, secrets which have been entrusted to him, and then turn the knowledge thus gained to his injury? Is it Christian charity to gather up every floating report, to unearth everything that will cast suspicion on the character of another, and then take delight in using it to injure him? Satan exults when he can defame or wound a follower of Christ. He is the “accuser of the brethren.” Shall Christians aid him in his work?

[92] God’s all-seeing eye notes the defects of all, and the ruling passion of each; yet he bears with our mistakes, and pities our weakness. He bids his people cherish the same spirit of tenderness and forbearance. True Christians will not exult in exposing the faults and deficiencies of others. They will turn away from vileness and deformity, to fix the mind upon that which is attractive and lovely. To the Christian every act of fault-finding, every word of censure or condemnation, is painful.

There have always been men and women who profess the truth, who have not conformed their lives to its sanctifying influence; men who are unfaithful, yet deceiving themselves, and encouraging themselves in sin. Unbelief is seen in their life, their deportment, and character, and this terrible evil acts as does a canker.

Would all professed Christians use their investigative powers to see what evils needed to be corrected in themselves, instead of talking of others’ wrongs, there would be a more healthy condition in the church to-day. Some will be honest when it costs nothing, but when policy will pay best, honesty is forgotten. Honesty and policy will not work together in the same mind. In time, either policy will be expelled, and truth and honesty reign supreme, or, if policy is cherished, honesty will be forgotten. They are never in agreement; they have nothing in common. One is the prophet of Baal, the other is the true prophet of God. When the Lord makes up his jewels, the true, the frank, the honest, will be looked upon with pleasure. Angels are employed in making crowns for such ones, and upon these stargemmed crowns will be reflected, with splendor, the light which radiates from the throne of God.

Our ministering brethren are too often imposed upon by the relation of trials in the church, and they too frequently refer to them in their discourses. They should not encourage the members of the church to complain of one another, but should set them as spies upon their own actions. None should allow their feelings of prejudice and resentment to be aroused by the relation of the wrongs of others; all should wait patiently until they hear both sides of the question, and then believe only what stern facts compel them to believe. At all times, the safe course is not to listen to an evil report, until the Bible rule has been strictly carried out. This will apply to some who have worked artfully to draw out from the unsuspecting, matters which they had no business with, and which would do them no good to know. [93]

For your soul's sake, my brethren, have an eye single to the glory of God. Leave self out of your thoughts as much as possible. We are nearing the close of time. Examine your motives in the light of eternity. I know you need to be alarmed; you are departing from the old landmarks. Your science, so-called, is undermining the foundation of Christian principle. I have been shown the course you would surely pursue, should you disconnect from God. Do not trust to your own wisdom. I tell you, your souls are in imminent peril. For Christ's sake, search and see why you have so little love for religious exercises.

The Lord is testing and proving his people. You may be just as severe and critical with your own defective character as you please, but be kind, pitiful, and courteous toward others. Inquire every day, Am I sound to the core, or am I false-hearted? Entreat the Lord to save you from all deception on this point. Eternal interests are involved. While so many are panting after honor, and greedy of gain, do you, my beloved brethren, be eagerly seeking the assurance of the love of God, and crying, Who will show me how to make my calling and election sure ?

Satan carefully studies the constitutional sins of men, and then he begins his work of alluring and ensnaring them. We are in the thickest of temptations, but there is victory for us if we fight manfully the battles of the Lord. All are in danger. But if you walk humbly and prayerfully, you will come forth from the proving process more precious than fine gold, even than the golden wedge of Ophir. If [94]

careless and prayerless, you will be as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

Some have become almost lost in the mazes of skepticism. To such I would say, Lift your mind out of that channel. Fasten it upon God. The more closely faith and holiness bind you to the Eternal One, the clearer and brighter will the justice of his dealings appear to you. Make life, eternal life, the object of your pursuit.

I know your danger. If you lose confidence in the testimonies, you will drift away from Bible truth. I have been fearful that many would take a questioning, doubting position, and, in my distress for your souls, I would warn you. How many will heed the warning? As you now hold the testimonies, should one be given crossing your track, correcting your errors, would you feel at perfect liberty to accept or reject any part, or the whole? That which you will be least inclined to receive, is the very part most needed. God and Satan never work in co-partnership. The testimonies either bear the signet of God or that of Satan. A good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. By their fruit ye shall know them. God has spoken. Who has trembled at his word?

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THE DAY OF THE LORD AT HAND.

“THE great day of the Lord is near; it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord. The mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord.”

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“And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will do no good, neither will he do evil.”

“Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord’s anger come upon you. Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger.”

We are near the close of time. I have been shown that the retributive judgments of God are already in the land. The Lord has given us warning of the events about to take place. Light is shining from his word, yet darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. “While they shall cry, Peace and safety, sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape.”

It is our duty to inquire the cause of this terrible darkness, that we may shun the course by which men have brought upon themselves so great delusion. God has given the world an opportunity to learn and to obey his will. He has given them, in his word, the light of truth, he has sent them warning, counsel, and admonition; but few will obey his voice. Like the Jewish nation, the majority, even of professed Christians, pride themselves on their superior advantages, but make no returns to God for these great blessings. In infinite mercy, a last

[96] warning message has been sent to the world, announcing that Christ is at the door, and calling attention to God's broken law. But as the antediluvians rejected with scorn the warning of Noah, so will the pleasure-lovers of to-day reject the message of God's faithful servants. The world pursues its unvarying round, absorbed as ever in its business and its pleasures, while the wrath of God is about to be visited on the transgressors of his law.

Our compassionate Redeemer, foreseeing the perils that would surround his followers at this time, has given them special warning: "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. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." If the church pursue a course similar to that of the world, they will share the same fate. Nay, rather, as they have received greater light, their punishment will be greater than that of the impenitent.

We, as a people, profess to have truth in advance of every other people upon the earth. Then our life and character should be in harmony with such a faith. The day is just upon us, when the righteous shall be bound, like precious grain, in bundles for the heavenly garner, while the wicked are, like the tares, gathered for the fires of the last great day. But "the wheat and tares grow together till the harvest." In the discharge of life's duties, the righteous will, to the last, be brought in contact with the ungodly. The children of light are scattered among the children of darkness, that the contrast may be seen by all. Thus are the children of God to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light." The divine love glowing in the heart, the Christ-like harmony manifested in the life, will be as a glimpse of Heaven granted to men of the world that they may see and appreciate its excellence.

[97] Like will attract like. Those who are drinking from the same fountain of blessing will draw nearer together. Truth dwelling in the hearts of believers will lead to blessed and happy assimilation. Thus will be answered the prayer of Christ that his disciples might

be one, even as he is one with the Father. For this oneness, every truly converted heart will be striving.

With the ungodly there will be a deceptive harmony that but partially conceals a perpetual discord. In their opposition to the will and the truth of God they are united, while on every other point they are rent with hatred, emulation, jealousy, and deadly strife.

The pure and the base metal are now so mingled that only the discerning eye of the infinite God can with certainty distinguish between them. But the moral magnet of holiness and truth will attract together the pure metal, while it will repel the base and counterfeit.

“The day of the Lord is near, and hasteth greatly;” but where do we behold the true Advent spirit? Who are preparing to stand in that time of temptation which is just before us? The people to whom God has entrusted the sacred, solemn, testing truths for this time, are sleeping at their post. They say by their actions, We have the truth, we are “rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;” while the True Witness declares, “Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

With what fidelity do these words portray the present condition of the church: “Knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Messages of warning, dictated by the Holy Spirit, are borne by the servants of God, defects of character are presented before the erring; but they say, “That does not represent my case. I do not accept the message you bring. I am doing the best I can. I believe the truth.”

That evil servant who said in his heart, “My Lord delayeth his coming,” professed to be waiting for Christ. He was a “servant,” outwardly devoted to the service of God, while at heart he had yielded to Satan. He does not, like the scoffer, openly deny the truth, but reveals in his life the sentiment of the heart,—that the Lord’s coming is delayed. Presumption renders him careless of eternal interests. He accepts the world’s maxims, and conforms to its customs and practices. Selfishness, worldly pride and ambitions predominate. Fearing that his brethren may stand higher than himself, he begins to disparage their efforts and impugn their motives. Thus he smites his fellow-servants. As he alienates himself from the people of God, he unites more and more with the ungodly. He is found “eating and drinking with the drunken,”—joining with worldlings, and partaking

of their spirit. Thus he is lulled into a carnal security, and overcome by forgetfulness, indifference, and sloth.

The very beginning of the evil was a neglect of watchfulness and secret prayer, then came a neglect of other religious duties, and thus the way was opened for all the sins that followed. Every Christian will be assailed by the allurements of the world, the clamors of the carnal nature, and the direct temptations of Satan. No one is safe. No matter what our experience has been, no matter how high our station, we need to watch and pray continually. We must be daily controlled by the Spirit of God, or we are controlled by Satan.

The Saviour's instructions to his disciples were given for the benefit of his followers in every age. He had those in view who were living near the close of time, when he said, "Take heed to yourselves." It is our work, each for himself, to cherish in the heart the precious graces of the Holy Spirit.

[99] Satan is working with unflinching perseverance and intense energy to draw into his ranks the professed followers of Christ. He is working "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." But Satan is not the only worker by whom the kingdom of darkness is supported. Whoever solicits to sin is a tempter. Whoever imitates the great deceiver becomes his aid. Those who give their influence to sustain an evil work are doing Satan's drudgery.

Actions reveal principles and motives. The fruit borne by many that claim to be plants in the Lord's vineyard, shows them to be but thorns and briars. A whole church may sanction the wrong course of some of its members, but that sanction does not prove the wrong to be right. It cannot make grapes of thorn berries.

If some who profess to believe present truth, could understand their true position, they would despair of the mercy of God. They have been exerting all their influence against the truth, against the voice of warning, against the people of God. They have been doing the work of Satan. Many have become so infatuated by his deceptions that they will never recover. Such a state of backsliding cannot exist without causing the loss of many souls.

The church has received warning after warning. The duties and dangers of God's people have been plainly revealed. But the worldly element has proved too strong for them. Customs, practices, and fashions which lead the soul away from God, have been for years

gaining ground, in defiance of the warnings and entreaties of the Holy Spirit; until at last their ways have become right in their own eyes, and the Spirit's voice is scarcely heard. No man can tell how far he may go in sin, when once he yields himself to the power of the great deceiver. Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, and induced him to betray his Lord. Satan led Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Ghost. Those who are not wholly consecrated to God may be led to do the work of Satan, while yet they flatter themselves that they are in the service of Christ.

Brethren and sisters, I entreat you to “examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” To maintain the warmth and purity of Christian love, requires a constant supply of the grace of Christ. Have you employed every means that your “love may abound yet more and more,” “that you may approve things that are excellent,” and be filled with the fruits of righteousness “which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God”?

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Many who should stand firm for righteousness and truth, have manifested weakness and indecision that have encouraged the assaults of Satan. Those who fail to grow in grace, not seeking to reach the highest standard in divine attainments, will be overcome.

This world is to the Christian a land of strangers and enemies. Unless he shall take for his defense the divine panoply, and wield the sword of the Spirit, he will become the prey of the powers of darkness. The faith of all will be tested. All will be tried as gold is tried in the fire.

The church is composed of imperfect, erring men and women, who call for the continual exercise of charity and forbearance. But there has been a long period of general lukewarmness; a worldly spirit coming into the church, has been followed by alienation, fault-finding, malice, strife, and iniquity.

Should there be less sermonizing by men who are unconsecrated in heart and life, and were more time devoted to humbling the soul before God, then might we hope that the Lord would appear to your help, and heal your backslidings. Much of the preaching of late begets a false security. Important interests in the cause of God cannot be wisely managed by those who have had so little real connection with God as some of our ministers have had. To entrust

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the work to such men is like setting children to manage great vessels at sea. Those who are destitute of heavenly wisdom, destitute of living power with God, are not competent to steer the gospel ship amid icebergs and tempests. The church is passing through severe conflicts, but in her peril, many would trust her to hands that will surely wreck her. We need a pilot on board now; for we are nearing the harbor. As a people we should be the light of the world. But how many are foolish virgins, having no oil in their vessels with their lamps. May the Lord of all grace, abundant in mercy, full of forgiveness, pity and save us, that we perish not with the wicked!

In this season of conflict and trial, we need all the support and consolation we can derive from righteous principles, from fixed religious convictions, from the abiding assurance of the love of Christ, and from a rich experience in divine things. We shall attain to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, only as the result of a steady growth in grace.

Oh, what can I say to open blind eyes, to enlighten the spiritual understanding! Sin must be crucified. A complete moral renovation must be wrought by the Holy Spirit. We must have the love of God, with living, abiding faith. This is the gold tried in the fire. We can obtain it only of Christ. Every sincere and earnest seeker will become a partaker of the divine nature. His soul will be filled with intense longing to know the fullness of that love which passes knowledge; as he advances in the divine life, he will be better able to grasp the elevated, ennobling truths of the word of God, until, by beholding, he becomes changed, and is enabled to reflect the likeness of his Redeemer.

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UNWISE MARRIAGES.

I HAVE been shown that the youth of to-day have no true sense of their great danger. There are many of the young whom God would accept as laborers in the various branches of his work; but Satan steps in and so entangles them in his web that they become estranged from God and powerless in his work. Satan is a sharp and persevering workman. He knows just how to entrap the unwary, and it is an alarming fact that but few succeed in escaping from his wiles. They see no danger, and do not guard against his devices. He prompts them to fasten their affections upon one another without seeking wisdom of God, or of those whom he has sent to warn, reprove, and counsel. They feel self-sufficient, and will not bear restraint.

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Your own case, Bro. — , is a forcible illustration of this. You have become infatuated with the thought of marriage. As is generally the case with those who have their minds directed in this channel, the warnings of the servants of God have but little influence upon you. I have been shown how easily you are affected by surrounding influences. Should you connect with associates whose minds are cast in an inferior mold, you would become like them. Unless the love and fear of God were before you, their thoughts would be your thoughts; if they lacked reverence, you also would become irreverent; if they were frivolous and given to pleasure-seeking, you would follow in the same path with a zeal and perseverance worthy of a better cause.

The young lady upon whom you have placed your affections has not depth of thought or character. Her life has been frivolous, and her mind is narrow and superficial. Yet you have steadily refused to be cautioned by your father, your loving sister, or by your friends in the church. I came to you as Christ's ambassador, but your strong feelings, your self-confidence, closed your eyes to danger, and your ears to warnings. Your course has been as persistent as though no

one knew quite so much as yourself, or as though the salvation of your soul depended upon your following your own judgment.

[103] Should every young man who professes the truth do as you have done, what would be the condition of families and of the church? Consider the influence of the disrespect you have shown for your parents by your self-will and self-sufficiency. You are among the class described as heady, high-minded. This infatuation has caused you to lose your interest in religious things, and to think only of yourself instead of the glory of God. No good can come of this intimacy or attachment. The blessing of God will not attend any such willful course as you are pursuing. You should not be eager to enter the marriage relation and assume the care of a family before you have thoroughly established your own character. I regard you as in great darkness, but unable to realize your peril.

The truth was reforming your life and character, and you were gaining the confidence of the brethren; but Satan saw that he was losing you, and therefore he increased his efforts to entangle you in his wily snare, and has succeeded wonderfully. The weakness of your nature, hitherto undiscovered, is now developed. You do not see your condition, although it is very apparent to others. Light does not come to a man who makes no effort to obtain it. When you saw that your brethren and sisters were grieved with your course, then it was time for you to stop and consider what you were doing, to pray much, and to counsel with men of experience in the church, and gratefully accept their advice.

“But,” say you, “should I follow the judgment of the brethren independent of my own feelings?” I answer, The church is God’s delegated authority upon earth. Christ has said, “Whatsoever ye bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.” There is altogether too little respect paid to the opinion of members of the same church. It is the want of deference for the opinions of the church that causes so much trouble among brethren. The eyes of the church may be able to discern in its individual members that which the erring may not see. A few persons may be as blind as the one in error, but the majority of the church is a power which should control its individual members.

[104] The apostle Peter says: “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and

be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble.” Paul exhorts, “ Be kindly affectioned one toward another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another,” “ submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” “Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” Unless the advice and counsel of the church can be respected, it is indeed powerless. God has placed a voice in the church which must control its members.

If you are led by truth rather than error, you will be willing to obey your parents, and sacredly regard the voice of the church. Your prayers have been made with a determination to carry out what you regarded as right, irrespective of the wishes of your parents or of the church. All through your life you have been actuated in a large degree by selfish feelings. Ofttimes a great sacrifice of feeling has to be made in order to comply with the conditions laid down in God’s word, and to act from principle.

“Should parents,” you ask, “select a companion without regard to the mind or feelings of son or daughter?” I put the question to you as it should be, Should a son or daughter select a companion without first consulting the parents, when such a step must materially affect the happiness of parents, if they have any affection for their children? And should that child, notwithstanding the counsel and entreaties of his parents, persist in following his own course? I answer decidedly, No; not if he never marries. The fifth commandment forbids such a comm “Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” Here is a commandment with a promise which the Lord will surely fulfill to those who obey.

Wise parents will never select companions for their children without respect to their wishes. No one has ever proposed to do this in your case. But most of that which the youth of our day term love is only blind impulse, which originates with Satan to compass their destruction.

Should you, my brother, go to our College now, as you have planned, I fear for your course there. Your expressed determination to have a lady’s company wherever you should go, shows me that you are far from being in a position to be benefited by going to Battle Creek. The infatuation which is upon you is more Satanic

than divine. I do not wish to have you disappointed in regard to Battle Creek. The rules are strict there. No courting is allowed. The school would be worth nothing to students, were they to become entangled in love affairs as you have been. Our College would soon be demoralized. Parents do not send their children to our College or to our Offices, to commence a love-sick, sentimental life, but to be educated in the sciences or to learn the printer's trade. Were the rules so lax that the youth were allowed to become bewildered and infatuated with the society of the opposite sex as you have been for some months past, the object of their going to Battle Creek would be lost. If you cannot put this entirely out of your mind, and go there with the spirit of a learner, and with a purpose to arouse yourself to the most earnest, humble, sincere efforts, praying that you may have a close connection with God, it would be better for you to remain at home.

[106] Should you go, you ought to be prepared to with-stand temptation, and to hold up the hands of professors and teachers, letting your influence be wholly on the side of discipline and order. God designs that all who work in his cause shall be subject one to another, ready to receive advice and instruction. They should train themselves by the severest mental and moral discipline, that by the assisting grace of God, they may be fitted in mind and heart to train others. Fervent prayer, humility, and earnestness must be combined with God's help, for human frail- ties and human feelings are continually striving for the mastery. Every man must purify his soul through obedience to the truth, and with an eye single to God's glory he must abase self and exalt Jesus and his grace. By thus continually advancing toward the light, he will become acquainted with God, and receive his help.

Some of those who attend the College do not properly improve their time. Full of the buoyancy of youth, they spurn the restraint that is brought to bear upon them. Especially do they rebel against the rules that will not allow young gentlemen to pay their attentions to young ladies. Full well is known the evil of such a course in this degenerate age. In a college where so many youth are associated, imitating the customs of the world in this respect would turn the thoughts in a channel that would hinder them in their pursuit of knowledge, and in their interest in religious things. The infatuation on the part of both young men and women in thus placing the

affections upon each other during school days, shows a lack of good judgment. As in your own case, blind impulse controls reason and judgment. Under this bewitching delusion, the momentous responsibility felt by every sincere Christian is laid aside, spirituality dies, and the Judgment and eternity lose their awful significance.

Every faculty of those who become affected by this contagious disease—blind love—is brought in subjection to it. They seem to be devoid of good sense, and their course of action is disgusting to all who behold it. My brother, you have made yourself a subject of talk, and have lowered yourself in the estimation of those whose approval you should prize. With many the crisis of the disease is reached in an immature marriage, and when the novelty is past, and the bewitching power of love-making is over, one or both parties awake to their true situation. They then find themselves ill-mated, but united for life. Bound to each other by the most solemn vows, they look with sinking hearts upon the miserable life they must lead. They ought then to make the best of their situation; but many will not do this. They will either prove false to their marriage vows, or make the yoke which they persisted in placing upon their own necks so very galling that not a few cowardly put an end to their existence.

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Associating with the vain, the superficial, and the skeptical, will be productive of moral depravity and ruin. Bold, forward young gentlemen or ladies may have something pleasing in their address; they may have brilliant powers of mind, and skill to make the bad appear even preferable to the good. Such persons will enchant and bewilder a certain class, and souls will be lost in consequence. The influence of every man's thoughts and actions surrounds him like an invisible atmosphere, which is unconsciously breathed in by all who come in contact with him. This atmosphere is frequently charged with poisonous influences, and when these are inhaled, moral degeneracy is the sure result.

My young brother, would that I could impress upon you your true condition. You must repent, or you can never see the kingdom of Heaven. Many young men and women who profess godliness, do not know what it is to follow Christ. They do not imitate his example in doing good. Love and gratitude toward God are not springing up in the heart, nor expressed in their words and deportment. They do not possess the spirit of self-denial, neither do they encourage

each other in the way of holiness. We do not want young people to engage in the solemn work of God, who profess Christ, but have not the moral strength to take their position with those who are sober, and watch unto prayer, and who have their conversation in Heaven, whence they look for the Saviour. We do not feel over anxious for youth to go to Battle Creek, who profess to be Sabbath-keepers, but who indicate by their choice of companions their low state of morals.

[108] The door of our College will ever be open to those who are not professors of religion; and the youth coming to Battle Creek may have this irreligious society, if it is their choice. If they have right motives in associating with these, and sufficient spiritual strength to withstand their influence, they may be a power for good,—while they are learners, they may become teachers. The true Christian does not choose the company of the unconverted for love of the atmosphere surrounding their irreligious lives, or to excite admiration and secure applause, but for the purpose of communicating light and knowledge, and bringing them up to a noble, elevated standard,—the broad platform of eternal truth.

One person with pure motives, intent on becoming intelligent that he may make a right use of his abilities, will be a power for good in the school. He will have a molding influence. When parents justify the complaints of their children against the authority and discipline of the school, they do not see that they are increasing the demoralizing power which now prevails to such a fearful extent. Every influence surrounding the youth needs to be on the right side; for youthful depravity is increasing.

With worldly youth, the love of society and pleasure becomes an absorbing passion. To dress, to visit, to indulge the appetite and passions, and to whirl through the round of social dissipation, appears to be the great end of existence. They are unhappy if left in solitude. Their chief desire is to be admired and flattered, and to make a sensation in society; and when this desire is not gratified, life seems unendurable.

Those who will put on the whole armor of God, and devote some time every day to meditation and prayer, and to the study of the Scriptures, will be connected with Heaven, and will have a saving, transforming influence upon those around them. Great thoughts,

noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth and duty to God, will be theirs. They will be yearning for purity, for light, for love, for all the graces of heavenly birth. Their earnest prayers will enter into that within the veil. This class will have a sanctified boldness to come into the presence of the Infinite One. They will feel that Heaven's light and glories are for them, and they will become refined, elevated, ennobled by this intimate acquaintance with God. Such is the privilege of true Christians. [109]

Abstract meditation is not enough; busy action is not enough; both are essential to the formation of Christian character. Strength acquired in earnest, secret prayer prepares us to withstand the allurements of society. And yet we should not exclude ourselves from the world, for our Christian experience is to be the light of the world. The society of unbelievers will do us no harm if we mingle with them for the purpose of connecting them with God, and are strong enough spiritually to withstand their influence.

Christ came into the world to save it, to connect fallen man with the Infinite God. Christ's followers are to be channels of light. Maintaining communion with God, they are to transmit to those in darkness and error the choice blessings which they receive of Heaven. Enoch did not become polluted with the iniquities existing in his day; why need we in our day? But we may, like our Master, have compassion for suffering humanity, pity for the unfortunate, and a generous consideration for the feelings and necessities of the needy, the troubled, and the despairing.

Those who are Christians indeed, will seek to do good to others, and at the same time will so order their conversation and deportment as to maintain a calm, hallowed peace of mind. God's word requires that we should be like our Saviour, that we should bear his image, imitate his example, live his life. Selfishness and worldliness are not fruits of a Christian tree. No man can live for himself, and yet enjoy the approbation of God.

Sept. 5, 1879

WARNINGS AND REPROOFS.

THERE is an element in the church at — that is detrimental to its spiritual interests. There is a great want of vital godliness, of experimental religion. I call no names. Let each search his own heart, and understand his own imperfections. There are some who are ever leaning toward the world, ever lowering the standard of religion by their worldly conversation. They have not the love of God in their hearts. They are weak-handed when real help is needed in the church. This spiritual weakness is the result of their own unwillingness to bear burdens when and where they can help the most. When, however, there is any plan or device of their own to carry out, they are willing to assume any responsibility; to have their own way is their purpose. If that were a sanctified way, it would not be so bad; but it is not.

There is great need of zealous, disinterested workers in God's cause. One Christ-loving, devoted member, will do more good in a church than one hundred half-converted, unsanctified, self-sufficient workers. It is impossible for the church to be a living, active church, unless its members shall be willing to bare burdens and assume responsibilities. In church relationship are brought together different temperaments and dispositions. In the — church there are a few devoted, God-fearing, faithful souls, who pray much, who carry the burden of the church, and whose happiness is in the prosperity of its members. Here, as elsewhere, Satan is constantly at work to drag down and demoralize. It is the business of the adversary of souls to weaken and destroy every organization, which, if prospered, would glorify God.

Young men have received the truth, and run well for a season; but Satan has woven his meshes about them in unwise attachments and poor marriages. This he saw would be the most successful way he could allure them from the path of holiness. For a while, some of these youth bore the gospel armor with dignity and grace. Just as long as the heart and mind were in subjection to the divine will,

there was prosperity; but when the eye was diverted from Jesus, and attracted to unworthy objects, then it was that self asserted the sway, that carnal reason overbore wise judgment and integrity, and the Christian armor was thought too weighty to be borne by those so young in years. It would do for old, experienced soldiers of the gospel, but it was too heavy for youth. The tempter offered many suggestions calculated to cause inconstancy and vacillation in the Christian course.

The injunction of the Captain of their salvation was, "Take ye heed, watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation;" but it was too much trouble to faithfully guard the soul, and the deceptive power of Satan and the deceitful heart allured away from Christ. If these young men and young women had considered the words of the apostle, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price," they would not have felt at liberty to keep back from God that which he had purchased at an infinite cost.

There is not one youth in one hundred who feels his God-given responsibility. Every physical and mental capability should be carefully preserved, and put to the best and highest use, to advance the glory of God. Those youth who permit their powers to be perverted, thus abusing God's gifts, will be called to strict account for the good they might have done had they availed themselves of the provision made through Jesus Christ. God claims the working of every faculty.

There are youth in the — church who should be cultivating the grace of Christian steadfastness, and growing up to be men of faith. They should become firm, unwavering, rooted and grounded in the truth. The church needs the very help which God designed they should give. Those professing his name have not consecrated their powers fully and entirely to him, but have yielded them, in a measure, to the service of Satan. Such have been, and still are, robbing God. Like the unfaithful steward to whom were entrusted talents, they have hid the gifts of God in the world.

Another great detriment to the church at — has been the material which has come into it. This material needs to be melted over by the Spirit of God. The dross is seen in crude, sharp traits of character, which might have been removed had these individuals been learners of Christ. But they have not fully separated themselves from the spirit and influences of the world. They rob God by daily mingling

his time, his talents, and his strength, with a worldly element. These powers cannot be withheld from God without resulting in eternal ruin. You have been bought with a price, even if you perish because you will not be saved in God's appointed way.

Holy angels are watching with intense interest, to see if the individual members of the church will honor their Redeemer, to see if they will place themselves in connection with Heaven, and no longer defraud the Lord, whom they profess to love, honor, and serve. God calls for his own. You are his by creation, and doubly his by redemption. But when you suffer the fires of unhallowed passion to light up the eye; when you speak words that drive the holy angels from you; when you think evil of your brethren; when you profane your hands with the gains of ungodliness, you are yielding your members as instruments of unrighteousness.

[113] Bro. —, I saw that "Wanting" was written against your name in the Ledger of Heaven, — wanting in patience, in forbearance, in self-control, in lowliness and meekness. The want of these heavenly graces will surely close the gates of Heaven against you. Your body, your soul, your entire being, with all its capabilities, God claims as his. That hasty, uncontrolled temper must be overcome. Spiritual disease is the sure result of giving way to this fretting, complaining, murmuring spirit. And this disease of soul will be your own fault. Cease to fret; cease to be stubborn; cease to pet self; and be a noble-hearted, valiant man for God. Jesus loves you. Has he not made ample provision for you, that you should have help when brought into difficult places? "What," he says, "could have been done for my vineyard that I have not done? and when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, lo, it brought forth wild grapes." The fruit Christ claims, after the patient care bestowed upon his church, is faith, patience, love, forbearance, heavenly-mindedness, meekness. These are clusters of fruit which mature amid storm, and cloud, and darkness, as well as in the sunshine.

Bro. — is joined to the church, but not to the Lord. He has a dyspeptic religion. He is not right with God; he is filled with self. He has lost much by uniting with individuals who have not the spirit of Christ. He is lacking in almost every grace. He is useless to himself, and a great stumbling-block to the church. Dear brother, Satan has controlled you to a great extent; your thoughts are unsanctified, your

actions are not in accordance with the spirit of a true Christian. You have brought on your own disease; you must be your own restorer, through the help of the divine Physician. Your moral powers are weak for want of nourishment. You are starving spiritually for Bible truth,—the Bread of life. You need to draw daily nourishment from the living Vine. The church receives no strength from you, and, in your present condition, would be better off without you, for now, if anything arises to cross your track, and you cannot control matters, you settle back with stubbornness, a dead weight on the church. You bear no burden or weight of the cause. God has borne long with you, but there is a limit to his forbearance, a line beyond which you may venture, when his Spirit will no longer strive with you, but leave you in your own perversity, defiled with selfishness, and debased with sin.

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Bro. — does not possess a right spirit. His disposition to lead, hurts him, for he is not fitted for any such work. He can act a good part in the church, if self is not made prominent. More meekness and lowliness will make his efforts a blessing to the church, instead of a burden.

Bro. and Sr —, I saw opposite your names also, in the heavenly record, the word, “Wanting.” You need to be emptied of self, and the soul temple cleansed. Both of you have ability to do good, but it is unsanctified. You are greatly deficient in the simplicity of godliness. Were the church left to be molded by your standard of religion, it would be demoralized into a worldly, unconsecrated form. You might have been a great blessing to the church, but you have greatly failed. Jesus bids you come out from the spirit of the world. Sr. —, I am alarmed for you, and for those who are brought in contact with your influence. You reach a low standard. “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.” By your words and actions, you are now casting the seed. You are either sowing to the flesh or to the Spirit. In the day of final reckoning, every one must take the sickle and mow down the crop his own hand has sown.

Your husband is mistaking his work. When he shall humble his heart as a little child, and when he shall feel his own importance less, and his need of help from God more, then he may be where he can be used to God’s glory. But, as he is, he does not realize the wants of the cause. There is so much great I, and so little Jesus

[115] exhibited in the life and character of many, that God will accept nothing from their hands. But few realize the solemnity of the time in which we live,—the day of God’s preparation. Should you both be converted, and devote your ability to studying how to build up the church, instead of weakening it, and helping the enemy in his work of leading its members to the world, you would be gaining a valuable experience every day as you pass along. Bro. — has been a great hindrance to the church. He should not be a member of the church unless his daily life is in harmony with his profession. God does not acknowledge him as his child. He stands to-day under the black banner of the powers of darkness. Satan has him completely under his control.

Such strong, discouraging influences as these have been a tide almost too strong for the church to stand against. Ten members, who were walking in all humbleness of mind, would have a far greater power upon the world than has the entire church, with its present numbers and lack of unity. The more there is of the divided, inharmonious element, the less power will the church have for good in the world.

Would that I could make plain to your beclouded senses, my brethren, the great peril you are in. Every action, good or bad, prepares the way for its repetition. How was it in the case of Pharaoh? The statement in Holy Writ is that God hardened his heart; and, at every repetition of light in the manifestation of God’s power, the statement is repeated. Every time he refused to submit to God’s will, his heart became harder and less impressible by the Spirit of God. He sowed the seed of obstinacy, and God left it to vegetate. He might have prevented it by a miracle, but that was not his plan. He allowed it to grow and produce a harvest of its own kind, thus proving the truthfulness of the scripture, “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.” When a man plants doubts, he will reap doubts. By rejecting the first light and every following ray, Pharaoh went from one degree of hardness of heart to another, until the cold, [116] dead form of the first-born only checked his unbelief and obstinacy for a moment. And then, determined not to yield to God’s way, he continued his willful course until overwhelmed by the waters of the Red Sea.

This case is placed on record for our benefit. Just what took place in Pharaoh's heart, will take place in every soul that neglects to cherish the light, and walk promptly in its rays. God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence. When a person once neglects to heed the invitations, reproofs, and warnings, of the Spirit of God, his conscience becomes seared, and the next time he is admonished, it will be more difficult to yield obedience than before. And thus with every repetition. Conscience is the voice of God, heard amid the conflict of human passions; when it is resisted, the Spirit of God is grieved.

We want all to understand how the soul is destroyed. It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved. He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. Then comes the harvest to be reaped from the seed of unbelief and resistance. Oh, what a harvest of sinful indulgences is preparing for the sickle!

When secret prayer and reading of the Scriptures are neglected to-day, to-morrow they can be omitted with less remonstrance of conscience. There will be a long list of omissions, all for a single grain sown in the soil of the heart. On the other hand, every ray of light cherished, will yield a harvest of light. Temptation once resisted will give power to more firmly resist the second time; every new victory gained over self, will smooth the way for higher and nobler triumphs. Every victory is a seed sown to eternal life.

There is great need of zealous, faithful, self-denying workers in our churches throughout the land. No one can labor in the Sabbath-school or in the temperance work without reaping a bountiful harvest, not only in the end of the world, but in the present life. In the very effort to enlighten and bless others, his own views will become clearer and broader. The more we endeavor to explain the truth to others, with a love for souls, the plainer will it become to ourselves. It ever opens with new beauty and force to the understanding of the expounder.

There are some good workers in your church, and these self-denying ones will never know how much good they have accomplished by their persevering efforts in the missionary field. But the

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Lord has claims upon more men and women in the church than have yielded to his demands. Some of the stones composing God's holy temple reflect the light which shines upon them from Jesus Christ, while others emit no light, thus clearly revealing that they are not living stones, elect, precious. They are not devotional, but prayerless, talkative, irreligious. True Christians will copy the pattern given them by our Saviour, and will be meek, lowly, forbearing, gentle, easy to be entreated, free from pomposity and stubbornness.

DANGERS OF THE YOUNG.

[118] Mr. — has a nature that Satan plays upon with wonderful success. This case is one that should teach the young a lesson in regard to marriage. His wife followed feeling and impulse, not reason and judgment, in selecting a companion. Was their marriage the result of true love? No, no; it was the result of impulse,—blind, unsanctified passion. Neither was at all fitted for the responsibilities of married life. When the novelty of the new order of things wore away, and each became acquainted with the other, did their love become stronger, their affection deeper, and their lives blend together in beautiful harmony? It was entirely the opposite. The worst traits of their character began to deepen by exercise, and, instead of their married life being one of happiness, it has been one of increasing trouble, especially to the wife. God in his mercy has tested her, spared her life, and lengthened her probation, in order that she might obtain a fitness for the future life.

Her husband has a very defective character. Without a thorough transformation by the grace of God, he would be unfit to connect in marriage with any woman. He is so thoroughly impregnated with self, so entirely given up to habits of self-indulgence and easy indolence, that he needs to be under discipline himself, rather than have anything to do in disciplining wife or children. This man's mind has been cast in an inferior mold. He has encouraged coarseness and objectionable traits of character, until he was presented to me as having scarcely a redeeming quality in his character. There is only one hope, and that is that he will see himself, and so despise and loathe himself, that he will seek a new heart, be born again, and become a new man in Christ Jesus. He should become a diligent

man. Industry will be of great advantage to him. His course is offensive to God, in that he invites temptation. His rudeness, his threats, his untamable, uncourteous spirit, will make him a curse to himself and to others. His conduct toward his wife's mother has been rude and ungentlemanly. It should henceforth be the life study of both husband and wife, how to avoid everything that creates contention, and to keep unbroken the marriage vows.

Just such unsanctified marriages are filling up the ranks of Sabbath-keepers. God wants his children to be happy, and, if they would learn of him, he would save them from the daily misery which comes in consequence of these unhappy unions. Many marriages can only be productive of misery, and yet the minds of the youth run in this channel because Satan leads them there, making them believe that they must be married in order to be happy, when they have not the ability to control themselves or support a family. Those who are not willing to adapt themselves to each other's disposition, so as to avoid unpleasant differences and contentions, should not take the step. But this is one of the alluring snares of the last days, in which thousands are ruined for this life and the next. Imagination, love-sick sentimentalism, should be guarded against as would be the leprosy. Very many of the young men and women in this age of the world are lacking in virtue; therefore great caution is needed. A virtuous character is the foundation upon which to build, but if the foundation is gone, the building is worthless. Those who have preserved a virtuous character, although they may lack in other desirable qualities, may be of real moral worth.

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In order for the church to prosper, there must be a studious effort on the part of its members to cherish the precious plant of love. Let it have every advantage that it may flourish in the heart. Every true Christian will develop in his life the characteristics of this divine love, he will reveal a spirit of forbearance, of beneficence, and a freedom from envy and jealousy. This character developed in word and act will not repulse, and will not be unapproachable, cold, and indifferent to the interests of others. The person who cultivates the precious plant of love will be self-denying in spirit, and will not yield self-control even under provocation. He will not impute wrong motives and evil intentions to others, but will feel deeply over sin when discovered in any of the disciples of Christ.

[120] Love vaunteth not itself. It is a humble element; it never prompts a man to boast, to exalt himself. Love for God and for our fellow-men will not be revealed in acts of rashness, nor lead us to be overbearing, fault-finding, or dictatorial. Love is not puffed up. The heart where love reigns will be guided to a gentle, courteous, compassionate course of conduct toward others, whether they suit our fancy or not, whether they respect us or treat us ill. Love is an active principle; it keeps the good of others continually before us, thus restraining us from inconsiderate actions lest we fail of our object in winning souls to Christ. Love seeks not its own. It will not prompt men to seek their own ease and indulgence of self. It is the respect we render to 1 that so often hinders the growth of love.

There are men of poverty and obscurity whose lives God would accept and make full of usefulness on earth and of glory in Heaven, but Satan is working persistently to defeat his purposes and drag them down to perdition by marriage with those whose character is such that they throw themselves directly across the road to life. Very few come out from this entanglement triumphant. Bro. —, you are willing to experiment and try to prove that you will be an exception to the general rule. Joseph was one of the few who could withstand temptation. He showed that he had an eye single to the glory of God. He evidenced a lofty regard to God's will, alike when occupying the prisoner's cell and when standing next the throne. He carried his religion with him wherever he went, and in whatever situation he was placed. True religion has an all-pervading power. It gives tone to everything man does. You need not go out of the world in order to be a Christian, but you may carry your religion, with all its sanctifying influences, into all you do and say. You may discharge well the duties belonging to the situation where God has placed you, by keeping the heart fixed upon heavenly things, and thus break the spell now upon you through unwise association. Had you followed the light, you would now be able to escape the snares which those who discern not the will of God have laid to captivate your soul.

[121] Another striking point in the character of Joseph, worthy of imitation by all youth, is his deep filial reverence. As he meets his father with tears streaming from his eyes, he hangs upon his neck in an affectionate, loving embrace. He seems to feel that he cannot do enough for his parent's comfort, and watches over his declining

years with a love as tender as a mother's. No pains is spared to show his respect and love upon all occasions. Joseph is an example of what a youth should be. Love manifested for your mother, would disclose a beautiful trait of character such as God would approve.

The want of respect for the counsel of a godly parent, is one of the marked sins of this degenerate age. There are many lives in our land that are dark and wretched because of one step taken in the dark. By one act of disobedience, many a youth has blighted his whole life and weighed down a loving mother's heart with anguish. God will not hold you guiltless if you follow in this course. By despising the counsel of a God-fearing mother, who would willingly give her life for her children, you are transgressing the fifth commandment. You know not where your steps are leading you.

I again plead a mother's claim, a mother's love. There can be no baser ingratitude than that which marks the sin of disobedience to a Christian mother. In the days of your helpless infancy she watched over you; her prayers and tears were witnessed of Heaven as she affectionately cherished you. For her children she has toiled and planned, thought, prayed, and exercised self-denial. Through your whole life her true heart has been anxious and earnest for your welfare. And yet now you choose your own course; you follow your own blind, stubborn will, irrespective of the bitter harvest you will reap, and the sorrow you will bring upon her.

Infirmities are gathering about your mother. She needs you; any attention you may render will be very precious to her. There are none of her other children to whom she can look. They feel under no obligation to her. But you will find the privilege which is now yours may soon be lost. Do not think, however, that should you neglect your privilege and your duty as a son, your mother would suffer. She has true friends who will feel it a privilege to do the duties from which you withdraw yourself. God loves your mother, and will care for her. If her own children neglect her, he will raise up others to do the work they might have done, and receive the blessing which was offered them. It is their privilege to make her last days her best and happiest.

I tell you plainly, God is displeased with your course. There are troubles before you that you do not discern, and which may be avoided if you choose to follow wise counsel. Our Saviour has

made you the object of his unwearied labors and tender solicitude, that you may be wise and not ruin yourself. He yearns over you in boundless compassion and love, exclaiming, "How often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not." Your foolish heart has turned from the counsel of your best friends.

Because of earnest, faithful warnings to guard you against the mistakes of a lifetime, you have imagined you were a great benefit to the church. True, you are capable, in Jesus Christ, of being useful; but notwithstanding this, the Lord and the church can get along without you. You can join the army of Christ's followers if you will; you may share in its conflicts and triumphs. But if you choose not to do this, the self-denying army under the blood-stained banner of the cross will move on to certain victory, and leave you behind. If you choose to guide your own frail bark across life's stormy waters, you must answer for the presumption, and be held responsible for the result.

[123] If you could see how you have already become weak in principle, if you could see how your honor and honesty are imperiled, you would then see that God is not with you, and that you ought not to stand in the place of responsibility you now occupy; you are unworthy. My heart is sad indeed when I know what you might have been had you yielded yourself wholly to God, and then see the power the enemy has had over you.

The Sabbath-school work is important, and all who are interested in the truth should endeavor to make it prosperous. Bro. — could have served well in this branch of the work, had he and others in the church pursued a right course. But he has been praised and petted too much. It has nearly ruined him. The Lord can do without him, but he cannot afford to do without God. The Lord will entrust his work to men with clean hands and a pure heart, therefore it is an honor to bear responsibilities in his cause.

The temperance work is also worthy of your best endeavors. But great care should be taken to make the temperance meetings as elevated and ennobling as possible. Avoid a surface work, and everything of a theatrical character. Those who realize the solemn character of this work will keep the standard high. But there is a class who have no real respect for the cause of temperance; their only

concern is to show off their smartness upon the stage. The pure, the thoughtful, and those who understand the object of the work, should be encouraged to labor in these great branches of reform. They may not be intellectually great, but if pure and humble, Godfearing and true, the Lord will accept their labors.

Literary societies are quite frequently organized, but, in nine cases out of ten, they have proved a damage to souls, rather than a blessing. This is because an alliance is formed with the world, or with a class whose influence and tendency is ever to lead away from the solid to the superficial, from the real to the fictitious. Literary societies would be of great advantage, if controlled by a religious element; but, sooner or later, the irreligious element is almost certain to gain the ascendancy, and have a controlling influence. Just so it is with our temperance societies. The solemnity of the work is all covered up with the superficial, and a continual temptation is placed before the youth whom we wish to save.

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The facts are before us. The burden-bearers among us are dropping off into the silent grave. The active members of the church, the true workers in all reforms, are mostly past the meridian of life, and are declining in physical and mental strength. We should anxiously contemplate who are to rise up and fill their places. To whom are to be committed the vital interests of the church? The question may be asked by us with the deepest concern, Who will bear the responsibilities of the cause of God when a few more standard-bearers fall? We can but look anxiously upon the youth of to-day as those who must take these burdens, and upon whom responsibilities must fall. They must take the work where others leave it, and their course will determine whether morality, religion, and vital godliness shall prevail, or whether immorality and infidelity shall corrupt and blight all that is valuable. It is the way the standard is carried now, that will determine the future.

Parents, will you now show by your course of action that wholesome restraint, good order, harmony, and peace shall be the ruling principle? or, shall those whose course of life shows that they have frivolous minds and are low in the scale of moral worth, have a molding, controlling influence? God calls upon his believing people to connect with him, to purify their souls by humbly walking in the footsteps of Jesus. God calls upon you to put away pride of

opinion, pride of dress, and self-exaltation, and let the good and noble faculties of the mind strengthen with use.

[125] Will men and women professing the most solemn truths ever borne to mortals, be true to principle? If they would have an influence to lead the world to serious reflection, they must be; their dress and conversation must be in strict accordance with their peculiar faith. Those who are older must educate the young, by precept and example, how to discharge those claims which society and their Maker have upon them. Upon these youth must be laid grave responsibilities. The question is whether they are capable of governing themselves, and standing forth in the purity of their God-given manhood, abhorring anything which savors of licentiousness and discord.

Can I say anything that will make an impression upon the young? Never before was there so much at stake; never was there such weighty results depending upon a generation as upon these now coming upon the stage of action. Not for one moment should they think that they can fill any position of trust without possessing a good character. Just as well might they expect to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. A good character must be built up brick by brick, every day growing in proportion to the effort put forth. Those characteristics which they will take to Heaven with them, must be obtained by the diligent exercise of their own faculties, by improving every advantage Providence gives them, and by connecting with the Source of all wisdom. Aim for no low standard. Let not your minds be cast in an inferior mold. The characters of Joseph and Daniel are good models for you to follow, but Christ is the perfect pattern.

[126] Some of the brethren and sisters in the — church have done a good missionary work, but their interest must not flag. A few have done more than their strength would admit; but it was their meat and drink to do it. All can act a part in this work, and none are excused. Jesus would have all who profess his name become earnest workers. It is necessary that every individual member build upon the rock Christ Jesus. A storm is arising that will wrench and test the spiritual foundation of every one to the utmost. Therefore avoid the sand-bed; hunt for the rock. Dig deep; lay your foundation sure. Build, oh, build for eternity! Build with tears, with heart felt prayers. Let every one of you, from henceforth, make your life beautiful by good works.

Calebs are the men most needed in these last days. That which will make our churches vigorous and successful in their efforts, is not bustle, but quiet, humble work; not parade and bombast, but patient, prayerful, persevering effort.

“He that is not for me,” said Christ, “is against me.” It is whole-hearted, thoroughly decided men and women who will stand now. Christ sifted his followers again and again, until, at one time, there remained only eleven and a few faithful women, to lay the foundation of the Christian church. There are those who will stand back when burdens are to be borne, but when the church is all aglow, they catch the enthusiasm, sing and shout, and become rapturous; but watch them. When the fervor is gone, only a few faithful Calebs will come to the front and display unwavering principle. These are salt that retains the savor. It is when the work moves hard that the churches develop the true helpers. These will not be talking of self, vindicating self, but will lose their identity in Jesus Christ. To be great in God’s kingdom is to be a little child in humility, in simplicity of faith, and in the purity of love. All pride must perish. All jealousy be overcome, all ambition for supremacy be given up, and the meekness and trust of the child be encouraged. All such will find Christ their rock of defense, their strong tower. In him they may trust implicitly, and he will never fail them.

Oh, that all who believe present truth would be warned to seek the Lord. The thoughts of God’s infinite mercy and of his matchless love, should influence all to imitate his example. But this is not the case. Some of our sisters indulge too freely in a love for dress and display; they do not dress at all in harmony with our holy faith. This is true of Sr. —. The world should have a better example than this sister has given it. She should feel her God-given responsibility to cast the entire weight of her influence upon the side of Christ, and seek to make those with whom she associates less worldly. She and Sr. — would be of far greater advantage to the church if they would encourage plainness of dress in themselves and others. Those sisters who are dressmakers, and who study the fashion plates, frequently lead others in the church to do that which is displeasing to God, by encouraging them to cut and trim their dresses in imitation of the world. The efforts of these sisters to do good would be far more acceptable to God were there seen in their lives less dressing,

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less cheap, worldly talking, and less visiting; less complaining and murmuring against the ministers laboring for you, and more praying and reading of the Bible.

The Lord is displeased with the course pursued by many in the church toward some of their ministering brethren. He bids you cease your cruel speeches, and let words of encouragement take the place of your murmuring, your repining, your faultfinding. Christ is speaking to you in the person of his saints, and you have despised his counsel and rejected his reproof. Do this no longer. Elder — has a work to do, not only in the East, but in many places. God will be with him and prosper him, if he hides in Jesus. He is not infallible; he may at times err in judgment. But be careful how you speak that which will make of none effect the words God bids him utter.

[128] When he knows what the will of God is, he would not hesitate to do it should it cost him his life. While many of you plan only how you can please self and have an easy life, his whole life and interest is wrapped up in the cause of God. While studying and planning for the cause, he has sometimes exercised shrewdness and sharpness, which has led others to misjudge him. His aim was not to advantage himself, but the cause which he loved. While the Lord would have you faithfully uphold the hands of his tried servants, he would warn you against placing too great confidence in those who have newly come to the faith, or with whose past life and labors you are unacquainted.

It is your privilege to be a prosperous, happy church. Let each one of you search his own heart, cleanse the defiled soul temple, and watch unto prayer. Be determined you will seek Jesus until you find him; release not your grasp until his love dwells in your heart, and you have his spirit subduing your life and fashioning your character. Then believe, and with boldness you may approach his throne, knowing that he will hear your prayers.

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LABORERS FOR GOD.

FELLOW-LABORERS in the great harvest field, we have but little time left in which to labor. Now is the most favorable opportunity we shall ever have, and how carefully ought every moment to be employed. So devoted was our Redeemer to the work of saving souls, that he even longed for his baptism of blood. The apostles caught the zeal of their Master, and firmly, steadily, zealously went forward to the accomplishment of their great work, fighting against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

We are living in a time when even greater earnestness is needed than in the apostles' day. But among many of the ministers of Christ there is a feeling of unrest, a desire to imitate the romantic style of modern revivalists, a desire to do something great, to create a sensation, to be accounted able speakers, and gain for themselves honor and distinction. If such could encounter perils and receive the honor given to heroes, they would engage in the work with unflagging energy. But to live and labor almost unknown, to toil and sacrifice for Jesus in obscurity, receiving no special praise from men,—this requires a soundness of principle and a steadfastness of purpose that but few possess. Were there a greater effort to walk humbly with God, looking away from men, and laboring only for Christ's sake, far more would be accomplished.

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My ministering brethren, seek Jesus with all lowliness and meekness. Do not try to draw the attention of the people to yourselves. Let them lose sight of the instrument, while you exalt Jesus. Talk of Jesus; lose self in Jesus. There is too much bustle and stir about our religion, while Calvary and the cross are forgotten.

We are in the greatest peril when we receive praise of one another, when we enter into a confederacy to exalt one another. The great burden of the Pharisees was to secure the praise of men; and Christ told them that that was all the reward they would ever receive. Let us take up our appointed work, and do it for Christ; if we suffer privation, let it be for his sake. Our divine Lord was made

perfect through suffering. Oh, when shall we see men laboring as he labored!

The word of God is our standard. Every act of love, every word of kindness, every prayer in behalf of the suffering and oppressed, is reported before the eternal throne, and placed on Heaven's imperishable record. The divine word pours light into the most darkened understanding, and that light makes the most cultivated feel their inefficiency and sinfulness.

The enemy is buying souls to-day very cheap. "Ye have sold yourselves for a thing of naught," is the language of Scripture. One is selling his soul for the world's applause, another for money; one to gratify base passions, another for worldly amusement. Such bargains are made daily. Satan is bidding for the purchase"" of Christ's blood, and buying them cheap, notwithstanding the infinite price which has been paid to ransom them.

[130] Great blessings and privileges are ours. We may secure the most valuable heavenly treasures. Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth ruins if it does not save. The soul that refuses to listen to the invitations of mercy from day to day, can soon listen to the most urgent appeals without an emotion stirring his soul.

As laborers with God, we need more fervent piety, and less self-exaltation. The more self is exalted, the more will faith in the testimonies of the Spirit of God be lessened. Those who are the most closely connected with God are the ones who know his voice when he speaks to them. Those who are spiritual discern spiritual things. Such will feel grateful that the Lord has pointed out their errors, while those who trust wholly in themselves will see less and less of God in the testimonies of his Spirit.

Our work must be accompanied with deep humiliation, fasting, and prayer. We must not expect all peace and joy. There will be sadness; but if we sow in tears we shall reap in joy. Darkness and despondency may at times enter the heart of the self-sacrificing ones; but this is not against them. It may be God's design to cause them to seek him more earnestly.

What we need now is Calebs, men who are faithful and true. Indolence marks the lives of too many at the present day. They turn their shoulders from the wheel just when they should persevere and bring all their powers into active exercise. Ministers of Christ,

“Awake out of sleep, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life.” Your labors taste so strongly of self that Christ is forgotten. Some of you are pampered and flattered too much. As in the days of Noah, there is too much eating and drinking, planting and building. The world has stolen the energies of the servants of Christ. Brethren, if you would have your religion honored by unbelievers, honor it yourselves by corresponding works. By a close connection with God and a strict adherence to Bible truth in the face of difficulty and worldly pressure, you may infuse the spirit of the truth into the hearts of your children so that they will work effectually with you as instruments in God’s hands for good. [131]

Many are incapacitated for labor both mentally and physically by over-eating and the gratification of the lustful passions. The animal propensities are strengthened, while the moral and spiritual nature is enfeebled. When we shall stand around the great white throne, what a record will the lives of many then present. Then will they see what they might have done had they not debased their God-given powers. Then will they realize what height of intellectual greatness they might have attained, had they given to God all the physical and mental strength he had entrusted to them. In their agony of remorse they will long to have their lives to live over again.

I call upon those who profess to be light-bearers— ensamples to the flock—to depart from all iniquity. Use well the little remnant of time now left you. Have you that strong hold of God, that consecration to his service, that your religion will not fail you in the face of direst persecution ? The deep love of God alone will sustain the soul amid the trials which are just upon us.

Self-denial and the cross are our portion. Will we accept it ? None of us need expect that when the last great trials come upon us a self-sacrificing, patriotic spirit will be developed in a moment because needed. No, indeed. This spirit must be blended with our daily experience, and infused into the minds and hearts of our children, both by precept and example. Mothers in Israel may not be warriors themselves, but they may raise up warriors who shall gird on the whole armor and fight manfully the battles of the Lord.

Ministers and people need the converting power of grace before they will be able to stand in the day of the Lord. The world is fast approaching that point in iniquity and human depravity when God’s [132]

inter-ference will become necessary. And at that time his professed followers should be more marked for their fidelity to his holy law. Their prayer will be as that of David: “It is time for thee, O Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law.” And by their conduct they will say: “Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold.” The very contempt that is shown to the law of God is sufficient reason why his commandment-keeping people should come to the front and show their esteem and reverence for his down-trodden law.

“And because iniquity abounds, the love of many shall wax cold.” The very atmosphere is polluted with sin. Soon God’s people will be tested by fiery trials, and the great proportion of those who now appear to be genuine and true will prove to be base metal. Instead of being strengthened and confirmed by opposition, threats, and abuse, they will cowardly take the side of the opposers. The promise is, “Them that honor me I will honor.” Shall we be less firmly attached to God’s law because the world at large have attempted to make it void?

Already the judgments of God are abroad in the land, as seen in storms, in floods, in tempests, in earthquakes, in peril by land and by sea. The great I AM is speaking to those who make void his law. When God’s wrath is poured out upon the earth, who will then be able to stand? Now is the time for God’s people to show themselves true to principle. When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when his law is most despised, then should our zeal be the warmest and our courage and firmness the most unflinching. To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few,—this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason. The nation will be on the side of the great rebel leader.

[133] The test will surely come. Thirty-six years ago I was shown that what is now transpiring would take place, that the observance of an institution of the Papacy would be enforced upon the people by a Sunday law, while the sanctified rest-day of Jehovah would be trampled under foot.

The Captain of our salvation will strengthen his people for the conflict in which they must engage. How often when Satan has

brought all his forces to bear against the followers of Christ, and death stares them in the face, have earnest prayers, put up in faith, brought the Captain of the Lord's host upon the field of action and turned the tide of battle and delivered the oppressed.

Now is the time when we should closely connect with God, that we may be hid when the fierceness of his wrath is poured upon the sons of men. We have wandered away from the old landmarks. Let us return. If the Lord be God, serve him; if Baal, serve him. Which side will you be on ?

* * * * *

AGENTS OF SATAN.

Satan uses men and women as agents to solicit to sin and make it attractive. These agents he faithfully educates to so disguise sin that he can more successfully destroy souls and rob Christ of his glory. Satan is the great enemy of God and man. He transforms himself through his agents into angels of light. In the Scriptures he is called a destroyer, an accuser of the brethren, a deceiver, a liar, a tormentor, and a murderer. Satan has many in his employ, but is most successful when he can use professed Christians for his Satanic work. And the greater their influence, the more elevated their position, the more knowledge they profess of God and his service, the more success-fully can he use them. Whoever entices to sin is his agent.

[134] While attending one of the Eastern camp-meetings, I was introduced one Friday, to a man who occupied a tent with several women and children. That night I was unable to sleep; my soul was deeply burdened. While pleading with God in the night season, a vision given years ago at the time when the course of Nathan Fuller was reproved, was distinctly revived in my mind. At that time I was shown three men whom I should meet who would be pursuing the same course of iniquity under the profession of godliness. This man was one of the three. As I bore my testimony in the morning meeting, the power and Spirit of God rested upon me; but I did not mention individual cases. Later in the day, I felt clear in reference to my duty, and bore my testimony, referring to his case as most marked. By his course of action this man was going exactly contrary to the direction of the apostle, to “abstain from all appearance of evil.” He was breaking the seventh commandment, while professedly keeping the fourth. By his deception he was gathering around him a company of women who followed him from place to place, as a faithful wife would accompany her husband.

As a people, we are looked upon as peculiar. Our position and faith distinguish us from every other denomination. If we are in life

and character no better than the world, they will point the finger of scorn at us and say, "These are Seventh-day Adventists." "We have here a sample of the people who keep the seventh day for Sunday." The stigma which should be rightfully attached to such a class is thus placed upon all who are conscientiously keeping the seventh day. Oh, how much better it would be if such a class would not make any pretension to obey the truth!

I felt led out to rebuke this man in the name of the Lord, and to call upon the women who were with him to separate from him and withdraw their misplaced confidence, for unhappiness and ruin were in the path they had entered upon. The Ledger of Heaven testifies of this man thus: "A deceiver, an adulterer, creeping into houses and leading captive silly women." How many souls he will destroy with his Satanic sophistry the Judgment alone will reveal. Such men ought to be rebuked and discountenanced at once, that they may not bring a continual reproach upon the cause.

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As we near the close of earth's history, perils and dangers thicken around us. A mere profession of godliness will not avail. There must be a living connection with God, that we may have spiritual eye-sight to discern the wickedness which is in a most artful and secret manner creeping into our midst through those who make a profession of our faith. The greatest sins are brought in through those who profess to be sanctified, and claim that they cannot sin. Yet many of this class are sinning daily, and are corrupt in heart and life. Such are self-sufficient and self-righteous, making their own standard of righteousness, and utterly failing to meet the Bible standard. Notwithstanding their high claims, they are strangers to the covenant of promise. It is in great mercy that God bears with their perversity, and that they are not cut down as cumberers of the ground, but still remain within the possibilities of forgiveness. The forbearance of God is continually presumed upon and his mercy abused. David in his day thought that men had exceeded the boundaries of the long-suffering of God, and that he must interfere to vindicate his honor and restrain unrighteousness.

Mr. — is a teacher of doctrines that defile the temple of God. There is scarcely a ray of hope for him; he has deceived himself and deluded others so long that Satan has almost entire control of his mind and body. If his professed robe of righteousness can be torn

from him, and his vile purposes and thoughts be exposed, so that he will not continue to lead others in the paths of hell, it will be all we may expect.

[136] The warnings of God he first hated and then resisted, because they brought his own wicked course to be seen in the light of God's law. It is one of the saddest evidences of the blinding influence of sin. that months and years roll on and there is no awaking to repentance. With a firm persistence he has pursued his downward course. He has no bitter feelings of remorse, no dread of Heaven's vengeance. If by lies and deception he can cover his sins from observation, he is content. All sense of right and wrong is dead within him. A harvest is before him that he will be horrified to reap.

The worst feature in this case is that all his Satanic work is done under pretense of being a representative of Jesus Christ. One sinner dressed up as an angel of light can do incalculable harm. Dark and fearful plans are deliberately laid to separate man and wife. Said the apostle, "Of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts." These licentious characters even creep into respectable families, and by their deceptive wiles and intrigues lead astray the conscientious. Damnable heresies are received as truth, and the most revolting sins committed as acts of righteousness, for conscience becomes confused and stupefied.

[137] This man embraced the unpopular doctrine that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord in order to give to his religious experience a semblance of honesty. Our views have been clearly defined in our publications, but concealing this fact, he mixed with truth his own defiling heresies, and tried to make others believe that God had given him new light upon the Bible. By thus professing to have great light for the people on the Sabbath of the fourth commandment and kindred truths, he had to the unsuspecting an appearance of really being led of God. But when once the confidence is gained, he commences his Satanic work of wresting the Scriptures from their true meaning, by seeking to show that adultery condemned in the law of God does not mean what it is generally understood to mean. He really tries to make sensible women believe it not offensive to God for wives to be untrue to their marriage vows. He will not even admit that this would be breaking the seventh

commandment. Satan rejoices to have sinners enter the church as professed Sabbathkeepers, while they allow him to control their minds and affections, using them to deceive and corrupt others.

In this degenerate age many will be found who are so blinded to the sinfulness of sin that they choose a licentious life, because it suits the natural and perverse inclination of the heart. Instead of facing the mirror, the law of God, and bringing their hearts and characters up to God's standard, they allow Satan's agents to erect his standard in their hearts. Corrupt men think it easier to misinterpret the Scriptures to sustain them in their iniquity, than to yield up their corruption and sin, and be pure in heart and life.

There are more men of this stamp than many have imagined, and they will multiply as we draw near the end of time. Unless they are rooted and grounded in the truth of the Bible, and have a living connection with God, many will be infatuated and deceived. Dangers unseen beset our path. Our only safety is in constant watchfulness and prayer. The nearer we live to Jesus, the more will we partake of his pure and holy character; and the more offensive sin appears to us, the more exalted and desirable will appear the purity and brightness of Christ.

In order to cover his corrupt life, and make his sins appear harmless, this man will bring up instances recorded in the Bible where good men have fallen under temptation. Paul met with just such men in his day, and the church has been cursed with them in all ages. At Miletus, Paul called the elders of the church together, and warned them in regard to what they would meet: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

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He who holds the truth in unrighteousness, who declares his belief in it, and yet wounds it every day by his inconsistent life, is surrendering himself to the service of Satan, and leading souls to ruin. This class hold intercourse with fallen angels, and are aided

by them in gaining the control of minds. When Satan's bewitching power controls a person, God is forgotten, and man who is filled with corrupt purposes is extolled. Secret licentiousness is practiced by these deceived souls as a virtue. This is a species of witchcraft. The question of the apostle to the Galatians may well be asked: "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" There is always a bewitching power in heresies and in licentiousness. The mind is so deluded that it cannot reason intelligently, and an illusion is continually leading it from purity. The spiritual eye-sight becomes blurred; and persons of hitherto untainted morals, become confused under the delusive sophistry of those agents of Satan who profess to be messengers of light. It is this delusion which gives these agents power. Should they come out boldly, and make their advances openly, they would be repulsed without a moment's hesitation; but they work first to gain sympathy and secure confidence in them as holy, self-sacrificing men of God. As his special messengers, they then begin their artful work of drawing away souls from the path of rectitude, by attempting to make void the law of God.

When ministers thus take advantage of the confidence the people place in them, and lead souls to ruin, they make themselves as much more guilty than the common sinner as their profession is higher. In the day of God, when the great Ledger of Heaven is opened, it will be found to contain the names of many ministers who have made pretensions to purity of heart and life, and professed to be entrusted with the gospel of Christ, but who have taken advantage of their position to allure souls to transgress the law of God.

When men and women fall under the corrupting power of Satan, it is almost impossible to recover them out of the horrible snare, so that they will ever again have pure thoughts and clear conceptions of God's requirements. Sin, to their deluded minds, has been sanctified by the minister, and it is never again regarded in the loathsome light that God looks upon it. After the moral standard has been lowered in the minds of men, their judgment becomes perverted, and they look upon sin as righteousness, and righteousness as sin. By associating with these, whose inclinations and habits are not elevated and pure,

others become like them. Their tastes and principles are almost unconsciously adopted.

If the society of a man of impure mind and licentious habits is chosen in preference to that of the virtuous and pure, it is a sure indication that the tastes and inclinations harmonize, that a low level of morals is reached. This level is called by these deceived, infatuated souls, a high and holy affinity of spirit,—a spiritual harmony. But the apostle terms it “spiritual wickedness in high places,” against which we are to institute a vigorous warfare.

When the deceiver commences his work of deception, he frequently finds dissimilarity of tastes and habits; but by great pretensions to godliness he gains the confidence, and when this is done, his wily, deceptive power is exercised in his own way, to carry out his devices. By associating with this dangerous element, women become accustomed to breathe the atmosphere of impurity, and almost insensibly become permeated with the same spirit. Their identity is lost; they become the shadow of their seducer. [140]

Men professing to have new light, claiming to be reformers, will have great influence over a certain class who are convinced of the heresies that exist in the present age, and who are not satisfied with the spiritual condition of the churches. With true, honest hearts, these desire to see a change for the better, a coming up to a higher standard. If the faithful servants of Christ would present the truth, pure and unadulterated to this class, they would accept it, and purify themselves by obeying it. But Satan, ever vigilant, sets upon the track of these inquiring souls. Someone making high profession as a reformer comes to them, as Satan came to Christ, disguised as an angel of light, and draws them still farther from the path of right.

The unhappiness and degradation that follow in the train of licentiousness cannot be estimated. The world is defiled under its inhabitants. They have nearly filled up the measure of their iniquity; but that which will bring the heaviest retribution, is the practice of iniquity under the cloak of godliness. The Redeemer of the world never spurned true repentance, however great the guilt; but he hurls burning denunciations against Pharisees and hypocrites. There is more hope for the open sinner than for this class.

“And for this cause [not receiving the love of the truth] God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they

all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” This man and those deceived by him, love not the truth, and have pleasure in unrighteousness. And what stronger delusion could come upon them than that there is nothing displeas-

[141] ing to God in licentiousness and adultery. The Bible contains many warnings against these sins. Paul writes to Titus of those who “profess that they know God, but in works deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” “ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily [not openly] shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” The ones here referred to are not those who openly claim to have no faith in Christ, but those who profess to *believe* the truth, and by their vileness of character bring a reproach upon it, causing it to be evil spoken of.

“And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” “ But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the daytime. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls; a heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children, which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.”

“These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity,” boasting of their light, their knowledge and their love of the truth, “ they allure through the

[142] lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those who were clean escaped from them who live in error.”

In this age of corruption, when our adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, I see the

necessity of lifting my voice in warning. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." There are many who possess brilliant talents, who wickedly devote them to the service of Satan. What warning can I give to a people who profess to have come out from the world, and to have left its works of darkness? to a people whom God has made the repositories of his law, but who like the pretentious fig-tree, flaunt their apparently flourishing branches in the very face of the Almighty, yet bear no fruit to the glory of God. Many of them cherish impure thoughts, unholy imaginations, unsanctified desires, and base passions. God hates the fruit borne upon such a tree. Angels, pure and holy, look upon the course of such with abhorrence, while Satan exults. Oh that men and women would consider what is to be gained by transgressing God's law! Under any and every circumstance, transgression is a dishonor to God and a curse to man. We must regard it thus, however fair its guise, and by whomsoever committed.

As Christ's ambassador, I entreat you who profess present truth, to promptly resent any approach to impurity, and forsake the society of those who breathe an impure suggestion. Loathe these defiling sins with the most intense hatred. Flee from those who would, even in conversation, let the mind run in such a channel; "for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh."

As those who practice these defiling sins are steadily increasing in the world, and would intrude them-selves into our churches, I warn you to give no place to them. Turn from the seducer. Though a professed follower of Christ, he is Satan in the form of man; he has borrowed the livery of Heaven that he may the better serve his master. You should not for one moment give place to an impure, covert suggestion; for even this will stain the soul, as impure water defiles the channel through which it passes. [143]

Choose poverty, reproach, separation from friends, or any suffering, rather than to defile the soul with sin. Death before dishonor or the transgression of God's law, should be the motto of every Christian. As a people professing to be reformers, treasuring the most solemn, purifying truths of God's word, we must elevate the standard far higher than it is at the present time. Sin and sinners in the church must be promptly dealt with, that others may not be contaminated. Truth and purity require that we make more thorough

work to cleanse the camp from Achans. Let those in responsible positions not suffer sin in a brother. Show him that he must either put away his sins or be separated from the church.

When the individual members of the church shall act as true followers of the meek and lowly Saviour, there will be less covering up and excusing of sin. All will strive to act as if in God's presence. They will realize that his all-seeing eye is ever upon them, and that the most secret thought is known to him. The character, the motives, the desires and purposes, are as clear as the light of the sun to the eye of the Omnipotent. But few bear this in mind. The larger class by far do not realize what a fearful account must be rendered at the bar of God by all the transgressors of his law.

[144] Can you who have professed to receive such great light, be content with a low level ? Oh, how earnestly and constantly should we seek for the divine presence, and a realization of the solemn truths that the end of all things is at hand, and that the Judge of all the earth stands at the door! How can you disregard his just and holy requirements? How can you transgress in the very face of Jehovah? How can you cherish unholy thoughts and base passions in full view of the pure angels, and of the Redeemer, who gave himself for you that he might redeem you from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works? As you contemplate the matter in the light which shines from the cross of Christ, will not sin appear too mean, too perilous, to be indulged when standing upon the very borders of the eternal world?

I speak to our people. If you draw close to Jesus, and seek to adorn your profession by a well-ordered life and godly conversation, your feet will be kept from straying into forbidden paths. If you will only watch, continually watch unto prayer, if you will do everything as if you were in the immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation, and may hope to be kept pure, spotless, and undefiled till the last. If you hold the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end, your ways will be established in God, and what grace has begun, glory will crown in the kingdom of our God. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. If Christ be within us, we shall crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.

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WILL A MAN ROB GOD?

THE Lord has made the diffusion of light and truth in the earth dependent on the voluntary efforts and offerings of those who have been partakers of the heavenly gifts. Comparatively few are called to travel as ministers or missionaries, but multitudes are to co-operate in spreading the truth with their means.

[145] The history of Ananias and Sapphira is given us that we may understand the sin of deception in regard to our gifts and offerings. They had voluntarily promised to give a portion of their property for the promotion of the cause of Christ; but when the means was in their hands they declined to fulfill that obligation, at the same time wishing it to appear to others that they had given all. Their punishment was marked, in order that it might serve as a perpetual warning to Christians of all ages. The same sin is fearfully prevalent at the present time, yet we hear of no such signal punishment. The Lord shows men once with what abhorrence he regards such an offense against his sacred claims and dignity, and then they are left to follow the general principles of the divine administration.

Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the gospel. Of the means which are entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion,—a tithe; but he leaves all free to say how much the tithe is, and whether or not they will give more than this. They are to give as they purpose in their hearts. But when the heart is stirred by the influence of the Spirit of God, and a vow is made to give a certain amount, the one who vowed has no longer any right to the consecrated portion. He has given his pledge before men, and they are called to witness to the transaction. At the same time he has incurred an obligation of the most sacred character to cooperate with the Lord in building up his kingdom on earth. Promises of this kind made to men would be considered binding. Are they not more sacred and binding when made to God? Are promises tried in the court of conscience less binding than written agreements with men?

When the divine light is shining into the heart with unusual clearness and power, habitual selfishness relaxes its grasp, and there is a disposition to give to the cause of God. None need expect that they will be allowed to fulfill the promises then made without a protest on the part of Satan. He is not pleased to see the Redeemer's kingdom on earth built up. He suggests that the pledge made was too much, that it may cripple them in their efforts to acquire property or gratify the desires of their families. The power Satan has over the human mind is wonderful. He labors most earnestly to keep the heart bound up in self. [146]

The only means which God has ordained to advance his cause is to bless men with property. He gives them the sunshine and the rain; he causes vegetation to flourish; he gives health, and ability to acquire means. All our blessings come from his bountiful hand. In turn he would have men and women show their gratitude by returning him a portion in tithes and offerings,—in thank-offerings, in free-will offerings, in trespass-offerings.

The hearts of men become hardened through selfishness, and like Ananias and Sapphira, they are tempted to withhold part of the price, while pretending to come up to the rules of tithing. Will a man rob God? Should means flow into the treasury exactly according to God's plan,—a tenth of all the increase,—there would be abundance to carry forward his work.

Well, says one, the calls keep coming to give to the cause. I am weary of giving. Are you t Then let me ask, Are you weary of receiving from God's beneficent hand? Not until he ceases to bless you will you cease to be under bonds to return to him the portion he claims. He blesses you that it may be in your power to bless others. When you are weary of receiving, then you may say, I am weary of so many calls to give. God reserves to himself a portion of all that we receive. When this is returned to him, the remaining portion is blessed; but when it is withheld, the whole is sooner or later cursed. God's claim is first; every other is secondary.

In every church there should be established a treasury for the poor. Then let each member present a thank-offering to God once a week or once a month, as is most convenient. This offering will express our gratitude for the gifts of health, of food, and of comfortable clothing. And according as God has blessed us with these comforts

[147] will we lay by for the poor, the suffering, and the distressed. I would call the attention of our brethren specially to this point. Remember the poor. Forego some of your luxuries, yea, even comforts, and help those who can obtain only the most meager food and clothing. In doing for them, you are doing for Jesus in the person of his saints. He identifies himself with suffering humanity. Do not wait until your imaginary wants are all satisfied. Do not trust to your feelings, and give when you feel like it, and withhold when you do not feel like it. Give regularly, either ten, twenty, or fifty cents a week, as you would like to see upon the heavenly record in the day of God.

Your good wishes we will thank you for, but the poor cannot keep comfortable on good wishes alone. They must have tangible proofs of your kindness in food and clothing. God does not mean that any of his followers should beg for bread. He has given you an abundance that you may supply those of their necessities which by industry and economy they are not able to supply. Do not wait for them to call your attention to their needs. Act as did Job. The thing that he knew not he searched out. Go on an inspecting tour, and learn what is needed, and how it can be best supplied.

I have been shown that many of our people are robbing the Lord in tithes and in offerings, and as the result his work is greatly hindered. The curse of God will rest upon those who are living upon God's bounties and yet close their hearts and do nothing or next to nothing to advance his cause. Brethren and sisters, how can the beneficent Father continue to make you his stewards, furnishing you with means to use for him, when you grasp it all, selfishly claiming that it is yours!

[148] Instead of rendering to God the means he has placed in their hands, many invest it in more land. This evil is growing with our brethren. They had before all they could well care for, but the love of money or a desire to be counted as well off as their neighbors, leads them to bury their means in the world, and withhold from God his just dues. Can we be surprised if they are not prospered? if God does not bless their crops, and they are disappointed? Could our brethren remember that God can bless twenty acres of land, and make them as productive as one hundred, they would not continue to bury themselves up in lands, but would let their means flow into God's treasury. "Take heed," said Christ, "lest at any time your

hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life." Satan is pleased to have you increase your farms and invest your means in worldly enterprises, for by so doing you not only hinder the cause from advancing, but by anxiety and overwork lessen your prospect for eternal life.

We ought now to be heeding the injunction of our Saviour, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not." It is now that our brethren should be cutting down their possessions instead of increasing them. We are about to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Then let us not be dwellers upon the earth, but be getting things into as compact a compass as possible.

The time is coming when we cannot sell at any price. The decree will soon go forth prohibiting men to buy or sell of any man save he that hath the mark of the beast. We came near having this realized in California a short time since; but this was only the threatening of the blowing of the four winds. As yet they are held by the four angels. We are not just ready. There is a work yet to be done, and then the angels will be bidden to let go, that the four winds may blow upon the earth. That will be a decisive time for God's children,—a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. Now is our opportunity to work.

There is, among many professing the truth, a spirit of unrest. Some want to go to another county or State, buy large lands, and carry on an extensive business; others want to go into the city. Thus little churches are left in weakness and discouragement to die, when, had the ones who loft them been content to work on a smaller scale, doing their little with fidelity, they might have made their families comfortable, and been free to keep their own souls in the love of God. Many who move are disappointed. They lose what little property they had, lose health, and finally give up the truth.

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The Lord is coming. Let every one show his faith by his works. Faith in Christ's near advent is dying out of the churches, and selfishness is causing them to rob God to serve their own personal interests. When Christ is abiding in us, we shall be self-denying like him.

In times past, there has been great liberality on the part of our people. They have not been backward to respond to calls for help in the various branches of the work. But of late a change has come.

There has been, especially with our Eastern brethren, a withholding of means, while worldliness and love of possessions have been increasing. There is a growing disregard of promises made to help our various institutions and enterprises. Subscriptions to build a church, to endow a college, or to assist in the missionary work, are looked upon as promises which persons are under no obligation to fulfill if it is not convenient. These promises were made under the holy impressions of the Spirit of God. Then do not rob him by withholding what rightfully belongs to him. Brethren and sisters, look over your past life and see if you have dealt faithfully with God. Have you any unredeemed pledges? If so, resolve that you will pay them if it is within your power.

[150] Listen to the counsel of the Lord: “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith,” “if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field.” “And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightsome land.”

Are you not willing to accept the promises which the Lord here makes, and to put selfishness from you, and begin to work earnestly to advance his cause? Do not strengthen your hold on this world by taking advantage of your poorer neighbor, for God’s eye is upon you; he reads every motive, and weighs you in the balances of the sanctuary.

I saw that many withhold from the cause while they live, quieting their consciences that they will be charitable at death; they hardly dare exercise faith and trust in God to give anything while living. But this death-bed charity is not what Christ requires of his followers; it cannot excuse the selfishness of the living. Those who hold fast their property till the last moment, surrender it to death rather than to the cause. Losses are occurring continually. Banks fail, and property is consumed in very many ways. Many purpose to do something, but they delay the matter, and Satan works to prevent the means from coming into the treasury at all. It is lost before it is returned to God, and Satan exults that it is so.

If you would do good with your means, do it at once lest Satan get it in his hands, and thus hinder the work of God. Many times when the Lord has opened the way for brethren to handle their means to advance his cause, the agents of Satan have presented some enterprise by which they were positive the brethren could double their means. They take the bait; their money is invested, and the cause, and frequently themselves, never receive a dollar.

Brethren, remember the cause, and when you have means at your command lay up for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal life. Jesus for your sakes became poor, that you through his poverty might be made rich in heavenly treasure. What will you give for Jesus, who has given all for you ? [151]

It will not do for you to depend on making your charity gifts in testamentary bequests at death. You cannot calculate with the least degree of surety that the cause will ever be benefited by them. Satan works with acute skill to stir up the relatives, and every false position is taken to gain to the world that which was solemnly dedicated to the cause of God. Much less than the sum willed is always received. Satan even puts it into the hearts of men and women to protest against their relatives doing what they wish in the bestowment of their property. They seem to regard everything given to the Lord as robbing the relatives of the deceased. If you want your means to go to the cause, appropriate it, or all that you do not really need for a support, while you live. A few of the brethren are doing this, and enjoying the pleasure of being their own executors. Will the covetousness of men make it necessary that they shall be deprived of life in order that the property which God has lent them shall not be useless forever? Let none of you draw upon yourselves the doom of the unprofitable servant who hid his Lord's money in the earth.

Dying charity is a poor substitute for living benevolence. Many will to their friends and relatives all except a very small pittance of their property. This they leave for their supreme Friend, who became poor for their sakes, who suffered insult, mockery, and death, that they might become sons and daughters of God. And yet they expect when the righteous dead shall come forth to immortal life that this Friend will take them into his everlasting habitations.

[152] The cause of Christ is robbed, not by a mere passing thought, not by an unpremeditated act. No. By your own deliberate act you made your will, placing your property at the disposal of unbelievers. After having robbed God during your life-time, you continue to rob him after your death, and you do this with the full consent of all your powers of mind, in a document called your will. What do you think will be your Master's will toward you for thus appropriating his goods? What will you say when an account is demanded of your stewardship?

Brethren, awake from your life of selfishness, and act like consistent Christians. The Lord requires you to economize your means, and let every dollar not needed for your comfort flow into the treasury. Sisters, take that ten cents, that twenty cents, that dollar which you were about to spend for candies, for ruffles, or for ribbons, and donate it to God's cause. Many of our sisters earn good wages, but it is nearly all spent in gratifying their pride of dress.

The wants of the cause will continually increase as we near the close of time. Means is needed to give young men a short course of study in our schools, to prepare them for efficient work in the ministry and in different branches of the cause. We are not coming up to our privilege in this matter. All schools among us will soon be closed up. How much more might have been done had men obeyed the requirements of Christ in Christian beneficence! What an influence would this readiness to give all for Christ have had upon the world! It would have been one of the most convincing arguments in favor of the truth we profess to believe,—an argument which the world could not misunderstand nor gainsay. The Lord would have distinguished us with his blessing, even before the eyes of the world.

[153] The first Christian church had not the privileges and opportunities we have. They were a poor people, but they felt the power of the truth. The object before them was sufficient to lead them to invest all. They felt that the salvation or the loss of a world depended upon their instrumentality. They cast in their all, and held themselves in readiness to go or come at the Lord's bidding.

We profess to be governed by the same principles, to be influenced by the same spirit. But instead of giving all for Christ, many have taken the golden wedge and a goodly Babylonish garment, and hid them in the camp. If the presence of one Achan was sufficient to

weaken the whole camp of Israel, can we be surprised at the little success which attends our efforts when every church and almost every family has its Achan? Let us individually go to work to stimulate others by our example of disinterested benevolence. The work might have gone forward with far greater power had all done what they could to supply the treasury with means.

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POWER OF THE TRUTH.

THE word of God was preached by his ministers in early days “in the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power.” The hearts of men were stirred by the proclamation of the gospel. Why is it that the preaching of the truth has now so little power to move the people ? Is God less willing to bestow his blessing upon the laborers in his cause in this age than in the apostles’ day ?

The warning which we bear to the world must prove to them a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. And will the Lord send forth his servants to proclaim this fearfully solemn message, and withhold from them his Holy Spirit? Shall frail, erring men, without special grace and power from God, dare to stand between the living and the dead, to speak the words of everlasting life? Our Lord is rich in grace, mighty in power; he will abundantly bestow these gifts upon all who come to him in faith. He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him than are parents to give good gifts to their children. The reason why the precious, important truth for this time is not powerful to save, is that we do not work in faith.

We should pray as earnestly for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the disciples prayed on the day of Pentecost. If they needed it at that time, we need it more to-day. Moral darkness, like a funeral pall, covers the earth. All manner of false doctrines, heresies, and Satanic deceptions, are misleading the minds of men. Without the Spirit and power of God, it will be in vain that we labor to present the truth.

It is by contemplating Christ, by exercising faith in him, by experiencing for ourselves his saving grace, that we are qualified to present him to the world. If we have learned of him, Jesus will be our theme; his love, burning upon the altar of our hearts, will reach the hearts of the people. The truth will be presented, not as a cold, lifeless theory, but in the demonstration of the Spirit.

Many of our ministers, in their discourses, dwell too largely upon theory, and not enough on practical godliness. They have an intellectual knowledge of the truth, but their hearts are untouched with

the genuine fervor of the love of Christ. Many have gained by the study of our publications a knowledge of the arguments that sustain the truth, but they have not become Bible students for themselves. They are not constantly seeking for a deeper and more thorough knowledge of the plan of salvation as revealed in the Scriptures. While preaching to others, they are becoming dwarfs in religious growth. They do not often go before God to plead for his Spirit and grace, that they may rightly present Christ to the world.

Human strength is weakness, human wisdom is folly. Our success does not depend on our talents or learning, but on our living connection with God. The truth is shorn of its power when preached by men who are seeking to display their own learning and ability. Such men display also that they know very little of experimental religion, that they are unsanctified in heart and life, and are filled with vain conceit. They do not learn of Jesus. They cannot present to others a Saviour with whom they themselves are not acquainted. Their own hearts are not softened and subdued by a vivid sense of the great sacrifice which Christ has made to save perishing man. They do not feel that it is a privilege to deny self, and to suffer for his dear sake. Some exalt self, and talk of self; they prepare sermons and write articles to call the attention of the people to the minister, fearing that he will not receive due honor. Had there been more lifting up of Jesus and less extolling the minister, more praise rendered to the Author of truth and less to its messengers, we would occupy a more favorable position before God than we do to-day.

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The plan of salvation is not presented in its simplicity, for the reason that few ministers know what simple faith is. An intellectual knowledge of the truth is not enough; We must know its power upon our own hearts and lives. Ministers need to come to Christ as little children. Seek Jesus, brethren, confess your sins, plead with God day and night, until you know that for Christ's sake you are pardoned and accepted. Then will you love much, because you have been forgiven much. Then you can point others to Christ as a sin-pardoning Redeemer. Then you can present the truth from the fullness of a heart that feels its sanctifying power. I fear for you, my brethren. I counsel you to tarry at Jerusalem, as did the early disciples, until, like them, you receive the baptism of the Holy

Spirit. Never feel at liberty to go into the desk until you have by faith grasped the arm of your strength.

[156] If we have the spirit of Christ, we shall work as he worked; we shall catch the very ideas of the Man of Nazareth, and present them to the people. If, in the place of formal professors and unconverted ministers, we were indeed followers of Christ, we would present the truth with such meekness and fervor, and would so exemplify it in our lives, that the world would not be continually questioning whether we believe what we profess. The message borne in the love of Christ, with the worth of souls constantly before us, would win even from worldlings the decision, "They are like Jesus."

If we desire to reform others, we must ourselves practice the principles which we would enforce upon them. Words, however good, will be powerless if contradicted by the daily life. Ministers of Christ I admonish you, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine." Do not excuse sins in yourselves which you reprove in others. If you preach on meekness and love, let these graces be exemplified in your own life. If you urge others to be kind, courteous, and attentive at home, let your own example give force to your admonitions. As you have received greater light than others, so is your responsibility increased. You will be beaten with many stripes, if you neglect to do your Master's will.

Satan's snares are laid for us as verily as they were laid for the children of Israel just prior to their entrance into the land of Canaan. We are repeating the history of that people. lightness, vanity, love of ease and pleasure, selfishness, and impurity are increasing among us. There is need now of men who are firm and fearless in declaring the whole counsel of God; men who will not sleep as do others, but watch and be sober. Knowing as I do the great lack of holiness and power with our ministers, I am deeply pained to see the efforts for self-exaltation.

If they could but see Jesus as he is, and themselves as they are, so weak, so inefficient, so unlike their Master, they would say, If my name may be written in the obscurest part of the book of life, it is enough for me, so unworthy am I of his notice.

[157] It is your work to study and to imitate the Pattern. Was Christ self-denying ? so must you be. Was he meek and lowly ? so must you be. Was he zealous in the work of saving souls? so must you

be. Did he labor to promote the glory of his Father? so must you. Did he often seek help from God? so must you. Was Christ patient? so will you be patient. As Christ forgave his enemies, so will you forgive.

It is not so much the religion of the pulpit as the religion of the family that reveals our real character. The minister's wife, his children, and those who are employed as helpers in his family, are best qualified to judge of his piety. A good man will be a blessing to his household. Wife, children, and helpers will all be the better for his religion.

Brethren, carry Christ into the family, carry him into the pulpit, carry him with you wherever you go. Then you need not urge upon others the necessity of appreciating the ministry, for you will bear the heavenly credentials which will prove to all that you are servants of Christ. Carry Jesus with you in your hours of solitude. Remember that he was often in prayer, and his life was constantly sustained by fresh inspirations of the Holy Spirit. Let your thoughts, your inner life, be such that you will not be ashamed to meet its record in the day of God.

Heaven is not closed against the fervent, prayers of the righteous. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, yet the Lord heard and in a most striking manner answered his petitions. The only reason for our lack of power with God is to be found in ourselves. If the inner life of many who profess the truth were presented before them, they would not claim to be Christians. They are not growing in grace. A hurried prayer is offered now and then, but there is no real communion with God.

We must be much in prayer, if we would make progress in the divine life. When the message of truth was first proclaimed, how much we prayed. How often was the voice of intercession heard in the chamber, in the bam, in the orchard, or the grove. Frequently we spent hours in earnest prayer, two or three together claiming the promise; often the sound of weeping was heard, and then the voice of thanksgiving and the song of praise. Now the day of God is nearer than when we first believed, and we should be more earnest, more zealous, and fervent than in those early days. Our perils are greater now than then. Souls are more hardened. We need now to be imbued with the spirit of Christ; and we should not rest until we receive it. [158]

Brethren and sisters, have you forgotten that your prayers should go out, like sharp sickles, with the laborers in the great harvest field? As young men go forth to preach the truth, you should have seasons of prayer for them. Pray that God will connect them with himself, and give them wisdom, grace, and knowledge. Pray that they may be guarded from the snares of Satan, and kept pure in thought and holy in heart. I entreat you who fear the Lord, to waste no time in unprofitable talk or in needless labor to gratify pride or to indulge the appetite. Let the time thus gained be spent in wrestling with God for your ministers. Hold up their hands as did Aaron and Hur the hands of Moses.

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OUR CAMP-MEETINGS.

I have been shown that some of our camp-meetings are far from being what the Lord designed they should be. The people come unprepared for the visitation of God's Holy Spirit. Generally the sisters devote considerable time before the meeting to the preparation of garments for the outward adorning, while they entirely forget the inward adorning, which is in the sight of God of great price. There is also much time spent in needless cooking, in the preparation of rich pies and cakes and other articles of food that do positive injury to those who partake of them. Should our sisters provide good bread and some other healthful kinds of food, both they and their families would be better prepared to appreciate the words of life, and far more susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit. [159]

Often the stomach is over-burdened with food which is seldom as plain and simple as that eaten at home, where the amount of exercise taken is double or treble. This causes the mind to be in such a lethargy that it is difficult to appreciate eternal things, and the meeting closes, and they are disappointed in not having enjoyed more of the Spirit of God.

While preparing for the meeting, each individual should closely and critically examine his own heart before God. If there have been unpleasant feelings, discord, or strife in families, it should be one of the first acts of preparation to confess these faults one to another and pray with and for one another. Humble yourselves before God, and make an earnest effort to empty the soul temple of all rubbish,—all envyings, all jealousies, all suspicions, all fault-findings. “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

The Lord speaks; enter into your closet, and in silence commune with your own heart; listen to the voice of truth and conscience. Nothing will give such clear views of self as secret prayer. He

who seeth in secret and knoweth all things, will enlighten your understanding and answer your petitions. Plain, simple duties that must not be neglected will open before you. Make a covenant with God to yield yourselves and all your powers to his service. Do not carry this undone work to the camp-meeting. If it is not done at home your own soul will suffer, and others will be greatly injured by your coldness, your stupor, your spiritual lethargy.

[160] I have seen the condition of the people professing the truth. The words of the prophet Ezekiel are applicable to them at this time: “Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face; should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him that cometh, according to the multitude of his idols.”

If we love the things of the world and have pleasure in unrighteousness, or fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, we have put the stumbling-block of our iniquity before our face, and have set up idols in our heart. And unless by determined effort we put them away, we shall never be acknowledged as the sons and daughters of God.

Here is a work for families to engage in before coming up to our holy convocations. Let the preparation for eating and dressing be a secondary matter, but let deep heart-searching commence at home. Pray three times a day, and like Jacob, be importunate. At home is the place to find Jesus; then take him with you to the meeting, and how precious will be the hours you spend there. But how can you expect to feel the presence of the Lord and see his power displayed, when the individual work of preparation for that time is neglected.

[161] For your soul’s sake, for Christ’s sake, and for the sake of others, work at home. Pray as you are not accustomed to pray. Let the heart break before God. Set your house in order. Prepare your children for the occasion. Teach them that it is not of so much consequence that they appear with fine clothes as that they appear before God with clean hands and pure hearts. Remove every obstacle that may have been in their way,—all differences that may have existed between themselves, or between you and them. By so doing you will invite

the Lord's presence into your homes, and holy angels will attend you as you go up to the meeting, and their light and presence will press back the darkness of evil angels. Even unbelievers will feel the holy atmosphere as they enter the encampment. Oh, how much is lost by neglecting this important work! You may be pleased with the preaching, you may become animated and revived, but the converting, reforming power of God will not be felt in the heart, and the work will not be so deep, thorough, and lasting as it should be. Let pride be crucified, and the soul be clad with the priceless robe of Christ's righteousness, and what a meeting will you enjoy. It will be to your soul even as the gate of Heaven.

The same work of humiliation and heart-searching should also go on in the church, so that all differences and alienations among brethren may be laid aside before appearing before the Lord at these annual gatherings. Set about this work in earnest, and rest not until it is accomplished; for if you come up to the meeting with your doubts, your murmurings, your disputings, you bring evil angels into the camp, and carry darkness wherever you go.

I have been shown that for want of this preparation these yearly meetings have accomplished but little. The ministers are seldom prepared to labor for God. There are many speakers,—those who can say sharp, crank things, going out of their way to whip other churches and ridicule their faith,—but there are but few earnest laborers for God. These sharp, self-important speakers, profess to have truth in advance of every other people, but their manner of labor and their religious zeal in no way correspond with their profession of faith.

I looked to see the humility of soul that should ever sit as a fitting garment upon our ministers, but it was not upon them. I looked for the deep love for souls that the Master said they should possess, but they had it not. I listened for the earnest prayers offered with tears and anguish of soul because of the impenitent and unbelieving in their own homes and in the church, but heard them not. I listened for the appeals made in the demonstration of the Spirit, but these were missing. I looked for the burden-bearers, who in such a time as this should be weeping between the porch and the altar, crying, Spare thy people, Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach; but I heard no such supplications. A few earnest, humble ones were seeking

the Lord. At some of these meetings one or two ministers felt the burden, and were weighed down as a cart beneath sheaves. But a large majority of the ministers had no more sense of the sacredness of their work than children.

I saw what these yearly gatherings might be, and what they should be,—meetings of earnest labor. Ministers should seek a heart preparation before entering upon the work of helping others, for the people are far in advance of many of the ministers. They should untiringly wrestle in prayer until the Lord blesses them. When the love of God is burning on the altar of their hearts, they will not preach to exhibit their own smartness, but to present Christ who taketh away the sins of the world.

In the early church, Christianity was taught in its purity; its precepts were given by the voice of inspiration; its ordinances were uncorrupted by the device of men. The church revealed the spirit of Christ, and appeared beautiful in its simplicity. Its adorning was the holy principles and exemplary lives of its members. Multitudes were won to Christ, not by display or learning, but by the power of God which attended the plain preaching of his word. But the church has become corrupt. And now there is greater necessity than ever that ministers should be channels of light.

[163] There are many flippant talkers of Bible truth, whose souls are as barren of the Spirit of God as were the hills of Gilboa of dew and rain. But what we need is men who are thoroughly converted themselves, and can teach others how to give their hearts to God. The power of godliness has almost ceased to be in our churches. And why is this? The Lord is still waiting to be gracious; he has not closed the windows of heaven. We have separated ourselves from him. We need to fix the eye of faith upon the cross, and believe that Jesus is our strength, our salvation.

As we see so little burden of the work resting upon ministers and people, we inquire, When the Lord comes, shall he find faith on the earth? It is faith that is lacking. God has an abundance of grace and power awaiting our demand. But the reason we do not feel our great need of it is because we look to ourselves and not to Jesus. We do not exalt Jesus and rely wholly upon his merits.

Would that I could impress upon ministers and people the necessity of a deeper work of grace in the heart, and more thorough

preparation to enter into the spirit and labor of our camp-meetings, that they may receive the greatest possible benefit from these meetings. These yearly gatherings may be seasons of special blessing, or they may be a great injury to spirituality. Which shall they be to you, dear reader? It remains for each to decide for himself.

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BROTHERLY LOVE.

[164] “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” The more closely we resemble our Saviour in character, the greater will be our love toward those for whom he died. Christians who manifest a spirit of unselfish love for one another are bearing a testimony for Christ which unbelievers can neither gainsay nor resist. It is impossible to estimate the power of such an example. Nothing will so successfully defeat the devices of Satan and his emissaries, nothing will so build up the Redeemer’s kingdom, as will the love of Christ manifested by the members of the church. Peace and prosperity can be enjoyed only as meekness and love are in active exercise.

In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul sets forth the importance of that love which should be cherished by the followers of Christ; “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

No matter how high his profession, he whose heart is not imbued with love for God and for his fellowmen, is not a disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith, and even have power to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worth-less. He might display great liberality, but should he from some other motive than genuine love, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favor of God. In his zeal he might even meet a martyr’s death, yet if destitute of the gold of love, he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite.

The apostle proceeds to specify the fruits of love: “Charity suffereth long, and is kind. Charity envieth not.” The divine love ruling in the heart exterminates pride and selfishness. “Charity

vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.” The purest joy springs from the deepest humiliation. The strongest and noblest characters rest upon the foundation of patience and love, and trusting submission to the will of God.

“Charity doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.” The heart in which love rules, will not be filled with passion or revenge, by injuries which pride and selflove would deem unbearable. Love is unsuspecting, ever placing the most favorable construction upon the motives and acts of others. Love will never needlessly expose the faults of others. It does not listen eagerly to unfavorable reports, but rather seeks to bring to mind some good qualities of the one defamed.

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Love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.” He whose heart is imbued with love is filled with sorrow at the errors and weaknesses of others; but when truth triumphs, when the cloud that darkened the fair fame of another is removed, or when sins are confessed and wrongs corrected, he rejoices.

“Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” Love not only bears with others’ faults, but cheerfully submits to whatever suffering or inconvenience, such forbearance makes necessary. This love “never faileth.” It can never lose its value; it is the attribute of Heaven. As a precious treasure, it will be carried by its possessor through the portals of the city of God.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace. Discord and strife are the work of Satan and the fruit of sin. If we would as a people, enjoy peace and love, we must put away our sins, we must come into harmony with God, and we shall be in harmony with one another. Let each ask himself: Do I possess the grace of love? Have I learned to suffer long, and to be kind? Talents, learning, and eloquence, without this heavenly attribute, will be as meaningless as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Alas that this precious treasure is so lightly valued and so little sought by many who profess the faith!

Paul writes to the Colossians: “Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of

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God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful.” “And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

The fact that we are under so great obligation to Christ, places us under the most sacred obligation to those whom he died to redeem. We are to manifest toward them the same sympathy, the same tender compassion and unselfish love, which Christ has manifested toward us. Selfish ambition, desire for supremacy, will die when Christ takes possession of the affections.

Our Saviour taught his disciples to pray, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” A great blessing is here asked upon conditions. We ourselves state these conditions. We ask that the mercy of God toward us may be measured by the mercy which we extend to others. Christ declares that this is the rule by which the Lord will deal with us: “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Wonderful terms ! but how little are they understood or heeded. One of the most common sins, and one that is attended with most pernicious results, is the indulgence of an unforgiving spirit. How many will cherish animosity or revenge, and then bow before God and ask to be forgiven as they forgive. Surely, they can have no true sense of the import of this prayer, or they would not dare to take it upon their lips. We are dependent upon the pardoning mercy of God every day and every hour; how then can we cherish bitterness and malice toward our fellow-sinners ! If, in all their daily intercourse, Christians would carry out the principles of this prayer, what a blessed change would be wrought in the church and in the world !

[167] This would be the most convincing testimony that could be given to the reality of Bible religion.

God requires more of his followers than many realize. If we would not build our hopes of Heaven upon a false foundation, we must accept the Bible as it reads, and believe that the Lord means what he says. He requires nothing of us that he will not give us grace to perform. We shall have no excuse to offer in the day of God if we fail to reach the standard set before us in his word.

We are admonished by the apostle: "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." Paul would have us distinguish between the pure, unselfish love which is prompted by the spirit of Christ, and the unmeaning, deceitful pretense with which the world abounds. This base counterfeit has misled many souls. It would blot out the distinction between right and wrong, by agreeing with the transgressor instead of faithfully showing him his errors. Such a course never springs from real friendship. The spirit by which it is prompted dwells only in the carnal heart. While the Christian will be ever kind, compassionate, and forgiving, he can feel no harmony with sin. He will abhor evil and cling to that which is good, at the sacrifice of association or friendship with the ungodly. The spirit of Christ will lead us to hate sin, while we are willing to make any sacrifice to save the sinner.

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all Uncleanness with greediness." The apostle admonishes his brethren, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, that after having professed the gospel they should not conduct themselves as did the Gentiles, but should show by their daily deportment that they had been truly converted. [168]

"Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Once they were corrupt, degraded, enslaved by lustful passions; they were drugged by worldly opiates, blinded, bewildered, and betrayed by Satan's devices. Now that they had been taught the truth as it is in Jesus, there must be a decided change in their life and character.

The accession of members who have not been renewed in heart and reformed in life is a source of weakness to the church. This fact is often ignored. Some ministers and churches are so desirous of securing an increase of numbers that they do not bear faithful

testimony against unchristian habits and practices. Those who accept the truth are not taught that they cannot safely be worldlings in conduct while they are Christians in name. Heretofore they were Satan's subjects; henceforth they are to be subjects of Christ. The life must testify to the change of leaders. Public opinion favors a profession of Christianity. Little self-denial or self-sacrifice is required in order to put on a form of godliness, and to have one's name enrolled upon the church book. Hence many join the church without first becoming united to Christ. In this Satan triumphs. Such converts are his most efficient agents. They serve as decoys to other souls. They are false lights, luring the unwary to perdition. It is in vain that men seek to make the Christian's path broad and pleasant for worldlings. God has not smoothed or widened the rugged, narrow way. If we would enter into life, we must follow the same path which Jesus and his disciples trod,—the path of humility, self-denial, and sacrifice.

[169] Ministers should see that their own hearts are sanctified through the truth, and then labor to secure these results for their converts. It is pure religion that ministers and people need. Those who put away iniquity from their hearts, and stretch out their hands in earnest supplication unto God, will have that help which God alone can give them. A ransom has been paid for the souls of men, that they may have an opportunity to escape from the thralldom of sin and obtain pardon, purity, and Heaven.

God hears the cry of the lowly and contrite. Those who frequent the throne of grace, offering up sincere, earnest petitions for divine wisdom and power, will not fail to become active, useful servants of Christ. They may not possess great talents, but with humility of heart and firm reliance upon Jesus they may do a good work in bringing souls to Christ. They can reach men through God.

Ministers of Christ should ever feel that a sacred work engages all their souls, their efforts should be for the edification of the body of Christ, and not to exalt themselves before the people. And while Christians should esteem the faithful minister as Christ's ambassador, they should avoid all praise of the man.

“Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” Man

by wicked works alienated himself from God, but Christ gave his life that all who would, might be freed from sin and re-instated in the favor of the Creator. It was the anticipation of a redeemed, holy universe that prompted Christ to make this great sacrifice. Have we accepted the privileges so dearly purchased? Are we followers of God as dear children, or are we servants of the prince of darkness? Are we worshipers of Jehovah, or of Baal? of the living God, or of idols!

No outward shrines may be visible, there may be no image for the eye to rest upon, yet we may be practicing idolatry. It is as easy to make an idol of cherished ideas or objects as to fashion gods of wood or stone. Thousands have a false conception of God and his attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as he is revealed in his word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in his place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of his throne. He is a God of love, of pity, and tender compassion. Thus he is represented in his Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore, and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. [170]

If we are following Christ, his merits, imputed to us, come up before the Father as sweet odor. And the graces of our Saviour's character, implanted in our hearts, will shed around us a precious fragrance. The spirit of love, meekness, and forbearance, pervading our life, will have power to soften and subdue hard hearts, and win to Christ bitter opposers of the faith.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” “Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”

Vainglory, selfish ambition, is the rock upon which many souls have been wrecked, and many churches rendered powerless. Those who know least of devotion, who are least connected with God, are the ones who will most eagerly seek the highest place. They have no

[171] sense of their weakness and their deficiencies of character. Unless many of our young ministers shall feel the converting power of God, their labors will be a hindrance rather than a help to the church. They may have learned the doctrines of Christ, but they have not learned Christ. The soul that is constantly looking unto Jesus will see his self-denying love and deep humility, and will copy his example. Pride, ambition, deceit, hatred, selfishness, must be cleansed from the heart. With many, these evil traits are partially subdued, but not thoroughly uprooted from the heart. Under favorable circumstances they spring up anew, and ripen into rebellion against God. Here lies a terrible danger. To spare any sin is to cherish a foe that only awaits an unguarded moment to cause our ruin.

“ Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.” My brethren and sisters, how are you employing the gift of speech ? Have you learned so to control the tongue that it shall ever obey the dictates of an enlightened conscience and holy affections ? Is your conversation free from levity, pride and malice, deceit and impurity t Are you without guile before God? Words exert a telling power. Satan will, if possible, keep the tongue active in his service. Of ourselves we cannot control the unruly member. Divine grace is our only hope.

Those who are eagerly studying how they may secure the pre-eminence, should study rather how they may gain that wisdom which is “ first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” I have been shown that many ministers need to have these words imprinted on the tablets of the soul. He who has Christ formed within, the hope of glory, will “ show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.”

[172] Peter exhorts the believers: “ Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open

unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”

When the right way is so plainly marked out, why do not the professed people of God walk in it? Why do they not study and pray and labor earnestly to be of one mind? Why do they not seek to cherish com-*passion* for one another, to love as brethren, instead of rendering evil for evil, and railing for railing? Who does not love life, and desire good days? yet how few comply with the conditions, to refrain the tongue from evil, and the lips from speaking guile. Few are willing to follow the Saviour’s example of meekness and humility. Many ask the Lord to humble them, but are unwilling to submit to the needful discipline. When the test comes, when trials or even annoyances occur, the heart rebels, and the tongue utters words that are like poisoned arrows or blasting hail.

Evil-speaking is a two fold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer. He who scatters the seeds of dissension and strife, reaps in his own soul the deadly fruits. How miserable is the tale-bearer, the surmiser of evil! He is a stranger to true happiness.

“Blessed are the peacemakers.” Grace and peace rest upon those who refuse to join in the strife of tongues. When venders of scandal are passing from family to family, those who fear God will be chaste keepers at home. The time that is so often worse than wasted in idle, frivolous, and malicious gossip, should be given to higher and nobler objects. If our brethren and sisters would become missionaries for God, visiting the sick and afflicted, and laboring patiently and kindly for the erring—in short, if they would copy the Pattern—the church would have prosperity in all her borders.

The sin of evil-speaking begins with the cherish- ing of evil thoughts. Guile includes impurity in all its forms. An impure thought tolerated, an unholy desire cherished, and the soul is contaminated, its integrity compromised. “Then, when lust has conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” If we would not commit sin, we must shun its very beginnings. Every emotion and desire must be held in subjection to reason and conscience. Every unholy thought must be instantly repelled. To your closet, followers of Christ. Pray in faith, and with all the heart.

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Satan is watching to ensnare your feet. You must have help from above if you would escape his devices.

By faith and prayer all may meet the requirements of the gospel. No man can be forced to transgress. His own consent must be first gained; the soul must purpose the sinful act, before passion can dominate over reason, or iniquity triumph over conscience. Temptation, however strong, is never an excuse for sin. “The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.” Cry unto the Lord, tempted soul. Cast yourself, helpless, unworthy, upon Jesus, and claim this very promise. The Lord will hear. He knows how strong are the inclinations of the natural heart, and he will help in every time of temptation.

Have you fallen into sin? Then without delay seek God for mercy and pardon. When David was convicted of his sin, he poured out his soul in penitence and humiliation before God. He felt that he could endure the loss of his crown, but he could not be deprived of the favor of God. Mercy is still extended to the sinner. The Lord is calling to us in all our wanderings, “Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.” The blessing of God may be ours, if we will heed the pleading voice of his Spirit. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.”

DILIGENCE IN BUSINESS.

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“SEEST thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.” “ He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.” “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.”

The many admonitions to diligence found in both the Old and the New Testament, plainly indicate the intimate relation existing between our habits of life and our religious feelings and practices. The human mind and body are so constituted that plenty of exercise is necessary in order to a proper development of all the faculties. While many are too much engaged in worldly business, others go to the opposite extreme, and do not labor sufficiently to support themselves or those dependent upon them. Bro. — is one of this class. While he occupies the position of house-band to his family, he is not this in reality. The heaviest responsibilities and burdens he allows to rest upon his wife, while he indulges in careless indolence, or busies himself about small matters that tell little for the support of his family. He will sit for hours and chat with his sons or his neighbors upon matters of no great consequence. He takes things easy, and enjoys himself, while the wife and mother does the work which must be done to prepare food to eat and clothes to wear.

This brother is a poor man, and always will be a burden to society unless he asserts his God-given privilege and becomes a man. Any one can find work of some kind to do if he really desires it; but if he is careless and inattentive, the positions which he might have secured he will find filled by those who had greater activity and business tact.

God never designed that you, my brother, should be in the position of poverty that you are now in. Why did he give you that physical frame? You are just as responsible for your physical powers as your brethren are for their means. Some of these would to-day

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be the gainers could they exchange their property for your physical strength. But if placed in your position, they would, by a diligent use of both mental and physical powers, soon be above want, and owe no man anything. It is not because God owes you a grudge that circumstances appear to be against you, but because you do not use the strength he has given you. He did not intend that your powers should rust by inaction, but that they should strengthen by use.

The religion you profess makes it as much your duty to employ your time during the six working days, as to attend church on the Sabbath. You are not diligent in business. You let hours, days, and even weeks pass without accomplishing anything. The very best sermon you could preach to the world would be to show a decided reformation in your life, and provide for your own family. Says the apostle, “If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

You bring a reproach upon the cause by locating in a place, where you indulge indolence for a time, and then are obliged to run in debt for provision for your family. These your honest debts you are not always particular to pay, but, instead, move to another place. This is defrauding your neighbor. The world has a right to expect strict integrity in those who profess to be Bible Christians. By one man’s indifference in regard to paying his just dues, all our people are in danger of being regarded as unreliable.

[176] “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” This refers to those who labor with their hands as well as to those who have gifts to bestow. God has given you strength and skill, but you have not used them. Your strength is sufficient to abundantly support your family. Rise in the morning, even while the stars are shining, if need be. Lay your plans to do something, and then accomplish it. Redeem every pledge, unless sickness lays you prostrate. Better deny yourself food and sleep than be guilty of keeping from others their just dues.

The hill of progress is not to be climbed without effort. No one need expect to be carried along to the prize, either in religious or secular matters, independently of his own exertions. The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, yet he that dealeth with a slack hand will become poor. The persevering and industrious are not only happy themselves, but they contribute largely to the

happiness of others. Competency and comfort are not ordinarily attained except at the price of earnest industry. Pharaoh showed his appreciation of this trait of character when he said to Joseph, "If thou knowest any men of activity among thy brethren, make them rulers over my cattle."

There is no excuse for Bro. —, unless love of ease and inability to plan and set himself to work is an excuse. The best course for him now to pursue is to go from home and work under some one who shall plan for him. He has so long been a careless, indolent master over himself that he accomplishes but little, and his example before his children is bad. They have his stamp of character. They let mother bear the burdens. When asked to do anything, they will do it; but they do not cultivate, as all children should, the faculty of seeing what needs to be done, and doing it without being told.

A woman does herself and her family a serious wrong when she does her work and theirs too,— when she brings the wood and water, and even takes the axe to prepare the wood, while her husband and sons sit about the fire having a social, easy time. God never designed that wives and mothers should be slaves to their families. Many a mother is over- burdened with care, while her children are not educated to share the domestic burdens. As the result, she grows old and dies prematurely, leaving her children just when a mother is most needed to guide their inexperienced feet. Who is to blame ?

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Husbands should do all they can to save the wife care, and keep her spirit cheerful. Never should idleness be fostered or permitted in children, for it soon becomes a habit. When not engaged in useful employment, the faculties either depreciate or become active in an evil work.

What you need, my brother, is active exercise. Every feature of your countenance, every faculty of your mind, is indicative of this. You do not love hard work, nor to earn your bread by the sweat of your brow. But this is God's ordained plan in the economy of life.

You fail to carry through what you undertake. You have not disciplined yourself to regularity. System is everything. Do but one thing at a time, and do that well, finishing it before you begin a second piece of work. You should have regular hours for rising, for praying, and for eating. Many waste hours of precious time in bed because it gratifies the natural inclination and to do otherwise

requires an exertion. One hour wasted in the morning is lost never to be recovered. Says the Wise Man: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well. I looked upon it and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as one that travelth, and thy want as an armed man."

[178] Those who make any pretensions to godliness should adorn the doctrine they profess, and not give occasion for the truth to be reviled through their inconsiderate course of action. "Owe no man any- thing," says the apostle. You ought now, my brother, to take hold earnestly to correct your habits of indolence, redeeming the time. Let the world see that the truth has wrought a reformation in your life.

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MOVING TO BATTLE CREEK.

OUR Saviour represents himself as a man taking his journey into a far country, who left his house in charge of chosen servants, giving to every man his work. Every Christian has something to do in the service of his Master. We are not to seek our own ease or convenience, but rather to make the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom our first consideration. Unselfish efforts to help and bless our fellow-men will not only evince our love for Jesus, but will keep us near him in dependence and faith, and our own souls will be constantly growing in grace and in a knowledge of the truth.

God has scattered his children in various communities, that the light of truth may be kept shining amid the moral darkness that enshrouds the earth. The deeper the darkness around us, the greater the need that our light should shine for God. We may be placed in circumstances of great difficulty and trial, but this does not prove that we are not in the very position assigned us by Providence. Among the Christians at Rome in Paul's day, the apostle mentions "them that are of Cæsar's household." Nowhere could the moral atmosphere be more unfavorable to Christianity than at that Roman court, under the cruel and profligate Nero. Yet those who had, while in the emperor's service, accepted Christ, did not feel at liberty, after their conversion, to leave their post of duty. In the face of seductive temptations, fierce opposition, and appalling dangers, they were faithful witnesses for Christ.

Whoever will rely wholly upon divine grace may make his life a constant testimony for the truth. No one is so situated that he cannot be a true and faithful Christian. However great the obstacles, all who are determined to obey God will find the way opening as they go forward. [179]

Those who maintain their fidelity to God in the midst of opposing influences are gaining an experience of the highest value. Their strength increases with every obstacle surmounted, every temptation overcome. This fact is often overlooked. When a person has received

the truth, mistaken friends fear to expose him to any test or trial, and they immediately endeavor to secure for him an easier position. He goes to some place where all are in harmony with him. But is his spiritual strength increased thereby ? In many cases not. He comes to have as little real stamina as a hot-house plant. He ceases to watch; his faith becomes weak; he is neither growing in grace himself, nor aiding others.

Do any shrink from maintaining the truth, in the midst of unbelief and opposition ? I ask them to call to mind the believers in Nero's household; consider the depravity and persecution which they encountered, and gather from their example a lesson of courage, fortitude, and faith.

It may at times be advisable for those who are young in the faith to be withdrawn from great temptations or opposition, and to be placed where they can enjoy the care and counsel of experienced Christians. But it should be ever kept before their minds that the Christian life is a constant warfare; that the indulgence of sloth or indolence will be fatal to success.

We should not, after accepting the truth, unite with those who oppose it, nor in any manner place ourselves where it will be difficult for us to live out our faith. But should any one, while thus situated, receive the truth, he should weigh the matter carefully before leaving his position. It may be the design of Providence that his influence and example shall bring others to the knowledge of the truth.

[180] Many are connected in family relations with opposers of the faith. These believers are often subjected to great trials, but by divine grace they may glorify God by obedience to the truth.

As servants of Christ we should be faithful in the position where God sees that we can render most efficient service. If opportunities of greater usefulness are presented to us, we should accept them at the Master's bidding, and his approving smile will be upon us. But we should fear to leave our appointed work, unless the Lord clearly indicates our duty to serve him in another field.

Different qualifications are needed for different departments of the work. The carpenter is not fitted to work at the anvil, nor the blacksmith to use the plane. The merchant would be out of place beside the sick-bed, and the doctor in the counting-room. Those who become weary with the work which God has committed to them, and

place themselves in positions where they cannot or will not work, will be accounted slothful servants. "To every man his work." Not one is excused.

Our duty to act as missionaries for God in the very position where he has placed us, has been greatly overlooked by us as a people. Many are eagerly turning from present duties and opportunities to some wider field; many imagine that in some other position they would find it less difficult to obey the truth. Our larger churches are looked upon as enjoying great advantages, and there is among our people a growing tendency to leave their special post of duty and move to Battle Creek, or to the vicinity of some other large church. This practice not only threatens the prosperity and even the life of our smaller churches, but it is preventing us from doing the very work which God has given us to do, and is destroying our spirituality and usefulness as a people.

From nearly all our churches in Michigan, and to some extent, from other States, our brethren and sisters have been crowding into Battle Creek. Many of them were efficient helpers in smaller churches, and their removal has greatly weakened those little companies; in some cases the church has thus been completely disorganized.

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Have those who moved to Battle Creek proved a help to the church? As the matter was presented before me, I looked to see who were bearing a living testimony for God, who were feeling a burden for the youth, who were visiting from house to house, praying with families and laboring for their spiritual interests. I saw that this work had been neglected. On coming to this large church, many feel that they have no part to act. Hence they fold their hands, and shun all responsibility and effort.

There are some who come here merely to secure financial benefit. This class are a heavy burden to the church. They are cumberers of the ground, their unproductive boughs shutting from other trees the glory of Heaven's sunlight.

It is not pleasing to God that so many of our ministers should settle at Battle Creek. If their families were scattered in different parts of the field, they might be far more useful. It is true that the minister spends but a short time at home, yet there are many places where that time would be of far greater benefit to the cause of God.

The Lord says to many at Battle Creek, What doest thou here? What account can you render for leaving your appointed work and becoming a hindrance rather than a help to the church?

[182] Brethren, I entreat you to compare your own spiritual state as it now is with what it was when you were actively engaged in the cause of Christ. While helping and encouraging the church, you were gaining a useful experience, and keeping your own souls in the love of God. As you have ceased to work for others, has not your own love grown cold, and your zeal languid? And how is it with your children? Are they more firmly established in the truth, and more devoted to God, than before coming to this large church?

The influence exerted by some who have long been connected with the work of God, is fatal to spirituality and devotion. These gospel-hardened youth have surrounded themselves with an atmosphere of worldliness, irreverence, and infidelity. Dare you risk the effect of such associations upon your children? It would be better for them never to obtain an education, than to acquire it at the sacrifice of principle and the blessing of God.

Among the youth who come to Battle Creek, there are some who maintain their fidelity to God in the midst of temptation; but the number is small. Many who come here with confidence in the truth, in the Bible, and in religion, have been led astray by irreligious associates, and have returned to their homes doubting every truth which we as a people hold dear.

Let all our brethren who contemplate removing to Battle Creek, or sending their children here, consider the matter well before taking this step. Unless the forces at this great center are keeping the fort, unless the faith and devotion of the church are proportioned to her privileges and opportunities, this is the most dangerous position which you can choose. I have seen the condition of this church as angels look upon it. There is a spiritual deception upon both the people and the watchmen. They maintain the forms of religion, but lack the abiding principles of righteousness. Unless there is a decided change, a marked transformation in this church, the school here should be removed to some other locality.

Had the youth who have lived here for years improved their privileges, several who are now skeptics would have devoted themselves to the work of the ministry. But they have considered it an evidence

of intellectual superiority to doubt the truth, and have been proud of their independence in cherishing infidelity. They have done despite to the Spirit of grace, and have trampled upon the blood of Christ. [183]

Where are the missionaries who should be raised up at the heart of the work? From twenty to fifty should be sent out from Battle Creek every year to carry the truth to those who sit in darkness. But piety is at so low an ebb, the spirit of devotion is so weak, worldliness and selfishness so prevalent, that the moral atmosphere begets a lethargy fatal to missionary zeal.

We need not go to foreign lands to become missionaries for God. All around us are fields “white already to harvest,” and whoever will may gather “fruit unto life eternal.” God calls upon many in Battle Creek who are dying of spiritual sloth, to go where their labor is needed in his cause. Move out of Battle Creek, even if it requires a pecuniary sacrifice. Go some where to be a blessing to others. Go where you can strengthen some weak church. Put to use the powers which God has given you.

Shake off your spiritual lethargy. Work with all your might to save your own souls and the souls of others. It is no time now to cry peace and safety. It is not silver-tongued orators that are needed to give this message. The truth in all its pointed severity must be spoken. Men of action are needed, —men who will labor with earnest, ceaseless energy for the purifying of the church and the warning of the world.

A great work is to be accomplished; broader plans must be laid; a voice must go forth to arouse the nations. Men whose faith is weak and wavering are not the ones to carry forward the work at this important crisis. We need the courage of heroes and the faith of martyrs.

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WORLDLINESS IN THE CHURCH

IT is recorded of the holy men of old that God was not ashamed to be called their God. The reason assigned is, that instead of coveting earthly possessions or seeking happiness in worldly plans or aspirations, they placed their all upon the altar of God, and made disposition of it to build up his kingdom. They lived only for God's glory, and declared plainly that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth, seeking a better country, that is, an heavenly. Their conduct proclaimed their faith. God could intrust to them his truth, and could leave the world to receive from them a knowledge of His will.

But how are the professed people of God to-day maintaining the honor of his name ? How could the world infer that they are a peculiar people? What evidence do they give of citizenship in Heaven ? Their self-indulgent, ease-loving course falsifies the character of Christ. He could not honor them in any marked manner before the world without indorsing their false representation of his character.

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 proclaim that which the owners have been saying in their hearts,—“My Lord delayeth his coming.”

I looked upon the dress and listened to the conversation of many who profess the truth. Both were opposed to the principles of 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. Our institutions are burdened with debt, and how can we expect the Lord to answer our prayers for their prosperity, when we are not doing what we can do to relieve them from embarrassment ?

I would address you as Christ addressed Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." 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, ever bearing witness of higher aims and nobler themes than those in which worldlings are absorbed. Our dress, our dwellings, our conversation, should testify of our consecration to God. What power would attend those who thus evinced that they had given up all for Christ. God would not be ashamed to acknowledge them as his children. He would bless his devoted people, and the unbelieving world would fear him.

Christ longs to work mightily by his Spirit for the conviction and conversion of sinners. But according to his divine plan, the work must be performed through the instrumentality of his church; and her members have so far departed from him that he cannot accomplish his will through them. He chooses to work by means; yet the means employed must be in harmony with his character.

Who are there in Battle Creek that are faithful and true? Let them come over on the Lord's side. If we would be in a position where God can use us, we must have an individual faith and an individual experience. Only those who trust wholly in God are safe now. We must not follow any human example, or lean upon any human support. Many are constantly taking wrong positions and making wrong moves; if we trust to their guidance, we shall be misled.

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Some who profess to be spokesmen for God are in their daily life denying the faith. They present to the people important truths; but who are impressed by these truths ? who are convicted of sin ? The hearers know that those who are preaching to-day will to-morrow be the first to join in pleasure, mirth, and frivolity. Their influence out of the pulpit soothes the conscience of the impenitent, and causes the ministry to be despised. They are themselves asleep, upon the

very verge of the eternal world. The blood of souls is upon their garments.

How are the faithful servants of Christ employed? —“Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,“—praying in the closet, in the family, in the congregation, everywhere; “and watching thereunto, with all perseverance.” They feel that souls are in peril, and with earnest, humble faith, they plead the promises of God in their behalf. The ransom paid by Christ,—the atonement on the cross, —is ever before them. They will have souls as seals of their ministry.

The rebuke of the Lord is upon his people for their pride and unbelief. He will not restore unto them the joys of his salvation while they are departing from the instructions of his word and his Spirit. He will give grace to those who fear him and walk in the truth, and he will withdraw his blessing from all that assimilate to the world. Mercy and truth are promised to the humble and penitent, and judgments are denounced against the rebellious.

[187] The church at Battle Creek might have stood free from idolatry; and her faithfulness would have been an example to other churches. But she is more willing to depart from God’s commandments than to renounce the friendship of the world. She is joined to the idols which she has chosen; and because temporal prosperity and the favor of a wicked world are hers, she believes herself to be rich toward God. This will prove to many a fatal delusion. Her divine character and spiritual strength have departed from her.

I counsel this church to give heed to the Saviour’s admonition: “Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

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SHALL WE CONSULT SPIRITUALIST PHYSICIANS?

“ AHAZIAH fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick; and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover of this disease. But the angel of the Lord said unto Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.”

This narrative most strikingly displays the divine displeasure against those who turn from God to Satanic agencies. A short time previous to the events above recorded, the kingdom of Israel had changed rulers. Ahab had fallen under the judgment of God, and had been succeeded by his son Ahaziah, a worthless character, who did only evil in the sight of the Lord, walking in the ways of his father and mother, and causing Israel to sin. He served Baal, and worshiped him, and provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger, as his father Ahab had done. But judgments followed close upon the sins of the rebellious king. A war with Moab, and then the accident by which his own life was threatened, attested the wrath of God against Ahaziah. [188]

How much had the king of Israel heard and seen in his father's time, of the wondrous works of the Most High! What terrible evidence of his severity and jealousy had God given apostate Israel! Of all this, Ahaziah was cognizant; yet he acts as though these awful realities, and even the fearful end of his own father, were only an idle tale. Instead of humbling his heart before the Lord, he ventured upon the most daring act of impiety which marked his life. He commands his servants, “Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover of this disease.”

The idol of Ekron was supposed to give information, through the medium of its priests, concerning future events. It had obtained such general credence that it was resorted to by large numbers from a considerable distance. The predictions there uttered, and the information given, proceeded directly from the prince of darkness. It is Satan who created, and who maintains the worship of idols, to divert the minds of men from God. It is by his agency that the kingdom of darkness and falsehood is supported.

The history of King Ahaziah's sin and punishment has a lesson of warning which none can disregard with impunity. Though we do not pay homage to heathen gods, yet thousands are worshipping at Satan's shrine as verily as did the King of Israel. The very spirit of heathen idolatry is rife to-day, though under the influence of science and education it has assumed a more refined and attractive form. Every day adds sorrowful evidence that faith in the sure word of prophecy is fast decreasing, and that in its stead superstition and Satanic witchery are captivating the minds of men. All who do not earnestly search the Scriptures, and submit every desire and purpose of life to that unerring test, all who do not seek God in prayer for a knowledge of his will, will surely wander from the right path, and fall under the deception of Satan.

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The heathen oracles have their counterpart in the spiritualistic mediums, the clairvoyants, and fortune-tellers of to-day. The mystic voices that spoke at Ekron and Endor are still by their lying words misleading the children of men. The prince of darkness has but appeared under a new guise. The mysteries of heathen worship are replaced by the secret associations and seances, the obscurities and wonders, of the sorcerers of our time. Their disclosures are eagerly received by thousands who refuse to accept light from God's word, or from his Spirit. While they speak with scorn of the magicians of old, the great deceiver laughs in triumph as they yield to his arts under a different form.

His agents still claim to cure disease. They attribute their power to electricity, magnetism, or the so-called "sympathetic remedies." In truth, they are but channels for Satan's electric currents. By this means he casts his spell over the bodies and souls of men.

I have from time to time received letters both from ministers and lay-members of the church, inquiring if I think it wrong to consult

spiritualist and clairvoyant physicians. I have not answered these letters, for want of time. But just now the subject is again urged upon my attention. So numerous are these agents of Satan becoming, and so general is the practice of seeking counsel from them, that it seems needful to utter words of warning.

God has placed it in our power to obtain a knowledge of the laws of health. He has made it our duty to preserve our physical powers in the best possible condition, that we may render to him acceptable service. Those who refuse to improve the light and knowledge that has been mercifully placed within their reach, are rejecting one of the means which God has granted them to promote spiritual as well as physical life. They are placing themselves where they will be exposed to the delusions of Satan.

Not a few, in this Christian age and Christian nation, resort to evil spirits, rather than trust to the power of the living God. The mother, watching by the sick-bed of her child, exclaims, "I can do no more. Is there no physician who has power to restore my child?" She is told of the wonderful cures performed by some clairvoyant or magnetic healer, and she trusts her dear one to his charge, placing it as verily in the hands of Satan as if he were standing by her side. In many instances the future life of the child is controlled by a Satanic power, which it seems impossible to break.

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Many are unwilling to put forth the needed effort to obtain a knowledge of the laws of life and the simple means to be employed for the restoration of health. They do not place themselves in right relation to life. When sickness is the result of their transgression of natural law, they do not seek to correct their errors, and then ask the blessing of God, but they resort to the physicians. If they recover health, they give to drugs and doctors all the honor. They are ever ready to idolize human power and wisdom, seeming to know no other God than the creature—dust and ashes.

I have heard a mother pleading with some infidel physician to save the life of her child; but when I entreated her to seek help from the Great Physician who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto him in faith, she turned away with impatience. Here we see the same spirit that was manifested by Ahaziah.

It is not safe to trust to physicians who have not the fear of God before them. Without the influence of divine grace, the hearts

of men are “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Selfaggrandizement is their aim. Under the cover of the medical profession, what iniquities have been concealed; what delusions supported! The physician may claim to possess great wisdom and marvelous skill, when his character is abandoned, and his practice
[191] contrary to the laws of life. The Lord our God assures us that he is waiting to be gracious; he invites us to call upon him in the day of trouble. How can we turn from him to trust in an arm of flesh ?

Go with me to yonder sick-room. There lies a husband and father, a man who is a blessing to society and to the cause of God. He has been suddenly stricken down by disease. The fire of fever seems consuming him. He longs for pure water to moisten the parched lips, to quench the raging thirst, and cool the fevered brow. But no; the doctor has forbidden water. The stimulus of strong drink is given, and adds fuel to the fire. The blessed, Heaven-sent water, skillfully applied, would quench the devouring flame, but it is set aside for poisonous drugs.

For a time, nature wrestles for her rights, but at last, overcome, she gives up the contest, and death sets the sufferer free. God desired that man to live, to be a blessing to the world; Satan determined to destroy him, and through the agency of the physician he succeeded. How long shall we permit our most precious lights to be thus extinguished ?

Ahaziah sent his servants to inquire of Baal-zebub, at Ekron; but instead of a message from the idol, he hears the awful denunciation from the God of Israel, “Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.” It was Christ that bade Elijah speak these words to the apostate king. Jehovah Immanuel had cause to be greatly displeased at Ahaziah’s impiety. What had Christ not done to win the hearts of sinners, and to inspire them with unwavering confidence in himself? For ages he had visited his people with manifestations of the most condescending kindness and unexampled love. From the times of the patriarchs, he had shown how his “delights were with the sons of men.” He had been a very present help to all who sought him in sincerity. “In all their
[192] afflictions, he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and in his pity he redeemed them.” Yet Israel had revolted from God, and turned for help to the Lord’s worst enemy.

The Hebrews were the only nation favored with a knowledge of the true God. When the king of Israel sent to inquire of a pagan oracle, he proclaimed to the heathen that he had more confidence in their idols than in the God of his people, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In the same manner do those who profess to have a knowledge of God's word dishonor him when they turn from the Source of strength and wisdom, to ask help or counsel from the powers of darkness. If God's wrath was kindled by such a course on the part of a wicked, idolatrous king, how can he regard a similar course pursued by those who profess to be his servants?

Why is it that men are so unwilling to trust Him who created man, and who can, by a touch, a word, a look, heal all manner of disease? Who is more worthy of our confidence than the One who made so great a sacrifice for our redemption? Our Lord has given us definite instruction, through the apostle James, as to our duty in case of sickness. When human help fails, God will be the helper of his people. "Are any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." If the professed followers of Christ would, with purity of heart, exercise as much faith in the promises of God as they repose in Satanic agencies, they would realize in soul and body the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit.

God has granted to this people great light, yet we are not placed beyond the reach of temptation. Who among us are seeking help from the gods of Ekron? Look on this picture—not drawn from imagination. In how many, even among Seventh-day Adventists, may its leading characteristics be seen? An invalid—apparently very conscientious, yet bigoted and self-sufficient—freely avows his contempt for the laws of health and life, which divine mercy has led us as a people to accept. His food must be prepared in a manner to satisfy his morbid cravings. Rather than sit at a table where wholesome food is provided, he will patronize restaurants, because he can there indulge appetite without restraint. A fluent advocate of temperance, he disregards its foundation principles. He wants relief, but refuses to obtain it at the price of self-denial. That man is worshipping at the shrine of perverted appetite. He is an idolater. The powers which, sanctified and ennobled, might be employed to

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honor God, are weakened and rendered of little service. An irritable temper, a confused brain, and unstrung nerves are among the results of his disregard of nature's laws. He is inefficient, unreliable.

Whoever has the courage and honesty to warn him of danger, thereby incurs his displeasure. The slightest remonstrance or opposition is sufficient to rouse his combative spirit. But now an opportunity is presented to seek help from one whose power comes through the medium of witchcraft. To this source he applies with eagerness, freely expending time and money in hope of securing the proffered boon. He is deceived, infatuated. The sorcerer's power is made the theme of praise, and others are influenced to seek his aid. Thus the God of Israel is dishonored, while Satan's power is revered and exalted.

In the name of Christ, I would address his pro-fessed followers: Abide in the faith which you have received from the beginning. Shun profane and vain babblings. Instead of putting your trust in witchcraft, have faith in the living God. Cursed is the path that leads to Endor or to Ekron. The feet will stumble and fall that venture upon the forbidden ground. There is a God in Israel, with whom is deliverance for all that are oppressed. Righteousness is the habitation of his throne.

[194] There is danger in departing in the least from the Lord's instruction. When we deviate from the plain path of duty, a train of circumstances will arise that seem irresistibly to draw us farther and farther from the right. Needless intimacies with those who have no respect for God will seduce us, ere we are aware. Fear to offend worldly friends will deter us from expressing our gratitude to God, or acknowledging our dependence upon him. We must keep close to the word of God. We need its warnings and encouragement, its threatenings and promises. We need the perfect example given only in the life and character of our Saviour.

Angels of God will preserve his people while they walk in the path of duty; but there is no assurance of such protection for those who deliberately venture upon Satan's ground. An agent of the great deceiver will say and do anything to gain his object. It matters little whether he calls himself a spiritualist, an "electric physician," or a "magnetic healer." By specious pretenses he wins the confidence of the unwary. He pretends to read the life-history and to understand all

the difficulties and afflictions of those who resort to him. Disguising himself as an angel of light, while the blackness of the pit is in his heart, he manifests great interest in women who seek his counsel. He tells them that all their troubles are due to an unhappy marriage. This may be too true, but such a counselor does not better their condition. He tells them that they need love and sympathy. Pretending great interest in their welfare, he casts a spell over his unsuspecting victims, charming them as the serpent charms the trembling bird. Soon they are completely in his power; sin, disgrace, and ruin are the terrible sequel.

These workers of iniquity are not few. Their path is marked by desolated homes, blasted reputations, and broken hearts. But of all this the world knows little; still they go on making fresh victims, and Satan exults in the ruin he has wrought.

The visible and the invisible world are in close contact. Could [195] the vail be lifted, we would see evil angels pressing their darkness around us, and working with all their power to deceive and destroy. Wicked men are surrounded, influenced, and aided by evil spirits. The man of faith and prayer has yielded his soul to Divine guidance, and angels of God bring to him light and strength from heaven.

No man can serve two masters. Light and darkness are no more opposites than are the service of God and the service of Satan. The prophet Elijah presented the matter in the true light when he fearlessly appealed to apostate Israel: "If the Lord be God, serve him; but if Baal, then serve him."

Those who give themselves up to the sorcery of Satan, may boast of great benefit received thereby, but does this prove their course to be wise or safe? What if life should be prolonged? What if temporal gain should be secured? Will it pay in the end to disregard the will of God? All such apparent gain will prove at last an irrecoverable loss. We cannot with impunity break down a single barrier which God has erected to guard his people from Satan's power.

Our only safety is in preserving the ancient land-marks. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

[196] MANY make a serious mistake in their religious life by keeping the attention fixed upon their feelings, and thus judging of their advancement or decline. Feelings are not a safe criterion. We are not to look within for evidence of our acceptance with God. We shall find there nothing but that which will discourage us. Our only hope is in “looking unto Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith.” There is everything in him to inspire with hope, with faith, and with courage. He is our righteousness, our consolation and rejoicing.

Those who look within for comfort will become weary and disappointed. A sense of our weakness and unworthiness should lead us with humility of heart to plead the atoning sacrifice of Christ. As we rely upon his merits, we shall find rest and peace and joy. He saves to the uttermost all who come unto God by him.

We need to trust in Jesus daily, hourly. He has promised that as our day is, our strength shall be. By his grace we may bear all the burdens of the present and perform its duties. But many are weighed down by the anticipation of future troubles. They are constantly seeking to bring to-morrow’s burdens into to-day. Thus a large share of all their trials are imaginary. For these, Jesus has made no provision. He promises grace only for the day. He bids us not to burden ourselves with the cares and troubles of to-morrow; “for sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

The habit of brooding over anticipated evils is unwise and unchristian. In thus doing, we fail to enjoy the blessings and to improve the opportunities of the present. The Lord requires us to perform the duties of to-day, and to endure its trials. We are to-day to watch that we offend not in word or deed. We must to-day praise and honor God. By the exercise of living faith to-day, we are to conquer the enemy. We must to-day seek God, and be determined that we will not rest satisfied without his presence. We should watch and work and pray as though this were the last day that would be

granted us. How intensely earnest, then, would be our life. How closely would we follow Jesus in all our words and deeds.

There are few who rightly appreciate or improve the precious privilege of prayer. We should go to Jesus and tell him all our needs. We may bring him our little cares and perplexities as well as our greater troubles. Whatever arises to disturb or distress us, we should take it to the Lord in prayer. When we feel that we need the presence of Christ at every step, Satan will have little opportunity to intrude his temptations. It is his studied effort to keep us away from our best and most sympathizing friend. We should make no one our confidant but Jesus. We can safely commune with him of all that is in our hearts. [197]

Brethren and sisters, when you assemble for social worship, believe that Jesus meets with you; believe that he is willing to bless you. Turn the eye away from self; look unto Jesus, talk of his matchless love. By beholding him, you will become changed into His likeness. When you pray, be brief, come right to the point. Do not preach the Lord a sermon in your long prayers. Ask for the bread of life as a hungry child asks bread of his earthly father. God will bestow upon us every needed blessing, if we ask him in simplicity and faith.

The prayers offered by ministers previous to their discourses, are frequently long and inappropriate. They embrace a whole round of subjects that have no reference to the necessities of the occasion or the wants of the people. Such prayers are suitable for the closet, but should not be offered in public. The hearers become weary, and long for the minister to close. Brethren, carry the people with you in your prayers. Go to your Saviour in faith, tell him what you need on that occasion. Let the soul go out after God with intense longing for the blessing needed at that time.

Prayer is the most holy exercise of the soul. It should be sincere, humble, earnest,—the desires of a renewed heart breathed in the presence of a holy God. When the suppliant feels that he is in the divine presence, self will be forgotten. He will have no desire to display human talent; he will not seek to please the ear of men, but to obtain the blessing which the soul craves. If we would only take the Lord at his word, what blessings might be ours! Would that there [198]

were more fervent, effectual prayer. Christ will be the helper of all who seek him in faith.

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CALLS FOR LABORERS.

A SPIRIT of worldliness and selfishness has deprived the church of many a blessing. We have no right to suppose an arbitrary withholding from the church of the divine light and power, to account for its limited usefulness. The measure of success which in the past has followed well-directed effort, contradicts such an idea. Success has ever been granted proportionate to the labor performed. It is the limitation of labors and sacrifices alone which has restricted the usefulness of the church. The missionary spirit is feeble; devotion is weak; selfishness and cupidity, covetousness and fraud, exist in its members.

Does not God care for these things ? Can he not read the intents and purposes of the heart? Earnest, fervent, contrite prayer would open to them the windows of Heaven, and bring down showers of grace. A clear, steady view of the cross of Christ would counteract their worldliness, and fill their souls with humility, penitence and gratitude. They would then feel that they are not their own, but that they are the purchase of Christ's blood.

A deadly spiritual malady is upon the church. Its members are wounded by Satan, but they will not look to the cross of Christ, as the Israelites looked to the brazen serpent, that they may live. The world has so many claims upon them that they have not time to look to the cross of Calvary long enough to see its glory or to feel its power. When they now and then catch a glimpse of the self-denial and self-dedication which the truth demands, it is unwelcome, and they turn their attention in another direction, that they may the sooner forget it. The Lord cannot make his people useful and efficient while they are not careful to comply with the conditions he has laid down.

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Great demands are everywhere made for the light which God has given to his people; but these calls are for the most part in vain. Who feels the burden of consecrating himself to God and to his work? Where are the young men who are qualifying themselves to answer these calls? Vast territories are opened before us where the light

of truth has never penetrated. Whichever way we look we see rich harvests ready to be gathered, but there are none to do the reaping. Prayers are offered for the triumph of the truth. What do your prayers mean, brethren? What kind of success do you desire?—a success to suit your indolence, your selfish indulgence?—a success that will sustain and support itself without any effort on your part?

There must be a decided change in the church which will inconvenience those who are reclining on their lees, before laborers who are fitted for their solemn work can be sent into the field. There must be an awakening, a spiritual renovation. The temperature of Christian piety must be raised. Plans must be devised and executed for the spread of truth to all nations of the earth. Satan is lulling Christ's professed followers to sleep, while souls are perishing all around them; and what excuse can they give to the Master for their negligence?

The words of Christ apply to the church: "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Why are you not at work in some capacity in his vineyard? Again and again he has bid you, "Go ye also into my vineyard, and whatsoever is right that shall ye receive." But this gracious call from Heaven has been disregarded by the large majority. Is it not high time that you obey the commands of God? [200] There is work for every individual who names the name of Christ. A voice from Heaven is solemnly calling you to duty. Heed this voice, and go to work at once in any place, in any capacity. Why stand ye here all the day idle? There is work for you to do,—a work that demands your best energies. Every precious moment of life is related to some duty which you owe to God or to your fellow-men, and yet you are idle!

A great work of saving souls remains yet to be done. Every angel in glory is engaged in this work, while every demon of darkness is opposing it. Christ has demonstrated to us the great value of souls in that he came to the world with the hoarded love of eternity in his heart, offering to make man heir to all his wealth. He unveils before us the love of the Father for the guilty race, and presents him as just and the justifier of him that believeth.

"Christ pleased not himself." He did nothing for himself; his work was in behalf of fallen man. Self-ishness stood abashed in his presence. He assumed our nature that he might suffer in our stead.

Self-ishness, the sin of the world, has become the pre-vailing sin of the church. In sacrificing himself for the good of men, Christ strikes at the root of all selfishness. He withheld nothing, not even his own honor and heavenly glory. He expects corresponding self-denial and sacrifice on the part of those whom he came to bless and save. Everyone is required to work to the extent of his ability. Every worldly consideration should be laid aside for the glory of God. The only desire for worldly advantages should be that we may the better advance the cause of God.

Christ's interests and those of his followers should be one; but the world would judge that they were separate and distinct, for those who claim to be Christ's pursue their own ends as eagerly, and waste their substance as selfishly, as non-professors. Worldly prosperity comes first; nothing is made equal to this. The cause of Christ must wait till they gather a certain portion for themselves. They must increase their gains at all hazards. Souls must perish without a knowledge of the truth. Of what value is a soul for whom Christ died, in comparison with their gains, their merchandise, their houses and lands? Souls must wait till they get prepared to do something. God calls these servers of Mammon slothful and unfaithful servants, but Mammon boasts of them as among his most diligent and devoted servants. They sacrifice their Lord's goods to ease and enjoyment. Self is their idol.

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Doing nothing to bring souls to Jesus, who sacrificed everything to bring salvation within our reach! Selfishness is driving benevolence and the love of Christ from the church. Millions of the Lord's money are squandered in the gratification of worldly lust, while his treasury is left empty. I know not how to present this matter before you as it was presented to me. Thousands of dollars are spent every year in gratifying pride of dress. That very means should be used in our missions. I was shown families who load their tables with almost every luxury, and gratify almost every desire for fine clothes. They are engaged in a prosperous business, or are earning good wages, but nearly every dollar is expended upon themselves or their families. Is this imitating Christ? What burden do these feel to carefully economize and deny inclination that they may do more to advance the work of God on earth? Should Eld. Andrews have the advantage of some of the means thus needlessly expended, it would be a great

blessing to him, and give him advantages which would prolong his life. The missionary work might be enlarged a hundred-fold if there were more means to employ in carrying out larger plans. But the means which God designed should be used for this very purpose is expended for articles which are thought necessary to comfort and happiness, and which there might be no sin in possessing were not means so greatly needed in extending the truth. How many of you, my brethren, are seeking your own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

[202] Suppose Christ should abide in every heart, and selfishness in all its forms should be banished from the church; what would be the result? Harmony, unity, and brotherly love would be seen as verily as in the church which Christ first established. Christian activity would be seen everywhere. The whole church would be kindled into a sacrificial flame for the glory of God. Every Christian would cast in the fruit of his self-denial to be consumed upon the altar. There would be far greater activity in devising fresh methods of usefulness, and in studying how to come close to poor sinners to save them from eternal ruin.

Should we dress in plain, modest apparel, without reference to the fashions; should our tables at all times be set with simple, healthful food, avoiding all luxuries, all extravagance; should our houses be built with becoming plainness, and furnished in the same manner, it would show the sanctifying power of the truth, and would have a telling influence upon unbelievers. But while we conform to the world in these matters, in some cases apparently seeking to excel worldlings in fanciful arrangement, the preaching of the truth will have but little or no effect. Who will believe the solemn truth for this time, when those who already profess to believe it contradict their faith by their works? It is not God who has closed the windows of Heaven to us, but it is our own conformity to the customs and practices of the world.

The third angel of Revelation fourteen is represented as flying swiftly through the midst of heaven crying, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Here is shown the nature of the work of the people of God. They have a message of so great importance that they are represented as flying in the presentation of it to the world. They are holding in their hands the

bread of life for a famishing world. The love of Christ constraineth them. This is the last message. There are no more to follow; no more invitations of mercy to be given after this message shall have done its work. What a trust ! What a responsibility is resting upon all to carry the words of gracious invitation. “And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

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Everyone who heareth is to say, come. Not only the ministers, but the people. All are to join in the invitation. Not only by their profession but by their character and dress, all are to have a winning influence. They are made trustees for the world, executors of the will of One who has bequeathed sacred truth to men. Would that all could feel the dignity and glory of their God-given trust.

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THE SEAL OF GOD.

“HE cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand.”

“And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer’s inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite; let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity; slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.”

[204] Jesus is about to leave the mercy-seat of the heavenly sanctuary, to put on garments of vengeance, and pour out his wrath in judgments upon those who have not responded to the light God has given them. “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” Instead of being softened by the patience and long forbearance that the Lord has exercised toward them, those who fear not God and love not the truth, strengthen their hearts in their evil course. But there are limits even to the forbearance of God, and many are exceeding these boundaries. They have overrun the limits of grace, and therefore God must interfere and vindicate his own honor.

Of the Amorites, the Lord said: “In the fourth generation they shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” Although this nation was conspicuous because of its idolatry and corruption, it had not yet filled up the cup of its iniquity, and God would not give command for its utter destruction. The people were to see the divine power manifested in a marked manner, that they might be left without excuse. The compassionate Creator was willing to bear with their iniquity until the fourth generation. Then,

if no change was seen for the better, his judgments were to fall upon them.

With unerring accuracy, the Infinite One still keeps an account with all nations. While his mercy is tendered, with calls to repentance, this account will remain open; but when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of his wrath commences. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. There is no more pleading of mercy in their behalf.

The prophet, looking down the ages, had this time presented before his vision. The nations of this age have been the recipients of unprecedented mercies. The choicest of Heaven's blessings have been given them, but increased pride, covetousness, idolatry, contempt of God, and base ingratitude, are written against them. They are fast closing up their account with God. [205]

But that which causes me to tremble, is the fact that those who have had the greatest light and privileges have become contaminated by the prevailing iniquity. Influenced by the unrighteous around them, many, even of those who profess the truth, have grown cold, and are borne down by the strong current of evil. The universal scorn thrown upon true piety and holiness, leads those who do not connect closely with God to lose their reverence for his law. If they were following the light, and obeying the truth from the heart, this holy law would seem even more precious to them when thus despised and set aside. As the disrespect for God's law becomes more manifest, the line of demarkation between its observers and the world becomes more distinct. Love for the divine precepts increases with one class, according as contempt for them increases with another class.

The crisis is fast approaching. The rapidly swelling figures show that the time for God's visitation has about come. Although loth to punish, nevertheless he will punish, and that speedily. Those who walk in the light will see signs of the approaching peril; but they are not to sit in quiet, unconcerned expectancy of the ruin, comforting themselves with the belief that God will shelter his people in the day of visitation. Far from it. They should realize that it is their duty to labor diligently to save others, looking with strong faith to God for help. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

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The leaven of godliness has not entirely lost its power. At the time when the danger and depression of the church are greatest, the little company who are standing in the light will be sighing and crying for the abominations that are done in the land. But more especially will their prayers arise in behalf of the church, because its members are doing after the manner of the world.

The earnest prayers of this faithful few will not be in vain. When the Lord comes forth as an avenger, he will also come as a protector of all those who have preserved the faith in its purity, and kept themselves unspotted from the world. It is at this time that God has promised to avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them.

The command is, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." These sighing, crying ones had been holding forth the words of life; they had reproved, counseled, and entreated. Some who had been dishonoring God, repented and humbled their hearts before him. But the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel; although many still continued the forms of religion, his power and presence were lacking.

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In the time when his wrath shall go forth in judgments, these humble, devoted followers of Christ will be distinguished from the rest of the world by their soul-anguish, which is expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God's honor and a love for souls, will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. Their righteous souls are vexed day by day with the unholy works and conversation of the unrighteous. They are powerless to stop the rushing torrent of iniquity, and hence they are filled with grief and alarm. They mourn before God to see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament and afflict their souls because pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church. The Spirit of God, which prompts to reproof, is trampled under foot, while the servants of Satan triumph. God is dishonored, the truth made of none effect.

The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God. The Lord commissions his messengers, the men with slaughtering weapons in their hands : “Go ye after him through the city, and smite; let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity; slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.”

Here we see that the church—the Lord’s sanctuary —was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light, and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God’s power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil. He is too merciful to visit his people in judgment. Thus peace and safety is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God’s people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs, that would not bark, are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children, all perish together.

The abominations for which the faithful ones were sighing and crying were all that could be discerned by finite eyes, but by far the worst sins, those which provoked the jealousy of the pure and holy God, were unrevealed. The great searcher of hearts knoweth every sin committed in secret, by the workers of iniquity. These persons come to feel secure in their deceptions, and because of his long-suffering, say that the Lord seeth not, and then act as though he had forsaken the earth. But he will detect their hypocrisy, and will open before others those sins which they were so careful to hide.

No superiority of rank, dignity, or worldly wisdom, no position in sacred office, will preserve men from sacrificing principle, when left to their own deceitful hearts. Those who have been regarded as worthy and righteous, prove to be ringleaders in apostasy, and examples in indifference and in the abuse of God’s mercies. Their

wicked course he will tolerate no longer, and in his wrath he deals with them without mercy.

It is with reluctance that the Lord withdraws his presence from those who have been blessed with great light, and who have felt the power of the word in ministering to others. They were once his faithful servants, favored with his presence and guidance; but they departed from him, and led others into error, and therefore are brought under the divine displeasure.

The day of God's vengeance is just upon us. The seal of God will be placed upon the foreheads of those only who sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. Those who link in sympathy with the world are eating and drinking with the drunken, and will surely be destroyed with the workers of iniquity. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

Our own course of action will determine whether we shall receive the seal of the living God, or be cut down by the destroying weapons. Already a few drops of God's wrath have fallen upon the earth; but when the seven last plagues shall be poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, then it will be forever too late to repent, and find shelter. No atoning blood will then wash away the stains of sin.

[209] "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." When this time of trouble comes, every case is decided; there is no longer probation, no longer mercy for the impenitent. The seal of the living God is upon his people. This small remnant, unable to defend themselves in the deadly conflict with the powers of earth that are marshaled by the dragon host, make God their defense. The decree has been passed by the highest earthly authority that they shall worship the beast and receive his mark under pain of persecution and death. May God help his people now, for what can they then do in such a fearful conflict without his assistance!

Courage, fortitude, faith, and implicit trust in God's power to save, do not come in a moment. These heavenly graces are acquired

by the experience of years. By a life of holy endeavor and firm adherence to the right, the children of God were sealing their destiny. Beset with temptations without number, they knew they must resist firmly or be conquered. They felt that they had a great work to do, and at any hour they might be called to lay off their armor; and should they come to the close of life with their work undone, it would be an eternal loss. They eagerly accepted the light from Heaven, as did the first disciples from the lips of Jesus. When those early Christians were exiled to mountains and deserts, when left in dungeons to die with hunger, cold, and torture, when martyrdom seemed the only way out of their distress, they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ, who was crucified for them. Their worthy example will be a comfort and encouragement to the people of God who will be brought into the time of trouble such as never was.

Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. They had the light of truth, they knew their Master's will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works. These who were so familiar with prophecy and the treasures of divine wisdom, should have acted their faith. They should have commanded their households after them, that by a well-ordered family they might present to the world the influence of the truth upon the human heart. [210]

By their lack of devotion and piety, and their failure to reach a high religious standard, they make other souls contented with their position. Men of finite judgment cannot see that in patterning after these men, who have so often opened to them the treasures of God's word, they will surely endanger their souls. Jesus is the only true pattern. Every one must now search the Bible for himself upon his knees before God, with the humble, teachable heart of a child, if he would know what the Lord requires of him. However high any minister may have stood in the favor of God, if he neglects to follow out the light given him of God, if he refuses to be taught as a little child, he will go into darkness and Satanic delusions, and will lead others in the same path.

Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy

the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost.

[211] We are too easily satisfied with our attainments. We feel rich and increased with goods, and know not that we are “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Now is the time to heed the admonition of the True Witness: “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”

In this life we must meet fiery trials and make costly sacrifices, but the peace of Christ is the reward. There has been so little self-denial, so little suffering for Christ’s sake, that the cross is almost entirely forgotten. We must be partakers with Christ of his sufferings, if we would sit down in triumph with him on his throne. So long as we choose the easy path of self-indulgence, and are frightened at self-denial, our faith will never become firm, and we cannot know the peace of Jesus, nor the joy that comes through conscious victory. The most exalted of the redeemed host that stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, clad in white, know the conflict of overcoming, for they have come up through great tribulation. Those who have yielded to circumstances rather than engage in this conflict, will not know how to stand in that day when anguish will be upon every soul, when, though Noah, Job, and Daniel, were in the land, they could save neither son nor daughter, for every one must deliver his soul by his own righteousness.

No one need say that his case is hopeless, that he cannot live the life of a Christian. Ample provision is made by the death of Christ for every soul. Jesus is our ever-present help in time of need. Only call upon him in faith, and he has promised to hear and answer your petitions.

Oh, for living, active faith! We need it; we must have it, or we shall faint and fail in the day of trial. The darkness that will then rest upon our path must not discourage us, or drive us to despair. It is the vail with which God covers his glory when he comes to impart rich blessings. We should know this by our past experience. In that day when God has a controversy with his people, this experience will be a source of comfort and hope.

It is now that we must keep ourselves and our children unspotted from the world. It is now that we must wash our robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. It is now that we must overcome pride, passion, and spiritual slothfulness. It is now that we must awake, and make determined effort for symmetry of character. "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." We are in a most trying position, waiting, watching for our Lord's appearing. The world is in darkness. "But ye, brethren," says Paul, "are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." It is ever God's purpose to bring light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, and rest out of weariness, for the waiting, longing soul. [212]

What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world, are receiving the worldly mold, and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth,— these are receiving the heavenly mold, and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth, and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.

Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for Heaven. Go forward, my brethren and sisters. I can only write briefly upon these points at this time, merely calling your attention to the necessity of preparation. Search the Scriptures for yourselves, that you may understand the fearful solemnity of the present hour.

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AN APPEAL. *

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. Ministers who preach self instead of Christ, 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.

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Let each put the question to his own heart, “ How have we fallen into this state of spiritual feebleness and dissension? Have we not brought upon ourselves the frown of God because our actions do not correspond with our faith? 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

*This appeal was written at Healdsburg, Cal., May 30, 1882, to be read at the camp-meetings. It presents warnings and instruction which the writer being absent in person, felt urged to give to the church. For the benefit of those who were not present at those meetings, and also for all who nifty desire to preserve it in permanent form, it is inserted here.

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 to-day widespread, even among the professed followers of Christ. Passion is unrestrained; the animal propensities are gaining strength by indulgence, while the moral powers are constantly becoming weaker. 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. I know whereof I speak. 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.

No matter who you are, or what your life has been, you can be saved only in God's appointed way. You must repent; you must fall helpless on the Rock, Christ Jesus. You must feel your need of a physician, and of the one only remedy for sin, the blood of Christ. This remedy can be secured only by repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Here the work is yet to be begun [215] by many who profess to be Christians, and even to be ministers of Christ. Like the Pharisees of old, many of you feel no need of a Saviour. You are self-sufficient, self-exalted. Said Christ, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The blood of Christ will avail for none but those who feel their need of its cleansing power.

What surpassing love and condescension, that when we had no claim upon divine mercy, Christ was willing to undertake our redemption! But our great Physician requires of every soul unques-

tioning submission. We are never to prescribe for our own ease. Christ must have the entire management of will and action.

Many are not sensible of their condition, and their danger; and there is much in the nature and manner of Christ's work averse to every worldly principle, and opposed to the pride of the human heart. Jesus requires us to trust ourselves wholly to his hands, and confide in his love and wisdom.

We may flatter ourselves, as did Nicodemus, 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 we glory for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake."

[216] 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. It makes me sad to say that this experience is understood by but few who profess the truth. 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. Like the foolish virgins, they have neglected to obtain the oil of grace in their vessels with their lamps. I tell you, my brethren, that a large number who profess to believe and even to teach the truth, are under the bondage of sin. Base passions defile the mind and corrupt the soul. Some who are in the vilest iniquity have borrowed the livery of Heaven, that they may serve Satan more effectively. "Everyone who 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 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.

Such an experience must be ours if we would be prepared to stand in the day of God. Now, while probation lingers, while mercy's voice is still heard, is the time for us to put away our sins. While moral darkness covers the earth like a funeral pall, the light of God's standard-bearers must shine the more brightly, showing the contrast between Heaven's light and Satan's darkness.

God has made ample provision that we may stand perfect in his grace, wanting in nothing, waiting for the appearing of our Lord. Are you ready? Have you the wedding garment on? That garment will never cover deceit, impurity, corruption or hypocrisy. The eye of God is upon you. It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. We may conceal our sins from the eyes of men, but we can hide nothing from our Maker.

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God spared not his own Son, but delivered him to death for our offenses, and raised him again for our justification. Through Christ we may present our petitions at the throne of grace. Through him, unworthy as we are, we may obtain all spiritual blessings. Do we come to him, that we may have life ?

How shall we know for ourselves God's goodness and his love? The psalmist tells us—not, hear and know, read and know, or believe and know; but—“*Taste* and see that the Lord is good.” Instead of relying upon the word of another, taste for yourself.

Experience is knowledge derived from experiment. Experimental religion is what is needed now. “*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*” Some—yes, a large number—have a theoretical knowledge of religious truth, but have never felt the renewing power of divine grace upon their own hearts. These persons are ever slow to heed the testimonies of warning, reproof, and instruction indited by the Holy Spirit. They believe in the wrath of God, but put forth no earnest efforts to escape it. They believe in Heaven, but make no sacrifice to obtain it. They believe in the value of the soul, and that ere long its redemption ceaseth forever. Yet they neglect the most precious opportunities to make their peace with God.

They may read the Bible, but its threatenings do not alarm or its promises win them. They approve things that are excellent, yet they follow the way in which God has forbidden them to go. They know a refuge, but do not avail themselves of it. They know a remedy for sin, but do not use it. They know the right, but have no relish for it.

[218] All their knowledge will but increase their condemnation. They have never tasted and learned by experience that the Lord is good.

To become a disciple of Christ is to deny self and follow Jesus through evil as well as good report. Few are doing this now. Many prophesy falsely, and the people love to have it so; but what will be done in the end thereof? What will be the decision when their work, with all its results, shall be brought in review before God?

The Christian life is a warfare. The apostle Paul speaks of wrestling against principalities and powers as he fought the good fight of faith. Again, he declares, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Ah, no. Today sin is cherished and excused. The sharp sword of the Spirit, the word of God, does not cut to the soul. Has religion changed? Has Satan's enmity to God abated? A religious life once presented difficulties, and demanded self-denial. All is made very easy now. And why is this? The professed people of God have compromised with the powers of darkness.

There must be a revival of the strait testimony. The path to Heaven is no smoother now than in the days of our Saviour. All our sins must be put away. Every darling indulgence that hinders our religious life must be cut off. The right eye or the right hand must be sacrificed, if it cause us to offend. Are we willing to renounce our own wisdom, and to receive the kingdom of Heaven as a little child? Are we willing to part with self-righteousness? Are we willing to give up our chosen worldly associates? Are we willing to sacrifice the approbation of men? The prize of eternal life is of infinite value. Will we put forth efforts and make sacrifices proportionate to the worth of the object to be attained?

Every association we form, however limited, exerts some influence upon us. The extent to which we yield to that influence will be determined by the degree of intimacy, the constancy of the intercourse, and our love and veneration for the one with whom we

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associate. Thus by acquaintance and association with Christ, we may become like him, the one faultless example.

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 so to walk, even as He walked. And 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.

Moses did not know that his face shone with a brightness painful and terrifying to those who had not, like himself, communed with God. Paul had a very humble opinion of his own advancement in the Christian life. He says, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.” He speaks of himself as the “chief of sinners.” Yet Paul had been highly honored of the Lord. He had been taken, in holy vision, to the third heaven, and had there received revelations of divine glory which he could not be permitted to make known.

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John the Baptist was pronounced by our Saviour the greatest of prophets. Yet what a contrast between the language of this man of God and that of many who profess to be ministers of the cross. When asked if he was the Christ, John declares himself unworthy even to unloose his Master’s sandals. When his disciples came with

the complaint that the attention of the people was turned to the new Teacher, John reminded them that he himself had claimed to be only the fore-runner of the Promised One. To Christ, as the bridegroom, belongs the first place in the affections of his people. "The friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all." "He that hath received His testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true."

It is such workers that are needed in the cause of God to-day. The self-sufficient, the envious and jealous, the critical and fault-finding, can well be spared from his sacred work. They should not be tolerated in the ministry, even though they may, apparently, have accomplished some good. God is not straitened for men or means. He calls for workers who are true and faithful, pure and holy; for those who have felt their need of the atoning blood of Christ and the sanctifying grace of his Spirit.

[221] 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.

To this class I would say, "Glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

When the Pharisees and Sadducees flocked to the baptism of John, that fearless preacher of righteousness addressed them, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance." These men were actuated by unworthy motives in coming to John. They were men of poisonous principles and corrupt practices. Yet they had no sense of their true condition. Filled with pride and ambition, they would not hesitate at any means to exalt themselves and strengthen their influence with the people. They came to receive baptism at the hand of John that they might better carry out these designs.

John read their motives, and met them with the searching inquiry, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Had they heard the voice of God speaking to their hearts, they would have given evidence of the fact, by bringing forth fruit meet for repentance. No such fruit was seen. They had heard the warning as merely the voice of man. They were charmed with the power and boldness with which John spoke; but the Spirit of God did not send conviction to their hearts, and as the sure result bring forth fruit unto eternal life. They gave no evidence of a change of heart. Without the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, John would have them understand that no outward ceremony could benefit them.

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The reproof of the prophet is applicable to many in our day. They cannot gainsay the clear and convincing arguments that sustain the truth, but they accept it more as the result of human reasoning than of divine revelation. They have no true sense of their condition as sinners, they manifest no real brokenness of heart; but like the Pharisees, they feel that it is a great condescension for them to accept the truth.

None are farther from the kingdom of Heaven than self-righteous formalists, filled with pride at their own attainments, while they are wholly destitute of the spirit of Christ; while envy, jealousy, or love of praise and popularity controls them. They belong to the same class that John addressed as a generation of vipers, children of the wicked one. Such persons are among us, unseen, unsuspected. They serve the cause of Satan more effectively than the vilest profligate; for the latter does not disguise his true character; he appears what he is.

God requires fruit meet for repentance. Without such fruit, our profession of faith is of no value. The Lord is able to raise up true believers among those who have never heard his name. "Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

[223] God is not dependent upon men who are unconverted in heart and life. He will never favor any man who practices iniquity. "And now the ax is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." Those who land and flatter the minister, while they neglect the works of righteousness, give unmistakable evidence that they are converted to the minister and not to God. We inquire, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Was it the voice of the Holy Spirit or merely the voice of man which you heard in the message sent from God? The fruit borne will testify to the character of the tree.

No outward forms can make us clean; no ordinance, administered by the saintliest of men, can take the place of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God must do its work upon the heart. All who have not experienced its regenerating power are chaff among the wheat. Our Lord has his fan in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor. In the coming day, he will discern "between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."

The spirit of Christ will be revealed in all who are bom of God. Strife and contention cannot arise among those who are controlled by his Spirit. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." The church will rarely take a higher stand than is taken by her ministers. We need a converted ministry and a converted people. Shepherds who watch for souls as they that must give account will lead the flock on in paths of peace and holiness. Their success in this work will be in proportion to their own growth in grace and knowledge of the truth. When the teachers are sanctified, soul, body, and spirit, they can impress upon the people the importance of such sanctification.

To talk of religious things in a casual way, to pray for spiritual blessings without real soul-hunger, and living faith, avails little. The wondering crowd that pressed close about Christ, realized no vital power from the contact. But when the poor, suffering woman, in

her great need, put forth her hand and touched the hem of Jesus' garment, she felt the healing virtue. Hers was the touch of faith. Christ recognized that touch, and he determined there to give a lesson for all his followers, to the close of time. He knew that virtue had gone out of him, and turning about in the throng he said, "Who touched my clothes?" Surprised at such a question, his disciples answered, "Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, who touched me?" [224]

Jesus fixed his eyes upon her who had done this. She was filled with fear. Great joy was hers; but had she overstepped her duty? Knowing what was done in her, she came trembling and fell at his feet, and told him all the truth. Christ did not reproach her. He gently said, "Go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

Here was distinguished the casual contact from the touch of faith. Prayer and preaching, without the exercise of living faith in God, will be in vain. But the touch of faith opens to us the divine treasure-house of power and wisdom; and thus, through instruments of clay, God accomplishes the wonders of his grace.

This living faith is our great need to-day. We must know that Jesus is indeed ours; that his spirit is purifying and refining our hearts. If the ministers of Christ had genuine faith, with meekness and love, what a work they might accomplish!

What fruit would be seen to the glory of God! What can I say to you, my brethren, that shall arouse you from your carnal security? I have been shown your perils. There are both believers and unbelievers in the church. Christ represents these two classes in his parable of the vine and its branches. He exhorts his followers, "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing."

There is a wide difference between a pretended union and a real connection with Christ by faith. A profession of the truth places men in the church, but this does not prove that they have a vital connection with the living Vine. A rule is given by which the true disciple may be distinguished from those who claim to follow Christ, but have not faith in him. The one class are fruit-bearing; the other, [225]

fruitless. The one are often subjected to the pruning-knife of God, that they may bring forth more fruit; the other, as withered branches, are ere long to be severed from the living Vine.

I am deeply solicitous that our people should preserve the living testimony among them; and that the church should be kept pure from the unbelieving element. Can we conceive of a closer, more intimate relation to Christ than is set forth in the words, “I am the vine, ye are the branches”? The fibers of the branch are almost identical with those of the vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the trunk to the branches is unobstructed and constant. The root sends its nourishment through the branch. Such is the true believer’s relation to Christ. He abides in Christ, and draws his nourishment from him.

This spiritual relation can be established only by the exercise of personal faith. This faith must express on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will, our feelings, desires, interests, and honor, identified with the prosperity of Christ’s kingdom and the honor of his cause, we constantly receiving grace from him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us.

When this intimacy of connection and communion is formed, our sins are laid upon Christ, his righteousness is imputed to us. He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. We have access to God through him; we are accepted in the Beloved. Whoever by word or deed injures a believer, thereby wounds Jesus. Whoever gives a cup of cold water to a disciple because he is a child of God, will be regarded by Christ as giving to himself.

[226] It was when Christ was about to take leave of his disciples, that he gave them the beautiful emblem of his relation to believers. He had been presenting before them the close union with himself by which they could maintain spiritual life when his visible presence was withdrawn. To impress it upon their minds, he gave them the vine as its most striking and appropriate symbol.

The Jews had always regarded the vine as the most noble of plants, and a type of all that was powerful, excellent, and fruitful. “The vine,” our Lord would seem to say, “which you prize so highly, is a symbol. I am the reality; I am the true vine. As a nation you prize

the vine; as sinners you should prize me above all things earthly. The branch cannot live separated from the vine; no more can you live unless you are abiding in me.”

All Christ’s followers have as deep an interest in this lesson as had the disciples who listened to his words. In the apostasy, man alienated himself from God. The separation is wide and fearful; but Christ has made provision again to connect us with himself. The power of evil is so identified with human nature that no man can overcome, except by union with Christ. Through this union we receive moral and spiritual power. If we have the spirit of Christ, we shall bring forth the fruit of righteousness, fruit that will honor and bless men, and glorify God.

The Father is the vine-dresser. He skillfully and mercifully prunes every fruit-bearing branch. Those who share Christ’s suffering and reproach now, will share his glory hereafter. He “ will not be ashamed to call them brethren.” His angels minister to them. His second appearing will be as the Son of man, thus even in his glory identifying him with humanity. To those who have united themselves to him, he declares, “ Though a mother may forget her child, yet will not I forget thee. I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. Thou art continually before me.”

Oh, what amazing privileges are proffered us! Will we put forth most earnest efforts to form this alliance with Christ, through which alone these blessings are attained ? Will we break off our sins by righteousness, and our iniquities by turning unto the Lord? Skepticism and infidelity are wide-spread. Christ asked the question, “ When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth ? ” We must cherish a living, active faith. The permanence of our faith is the condition of our union.

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A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our redemption; and the true believer chooses Christ as first and last, and best in everything. But this union costs us something. It is a union of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud being. All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have a change of heart. They must submit their own will to the will of God. There will be a struggle with outward and internal obstacles. There must be a painful work of detachment, as well

as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness—sin in all its forms—must be overcome, if we would enter into a union with Christ. The reason why many find the Christian life so deplorably hard, why they are so fickle, so variable, is, they try to attach themselves to Christ without first detaching themselves from these cherished idols.

After the union with Christ has been formed, it can be preserved only by earnest prayer and untiring effort. We must resist, we must deny, we must conquer self. Through the grace of Christ, by courage, by faith, by watchfulness, we may gain the victory.

[228] Believers become one in Christ; but one branch cannot be sustained by another. The nourishment must be obtained through the vital connection with the vine. We must feel our utter dependence on Christ. We must live by faith on the Son of God. That is the meaning of the injunction, “Abide in me.” The life we live in the flesh is not to the will of men, not to please our Lord’s enemies, but to serve and honor Him who loved us, and gave himself for us. A mere assent to this union, while the affections are not detached from the world, its pleasures and its dissipations, only emboldens the heart in disobedience.

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 consideration than to imperil the precious souls committed to your care. They will be assailed by temptations, and should be taught to meet them; but it is your duty to cut off every influence, to break up every habit, to

sunder every tie, that keeps you from the most free, open, and hearty committal of yourselves and your family to God.

Instead of the crowded city, seek some retired situation where your children will be, so far as possible, shielded from temptation, and there train and educate them for usefulness. The prophet Ezekiel thus enumerates the causes that led to Sodom's sin and destruction: "Pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hands of the poor and needy." All who would escape the doom of Sodom, must shun the course that brought God's judgments upon that wicked city. [229]

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 eye-salve? The gold is faith and love, the white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the eye-salve 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 [230]

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. Pierce 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 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, which have been in the church for the last thirty-six years, 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.

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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 un-awares." 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.

The watchmen are responsible for the condition of the people. While you open the door to pride, envy, doubt, and other sins, there will be strife, hatred, and every evil work. Jesus, the meek and lowly One, asks an entrance as your guest, but you are afraid to bid him enter. He has spoken to us in both the Old and the New Testament; he is speaking to us still by his Spirit and his providence. His instructions are designed to make men true to God, and true to themselves.

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.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

“I BESEECH you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

Union is strength; division is weakness. When those who believe present truth are united, they exert a telling influence. Satan well understands this. Never was he more determined than now to make of none effect the truth of God, by causing bitterness and dissension among the Lord’s people.

The world is against us, the popular churches are against us, the laws of the land will soon be against us. If there was ever a time when the people of God should press together, it is now. God has committed to us the special truths for this time, to make known to the world. The last message of mercy is now going forth. We are dealing with men and women who are Judgment-bound. How careful should we be in every word and act to follow closely the Pattern, that our example may lead men to Christ. With what care should we seek so to present the truth that others by beholding its beauty and simplicity may be led to receive it. If our characters testify of its sanctifying power, we shall be a continual light to others,—living epistles, known and read of all men. We cannot afford now to give place to Satan by cherishing disunion, discord, and strife.

That union and love might exist among his disciples, was the burden of our Saviour’s last prayer for them prior to his crucifixion. With the agony of the cross before him, his solicitude was not for himself, but for those whom he should leave to carry forward his work in the earth. The severest trials awaited them; but Jesus saw that their greatest danger would be from a spirit of bitterness and division. Hence he prayed:—

“Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be

sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

That prayer of Christ embraces all his followers, to the close of time. Our Saviour foresaw the trials and dangers of his people; he is not unmindful of the dissensions and divisions that distract and weaken his church. He is looking upon us with deeper interest and more tender compassion than moves an earthly parent’s heart toward a wayward, afflicted child. He bids us learn of him. He invites our confidence. He bids us open our hearts to receive his love. He has pledged himself to be our helper.

When Christ ascended to Heaven, he left the work on earth in the hands of his servants, the under-shepherds. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

In sending forth his ministers, our Saviour gave gifts unto men, for through them he communicates to the world the words of eternal life. This is the means which God has ordained for the perfecting of the saints in knowledge and true holiness. The work of Christ’s servants is not merely to preach the truth; they are to watch for souls, as they that must render account to God. They are to reprove, rebuke, exhort with long-suffering and doctrine.

All who have been benefited by the labors of God’s servant, should, according to their ability, unite with him in working for the salvation of souls. This is the work of all true believers, ministers and people. They should keep the grand object ever in view, each seeking to fill his proper position in the church, and all working together in order, harmony, and love.

There is nothing selfish or narrow in the religion of Christ. Its principles are diffusive and aggressive. It is represented by Christ as the bright light, as the saving salt, as the transforming leaven. With zeal, earnestness, and devotion, the servants of God will seek

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to spread far and near the knowledge of the truth; yet they will not neglect to labor for the strength and unity of the church. They will watch carefully lest opportunity be given for diversity and division to creep in.

There have of late arisen among us men who profess to be the servants of Christ, but whose work is opposed to that unity which our Lord established in the church. They have original plans and methods of labor. They desire to introduce changes into the church to suit their ideas of progress, and imagine that grand results are thus to be secured. These men need to be learners rather than teachers in the school of Christ. They are ever restless, aspiring to accomplish some great work, to do something that will bring honor to themselves. They need to learn that most profitable of all lessons, humility and faith in Jesus. Some are watching their fellow-laborers and anxiously endeavoring to point out their errors, when they should rather be earnestly seeking to prepare their own souls for the great conflict before them. The Saviour bids them, “ Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

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Teachers of the truth, missionaries, officers in the church, can do a good work for the Master, if they will but purify their own souls by obeying the truth. Every living Christian will be a disinterested worker for God. The Lord has given us a knowledge of his will, that we may become channels of light to others. If Christ is abiding in us, we cannot help working for him. It is impossible to retain the favor of God, and enjoy the blessing of a Saviour’s love, and yet be indifferent to the danger of those who are perishing in their sins. “It is my Father’s good pleasure that ye bear much fruit.”

Paul urges the Ephesians to preserve unity and love: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

The apostle exhorts his brethren to manifest in their lives the power of the truth which he had presented to them. By meekness and gentleness, forbearance and love, they were to exemplify the

character of Christ and the blessings of his salvation. There is but one body, and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith. As members of the body of Christ, all believers are animated by the same spirit and the same hope. Divisions in the church dishonor the religion of Christ before the world, and give occasion to the enemies of truth to justify their course. Paul's instructions were not written alone for the church in his day. God designed that they should be sent down to us. What are we doing to preserve unity in the bonds of peace ?

When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the early church, the brethren loved one another. "They did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people; and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Those primitive Christians were few in numbers, without wealth or honor, yet they exerted a mighty influence. The light of the world shone out from them. They were a terror to evil-doers wherever their character and their doctrines were known. For this cause they were hated by the wicked, and persecuted even unto death.

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The standard of holiness is the same to-day as in the days of the apostles. Neither the promises nor the requirements of God have lost aught of their force. But what is the state of the Lord's professed people as compared with the early church ? Where is the Spirit and power of God which then attended the preaching of the gospel? Alas, "how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!"

The Lord planted his church as a vine in a fruitful field. With tenderest care he nourished and cherished it, that it might bring forth the fruits of righteousness. His language is, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" But this vine of God's planting has inclined to the earth, and entwined its tendrils about human supports. Its branches are extended far and wide, but it bears the fruit of a degenerate vine. The Master of the vineyard declares, "When I looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes."

The Lord has bestowed great blessings upon his church. Justice demands that she return these talents with usury. As the treasures of truth committed to her keeping have increased, her obligations have increased. But instead of improving upon these gifts and going forward unto perfection, she has fallen away from that which she

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had attained in her earlier experience. The change in her spiritual state has come gradually, and almost imperceptibly. As she began to seek the praise and friendship of the world, her faith diminished, her zeal grew languid her fervent devotion gave place to dead formality. Every advance step toward the world was a step away from God. As pride and worldly ambition have been cherished, the spirit of Christ has departed. and emulation, dissension, and strife have come in to distract and weaken the church.

Paul writes to his Corinthian brethren: “Ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” It is impossible for minds distracted by envy and strife to comprehend the deep spiritual truths of God’s word. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” We cannot rightly understand or appreciate divine revelation without the aid of that Spirit by whom the word was given.

Those who are appointed to guard the spiritual interests of the church should be careful to set a right example, giving no occasion for envy, jealousy, or suspicion, ever manifesting that same spirit of love, respect, and courtesy which they desire to encourage in their brethren. Diligent heed should be given to the instructions of God’s word. Let every manifestation of animosity or unkindness be checked, let every root of bitterness be removed. When trouble arises between brethren, the Saviour’s rule should be strictly followed. All possible effort should be made to effect a reconciliation, but if the parties stubbornly persist in remaining at variance, they should be suspended till they can harmonize.

Upon the occurrence of trials in the church, let every member examine his own heart to see if the cause of trouble does not exist within. By spiritual pride, a desire to dictate, an ambitious longing for honor or position, a lack of self-control, by the indulgence of passion or prejudice, by instability or lack of judgment, the church may be disturbed, and her peace sacrificed.

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Difficulties are often caused by the venders of gossip, whose whispered hints and suggestions poison unsuspecting minds, and separate the closest friends. Mischief-makers are seconded in their evil work by the many who stand with open ears and evil heart, say-

ing, "Report, and we will report it." This sin should not be tolerated among the followers of Christ. No Christian parent should permit gossip to be repeated in the family circle, or remarks to be made disparaging the members of the church.

Christians should regard it as a religious duty to repress a spirit of envy or emulation. They should rejoice in the superior reputation or prosperity of their brethren, even when their own character or achievements seem to be cast in the shade. It was the pride and ambition cherished in the heart of Satan that banished him from Heaven. These evils are deeply rooted in our fallen nature, and if not removed they will overshadow every good and noble quality, and bring forth envy and strife as their baleful fruits.

We should seek for true goodness, rather than greatness. Those who possess the mind of Christ will have humble views of themselves. They will labor for the purity and prosperity of the church, and be ready to sacrifice their own interests and desires rather than to cause dissension among their brethren.

Satan is constantly seeking to cause distrust, alienation, and malice among God's people. We shall be often tempted to feel that our rights are invaded, when there is no real cause for such feelings. Those whose love for self is stronger than their love for Christ and his cause, will place their own interests first, and resort to almost any expedient to guard and maintain them. When they consider themselves injured by their brethren, some will even go to law, instead of following the Saviour's rule. Even many who appear to be conscientious Christians are hindered by pride and self-esteem from going privately to those they think in error, that they may talk the matter over in the spirit of Christ, and pray for one another. Contentions, strife, and lawsuits between brethren are a disgrace to the cause of truth. Those who take such a course expose the church to the ridicule of her enemies, and cause the powers of darkness to triumph. They are piercing the wounds of Christ afresh, and putting him to an open shame. By ignoring the authority of the church, they show contempt for God, who gave to the church its authority.

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Paul writes to the Galatians: "I would they were even cut off which trouble you. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this:

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

False teachers had brought to the Galatians doctrines that were opposed to the gospel of Christ. Paul sought to expose and correct these errors. He greatly desired that the false teachers might be separated from the church, but their influence had affected so many of the believers that it seemed hazardous to take action against them. There was danger of causing strife and division which would be ruinous to the spiritual interests of the church. He therefore sought to impress upon his brethren the importance of trying to help one another in love. He declared that all the requirements of the law setting forth our duty to our fellow-men are fulfilled in love to one another. He warned them that if they indulged hatred and strife, dividing into parties, and like the brutes biting and devouring one another, they would bring upon themselves present unhappiness and future ruin. There was but one way to prevent these terrible evils, and that was, as the apostle enjoined upon them, to “walk in the Spirit.” They must by constant prayer seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which would lead them to love and unity.

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A house divided against itself cannot stand. When Christians contend, Satan comes in to take control. How often has he succeeded in destroying the peace and harmony of churches. What fierce controversies, what bitterness, what hatred, has a very little matter started ! What hopes have been blasted, how many families have been rent asunder by discord and contention!

Paul charged his brethren to beware lest in trying to correct the faults of others, they should commit sins equally great themselves. He warns them that hatred, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, and envyings are as truly the works of the flesh as are lasciviousness, adultery, drunkenness, and murder, and will as surely close the gate of Heaven against the guilty.

Christ declares, “Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.” Whoever by willful deception or by a wrong example misleads a disciple of Christ, is guilty of a great sin. Whoever would make him an object of slander

or ridicule is insulting Jesus. Our Saviour marks every wrong done to his followers.

How were those punished who in olden time made light of what God had chosen as sacred to himself? Belshazzar and his thousand lords profaned the golden vessels of Jehovah, and praised the idols of Babylon. But the God whom they defied was a witness of the unholy scene. In the midst of their sacrilegious mirth, a bloodless hand was seen tracing mysterious characters upon the palace wall. Filled with terror, king and courtiers heard their doom pronounced by the servant of the Most High.

Let those who delight to trace words of calumny and falsehood against the servants of Christ remember that God is a witness of their deeds. Their slanderous touch is not profaning soulless vessels, but the characters of those whom Christ has purchased by his blood. The hand which traced the characters upon the walls of Belshazzar's palace, keeps faithful record of every act of injustice or oppression committed against God's people.

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Sacred history presents striking examples of the Lord's jealous care for the weakest of his children. During the journeying of Israel in the wilderness, the weary and feeble ones who had fallen behind the body of the people, were attacked and slain by the cowardly and cruel Amalekites. Afterward Israel made war with the Amalekites and defeated them. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." Again the charge was repeated by Moses just before his death, that it might not be forgotten by his posterity: "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary, and he feared not God. . . . Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it."

If God thus punished the cruelty of a heathen nation, how must he regard those who, professing to be his people, will make war upon their own brethren who are worn and wearied laborers in his cause. Satan has great power over those who yield to his control. It was the chief priests and elders—the religious teachers of the people—that urged on the murderous throng from the Judgment Hall to Calvary.

There are hearts to-day among the professed followers of Christ, inspired by the same spirit that clamored for the crucifixion of our Saviour. Let the workers of evil remember that to all their acts there is one witness, a holy, sin-hating God. He will bring all their works into Judgment, with every secret thing.

[242] “We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself.” As Christ has pitied and helped us in our weakness and sinfulness, so should we pity and help others. Many are perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ’s stead, can be as a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon God. Oh, this is a blessed work! Let not pride and selfishness prevent us from doing the good which we may do, if we will work in Christ’s name, and with a loving, tender spirit.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Here, again, our duty is plainly set before us. How can the professed followers of Christ so lightly regard these inspired injunctions ? Not long since I received a letter describing a circumstance in which a brother had manifested indiscretion. Although it occurred years ago, and was a very small matter, hardly worthy of a second thought, the writer stated that it had forever destroyed her confidence in that brother. If that sister’s life should show, upon review, no greater errors, it would be indeed a marvel, for human nature is very weak. I have been and am still fellowshiping as brethren and sisters those who have been guilty of grave sins, and who even now do not see their sins as God sees them. But the Lord bears with these persons, and why should not I? He will yet cause his Spirit so to impress their hearts that sin will appear to them as it appeared to Paul, exceedingly sinful.

[243] We know but little of our own hearts, and have but little sense of our own need of the mercy of God. This is why we cherish so little of that sweet compassion which Jesus manifests toward us, and which we should manifest toward one another. We should remember that our brethren are weak, erring mortals, like ourselves.

Suppose that a brother has through unwatchfulness been over-borne by temptation, and contrary to his general conduct has committed some error; what course shall be pursued toward him? We learn from Bible history that men whom God had used to do a great and good work committed grave sins. The Lord did not pass these by unrebuked, neither did he cast off his servants. When they repented, he graciously forgave them, and revealed to them his presence, and wrought through them. Let poor, weak mortals consider how great is their own need of pity and forbearance from God and from their brethren. Let them beware how they judge and condemn others. We should give heed to the instruction of the apostle: "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." We may fall under temptation, and need all the forbearance which we are called to exercise toward the offender. "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

The apostle adds a caution to the independent and self-confident: "If a man think himself to be some-thing, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. . . Every man shall bear his own burdens." He who considers himself superior in judgment and experience to his brethren, and despises their counsel and admonition, evinces that he is in a dangerous delusion. The heart is deceitful. He should test his character and life by the Bible standard. God's word sheds an unerring light upon the pathway of man's life. Notwithstanding the many influences which arise to divert and distract the mind, those who honestly seek God for wisdom will be guided into the right course. Every man must at last stand or fall for himself, not according to the opinion of the party that sustains or opposes him, not according to the judgment of any man, but according to his real character in the sight of God. The church may warn, counsel, and admonish, but it cannot compel any to take a right course. Whoever persists in disregarding the word of God must bear his own burden,—answer to God for himself, and suffer the consequences of his own course.

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The Lord has given us in his word definite, unmistakable instructions, by obedience to which we may preserve union and harmony in the church. Brethren and sisters, are you giving heed to these inspired injunctions? Are you Bible-readers, and doers of the word?

Are you striving to fulfill the prayer of Christ, that his followers might be one? “The God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God.” “Finally, brethren, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

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