

Ellen G. White Estate

TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH. — NO. 17

ELLEN G. WHITE



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**TESTIMONY FOR  
THE CHURCH. — No.  
17**

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**Ellen G. White**

**1869**

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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.**  
— No. 17.

## THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

In order to fully realize the value of salvation, it is necessary to understand what it cost. In consequence of our limited ideas of the sufferings of Christ, we place a low estimate upon the great work of the atonement. The glorious plan of man's salvation was brought about through the infinite love of God the Father. In this divine plan is seen the most marvelous manifestation of the love of God to the fallen race. Such love as is manifested in the gift of God's beloved Son amazed the holy angels. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This Saviour was the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. He possessed divine majesty, perfection and excellence. He was equal with God. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

[2] Christ consented to die in man's stead that man, by a life of obedience, might escape the penalty of the transgression of the law of God. The death of Christ did not make the law of God of none effect. His death did not slay the law, lessen its holy claims, nor detract from its sacred dignity. The death of Christ proclaimed the justice and perpetuity of his Father's law in punishing the transgressor, in that he consented to suffer the penalty of the law himself, in order to save fallen man from its curse. The death of God's beloved Son on the cross shows the immutability of the law of God. His death magnified the law and made it honorable, and gave evidence to man of its changeless character. From his own divine lips is heard, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill." The death of Christ justified the claims of the law.

In Christ was united the human and the divine. His mission was to reconcile God to man, and man to God; to unite the finite with the infinite. This was the only way in which fallen men could be exalted through the merits of the blood of Christ, to be partakers of the divine nature. Taking human nature, fitted Christ to understand the nature of man's trials, and his sorrows, and all the temptations wherewith he is beset. Angels who were unacquainted with sin could not sympathize with man in his peculiar trials. Christ condescended to take man's nature. He was tempted in all points like as we, that he might know how to succor all who should be tempted.

As the human was upon him, he felt his need of strength from his Father. He had select places of prayer. He loved the solitude of the mountain where to hold communion with his Father in Heaven. In this exercise, his holy, human soul was strengthened for the duties and trials of the day. Our Saviour identifies himself with our needs and weaknesses, in that he became a suppliant, a nightly petitioner, seeking from his Father fresh supplies of strength, to come forth invigorated and refreshed, braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, but not possessing like passions. As the sinless One his nature recoiled from evil. He endured struggles, and torture of soul, in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity, and privilege. He required all the stronger divine support and comfort which his Father was ready to impart to his Son, who had left the joys of Heaven, chose his home, for the benefit of man, in a cold and thankless world. Christ found comfort and joy in communion with his Father. Here he could unburden his sorrows that were crushing him. He was a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. [3]

Through the day he labored earnestly to do good to others, to save men from destruction. He healed the sick, he comforted the mournful, and brought cheerfulness and hope to the despairing. He brought the dead to life. After his work was finished for the day, he went forth, evening after evening, away from the confusion of the city, and his form was bowed in some retired grove, in supplication to his Father. At times the bright beams of the moon shone upon his bowed form. And then again the clouds and darkness shut away all light. The dew and frost of night rested upon his head and beard while in the attitude of a suppliant. He frequently continued his [4]

petitions through the entire night. He is our example. If we could remember this, and imitate the pattern, we should be much stronger in God.

If the Saviour of men, with his divine strength, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals, feel the necessity of prayer, — fervent, constant, prayer? When Christ was the most fiercely beset by temptation, he ate nothing. He committed himself to God, and through earnest prayer, and perfect submission to the will of his Father, came off conqueror.

Those who profess the truth for these last days, above every other class who take the name of Christian, should imitate the great Exemplar in prayer. ” It is necessary for the disciple to follow his Master, and enough for the servant to be as his Lord.” Our tables are frequently spread with luxuries not healthful nor necessary, because we love these things more than we love self-denial, freedom from disease, and a sound mind. Jesus sought earnestly for strength from his Father. This he considered, even for himself, the divine Son of God, of more value than to sit at the most luxurious table. He has given us evidence that prayer was essential in order to receive strength to contend with the powers of darkness, and to do the work allotted us to perform. Our own strength is weakness, but the strength which God gives is mighty, and will bring off every one who obtains it, more than conqueror.

[5] As the Son of God in the garden of Gethsemane bowed in the attitude of prayer, the agony of his spirit forced from his pores sweat like great drops of blood. It was here that the horror of great darkness surrounded him. The sins of the world were upon him. He was suffering in man’s stead as a transgressor of his Father’s law. Here was the scene of temptation. The divine light of God was receding from his vision, and he was passing into the hands of the powers of darkness. In the agony of his soul-anguish, he lay prostrate on the cold earth. He was realizing his Father’s frown. The cup of suffering, Christ had taken from the lips of guilty man and proposed to drink it himself, and in its place, give to man the cup of blessing. The wrath that would have fallen upon man, was now falling upon Christ. It was here the mysterious cup trembled in his hand.

Jesus had often resorted to Gethsemane with his disciples for meditation and prayer. They were all well acquainted with this sacred retreat. Even Judas knew where to lead the murderous throng, that he might betray Jesus into their hands. Never before had the Saviour visited the spot with a heart so full of sorrow. It was not bodily suffering from which the Son of God shrank, and which wrung from his lips, in the presence of his disciples, these mournful words: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." "Tarry ye here," said he, "and watch with me."

He went a little distance from his disciples, leaving them within hearing of his voice, and fell on his face, and prayed. His soul was agonized, and he plead, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." The sins of a lost world were upon him, and overwhelmed him. It was a sense of his Father's frown, in consequence of sin, which rent the heart of the Son of God with such piercing agony, and forced the great blood-drops from his brow down his pale cheeks, falling to the ground, and moistening the earth.

[6]

He rose from his prostrate position, and came to his disciples, and found them asleep. He said unto Peter, "What! could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." At the most important time, the disciples were found sleeping—at the time when Jesus had made a special request for them to watch with him. He knew that severe conflicts and terrible temptations were before his disciples. He took them with him, that they might be a strength to him, and that the events they should witness that night, and the lessons of instruction they should receive, might be indelibly printed upon their memories. This was necessary, that their faith might not fail, but be strengthened for the test just before them.

But instead of watching with Christ, they were burdened with sorrow, and fell asleep. Even the ardent Peter was asleep, who, only a few hours before, had declared that he would Suffer, and, if need be, die for his Lord. At the most critical moment, when the Son of God was in need of their sympathy and heartfelt prayers, they were found asleep. They lost much by thus sleeping. Our Saviour designed to fortify them for the severe test of their faith to which they would soon be subjected. If they had spent the mournful period

in watching with the dear Saviour, and in prayer to God, Peter would not have been left to his own feeble strength to have denied his Lord in the time of trial.

[7] The Son of God went away the second time, and prayed, saying, “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done.” And again he came to his disciples, and found them sleeping. Their eyes were heavy. By these sleeping disciples is represented a sleeping church when the day of God’s visitation is nigh. It is a time of clouds and thick darkness, when to be found asleep is most perilous.

Jesus has warned: “Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.” The church of God is required to fulfill her night watch, however perilous, whether long or short. Sorrow is no excuse for her to be less watchful. Tribulation should not lead to carelessness, but to double vigilance. Christ has directed the church by his own example to the Source of their strength in times of need, distress, and peril. The attitude of watching is to designate the church as God’s people indeed. By this sign the waiting ones are distinguished from the world, and show that they are pilgrims and strangers upon the earth.

[8] The Saviour turned sadly the second time from his sleeping disciples, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to them, and said, “Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.” How cruel for the disciples to permit sleep to close their eyes and slumber to chain their senses, while their divine Lord was enduring such inexpressible mental anguish. If they had remained watching, they would not have lost their faith as they beheld the Son of God dying upon the cross. This important night-watch should have been signaled by noble mental struggles and prayers, which would have brought them strength to witness the unspeakable agony of the Son of God. It would have prepared them, as they should behold his sufferings upon the cross, to understand something of the nature of the overpowering anguish which he endured in the garden of Gethsemane. And they would have been better able to recall the words he had spoken to them in reference to his sufferings, death,

and resurrection; and amid the gloom of that terrible, trying hour, some rays of hope would have lit up the darkness, and sustained their faith. He had told them before that these things would take place; but they did not understand him.

The scene of Christ's sufferings was to be a fiery ordeal to his disciples, and hence the necessity of watchfulness and prayer. Their faith needed to be sustained by an unseen strength, as they should experience the triumph of the powers of darkness.

We can have but faint conceptions of the inexpressible anguish of God's dear Son in Gethsemane, as he realized the separation, from his Father in consequence of bearing man's sin. He became sin for the fallen race. The sense of the withdrawal of his Father's love pressed from his anguished soul these words: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Then with entire submission to his Father's will, he adds, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

The divine Son of God was fainting, dying. The Father sent a messenger from his presence to strengthen the divine Sufferer, and brace him to tread his blood-stained path. Could mortals view the amazement and the sorrow of the angelic host as they watched in silent grief the Father separating his beams of light, love, and glory, from the beloved Son of his bosom, they would better understand how offensive is sin in his sight.

[9]

The sword of justice was now to awake against his dear Son. He was betrayed by a kiss into the hands of his enemies, and hurried to the judgment hall of an earthly court, there to be derided, and condemned to death, by sinful mortals. There the glorious Son of God was "wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." He bore insult, mockery, and shameful abuse, until his "visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."

Who can comprehend the love here displayed? The angelic host beheld with wonder and with grief Him who had been the majesty of Heaven, and who had worn the crown of glory, now wearing the crown of thorns, a bleeding victim to the rage of an infuriated mob, fired to insane madness by the wrath of Satan. Behold the patient sufferer! Upon his head is the thorny crown. His life-blood flows from every lacerated vein. All this in consequence of sin! Nothing

could have induced Christ to leave his honor, his majesty, in Heaven, and come to a sinful world, to be neglected, despised, and rejected, by those he came to save, and finally to suffer upon the cross, but eternal, redeeming love, which will ever remain a mystery.

Wonder, O Heavens! and be astonished, O earth! Behold the oppressor and the oppressed. A vast multitude enclose the Saviour of the world. Mocking and jeering are mingled with the coarse oaths of blasphemy. His lowly birth and his humble life are commented upon by unfeeling wretches. His claim to be the Son of God is ridiculed by the chief priests and elders, and the vulgar jest and insulting derision are passed from lip to lip. Satan was having full control of the minds of his servants. In order to do this effectually, he commences with the chief priests and the elders, and imbues them with a religious frenzy. They are actuated by the same Satanic spirit which moves the most vile and hardened wretches. There is a corrupt harmony in the feelings of all, from the hypocritical priests and ciders down to the most debased. Christ, the precious Son of God, was led forth, and the cross was laid upon his shoulders. At every step was left blood which flowed from his wounds. Thronged by an immense crowd of bitter enemies and unfeeling spectators, he is led away to the crucifixion. . “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.”

His sorrowing disciples follow him at a distance, behind the murderous throng. He is nailed to the cross, and hangs suspended between the heavens and the earth. Their hearts are bursting with anguish as their beloved Teacher is suffering as a criminal. Close to the cross are the blind, bigoted, faithless priests and elders, taunting, mocking, and jeering:” Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If ho be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God.” Not one word did jesus answer to all this. While the nails were being driven through his hands, and the sweat-drops of agony were forced from his pores, from the pale, quivering lips of the innocent sufferer a prayer of

pardoning love was breathed for his murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." All Heaven was gazing with profound interest upon the scene. The glorious Redeemer of a lost world was suffering the penalty of man's transgressions of the Father's law. He was about to ransom his people with his own blood. He was paying the just claims of God's holy law. This was the means through which an end was to be finally made of sin and Satan, and his host to be vanquished.

Oh, was there ever suffering and sorrow like that endured by the dying Saviour! It was the sense of his Father's displeasure which made his cup so bitter. It was not bodily suffering which so quickly ended the life of Christ upon the cross; It was the crushing weight of the sins of the world, and a sense of his Father's wrath.

The Father's glory and sustaining presence had left him, and despair pressed its crushing weight of darkness upon him, and forced from his pale and quivering lips the anguished cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Jesus had united with the Father in making the world. While amid the agonizing sufferings of the Son of God, blind and deluded men alone remained unfeeling. The chief priests and elders were reviling the expiring agonies of God's dear Son. Yet inanimate nature groans in sympathy with her bleeding, dying Author. The earth trembles. The sun refuses to behold the scene. The heavens gather blackness. Angels have witnessed the sufferings of God's dear Son, until they can look no longer, and hide their faces from the horrid sight. Christ is dying! He is in despair I His Father's approving smile is removed, and angels are not permitted to lighten the gloom of the terrible hour. They could only behold in amazement their loved Commander, the Majesty of Heaven, suffering the penalty of man's transgression of the Father's law.

[12]

Even doubts assailed the dying Son of God. He could not see through the portals of the tomb. Bright hope did not present to him his coming forth from the tomb a conqueror, and his Father's accepting his sacrifice. The sin of the world, with all its terribleness, was felt to the uttermost by the Son of God. The displeasure of the Father for sin, and its penalty which was death, was all that he could realize through this amazing darkness. His soul was tempted to fear that sin was so offensive in the sight of his Father, that he could not

[13] be reconciled to his Son. The fierce temptation that his own Father had left him, caused that piercing cry from the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Christ felt much as sinners will feel when the vials of God’s wrath shall be poured out upon them. Black despair, like the pall of death, will gather about their guilty souls, and then they will realize, to the fullest extent, the sinfulness of sin. Salvation has been purchased for them, by the suffering and death of the Son of God. It might be theirs, if they would accept of it willingly, gladly; but none are compelled to yield obedience to the law of God. If they refuse the heavenly benefit, if they choose the pleasures and deceitfulness of sin, they can have their choice, and at the end receive their wages, which is the wrath of God and eternal death. They will be forever separated from the presence of Jesus, whose sacrifice they had despised. They will have lost a life of happiness, and sacrificed eternal glory, for the pleasures of sin for a season.

[14] Faith and hope trembled in the expiring agonies of Christ, because God had removed the assurance he had heretofore given his beloved Son of his approbation and acceptance. The Redeemer of the world then relied upon the evidences which had hitherto strengthened him, that his Father accepted his labors and was pleased with his work. In his dying agony, as he yields up his precious life, he has by faith alone to trust in Him whom it has ever been his joy to obey. He is not cheered with clear, bright rays of hope on the right hand nor on the left. All is enshrouded in oppressive gloom. Amid the awful darkness which is felt by sympathizing nature, the Redeemer drains the mysterious cup even to its dregs. Denied even bright hope and confidence in the triumph which will be his in the future, he cries with a loud voice, Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit.” He is acquainted with the character of his Father, his justice, his mercy, and great love. In submission he drops into the hands of his Father. Amid the convulsions of nature are heard, by the amazed spectators, the dying words of the Man of Calvary. Nature sympathized with the suffering of its Author. The heaving earth, the rent rocks, proclaimed that it was the Son of God who died. There was a mighty earthquake. The vail of the temple was rent in twain. Terror seized the executioners and spectators as they behold the sun veiled in darkness, and felt the earth shake beneath them, and saw and heard the rending of

the rocks. The mocking and laughing of the chief priests and elders was hushed as Christ commended his spirit into the hands of his Father. The astonished throng began to withdraw, and grope their way, in the darkness, to the city. They smote upon their breasts as they went, and in terror, speaking scarcely above a whisper, said among themselves, "It is an innocent person that has been murdered. What if, indeed, he is, as he asserted, the Son of God."

Jesus did not yield up his life till he had accomplished the work which he came to do, and exclaimed with his departing breath, "It is finished." Satan then was defeated. He knew that his kingdom was lost. Angels rejoiced as the words were uttered, "It is finished." The great plan of redemption, which was dependent on the death of Christ, had been thus far carried out. And there was joy in Heaven that the sons of Adam could, through a life of obedience, be finally exalted to the throne of God. Oh, what love! What amazing love! [15] that brought the Son of God to earth to be made sin for us, that we might be reconciled to God, and elevated to a life with him in his mansions in glory. Oh! what is man, that such a price should be paid for his redemption !

When men and women can more fully comprehend the magnitude of this great sacrifice, which was made by the Majesty of Heaven in dying in man's stead, then will the plan of salvation be magnified, and reflections of Calvary will awaken tender, sacred, and lively emotions in the Christian's heart. Praises to God and the Lamb will be in their hearts, and upon their lips. Pride and self-esteem cannot flourish in the hearts that keep fresh in memory the scenes of Calvary. This world will appear of but little value to those who appreciate the costly price of man's redemption—the precious blood of God's dear Son. All the riches of the world are not of sufficient value to re-deem one perishing soul. Who can measure the love Christ felt for a lost world, as he hung upon the cross, suffering for the sins of guilty men? This love was immeasurable. It was infinite.

His love, he has shown, was stronger than death. He was accomplishing man's salvation; and although he had the most fearful conflict with the powers of darkness, yet, amid it all, his love decreased not, but grew stronger and stronger. He endured the hidings of his Father's countenance, until he was led to exclaim, in the bitterness of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken

me?" His arm brought salvation. The price was paid to purchase the redemption of man, when, in the last soul-struggle, the blessed words were uttered, which seemed to resound through creation, "It is finished."

Many who profess to be Christians, will become excited over some worldly enterprise. Their interest is awakened for new and exciting amusements, while they are cold-hearted, and appear as if frozen in the cause of God. Here is a theme, poor formalist, which is of sufficient importance to excite you. Eternal interests are here involved. Upon this theme it is sin to be calm, and unimpassioned. The scenes of Calvary call for the deepest emotion. Upon this subject you will be excusable if you manifest enthusiasm. That Christ, so excellent, so innocent, should suffer such a painful death, bearing the weight of the sins of the world, our most extended thoughts and imaginations can never be able to fully reach, and enable us to comprehend the length, the breadth, the height, the depth, of such amazing love. The contemplation of the matchless depths of a Saviour's love, viewed by faith, fills and absorbs the mind, touches and melts the soul, refines and elevates the affections, and completely transforms the whole character. The language of the apostle is, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." We may look toward Calvary, and also exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Considering at what an immense cost our salvation has been purchased, what will be the fate of those who neglect so great a salvation? What will be the punishment of those who profess to be followers of Christ, yet fail to bow in humble obedience to the claims of their Redeemer, and who do not take the cross, as humble disciples of Christ, and follow him from the manger to Calvary? He that gathereth not with me, saith Christ, scattereth abroad.

Some have limited views of the atonement, and think that Christ suffered only a small portion of the penalty of the law of God, and that while the wrath of God was felt by his dear Son, they suppose that he had, through all his painful sufferings, an evidence of his Father's love and acceptance, and that the portals of the tomb before him were illuminated with bright, hope that he had the abiding evidence of his future glory. Here is a great mistake. Christ's

keenest anguish was a sense of his Father's displeasure. His mental agony, because of this, was of such intensity that man can have but faint conception of it.

The history of the condescension, humiliation and sacrifice of our divine Lord does not with many stir the soul, affect the character and life, any more, nor awaken deeper interest than to read of the death of the martyrs of Jesus. Many have suffered death by slow tortures; others have suffered death by crucifixion. In what does the death of God's dear Son differ from these? It is true he died upon the cross a most cruel death; yet others, for his dear sake, have suffered equally, as far as bodily torture is concerned. Why was the suffering of Christ more dreadful than that of other persons who have yielded their lives for his sake? If the sufferings of Christ consisted in physical pain alone, then his death was no more painful than that of some of the martyrs. Bodily pain was but an item in the excruciating agony of God's dear Son. The sins of the world were upon him, also the sense of his Father's wrath as he suffers the penalty of the law transgressed. It was these that crushed his divine soul. It was the hiding of his Father's face, a sense that his own dear Father had forsaken him, which brought despair. The separation that sin makes between God and man was fully realized and keenly felt by the innocent, suffering Man of Calvary, without one ray of light to brighten the future, oppressed by the powers of darkness, struggling with the power of Satan,—he declaring that Christ was in his power, that he was superior in strength to the Son of God, that God had disowned his Son, and that he was no longer in the favor of God any more than himself. If he was indeed still in favor with God. Why need he die? God could save him from death. Christ yielded not in the least degree to the tormenting foe, even in his bitterest anguish. Legions of evil angels were all about the Son of God, yet the holy angels were bidden not to break their ranks and engage in conflict with the taunting, reviling foe. Heavenly angels were not permitted to minister unto the anguished spirit of the Son of God. It was in this terrible hour of darkness, the face of his Father hidden, legions of evil angels enshrouding him, the sins of the world upon him, that the words were wrenched from his lips, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me."

[18]

[19] The death of the martyrs can bear no comparison with the agony endured by the Son of God. And we should take larger, broader, and deeper views of the life, sufferings, and death of God's dear Son. When the atonement is viewed correctly, the salvation of souls will be felt to be of infinite value, In comparison with the enterprise of everlasting life, every other sinks into insignificance. But how have the counsels of this loving Saviour been despised. The heart's devotion has been to the world, and selfish interests have closed the door against the Son of God. Hollow hypocrisy and pride, selfishness and gain, envy, malice and passion, have so filled the hearts of many that Christ can have no room.

He was eternally rich, "yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." He was clothed with light and glory, surrounded with hosts of heavenly angels, waiting to execute his commands. Yet he put on our nature, and came to sojourn among sinful mortals. Here is love that no language can express. It passes knowledge. Great is the mystery of godliness. Our souls should be enlivened, elevated, enraptured with the theme of the love of the Father and the Son to man. The followers of Christ should learn here to reflect back in some degree that mysterious love preparatory to joining all the redeemed in ascribing "Blessing and honor and glory and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

\* \* \* \* \*

### To The Church at —.

[20] DEAR BRETHREN:—I have been shown that you are not in the light, as God would have you. In vision, I was pointed back to the ingathering of souls at — last spring, and was shown that your minds were not prepared for that work. You were not expecting or believing for the work which was then accomplished among you. This work was carried on, notwithstanding your unbelief, aside from the participation of many among you.

When you had such evidences that God was waiting to be gracious to his people, that Mercy's voice was inviting sinners and back-sliders to the cross of Christ, why did you not unite with us,

who had the burden of the work upon us? Why did you not come up to the help of the Lord? Some of you seemed benumbed and stupefied, and seemed to be amazed, and were unprepared to participate fully in the work. You assented to it, but the hearts of many were not in it. It was a great evidence of the lukewarm condition of the church.—

The worldliness you possess does not incline your hard hearts to throw wide open the door, at the knock you hear from Jesus who is seeking an entrance. The Lord of glory who has redeemed you by his own blood, waited at your doors for admittance, and you did not throw open the door wide and welcome him in. Some opened the door slightly and permitted a little light from his presence to enter, but did not welcome the heavenly Visitor. There was not room for Jesus. The place which should have been reserved for him was occupied with other things. Jesus entreated you: “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” There was a work for you to do to open the door. For a time you felt inclined to hear, and open the door, but even this inclination departed, and you failed to secure the communion with the heavenly guest which it was your privilege to have. By some, the door was opened, and Jesus heartily welcomed. [21]

Jesus will not force open the door. The act you have to perform to show your desire for the heavenly Visitor is to open the door wide and give him a sincere welcome. If all had made thorough work in clearing away the world’s rubbish, and preparing a place for Jesus, he would have entered and abode with you, and would have done a great work through you for the salvation of others. You were unprepared for the work. It commenced, notwithstanding, in mighty power among you. Backsliders were reclaimed, sinners were converted, and the sound went out into the region round about. The community was stirred. Had the church come up to the help of the Lord, and had the way been fully opened for further labor, there would have been in — and — and the region round about, a work accomplished such as you have never witnessed. But the ideas of the brethren were not raised, and they were indifferent, in a great degree, to the matter. Some who had ever been seeking their own interest, could not think of having their minds drawn away from themselves [22]

on this occasion, even though the salvation of souls might be at stake.

The Lord had laid upon us the burden. We were willing to give you all there was of us for a time, if you would come up with us to the help of the Lord. There was a decided failure. There was great ingratitude shown for the manifestations of the power of God among you. Had you received the tokens of God's mercy and loving kindness as you should, with thankful hearts, and united your interest to work with the Spirit of God, you would not now be in the condition that you are. But you have been going down, and withering spiritually since that precious work was done among you.

[23] The parable of the lost sheep you do not yet understand. You have not learned the lesson the divine Teacher designed you should. You have been dull scholars. Read the parable in Luke xv. "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the *wilderness*, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends, and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."

Here were the cases of several who had backslidden; who had been in darkness; who had strayed away from the fold. But especially, as a prominent one, was the case of Bro. — —. He strayed from the fold. All the efforts were not made in wisdom, which should have been made to have prevented his straying from the fold, and then after he had strayed, there were not diligent efforts put forth to bring him back. There was much more gossiping over his case than sincere sorrow for him. All these things kept him from the fold, and caused his heart to be separated farther and farther from his brethren, making his rescue more and still more difficult. How different was this course from that pursued by the shepherd in the parable, in pursuit, of the lost sheep. The whole ninety and nine were left in the wilderness, to care for themselves, exposed to dangers; yet the lone sheep, separated from the flock, was in greater danger, and to secure the one, the ninety and nine were left.

Some of the church had no special anxiety to have Bro. — return. They cared not enough to unbend from their dignity and pride to make special efforts to help him to the light. They stood back on

their dignity, and said, "We will not go after him; let him come to us." It was impossible for him to do this, as he viewed the feelings of his brethren toward him. Had they regarded the lesson taught by Christ, they would have been willing to yield their dignity and pride, and go after the wandering ones. They would have wept over them, prayed for them, implored them to be faithful to God, and the truth, and abide with the church. But the feeling of many was: If he wants to go, let him go. [24]

When the Lord sent his servants to do the work for these wanderers, which you ought to have done, you were even then unprepared to give up your ideas, when you had evidence that the Lord was giving a message of mercy to these poor stray sheep. You did not feel like leaving the ninety and nine, and searching after the lost sheep till you found it. You did not do this. And when the Sheep was found, and brought back to the fold with rejoicing, did you rejoice? We tried to arouse you. We tried to call you together as the shepherd called his neighbors and friends, to have you rejoice with us. But you seemed unwilling. You felt that the sheep had done a great wrong in leaving the fold, and instead of rejoicing that he had returned, you were anxious to make him feel that he should be very sorry for leaving, and should come back just according to your ideas. And since the return of the lost sheep, you have had a feeling of jealousy in regard to his return. You have kept your eye out, watching to see if all was right. Some have not felt just satisfied, but have felt an unwillingness in their hearts to have things just as they are. [25]

You are unacquainted with yourselves. Some possess selfishness, which leads to the narrowing up of their influence and efforts. There is more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.

Had the church been prepared to appreciate the work the Lord was doing among them, they would since that ingathering have been growing stronger and stronger. But instead of all throwing their whole soul into the work, and feeling a special, sincere interest to do all in their power to bring up the work where we left it, they acted very much as if the work did not concern them especially, but as though they were only spectators—ready to distrust, and find fault if there was a chance.

I was shown the case of Bro.—. He feels — unhappy. He is dissatisfied with his brethren. His mind has been exercised for some time that it was his duty to carry the message. He is capable, as far as his knowledge of the truth is concerned. He has the ability, but he lacks culture. He has not controlled himself. It requires great wisdom to deal with minds. Bro. is not qualified for this work. He understands the theory, but has not educated himself in forbearance, patience, gentleness, kindness, and true courteousness. If things arise which do not meet his mind, he does not stop and consider whether it is not wisdom to take no notice of it, and let it pass for the present until it shall be fully considered. He braces himself at once for battle. He is harsh, severe, denunciatory. He raises disturbance at once, if things do not meet his mind.

He possesses in his organization the elements of war rather than of sweet peace and harmony. He has not wisdom to give to all their portion of meat in due season. “And of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” This making a difference, Bro. — has but little knowledge of. He is rough in his manners, and indiscreet in his dealing with souls. This disqualifies him for making a good, wise, careful shepherd. A shepherd must have courage, fortitude, noble generosity, love, and tenderness, combined.

He will be in danger of tearing down more than he can build up. He has not had all his powers in subjection to the will of God. He has not been transformed by the renewing of his mind. He is self-sufficient, and does not rely wholly upon the grace of God. His works are not wrought in God.

To be a shepherd is to occupy a very important, responsible position. It is a high and sacred work to feed the flock -of God. Bro. —, the Lord does not regard you fit to be an overseer of his flock. Had you been learning the lesson of self-government in your religious experience, and had you felt the necessity of elevating your mind, and purifying your heart by sanctification of the Spirit, and bringing all your powers into subjection to the Spirit of God, seeking humility and meekness, you might now be in a position to do good, and to exert an influence which would be elevating and saving.

Bro. and Sr. , you have a work to do for yourselves, which no one can do for you. You are inclined to murmur and complain. You have something to do to subdue your natural feelings. Live for God yourselves, knowing that you have not to answer for the wrongs of others. I saw, Bro. —, that you would certainly be overcome by Satan, and make utter shipwreck of faith unless you stop your fault-finding, and seek pure and undefiled religion before God. You need to be elevated in your thoughts and conversation. You need a thorough conversion.

Life or death is before you. You should solemnly consider that you are dealing with the great God. Remember, God is not a child [28] that can be trifled with. You cannot serve God at will, and let it alone at pleasure. Your inmost soul needs to be converted.

All who, like you, my brother, have failed to grow in the grace of God, and perfect holiness in his name, will, in these days of peril and trial, meet with great loss. Their foundation will be in danger of proving sliding sand instead of the Rock, Christ Jesus.

You move by impulse. You feel unreconciled with your brethren because you are not sent out to preach the truth. You are not fit for this trust. It would take the care of more than one efficient preacher to follow in your wake, to bind up the wounds and bruises your harsh dealing would make. God is not pleased with you, and I fear that you will fail of everlasting life.

You have no time to lose in making mighty efforts to rescue yourself from Satan's snare. You need to learn of Jesus, who is meek and lowly of heart, and then you will obtain rest. Oh! what a work you have to do to perfect holiness in the fear of God, and be prepared for the society of the pure and holy angels. You need to humble your heart before God, and seek meekness and righteousness, that you may be hid in the day of the Lord's fierce anger.

Bro. —, the Lord let his blessing rest upon you last spring; but you did not see the relation which watchfulness and prayer sustain to a progress in the divine life. You have neglected these duties, and the result has been that darkness has enshrouded you. You have been in a state of uncertainty and distrust. You have frequently chosen for your society those who are in darkness, those whom Satan uses to scatter from Christ. You could live among the most corrupt, and remain unstained, unsullied, if God in his providence thus directed [29]

you. But it is dangerous for those who wish to honor God to choose for their companions those who fear not God, and be pleased and entertained with their society. Satan is ever surrounding such, and great darkness is around about them; and if those who profess Christ go unbidden into this darkness, they tempt the Devil to tempt them. If God requires us to go amid infernal spirits, where is the blackest darkness, in order to do good and glorify his name, he will encircle us with his angels and keep us unsullied. But if we seek the company of sinners, and are pleased with their coarse jests, and are entertained and amused with their stories, sports, and ribaldry, the pure and holy angels remove their protection, and leave us to the darkness we have chosen.

[30] Bro. —, I wish to alarm you. I wish to arouse you to action. I wish to entreat of you to seek God while he invites you to come to him that you may have life.

Watch, Pray, Work, are the Christian's watchwords. Satan is vigilant in his efforts. His perseverance is untiring, his zeal earnest and unabated. He does not wait for his prey to come to him, he seeks for it. To wrench souls from the hand of Christ, is his determined purpose; yet souls are asleep in their blindness—insane in their pursuits. God is not in their thoughts. A vigilant foe is upon the track of the Christian; yet he is in no danger while he makes God his trust. But unless he puts his trust in God, his strength will be weakness, and he will be overcome by Satan.

Bro. —, it is dangerous for you to yield to doubts. You must not permit yourself to go any farther in the direction in which you have been going. You are in constant danger. Satan is on your track, suggesting doubts and causing unbelief. Had you stood clear in the counsel of God, you could have had an influence for good over those who love your society now.

[31] Poor Bro. —; he felt the influence of the Spirit of God, but was deficient in experience. He did not turn fully from his old habits and customs. There is no concord between Christ and Belial. Bro. — failed to make God his strength continually, and his feet have slipped. You might have helped him if you had had hold from above, as you should have had. But your course of inactivity, your manner of conversation, your influence, have strengthened him in his backsliding, and quieted the voice of conscience within him.

Your course has not been a reproof to him in his downward track. You could do good, were you living for God.

Your strength is utter weakness; your wisdom is foolishness; yet you do not realize this. You have been too well satisfied with a theory—a correct form of doctrine, but have not felt the necessity of the power of God. You have neglected the spiritual part of religion. Your whole being should cry out for the Spirit of God—the life and power of religion in the soul, which would lead to the crucifixion of self, and firm trust in your Redeemer.

You are in terrible darkness, and unless you arise in the name of God, and break the fetters of Satan asunder, and assert your freedom, you will make shipwreck of the faith.

Notwithstanding your life has not been in accordance with the will of God, your works and ways have been offensive to him, yet such is his great unwillingness to leave you—such is his love toward you, that the Majesty of Heaven condescends to beg the privilege of making you a visit, and leaving you his blessing. “Behold I stand at the door and knock.” The mansions in glory are his. His the joy of the heavenly abode; yet he humbles himself to seek an entrance at the door of your heart, that he may bless you with his light, and make you to rejoice in his glory. His work is to seek and save that which is lost, and ready to perish. He wishes to redeem from sin, and death, as many as he can, that he may elevate them to his throne and give them everlasting life.

[32]

Bro. —, be entreated to arise and cast aside your doubts. What makes you inclined to doubts? It is your life of departure from God. Your life of unconsecration. Your jesting and joking. Your lack of sobriety is endangering your eternal interests. Christ is inviting you to turn from these follies to him. You are not growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. You are not an honor to the cause. You are not becoming elevated, but are sinking lower and lower in the scale. You are not forming a character for Heaven, and everlasting life.

You are pleasing yourself, passing away time in frivolity which should be spent with your family, teaching your children the ways and works of God. The hours that you spend in company that is doing you only harm, should be devoted to prayer and the study of God’s word. You should feel that a responsibility is upon you, as

[33] head of your family, to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. What account will you render to God for misspent time? What influence are you having over those who have not the fear of God before them? “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.” May God anoint your eyes that you may see your peril? I feel deeply for you. My heart yearns over you. I long to see you coming up to the high standard that it is your privilege to attain. You can do good. Your influence, if exerted on the right side, will tell. Bro. — your footsteps are in the downward path. “Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die.”

Pursue the course you are now traveling, much longer, and you will become infidel in regard to the truth—infidel in regard to the word of God. Watch, and pray always. Dedicate yourself unreservedly to God, and it will not be difficult then to serve God. You have a divided heart. This is the reason that darkness, instead of light, encircles you.

The last message of mercy is now going forth. It is a token of the longsuffering and compassion of God. Come, is the invitation now given. Come, for all things are now ready. This is mercy’s last call. Next will come the vengeance of an offended God.

[34] Bro. —, encourage simplicity, love, forbearance, and sweet union with your brethren. But do not, oh! do not, sell everlasting life so cheaply. You will never know real happiness if you go from the truth. You will be miserable indeed. Heaven is worth making any and every sacrifice for. Break the bands of Satan. Jesus is now inviting you. Will you listen to his voice? You must take a higher stand than you have hitherto done. Make the kingdom of Heaven, and the righteousness of Christ, your first business. Live for God and Heaven, and the eternal reward will be yours at the end of the race.

I was shown Bro. — —.I was pointed back to last spring, in May, when the Lord visited —.Bro. —.was not prepared to take stock in that work. His mind and heart were elsewhere. He was contemplating marriage. He could not listen to the invitation of Jesus, “Come, for all things are now ready.” His contemplated marriage engrossed his attention. He had no time or inclination to open the door of his heart to the gracious Visitor. Had he done this, Christ

would have given him good counsel, which, if heeded, would have been of priceless value to him. He would have presented before him in its true light his danger of yielding to the dictates of a wayward inclination, and setting aside the decisions of sober reason, and the glory of God. He would have charged him to beware how he tread in the footsteps of those who have fallen and been ruined. He did not consider that God had claims upon him; that he should make no move without consulting him who had bought him. We are instructed that whatever we do, we should do all to his glory. [35]

Did you, Bro. —,—as a disciple, a learner of Christ, go to him in humble, sincere prayer, and commit your ways to him? You failed to do this. You did not investigate all your motives, and move with carefulness lest you should bring a reproach upon the cause of Christ, your Redeemer. You did not consider whether this move would have the best effect to increase your spiritual sensibility, quicken your zeal, and strengthen your efforts in self-denial and steadfastness in the truth. You were ignorant of your own heart. The work of God was seen in the church, but you had no longings for the divine Spirit. The things of Heaven were insipid to you. You were infatuated by your new hopes of uniting your interest with another. You did not consider that a marriage alliance was to affect vitally your interest for life, short though that life must be.

You should have felt that with your own evil heart to subdue, you could not be brought in connection with an influence which would make it more difficult for you to overcome self, and make your path upward to Heaven more rugged. You have now made your religious progress tenfold more difficult than when you stood alone. It is true you were lonely; for you had lost a precious jewel. But if you had counseled with your brethren, and committed your ways to the Lord, he would have opened ways for you, that you could have connected yourself with one who could have helped you instead of being a hindrance. [36]

If you will now turn to the Lord with humility with all your heart, he will pity and help you. But you are just where you are shorn of your strength, and are prepared to compromise your faith and your allegiance to God, to please your new wife. God pity you; for ruin is before you unless you arouse like a true soldier of Christ, and engage anew in the warfare for everlasting life. Your only safety

is in keeping with your brethren, obtaining all the strength you can from them to stand in the truth.

You are about to sacrifice the truth for the sake of peace and happiness here. You are selling your soul at a cheap market. It is now your duty to do all you can to make your wife happy, and not sacrifice the principles of truth. You should exercise forbearance, patience, and true courteousness. By thus doing, you can show the power of true grace, and the influence of the truth.

[37] I was shown that the love of money is a snare to you. Money, independent of the opportunity it furnishes for doing good, blessing the needy, and advancing the cause of God, is really of but little value. The little you possess is a snare to you. Unless you use your talents of means as a wise and faithful steward in the service of your Master it will yield you little else but misery.

You are a close, penurious man. You need to cultivate a noble and liberal spirit. Unless you separate your affections from the world, you will be overcome. The deceitfulness of riches will so corrupt your soul, that the good will be overborne by evil. Selfishness and love of gain will triumph.

If you, my dear brother, are saved, it will be indeed a miracle of mercy. Your love of the world is increasing upon you. Carefully consider the words of Christ: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

[38] My brother, you have not obeyed either the first or second commandments. You would reach out and advantage yourself although you knew it would greatly disadvantage your neighbor. You look to your own selfish interest, and would say, Am I my brother's keeper?

You are not laying up your treasure in Heaven, and becoming rich toward God. Self and selfish interest are eating out true godliness from your soul. You are bowing to the god of this world. Your heart is alienated from God. An inspired writer says, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The steps of a Christian may appear at times feeble and faltering, yet in his conscious weakness he leans upon the mighty One for

support. He is sustained, and is surely making progress onward and upward toward perfection. He is gaining new victories daily, and coming nearer and nearer to the standard of perfect holiness. His eye is not downward to the earth, but upward, keeping in view the heavenly pattern.

Bro. —, the glitter and tinsel of the corruptible things of the earth, have eclipsed the charms of Heaven, and have made eternal life of but little value to you. I beg and entreat you, as a servant of Christ, to awaken and see yourself as you are.

The profits you will obtain in the course you are now pursuing, will be eternal loss. You will find you have made a terrible mistake which can never be remedied.

You can now face right about, heed the call of mercy, and live. [39] Rejoice that your probation has not ended—that you may now, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life. Rejoice that she who has been your faithful companion for years shall rise again—that mortality will be swallowed up of life. Look forward to the morning of the resurrection, when she who shared your joys and sorrows for more than a score of years, will come forth from her prison-house. Will you have her look for you, her companion, in vain? Will you be missing then, as her voice is raised in triumph and victory—“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” Oh! that day will bring honor to the saints. No shame, no reproach, no suffering; but peace, joy, and immortal praise, upon every redeemed tongue. Oh! that God would speak to your heart, and impress upon your soul the value of eternal life. And may you be led, my brother, to ever possess a spirit of noble generosity, that you may discharge the duties of your stewardship with faithfulness, having your eye single to the glory of God, that the Master may say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

I was shown that some are deceived in regard to themselves. They look to those who have much property, and feel that they are the only ones who are in special danger of covetousness, and who [40] have a love of the world. This is not the case. Those who have means are constantly in danger, and are accountable for all the talents of means which the Master has entrusted to their care. But those who have little of this world are frequently self-caring, and do not do

that which is in their power to do, and which God requires them to do. They have opportunities, frequently, of doing good if they were less self-caring; but they have so long cared for self, and studied self-interest, they think there is no other way for them to do.

I was shown that Bro. and Sr. — are in danger of having their thoughts centered too much upon themselves, especially is Sr. — at fault here. She has almost supreme love for herself. Sr. —, you are poorly prepared to stand amid the perils of the day of God. You do not imitate the true pattern, Jesus. There was not one selfish act in his whole life. You have a work to do for yourself which no one can do for you. Divest yourself of selfishness, and learn the mind and will of God. Study to show yourself approved unto God. You are impulsive. You are naturally irritable and peevish. You work far beyond your strength. There is no virtue in this. God does not require it. A selfish disposition is at the bottom of this. Your motives [41] are not praise-worthy. You shun responsibility and care-taking, and have felt that you should be considered, you should be favored. It is to be regretted that you have been favored from your childhood. You have been petted, and your will left unsubdued. Now you have the work to do at a more advanced age which should have been done in your childhood. Your husband has yielded to your wishes, and indulged your whims, to your injury.

Selfishness must die. It manifests itself in a variety of ways, according to circumstances, and the peculiar organization of individuals. If you had children, and your mind was compelled to be called away from yourself to care for them, to instruct them, and be an example to them, it would be more to your advantage. You have called forth in your home the attention and forbearance which is required to be exercised toward children. To care for others, to seek to advantage them, you have not thought was any part of your duty. But you require it, and will have it. You are willful, and very set to carry out your own plans. When everything is smooth in your pathway, you manifest the fruits we expect to see in a Christian; but when your path is crossed, you manifest fruits that are not to be found upon a good tree. You have a regular perverse, willful time, like a spoiled child which deserved chastisement. When two [42] compose a family, as in your case, and there are no children to call into exercise forbearance and patience, and true love, there is neces-

sity for constant watchfulness lest selfishness obtain the supremacy, lest yourselves become a center, and you require attention, care and interest, which you feel under no obligation to bestow. The care of children in a family makes it necessary for the culture of mind and heart in connection with the ordinary cares of domestic life, that a large portion of the time be spent at home.

You neglect to keep your heart, and neglect to use the means God has given you with which to do good. Your influence could benefit, did you feel that anything was required of you toward those who need help, who need encouragement and strength. You have so long studied your pleasure, that you are disqualified to benefit those around you. You need to discipline yourself. Take time for self-examination to bring all your powers in subjection to the mind and will of God. You need secret discipline of your affections which is so important in order that even the thoughts may be brought into subjection. You are shut up to self. It is the privilege of every true Christian to exert an influence for good upon the character of every one with whom he associates.

You, my sister, will be rewarded according as your works have been. Closely investigate your motives, and candidly decide whether you are rich in good works. I was pointed back to last spring, when the Lord was doing a good work in — and vicinity. The angels of mercy were hovering over his people, and hearts which knew not God and the truth were deeply stirred. God would have carried forward the work he so graciously commenced, had the brethren been in working order. You had so long consulted your wishes, and had everything bend to your convenience, that the possibility that you might be inconvenienced, led you to close the door which you might have opened to advance the cause. [43]

You acted your part, and some others felt a drawback, fearing the expense, and calculating that they would lose time in attending meetings if the effort should be made. Christian zeal was lacking. A world was before us lying in wickedness, exposed to the wrath of God, and poor souls were held by the prince of darkness, and yet those who ought to be awake and engaged in the most noble object in the universe, the salvation of perishing souls, had not interest enough to call into action every means they could employ, to hedge up the path to destruction, and to turn their footsteps into the path

of life. The enterprise of eternal life should engage the deepest interest of every Christian. To be a co-worker with Christ and the heavenly angels in the great plan of salvation! What work can bear any comparison with this? From every soul saved, there comes to God a revenue of glory, to be reflected back upon the one saved, and also upon the one instrumental in his salvation. There is a noisy zeal without aim or purpose, which is not according to knowledge, which is blind in its operations and destructive in its results. This is not Christian zeal. Christian zeal which is controlled by principle is not spasmodic. It is earnest, deep, and strong, engaging the whole soul, awakening to exercise the moral sensibilities. The salvation of souls and the interests of the kingdom of God are matters of the highest importance. What earthly object is there that would make it more reasonable to be in earnest than the salvation of souls and the glory of God? There are considerations here which cannot be lightly regarded. They are as weighty as eternity. Eternal destinies are at stake. Men and women are deciding for weal or woe. Christian zeal will not exhaust itself in talk, but will feel and act with vigor and efficiency. Yet Christian zeal will not act for the sake of being seen. Humility will characterize every effort, and humbleness will be seen in every work. Christian zeal will lead to earnest prayer and humiliation, and to faithfulness in home duties. In the family circle [45] will be seen the gentleness and love, benevolence and compassion, which are ever the fruits of Christian zeal.

I was shown that you must make an advance move. Your treasure in Heaven, Sr. — , is not large. You are not rich toward God. May the Lord open your eyes to see, and make your heart feel, and you manifest, Christian zeal. Oh, how few feel the worth of souls! How few would sacrifice, to bring souls to the knowledge of Christ! There is much talking, much professed love for perishing souls. Talk is cheap stuff. It is earnest Christian zeal to act that is wanted. It is zeal to be manifested by doing something, by engaging in the work. Everyone must now work for him and herself, and when they have Jesus in their hearts, they will confess him to others. You could no more hinder a soul from confessing Christ, who had him to confess, than you could stop the waters of Niagara from flowing over the falls.

I was shown that Bro. — — is buried up in the rubbish of the world. He cannot afford time to serve God. He cannot afford time to earnestly study and pray to know what the Lord would have him do. His talent is buried in the earth. The cares of this life have swallowed up eternal considerations with him. The kingdom of God and the righteousness of Christ are secondary with him. He loves business, but I saw, that unless he changed his course, the hand of God would be against him. He may gather, hut God will scatter. He could do good.

[46]

But many have the idea that if their life is a working, business life, that they can do nothing for the salvation of souls, and to advance the cause of their Redeemer. They say they cannot do things by halves, and therefore turn from religious duties, and religious exercises, and bury up in the world. They make their business primary, and forget God. And God is displeased with them. Any who are engaged in business where they cannot advance in the divine life, and perfect holiness in the fear of God, should change to a business in which they can have Jesus with them every hour. Bro. ———, you are not honoring your profession. Your zeal is a worldly zeal, and your interest is a worldly interest.

You are dying spiritually. You understand not your perilous condition. The love of the world is swallowing up your religion. You must awake. You must seek God. You must repent of your backslidings. In contrition take words and return to the Lord. Your religious duties have become merely a form. You have not religious enjoyment; for this enjoyment is dependent upon willing obedience. The willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land. You do not possess a bright evidence that you will dwell with God in his kingdom. You occasionally engage in the outward performance of religious duties, but your heart does not engage in the exercise. You occasionally drop a word of warning to sinners, and in favor of the truth; but it is a reluctant service, as though rendered to a task-master, instead of the cheerful service of filial affection. If your heart is aglow with Christian zeal, the most arduous duties will be pleasant and easy.

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Why the Christian life is so difficult to many is because they have a divided heart. They are double-minded, which makes them unstable in all their ways. Were they richly imbued with Christian

zeal, which is ever the result of consecration to God, instead of the mournful cry, "My leanness ! my leanness!" the language of the soul would be, "Hear what the Lord has done for me."

In the course you have been pursuing, how limited will be the good you have accomplished, even if you are saved, which is very doubtful. Not a soul will be saved by your instrumentality. Will the Master say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant"? What have you been doing faithfully? Hard work in the business and cares of this life. Will this bring from the lips of Christ, the gracious words, "Well done, good and faithful servant"?

[48] My brother, Jesus loves you, and invites you to face right about, and take your eyes from the earth, and fix them upon the mark of the prize of your high calling, which is Christ Jesus. Cease lightness and trifling. Let a solemn weight of the time in which we live be borne by you till the war is over.

You should go to work. Your influence, if consecrated to God, will tell.

The family of Bro. — are,—most of them, in the downward road. — lives an aimless life. She is full of folly, vanity, and pride. Her influence does not tend to ennoble, does not lead to goodness and holiness. She does not like the restraint religion imposes; therefore she will not yield her heart to its sacred sway. She loves self, she loves pleasure, and is seeking for her own enjoyment. Sad, sad indeed will be the result unless she now turns square about, and seeks for true genuine godliness. She might exert an influence over her brothers which would be softening, ennobling and elevating in its tendency. God loves these children; but they are not Christians. They can become children of the light, and be missionaries in their own family, and among their associates. They could be workers for God, if they would try to live humble Christians.

[49] If the youth could only see how much good it is their power to accomplish, if they would make God their strength and wisdom, they would no longer pursue a course of careless indifference toward God; they would be no longer swayed by the influence of those who are unconsecrated. Instead of feeling that an individual responsibility rests upon them, to put forth efforts to do others good, and lead them to righteousness and holiness, they give themselves up to their own

amusement. They are useless members of society, and their lives are aimless as the butterfly's.

The youth may have knowledge of the truth, and believe it, but not live it. They possess a dead faith. Their hearts are not reached so as to affect the conduct and character in the sight of God, and they are no nearer to doing his will than the unbeliever. Their hearts do not conform to the will of God. They are at enmity with God.

Those who are devoted to amusements; who love the society of those who love pleasure, have an aversion to religious exercises. Will the Master say to these youth who profess his name, "Well done, good and faithful servant," unless they are good and faithful?

The young are in great danger. Much evil results from their light and trifling reading. Much time is lost which should be spent in useful employment. Some would even deprive themselves of sleep that they might finish some ridiculous love story. The world is flooded with novels of every description. Some are not of as dangerous a character as others. Some are immoral, low, and vulgar; others are clothed with more refinement; but all are pernicious in their influence. Oh! that the young would reflect upon the influence the exciting story-reading has upon the mind. [50]

Can you, after such reading, open the word of God and read the words of life with interest? Do you not find the book of God uninteresting? The charm of that love story is upon the mind, destroying its healthy tone, and making it impossible for you to fix your mind upon the important, solemn truths which concern your eternal interest. You have sinned against your parents in devoting to such a poor purpose the time which belonged to them. You sin against God in using the time thus, which should be spent in devotion to him. It is the duty of the youth to encourage sobriety. Lightness, jesting, and joking, can only be indulged at the expense of barrenness of soul, and the loss of the favor of God.

Many of you think you do not exert a bad influence upon others, and thus feel in a measure satisfied; but do you exert an influence for good? Do you seek in your conversation and acts to lead others to Christ? or, if they profess Christ, lead them to a closer walk with him?

The young should cultivate a spirit of devotion, and piety. They cannot glorify God unless they aim constantly to the fullness of the [51]

stature of Christ—a perfect person in Christ Jesus. Let the Christian graces be and abound in you. Give to your Saviour the best and holiest affection. Render entire obedience to his will. He will accept of nothing short of this. Be not moved from your steadfastness by the jeers and scoffs of those whose minds are given to vanity. Follow your Saviour through good report and evil report. And count it all joy, and a sacred honor, to bear the cross of Christ. Jesus loves you. He died for you. Unless you seek to serve him with your undivided affections, you will fail to perfect holiness in his fear, and you will be compelled to hear at last the fearful word, *Depart*.

The case of Bro. — is fearful. This world is his god. He worships money. He has not heeded the warning given him years ago, and overcome his love of the world while in the exercise of all his faculties. The dollars he has accumulated since, have been like so many cords entangling his soul, and binding him to the world. As he has gained in property, the more greedy he has been for gain.

[52] All the powers of his being are devoted to the one object, securing money. This has been the burden of his thoughts, the anxiety of his life. He has turned all the powers of his being in this one direction until he is a worshiper of mammon to all intents and purposes. Upon this subject he is insane. His example before his family is leading them to think the possession of property is to be valued before Heaven and immortality. He is sacrificing his eternal interest for treasures upon the earth. He has for years been educating his mind to acquire property. He believes the truth—he loves the principles of truth, and loves to see others prospering in the truth, but he has made himself so thoroughly a slave to mammon, that he feels bound to serve this master as long as he shall live. The longer he lives, the more devoted will he become to his love of getting gain, unless he tears his soul away from this terrible God, money. It will be like tearing out his vitals, but it must be done if he values Heaven.

He needs the censure of none, but the pity of all. His life has been a terrible mistake. He has suffered imaginary pecuniary want, while surrounded with plenty. Satan has taken possession of his mind, and excited his organ of acquisitiveness, and made him insane upon this subject. The higher, nobler powers of his being have been brought very much into subjection to the close, selfish propensity of acquisitiveness. His only hope is in overcoming this propensity,

and breaking the bands of Satan. He has tried to do this, by doing something after his conscience had been wrought upon; but this is not sufficient. This merely making a mighty effort and parting with a little of his mammon, and feeling all the time that he is parting with his soul, is not the fruit of true religion. He must train his mind to good works. He must brace against his propensity to acquire. He must weave into all his life good works. He must cultivate a love of doing good, and get above the little, penurious spirit which he has fostered. [53]

In trading with the merchants at —, Bro. and Sr. — do not take a course which is pleasing to God. They will dicker to get things as cheap as they possibly can, and linger over a few pennies difference, and talk in regard to it as though money was their *all*—their God. If they could only be brought back, unobserved, to hear the remarks that are made after they leave, they would get a clearer idea of the influence of penuriousness. Our faith is brought into disrepute, and God is blasphemed, by some, on account of this close, selfish dealing. Angels turn from this close, penny deal, in disgust. Everything in Heaven is noble and elevated. All are seeking the interest and happiness of others. No mind is devoted to looking out and caring for self. It is the chief joy of all holy beings to witness the joy and happiness of those around them.

When these angels come to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation and witness the exhibition of selfishness, of covetousness, of overreaching, and benefiting self at others' disadvantage, they turn away in grief. When they see those who claim to be heirs to an immortal inheritance so penurious in dealing with those who do not profess any higher ambition than to be laying up treasures on earth, they turn away in shame, for holy truth is reproached. [54]

There could be no way in which the Lord would be better glorified, and the truth honored, than for unbelievers to see that truth had wrought a great and good work upon the lives of naturally covetous and penurious men.

If they could see that the faith was having an influence to mould their characters, changing them from close, selfish, overreaching, money-loving men, to men who love to do good, who are seeking opportunities to bless those who need to be blessed with their means, they would have evidence that their religion was genuine by visiting

the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and by keeping themselves unspotted from the world. Such would let their light so shine that others seeing their *good works* would be led to glorify our Father which is in Heaven. This fruit would be unto holiness, and they would be living representatives of Christ upon the earth. Sinners would be convicted that there is a power in the truth to which they are strangers. Those who profess to be waiting and watching for the appearing of their Lord should not disgrace this profession by bantering in deal, and standing for the last penny. Such fruit does not grow upon the Christian tree.

[55] Bro. —, the Lord is not willing you should perish, but rather that you should take hold of his strength, and make peace with him by a conformity of your will to the will of the Divine. If a faithful picture of your course in money-getting could be presented before you, you would be terrified. You would be disgusted with your closeness, your penuriousness, your love of money. You would make it the effort of your life to obtain the transforming grace of God, which would make you a new man. The means which came to you from relatives was a curse to you. It only increased your money-loving propensity, and was an additional weight to sink you to perdition with your god.

“The love of money is the root of all evil. When men employ the powers that God has given them to obtain riches, and can be content with the pleasures of adding to wealth which they can never use, and which will prove a damage to their children, they abuse the powers which God has given them. They show that their characters have been made sordid by the absorbing pursuit of gain. Instead of realizing happiness, they are miserable. They have shut up their souls to the wants of the needy, and have given evidence that they had no bowels of mercy and compassion for the suffering.

[56] Bro. —, your heart is not callous to the wants and necessities of others. You have generous impulses, and you love to accommodate. You will frequently do a kind act for a brother or a neighbor readily, but you make money your god, and are in danger of valuing Heaven less than you value your money. In money-getting there is always danger, unless the grace of God is the ruling principle of the soul. When Christians are controlled by the principles of Heaven, they will dispense with one hand, while the other gains. This is the only

rational and healthy position a Christian can occupy while having, and still making, money. "We would ask Bro. —, What are you going to do with your money? You are God's steward. You possess talents of means, and can with them do much good. You can deposit in the bank of Heaven by being rich in good works. Bless others with your life. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

In laying up treasures in Heaven, remember it is not lost. It is for yourselves. It is securing these treasures to yourselves by a judicious use of the means of which Heaven has made you a steward. Charge [57] them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

There is danger, Bro. —,—of your life being lost, your gifts, bestowed by God, being surrendered to the Devil, and you led captive by him at his will. Can you bear the thought? Can you for this short life choose to serve self, and love your money, and then part with it all, and have no title to Heaven, no right to the life which is eternal? You have a great work, a mighty struggle before you, to separate your affections from this earth's treasure. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Watch, pray, and work, are the Christian's watchwords. Arouse yourself, I implore you. Seek for those things which are enduring. The things of this earth must soon pass away. Are you ready to exchange worlds? Are you forming a character for everlasting life? If lost at last, you will know what proved your ruin, —the love of money. You will cry in bitter anguish: Oh! the deceitfulness of riches! I have lost my soul. I sold it for money. My soul and body I bartered for gain. I sacrificed Heaven, fearing that [58] I should have to sacrifice my money to obtain it. From the Master will be heard, Take ye the unprofitable servant, bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness.

We hope this will not be your fate. We hope you will transfer your affections, and remove your treasure to Heaven, and fasten your affections upon God and the immortal treasure.

I have seen that the entire family were in danger of partaking, in a degree, of the father's spirit. Sr. —, you have already partaken of this spirit. God help you to see it, and make an entire change. Cultivate a love of doing good. Seek to be rich in good works. You can do, in many things, more than you do. You have an individual responsibility before God. You have a duty to do, from which you cannot be excused. Maintain a close walk with God. Pray without ceasing. You will have close work if you save your soul.

[59] Seek to have a counteracting influence in your family. Take your stand nobly for God. Your organization is unlike your husband's, and you will be condemned of God unless you act for yourself. Make diligent work in saving your own soul, and in exerting an influence to save your family. Let your example show that your treasure is in Heaven—that you have invested all in a better home and a better life, which are eternal. Train your mind to value heavenly things, to be elevated, to love God, and to manifest a willing obedience to his will.

You may be tested; you may be proved to see how deep and strong is your affection for the things of this world. You may be made to understand, my sister, a page of your heart with which you are now unacquainted.

God knows your trials, as you view the state of your husband and children, who so greatly lack saving faith. Much more depends upon you than you realize. You should put the armor on. Spend not your precious strength in exhausting labor which another can do. Encourage your daughter to engage in useful employment, and to aid you in bearing the burdens of life. She needs discipline. Her mind is vain. She needs to render all to God, then she can be useful and please her Redeemer.

Sr. —, work less, and pray and meditate more. Eternal interests should be primary with you. God forbid that your children should be moulded into money-lovers.

True refinement, and gentleness of manners, can never be found in a home where selfishness reigns. The truly refined always have brains and hearts, always have consideration for others. True refine-

ment does not find satisfaction in the adornment and display of the body. True refinement and nobility of soul, will be seen in efforts to bless others, being useful to others, seeking to elevate others. [60]

The weight of eternal things rests very lightly upon your children. May God arouse them before it shall be too late, and they exclaim in anguish, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Bro. — —, I was shown your case. You occupy a responsible position. You are entrusted with talents of money, and talents of influence. To every man there is given a work. Something to *do*, not merely to engage his brain, bone and muscle in common labor; it means more than this. You are acquainted with this work from a worldly point of view, and have some experience in the work in a religious capacity. But for a few years past you have been losing time, and now you will have to work fast to redeem the past. To possess talents is not enough; you must turn these talents to advantage; not merely for yourself, but for Him who bestowed them. All that you have is a loan from your Lord. He will require it again at your hand with interest.

Christ has a right to your services. You are not your own servant, to serve your own interest, but the interest of him who has employed you. As a professed Christian, your relation to God brings you under obligations as his servant. You have become his servant by grace. It is not your own property entrusted to you for investment. Had [61] it been so, you might have consulted your own pleasure in regard to its use. The capital is the Lord's, and you are responsible for its use or abuse. There are ways and means in which this capital can be invested—put out to the exchangers, where it shall be earning the Lord something. If it is allowed to be buried in the earth, the Lord is not benefited, and you will not be benefited; but will lose all that you had entrusted to you.

May God help you, my brother, to realize your true position as God's hired servant. He has paid the wages of his own blood and suffering to secure your willing servitude and engage your ready obedience.

During the trials of the few past years, you have suffered in mind, and have felt it a relief to turn your attention more fully to the things of the world, to the work of acquiring. God, in his great

love and mercy to you, has gathered you again to his fold. Now, new duties and responsibilities are laid upon you. You have a strong love for this world. You have been laying up treasures upon the earth. Now, Jesus invites you to transfer your treasure to Heaven; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. In all your deal with your brethren, and with unbelievers, guard yourself. Be true to your profession, and maintain true nobleness of soul, which shall be a credit to the truth which you profess.

You occupy a position where others are looking to you. You possess more than ordinary intellect. Your perception is quick, and you are a man that feels deeply. Some of your brethren have not moved in wisdom. They have watched you, and have felt over your case, and have wished to see you more liberal with your means. They have made themselves unhappy over your case. This is all needless in them. These very ones lack in many things. And if they are faithful in the humble service the Master has required of them, they will have all that they can do. They cannot afford to waste their time in anxiously fearing their neighbor, who has a larger work entrusted to him, will not do his work well. While so interested in the case of another, their own work is neglected, and they are really slothful servants. They were anxious to do their neighbor's work, instead of that committed to themselves to do.

They think that if they only had the five talents to handle, they could do so much better than the one to whom these talents were entrusted. But the Master knew better than they. None need mourn that they cannot glorify God by talents he never gave them, and for which they are not responsible. They need not say, If I were in another's position in life, I would have done a great amount of good with my capital. God requires no more of them than to improve upon what they have, as stewards of his grace.

The one talent, the humblest service, if wholly consecrated, and exercised to promote the glory of God, will be as acceptable as the improvements of the weightiest talents. The varied trusts are proportioned to our varied capabilities. To every man is given according to his ability. None should overlook their work, considering it as so small that they need not be particular to do it well. If they do this, they trifle with their moral responsibilities, and despise the day of small things. Heaven apportioned them their work, and it should be

their ambition to do this work well, according to their capabilities. God requires that all, the lowliest, as well as the strongest, fulfill their appointed work. The interest expected will be in proportion to the amount entrusted.

Each should diligently and interestedly attend to his own work, and leave others to their own Master, to stand or fall. There are too many busy bodies in —,—too many interested in watching their brethren, and for this reason they are constantly weak. They will bear testimony in meeting, and because they have not Jesus in their hearts to confess, they will try to impress upon their brethren their duty. These poor souls do not know their own duty, and yet they take the responsibility to enlighten others in regard to their duty. If such would attend to their own work, and obtain the grace of God in their hearts, there would be a power in the church which is now lacking.

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Bro. —, you can do good. You possess good judgment, and God is leading you out of darkness into the light. Use your talents to the glory of God. Put them out to the exchangers, that when the Master cometh he may receive his own with usury. Break your tendrils from the valueless things of earth, and elevate them to entwine about God. The salvation of souls is of greater consideration than the whole world. One soul saved, to live through the endless ages of eternity, to praise God and the Lamb, is of more value than millions of money. Wealth sinks into insignificance when compared with the worth of souls for whom Christ died. You are a cautious man, and will not move rashly. Sacrifice for the truth of God, and become rich toward God. God help you to move as fast as you should, and place the right estimate upon eternal things.

Your children need a deeper work. They need to encourage sobriety and solidity of character. They can, if they are consecrated to God, do good, and exert an influence which will be saving upon their companions.

And let not the poor feel that there is nothing that they can do, because they have not the wealth of their brethren. They can sacrifice in many ways. They can deny self. They can live devotedly. And in their words and acts they can honor their Redeemer. The sisters, especially, can exert a strong influence, if they will cease their gossiping, and devote their time to watchfulness and prayer. They can honor God. They can let their light so shine, that others by

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seeing their good works will be led to glorify our Father which is in Heaven.

As an illustration of the failure on your part to come up to the work of God, as was your privilege, I was referred to these words: “Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” What had Meroz done ? Nothing. And this was their sin. They came not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

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## Epistle Number One.

Dear Sr. — : In the vision given me last June, I was shown that you had firmness, and rather a determined will. Your disposition savors somewhat of stubbornness. You are unwilling to be led, yet you feel anxious to know and do the will of God.

You have been deceived in yourself. You have not understood your own heart. You have thought that your will was in subjection to the will of God. but in this you have not judged aright. You have met with trials, and have permitted your mind to dwell upon disappointed hopes. [66]

Your life, for some years back, has taken a peculiar turn. There has seemed to be a spirit of unrest with you. You have not been happy, although there has been nothing in your surroundings which need to have cast so dark a shadow. You have not disciplined your mind to dwell upon cheerful subjects.

You are capable of exerting a strong influence in favor of truth, if you will only train your mind to run in the right channel. All your words and acts should be such as to honor your Redeemer, and exalt his love, and magnify his charms.

You have fallen into the sad error which is so prevalent in this degenerate age, especially with females. You are too fond of the other sex. You love their society. Your attention to them is flattering, and you encourage, or permit, a familiarity which does not always accord with the exhortation of the apostle, to “abstain from all appearance of evil.”

You do not really understand yourself. You are walking in darkness. You have had something to do with match-making. This is most uncertain business; for you do not know the heart, and may make very bad work, and may be aiding the great Rebel in his work of matchmaking. He is busily engaged in exerting his influence to lead youth, who are wholly unsuited to each other, to unite their interests. He exults in this work, for by it he can produce more

misery and hopeless woe to the human family than by exercising his skill in any other direction.

[67] You have written many letters, which has greatly taxed you. These letters have dwelt somewhat upon the subjects of our faith and hope, but mixed with this have been close inquiries in regard to whether this one or that one was about to marry, making suggestions relative to marriage, guessing that this one or that one was about to marry. You seem to know considerable about anticipated marriages, and write and talk upon these things, which only causes dearth to your soul. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

You have done great injustice to yourself, in permitting your mind and conversation to dwell upon love and marriage as you have. You have not been happy, because you have been seeking after happiness. This is not profitable business. When you seek earnestly to do your duty, and arouse yourself to minister unto others, then will you find rest of spirit. Your mind dwells upon yourself. It needs to be drawn out away from yourself. By seeking to lighten the cares of others, and in making them happy, you will find happiness, and cheerfulness of spirit.

You have a diseased imagination. You have thought yourself diseased to quite a degree, which has been more imaginary than real. You have been untrue to yourself. You have conversed with young men, and permitted freedom in your presence which should only be permitted in a brother.

[68] I was shown that your influence at — was not what it might have been. You permitted your mind to take a low level. You could chit chat, and laugh, and talk cheap talk unworthy of a Christian. Your deportment was not as it should have been. You appeared like a person without a backbone. You were half reclining upon others, which is a wrong position for a female to occupy in the presence of others. You could have sat as erect as others, if you had only thought so. You could have walked as well as many others, if you had only thought so. The condition of your mind leads to indolence and to a dread of exercise, when this exercise will prove one of the greatest means of your recovery. You will never recover unless you lay aside this listless, dreamy condition of mind, and arouse yourself to do—work while the day lasts. Do, as well as imagine and plan. Turn your mind away from romantic projects. You mingle with

your religion a romantic, love-sick sentimentalism, which does not elevate, but only lowers. It is not your mind alone that is affected, but others are injured by your example and influence.

You are naturally devotional. If you would train your mind to dwell upon elevated themes which have nothing to do with yourself, but are of a heavenly nature, you could yet be of use. But much of your life has been wasted in dreaming of doing some great work in the future, while, the present duty, small though it may appear to you, has been neglected. You have been unfaithful. The Lord will not commit to your trust any larger work until the work now before you has been seen and performed with a ready, cheerful will. Unless the heart is put into the work, it will drag heavily, whatever that work may be. The Lord tests our ability by giving us small duties to perform first. If we turn from these with dissatisfaction and murmuring, no more will be entrusted to us until we take right hold cheerfully of these small duties, and do them well; then, higher and greater responsibilities will be committed to us.

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You have been entrusted with talents not to be squandered, but to be put out to the exchangers, that at the Master's coming he may receive his own with usury. God has not distributed these talents indiscriminately. He has dispensed these sacred trusts according to the known powers and capacities of his servants. "To every man his work."

He gives impartially, and he expects a corresponding return. If all do their duty according to the measure of their responsibility, the amount entrusted to them will be doubled, be it large or small. Their fidelity is tested and proved, and their faithfulness is positive evidence of their wise stewardship, and they can be entrusted with the true riches, even the gift of everlasting life.

At the N. Y. Conference, Oct. 1868, I was shown many who are now doing nothing, who might be accomplishing good. There was presented before me a class who are conscious that they are possessed of generous impulses, and devotional feelings, and a love of doing good, yet at the same time are doing nothing. They possess a self-complacent feeling, flattering themselves that if they had an opportunity, or were circumstanced more favorably, they could and would do a large and good work; but they are waiting the opportunity. They despise the narrow mind of the poor niggard who grudges the

[70] small pittance to the needy. They see he lives for self, that he will not be called from himself to do good to others, and bless others with the talents of influence and of means which has been committed to him to use, but not to abuse, nor to lay and rust, nor to be buried in the earth. Those who give themselves up to their stinginess and selfishness, are accountable for their niggardly acts, and are responsible for the talents they abuse. But more responsible are those who have generous impulses, and are naturally quick to discern spiritual things, if they remain inactive, waiting an opportunity they suppose has not come, yet contrasting their readiness to do with the unj willingness of the niggard; and reflecting that their condition is more favorable than their mean-souled neighbors. These deceive themselves. The mere possession of qualities, and yet not using them, only increases their responsibility; and if they keep their Master's talents unimproved, or hoarded, their condition is no better than their neighbors for whom their souls feel such contempt. To them it will be said, Ye knew your Master's will, yet did it not. Had you trained your mind to dwell upon elevated subjects, meditating upon heavenly themes, you could have done much good. You could have had an influence upon the minds of others, to turn their selfish thoughts and world, loving dispositions into the channel of spirituality. You are capable of doing good, were your affections and thoughts brought into subjection to the will of Christ.

[71] Your imagination is diseased because you have permitted it to run in a forbidden channel. The mind has been allowed to become dreamy. Day-dreaming and romantic castle-building have unfitted you for usefulness. You have lived in an imaginary world; have been an imaginary martyr, and an imaginary Christian.

There is much of this low sentimentalism mingled with the religious experience of the young in this age of the world. My sister, God requires you to be transformed. Elevate your affections, I implore you. Devote your mental and physical force to the service of your Redeemer, who has bought you. Sanctify your thoughts and feelings that all your works may be wrought in God.

You have been in a sad deception. God would have you investigate closely every thought and purpose of your heart. Deal truly with your own soul. Had your affections been centered upon God as

he has required, you would not have passed through the trials you have.

There is a restlessness of spirit which will not be relieved until the thoughts are changed, and day-dreaming and castle-building cease; and you do the work of the present—that which you find

In your letter writing, leave match-making and guessing about the marriages of your friends. The marriage relation is holy, but in this degenerate age it covers vileness of every description. And Satan is constantly busy to hurry inexperienced youth into a marriage alliance until marriage is abused, and is a crime now which constitutes one of the signs of the last days; even as marriages were a crime the way they were managed previous to the flood. The less we glory in the marriages which are now taking place, the better.—

Marriage which is entered into even now, in this degenerate age, with its claims and sacred nature understood, will be approved of Heaven, and the result will be happiness to both parties, and God will be glorified. May the Lord enable you to do the work before you to do.

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I am about to write upon this wrong, deceptive work which is carried on under the cover of religion. The lust of the flesh has led men and women. The mind has been depraved through a perversion of the thoughts and feelings, and yet the deceptive power of Satan has so blinded their eyes, that poor deceived souls flatter themselves that they are spiritually minded, especially consecrated, when their religious experience is composed of a lovesick sentimentalism, more than of purity, true goodness and humiliation of self; having the mind drawn out of self, and exercised in blessing others, and being elevated by good works. “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this; to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” True religion ennobles the mind, refines the taste, sanctifies the judgment, and makes its possessor partaker of the purity, and the influences of Heaven, brings angels near, and separates more and more from the spirit and influence of the world.

E. G. W.

*Battle Creek, Mich.*

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## Epistle Number Two.

Bro. —: Last June I was shown that there is a work before you, to correct your ways. You do not see yourself. Your life has been a mistake. You do not pursue a wise and merciful course in your family. You are exacting. If you continue to pursue the course toward your wife and children that you have been pursuing, her days will be shortened, and your children will fear, but not love you. You feel that your course is in Christian wisdom toward your wife and children, hut in this you deceive yourself. [73]

You have peculiar views in regard to managing your family. You exercise an independent, arbitrary power, which permits no liberty of will around you. You think yourself sufficient to be head in your family, and your head sufficient to move every member, as a machine is moved in the hands of the workman. You assume authority and dictation which displeases Heaven, and grieves the pitying angels. You have conducted yourself in your family as though you alone were capable of self-government. It has offended you that your wife should venture to oppose your opinion, or question your decisions.

After much long suffering on her part, and patient waiting upon your whims, she has rebelled against unjust authority, and has become nervous and distracted, and shown contempt for your course.

You have made the most of those manifestations on her part, and charged her with wrong and sin, and being led by the spirit of the Devil. You were the one at fault. You, as it were, drove her almost to desperation, and then taunted her with it afterwards.

Her life has not been happy. How easy would it have been for you to have made her life cheerful and pleasant.

You have been rather indolent. You have not been ambitious to exercise the strength the Lord has given you. This is your capital. A judicious use of this strength, and persevering, industrious habits would have enabled you to obtain the comforts of life. You have erred, and thought it was pride which led your wife to desire to have things more comfortable around her. She has been stinted, and [74]

dealt closely with by you. She needs a more generous diet, a more plentiful supply of food upon her table; and in her house, things to make her work as easy as possible. She needs things as comfortable and convenient as you can make them. But you have viewed things from a wrong standpoint. You have thought that almost anything which could be eaten was good enough if you could live and retain strength. You plead the necessity of spare diet to your feeble wife. She cannot make good blood or flesh upon the diet to which you could confine yourself, and flourish. Some persons cannot subsist upon the same food, prepared in the same manner, upon which others can do well.

You are in danger of becoming an extremist. Your system could convert a very coarse, poor diet, into good blood. Your blood-making organs are in a good condition. Your wife requires a more select diet than yourself. Let her eat the same food which your system could convert into good blood, and her system could not appropriate it. She needs a generous, strengthening diet. She lacks vitality. She should have a good supply of fruit, and not be confined to the same things from day to day. She has a slender hold of life. She is diseased, and the wants of her system are far different from those of a healthy person.

[75] Bro. —, you are a man possessing considerable dignity, but have you earned the dignity you have assumed? Oh, no! You have loved your ease. You and hard work have not agreed. Had you not been slothful in business, you could now have had many of the comforts of life which you cannot now command. You have wronged your wife and your children by your indolent habits. Hours have been passed away by you in talking and reading, and taking your ease, which should have been occupied in earnest labor.

You are just as accountable for your capital of strength as the wealthy man is for his riches. Both of you are stewards. To both of you is committed a work. You are to use your strength, not to abuse it, but to acquire, that you may liberally (not stintedly) supply the wants of your family, and have wherewith to render to God by aiding in the cause of present truth.

You have been aware of the existence of pride, and show, and vanity, in —, and have felt determined that your example should not

countenance this pride and extravagance. In your effort to do this, your sin has been as great on the other

You have been greatly at fault in your religious experience. You have, stood one side as a looker on, as a spectator watching the deficiencies of others, noticing others' faults, and building yourself up because you see wrongs in them.

You have been careful and upright in deal, and as you have seen slackness in this respect in others who make high professions, you have contrasted their wrong with your principles in reference to deal, and have said in your heart, I am better than they, while at the same time you were standing off from the church, watching and finding fault, yet doing nothing in coming up to the help of the Lord, to remedy the evil. [76]

You had a standard by which you measured others. If they failed to meet your idea, your sympathy was not with them and you had a self-complacent feeling in regard to your case.

You been exacting in your religious experience. Should God deal with you as you would have dealt with those you supposed in error in the church, and as you have dealt with your own family, your condition would be bad indeed. But a merciful God, who is of tender pity, whose loving-kindness changeth not, has been forgiving, and has not cast you aside, nor cut you off, for your transgressions, your numerous errors and backslidings. Oh, no! he has loved you still.

Have you really considered that "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again? You have seen pride and vanity, and a world-loving spirit in some who profess to be Christians in —. This is a great evil, and as this spirit is indulged, angels are grieved because the example of the unconsecrated is followed. They are exerting an influence to scatter from Christ, and are gathering in their garments the blood of souls. If they pursue the same course they have done, they will lose their own souls, and will know one day what it is to feel the terrible weight of other souls who have been led astray by their lives of unconsecration, while professing to be governed by religious principles.

You have just reason to be grieved with the pride and lack of simplicity in those who profess better things. You have watched others, and talked of their errors and wrongs, and neglected your own [77]

soul. You are not accountable for any of the sins of your brethren, unless your example has caused them to stumble, and their feet to be diverted from the narrow path.

You have a great and solemn work before you to control yourself, to subdue yourself, to become meek and lowly of heart, to educate yourself to be tender-hearted, pitiful in your family, to possess nobleness of spirit and true generosity of soul, which despises everything niggardly.

You have thought there was too much work and cost to the meeting-house. You have remarked upon the unnecessary expense. It is all needless in you to have these special conscientious scruples. There is nothing in that house which is prepared with too much care, neatness, or order. The work is none too nice. The arrangement is not extravagant.

Do those who are ready to complain of this house of worship consider for whom it was built? that it was made especially to be the house of God; to be dedicated to him; to be a place where the people assemble to meet God? Many act as though the Creator of the heavens and the earth, he who has made everything that is lovely and beautiful in our world, would be pleased to see a house erected for him put together without order or beauty. Some build large, convenient houses for themselves, and cannot afford to spend much upon a house which they are to dedicate to God. The means in their hands, every dollar of it, is the Lord's. He has lent it to them [78] for a little while, to use to his glory; yet they hand out this means for the advancement of the cause of God as though every dollar thus expended were a total loss.

God would not have his people expend means extravagantly for show or ornament, in the house prepared for him; but he would have them observe neatness, order, taste, and plain beauty in preparing a house for him, where he will meet with his people. Those who build a house for God should manifest as much higher interest, greater care, and nicer taste, in the arrangement, as the object or purpose for which it is prepared, is higher and more holy than common dwelling-houses.

God reads the hearts and purposes of men. Those who have exalted views of the character of God, will feel it their highest pleasure to have everything which has any connection with God, of the very

best work, and displaying the very best taste. But those who can build grudgingly a poorer house to dedicate to God than they would accept to live in themselves, show their lack of reverence for God and for sacred things. Their work shows that their own temporal concerns are higher in their eyes and of more value than matters of a spiritual nature.

Eternal things are made secondary. The choice of good and convenient things is not considered essential for the use of the people of God in his service, but highly essential in the concerns of this life. Men will reveal the true state of the moral tone of the principles of their hearts. The views of many of our people have become narrowed up. Order, neatness, taste, and convenience, are termed pride and love of the world. A mistake is made here. Vain pride, which is exhibited in gaudy trappings and needless ornaments, is not pleasing to God. But he who created for man a beautiful world, and planted a lovely garden in Eden with every variety of trees for fruit and beauty, who decorated the earth with most lovely flowers of every description and hue, has given tangible proofs that he is pleased with the beautiful. Yet he will accept the most humble offering from the poorest, weakest child, who has no better to present. It is the sincerity of the soul that God accepts. The man who has God enshrined in his heart, as exalted above all, will be led to a thorough submission of his will to God, to make an entire surrender of himself to his rule and reign.

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Short-sighted mortals do not comprehend the ways and works of God. Their eyes are not directed upward to him as they should be. They do not have exalted views of eternal things. They only look at these things with a clouded vision. They take no special delight in contemplating the love of God, the glory and splendor of Heaven, the exalted character of the holy angels, the majesty and inexpressible loveliness of Jesus, our Redeemer. They have so long kept earthly things before their vision that eternal scenes are all vague and indistinct to them. They have limited views of God, Heaven, and eternity.

Sacred things are brought down upon a level with common; therefore in their dealing with God they manifest the same close, penurious spirit as in dealing with their fellow men. Their offerings to God are lame, sick, or deficient. They carry on robbery with God,

[80] such as they have with their fellow men. Their minds do not reach up to an exalted, high, moral standard, but re-main on a low level; and they are constantly breathing the impure miasma of the low lands of earth.

Bro. —, you rule with a rod of iron in your family. You are severe in the government of your children. You will not gain their love by this course of management. To your wife you are not tender, loving, affectionate, and courteous; but harsh, bearing down upon her, and blaming and censuring her.

A well-regulated, orderly family is a pleasing sight to God and ministering angels. You have lessons to learn, to make a home—a pleasant, orderly, comfortable, home. Then adorn that home with a becoming dignity, and the spirit will be received by the children; and order, regularity, and obedience, will be more readily secured by both of you.

Bro. , have you considered what a child is? and whither it is going? Your children are the Lord's, and these children are the younger members of the Lord's family—brothers and sisters, intrusted to your care by your Heavenly Father for you to train, to educate for Heaven. When you are handling them so roughly as you have frequently done, do you consider that God will call you to account for this dealing? You should not use your children thus roughly. A child is not a horse nor a dog to be ordered about according to your imperious will, or to be con-trolled by a stick or whip or by blows with the hand, under all circumstances. Some children are so vicious in their tempers that the infliction of pain is necessary; but very many cases are made much worse by this manner of discipline.

[81] You should control yourself. Never correct your children while under the influence of passion —while impatient or fretful. Punish them in love, manifesting the unwillingness you feel to cause your children pain. Never raise your hand to give them a blow unless you can with a clear conscience bow before God, and ask his blessing upon the correction you are about to give.

Encourage love in the hearts of your children. Present before them high and correct motives for self-restraint. Do not give them the impression that they must submit to control because it is your arbitrary will; because they are weak, and you are strong; because you are the father, they the children.

If you wish to ruin your family, pursue the course you have done—govern by brute force— and you will surely succeed.

Your wife is easily agitated, is tender-hearted. She feels your harshness of discipline, and it leads her to the opposite extreme. She seeks to counteract your severity, and you charge this as a great lack in her of doing her duty, and controlling her children. You think her indulgent, over fond, and tender. You cannot help her in this respect until you correct yourself, and manifest that parental tenderness you should in your family.

It is your wrong management which leads your wife to be lax in her discipline. You must have your nature softened. You need to be refined by the influences of the Spirit of God. You need a thorough conversion; then you can work from the right standpoint. You need to let love into your soul, and permit it to occupy the place [82] of self-dignity. Self in you must die.

Your wife needs tenderness and love. The Lord loves her. She is much nearer the kingdom of Heaven than yourself. But she is dying by inches, and you are the one who is slowly taking her life. You can make her life happy if you will. You can encourage her to lean upon your large affections, to confide in you and love you. You are weaning her heart from you. She shrinks from opening all the emotions of her soul to you; for you have treated her feelings with contempt; have ridiculed her fears; and pompously advanced your opinion as though there was no appeal from that. Her respect for you will surely die if you continue the course you have commenced; and when respect has gone, love does not abide long.

I implore you to turn right about, and humble yourself to confess that you have wronged your wife. Your wife is not perfect. She has faults; but she is sincerely desiring to serve God, and patiently as she can, endure your course toward her and your children. You are quick to detect your wife's errors, and when you can pick a flaw, you will. She is weak; yet with her weaker strength, she glorifies God better than you do with your greater and stronger powers.

E. G. W.

*Hattie Creek, Jan. 17, 1869.*

## Epistle Number Three.

Dear Son —: I write this for your nineteenth birthday.

[83] It has been a pleasure to have you with us a few weeks in the past. You are about to leave us, yet our prayers shall follow you.

Another year of your life closes to-day. How can you look back upon it? Have you made advancement in the divine life? Have you increased in spirituality? Have you crucified self, with the affections and lusts? Have you an increased interest in the study of God's word? Have you gained decided victories over your own feelings and waywardness? Oh! what has been the past year's record of your life, which has passed into eternity, and can never be recalled!

As you enter upon a new year let it be with an earnest resolve to have your course onward and upward. Let your life be more elevated and exalted, than it has ever hitherto been. Have it not your aim to seek your own interest and pleasure, but to advance the cause of your Redeemer. Remain not in a position where you are ever needing help yourself—where others have to guard you to keep you in the narrow way.

You may be strong to exert a sanctifying influence upon others. You may be where your soul's interest is awakened for the good of others—com-forting the sorrowful ones, strengthening the weak ones, bearing your testimony for Christ whenever opportunity offers. Aim to honor God in everything, always, and everywhere. Carry your religion into everything. Be thorough in everything you undertake.

[84] You have not experienced the saving power of God, as it is your privilege, because you have not made Christ and his glory the great aim of your life. Let every purpose you form, every work in which you engage, and every pleasure you enjoy, be to the glory of God. Let this be the language of your heart: I am thine, O God, to live for thee, to work for thee, and to suffer for thee.

Many profess to be on the Lord's side, but they are not; the weight of all their actions is on Sa-tan's side. By what means shall

we determine whose side we are on? Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Upon whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections, and our best energies? If we are on the Lord's side, our thoughts are with him, and our sweetest thoughts are of him. We have no friendship with the world; we have consecrated all that we have and are, to him. We long to bear his image, breathe his Spirit, do his will, and please him in all things.

You should pursue so decided a course that none need to be mistaken in you. You cannot exert an influence upon the world without decision. Your resolutions may be good and sincere, but will prove a failure unless you make God your strength, and move forward with decision and a firm, determined purpose. You should throw your whole heart into the cause and work of God. You should be in earnest to obtain an experience in the Christian life. You should exemplify Christ in your life.

You cannot serve God and mammon. You are either wholly on the Lord's side, or on the side of the enemy. "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Some persons make their religious life a failure because they never seem decided. They are always wavering, and do not have determination. They are frequently convicted, and come almost up to the point of surrendering all for God; but fail to meet the point, and fall back, again. While in this state, the conscience is hardening, and becoming less and less susceptible of the impressions of the Spirit of God. The Spirit has warned, has convicted, and has been disregarded, until it is nearly grieved away. God will not be trifled with. He shows duty clearly, and if there is a neglect to follow the light, it becomes darkness.

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God bids you be a worker with him in his vineyard. Commence just where you are. He bids you come to the cross and there renounce self, the world, and every idol. Take Jesus into your heart fully. You are in a hard place to preserve consecration and have an influence which shall lead others from sin and pleasure and folly to the narrow way, cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in.

You have a consecration to make to God; an entire surrender, a yielding up of everything un-reservedly, and thus to seek for that peace which passes understanding. You cannot draw nourishment from Christ unless you are in him. If not in him, you are a branch that

is withered. You do not feel your want of purity and true holiness. You should feel an earnest desire for, and come to God in earnest for, his Holy Spirit. You cannot expect the blessing of God without seeking for it. If you used the means within your reach, you would experience a growth in grace, a rise to a higher life.

[86] It is not natural for you to love spiritual things, but you can acquire that love by exercising your mind, the strength of your being, in that direction. The power of doing is what you need. True education is the power of using our faculties so as to achieve beneficial results. Why is it that religion occupies so little of our attention, while the world has the strength of brain, bone and muscle? It is because the whole force of our being is bent in that direction. We have trained ourselves to engage with earnestness and power in worldly business, until it is easy for the mind to take that turn. This is why Christians find a religious life so hard, and a worldly life so easy. The faculties have been trained to exert their force in that direction. In religious life there has been an adoption of the truths of God's word, but not a practical illustration of them in the life.

Religious thoughts and devotional feelings have not been a part of the education of the mind. These should influence and control the entire being. There is wanting the *habit* of doing right. There are influences which create spasmodic action, but to think naturally and readily upon divine things, and have this the ruling principle of the mind, is not the case.

There is no need of being spiritual dwarfs, if there is a continual exercising of the mind in spiritual things. Merely praying for this, and about this, will not meet the necessities of the case. You must habituate the mind to concentrate upon heavenly and spiritual things. Exercise will bring strength. Many professed Christians are in a fair way to lose both worlds. To be half a Christian and half a worldly man, makes you about one hundredth part a Christian, and all the rest worldly.

Spiritual living is what God requires, yet thousands are crying out "I don't know what is the matter—I have no spiritual strength—I do not enjoy the Spirit of God." Yet the same ones will become active and talkative upon their worldly enterprises, will even become eloquent when talking upon worldly matters. Listen to such ones in meeting —there are about one dozen words spoken in scarcely an

audible voice. They are men and women of the world. They have cultivated worldly propensities until their faculties by exercise have become strong in that direction. Yet in regard to spiritual things they are weak as babes. They should become intelligent in regard to heavenly things. They do not love to dwell upon the mystery of godliness. They know not the language of Heaven, and are not educating their minds so as to be prepared to sing the songs of Heaven, or to delight in the spiritual exercises which will engage the attention of all. Professed Christians—worldly Christians, are unacquainted with heavenly things. They will never be brought to the gates of the New Jerusalem to engage in exercises which have not hitherto especially interested them. They have not trained their minds to delight in devotion, and meditation upon things of God and Heaven. How, then, can they engage in the services of Heaven! bow delight in the spiritual, the pure, the holy, in Heaven, when it was not a special delight to them upon earth. The very atmosphere they breathe will be purity itself. They are unacquainted with it all. But when in the world, in their worldly vocations, they knew just where to take hold, just what to do. The lower order of faculties have been in so

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minds to delight in devotion, and meditation upon things of God and Heaven. How, then, can they engage in the services of Heaven ? how delight in the spiritual, the pure, the holy, in Heaven, when it was not a special delight to them upon earth. The very atmosphere they breathe will be purity itself. They are unacquainted with it all. But when in the world, in their worldly vocations, they knew just where to take hold, just what to do. The lower order of faculties have [88] been in so constant exercise, that they have been growing, while the higher, the nobler powers of the mind have not been strengthened by use, and they are incapable of awaking at once to spiritual exercises. Spiritual things are not discerned, because they are viewed with world-loving eyes, which cannot estimate the value and glory of the divine above the temporal.

The mind must be educated and disciplined to a love of purity. A love for spiritual things should be encouraged; yea, must be encouraged if you grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the truth. Desire for goodness and true holiness is right so far as it goes, but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Good purposes are right, but will prove of no avail unless determinedly carried out.

Many will be lost, hoping and desiring to be Christians, but they made no earnest effort, therefore they will be weighed in the balances and found wanting. The will must be exercised in the right direction. I *will* be a whole-hearted Christian. I *will* know the length and breadth, depth and height of perfect love. Listen to the words of Jesus. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Ample provisions are made by Jesus Christ to satisfy the hungering and thirsting soul for righteousness.

The pure element of love will expand the soul for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of divine things, so that it will not be satisfied short of the fullness. The most of professed Christians have no sense of the spiritual strength they might obtain were they as ambitious, zealous, and persevering to gain a knowledge of divine [89] things as they are to obtain the paltry, perishable things of this life. The masses professing to be Christians have been satisfied to be spiritual dwarfs. They have no disposition to make it their highest object to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; hence, godliness is a hidden mystery to them—they cannot understand it.

They know not Christ by experimental knowledge. Let men and women who are satisfied with their dwarfed, crippled condition in divine things, be suddenly transported to Heaven, and for an instant witness the high, holy state of perfection that ever abides there,— every soul filled with love; joy beaming from every countenance; the high melodious strains of enchanting music in honor of God and the Lamb; the ceaseless streams of light that flow from the face of him who sitteth upon the throne, and from the Lamb, upon the faces of his saints; and yet higher and greater joy to experience (for the more they receive and exercise the enjoyment of God, the more is their capacity increased to bear more, to rise higher in eternal, immortal enjoyment, and thus continue to receive new and greater supplies from the ceaseless sources of glory and bliss inexpressible) ;— and could such persons mingle with the heavenly throng, participate in their songs, and endure the high, pure, exalted, spiritual, transporting glory that emanates from God and the Lamb ? Oh. No! their probation was lengthened for years that they might learn the language of Heaven, that they might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But they had a selfish business of their own to engage the powers of their minds, and the energies of their beings. They could not afford to serve God unreservedly, and make this a business. Worldly enterprises must come first, and take the best of their powers, and a transient thought is devoted to God. Are such to be transformed after the final decision, He that is holy, let him be holy still, he that is filthy, let him be filthy still? Such a time is coming.

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Those who have trained the mind to delight in spiritual exercises, are the ones who can be translated and not be overwhelmed with the sacred purity and transcendent glory of Heaven. You may have a good knowledge of the arts, you may have an acquaintance with the sciences, you may excel in music and in penmanship, your manners may please your associates, but what have these things to do with a preparation for Heaven? What have they to do to prepare you to stand before the tribunal of God?

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Nothing but holiness will prepare you for Heaven. It is sincere, experimental piety alone that can give you a true, pure, elevated character, and enable you to enter into the presence of God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable.

The heavenly character must be acquired on earth, or it can never be acquired at all. Begin, then, at once. Flatter not yourself that a time will come when you can make an earnest effort easier than now. Every day increases your distance from God. It is a preparation for eternity such as you have not yet engaged in. Educate your mind to love the Bible, to love the prayer-meeting, to love the hour of meditation, and above all, the hour when the soul communes with  
[91] God. Become heavenly-minded if you would unite with the heavenly choir in the mansions above.

A new year of your life commences. A new page is turned in the book of the recording angel. What will be the record upon its pages? Shall it be blotted with neglect of God, with unfulfilled duties? God forbid. Let a record be stamped there, which you will not be ashamed to have revealed to the gaze of angels and men.

E. G. W.

*Greenville, Mich., July 27, 1868.*

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## Epistle Number Four.

Dear Sr. —:—When the Lord showed me your case, I was pointed back many years in the past, when you became a believer in the near coming of Christ. You looked for, and loved, his appearing.

Your husband was naturally an affectionate, noble-minded man; but he relied upon his own strength, which was weakness. He did not feel the need of making God his strength. Intoxicating drinks benumbed his brain, and finally paralyzed the higher powers of his mind. His godlike manhood was sacrificed, to gratify his thirst for strong drink.

You suffered opposition and abuse, yet God was your source of strength. While you trusted in him, he sustained you. In all your trials, you were not permitted to be overwhelmed. How often have the heavenly angels strengthened you when desponding, by presenting vividly to your mind passages of Scripture expressing the never failing love of God, and giving evidence that his loving-kindness changeth not. Your soul trusted in God. It was your meat and drink to do your Heavenly Father's will.

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You, at times, had a firm trust in the promises of God, and then again your faith would he tried to the utmost. God's dealings seemed mysterious, yet you had most of the time the evidence that he looked upon your affliction, and would not cause your burdens to be greater than you could bear.

The Master saw that you needed a work of fitness for his heavenly kingdom. He did not leave you in the furnace for the fire of affliction to consume. As a refiner and purifier of silver, he kept his eye upon you, watching the process of purification until he should discern his image reflected in you. Although you often felt affliction's flame kindling upon you, and at times have thought it would consume you, yet the loving-kindness of God has been just as great toward you at these times as when you were free in spirit, and triumphing in him. The furnace was to purify and refine, but not to consume and destroy.

I saw you struggling with poverty, seeking to support yourself and your children, and many times you knew not what to do. The future looked dark and uncertain. In your distress you cried unto the Lord, and he comforted you, and helped you, and hopeful rays of light shone around you. How precious was God to you at such times! how sweet his comforting love ! What a treasure you felt that you had, laid up in Heaven! As you could view the reward of the afflicted children of God, what a consolation to feel that you could claim God as your Father!

Your case was, in reality, worse than if you had been widowed. Your heart was agonized by the wicked course pursued by your husband. But his persecutions, and threats, and violence, did not lead you to trust in your own wisdom, and forget God; so far from this, you felt sensibly your weakness, and that you were incapable of carrying your burdens, and in your conscious weakness you were relieved by bringing your heavy burdens to Jesus, the great Burden-bearer.

How you cherished every ray of light from his presence! and how strong you often felt in his strength ! When unexpectedly a storm of persecution and cruelty burst upon you, the Lord did not suffer you to be overwhelmed; but in those times of trial you realized strength, calmness, and peace, which were a marvel to you.

When railing accusations and taunts more cruel than spears and arrows have fallen upon you, the influence of the Spirit of God upon your heart, has led you to speak calmly and dispassionately. It was not in nature to do this. It was the fruit of the Spirit of God. It was the grace of God which strengthened your faith amid all the heart sicknesses of hope deferred. Grace fortified you for the warfare and hardships, and brought you through conqueror. Grace taught you to pray, to love and trust, notwithstanding your unfavorable surroundings.

As you repeatedly realized the answers to your prayers, in a special manner bringing your desires to pass, you did not feel that it was because of any special merit in yourself, but because of your great need. Your necessity was God's opportunity. Your life in those days of trial was to trust in God. And the manifestations of his special deliverance when in most trying places were like the oasis in the desert to the faint and weary traveler.

God did not leave you to perish. He frequently raised up friends to aid you, when you least expected it. Angels of God ministered unto you, as step by step they led you up the rugged pathway.

You were pressed by poverty, but this was the least of the difficulties with which you had to contend. When exercised—his power to abuse and harm you, you felt that the cup you had to drink was bitter indeed; and when he degraded himself to pursue a course of iniquity, and you were outraged and insulted in your own house, he made a gulf between himself and you which could never be passed. Then in your sore distress and perplexity the Lord raised you up friends. He did not leave you alone; but his strength was imparted, and you could say, “The Lord is my helper.”

Through all your trials, which have never been fully revealed to others, you have had a never-failing Friend, who has said, “I am with you al-ways, even unto the end of the world.” While upon the earth, he was ever touched with human woe. Although ascended to his Father, and adored by angels who quickly obey his commands, his heart which loved, pitied, and sympathized, knows no change. It remains a heart of unchangeable tenderness still.

That same Jesus was acquainted with all your trials, and did not leave you alone to struggle with temptations, battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Through his angels, he whispered to you, “Fear not; I am with you.” “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.” “I know your sorrows; I have endured them. I am acquainted with your struggles; I have experienced them. I know your temptation; I have encountered them. I have seen your tears; I also have wept. Your earthly hopes are crushed, but let the eye of faith be uplifted, and penetrate the vail, and there anchor your hopes. The everlasting assurance shall be yours that you have a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

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O my dear sister, if you could only see, as I have seen, the ways and works of God manifested all through your perplexities and trials in the former part of your experience, when pressed by the hand of poverty, you could never forget him, but your love would increase, and your zeal to promote his glory be untiring.

In consequence of your afflictions and peculiar trials, your health failed. The friends of the cause of God were but few, and many of them were poor; and you could see but little to hope for on the

right hand or on the left. You looked upon your children and your destitute, helpless condition, and your heart well nigh fainted. At this time, through the influence of Adventists who had united with the Shakers, and in whom you had confidence because they had been your friends in time of need, you were induced to go among that sect for a time.

[96] The angels of God did not leave you. They ministered unto you, and were as a wall of fire around about you. Especially did the holy angels protect you from the deceptive influences which prevail among that people. The Shakers believed that you would unite your interest with theirs; and they thought that, if they could induce you to become one of them, you would be a great help to their cause; for you would make an ardent member of their society. They would have given you a high position among them. Some of the Shakers had received spiritual manifestations, telling them that you were designed of God to be a prominent member of their society; but that you were one who should not be urged; that kindness would have a powerful influence where force or pressure would cause a failure of their hopes.

There was a powerful spirit of magnetism exercised among them. Through this power they flattered themselves that you would be brought to view things in the same light in which they themselves did. You were not aware of all the arts and deception used, to bring about their purpose. The Lord preserved you. There seemed to be a circle of light around about you, proceeding from the ministering angels; so that the darkness which prevailed about you did not cloud the circle of light.

The Lord opened the way for you to leave that deceived community, and you left unharmed, the principles of your faith as pure as when you went among them.

[97] Your diseased arm was a great affliction. You had turned to the right and to the left for help. You had consented to have a woman try her boasted skill upon you. This woman was a special agent of Satan. Through her experiments, you nearly lost your life. The poison introduced into your system was sufficient to kill a person of the most robust constitution. Here again God interposed, or your life would have been sacrificed.

Every means you had resorted to for the recovery of health had failed. Not only your arm, but your entire system, was diseased. Your lungs were affected, and you were fast going down to death. At this time you felt that God alone could deliver. You could do one thing more: follow the direction of the apostle. Jas. v.

You there made a covenant with God, that if he would spare your life to minister still to the wants of your children, that you would be for the Lord, and him only would you serve; that your life you would dedicate to his glory; and that you would use your strength to advance his cause, and to do good in the earth. Angels recorded the promise there made to God.

We came to you in your great affliction, and claimed the promise of God in your behalf. To look to appearances, we dared not; for in so doing we should be like Peter, whom the Lord bade come to him on the water. He should have kept his eye lifted upward to Jesus; but he looked down at the troubled waves, and his faith failed.

We calmly and firmly grasped the promises of God alone, irrespective of appearances, and by faith claimed the blessing. I was especially shown that God wrought in a wonderful manner, and you were preserved by a miracle of mercy, to be a living monument of his healing power, to testify of his wondrous works to the children of men.

At the time you felt so decided a change, your captivity was turned, and joy and gladness in the place of doubt and distress, filled your heart. The praise of God was in your heart and upon your lips. "Oh! what hath the Lord wrought!" was -the sentiment of your soul.

[98]

The Lord heard the prayers of his servants, and raised you up still to live and endure trials, to watch and wait for his appearing, and to glorify his name.

Poverty and care pressed heavily upon you. As dark clouds at times enshrouded you, you could not forbear inquiring, "O God, hast thou forsaken me But you were not left, although you could see no Way open before you. The Lord would have you trust in his love and mercy amid clouds and darkness, as well as in the sunshine.

The clouds would part, and beams of light would shine through, to strengthen your desponding heart, and increase your wavering confidence, and you would again fix your trembling faith upon the sure promises of your Heavenly Father. You would involuntarily cry

out, "O God, I will believe; Twill trust in thee. Thou hast hitherto been my helper, and thou wilt not leave me now." As victory was gained by you, and light again shone upon you, you could not find language to express your sincere gratitude to your gracious Heavenly Father; and you thought you never again would doubt his love, nor distrust his care.

[99] You did not seek for ease. You did not consider hard labor a burden if the way would only open, that you might care for your children; and shield them from the iniquity prevailing in this age of the world, It was the burden of your heart that you might see them turning to the Lord. You plead before God for your children with strong cries and tears. Their conversion you *somuch* desired. Your heart would despond and faint, and you would sometimes fear your prayers would not be answered; then again you would consecrate them to God afresh, and your yearning heart would lay them anew upon the altar.

When they went into the, army, your prayers followed them. They were wonderfully preserved from harm. They called it good luck, but a mother's prayers from an anxious, burdened soul, as she felt the peril of her children and the danger of their being cut off in their youth without hope in God, had much to do with their preservation. How many prayers were lodged in Heaven that these sons might be preserved to obey God, to devote their lives to his glory.

In your anxiety for your children, you plead with God to return them to you again, and you would seek more earnestly to lead them in the path of holiness. You thought you would labor more faithfully than you had ever done.

The Lord had suffered you to be schooled in adversity and affliction, that you might obtain an experience which would be valuable to yourself and others.

[100] While in the days of your poverty and trial, you loved the Lord, and you loved religious privileges. The nearness of Christ's coming was your consolation. It was a living hope to you that you would soon have rest from labors, and find the end of all your trials; when you would find you had not labored nor suffered too much; for the apostle had declared, "For our light affliction, which is but for a

moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

To meet with the people of God seemed to you almost like visiting Heaven. Obstacles did not deter you. You could suffer weariness and hunger for temporal food; but you could not be deprived of spiritual food. The grace of God you earnestly sought for, and you did not seek it in vain. Communion with the people of God was the richest blessing you could enjoy.

In your Christian experience, your soul abhorred vanity, pride and extravagant show. You witnessed the expenditure of means among pro-fessed Christians to make a display, and to foster pride; and your heart and lips have said, “Oh! if I only had the means handled by those who are unfaithful in their stewardship, I would feel it one of the greatest privileges to help the needy, and to aid in the advancement of the cause of God.”

You often realized the presence of God while you sought in your humble way to enlighten others in regard to the truths of these last days.

You had experienced the truth for yourself. That which you had seen, and heard, and experienced, and testified unto, you knew was no fiction. And you delighted to present before others, in private conversation, the wonderful way in which God had led his people. You recounted his dealings with such an assurance as to strike with conviction, those who listened to you. You talked as though you had knowledge of the things whereof you affirmed.

When speaking to others in regard to the present truth, you longed for greater opportunities and a more extended influence, that you might bring to the notice of many in darkness, the light which had lightened your pathway.

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At times you looked at your poverty, and your limited influence, and your best endeavors frequently misinterpreted by the professed friends of the cause of truth, and you were nearly discouraged.

Sometimes you erred in judgment in your unsettled state, and there were those who should have possessed that charity which thinketh no evil, who watched, and surmised evil, and made the most of the errors they thought they saw in you. But the love of Jesus and his tender pity were not withdrawn, but were your support amid the trials and persecutions of your life. The kingdom of Heaven

and the righteousness of Christ were primary with you. Your life was marred with imperfections because it is human to err; but from what the Lord has been pleased to show me of your discouraging surroundings in the days of your poverty and trial, I know of no one who would have pursued a course more free from mistakes than you did, were they situated as you were, in poverty and embarrassing trials. It is easy for those who are spared the severe trials to which others are subjected, to look on and question, and surmise evil and find fault. Some are more ready to censure others for pursuing a certain course, than to take the responsibility of saying what should be done, or of pointing out a more correct way.

[102] You became confused. You knew not where to trust. There were but few Sabbath-keepers in Boston and vicinity who exerted a saving influence. Some who professed the faith, were no honor to the cause of present truth. They did not gather with Christ, but scattered abroad. They could talk loud and long; yet their hearts were not in the work. They were not sanctified by the truth they professed. These, not having root in themselves, gave up the faith. Had they done this at an earlier period, it would have been better for the cause of truth. Satan took advantage of you, in consequence of those things, and prepared the way for your backsliding.

My attention was called to your desire to possess means. The sentiment of your heart was, "Oh! if I only had means, I would not squander it. I would set an example to those who are close and penurious. I would show them the great blessing there is to be received in doing good."

Your soul abhorred covetousness. As you have seen those who possessed abundance of this world's goods, shut their hearts to the cry of the needy, you have said, "God will visit them; he will reward them according to their works." As you have seen the wealthy walking in their pride, their hearts girt about with selfishness, as with iron bands, you have felt that they were poorer than yourself, although you were in suffering and want. When you have seen these purse-proud men bearing themselves loftily because money has power, you have felt pity for them, and in no case would you have been induced to change places with them. Yet you desired means that you might go use it as to be a rebuke to the covetous.

The Lord said to his angel who had hitherto ministered unto you; "I have proved her in poverty and affliction, and she has not separated her self from me, nor rebelled against me. I will now prove her with prosperity. I will reveal to her a page of the human heart with which she is unacquainted. I will show her that money is the most dangerous for she has ever met. I will reveal to her the deceitfulness of riches; that they are a snare, even to those who fee] that they are secure from selfishness, and proof against exaltation, extravagance, pride, and love of the praise of men." [103]

I was then shown that a way was opened for you to improve your condition in life, and at length to obtain the means which you had thought you should use with wisdom, and to the glory of God. How' anxiously did your ministering angel watch the new' trial, to see how you would stand the test.

As means came into your hands, I saw you gradually and almost imperceptibly separating from God. The means intrusted to you were expended for your own convenience, to surround yourself with the good things of this life.

I saw the angels looking upon you with yearning sadness, their faces half averted, loth to leave you. Yet their presence was not perceived by you, and your course was pursued without reference to your angel guard.

The business and cares of your new position claimed your time and attention, and your duty to God was not considered. Jesus had purchased you by his own blood. You were not your own. Your time, your strength, the means you handled, all belonged to your Redeemer. He had been your constant friend, your strength and support, when every other friend had proved as a broken reed. You have repaid the love and bounty of God with ingratitude and forgetfulness. [104]

Your only safety was in implicit trust in Christ, your Saviour. There was no safety for you away from the cross. And how weak human strength seemed in this instance! Oh! how evident that there is no real strength but that which God imparts to those who trust in him! One petition offered up to God in faith has more power than a wealth of human intellect.

You did not in your prosperity carry out the purposes and resolves you had made in adversity. The deceitfulness of riches turned you

from your purposes. Cares increased upon you. Your influence became extended. As the afflicted realized relief from suffering, they glorified you, and you learned to love praise from the lips of poor mortals.

You were in a popular city, and thought it necessary for the success of your business, as well as to retain your influence, for your surroundings to be somewhat in accordance with your business. But you carried things too far. You were swayed too much by the opinions and judgment of others. You expended means needlessly, only to gratify the lust of the eye and the pride of life. You forgot that you were handling your Lord's money. When means were expended by you, which would only encourage vanity, you did not consider that the recording angel was making a record which you would blush to meet again. Said the angel, pointing to you, "You glorified yourself, but did not magnify me." You even gloried in the fact that it was in your power to purchase these things.

[105] A large sum has been expended in needless things which could only answer for show, and encourage vanity and pride that will cause you remorse and shame.

If you had borne in mind the claims Heaven had upon you, and made a right disposition of the means intrusted to your care, in helping the needy and in advancing the cause of present truth, you would have been laying up treasure in Heaven, and would have been rich toward God.

Consider how much means you have invested where no one has been really benefited, no one fed or clothed, and none helped to see the error of their ways that they might turn to Christ and live.

You have made large investments in uncertain enterprises. Satan blinded your eyes, so that you could not see that the enterprises in which you have invested so much, would yield you no returns. The eternal enterprise has not awakened your interest. Here you could expend means, and run no risks, and meet with no disappointments, and in the end receive immense profits. Here you could invest in the never-failing bank of Heaven. You could bestow your treasures where no thief approacheth, nor rust corrupteth. This enterprise is eternal, and is as much higher and nobler than any earthly enterprise as the heavens are higher than the earth.—

Your children were not disciples of Christ. They were in friendship with the world, and their natural hearts wanted to be like worldlings. The lust of the eye and the pride of life controlled them, and its influence has extended to you.

You have sought more earnestly to please and gratify your children than to please and glorify God. You have forgotten the claims God has upon you, and the wants of his cause. Selfishness has led you to expend money in ornaments, to gratify yourself and your children. You did not think that, this money was not yours; that it was only lent you, to test and prove you, to see if you would shun the evils you had marked in others.

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God made you his steward, and when he cometh and reckoneth with his servants, what account can you give of your stewardship?

Your faith and simple trust in God began to wane as soon as means flowed in upon you. You did not depart from God all at once. Your back-sliding was gradual. You ceased the morning and evening devotion, because it was not always convenient. The wife of your son caused you trials of a peculiar, aggravating character, which had considerable to do in discouraging you from continuing in family devotions.

Look back to the days of your earlier experience; would these trials then have driven you from family prayer? Your house became a prayerless house. Your business was made primary; and the Lord and his truth were made secondary.

Here, in the neglect of vocal prayer, you lost an influence in your house which you could have retained. It was your duty to acknowledge God in your family irrespective of consequences. Your petitions should have been offered to God morn in”“ and evening. You should have been as priest of the household, confessing your sins and the sins of your children. Had you been faithful, God, who had been your guide, would not have left you to your own wisdom.

Means were expended needlessly for show. This sin in others you had felt deeply grieved over. And while thus using means, you were robbing God. Then the Lord said:

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“I will scatter. I will permit her for a time to walk in the way of her own choosing. I will blind judgment, and remove wisdom. I will show her that her strength is weakness, and her wisdom foolishness. I will humble her and open her eyes to see how far she has departed

from me. If she will not then turn unto me with her whole heart, and in all her ways acknowledge me, my hand shall scatter, and the pride of the mother and of the children shall be brought down, and poverty shall again be their lot. My name shall be exalted. The loftiness of man shall be brought down, and the pride of man shall be laid low.”

This view was given me Dec. 25, 1865, in the city of Rochester, N. Y.

Last June, I was shown that the Lord was dealing with you in love—that he now invited you to turn to him, that you might live. I was shown that for years you have felt that you were in a backslidden state. If you had been consecrated to God, you might have done a good and great work in letting your light shine to others. To every one there is given a work to do for the Master. To each of his servants are committed Special gifts or talents. “Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability.” Every servant has some trust for which he is responsible; and the varied trusts are proportioned to our varied capabilities.

[108] In dispensing his gifts, God has not dealt with partiality. He has distributed the talents according to the known powers of his servants, and he expects corresponding returns.

The Lord imparted to you in your earlier experience talents of influence, but did not give you talents of means, and therefore did not expect you in your poverty to bestow that which you had not to give. Like the widow, you did give what you could, although, had you considered your own circumstances, you would have felt excused from doing even as much as you did. In your sickness, God did not require from you that active energy of which disease had deprived you.

Though you were restricted in your influence and means, yet God accepted your efforts to do good, and to advance his cause, according to what you had, not according to what you had not. God does not despise the humblest offering bestowed with readiness and sincerity.

You possess an ardent temperament. Earnestness in a good cause is praiseworthy. In your former trials and perplexity, you were obtaining an experience which was to be of advantage to others. You were zealous in the service of God. You loved to present to those

who did not believe present truth, the evidences of our position. You could speak with assurance; for these things were a reality to you. The truth was a part of your being; and those who listened to your earnest appeals, had not a doubt of your honesty, but were convicted that these things were so.

In the providence of God your influence has been extended; and added to this, God has seen fit to prove you by adding talents of means. You are laid under double responsibility.

When your condition in life began to improve, you said, "As soon as I can get me a home, I will then donate to the cause of God." But when you had a home, you saw so many improvements to make, to have everything about you convenient and pleasant, that you forgot the Lord and his claims upon you, and were less inclined to help the cause of God than in the days of your poverty and affliction. [109]

You were seeking friendship with the world, and separating further and further from God. You forgot the exhortation of Christ: "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."

"Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

There are three watchwords in the Christian life, which must be heeded if we would not have Satan steal a march upon us: Watch, Pray, Work, Prayer and watching thereunto are necessary for advancement in the divine life.

Never was there a time in your history more important than the present. Your only safety is to live like a watchman. "Watch and pray always." Oh! what a preventive against yielding to temptation, and the snares of the world.

How earnestly should you have been at work the past few years, when your influence was extensive.

Dear sister, praise of men, and the flattery current in the world, has had greater influence even upon you, than you have been aware of.

You, my sister, have not been improving your talents—putting them out to the exchangers. You possess naturally kindly affections and a generous heart. These have been exercised to a degree, but not as God requires. The mere having these excellent gifts is not enough; [110]

God requires them to be kept in constant exercise; for through these qualities he blesses those who need to be helped, and carries forward his work in the salvation of man.

God will not depend upon niggardly souls to take care of the worthy poor, nor to sustain his cause. Such are too narrow in mind, and would grudge the smallest pittance to the needy in their distress. They would also want the cause narrowed down to meet their limited ideas. To save means would be the prominent idea with them. Their means would be more valuable to them than precious souls for whom Christ died. Their lives, so far as God and Heaven are concerned, are worse than a blank. God will not trust his important work with them.

“Curse, ye Meroz,” said the angel of God, “curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” What had Meroz done? Nothing. This was their sin. The curse of God came upon them for what they had not done.

The man with a selfish, narrow mind, is responsible for his niggardliness, but those who have kindly affections, generous impulses, and a love for souls, are laid under weighty responsibilities; for if they leave these talents unemployed and wasting, they come under the head of unfaithful servants. The mere possession of these gifts [111] is not enough. Those who have them should realize that their obligation and responsibility is increased.

The Master will require each of his stewards to give an account of his stewardship, that he may learn what they have gained with the talents entrusted to them. Those to whom rewards are given will impute no merit to themselves for their diligent trading; they will give all the glory to God. They speak of that which was delivered to them, as “Thy pound” (not their own). When they speak of their gain, they are careful to state whence it came. The capital was advanced by the Master. They have traded upon it successfully, and return the principal and interest to the Giver. He rewards their efforts as if the merit belonged to them, when they owe all to the grace and mercy of the bountiful Giver. His words of unqualified approval fall upon their ears: “Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast/been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

To you, my sister, are committed talents of influence, and talents of money; and your responsibility is great. You should move cautiously, and in the fear of God. Your wisdom is weakness, but the wisdom from above is strong. The Lord designs to enlighten your darkness, and again give you a glimpse of the heavenly treasure, that you may have some sense of the comparative value of both worlds, and then leave you to choose between this world and the eternal inheritance.

I saw that there was yet opportunity to return to the fold. Jesus has redeemed you by his own blood, and he requires you to employ your talents in his service. You have not become hardened to the influence of the Holy Spirit. The truth of God when presented, will meet a response in your heart. [112]

I saw that you should study every move. You should do nothing rashly. Let God be your counselor. God loves your children, and it is right that you should love them; but it is not right to give them the place in your affections that God claims. They have kind impulses and generous purposes. They possess noble traits of character. If they would only see their need of a Saviour and bow at the foot of the cross, they might exert an influence for good. They are now lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. They now stand in the enemy's ranks, under the black banner of Satan. Jesus invites them to come to him, to leave the ranks of the enemy, and stand under the bloodstained banner of the cross of Christ.

This will look to them like a work they cannot perform, for it will require too much self-denial. They have no experimental knowledge of the way. Those who have engaged in their country's warfare, and been subjected to the hardships, and toils, and perils of a soldier's life, should be the last to hesitate and manifest cowardice in this great warfare for everlasting life. In this case they will be fighting for a crown of life, and an immortal inheritance. Their wages will be sure, and their gain, when the war is over, will be everlasting life, happiness unalloyed, and an eternal weight of glory.

Satan will oppose every effort they may make. He will present the world before them in its most attractive light, as he did to the Saviour of the world when he tempted him forty days in the wilderness. Christ overcame all the temptations of Satan, and so may your children. They are serving a hard master. The wages of sin [113]

is death. They cannot afford to sin. They will find it expensive business. They will meet with eternal loss in the end. They will lose the mansions Jesus has gone to prepare for those who love him. They will lose that life which measures with the life of God. And this is not all. They must suffer the wrath of an offended God. They have withheld from him their service, and given all their efforts to his worst enemy. Your children have not yet had the clear light, and condemnation only follows the rejection of light.

If professed Christians were all sincere and earnest in their efforts to promote the glory of God, what a stir would be made in the enemy's ranks. Satan in his work is earnest and sincere. He does not want souls saved. He does not want his power upon them broken. Satan does not merely pretend. He is in earnest. He beholds Christ inviting souls to come to him that they may have life, and he is earnest and zealous in his efforts to prevent them from accepting the invitation. He will leave no means untried to prevent them from leaving his ranks, and standing in the ranks of Jesus Christ. Why cannot Christ's professed followers do as much for him as his enemies do against him? Why not do all they can? Satan does all he can to keep souls from Christ. He was once an honored angel in Heaven, and although he has lost his holiness, he has not lost his power. He exerts his power with terrible effect. He does not wait for his prey to come to him. He hunts for it. He goeth to and fro [114] in the earth like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He does not always wear the ferocious look of the lion, but when he can work to better effect he will transform himself into an angel of light. He can readily exchange the roar of the lion for the most persuasive arguments, and for the softest whisper. He has legions of angels to aid him in his work. He will conceal his snares, and allure by pleasing deception. He will charm and delude many by flattering their vanity. He will, through his agents, present the pleasures of the world in an attractive light, and strew the path to hell with tempting flowers, and souls are charmed and ruined. For every step that they advance in the downward road, Satan has some special temptation to lead them still farther on the wrong track.

If your children were controlled by religious principles, they would be fortified against the vice and corruption surrounding them in this degenerate age. God will be to them a tower of strength if

they will put their trust in him. “Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.” The Lord will be the guide of their youth if they will believe and trust in him.

My dear sister, the Lord has been very merciful to you and your family. You are laid under obligation to your Heavenly Father to praise and glorify his holy name upon the earth. In order to continue in his love you should labor constantly for humbleness of mind, and that meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price.

Your strength in God will increase while you consecrate all to him; so that you can say with confidence, ” Who shall separate us [115] from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” ” For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

E.G.W.

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## Epistle Number Five.

Bro. —: I have been shown in vision the dangers of youth. Your case was presented before me. I saw that you had not adorned your profession. You might have done good, and your example might have been a blessing to the youth with whom you have associated, but alas! you have not had your inmost soul converted to God. If you had taken the course a consistent Christian should, your relatives and your friends would have been influenced by your godly course to follow in your footsteps. My brother, your heart is not right with God; your thoughts are not elevated; you permit your mind to run in a wrong channel. Your morals have not taken a high, pure tone. Your habits have been such as to injure your bodily health, and have been death to spirituality. You cannot prosper in religious things until you are converted.

[116] When you realize the transforming influence of the power of God upon the heart, it will be seen in your life. You have lacked a religious experience, but it is not too late for you now to seek God with earnest, heartfelt cries, “What shall I do to be saved?” You can never be a true Christian until you are thoroughly converted. You have been a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God. You have been seeking after pleasure, but have you found real enjoyment in this course? You have sought to make yourself agreeable to young, inexperienced girls. You have had your mind so much upon them, you could not direct it upward to God and Heaven.

“Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded.” This exhortation is applicable to you. You need to learn the ways, and will, and works, of God. You need pure and undefiled religion. Cease to do evil, and learn to do well. The blessing of God cannot rest upon you until you become more like Christ. You need to cultivate devotional feelings.

I am pained as I see the lack of godliness with the young. Satan takes the mind and turns it in a channel which is corrupt. A self-deception is upon many of the young. They think they are Christians,

but have never been converted. Until this work shall be wrought in them, they will not understand the mystery of godliness. "There is no peace to the wicked." God requires truth and sincerity of heart. God sees and pities you, with the youth in general, who are eagerly following childish toys, and wasting short and precious time for things of no value. Christ has bought you at a dear price, and offers you grace and glory if you will receive it; but you turn from the precious promise of the gift of everlasting life, to the meager and unsatisfactory pleasures of earth.

Your labor in this direction will bring no profit, but great loss. [117] The wages of sin is death. Life and Heaven are before you, but you seem not to know their value. You have not meditated upon the precious things of Heaven. If the inestimable love of Christ be turned from, if Heaven, and glory, and everlasting life, be considered of little value, what motive can we present to move? what inducement to charm? Will the foolish sports and a round of exciting pleasures attract the mind, and separate from God, and deaden the heart to his fear?—

Oh! I beg of you, who have so little interest in holy things, to closely investigate your own heart. Oh! what plea will you make before God for your worldly, unconsecrated life? You will, in that dread day, have no plea to make. You will be speechless. Think, oh, think, in your pleasure-seeking hours, all these things have an end. Did you have correct views of life, endless life with God, how quickly would you turn from a life of pleasure and sin; how quickly would you change your mind, and your course, and your company, and turn the strength of your affection to God and heavenly things. How resolutely would you scorn to yield to temptations which have deceived and captivated you. How earnest and zealous would be your efforts for the blessed life. How earnest and persevering would be your prayers to God for his grace to abide upon you, for his power to sustain you, and to help you resist the Devil. How diligent would you be to improve every religious privilege to learn the ways and will of God. How careful would you be in meditating upon the law of God, and in compar-

ing your life with its claims. How fearful would you be, lest [118] you sin in word or deed; and how earnest to grow in grace and true holiness. Your conversation would not be on trifling things, but in

Heaven. Then glorious and eternal things would open before you, and you would not rest until you should increase more and more in spirituality.

But earthly things claim your attention, and God is forgotten. I implore you to face right about, and to seek the Lord, that he may be found of you; call upon him while he is near.

E. G. W.

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## Epistle Number Six.

Dear Bro. —:While at — — one year ago, we labored for your interest. I had been shown your dangers, and we were desirous of saving you; but we see you have not had strength to carry out the resolutions there made. I am troubled over the matter, and fear that I was not as faithful as I should have been in bringing all I knew of your case before you. Some things I withheld from you. While in Battle Creek in June, I was again shown that you were not making any advance, and the reason you were not is because you have not made a clean track behind you. You do not enjoy religion; you have departed from God and righteousness. You have been seeking happiness in the wrong way—in forbidden pleasures; and you have not moral courage to confess your sins, and forsake them, that you may find mercy.

You did not put sin away; you did not view it heinous in the sight of God. You did not make thorough work; and when the enemy came in with his temptations, you did not resist him. Had you seen how offensive sin was in the sight of God, you would not have so readily yielded to temptation. You were not so thoroughly converted as to abhor your life of sin and fully. Sin yet seemed pleasant unto you. You were loth to yield up its delusive pleasures. Your inmost soul was not converted, and you soon lost that which you had gained.— [119]

Personal vanity in your case, as well as in many others, has been a special hindrance to you. You have ever had a love of praise. This has been a snare to you. Your professed friends have shown a special pleasure in your society, which has gratified you. Soft and sympathetic women have praised you, and appeared charmed with your society; and you have felt a fascinating power upon you in their company. You did not realize while spending your hours in pleasure-seeking, which belonged to your family, that Satan was weaving his net about your feet.

Satan has temptations laid for every step of your life. You have not been as economical of means as you should have been. You hate

stinginess. This is all right; but you go to the opposite extreme, and your course has been marked with prodigality.—

[120] Christ taught a lesson to his disciples in feeding the five thousand. He wrought a great miracle, and fed that vast multitude with five and two small fishes. After all had been satisfied, he did not then regard the fragments indifferently, as if they were beneath his dignity to notice. He who had power to work so notable a miracle, and to give food to so large a company, said to his disciples, “Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost.” This is a lesson to us all, which we should not disregard.

You have a great work before you, and you cannot afford to waste another moment of time without taking hold of the work. Bro. —, I am alarmed for you; but I know that God loves you still, although your course has been wayward. If he did not have a special love for you, he would not present your dangers before me as he has. You have engaged in jesting and sporting with men and women who have not the fear of God before them. Weak-headed and unprincipled superficial women have retained you in their presence, and you were like a charmed bird. You seemed fascinated. Angels of God were upon your track, and have faithfully recorded every act, every instance of wrong, of departure from virtue’s path.

Yes, every act, however secret you may have thought you were in its committal, has been open to God, to Christ, and to the holy angels. A book is written of all the doings of the children of men. Not an item of this record of acts can be concealed.

There is only one provision made for the transgressor. Faithful repentance and confession of sin, and faith in the cleansing blood of Christ, will bring forgiveness, and pardon will be written against his name.

[121] O my brother, had you made thorough work one year ago, the past precious year need not have been to you worse than a blank. You knew your Master’s will, but did it not. You are in a perilous condition. Your sensibilities have been blunted to spiritual things; you have a violated conscience. Your influence is not to gather, but to scatter. You have no special interest in religious exercises. You are not a happy man. Your wife would unite her interest with the people of God, if you would get out of her way. She needs your help. Will you take hold of this work together?—

Last June, I saw that your only hope of breaking the chain of your bondage was a removal from your associates. You had yielded to Satan's temptations until you were a weak man. You were a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God. You were fast traveling the downward path. And I have been disappointed that you have continued in the same indifferent state in which you have been for years.

You have known and experienced the love of God; and it has been your delight to do his will. You have delighted in the study of the word of God. You have been punctual at the prayer-meetings. Your testimony has been from a heart which felt the quickening influences of the love of Christ.

But you have lost your first love. God now calls upon you to repent, to be zealous in the work. Your eternal happiness will be determined by the course you now pursue. Can you reject the invitations of mercy now offered? Can you choose your own way? Will you cherish pride and vanity, and lose your soul at last? The word of God plainly tells us how few will be saved, and that the greatest number of even those who are called, will prove themselves unworthy of everlasting life. They will have no part in Heaven, but will have their portion with Satan, and experience the second death. [122]

Men and women may escape this doom if they will. It is true, Satan is the great originator of sin; yet this does not excuse any man for sinning; for he cannot force men to do evil. He tempts them to it, and makes sin look enticing and pleasant; but he has to leave it to their own wills whether they will do it or not. He does not force men to become intoxicated, neither does he take hold of them, and compel them by force to remain away from religious meetings; but he will present temptations in a manner to allure to evil, and man is a free moral agent to accept or refuse.

Conversion is a work that most do not appreciate. It is not a small matter to transform an earthly, sin-loving mind, and bring it up to Heaven, to understand the unspeakable love of Christ and the charms of his grace, and the excellency of God, till his soul is imbued with divine love, and captivated with the heavenly mysteries. When he understands these things, his former life will appear disgusting and hateful. He hates sin. He breaks his heart before God, and embraces Christ as the life and joy of the soul. He renounces his

[123] former pleasures. He has a new mind, new affections, new interest, new will. His sorrows, and desires, and love, are all new. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which have heretofore been preferred before Christ, are now turned from, and Christ is claimed as the charm of his life, his crown of rejoicing. Heaven, which possessed no charms, is now viewed in its riches and glory; and he con- templates it as his future home, where he shall see, love, and praise Him who hath redeemed him by his precious blood. The works of holiness which appeared wearisome, are now his delight. The word of God, which was dull and uninteresting, is now chosen as his study, the man of his counsel. It is as a letter written to him from God, bearing the inscription of the Eternal. His thoughts, his words, and his deeds are brought to this rule and tested. He trembles at the commands and threatenings, while he firmly grasps the promises, and strengthens his soul by appropriating them to himself.

The society of the most godly is now chosen by him, and the wicked, whose company he once loved, he no longer delights in. He weeps over the sins in them, at which he once laughed. Self-love and vanity are renounced, and he lives unto God, and is rich in good works. This is the sanctification God requires. Nothing short of this will he accept.

I beg of you, my brother, to enter into an earnest search of your heart, and inquire, What road am I traveling, and where will it end? You have reason to rejoice that your life has not been cut off while you have no certain hope of eternal life. God forbid that you should longer neglect this work, and so perish in your sins. Do not flatter your soul with false hopes. You see no way to get bold again, but one so humble that you cannot consent to accept it.

[124] Christ presents to you, even to you, my erring brother, a message of mercy, "Come, for all things are now ready." God is ready to accept you, and pardon all your transgressions, if you will but come. Though you have been a prodigal, and have separated from God, and staid away from him so long, he will meet you even now. Yes; the Majesty of Heaven invites you to come to him, that you may have life. Christ is ready to cleanse you from sin when you lay hold upon him. What profit have you found in serving sin? what profit in

serving the flesh and the Devil ? Is it not poor wages you receive?  
Oh! turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die 1

You have had many convictions and many pangs of conscience. You have had so many purposes, and made so many promises; and yet you linger, you will not come to Christ, that you may have life. Oh! that your heart may feel, and be impressed with, a sense of this time, that you may now turn and live. Cannot you hear the voice of the true Shepherd in this message? How can you disobey? Trifle not with God, lest he leave you to your own crooked ways. It is life or death with you. Which will you choose? It is a fearful thing to contend with, and resist, God. You may have the love of God burning upon the altar of your heart as you have once felt it. You may commune with God as you have done. You may again experience the riches of his grace, and your countenance express his love, if you will make a clean track behind you.

It is not required of you to confess to those who know not your sin and errors. It is not your duty to publish a confession which will lead unbelievers to triumph; but to those to whom it is proper, who will take no advantage of your wrong, confess according to the word of God, and let them pray for you, and God will accept your work, and will heal you. For your soul's sake, be entreated to make [125] thorough work for eternity. Lay aside your pride, your vanity, and make straight work. Come back again to the fold. The Shepherd is waiting to receive you. Repent, and do your first works, and again come into favor with God.

E. G. W.

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## Epistle Number Seven.

Bro. : Last June, your case was presented before me in vision. I have been constantly pressed with labor, so that I could not possibly write out the things shown me of individual cases. I wish to write what I have to write, before I hear any account of matters in regard to your case; for Satan might suggest doubts to your mind. This is his work.

I was pointed back to your past life, and was shown that God had been very merciful to you, in enlightening your eyes to see his truth, rescuing you from your perilous condition of doubt and uncertainty, establishing your faith, and settling your mind, upon the eternal truths of God's word. He established your feet upon the Rock, and for a time you felt grateful and humble. For some time you have been separating yourself from God.

[126] When you were little in your own eyes, then you were beloved of God. Music has been a snare to you. You are naturally troubled with self-esteem, and have exalted ideas of your own abilities. Teaching music has been an injury to you. Many women have confided their family difficulties to your ear. This has been an injury to you. It has exalted you, and led you to greater self-esteem.

In your own family, you have occupied a dignified, and rather haughty, position. There are defects in your wife, of which you are aware. They have led to bad results. She is not naturally a housekeeper. Her education in this direction has to be acquired. She has improved some, and should apply herself earnestly to make greater improvements. She lacks order, taste, and neatness, in house-keeping and dress. It would be pleasing to God if she should train her mind upon these things wherein she lacks. She does not have good government in her family. She is too yielding. She does not maintain her decisions. She is swerved by the desires and claims of her children, and yields her judgment to theirs. Instead of trying to improve in these respects, as it is her duty to do, she is glad of an opportunity or an excuse, to release herself from her home cares

and responsibilities, and permits others to perform the duties in her family that she should educate herself to love to do. She cannot perform her part as a wife and mother, until she shall educate herself in this direction. Practice, in these things, will give her experience, and confidence in her own ability to perform, her duties aright. She lacks confidence in herself. She is timid, and fearing and distrustful of herself. She has a very poor opinion of what she does, and this discourages her from doing. She needs encouragement. She needs words of tenderness and affection. She has a good spirit. She is good at heart. She is meek and quiet. The Lord loves her. Yet she should make thorough efforts to correct these evils which tend to make her family unhappy. [127]

You, Bro. —, have an organism different from your wife's. You have a love for order and neat-ness, and a nice taste, and have quite good government. You are opposite in your organizations. You, as a husband, are rather stiff and stern. You fail to take a course to encourage confidence and familiarity in your wife. The deficiencies in your wife have led you to regard her as inferior to yourself, and have also caused your wife to feel that you thus regarded her. God esteems her more highly than yourself; for your ways are crooked before him. For the sake of her husband and children, and for other reasons, she should seek to correct her deficiencies, and improve in those things wherein she now fails. She can do it, if she will try hard enough.

God is displeased with disorder, slackness, and a lack of thoroughness, in any one. These deficiencies are serious evils, and tend to wean the affections of the husband from the wife, when the husband loves order, well-disciplined children, and a well-regulated house. A wife and mother cannot make home agreeable and happy, unless she possesses a love for order, and preserves her dignity, and has good government; therefore, all who fail on these points should begin at once to educate themselves in this direction, and cultivate the very things wherein is their greatest lack. Discipline will do much for those who are lacking in these essential qualifications. Sr. —, gives up to these failings, and thinks that she cannot do otherwise than she does. After she has made a trial, and fails to see decided improvement in herself, she is discouraged. This must not be. The happiness of herself and her family depend upon her [128]

arousing herself, and working with earnestness and zeal to make a decided reformation in these things. She must put on confidence and decision; put on the woman. Her nature is to shrink from anything untried. No one can be more ready and willing than herself to do, where she thinks she can succeed. If she fails in her new effort, she must try, try again. She can earn the respect of her husband and children.

I was shown that self-exaltation has caused Bro. —, to stumble. He has exercised a certain dignity, savoring of severity, in his family, and toward his wife. This has shut her from him. She felt that she could not approach him, and has been, in her married life, more like a child, fearing a stern, dignified father, than a wife. She has loved, looked up to, respected, and idolized her husband, notwithstanding your lack of encouraging her confidence. Bro. —, you should, in your married life, pursue a course that would encourage your timid, shrinking wife to lean upon your large affections, which would give you a chance, in a delicate, affectionate manner, to correct the errors existing in your wife, as far as you are capable of so doing, and to inspire her with confidence in herself.

[129] I was shown that you had not possessed that love for your wife that you should. Satan has taken advantage of her defects and your errors, to work for the destruction of your family. You have suffered shame of your wife to come into your heart. Respect began to grow less and less for her whom you had vowed to love and cherish until death should part you.

Oct. 25, 1868, your case was again presented before me. I was shown that evil thoughts and unlawful desires have led to improper acts, and a violation of the commandments of God. You have dishonored yourself, your wife, and the cause of God. You could have exerted an influence for good in the cause of God. The pursuance of a wrong course in matters that you thought were of little consequence, led to greater evils.

Bro. —, you are now in danger of making total shipwreck of your faith. You have sinned greatly. Your sin has since been tenfold in seeking to cover up, and blind the eyes of those who have suspected you of wrong. All have not acted as prudently and with that love and care that the Lord would have been pleased to have them, in order to redeem you. But when you tried to put on an air of injured

innocency, did you think that God could not see your wrong course? Did you think that He who made man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, could not discern the intents and purposes of the heart? You have thought that if you should confess your sin, you would lose your honor—your life, as it were. You thought that your brethren would have no confidence in you. You have not viewed matters in the right light. It is a shame to sin, but an honor to confess the sin, every time.

Angels of God have kept a faithful record of every act, however secret you may have thought you were in its committal. God discerns the purposes of man, and all his works. Every man will be rewarded according as his works have been, whether good or evil. That which a man sows will he also reap. There will be no failure in the crop. The harvest is sure and plentiful.

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You have tried to blind your brethren in regard to your course. How could you do so, when you knew that you were not clear in the sight of God, but guilty before him? If you value your soul's salvation, make thorough work for eternity.

You will have to make a clean track behind you by thorough confession. You need a thorough conversion—a transformation of self by the renewing of your mind. Your self-esteem must be overcome. You must learn to esteem others better than yourself. Your exalted opinion of your acquirements must be given up, and you must obtain a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

You have possessed a spirit which has led you from the path of rectitude, and now you are 'troubled. Doubts and fears and despair seize 1 you. There is but one way out, and that is by the way of confession. Your only hope is in falling on the rock and being broken to pieces; if you do not, it will surely fall upon you and grind you to powder. You can now right your wrongs. You can now redeem the past. By a life of goodness and true humility, you can yet walk with acceptance before God in your family. God help you to work as for your life, in view of the Judgment.

Dear Bro. —, I feel deeply interested for you. You have been for some time walking in darkness. You have not arrived at your present state of darkness all at once. You have been leaving the light gradually. You became exalted, and then, as you felt sufficient in

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your own strength, the Lord re-moved his strength from you.

You have been interested in music. This has given incautious, unwise women opportunity, and they have confided their troubles to you. You have felt your pride gratified, but it has been a snare to you. It has opened a door for the suggestions of Satan. You have not done as you should. You had no right to hear in families that which has been spoken to you. These communications have corrupted your mind, increased your self-esteem, and led to evil thoughts. You have permitted yourself to be as a confessor to some sentimental women who desired sympathy, and wished to lean upon others. Had they possessed sound judgment, and stood self-reliant, having an aim in life, loving to do others good, they would not have been in a condition where they needed to come to any one for sympathy.

You know not the deceptions of the human heart. You know not the devices of Satan. Some who have drawn largely upon your sympathy, have a sickly, diseased imagination, are love-sick, sentimental, ever eager to create a sensation, and make a great ado. Some are dissatisfied with their married life. There is not enough romance in it. Novel reading has perverted all the good sense they ever had. They live in an imaginary world. Their imagination creates a husband for themselves, such as exists only in romances found in novels. They talk of unrequited love. They are never contented or happy, because their imaginations are picturing to them a life that is unreal. When they face the realities, and come down to the simplicity of real life, take up life's burdens in their families, as is women's lot, then they will find contentment and happiness.

You have cherished thoughts that were not right. These thoughts have borne fruit. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Your words are not always chaste, pure, and elevated. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." Guile is too often found in your mouth—low expressions that proceed from a heart cherishing corrupt thoughts and evil desires.

You have been for some time turned from the path of rectitude and purity. You know your course has been displeasing to God. You know that these things cannot be hid. God will not permit his people to be deceived in your case.

You know that you are transgressing the law of God. Your great sin is in enlisting the sympathies of those who do not understand

your crooked course, and by thus doing, dividing the judgment of the people who profess the truth.

We pity you. My heart aches for you. I see nothing before you but perdition. Nothing but utter shipwreck of faith.

Will you cover your sins and brave the matter out? God says you shall not prosper. He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy. Will you choose death? Will you shut the kingdom of Heaven against yourself because you will not yield your wicked pride?

Your only hope is in confessing your backslidings from God. God has let the light shine upon your pathway. Will you choose your own course of corruption? Will you cast the truth behind you because it will not sustain you in a course of iniquity? Oh! be entreated to "Rend your heart, and not your garments." Make thorough work for eternity.—

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God will be merciful to you. He will be entreated in your behalf. He will not despise a broken and contrite spirit. Will you turn? Will you live? Your soul is worth saving. Your soul is precious. We wish to help you.

I saw that you were not happy. You are not at rest. You feel distressed, and yet you refuse to take the only course you can take, that will bring you relief and hope. He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall find mercy. Your condition is deplorable, and you are greatly injuring the cause of God. Your influence will destroy others besides yourself.

If you refuse to come to God and confess your backslidings that he may heal you, there is nothing to be hoped for you, or your poor family, in the future. Misery will follow upon the steps of sin. God's hand will be against you, and he will leave you to be controlled by Satan, and be led captive by him at his will. You know not to what lengths you may go. You will be like a man at sea without an anchor. The truth of God is an anchor. You are breaking away from the truth. Your eternal interests are being sacrificed to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

You are on the point of breaking the bonds which would save you from utter destruction. In seeking to save your life by concealing your wrongs you are losing it.

If you now humble yourself before God, confess your wrongs,

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and return to him with full purpose of heart, yours can yet be a happy! family. If you will not do this, but choose your 1 own ways, your happiness is at an end.

You have a great work to do. You have been too slack in your deportment. Your words have ‘ not been elevated, chaste, and pure. You have been separating from the divine, and cultivating the lower order of your passions. The intellectual and noble powers of your mind have been brought down into subjection to the animal. You have not pursued a right course for some time. You have not abstained from every appearance of evil. You are not safe to pursue this course any longer.

You have not loved your wife as you should. She is a good woman. She has seen, in a small measure, your danger. But you closed your ear to her cautions. You have thought her jealous, but this is not her nature. She loves you, and ‘ will bear with you, and forgive you, and love you, notwithstanding the deep wrong you have done her, if you will only press to the light, and make clean work in the past.

You must have a thorough conversion; unless you do, all your past efforts to obey the truth will not save you, nor cover up your past wrongs. Jesus requires of you a thorough reformation, then he will help, and bless, and love you, and blot out your sins in his own most precious blood. You can redeem the past. You can correct your ways, find yet be an honor to the cause of God. You can do good when you take hold of the strength of God, and in his name work; work for your own salvation, and for the good of others.

[135] Yours can yet be a happy family. Your wife needs your help. She is like a clinging vine. She wants to lean upon your strength. You can help her, and lead her along. You should never censure your wife. Never reprove her, if her efforts are not what you think they should be. Encourage her by words of tenderness and love.

You have put your help in the house, before your wife. Your courteous acts have been more to others than to her. You can help your wife to preserve her dignity and self-respect. Never praise the work or acts of others before your wife, to make her feel her deficiencies. You have been harsh and unfeeling in this respect.

God loves your wife. She has suffered, and he has noticed all, marked it all, and will not hold you guiltless for the wounds you have caused.

It is neither wealth, nor intellect, that gives happiness. It is moral worth.

True goodness is accounted of Heaven as true greatness. The condition of the moral affections determine the worth of the man. A man may have property and intellect, and yet be valueless, because the glowing fire of goodness has never

burned upon the altar of his heart, because his conscience has been seared, blackened and crisped with selfishness and sin.

When the lust of the flesh is controlling the man, and the evil passions of the carnal nature are permitted to rule, skepticism in regard to the realities of the Christian religion is encouraged, and doubts are expressed as though it was a special virtue to doubt.

The life of Solomon might have been remarkable until its close if virtue had been preserved. But he surrendered this special grace to lustful passion. In his youth he looked to God for guidance. He trusted in him, and God chose for him, and wisdom was given to him—wisdom that astonished the world. His power and wisdom were extolled throughout the land. His love of women was his sin. In his passion he did not control in his manhood. It proved a snare to him. His wives led him into idolatry, and the wisdom God had given him was removed when he began to descend the declivity of life, he lost his firmness of character, and became more like the giddy youth, wavering between right and wrong. He yielded his principles, and placed himself in the current of evil, and thus separated himself from God, the foundation and source of his strength. He was a man who had moved from principle. Wisdom had been more precious to him than the gold of Ophir. But alas! lustful passions got the victory. He was deceived and ruined through women. What a lesson for watchfulness! What a testimony as to the need of strength from God to the very last.

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In the battle with inward corruptions and outward temptations, even the wise and powerful Solomon was vanquished. It is not safe to permit the least departure from the strictest integrity. “Abstain from all appearance of evil.”

When a woman relates her family troubles, or complains of her husband, to another man, she violates her marriage vows, she dishonors her husband, and breaks down the wall erected to preserve the sanctity of the marriage relation; she throws wide open the door, and invites Satan to enter with his insidious temptations. This is just as Satan would have it.

[137] If a woman comes to a Christian brother with a tale of her woes, her disappointments, and trials, he should ever advise her, if she must confide her troubles to someone, to select sisters for her confidants, and then there will be no appearance of evil, whereby the cause of God may suffer reproach.

Remember Solomon. Among many nations there was no king like him, beloved of his God. He fell. He was led from God and became corrupt through the indulgence of lustful passions. This is the prevailing sin of this age, and its progress is fearful. Professed Sabbath-keepers are not clean. There are those who profess to believe the truth who are corrupt at heart. God will prove them, and their folly and sin shall be made manifest. None but the pure and lowly can dwell in his presence. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? 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. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved."— E.G.W.

## Epistle Number Eight.

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Dear Friend —:In the last vision given me, I saw that you had faults to correct. It is necessary for you to see these before you will make the required effort to correct them. I saw that you had much to learn before you could form a good, Christian character, which Cod can approve. From your childhood you have been a wayward boy, disposed to have your own way, and to follow your own mind. You have not loved to yield your wishes and will to those who have the care of you. This is the experience you must obtain.

Your danger is increased by the spirit of independence and self-confidence, connected, as of course it must be, with inexperience, which young men of your age are apt to assume when they have not their own dear parents to watch over them, and stir the tender chords of affection in the soul. You feel that it is time for you to think and act for yourself. “I am a young man, and no longer a child. I am capable of judging, discriminating, and determining, between right and wrong. I have rights, and I will stand for them. I am capable of forming my own plans of action. Who has authority to interfere with me?” These have been some of your thoughts, and you are encouraged in them by youth who are about your age.

You feel that you may assert your liberty, and act like a man. These feelings and thoughts lead to wrong action. You have not a submissive spirit. Wise is that young man and highly blest, who feels it to be his duty to look up to his parents, if he have them, if not, to his guardian, or to those with whom he lives, as counselors, as comforters, and, in some respects, his rulers, who allows the restraints of his home to abide upon him. Independence of one kind is praiseworthy. To desire to bear your own weight, and not to eat the bread of dependence, is right. It is a noble, generous ambition that dictates the wish to be self-supported. Industrious habits and frugality are necessary.

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Dear —, you have been placed in unfavorable circumstances for the development of a good, Christian character; but you are

now placed where you may build up a reputation, or blast it. The latter, we do not believe you will do. But you are not secure from temptation. In one single hour you may, by yielding to temptation, estrange hearts from you, lose the respect and esteem you have been acquiring from those around you, and also stain your Christian character, which will afterwards cost you tears of bitter repentance.

You have the lesson of submission to learn. You consider it beneath you to do duties about the house—chores and little errands. You have a positive dislike to these little requirements. You have a work to do, to cultivate a love for these very things to which you are so averse. Until you do this, you will not be acceptable help anywhere. You are doing more real service when engaged in these necessary small things, than when engaged in large business and in laborious work.

[140] There is a case now in my mind, of one who was presented before me in vision, who neglected these little things, and could not interest himself in small duties, seeking to lighten the work of females indoors; it was too small business. He has now a family, and possesses the same unwillingness to engage in these important, yet small, duties, which he ever did. The result is, great care rests upon his wife. Many things she has to do, or they will be left undone; and the amount of care, which comes upon her because of her husband's lack, is breaking down her constitution. He cannot now overcome this evil, as he could in his youth. He neglects the little duties, therefore cannot make a successful farmer, and keep everything up tidy and nice. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much."

Naaman, the Syrian, consulted the prophet of God as to how he could be cured of a loathsome disease, the leprosy. He was bid to go and bathe in Jordan seven times. Why did he not immediately follow the directions of Elisha, the prophet of God? Why did he refuse to do as the prophet commanded? He went to his servants, murmuring. In his mortification and disappointment, he became passionate, and in a rage refused to follow the humble course marked out by the prophet of God. "I thought," said he, "He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana

and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage." His servant said, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather, then, when he saith to thee, Wash [merely], and be clean?" Yes, this great man considered it beneath his dignity to go to the humble river, Jordan, and wash. The rivers he mentioned and desired, were beautified by surrounding trees and groves, and idols were placed in these groves. Many flocked to these rivers to worship their idol gods, therefore it would have cost him no humility. But it was following the specified directions of the prophet which would humble his proud and lofty spirit. Willing obedience would bring the desired result. He washed, and was made whole.

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Your case is similar in some respects to Naaman's. You do not consider that, in order to perfect a Christian character, you must condescend to be faithful in the littles. Although these things you are called to do, may be of small account in your eyes, yet they are duties which you will have to do just as long as you live. A neglect of these things will make a great deficiency in your character. You, my dear boy, should educate yourself to faithfulness in small things. You cannot please God unless you do this. You cannot gain love and affection unless you do just as you are bid with pleasure and willingness. If you wish those with whom you live to love you, you must show your love and respect for them.

It is your duty to lighten the cares of Sr. — all in your power. You see her pale and feeble, cooking for a large family. Every extra job she has to perform, is wearing her, and lessening her vitality. She has no young hands and feet to perform little errands. They received you into their family, as they told you and us at the time, expressly to do these things. Now if you neglect to do the very things they think will help them most, and choose to follow your will in an independent course of your own choosing, you must lose your place, and they must have one that will do the very things you consider too small for you to do. You are now doing larger and heavier work than your strength will admit. You love to do the work of a man. You have a set will of your own which must be given up. You must die to self, crucify self, get the victory over self. You cannot be a true follower of Christ unless you take hold of this work resolutely.

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I saw, —, that you do not naturally possess reverence and respect for those older than yourself. You should be faithful in the little errands and duties you are required to perform. You should not attend to these things as though they were a drug, and go murmuringly about them. You cannot see how unpleasant and unlovely you make yourself. You cannot thus be happy yourself, nor make others happy around you. You should bear in mind that God requires of you, as his servant, to be faithful, to be patient, kind, affectionate, obedient, and respectful. You cannot attain to Christian perfection without you possess perfect control of your own spirit. You allow feelings to arise in your heart, which are sinful, which are a great injury to you, and tend to encourage a hard, defiant spirit, unlike the spirit of Christ, whose life you are commanded to imitate. Dear —, commence anew, determined, by God's help, to follow the things which are true, lovely, and of good report. Let the fear of God, united with love and affection for all around you, be seen in all your actions. Be faithful and thorough, rid yourself of everything like slackness. Have a place for everything, and put everything in its place. Be accommodating, kind, cheerful, and agreeable. Then you can win your way into the hearts of those you are with.

One thing ever bear in mind: No young man can be possessed of a right spirit who does not respect, and seek to lighten, the cares of women. It is the worst sign that can be found in a young man to consider it beneath him to lighten the labor of women. Such a man is marked. No woman would commit the keeping of her life to such a man; for he will never make a tender, careful, considerate, husband.

The boy is the type of the man. —,—I entreat of you to face right about. Do everything in the shape of small duties, disagreeable though they may be to you, that needs to be done. Then will you have the approval of those around you, and, what is to be more highly prized, you will have the approval of God. You cannot be a Christian unless you are a faithful servant in that which is least. God will bless you, and help you, if you pray, and strive to do your best, to perform every duty.

Do you wish, when Jesus comes to take his faithful ones to himself, to have him say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant"? Do you desire to have all imperfections removed from

your character, that you may be found without fault before the throne of God? If so, you have a work to do for yourself which no other can do for you. You have an individual responsibility before God. [144] You can walk in the light, and receive strength from God daily to overcome every imperfection, and finally be among the faithful, true, and holy, in the kingdom of God.

Yield not to temptation. Satan will annoy you, seeking to control your mind, that he may lead you into sin. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Remember that the eye of God is ever upon you. When you answer disrespectfully, God sees and hears you. The Judgment is to come, when all shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body.

You, —, will have a part to act in the Judgment. Jesus will either receive, or reject you. Flee to him for strength and grace. He will love to help you, to be the guide of your youth, and will so strengthen you that you can bless others with your influence. God loves you, and will save you if you come in his appointed way; but if you rebel, and choose your own course, it will be to your eternal loss. Pray much; for prayer is one of the most essential exercises. Without it you cannot maintain a Christian walk. It elevates, strengthens, and ennobles. It is the soul talking with God.

—, do not think you can cease your efforts or vigilance for a moment; you cannot. Study God's word diligently, that you may not be ignorant of Satan's devices, and that you may learn the way of salvation more perfectly. Your will must be submerged in God's will. Seek not your own pleasure and happiness, but that of those around you; and in so doing you can but be happy. Come to Jesus with all your needs and wants, and in simple confidence crave his blessing. [145] Trust in God, and seek to move from principle, strengthened and ennobled by high resolves and a determination of purpose found only in God.

You should not be easily provoked. Let not your heart become selfish; but let it expand with love. You have a work to do. do not neglect it; endure hardship as a good soldier. Jesus is acquainted with every conflict, every trial, and every pang of anguish. He will help you; for he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet he sinned not. Go to him, dear boy, with your burdens. Take no one into your confidence, and tell no one your difficulties, but ourselves. Make

Jesus your burden-bearer, and seek a more thorough experience in religious things. God help and bless you, is my sincere prayer.

My tenderest sympathies are aroused for orphans. You indeed have no home. The grave has taken your father and your mother, and the home of your childhood others inhabit. You cannot have as distinct recollection of your godly father as of your mother. You remember that you sometimes grieved her. You had not learned submission; you have yet but partially learned the lesson. But the prayers of your parents have found a lodgment in Heaven, that you may be among those who love and fear God.

[146] Oh! this is a cold and selfish world. Your relatives, who should have loved and befriended you, if not for your own, for your parents' sake, have shut themselves up in their selfishness, and have no special interest for you. But God will be nearer and dearer to you, than any of your earthly relatives can be. He will be your friend, and never leave you. He is a father to the fatherless. His friendship will prove sweet peace to you, and will help you to bear your great loss with fortitude.

Seek to make God your father, and you will never want a friend. You will be exposed to trials, yet be steadfast, and strive to adorn your profession. You will need grace to stand, but God has his eye of pity upon you. Pray much and earnestly, believing that God will help you. Guard against irritability, and petulance, and a spirit of tantalizing. Forbearance is a virtue which you need to encourage. Seek for piety of heart. Be a consistent Christian. Possess a love of purity and humble simplicity; and let these be interwoven with your life.

You should not only educate yourself to fear God, but to love all around you; and yours can be a useful and happy life, and your example can be such as to lead others to choose the humble path of holiness. Be right. Have moral courage at all times to do right, and honor your Redeemer. Dear boy, seek true holiness, I implore you.

E.G.W.

## Epistle Number Nine.

Dear Sr. —: Some things have been shown me in reference to yourself. Dear sister, you have not a sense of your true state. You need a deep and thorough work of grace in your heart. You need to set your heart and your house in order. Your example in your family is not worthy of imitation. You come up to a low standard, but fail to come to the standard elevated by our divine Lord. You love to visit and to talk. You talk much, and say many things unbecoming a Christian. You exaggerate in your statements, and frequently come far from the truth. Your words and acts will judge you in the last day. By your words and works you will be justified, or by the same condemned. Your education has not been of an exalted character, therefore there is the greatest necessity of your now training and educating yourself to purity of thoughts and acts. You need to train your thoughts, that it may become easy to dwell upon pure and holy things. You should cultivate a love for spirituality and true godliness.

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Your conversation is often of a low order. You deceive your own soul, which will prove fatal unless you arouse to see yourself as you are, and turn unto God with true humbleness of mind.

You are inclined to be deceptive. Your son has not an experimental knowledge of God, or of the sacred claims of truth. He is a most miserable representative of a Christian, Sabbath-keeping boy. He is flattered by his parents that he is a Christian. God forbid that we acknowledge such as being Christ-like. You do not discipline your boy. He is self-willed and bigoted. He has but very little sense of true courtesy, or even common politeness. He is rough and uncultivated, unloving and unlovable. You represent to others that he is a Christian, and by so doing you disgrace the cause of Jesus Christ. This boy is in a fair way of becoming an educated hypocrite, He has not control over himself, yet you flatter him that he is a Christian.

The work of reform must commence with you. You should become chaste in conversation, and a keeper at home, loving your home duties, loving your husband and child. You should study to econo-

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mize your time, so as not to overtax your strength. The light burdens of home duties which you have to bear, you can perform without over-taxation, if you exercise perseverance and proper diligence.

You have a work to do to control the tongue. It is a little member, and boasteth great things; but it needs the bridle of grace and the bit of self-control, to keep it from running at random. Your conversation is of a low order, and you indulge in much cheap talk. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

May the Lord convict you of these things as you read these lines. I entreat of you to put on the meek dignity of a wife and mother. There is a responsibility resting upon the father. Your efforts should be united to control your son, who is on the fast road to perdition. You should earnestly seek for the inward adorning, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. With patience, grace, and sweet humility, you can teach your poor, deceived boy the first principles of Christianity, and true politeness, or Christian courtesy. You are frequently hasty and boisterous. Oh! how important that you see the work to be done for you, before it shall be forever too late. Now Jesus invites you to come to him, and to learn of him, for he is meek and lowly of heart. The promise he has given you is sure, that you will find rest in him. You have a great work to do. Deceive not your own souls, but examine yourselves as in the light of eternity. It is impossible for you to be saved as you are.

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Sr. —, your husband might be of some use in the church, if your influence was what it ought to be. Your example and influence disqualify him to exert a good and sanctifying influence in the church. Home influences more than counteract your husband's efforts for good. You are wholly unqualified for the wife of the elder of the church. God calls upon you to reform. Your husband has a work to do to set his heart and house in order. When he is converted, then can he strengthen his brethren.

As a family, you need to be sanctified through the truth. Sr. —, will you see the work to be done for you, and take hold of it without delay, that your influence may be saving? Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. "Let your speech be always

with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, 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.

There are enough subjects, to meditate and con-verse upon, that are profitable. The conversation of the Christian should be in Heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour. Meditation upon heavenly things is profitable, and will ever be accompanied with peace and comfort of the Holy Spirit. Our calling is holy, our profession exalted. God is purifying unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. He is sitting as a refiner and purifier of silver. When the dross and tin are removed, then his image shall be perfectly reflected in us. Then the prayer of Christ for his disciples will be answered in us, “Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” When the truth has its sanctifying influence upon our hearts and lives, we can render to God acceptable service, and can glorify him upon the earth, being partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

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Oh ! how many will be found unready when the Master shall come to reckon with his servants. They have meagre ideas of what constitutes a Christian. Self-righteousness will then be of no avail. None can stand the test only those who shall be found having on the righteousness of Christ, imbued with his spirit, walking even as he walked, in purity of heart and life. The conversation must be holy, and then the words will be seasoned with grace.

May the Lord help you as a family to get right, to be elevated in life, and in all your acts honor your profession.

E.G.W.

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## Epistle Number Ten.

[151] Dear Sr. —: I have learned of your affliction, and hasten to pen a few lines. My dear sister, I have the very best of evidence that the Lord loves you. In the last view which was given me, I was shown your case, among others, that you had been affected in the past with the course of error which others had pursued, but you were ever anxious to know the right, you were strictly conscientious, extremely sensitive, viewing your ease worse than it was.

You have been afflicted with disease for quite a length of time. You are a nervous dyspeptic. The brain is closely connected with the stomach, and its power has so often been called to aid the weakened digestive organs that it is in its turn weakened, depressed, or congested. While in this state, your mind is gloomy, naturally dwelling upon the dark side, imagining that the frown of God is upon you. You have thought that your life had been useless, filled with errors and wrong moves. Dear sister, your diseased state of health leads you to this despondency and discouragement. God's love is yet toward you. He has not left you. I saw that you should trust in God as a child trusts itself in the arms of its mother. God is merciful and kind, and is full of tender pity and compassion. He has not turned his face from you.

[152] You are extremely sensitive. You feel deeply, and have not possessed the power to throw off care, perplexity, and discouragement of mind. I saw that God would be to you a very present help, if you will only trust yourself in his arms. You worry yourself out of the arms of your dear, loving Saviour. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" What a precious promise is this! We may claim much of our kind Heavenly Father. Great blessings are in reserve for us. We may believe, we may trust, and glorify God by thus trusting in him. Even if we are overcome of the enemy, we are not cast off, forsaken, and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God,

who also maketh intercession for us. If we sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

I want to say, Sr. —, you need not cast away your confidence. Poor, trembling soul, rest in the promises of God. In thus doing, the enemy's fetters will be broken, his suggestions will be powerless. Heed not the whisperings of the enemy Go free, oppressed soul. Be of good courage. Say to your poor, desponding heart, "Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance, and my God." I know that God loves you. Put your trust in him. Don't think of those things which bring sadness and distress; turn from every disagreeable thought, and think of precious Jesus. Dwell upon his power to save, his undying, matchless love for you, even you. I know that the Lord loves you. If you cannot rely upon your own faith, rely upon the faith of others. We believe and hope for you. God accepts our faith in your behalf.

You have tried to do right, Sr.—, and God is pitiful and compassionate to you. Be cheerful, and bid adieu to gloom and doubts. In indulging in these doubts, you dishonor God. There is peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Believing brings peace, and trusting in God brings joy. Believe, believe! my soul says, Believe. Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to his trust. He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him who hath loved you. May the Lord bless you and strengthen your trembling faith, is our prayer. We commit these few lines to you, trusting they may do you good.

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E.G.W.

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## Epistle Number Eleven.

Dear Bro. —: I was shown in the last vision that you would need to watch yourself with jealous care, or your peculiar temperament would control you. You erred while engaged in praying for Sr. —, and took upon yourself the same dictatorial, overbearing spirit which has been the curse of your life. You bore down on Bro. — when you should have been, considering your failures in the past, unassuming and modest. It will—be very difficult for you to get out of the train of watching others, and noticing little things, and speaking out decidedly, and censuring. All this you have nothing to do with. Just as sure as you are overcome in a small degree in this direction, the door is open for a greater failure. There is no safety for you but constant control of yourself, and to possess your soul in patience. You cannot I accomplish any great work, but may, if right, do a little good in the cause of God. But your influence need not injure; if you will be guarded and sanctified to God you may take a position to comfort and to speak a peaceful word, to bear testimony in regard to the great riches of God and the undying love of Jesus.

[154] Let your heart be softened and melt under the divine influence of the Spirit of God. You should not talk so much about yourself, for this will strengthen no one. You should not make yourself a center, and imagine you must be constantly caring for yourself and leading others to care for you. Get your mind off from yourself in a more healthy channel. Talk of Jesus, and let self go. You must be submerged in Christ, where this shall be the language of your heart, I live, yet not I, for Christ liveth in me. Jesus will be to you a present help in every time of need. He will not leave you to battle with the powers of darkness alone, oh! no; he has laid help upon One that is mighty to save to the uttermost.

Be not self-caring. Overcome your notions, your little peculiarities, and seek only to represent Jesus. In your talks in meeting, and in praying, do not be too lengthy. You have failed here. You can remedy this. Lengthy speaking and praying is injurious to you, and

not beneficial to those who hear you. You have close work to be an overcomer. Yet you can do this, if you engage in the work calmly. Here you need to guard yourself. You are uneasy, hurried, nervous. This you may overcome.

You have an earnest, anxious desire to do right, and meet the approval of God. Continue your earnest, persevering efforts, and be not discouraged. Be patient. Never censure. Never let the enemy beguile you from your watch. Watch as well as pray. After you pray, watch thereunto. The effort is your own; no one can do this work for you. Take hold of the strength of God, and as fast as you see your errors in the past, redeem the time.

E. G. W.

## Epistle Number Twelve.

Dear Bro. —: In the last vision I was shown that you do not understand yourself. You have a work to do for yourself which no other can do for you. Your experience in the truth is short, and you have not a thorough conversion. You esteem yourself highly when you will not bear the estimate you put upon yourself. I was pointed back to your past life. You have not been elevated. Your mind has dwelt upon subjects not calculated to lead to purity of actions. You have had habits which were corrupt, which has given tone to your morals by tainting them. You have been too familiar with the other sex, and have not possessed modesty of deportment. You would be well suited were there greater familiarity encouraged between males and females, much after Dr. —'s theory.

Your influence at — was not good. You was not a proper person for that place. Your lightness, and trifling, vain conversation disqualified you to exert a good influence.

The character of your music was not of a nature to encourage elevated thoughts or feelings, but to degenerate the thoughts and feelings. Your influence has been improving for some weeks in the past, but you lack a firm principle. You lack in many things, and in some things you must know where you fail. The follies of your youth have left their impress upon you, and you can never recover what you have lost through impure habits. These things have benumbed your sensibilities so that sacred things are not clearly discerned. You cannot, with your present experience, resist temptation. You cannot endure tri- als. You are not sanctified through the truth. You have taken hold of the truth, but the truth has not taken hold upon you, to transform you by the renewing of your mind. Oh! do not, I entreat of you, remain deceived in regard to your true condition. You are a self-deceived man. You have not felt deep conviction because of your sins, and in deep humility sought the Lord with anguish of heart, that your transgressions might be blotted out. You could not see that your ways were so sinful before God. The work is not inwrought

in your soul. A self-righteous garment you have clothed yourself with to cover up the deformity of sin; but this is not the remedy. You know not what true conversion is. The old man with you is not dead. You have a form of godliness, but not the cleansing power of God. You can, and do, talk and write smoothly. Your words, as far as they go, may possibly be correct, but the true language of the heart is not spoken. You know this. You are thus much acquainted with yourself. Your case is perilous; yet God pities you, and will save you if you fall all broken at his feet, feeling your vileness, and impurity, and rottenness of soul, without the transforming power of God.

I do not wish to discourage you, but to lead you to investigate your motives and acts as in the light of eternity. Break away from Satan's snare. Do not, I beg of you, lead any person to think of you in an elevated light that you cannot hear, for when this deception shall be removed, and your true self appear as you are, there will be a reaction. You do have convictions of the Spirit of God, and feel the force of truth when you listen to it; but these sacred, softening impressions wear away, and you are a forgetful hearer. You are not established, strengthened, and settled, in the truth. You have thought it best for your interest to adopt the truth, but you have not yet experienced its sanctifying influence. Now we I would entreat of you, be not deceived, God is not mocked. It is not too late for you to become a Christian; but don't move by impulse. Weigh every move well, and don't deceive your own soul

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E.G.W.

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## Epistle Number Thirteen.

Dear Sister —: In the vision given me June 12, I was shown your case. You are in a sad state. Not so much because of actual disease, although you are not well, but of imaginary inability to perform. Several years ago I was shown you suffered your mind to dwell too much upon the boys. You frequently made them the theme of conversation, and your mind ran in a channel not profitable to your spiritual advancement. You have fallen into a train of thinking which has led to evil results. You have injured and abused your own body, and brought upon yourself an imbecile state of mind. You have indulged in a love-sick train of thought and feeling until you are almost ruined, soul and body. Your indisposition to exercise and exert yourself is very bad for you. Useful employment in bearing home burdens, and engaging in useful labor, would overcome this sickly, sentimental state of feeling sooner than any other means.

[158] You have been sympathized with too much. To relieve you from all responsibility has been a very great mistake. You have come to that state where nearly all your thoughts are upon yourself. You are fretting yourself, and dwelling upon sad things, and contemplating your state as very bad, and even settling in your mind that you can never get well unless you are married. In your present state of mind, you are not fit to marry. There is no one who would wish you in your present helpless, useless condition. If one should fancy they loved you, they would be worthless, for no sensible man could think for a moment of placing his affections upon so useless an object.

The sad, gloomy state of your mind which leads you to weep, and feel that life is not desirable, is the result of your thoughts running in an impure channel, upon forbidden subjects, while you have habits that have been steadily and surely undermining your constitution, and preparing you for premature decay.

Had you never gone to —, you would have been far better. Your stay there injured you. You dwelt upon your infirmities, while you had society which was corrupting in its influence. Miss —

was—a corrupt, evil-minded woman. Her association with yourself increased the evil which was already upon you. Evil communications corrupt good manners.

At the present time you are not in an acceptable state with God; yet you imagine that you have no desire to live. But should you be taken at your expressed wishes, and your life cease, your case would be hopeless indeed. You are neither prepared for this world nor the next.

You imagine you cannot walk, you cannot ride, you cannot exercise, and you settle into a cold, dead apathy. You are no comfort to yourself, and a sad grief and anxiety to your indulgent parents. You can rally, you can do, you can shake off this terrible state. Your mother needs your aid; your father needs the comfort you can give him; your brothers need a kindly care from their elder sister; your sisters need your instruction; but here you sit upon the stool of indolence, dreaming of unrequited love. For your own soul's sake, have done with this folly. Read your Bible as you have never read it before. Engage in home duties, and lighten the cares of your overburdened, over-worked parents. You may not be able to do a great amount at first, but increase the task you set yourself every day. This is the most sure remedy for a diseased mind and an abused body.

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If you possess earnestness and steadiness of purpose, your mind will come back, in a degree, to dwelling upon more healthful, pure subjects. Self-indulgence has degenerated by degrees into such a wantonness of will as knows not how to please itself. Instead of regulating your actions by reason and principle, you suffer yourself to be guided by every slight and momentary impulse of inclination, which makes you appear variable, and inconstant. It is in vain for others to seek to please you, for you cannot please yourself, even if all your wishes were indulged. You are a capricious child, and have become sick of yourself through very selfishness.

This wretched state is the result of unwise sympathy and flattery. You have had a very good mind, but it has become unbalanced by being directed in a wrong channel. You now amount to little else than a blank in society. This need not be. You can do for yourself that which no other can do for you. You have duties to perform. You

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have yielded to a helpless condition, and imagine you cannot do. The will is at fault; you have the power, but not the will.

You are pining for love. Jesus calls for your affections, which if you devote to him, will rid you of all this sickly, sentimental, impure, love, found in the pages of a novel. In Jesus you may love with fervor, with earnestness. This love may increase in depth, and it may expand without limit, and will not endanger health of body or strength of mind. You need love to God and to your neighbor. You must awake, you must shake off this deception which is upon you, and seek pure love.

Your only hope of this life and the better life is to seek earnestly for the true religion of Jesus. You have not a religious experience. You need to be converted. Your listless, indolent, selfish sadness will then give place to cheerfulness which will be beneficial to body and mind. Love to God would ensure love to your neighbor, and you would engage in the duties of life with a deep, unselfish interest. You want pure principles underlying your actions. Inward peace will bring even your thoughts into a healthy channel.

[161] Devote yourself to God, or you will never have the better life. You have duties to perform to your parents. You should not be discouraged if you at first become weary. It will not prove a lasting injury. Your parents frequently become exceedingly weary. It will not be half so injurious to you to become very weary in useful labor, as for your mind to be dwelling upon yourself, fostering ailments, and yielding to despondency.

A faithful accomplishment of home duties, filling the position you can occupy to the best advantage, be it ever so simple and humble, is truly elevating. The divine influence is needed. In this, there is peace and sacred joy. It possesses healing power. It will secretly and insensibly soothe the wounds of the soul and even the sufferings of the body. Peace of mind, which comes from pure and holy motives and actions, will give free and vigorous spring to all the organs of the body. Inward peace and a conscience void of offense toward God will invigorate, like dew distilling upon the tender plants. The intellect is strengthened and quickened.

The will is rightly directed and controlled, and is more decided, and yet free from perverseness. The meditations are pleasing because they are sanctified. The serenity of mind you may possess, will bless

all with whom you associate. This calmness and peace will, in time, become natural, and will reflect its precious rays upon all around you, to be reflected back upon you again. The more you taste this peace and heavenly quietude of mind, the more it will increase. It is an animated, living pleasure which does not throw into a stupor, but awakens all the moral energies to increased activity. Perfect peace is an attribute of Heaven, which angels possess. May God help you to become a possessor of this peace.

E. G. W.

## Epistle Number Fourteen.

Dear Bro. and Sr. —: Your late visit and conversation with us have suggested many thoughts of which I cannot forbear placing a few upon paper. I was very sorry that had not carried himself correctly at all times; yet, when we consider, you cannot expect perfection in youth at his age. Children have faults, and need a great deal of patient instruction.

That he should have feelings not always correct is no more than can be expected of a boy of his age. You must remember he has no father or mother, nor anyone to whom he can confide his feelings, his sorrows, and his temptations. Every person feels that he must have some sympathizer. — has been tossed about here and there, from pillar to post, and he may have many errors, careless ways, and a lack of reverence, with considerable independence. He is quite enterprising, and with right instruction, if treated with tenderness, I have the fullest confidence would not disappoint our hopes, nor cause us to decide the labor bestowed in vain, but would fully repay all the labor expended on him. I think is a very good boy considering his disadvantages.

When we intreated you to take him we did it because we fully believed it was your duty, and that in doing this you would be blessed. We did not expect that you would do this merely to be benefited by the help you would receive from the boy, but to benefit him, to do a duty to the orphan and fatherless. Duty which belongs to every true Christian to be seeking and watching for, and anxious to perform.

[163] A duty, a sacrifice- ing duty, which we believed it would do you good to engage in, if you did it cheerfully, with the view to be the instrument in saving a soul from the snares of Satan, of saving a son whose father devoted his precious life to pointing souls to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

From what was shown me, Sabbath-keeping Adventists have but a feeble sense of how large a place the world and selfishness hold in their hearts. If you have a desire to do good and glorify God, there

are many ways in which you can do this. But you have not felt that this was the result of true religion. This is the fruit which every good tree will produce. To be interested in others, to make their cases your own, to manifest an unselfish interest for the very ones who stand most in need of help, you have not felt was required of you. You have not reached out to help the most needy, the most helpless. Had you children of your own, to call into exercise care, affection, and love, you would not be so much shut up to yourselves, and to your own interests. If those who have no children would expand their hearts to care for children who need love, care, and affection, and assistance with this world's goods, which God has made them stewards of, they would be far happier than they are today. So long as there are youth exposed to the corrupting influences of these last days, who have no father's pitying care, nor a mother's tender love, it is somebody's duty to supply the place of father and mother to some of these. Learn to give them love, affection, and sympathy. All who profess to have a Father in Heaven who they hope will care for them, and finally take them to the home he has prepared for them, will have to feel a solemn obligation resting upon them to be friends to the friendless, fathers to the orphans, to aid the widows, and be of some practical use in this world, to benefit humanity. Many have not viewed things in a right light. If they live merely for themselves they will have no greater strength than this calls for. [164]

The youth, who are growing up among us, are not cared for as they should be. Someone has duties which they are not willing and ready to see and perform. The fear of inconvenience, or of a little trouble, is sufficient for many to excuse themselves. The day of God will reveal unfulfilled duties—souls lost because the selfish would not take pains to interest themselves in their behalf.

I was shown that should professed Christians cultivate more affection, and kind regard in caring for others, they would be repaid fourfold. God marks. He knows for what object we live, and whether our living is put to the very best account for poor, fallen humanity, or whether our eyes are eclipsed to everything but our own interest, and to everyone but our own poor selves. I entreat you, in behalf of Christ, and in behalf of your own souls, and in behalf of the youth, not to think so lightly of this matter as many do. It is a grave and serious thing, and affects your interest in the kingdom of Christ,

inasmuch as the salvation of precious souls is involved. Why is it not your duty, which God enjoins upon you who are able, to expend something for the benefit of the homeless, ignorant even though they may be, and undisciplined? Shall you study to labor only in the direction where you will receive the most selfish pleasure and profit?!

[165] It is not meet for you to neglect the divine favor that Heaven offers you, to care for those who need your care, and thus let God knock in vain at your door. He stands at your door in the person of the poor, the homeless orphans, and afflicted widows, who need love, sympathy, affection and encouragement. If ye do it not unto one of these, ye would not do it unto Christ were he upon the earth. Call to mind your former wretchedness, your spiritual blindness, and the darkness which enshrouded you before Christ, a tender, loving Saviour, came to your aid, and reached you where you were. If you let these seasons pass without giving tangible proofs of your gratitude for this wonderful and amazing love a compassionate Saviour exercised toward you, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, there is reason to fear that still greater darkness and misery will come upon you. Now is your sowing time. You will reap that which you have sown. Avail yourselves of every privilege of doing good while you may. They are as a passing shower, which will water and revive you. Lay hold of every opportunity within your reach of doing good. Idle hands will reap a small harvest. For what else do older persons live but to care for the young, and help the helpless. God has committed them to us who are older, and have experience, and he will call us to account if our duties in this direction are neglected. What though our labor may not be appreciated, and prove a failure many times, and a success but once. This once will outweigh all the discouragements previously borne.

[166] But few have a true sense of what is comprised in the word Christian. It is to be Christlike; to do others good; to be divested of all selfishness; and to have our lives marked with acts of disinterested benevolence. Our Redeemer throws souls into the arms of the church, for them unselfishly to care for, and train for Heaven, and thus be co-workers with him. But the church too often thrusts them away, upon the Devil's battlefield, saying, "It is not my duty," and bring up some trifling excuse. "Well," says another, "neither is it my duty," and finally it is nobody's duty, and the soul is left unearned

for, to perish. It is the duty of every Christian to engage in this self-denying, self-sacrificing enterprise. Cannot God return into their granaries, and increase their flocks, so that instead of loss there shall be increase? “There is that scattereth, and yet increased; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.” But every man’s work is to be tested, and brought into judgment, and he be rewarded as his works have been. “Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty.” “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?”

Read on, and notice the rich reward promised to those who do this. “Then shall thy light break forth as the MORNING, and THINE HEALTH shall spring forth speedily.”

Here is an abundantly precious promise for all who will interest themselves in the cases of those who need help. How can God come in and bless and prosper those who have no special care for any one only themselves, and who do not use that which he has intrusted to them, to glorify his name on the earth.

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Sr. Hannah More is dead, and died a martyr to the close selfishness of God’s people who profess to be seeking for glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life. Exiled from believers the past cold winter, because there were no hearts bountiful enough to receive this self-sacrificing missionary.

I blame no one. I am not judge. But when the Judge of all the earth shall make investigation, somebody will be found to blame. We are all narrowed up and consumed in our own selfishness. May God tear away this cursed covering and give us bowels of mercy, hearts of flesh, tenderness and compassion, is my prayer, offered from an oppressed, anguished, burdened soul. I am sure that a work must be done for us or we shall be found wanting in the day of God.

In regard to—, don’t, I intreat of you, forget that” he is a child, with only a child’s experience. Do not measure him, a poor, weak, feeble boy, with yourselves, and expect of him accordingly. I fully believe it is in your power to do the right thing by this orphan. You

can present inducements to him so that he will not feel that his task is cheerless, unrelieved by a ray of encouragement. You, Bro. and Sr. —, can enjoy yourselves in each other's confidence, you can sympathize with each other, interest and amuse each other, and tell your trials and burdens to each other. You have something to cheer [168] you, while he is alone. He is a thinking boy, but has no one to confide in, or to give him an encouraging word amid his discouragements and severe trials which I know he has as well as those more advanced in years.

If you shut yourselves up to each other, it is selfish love, unattended with Heaven's blessing. I have strong hope that you will love the orphan for Christ's sake; that you will feel that your possessions are but worthless, unless employed to do good. Do good; be rich in good works, willing to distribute, ready to communicate, laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal life. None will reap the reward of everlasting life but the self-sacrificing.

A dying father and mother left jewels to the care of the church, to be instructed in the things of God, and fitted for Heaven. When they shall look about for these jewels, and one is found missing, through neglect, what shall the church answer, for they are responsible in a great degree for the salvation of these orphan children.

In all probability you have failed, in not gaining the boy's confidence and affection by giving him more tangible proofs of your love by holding out some inducements. If you could not expend money, you could at least encourage in some way, by letting him know you were not indifferent to his ease. That the love and affection is to be all on one side, is a mistake. How much affection have you educated yourselves to manifest? You are too much shut up to yourselves, and do not feel the necessity of surrounding yourselves with an atmosphere of tenderness and gentleness, which comes from true nobility of soul. Bro. and Sr. — left their children to the care of [169] the church. There were plenty of relatives who were wealthy, and wished for these children; but they were unbelievers, and if allowed to have the care, or become the guardians, of the children, would lead their hearts away from the truth into error, and endanger their salvation. This made their relatives dissatisfied, and they have done

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nothing for the children. The confidence of the parents in the church should be considered, and not be forgotten because of selfishness.

We have the deepest interest for these children. One has already developed a beautiful Christian character, is married to Eld. —, and now, in return for the care and burdens borne for her, is a true burden-bearer in the church. She is sought unto for advice and counsel by the less experienced, and they seek not in vain. She possesses true Christian humility, with becoming dignity, which can but inspire respect and confidence in all who know her. These children are as near to me as my own. I shall not lose sight of them, nor cease my care for them. I love them sincerely, tenderly, and affectionately.

E. G. W.

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## APPEAL TO MINISTERS.

[170] I was shown, Oct. 2, 1868, the great and solemn work before us of warning the world of the coming Judgment. Our example in carrying out our faith and good works generally, in accordance with the truth we profess, is saving a few, and condemning the many, leaving them with no excuse in the day when the cases of all will be decided. The righteous are to be prepared for everlasting life, and sinners, who will not become acquainted with the ways and will of God, are appointed to destruction.

Ministers are not all cleansed and sanctified through the truths they preach to others. Some have but faint views of the sacred character of the work. They fail to trust in God, and to have all their works wrought in him. Their inmost souls have not been converted and consecrated. They have not in their daily life experienced the mystery of godliness. They are handling immortal truths, weighty as eternity, but are not careful, earnest, and thorough, to have these truths inwrought in their souls, making them a part of themselves. They are not so wedded to the principles which these truths inculcate that it is impossible to separate any part of the truth from them. The truth does not have a controlling influence over them in all they do.

[171] Sanctification of heart and life is alone acceptable with God. Said the angel, as he pointed to the ministers who are not right, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." God calls for integrity of soul; truth in the inward parts, transforming the entire man, by the renewing of the mind through the influences of the Divine Spirit. There is not devotion given to the work. Ministers have not all of them put their hearts into the work. They move as listlessly as though a temporal millennium was allowed them in which to work for souls. They shun burdens and responsibilities, care and privations. Self-denial, suffering, and weariness, are not pleasant or convenient. It is the study of some to save themselves, and not wear. Convenience is studied, and how to please themselves,

their wives, and their children, and the work they have entered upon is nearly lost sight of.

God calls for humiliation of soul and humble confessions from the ministers who have not had their works wrought in him. I was cited to men who engage in worldly enterprises. They know that if they would gain their object, they must suffer fatigue. They sacrifice ease, love of home, and endure privations. They are persevering, energetic, and ardent. Our ministers do not all of them manifest half the zeal shown by those who are securing earthly gain. They are not as intent upon their purpose, nor as earnest in their efforts; they are not as persevering, and are not as willing to deny themselves, as those who engage in worldly pursuits.

Compare these two enterprises. One is certain, eternal, enduring as the life of God; the other is a thing of this life, changeable, perishable; and if they succeed in their ambitious pursuits, that which they gain frequently stings like an adder, and drowns them in perdition. Oh! why should there be so great a contrast in the efforts of those who are engaged—the one class in worldly enterprises, the other in the eternal? The one laboring for a treasure here, that is perishable, and in the effort suffering much pain for that which is frequently a source of much evil; while the effort put forth for the salvation of precious souls will be approved of Heaven, and the reward will be the heavenly riches. There are no risks to run here, and no losses to be sustained; the profits are sure and immense.

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Ministers, who are in Christ's stead beseeching souls to be reconciled to God, should by precept and example manifest an undying interest to save souls. They should manifest earnestness, perseverance, self-denial, and a spirit of sacrifice, which should as far exceed the diligence and earnestness of those securing earthly gain, as the soul is more valuable than the trash of earth, and the subject more elevated than earthly enterprises. All earthly enterprises are of trifling importance, when compared with the work of saving souls. They are not enduring, although they cost so much. One soul saved will shine in the kingdom of Heaven throughout eternal ages.

Some ministers are asleep, and the people are also asleep; but Satan is wide awake. There is but little sacrificing for God or the truth. Ministers must set the example. In their labors, they should show that they esteem eternal things of infinite value, and earthly things

[173] as nothing in comparison. There are ministers who are preaching present truth, who must be converted. Their understandings must be invigorated, their affections purified, their hearts' affections centered in God. They should present the truth before the imagination in a manner which will arouse the intellect to appreciate its excellence, purity, and exalted sacredness. In order to do this, they should keep before their imaginations objects which are elevated, which purify, quicken, and exalt the mind. They must have the purifying fire of truth burning upon the altar of their hearts, to influence and characterize their lives; then, go where they will, amid darkness and gloom, they will illuminate those in darkness with the light dwelling in them and shining round about them.

Ministers must be imbued with the spirit of their Master, as he was when he was upon earth. He went about doing good, blessing others with his influence. He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Ministers should have clear conceptions of eternal things, and of God's claims upon them; then they can impress others, and excite in them a love for contemplating heavenly things.

[174] Ministers should become Bible students. Are the truths which they handle mighty? then they should seek to handle them skillfully. Their ideas should be mighty, and their spirits fervent, or they will weaken the force of the truth which they handle. By tamely presenting the truth, without being stirred by it themselves, merely repeating the theory of truth, they can never convert men. If they should live as long as did Noah, their efforts would be without effect. Their love for souls must be intensified, and their zeal fervent. Their listless, unaffected, unfeeling manner of presenting the truth will never arouse men and women from their death-like slumber. They must show in their manners, in their acts and words, in their preaching and praying, that they believe that Christ is at the door. Men and women are in the last hours of probation, and yet careless and stupid, and ministers have no power to arouse them; they are asleep themselves. Sleeping preachers preaching to people who are asleep! A great work must be accomplished for ministers, in order for them to make the preaching of the truth a success.

The word of God should be thoroughly studied. All other reading is inferior to this. A careful study of the word of God will not entirely exclude all other reading of a religious nature. If the word of God is

studied prayer-fully, all reading which will have a tendency to divert the mind from it will be excluded. If we study the word of God with an interested, prayerful heart, to understand it, new beauties will be seen in every line. God will reveal precious truth so clearly that the mind will have a continual feast, and will derive sincere pleasure, as its comforting and sublime truths are unfolded.

Visiting from house to house forms an important part of the minister's labors. His efforts in this direction should be to converse with every member of the family, whether they profess the truth or not. It is the duty of the minister to ascertain the condition of all; and he should live so near to God that he can counsel and exhort and reprove, carefully, in wisdom. He should have the grace of God in his own heart, and the glory of God constantly in view. All lightness and trifling is positively forbidden in the word of God. His conversation should be in Heaven. His words should be seasoned with grace. All flattery should be put away; for that is Satan's work. Poor, weak, fallen men generally think enough of themselves, and need no help in this direction. Flattering your ministers is all out of place. It perverts, and does not lead to meekness and humility; yet men and women love praise of one another. Ministers too frequently love praise. Their vanity is gratified by hearing it. Many have been cursed with it. Reproof is more to be prized than flattery. [175]

All who are preaching the truth do not realize that their testimony and example is deciding the destiny of souls. If they are unfaithful in their mission, and become careless in their work, souls will be lost as the result. If they are self-sacrificing and faithful in the world which the Master has given them to do, they will be instrumental in the salvation of many souls. Some permit trifles to divert them from the work. Bad roads, rainy weather, or little matters at home in their families, are sufficient excuses for them to leave the work of laboring for souls. Frequently the work is left at the most important time. When an interest has been raised, and the minds of the people are agitated, the interest is left to die out because they choose a more pleasant and easy field. Those who pursue this course show plainly that they do not have the burden of the work upon them. They wish to be carried by the people. They are not willing to endure privations and hardships, which ever characterize the life of a true shepherd. Some have no experience in taking hold of the work as though it

[176] was of vital importance. They have not entered upon the work with earnest, zealous interest, and engaged their whole souls in the matter, as though they were doing work which would have to bear the test of the Judgment. They work too much in their own strength. They do not make God their trust, and therefore errors and imperfections mark all their efforts. They do not give the Lord an opportunity to do anything for them. They do not walk by faith, but by sight. They will go no faster or further than they can see. To venture something for the truth's sake, they do not seem to understand has any part in their religious experience.

Some go from their homes to labor in the gospel-field, but do not act as though the truths which they speak were a reality to them. Their actions show that they have not experienced the saving power of the truth themselves. When out of the desk, they appear to have no burden or weight of the truth. They labor sometimes apparently to profit, but more frequently to no profit. Such feel entitled to the wages they receive, as much as though they had earned them; notwithstanding their unconsecration has cost more labor, anxiety, and pain of heart, to those laborers who have the burden of the work upon them, than all their efforts have done good. Such are not profitable workmen. But all such will have to bear this responsibility themselves.

[177] It is frequently the case that ministers are inclined to visit almost entirely among the churches, devoting their time and strength where their labor will do no good. The churches are frequently in advance of most of the ministers who are laboring among them, and would be in a more prosperous condition if the ministers would keep out of their way, and give them an opportunity to work. Their efforts to build up the churches only bring them down. They present the theory of the truth over and over, and there is not power from God to vitalize the truth they present. They have but little burden. They manifest much listless indifference. The spirit is contagious, and the churches lose their interest and burden for the salvation of others. The ministers, by their preaching and example, have lulled the people to carnal security. If these ministers would leave the churches, go out into new fields, and labor to raise up churches, they would then understand their ability, and what it costs to bring souls out to take their position upon the truth. They would then realize how

careful they should be that their example and influence might never discourage or weaken souls that had required so much hard, prayerful labor to convert to the truth. "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

The churches give of their means to sustain the ministers in their labors. What have they to encourage them in their liberality? Some ministers labor from month to month, and accomplish so little that the churches become disheartened; because they cannot see that anything is being done to convert souls to the truth. The churches are not made more spiritual or fervent in their love to God and his truth. Those who are handling sacred things should be wholly consecrated to the work. They should possess an unselfish interest in the work and a fervent love for perishing souls. If they do not have this, they have mistaken their mission, and should cease their labor of teaching others; for they do more harm than they can possibly do good.

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Some ministers display themselves, but do not feed the flock. The people are perishing for meat in due season. There is a disposition to shrink from opposition. Some fear to go into new places because of the darkness and the conflicts they think they may expect. This is cowardice. The people must be met where they are. They need stirring appeals and practical, as well as doctrinal, discourses. Precept backed up by example will have a powerful influence.

A faithful shepherd will not study his ease and his convenience, but will labor for the interest of the sheep on every hand. In this great work, he will forget self. In his search for the lost sheep, he will not realize that he himself is weary, cold, and hungry. He has one purpose in view: to save the lost and wandering sheep at whatever expense it may be to himself. His wages will not influence him in his labor, nor swerve him from his duty. He has received his commission from the Majesty of Heaven, and he expects his reward when the work intrusted to him is done.

Those who engage in the business of school-teaching, prepare for the work. They qualify themselves by attending school. They interest their minds in study. They are not allowed to engage in the work of teaching children and youth in the sciences, unless they are capable of instructing them. Those who apply for a situation as teacher, have to pass an examination before competent persons. It is an important work to deal with young minds, and instruct them

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correctly in the sciences. But of how much greater importance is the work of the ministry!

Many engage in the important business of interesting men and women to enter the school of Christ, to learn how they may form characters for Heaven, who need to become students themselves. Some who engage in the ministry, do not feel the burden of the work upon them. They have received incorrect ideas of the qualifications of a minister. They have thought it required but little close study in the sciences or in the word of God, to make a minister. Some ministers who are teaching present truth, are not acquainted with their Bibles. They are so deficient in Bible-reading and study, that it is difficult for them to quote a text of Scripture correctly, from memory. They sin against God by blundering along in the awkward manner they do. They mangle the Scripture. They make the Bible say things that are not written therein.

[180] Some who have all their lives been led by feeling, have thought that an education or thorough knowledge of the Scriptures was of no consequence if they only had the Spirit. God never sends his Spirit to sanction ignorance. Those who have not knowledge, and are so situated that it is impossible for them to obtain it, the Lord may, and does, pity and bless, and sometimes condescends to make his strength perfect in their weakness. He makes it the duty of such to study his word. A lack of knowledge in the sciences is no excuse for the neglect of Bible study; for the words of inspiration are so plain that the unlearned may understand them.

Those who are handling solemn truths for these perilous times, of all men upon the face of the earth, should understand their Bibles, and become acquainted with the evidences of our faith. Unless they possess a knowledge of the word of life, they have no right to undertake to instruct others in the way to life. Ministers should give all diligence to add to their faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. Some of our ministers graduate before they have scarcely learned the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. Those who are ambassadors for Christ, who stand in his stead, beseeching souls to be reconciled to God, should be qualified to present our faith intelligently, and be able to give the reasons

of their hope with meekness and fear. Said Christ, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."

Ministers who are engaged in teaching un-popular truth, will be beset by men who are urged on by Satan, who, like their master, can quote Scripture readily; and shall the servants of God be unequal to the servants of Satan in handling the words of inspiration? They should, like Christ, meet Scripture with Scripture. Oh! that those who minister in holy things, would awake, and, like the noble Bereans, search the Scriptures daily. Brethren in the ministry, I entreat of you to study the Scriptures, with humble prayer for an understanding heart, that you may teach the way of life more perfectly. Your counsel, prayers, and example, must be a savor of life unto life, or you are unfit to point out the way of life to others. [181]

The Master requires every one of his servants to improve upon the talents he has committed to them. How much more will he require of the ministers who profess to understand the way to life, and take upon themselves the responsibility of guiding others therein.

The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be *able*, to teach others also."

The glorious results that attended the ministry of the chosen disciples of Christ, were the effects of bearing about in their bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus. Some of those who testified of Christ were unlearned and ignorant men; but grace and truth reigned in their hearts, inspiring and purifying their lives, and controlling their actions. They were living representatives of the mind and spirit of Christ. They were living epistles, known and read of all men. They were persecuted and hated by all men who would not receive the truth they preached, and who despised the cross of Christ. [182]

Wicked men will not oppose a form of godliness, nor reject a popular ministry which presents no cross for them to bear. The natural heart will raise no serious objection to a religion in which there is nothing to make the transgressor of the law tremble, or bring to bear upon the heart and conscience the terrible realities of a Judgment to come. It is the demonstration of the Spirit, and the power of God which raises opposition, and leads the natural heart to

rebel. The truth that saves the soul, must not only come from God, but his Spirit must attend its communication to others, otherwise it falls powerless before op-posing influences. Oh! that the truth would fall from the lips of God's servants with such power as to melt and burn its way to the hearts of the people!

Ministers must be endued with power from on high. When the truth in its simplicity and strength, as it is in Jesus, is brought to bear against the spirit of the world, condemning its exciting pleasures and corrupting charms, it will then be plainly seen that there is no concord between Christ and Belial. The natural heart cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God. An unconsecrated minister, presenting the truth in an unimpassioned manner, when his own soul is not stirred by the truths he speaks to others, will only do harm. He lowers the standard every effort he makes.

[183] Selfish interest must be swallowed up in deep anxiety for the salvation of souls. Some ministers have labored, not because they dared not do otherwise, because the woe was upon them, but having in view the wages they were to receive. Said the angel, "Who is there, even among you, that would shut the doors for naught? neither do ye kindle fire upon my altar for naught. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand."

It is all wrong to buy every errand that is done for the Lord. The treasury of the Lord has been drained by those who have not benefited the cause, but have injured it. If ministers give themselves wholly to the work of God, and devote all their energies to build up the cause, they will have no lack. As regards temporal things, they have a better portion than their Lord, and better than his chosen disciples whom he sent forth to save perishing man. Our great Exemplar, who was in the brightness of his Father's glory, was despised and rejected of men. Reproach and falsehood followed him. His chosen disciples were living examples of the life and spirit of their Master. They were honored with stripes and imprisonment; and it was finally their portion to seal their ministry with their blood.

When ministers are so interested in the work that they love it as a part of their existence, then they can say, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy

sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

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“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

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## MORAL POLLUTION.

I HAVE been shown that we live amid the perils of the last days. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. The word many refers to the professed followers of Jesus Christ. They are affected by the prevailing iniquity, and they backslide from God. But it is not necessary that the followers of Christ should be affected by the prevailing iniquity. The cause of this declension is, that they do not stand clear from this iniquity. The fact that their love to God is waxing cold because iniquity abounds, shows that they are, in some sense, partakers in this iniquity, or it would not affect their love for God, and their zeal and fervor in his cause.

[185] A terrible picture has been presented before me, of the condition of the world. Immorality abounds everywhere. Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. The people seem to be benumbed, and the lovers of virtue, and true goodness, are nearly discouraged by its boldness, strength, and prevalence. The iniquity which abounds, is not merely confined to the unbeliever and scoffer. Would that this were the case; but it is not. Many men and women who profess the religion of Jesus Christ, are guilty. Even some who profess to be looking for the appearing of Jesus Christ, are no more prepared for that event than Satan himself. They are not cleansing themselves from all pollution. They have so long served their lust that it is natural for their thoughts to be impure, and their imaginations corrupt. It is as impossible to turn the course of the Niagara river, and send its waters pouring up the falls, as to change their minds to dwell upon pure and holy things.

Youth and children of both sexes, engage in moral pollution, and practice this disgusting, soul and-body-destroying vice. Many professed Christians are so benumbed by the practice of this terrible vice, that you cannot arouse their moral sensibilities to understand that it is sin, and its sure results, if continued, will be utter shipwreck of body and mind. Man, the noblest being upon the earth, formed

in the image of God, transforms himself into a beast! He makes himself gross and corrupt. Every Christian will have to learn to restrain his passions, and be controlled by principle. Unless he does this, he is unworthy of the Christian name.

Some who make a high profession, do not understand the sin of self-abuse, and its sure results. Long-established habit has blinded their understanding. They do not sense the exceeding sinfulness of this degrading sin, which is enervating the system, and destroying their brain nerve power. Moral principle is exceedingly weak, when it conflicts with established habit. The solemn messages from Heaven cannot forcibly impress the heart that is not fortified against the indulgence of this soul-and-body-destroying vice. The sensitive nerves of the brain have lost their healthy tone by morbid excitation to gratify an unnatural desire for sensual indulgence. The electric power of the brain nerves communicates with the entire system. The brain nerves are the only medium through which Heaven can communicate to man, and affect his inmost life. Whatever injures or disturbs the circulation of the electric currents in the nervous system, lessens the strength of the vital powers, and the result is a deadening of the sensibilities of the mind. In consideration of these facts, how important that ministers, and people who profess godliness, should stand forth clear and untainted from this soul-debasing vice.

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My soul has been bowed down with anguish as I have been shown the weak condition of God's professed people. Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. There are but few professed Christians who regard this matter in the right light, and hold proper government over themselves when public opinion and custom do not condemn them. How few restrain their passions because they feel under moral obligation to do so, and because the fear of God is before their eyes. The higher faculties of man are enslaved by appetite and corrupt passions. Some will acknowledge the evil of sinful indulgences, yet will excuse themselves by saying they cannot overcome their passions.

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This is a terrible admission for any person who names Christ, that they cannot control a loathsome, low habit, which is enervating soul and body. "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Why is this weakness? It is because the animal propensities have been indulged, and strengthened by exercise, until

they have gained the ascendancy over the higher powers. Men and women lack principle. They are dying spiritually, because they have pampered the natural appetites, by indulgence, so long. Their power of self-government seems gone. The lower passions of their nature have taken the reins, and that which should be the governing power has become the menial servant of corrupted passion. The soul is held in lowest bondage. Sensuality has quenched the desire for holiness, and withered spiritual prosperity.

[188] My soul mourns for the youth who are forming characters in this degenerate age. I also tremble for their parents; for I have been shown that as a general thing they do not understand their obligations to train up their children in the way they should go. Custom and fashion are consulted, and the children soon learn to be swayed by these, and are corrupted; while their indulgent parents are themselves benumbed, and asleep to their danger. But very few of the youth are free from corrupt habits. They are excused from physical exercise to a great degree. The parents fear they will overwork, and therefore bear burdens themselves which their children should bear. Overwork is bad; but the result of indolence is more to be dreaded. Idleness leads to the indulgence of corrupt habits. Industry does not weary and exhaust one-fifth part as much as the pernicious habit of self-abuse. If simple, well-regulated labor exhausts your children, be assured, parents, there is a cause, aside from their labor, which is enervating their systems, and producing a sense of constant weariness. Give your children physical labor, which will call into exercise the nerves and muscles. The weariness attending such labor will lessen their inclination to indulge in vicious habits. Idleness is a curse. It produces licentious habits.

Many eases have been presented before me, and I have been let into their inner lives. My soul has been sick and disgusted with the rotten-heartedness of human beings who profess godliness, and talk of translation to Heaven. I have asked myself frequently, whom can I trust? Who is free from iniquity?

My husband and myself attended a meeting in —. Our sympathies were enlisted for a brother who was a great sufferer with the phthisic. He was pale and emaciated. He requested the prayers of the people of God. He said that his family were sick, and that he had lost a child. He spoke, with feeling, of his bereavement. He said

that he had been waiting for some time to see Bro. and Sr. White. He had believed that if they would pray for him, he would be healed. After the meeting closed, the brethren called our attention to the ease. They said that the church was assisting them. His wife was sick, and his child had died. The brethren had met at his house, and united in praying for the afflicted family. We were much worn, and had the burden of labor upon us during the meeting, and wished to be excused. [189]

I had resolved not to engage in prayer for any one, unless the Spirit of the Lord should dictate in the matter. I had been shown that there was so much iniquity abounding, even among professed Sabbath-keepers, that I did not wish to unite in prayer for those of whose history I had no knowledge. I stated my reason. I was assured by brethren that, as far as they knew, he was a worthy brother. I conversed a few words with the one who had solicited our prayers that he might be healed. I could not feel free. He wept. Said he had waited for us to come, and felt assured that if we would pray for him he would be restored to health. We told him we were unacquainted with his life; that we had rather those who knew him would pray for him. He importuned us so earnestly that we decided to consider his case, and present it before the Lord that night; and if the way seemed all clear, we would comply with his request. That night we bowed before God and presented his case before him. We entreated that we might know the will of God concerning him. All we desired was that God might be glorified. Would the Lord have us pray for this afflicted man? We left the burden with the Lord, and retired to rest. In a dream the case of that brother was clearly presented. His course from his childhood up was shown, and if we should pray, the Lord would not hear us; for he regarded iniquity in his heart. The next morning the brother came for us to pray for him. We took him aside, and told him we were sorry to be compelled to refuse his request. I related my dream, which he acknowledged was true. He had practiced self-abuse from his boyhood up. He had continued the practice during his married life. He said he would try to break himself of this sin. This man had a long-established habit to overcome. He was in the middle age of life. His moral principles were so weak when brought in conflict with long-established indulgence, that they were overcome. The animal had gained the ascendancy over the higher nature. I [190]

asked him in regard to health reform. He could not live it, he said. His wife would throw graham flour out of doors, if it was brought into the house. This man had been helped by the church. Prayer also, had been offered in their behalf. Their child had died, and the wife was sick, and the husband and father would leave his case upon us, for us to bring before a pure and holy God, that he might work a miracle for him and make him well. The moral sensibilities of this man were benumbed.

[191] When the young adopt vile practices while the spirit is tender, they will never obtain force to develop, fully and correctly, physical, intellectual, and moral character. Here was a man debasing himself daily, and yet, dares to venture into the presence of God, and ask an increase of strength which he has vilely squandered, and which if granted, he will consume upon his lust. What forbearance has God! If he should deal with man according to his corrupt ways before him, who could live in his sight? What if we had been less cautious, and carried the case of this man before God while he was practicing iniquity, would the Lord have heard? would he have answered? “For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

This is not a solitary case. Even the marriage relation was not sufficient to preserve this man from the corrupt habits of his youth. I wish I could be convinced that such cases as the one I have presented are rare; but I know they are frequent. Children born to parents who are controlled by corrupt passions, are worthless.

What can be expected of such children, but that they will sink lower in the scale than their parents? What can be expected of the rising generation? Thousands are devoid of principle. These very ones are transmitting to their offspring their own miserable, corrupt passions. What a legacy! Thousands drag out their unprincipled lives, tainting their associates, and perpetuating their debased passions, by transmitting them to their children. They take the responsibility of giving to them the stamp of their characters.

I come again to Christians. If all who profess to obey the law of God were free from iniquity, my soul would be relieved; but they are not. Even some who profess to keep all the commandments

of God are guilty of the sin of adultery. What can I say to arouse the benumbed sensibilities? Moral principle strictly carried out, becomes the only safeguard of the soul. If ever there was a time when the diet should be of the most simple kind, it is now. Meat should not be placed before our children. Its influence is to excite and increase the force of the lower passions, and has a tendency to deaden the moral or higher powers. Grains and fruits prepared free from grease, and in as natural a condition as possible, should be the food for the tables of all who claim to be preparing for translation to Heaven. The less feverish the diet, the more easily can the passions be controlled. The gratification of taste should not be consulted irrespective of physical, intellectual, or moral health. [192]

Indulgence of the baser passions will load very many to shut their eyes to the light; for they fear they shall see sins which they are unwilling to forsake. All may see if they will. If they choose darkness rather than light, their criminality will be none the less. Why do not men and women read, and become intelligent upon these things, which so decidedly affect their physical, intellectual, and moral strength? God has given you a habitation to care for, and preserve in the best condition for his service and glory. Your bodies are not your own. "What! Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

**THE BLOOD THAT SPEAKETH**

THE sprinkled blood is speaking  
 Before the Father's throne,  
 The Spirit's power is seeking  
 To make its virtues known.  
 The sprinkled blood is telling  
 Jehovah's love to man,  
 While heavenly harps are swelling  
 Sweet notes to mercy's plan.

The sprinkled blood is speaking  
 Forgiveness full and free,  
 Its wondrous power is breaking  
 Each bond of guilt for me.  
 The sprinkled blood's revealing  
 A Father's smiling face,  
 While Jesus' love is sealing  
 Each monument of grace.

The sprinkled blood is pleading  
 Its virtue as my own,  
 And there my soul is reading  
 Her title to Thy throne.  
 The sprinkled blood is owning  
 The weak one's feeblest plea;  
 'Mid sighs, and tears, and groaning,  
 It pleads, O Lord, with Thee.

Oh, wondrous power that seeketh  
 From sin to set me free!  
 Ah, precious blood that speaketh!  
 Should I not value thee ?  
 The sprinkled blood is shedding

Its fragrance all around;  
It gilds the path we're treading,  
It makes our joys abound.