

Ellen G. White Estate

TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH — NO.26

ELLEN G. WHITE

**TESTIMONY FOR
THE CHURCH.
— No.26**

Ellen G. White

1876

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About the Author

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

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Testimonies to the Church, now twenty-six in number, cover a period of twenty years. These have ranged, in point of size, from a sixteen-page tract to a pamphlet of two hundred and eight pages. In these, a voice has been appealing to the people of God, in one straight-forward line for a score of years. This voice has in a uniform manner given warning of the deceitfulness of riches, and the dangers of the love and spirit of this world. It has also cried out against the prevailing sins of our evil time.

On the other hand, we recognize the voice of the dear Shepherd comforting the little flock, and encouraging them to faithfulness in their Christian lives and sacrifices in his cause, in view of immortal rewards to be given at the second coming of Christ.

The character of God, of his law, his Son, the Sacred Scriptures, and the way of holiness have been represented in a uniform manner for this period of twenty years. This also may be said of Satan, sin, and the path of death.

[4] Twenty years since, the idea of Testimonies from God to the church, through a frail, humble instrument, was regarded very questionable; a few believed fully by reason of attending evidences. Many, however, balancing the matter in their minds like Gamaliel, said, "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." Here is a work that has been subjected to the most rigid criticisms, and the most violent persecutions for the long period of twenty years, and yet remains unchanged. Had this work originated in the mind of an unsophisticated woman, it would have been forced out of its course long since and brought to confusion and to naught.

Let the following pages be read in the fear of God. Those who cannot feel the force of the great truths stated, and the importance of the admonitions given, at the first reading, should re-read this book upon their knees. Many who will read these pages of reproof, have read others of a similar character without taking heed to them.

Their minds are consequently blinded, and their hearts are well-nigh as cold and unfeeling as a stone. Those who can read these pages unmoved, should read them again and again with fervent prayer until they do feel deeply these admonitions from the Lord to his waiting people.

J. W.

Oakland, Cal., Jan., 1876

[5]

TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH.

Bible Biographies.

THE lives recorded in the Bible are authentic histories of actual individuals. From Adam down through successive generations, to the times of the apostles, we have the plain, unvarnished account of what actually occurred, and the genuine experience of real characters. It is a subject of wonder to many, that inspired history should narrate facts in the lives of good men that tarnish their moral characters. Infidels seize upon these sins with great satisfaction, and hold their perpetrators up to ridicule.

The inspired writers did not testify to falsehoods, fearing that the pages of Sacred History would be clouded by the record of human frailties and faults. The scribes of God wrote as they were dictated by the Holy Spirit, having no control of the work them-selves. They penned the literal truth, and stern, forbidding facts are revealed for reasons that our finite minds cannot fully comprehend.

[6] It is one of the best evidences of the authenticity of the Scriptures, that the truth is not glossed over, nor the sins of its chief characters suppressed. Many will urge that it is an easy matter to give a relation of what has occurred in an ordinary life. But it is a proven fact that it is a human impossibility to give an impartial history of a cotemporary; and it is almost as difficult to narrate, without deviating from the exact truth, the story of any person or people with whose career we have become acquainted. The human mind is so subject to prejudice that it is almost impossible for it to treat the subject impartially. Either the faults of the person under review stand out in glaring relief, or the virtues shine with undimmed luster, just as the writer is prejudiced for or against him. However impartial the historian may design to be, all critics will agree that it is a very difficult matter to be truly so.

But divine unction, lifted above the weaknesses of humanity, tells the simple, naked truth. How many biographies have been

written of faultless Christians, who, in their ordinary home life and church relations, shone as examples of immaculate piety. No blemish marred the beauty of their holiness, no fault is recorded to remind us they were of the common clay, and subject to the ordinary temptations of humanity.

Yet, had the pen of inspiration written their histories, how different would they have appeared. There would have been revealed human weaknesses, struggles with selfishness, bigotry and pride, hidden sins perhaps, and the continual warfare between the spirit and the flesh. Even private journals do not reveal on their pages the writer's sinful deeds. Sometimes the conflicts with evil are recorded, but usually only when the right has gained the victory. But they may contain a faithful account of praise worthy acts and noble endeavors, this, too, when the writer honestly intends to keep a faithful journal of his life. It is next to a human impossibility to lay open our faults for the possible inspection of our friends. [7]

Had our good Bible been written by uninspired persons it would have presented quite a different appearance and would have been a discouraging study to erring mortals contending with natural frailties and the temptations of a wily foe. But, as it is, we have a correct record of the religious experiences of marked characters in Bible history. Men whom God favored, and intrusted with great responsibilities, were sometimes overcome by temptation and committed sins, even as we of the present day strive, waver, and frequently fall into error. But it is encouraging to our desponding hearts to know that through God's grace they could gain fresh vigor to rise again above their evil natures, and remembering this we are ready to renew the conflict ourselves.

The murmurings of ancient Israel and their rebellious discontent, are recorded for our benefit as well as the mighty miracles wrought in their favor, and the punishment of their idolatry and ingratitude. The example of ancient Israel is given as a warning to the people of God that they may avoid unbelief and escape his wrath. If the iniquities of the Hebrews had been omitted from the Sacred Record, and only their virtues recounted, their history would fail to teach us the lesson that it does. [8]

Infidels, and the lovers of sin excuse their crimes by citing the wickedness of men to whom God gave authority in olden times. They

argue that if these holy men yielded to temptation and committed sins, it is not to be wondered at that they too should be guilty of wrong-doing; and intimate that they are not so bad after all, since they have such illustrious examples of iniquity before them.

The principles of justice required a faithful narration of facts for the benefit of all who should ever read the Sacred Record. Here we discern the evidences of divine wisdom. We are required to obey the law of God, and we are not only instructed as to the penalty of disobedience, but we have, narrated for our benefit and warning, the history of Adam and Eve in Paradise, and the sad results of their disobedience of God's commands. The account is full and explicit. The law given to man in Eden is recorded together with the penalty accruing in case of its disobedience. Then follows the story of the temptation and fall, and the punishment inflicted upon our erring parents.

[9] Their example is given us as a warning against disobedience, that we may be sure the wages of sin is death, that God's retributive justice never fails, and that he exacts from his creatures a strict regard for his commandments. When the law of Sinai was proclaimed, how definite was the penalty annexed, how sure punishment to follow the transgression of that law was, and how plain are the cases recorded in evidence of that fact.

The pen of inspiration, true to its task, tells us of the sins that overcame Noah, Lot, Moses, Abraham, David and Solomon, while even Elijah's strong spirit sank under temptation during his fearful trial. Jonah's disobedience and Israel's idolatry are faithfully recorded. Peter's denial of Christ, the sharp contention of Paul and Barnabas, the failings and infirmities of the prophets and apostles, are all laid bare by the Holy Ghost, who lifts the veil from the human heart. There lay before us the lives of the believers, with all their faults and follies, and they are intended as a lesson to all the generations following them. If they had been without foible they would have been more than human, and our sinful natures would despair of ever reaching such a point of excellence. But, seeing where they struggled and fell, took heart again and conquered through the grace of God, we are led to be encouraged, and press on over the obstacles that degenerate nature places in our way.

God has been ever faithful to punish crime. He sent his prophets to warn the guilty, denounce their sins, and pronounce judgment upon them. Those who question why the word of God brings out the sins of his people in so plain a manner for scoffers to deride and saints to deplore, should consider that it was all written for their instruction, that they might avoid the evils recorded, but imitate the righteousness of those who served the Lord. [10]

We need just such lessons as the Bible gives us, for with the revelation of sin is recorded the retribution following. The sorrow and penitence of the guilty and the wailing of the sin-sick soul, come to us from the past telling us that man was then, as now, in need of the pardoning mercy of God. It teaches us that while he is a punisher of crime, he pities and forgives the repenting sinner. In his providence the Lord has seen fit to teach and warn his people in various ways. By direct command, by the Sacred Writings, by the spirit of prophecy has he made known unto them his will.

My work has been to speak plainly of the faults and errors of God's people. Because the sins of certain individuals have been brought to light, it is no evidence that they are worse in the sight of the Lord than many whose failings are unrecorded. But I have been shown that it was not mine to choose my work, but humbly to obey the will of God. The errors and wrong-doings in the lives of professed Christians are recorded for he instruction of those who are liable to fall into the same temptations. The experience of one serves as a beacon light to warn others off the rocks of danger. [11]

Thus the snares and devices of Satan are revealed, the importance of perfecting Christian character, and the means by which this result may be obtained. Thus God indicates what is necessary to secure his blessing. There is a disposition on the part of many to let rebellious feelings arise if their peculiar sins are reprov'd. The spirit of this generation is, Speak unto us smooth things. But the Spirit of Prophecy speaks only truth.

Iniquity abounds, and the love of many who profess to follow Christ waxes cold. They are blind to the wickedness of their own hearts, and do not feel their weak and helpless condition. God in his mercy lifts the veil and shows them there is an eye behind the scenes that discerns their hidden guilt and the motives of their actions.

The sins of the popular churches are whitewashed over. Many of the members indulge in the grossest vices and are steeped in iniquity. Babylon is fallen and has become the cage of every foul and hateful bird! The most revolting sins of the age find a shelter beneath the cloak of Christianity. Many proclaim the law of God abolished, and surely their lives are in keeping with their faith. If there is no law then there is no transgression, and therefore no sin, for sin is the transgression of law.

[12] The carnal mind is at enmity with God and rebels against his will. Let it once throw off the yoke of obedience and it slips unconsciously into the lawlessness of crime. Iniquity abounds among those who talk grandly of a pure and perfect religious liberty. Their conduct is abhorrent to the Lord, and they are co-workers with the adversary of souls. The light of revealed truth is turned from their sight, and the beauties of holiness are but as shadows to them.

It is astounding what flimsy foundations very many build their hopes of Heaven upon. They rail at the law of the Infinite One as if they would defy him and make his word null. Satan even, with his knowledge of the divine law, would not dare to make the speeches which some law-hating ministers do from the pulpit, yet he exults in their blasphemy.

I have been shown what man is without a knowledge of the will of God. Crimes and iniquity fill up the measure of his life. But when the Spirit of God reveals to man the full meaning of the law, what a change takes place in his heart. Like Belshazzar he reads intelligently the hand-writing of the Almighty and conviction takes possession of his soul. The thunders of God's word startle him from his lethargy and he calls for mercy in the name of Jesus. And to that humble plea God always listens with a willing ear. He never turns the penitent away comfortless.

[13] The Lord has seen fit to give me a view of the needs and errors of his people. Painful though it has been to me, I have faithfully set before the offenders their faults and the means of remedying them, according to the dictates of the Spirit of God. This has, in many instances, excited the tongue of slander, and embittered against me those for whom I have labored and suffered. But I have not been turned from my course because of this. God gave me my work, and, upheld by his sustaining strength, I have performed the painful

duties he has set before me. Thus has the Spirit of God pronounced warnings and judgments, withholding not however the sweet promise of mercy.

If God's people would recognize his dealings with them, and accept his teachings, they would find a straight path for their feet, and a light to guide them through darkness and discouragement. David learned wisdom from God's dealings with him, and bowed in humility beneath the chastisement of the Most High. The faithful portrayal of his true state by the prophet Nathan, made David acquainted with his own sins and aided him to put them away. He accepted counsel meekly, and humiliated himself before God. "The law of the Lord," he exclaims, "is perfect, converting the soul."

Repentant sinners have no cause to despair because they are reminded of their transgressions and warned of their danger. These very efforts in their behalf show how much God loves them and desires that they shall be saved. They have only to follow his counsel and do his will to inherit eternal life. God sets before his erring people their sins that they may behold them in all their enormity, under the light of divine truth. It is then their duty to renounce them forever.

[14]

God is as powerful to save from sin to-day as he was in the times of the Patriarchs, of David, and the prophets and apostles of Bible times. The multitude of cases recorded in Sacred History, where God has delivered his people from their own iniquities, should make the Christian of this time eager to receive divine instruction, and zealous to perfect a character that will bear the close inspection of the Judgment.

Bible history stays the fainting heart with the hope of God's mercy. We need not despair when we see that others have struggled through discouragements like unto our own, fallen into temptations, even as we have done, yet recovered their ground and been blessed of God. The words of inspiration comfort and cheer the erring soul. Although the patriarchs and apostles were subject to human frailties, yet through faith they obtained a good report, fought their battles in the strength of the Lord, and conquered gloriously. Thus may we trust in the virtue of the atoning sacrifice and be overcomers in the name of Jesus. Humanity is humanity the world over, from the

time of Adam down to the present generation, and the love of God through all the ages is without a parallel.

[15]

Unity of the Church.

DEAR BRETHREN:—As all the different members of the human system unite to form the entire body, and each performs its office in obedience to the intelligence that governs the whole, so the members of the church of Christ should be united in one symmetrical body, subject to the sanctified intelligence of the whole.

The advancement of our church is retarded by the wrong course of its members. Uniting with the church, although an important and necessary act, does not make one a Christian or ensure salvation. We can not secure a title to Heaven by having our names enrolled upon the church books, while our hearts are alienated from Christ. We should be his faithful representatives on earth, working in unison with him. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” We should keep in mind this holy relationship and do nothing to bring dishonor upon our Father’s cause.

[16]

Our profession is an exalted one. As Sabbath-keeping Adventists, we profess to obey all God’s commandments, and are looking for the coming of our Redeemer. A most solemn message of warning has been intrusted to God’s faithful few. We should show by our words and works that we recognize the great responsibility laid upon us. Our light should shine so clearly that others can see that we glorify the Father in our daily lives; that we are connected with Heaven and are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; that when he shall appear in power and great glory, we shall be like him.

We should everyone feel our individual responsibility as members of the visible church and workers in the vineyard of the Lord. We should not wait for our brethren, who are frail as ourselves, to help us along, for our precious Saviour has invited us to join ourselves to him, and unite our weakness with his strength our ignorance to his wisdom, our unworthiness to his merits.

None of us can occupy a neutral position, our influence will tell for or against. We are active agents for Christ or for the enemy. We either gather with Jesus or scatter abroad. True conversion is

a radical change. The very drift of the mind and bent of the heart should be turned, and life become new again in Christ.

God is leading out a people to stand in perfect unity upon the platform of eternal truth. Christ gave himself to the world "that he might purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This refining process is designed to purge the church from all unrighteousness and the spirit of discord and contention; that they may build up instead of tear down, and concentrate their energies on the great work before them. God designs that his people should all come into the unity of faith. The prayer of Christ to his Father, just prior to his crucifixion, was that his disciples might be one, even as he was one with the Father, that the world might believe that he had sent him. This most touching and wonderful prayer reaches down the ages, even to our day, for his words were, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."

[17]

How earnestly should the professed followers of Christ seek to answer this prayer in their lives. Many do not realize the sacredness of their church relations, and are loth to submit to restraint and discipline. Their course of action shows that they exalt their own judgment above that of the united church; and they are not careful to guard themselves lest they encourage a spirit of opposition to its voice.

Those who hold responsible positions in the church may have their faults in common with other people, and may err in their decisions; but notwithstanding this, the church of Christ on earth has given to them an authority that cannot be lightly esteemed. Christ, after his resurrection, delegated power unto his church, saying, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

A relation to the church is not to be easily canceled; yet some professed followers of Christ will threaten to leave the church when their path is crossed, or their voice has not the controlling influence which they think it deserves. True, in leaving the church, they would be the greatest sufferers themselves, for in withdrawing beyond the pale of its influence, they subject themselves to the full temptations of the world.

[18]

Every believer should be whole-hearted in his attachment to the church. Its prosperity should be his first interest, and unless he feels under sacred obligations to make his connection with the church a benefit to it, in preference to himself, it can do far better without him. It is in the power of all to do something for the cause of God. There are those who spend a large amount for needless luxuries, and to gratify their appetites, but feel it a great tax to contribute means to sustain the church. They are willing to receive all the benefits of its privileges, but prefer to leave others to pay the bills. Those who really feel a deep interest in the advancement of the cause, will not hesitate to invest money in the enterprise whenever and wherever it is needed.

[19] They should also feel it a solemn duty to illustrate in their characters the teachings of Christ, being at peace one with another and moving in perfect harmony as an undivided whole. They should defer their individual judgment to the judgment of the body of the church. Many are living for themselves alone. They look upon their lives with great complacency, flattering themselves that they are blameless, when in fact they are doing nothing for God, and are living in direct opposition to his expressed word. The observance of external forms will never meet the great want of the human soul. A profession of Christ is not enough to stand the test of the day of Judgment. There should be a perfect trust in God, a childlike dependence upon His promises, and an utter consecration of self, to his will.

God has always tried his people in the furnace of affliction, in order to prove them firm and true, and purge them from all unrighteousness. After Abraham and his son had borne the severest test that could be imposed upon them, God spoke through his angel unto Abraham, “ Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.” This great act of faith causes the character of Abraham to shine forth with remarkable luster. It forcibly illustrates his perfect confidence in the Lord, from whom he withheld nothing, not even his son of promise.

There is nothing too precious for us to give to Jesus. If we return to him the talents of means he has intrusted to our keeping, he will give more into our hands. Every effort we make for Christ will be rewarded by him; and every duty we perform in his name will

minister to our own happiness. God surrendered his dearly-beloved Son to the agonies of the crucifixion, that all who believe on him should become one through the name of Jesus. When Christ made so great a sacrifice to save men and bring them into unity one with another, even as he was united with the Father, what sacrifice is too great for his followers to make, in order to preserve that unity? [20]

If the world sees a perfect harmony existing in the church of God, it will be a powerful evidence to them in favor of the Christian religion. Dissensions, unhappy differences, and petty church-trials dishonor our Redeemer. All these may be avoided if self is surrendered to God, and the followers of Jesus obey the voice of the church. Unbelief suggests that individual independence increases our importance, that it is weak to yield our own ideas of what is right and proper, to the verdict of the church. But to yield to such feelings and views is unsafe, and will bring us to anarchy and confusion. Christ saw that unity and Christian fellowship were necessary to the cause of God, therefore he enjoins it upon his disciples. And the history of Christianity from that time until now proves conclusively that in union only there is strength. Let individual judgment submit to the authority of the church.

The apostles felt the necessity of strict unity, and they labored earnestly to this end. Paul exhorted his brethren in these words:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

He also writes to his Philippian brethren, “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” [21]

To the Romans he writes, “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive

ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.” “Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.”

Peter wrote to the churches scattered abroad, “ Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous : not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing : but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.”

[22] And Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians says : “ Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

* * * * *

Go Forward.

THE vast armies of Israel marched in glad triumph from Egypt, the scene of their long and cruel servitude. The Egyptians would not consent to release them until they had been signally warned by the judgments of God. The avenging angel had visited every house among the Egyptians, and stricken with death the first-born of every family. None had escaped, from the heir of King Pharaoh, to the eldest-born of the captive in his dungeon. And the first-born of the cattle were also slain according to the mandate of the Lord.

But the Angel of Death passed over the homes of the children of Israel and did not enter there. Pharaoh, horror-stricken at the plagues that had fallen upon his people, called Moses and Aaron before him in the night, and bade them depart from Egypt. He was anxious that they should go without delay, for he and his people feared that the land would become a vast burial-ground, unless the curse of God was removed from them.

[23] Israel was joyful to receive the tidings of their freedom, and made haste to leave the scene of their bondage. But the way was toilsome, and at length their courage failed. Their journey led them over barren hills and desolate plains. The third night they found themselves walled in on each side by mountain ranges, and the Red Sea lay before them. They were perplexed and greatly deplored their

condition. They blamed Moses for conducting them to this place, for they believed they had taken the wrong course. "This, surely," said they, "is not the way to the wilderness of Sinai, nor the land of Canaan promised to the fathers. We can go no farther, but must now advance into the waters of the Red Sea, or turn back toward Egypt."

Then, as if to complete their misery, behold, the Egyptian host is on their track! The imposing army is led by King Pharaoh himself, who has repented that he freed the Hebrews, and fears that he has sent them out to become a great nation hostile to himself. What a night of perplexity and distress was this for Israel! What a contrast to that glorious morning when they left the bondage of Egypt, and with glad rejoicings took up the line of march into the wilderness! How powerless they felt before that mighty foe! The wailing of the terror-stricken women and children, mingled with the lowing of the frightened cattle, and the bleating of the sheep, added to the dismal confusion of the situation.

But had God lost all care for his people that he should leave them to destruction? Would he not warn them of their danger and deliver them from their enemies? God had no delight in the discomfiture of his people. It was he, himself, who had directed Moses to encamp by the Red Sea, and he had farther informed him that, "Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord."

[24]

Jesus stood at the head of that vast army. The cloudy column by day, and the pillar of fire by night represented their Divine Leader. But the Hebrews did not patiently bear the test of the Lord. Their voices were lifted up in reproaches and denunciations of Moses, who was their visible leader, for bringing them into this great peril. They did not trust in the protecting power of God, not recognize his hand staying the evils that surrounded them. In their frantic terror they had forgotten the rod with which Moses had changed the water of the Nile to blood, and the calamities which God had visited upon the Egyptians for their persecution of his chosen people. They had forgotten all the miraculous interpositions of God in their behalf.

"Ah !" they cried, " How much better for us had we remained in bondage ! It is better to live as slaves than to die of hunger and fatigue

[25] in the desert, or be slain in war with our enemies!” They turned upon Moses with bitter censure that he had not left them where they were instead of leading them out to perish in the wilderness.

Moses was greatly troubled because his people were so wanting in faith, especially as they had repeatedly witnessed the manifestations of the power of God in their favor. He felt grieved that they should charge upon him the dangers and difficulties of their position, when he had simply followed the express commands of God. He met and quieted the reproaches and fears of his people, even before he could himself discern the plan of their deliverance; but he was strong in his faith that the Lord would bring them into safety.

True, they were in a place from which there was no possibility of release unless God himself interposed to save them; but they were brought into this strait by obeying the divine commands, and Moses felt no fear of the consequences. He “said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace.”

[26] It was not an easy thing to hold the hosts of Israel in waiting before the Lord. They were excited and full of terror. They lacked discipline and self-control. Impressed by the horrors of their situation, they became violent and unreasonable. They expected speedily to fall into the hands of their oppressors, and their wailings and recriminations were loud and deep.

The wonderful pillar of cloud had accompanied them in their wanderings and served to protect them from the fervid rays of the sun. All day it had moved grandly before them, subject neither to sunshine nor storm. but at night it had become a pillar of fire to light them on their way. They had followed it as the signal of God to go forward; but now they questioned among of some terrible calamity that was about to befall them, for had it not led them on the wrong side of the mountain into an impassible way? Thus the angel of God appeared to their deluded minds as the harbinger of disaster.

But now, as the Egyptians host approaches them, expecting to make them an easy prey, the cloudy column rises majestically into the heavens, passes over the Israelites, and descends between them and the armies of Egypt. A wall of darkness interposes between the

pursued and their pursuers. The Egyptians can no longer discern the camp of the Hebrews, and are forced to halt. But as the darkness of night deepens, the wall of cloud becomes a great light to the Hebrews, illuminating the whole camp with the radiance of day.

Then hope came to the hearts of Israel that they might be delivered. And Moses lifted up his voice unto the Lord. “And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.”

[27]

Then Moses, obeying the divine command, stretched out his rod, and the waters parted, rolling up in a wall on either side, and leaving a broad pathway across the bed of the sea for the children of Israel. The light from God’s pillar of fire shone upon the foam capped billows and lit the road that was cut like a mighty furrow through the waters of the Red Sea and was lost in the obscurity of the farther shore.

All night long sounded the tramping of the hosts of Israel, crossing the Red Sea, But the cloud hid them from the sight of their enemies. The Egyptians, weary with their hasty march, had example I upon the shore for the night. They saw the Hebrews only a short distance before them, and there seemed no possibility of escape, so they decided to take a night’s rest, and make an easy capture in the morning. The night was intensely dark, the clouds seemed to encompass them like some tangible substance. Deep sleep fell upon the camp, even the sentinels slumbered at their posts.

At last a ringing blast arouses the army! The cloud is passing on ! The Hebrews are moving! Voices and the sound of marching come from toward the sea. It is still so dark they cannot discern the escaping people, but the command is given to make ready for the pursuit. The clattering of arms, and the roll of chariots is heard, the marshalling of the captains and the neighing of the steeds. At length the line of march is formed and they press on through the obscurity, in the direction of the escaping multitude.

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In the darkness and confusion, they rush on in their pursuit, not knowing that they have entered upon the bed of the sea, and are hemmed in on either hand by beetling walls of water. They long for the mist and darkness to pass away, and reveal to them the Hebrews

and their own whereabouts. The wheels of the chariots sink deep into the soft sand, and the horses become entangled and unruly. Confusion prevails, yet they press on feeling sure of victory,

At last the mysterious cloud changes to a pillar of fire before their astonished eyes. The thunders roll and the lightnings flash, the waves roll about them, and fear takes possession of their hearts. Amid the terror and confusion the lurid light reveals to the amazed Egyptians the terrible waters massed up on the right hand and on the left. They see the broad path that the Lord has made for his people across the shining sands of the sea, and behold triumphant Israel safe on the farther shore.

[29] Confusion and dismay seizes them. Amid the wrath of the elements, in which they hear the voice of an angry God, they endeavor to retrace their steps and fly to the shore they have quitted. But Moses stretches out his rod, and the piled up waters, hissing, roaring, and eager for their prey, tumble down upon the armies of Egypt. Proud Pharaoh and his legions, gilded chariot and flashing armor, horses and riders are engulfed beneath a stormy sea.

The mighty God of Israel had delivered his people, and their songs of thanksgiving went up to Heaven, that God had wrought so wonderfully in their behalf. The history of the children of Israel should be for the instruction and admonition of all Christians. When the Israelites were overtaken by dangers and difficulties and their way seemed hedged up, their faith forsook them and they murmured against the leader God had appointed for them. They blamed him with bringing them into peril, when he had only obeyed the voice of God.

[30] The divine command was, "Go Forward !" Not to wait until the way was made plain, and they could comprehend the entire plan of their deliverance. God's cause is onward, and he will open the path before his people. To hesitate and murmur is to manifest distrust in the Holy One of Israel. God in his providence brought the Hebrews into the mountain fastnesses, with the Red Sea before them, that he might work out their deliverance and forever rid them of their enemies. He might have saved them in any other way, but he chose this method in order to test their faith and strengthen their trust in him.

We cannot charge Moses with being at fault because his people murmured against his course. It was their own rebellious, unsubdued hearts that led them to censure the man whom God had delegated to lead his people. While Moses moved in the fear of the Lord, and according to his direction, having full faith in his promises, those who should have upheld him became discouraged and could see nothing before them but disaster, defeat, and death.

The Lord is now dealing with his people who believe in present truth. He designs to bring about momentous results, and while in his providence he is working towards this end, he says to his people, “Go Forward !”

True, the path is not yet opened, but when they move on in the strength of faith and courage, God will make the way plain before their eyes. There are ever those who will complain, as did ancient Israel, and charge the difficulties of their position upon those whom God has raised up for the special purpose of advancing his cause. They fail to see that God is testing them by bringing them into straight places, from which there is no deliverance except by his hand.

There are times when the Christian life seems beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage or death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly above all discouragements, “Go Forward!” We should obey this command, let the result be what it may, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness and we feel the cold waves about our feet.

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The Hebrews were weary and terrified, yet if they had held back when Moses bade them advance, if they had refused to move nearer to the Red Sea, God would never have opened the path for them. In marching down to the very water, they showed that they had faith in the word of God, as spoken by the man Moses. They did all that was in their power to do, and then the Mighty One of Israel performed his part and divided the waters to make a path for their feet.

The clouds that gather about our way will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Unbelief says, We can never surmount these obstructions, let us wait until they are removed, and we can see our way clearly. But faith courageously urges an advance, hoping

all things, believing all things. Obedience towards God is sure to bring the victory. Through faith only can we reach Heaven.

[32] There is a great similarity between our history and that of the children of Israel. God led his people from Egypt into the wilderness, where they could keep his law and obey his voice. The Egyptians, who had no regard for the Lord, were encamped close by them; yet, what was to them a great flood of light, illuminating the whole camp, and shedding brightness upon the path before them, was to the hosts of Pharaoh a wall of clouds, making blacker the darkness of night.

So, at this time, there is a people whom God has made the repository of his law. To those who obey them, the commandments of God are as a pillar of fire, lighting and leading the way to eternal salvation. But unto those who disregard them, they are as the clouds of night. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Better than all other knowledge is an understanding of the word of God. In keeping his commandments there is great reward, and no earthly inducements should cause the Christian to waver for a moment in his allegiance. Riches, honor, and worldly pomp are but as dross that shall perish before the fire of God's wrath.

The voice of the Lord bidding his faithful ones "Go Forward," frequently tries their faith to the uttermost. But if they should defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty was removed from their understanding, and there remained no risk of failure or defeat, they would never move on at all. Those who think it impossible for them to yield to the will of God and have faith in his promises until all is made clear and plain before them, will never yield at all. Faith is not certainty of knowledge, it is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. To obey the commandments of God is the only way to obtain his favor. "Go Forward," should be the Christian's watchword.

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Epistle Number One.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS :—I have been shown some things in reference to the church in P— G— . Individual cases were shown me, which in many respects represent the cases of many others. Among them was that of sister P. and her husband. The Lord convicted him of the truth. He was charmed with the harmony and

spirit of the truth, and was blessed in confessing it. But Satan came to him with his temptations upon the point of appetite.

Bro. P. had long indulged his appetite for stimulants, which had an influence to becloud the mind, weaken the intellect, and lessen the moral powers. Reason and judgment were brought in bondage to depraved, unnatural appetite, and his birthright, his God-given manhood, was sacrificed to intemperate habits. If Bro. P. had made the word of God his study, and his guide, had he trusted in God, and prayed for grace to overcome, he would have had strength in the name of Jesus to baffle the tempter.

But Bro. P. had never felt the high claims that God had upon him. His moral faculties had been enfeebled by his habits of eating and drinking, and his dissipation. He had, when he embraced the truth, a character to form for Heaven. God would test and prove him. He had a work to do for himself that no one could do for him. He had, by his course of life, lost many years of precious, probationary [34] time, when he might have been gaining an experience in matters of religion, and a knowledge of the life of Christ, and the infinite sacrifice he made in man's behalf that he might free him from the fetters Satan had bound upon him, and enable him to glorify his name.

Christ paid a dear price for man's redemption. In the wilderness of temptation he suffered the keenest pangs of hunger; and while emaciated with fasting Satan was at hand with his manifold temptations to assail the Son of God, to take advantage of his weakness and overcome him, and thus thwart the plan of salvation. But Christ was steadfast. He overcame in behalf of the race, that he might rescue them from the degradation of the fall. Christ's experience is for our benefit. His example in overcoming appetite points out the way for those who would be his followers and finally sit with him on his throne.

Christ suffered hunger in the fullest sense. Mankind generally have all that is needful to sustain life. And yet, like our first parents, they will desire that which God would withhold because it is not best for them. Christ suffered hunger for necessary food, and resisted the temptation of Satan upon the point of appetite. Indulgence of intemperate appetite, creates in fallen man unnatural desires for the things which will eventually prove his ruin.

[35] Man came from the hand of God perfect in every faculty of mind and body, in perfect soundness, therefore in perfect health. It took more than two thousand years of indulgence of appetite and lustful passions to create such a state of things in the human organism as would lessen vital force. Through successive generations the tendency was more swiftly downward. Indulgence of appetite and passion combined, led to excess and violence; debauchery and abominations of every kind weakened the energies, and brought upon the race diseases of every type until the vigor and glory of the first generations passed away, and man began to show signs of decay in the third generation from Adam. Successive generations after the flood degenerated more rapidly.

All this weight of woe and accumulated suffering can be traced to the indulgence of appetite and passion. Luxurious living and the use of wine corrupt the blood, inflame the passions, and produce diseases of every kind. Parents leave maladies as a legacy to their children. As a rule, every intemperate man, who rears children, transmits his inclinations and evil tendencies to his offspring, and the evil does not end here; he gives to them disease from his own inflamed and corrupted blood. Licentiousness, disease and imbecility is transmitted as an inheritance of woe from father to son and from generation to generation, bringing anguish and suffering into the world, which is no less than a repetition of the fall of man.

[36] The continual transgression of Nature's laws is a continual transgression of the law of God. The present weight of suffering and anguish which we see everywhere, the present deformity, decrepitude, disease and imbecility now flooding the world, make it, in comparison to what it might be, and what God designed it should be, a lazar-house, and the present generation are feeble in mental, moral and physical power.

All this accumulated misery from generation to generation is because fallen man will break the law of God. Sins of the greatest magnitude are committed through the indulgence of perverted appetite.

The effort made to create a taste for the disgusting, filthy poison, tobacco, leads to the desire for stronger stimulants, as liquor, which is taken, on one plea or another, for some imaginary infirmity, or to prevent some possible disease. Thus an unnatural appetite is

created for these hurtful and exciting stimulants, which strengthens until the increase of intemperance in this generation is alarming. Beverage-loving, liquor-drinking men may be seen everywhere. Their intellect is enfeebled, the moral powers are weakened, the sensibilities are benumbed, and the claims of God and heaven are not realized, and eternal things are not appreciated. The Bible declares that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Tobacco and liquor stupefy and defile the user. But the evil does not stop here. He transmits irritable temper, polluted blood, enfeebled intellect, and weak morals to his children; and renders himself accountable for all the evil results that his wrong and dissipated course of life has brought upon his family and the community. [37]

The race is groaning under a weight of accumulated woe, because of the sins of former generations. And yet with scarcely a thought or care, men and women of the present generation indulge intemperance by surfeiting and drunkenness, and thereby leave as a legacy for the next generation disease, enfeebled intellects, and polluted morals.

Intemperance of any kind is the worst sort of selfishness. Those who truly fear God and keep his commandments look upon these things in the light of reason and religion. How can any man or any woman keep the law of God, which requires man to love his neighbor as himself, and indulge intemperate appetite, which benumbs the brain, weakens the intellect, and fills the body with disease? Intemperance inflames the passions, and gives loose rein to lust. Reason and conscience are blinded by the lower passions.

We inquire, what will the husband of sister P. do? Will he, like Esau, sell his birthright for a mess of pottage? Will he sell his godlike manhood to indulge a perverted taste which only brings unhappiness and degradation? "The wages of sin is death." Has not this brother the moral courage to deny appetite? His habits have not been in harmony with the truth, and with the testimonies of reproof which God has seen fit to give his people. His conscience was not altogether dead. He knew that he could not serve God and indulge his appetite, therefore yielded to the temptation of Satan which was too strong for him, in his own strength, to resist. He was overcome. He has assigned his want of interest in the truth to other causes than the true one, in order to cover his own weak purpose, and the real [38]

cause of his backsliding from God, which was uncontrolled appetite. This is where many stumble; they waver between denial of appetite and its indulgence, and finally are overcome by the enemy and yield the truth. Many who have backslidden from the truth assign as a reason for their course, that they do not have faith in the testimonies.

Investigation reveals the fact that they had some sinful habit that God through the testimonies condemned. The question with them is, will they yield their idol which God condemns, or will they continue in their wrong course of indulgence, and reject the light God has given them, reproving the very things in which they delight? The question to be settled with them is, shall I receive, as of God, the testimonies which reprove my sins, and deny myself, or shall I reject the testimonies *because* they reprove my sins?

[39] In many cases the testimonies are fully received, the sin and indulgence broken off, and reformation at once commences in harmony with the light God has given. In other instances sinful indulgences are cherished, the testimonies are rejected, and many excuses which are untrue are offered to others as the reason for refusing to receive them. The true reason is not given. It is a lack of moral courage—a will, strengthened and controlled by the Spirit of God, to renounce hurtful habits.

It is not an easy matter to overcome established habits of taste and appetite for narcotics and stimulants. In the name of Christ alone can this great victory be gained. He overcame in behalf of man in the wilderness of temptation, in the long fast of nearly six weeks. He sympathizes with the weakness of man. His love for fallen man was so great that he made infinite sacrifice that he might reach him in his degradation, and through his divine power elevate him finally to his throne. But it rests with man whether Christ shall accomplish for him that which he is fully able to do.

[40] Will man take hold of divine power, and with determination and perseverance resist Satan as Christ has given him example in his conflict with the foe in the wilderness of temptation? God cannot save man, against his will, from the power of Satan's artifices. Man must work with his human power, aided by the divine power of Christ, to resist and to conquer at any cost to himself. In short, man must overcome as Christ overcame. And then, through the victory it is his privilege to gain by the all-powerful name of Jesus, he may

become an heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ.

This could not be the case if Christ alone did all the overcoming. Man must do his part. Man must be victor on his own account, through the strength and grace that Jesus gives him. Man must be a co-worker with Christ in the labor of overcoming, and then he will be partaker with Christ of his glory. It is a sacred work in which we are engaged. The apostle exhorts his brethern, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

It is a sacred duty that we owe to God to keep the spirit pure, as a temple for the Holy Ghost. If the heart and mind are devoted to the service of God, obeying all his commandments, loving him with all the heart, might, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves, we will be found loyal and true to the requirements of Heaven.

Again the apostle says: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." He also urges his brethern to earnest diligence and steady perseverance in their efforts for purity and holiness of life in these words: "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we, an incorruptible."

He presents before us the spiritual warfare and its reward, in contrast with the various games instituted among the heathen in honor of their gods. For these games, young men were trained with the most severe discipline, practicing close self-denial. Every indulgence which would have a tendency to weaken the powers of body were forbidden. Those who submitted to the training process were not allowed luxurious food or wine, for this would debilitate instead of increase personal vigor, healthful activity, fortitude and firmness. It was considered the highest honor to gain a simple chaplet which would fade in a few short hours.

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Many witnesses, kings and nobles, were present on these occasions. The competitors for this perishable crown, after they had exercised severe abstemiousness, and submitted to rigid discipline in order to obtain personal vigor and activity with the hope of becoming victors, were even then not sure of the prize. The prize could be awarded to but one. Some might labor fully as hard as others and put forth their utmost powers to gain the crowning honor, but, as

they reached forth the hand to secure the prize, another, an instant before them, might secure the coveted treasure.

[42] This is not the case in the Christian warfare. All may run this race and may be sure of victory and immortal honor if they submit to the conditions. Says Paul, "So run that ye may obtain." He then explains the conditions which are necessary for them to observe in order to be successful: "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things."

If heathen men, who are not controlled by enlightened conscience, who have not the fear of God before them, would submit to deprivation and a discipline of training—denying themselves of every weakening indulgence merely for a wreath of perishable substance and the applause of the multitude, how much more should they who are running the Christian race in the hope of immortality and the approval of High Heaven, be willing to deny themselves unhealthy stimulants and indulgences which degrade the morals, enfeeble the intellect, and bring the higher powers in subjection to the animal appetites and passions.

Multitudes in the world are witnessing this game of life, the Christian warfare. And this is not all. The Monarch of the universe, and the myriads of heavenly angels are spectators of this race— anxiously watching to see who will be successful overcomers, and win the crown of glory that fadeth not away. With intense interest God and heavenly angels mark the self-denial, self-sacrificing, and agonizing efforts of those who engage to run the Christian race. The reward given to every man will be in accordance with the persevering energy and faithful earnestness with which he has performed his part in the great contest.

[43] In the games referred to, but one was sure of the prize. In the Christian race, says the apostle, I run "not as uncertainly." We are not to be disappointed at the end of the race. To all those who fully comply with the conditions in God's word, with a sense of their responsibility to preserve physical vigor and activity of body, that they may have well balanced minds and healthy morals, the race is not uncertain. They, all may gain the prize, and win and wear the crown of immortal glory that fadeth not away.

The apostle Paul tells us that, "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." A cloud of witnesses are

observing our Christian course. "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

The world should be no criterion for us. It is fashionable to indulge the appetite with luxurious food and unnatural stimulus, strengthening by indulgence the animal propensities, and crippling the growth and development of the moral faculties.

There is no encouragement given to any son or daughter of Adam that they may become victorious overcomers in the Christian warfare unless they decide to practice temperance in all things, If they do this they will not fight as one that beateth the air. [44]

If Christians will keep the body in subjection and bring all their appetites and passions under the control of enlightened conscience, feeling it a duty that they owe to God and to their neighbor to obey the laws which govern health and life, they will have the blessing of physical and mental vigor. They will have moral power to engage in the warfare against Satan; and in the name of him who conquered appetite in their behalf, they may be more than conquerors on their own account. The warfare is open to all who will engage in it.

I was shown the case of Bro. R., that a cloud of darkness surrounded him. The light of Heaven was not in his dwelling. Although he professed to believe the truth, he did not exemplify in his daily life its sanctifying influence upon his heart. He does not naturally possess a benevolent, kind, affectionate, and courteous disposition. His temperament is very unfavorable to himself, and his family and the church where his influence is felt. He has a work to do for himself that no one can do for him. He has need of the transforming influence of the Spirit of God.

We are bound, by our profession, as Christ's followers, to test our ways and actions, by comparing them with the example of our Redemer. Our spirit and deportment must correspond with the copy our Saviour has given us. [45]

Bro. R. is not of that temperament to bring sunshine into his family. Here is a good place for him to begin to work. He is too

much like a cloud rather than a beam of light. He is too selfish to speak words of approval to the members of his family, especially the one of all others who should have his love and tender respect. He is morose, overbearing and dictatorial. His words are frequently cutting, and leave a wound that he does not try to heal by softening his spirit, acknowledging his faults and confessing his wrongdoings.

He does not make efforts to come to the light. There is not with him a searching of heart and of motives, temper, speech and conduct, to see if his life is like the Example. He does not apply God's law to his life as his rule of action and character. The Lord would have a people honest and upright before him.

Sister R. has many trials, and the weakness of her own nature to contend with, and she should not be compelled to have her lot made any harder than is positively necessary.

[46] Bro. B. should soften, and cultivate refinement and courteousness. He should be very tender and gentle towards his wife, who is his equal in every respect. He should not utter a word that would cast a shadow upon her heart. He should begin the work of reformation at home. He should cultivate affection, and overcome the coarse, harsh, unfeeling, and ungenerous traits of his disposition, for these are growing upon him. If we poor mortals reach Heaven, we must overcome as Christ overcame. We must be assimilated to his image, and our characters be spotless.

I was shown that Bro. R. has not a high sense of the perfection of character necessary to a Christian. He has not a proper sense of his duty to his fellow-men. He is in danger of advancing his own interests, if an opportunity presents, irrespective of his neighbor's advantage or loss. He regards his own prosperity as exceedingly important, but is not interested in the fortunes or misfortunes of his neighbors, as a follower of Christ should be. For a trifle of advantage to himself Satan can allure him from his integrity. This darkens his own soul, and brings darkness upon the church. "All this," says Satan, "shall be yours, if you will depart from strict, integrity. All this will I give you if you will only please me in this, or do and say that." And too often has Bro. R. been deceived by the adversary, to his own hurt and the darkening of other minds.

There are some others in the church who need to view things from a higher standpoint before they can be spiritually minded, and

in a position to shed light, instead of casting a shadow, and where they can discern the mind and will of God.

Bro. R. needs to have his eyes anointed, that he may clearly discern spiritual things, and also the devices of Satan. The Christian standard is high and exalted. But alas, the professed followers of Christ lower it to the very dust. [47]

You have need, Bro. R., of constant vigilance lest you are overcome by Satan's temptations to live for yourself, to be jealous and envious, suspicious and faultfinding. If you go murmuringly along you make not one step of progress in the heavenly road. If you stop for a moment in your earnest efforts and prayerful endeavors to subdue and control yourself, you are in danger of being overcome by some strong temptation; you may take imprudent steps; you may manifest an unchristian spirit, which will not only bring bitterness to you own soul, but sadness to the minds of others. You may bring upon them a weight of perplexity and sadness that will endanger their souls, and you will be accountable for this baneful influence. Bro. R., if you would escape the pollution that is in the world through lust, you must adorn the Christian profession in all things.

You will say, This is hard work—the way is too narrow, I cannot walk in it. Is the way made more straight in this letter than you find it plainly marked out in the word of God? Heaven is worth a life-long, persevering, untiring effort. If you now draw back and become discouraged, you will certainly lose Heaven—lose the immortal life and crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Those who have a seat at the Saviour's side on his throne are only that class who have overcome as he overcame. Love for pure, sanctifying truth, love for the dear Redeemer, will lighten the labor of overcoming. His strength will be cheerfully granted to all those who are really desirous of it. He will crown every persevering effort made in his name, with grace and peace. [48]

If your daily study is to glorify God and subdue self, he will make his strength perfect in your weakness, and you may live so that your conscience will not condemn you. You may have a good report from those who are without. A circumspect life will not only bring great profit to your own soul, but will be a bright light to shine upon the pathway of others, and will show them the way to Heaven.

Bro. R., how have you governed your own temper ? Have you sought to overcome your hasty spirit? With the disposition and feelings you now possess you will as surely fail of Heaven as there is a Heaven. For your own soul's sake, and for the sake of Christ, who has given you unmistakable evidence of his infinite love, bring yourself nearer to him that you may be imbued with his spirit.

[49] Cultivate a spirit of watchfulness and prayer that you may rightly represent the holy faith you profess as a follower of our dear Redeemer who has left an example in his own life. Imitate our Saviour. Learn of Christ. Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and overcome the temptations of Satan as he overcame, and come off conqueror over all your defects of character.

Christ was a perfect overcomer. We must be perfect and entire, wanting nothing—without spot or blemish. The redemption Christ achieved for man was at infinite cost to himself. The victory we gain over our own evil hearts and over the temptations of Satan will cost us strong effort, constant watchfulness and persevering prayer, and we shall then not only reap the reward which is the gift of eternal life, but will increase our happiness on earth by a consciousness of duty performed, and the greater respect and love of those about us.

I was shown that there is a general lack of devotion, and sincere and earnest effort in the church. There are many who need to be converted. Bro. C. is not a stay and strength to the church. He does not advance in the divine life as he advances in years. He has professed the truth many years, yet has been slow to learn and live its principles; therefore he has not been sanctified through the truth. He holds himself in a position to be tempted of Satan. He is still as a child in experience. He is watching others and marking their failings, when he should be searching diligently his own heart.

[50] That readiness to question, and to see faults in his brethren and talk of them to others, is reproved by the words of Christ to one whom he saw was more interested in the course of his brethren, than careful to watch and pray lest Satan should overcome himself. Said Christ to his disciples, "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

It is all that Bro. C. can do in the weakness of his nature, to guard his *own* soul and close every avenue whereby Satan could gain access to insinuate doubts in regard to others. He is in great danger of losing his soul, by failing to perfect Christian character

during probationary time. He is slow to follow Christ. His senses seem to be clouded, and almost paralyzed so that he does not place a proper estimate upon sacred things. He may even now correct his errors, and overcome his defects if he will work in the strength of God.

There are several in the church at P. G. whose names I cannot call, who have victories to gain over their appetite and passions. Some talk too much and stand in this position, "Report, and I will report it." Miserable indeed is such a position! If all these gossipers would ever bear in mind that an angelis following them, recording their words, there would be less talking and much more praying.

There are children of Sabbath-keepers who have been taught from their youth to observe the Sabbath. Some of these are very good children, faithful to duty as far as temporal matters are concerned; but they feel no deep conviction of sin, and no need of repentance from sin. Such are in a dangerous condition. They are watching the deportment and efforts of professed Christians. They see some who make high professions but are not conscientious Christians, and they compare their own views and actions with these stumbling-blocks and flatter themselves that, as there are no outbreking sins in their lives, they are about right. [51]

To these youth I am authorized to say, Repent ye and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. There is no time for you to waste. Heaven and immortal life are valuable treasures that will cost an effort on your part to obtain. No matter how faultless may have been your lives, as sinners you have steps to take. You are required to repent, believe, and be baptized. Christ was wholly righteous, yet he, the Saviour of the world, gave man an example, by taking the steps himself which he requires the sinner to take to become a child of God—an heir of Heaven.

If Christ, the spotless and pure Redeemer of man, condescended to take the steps necessary for the sinner to take in conversion, why should any, with the light of truth shining upon their pathway, hesitate to submit their hearts to God, and in humility confess that they are sinners, and show their faith in the atonement of Christ by words and actions, identifying themselves with those who profess to be his followers? There will ever be those who do not live their profession, whose daily lives show them to be anything but Chris-

[52] tians; but should this be a sufficient reason for any to refuse to put on Christ by baptism into the faith of his death and resurrection!

Even when Jesus was upon the earth himself, and walked with, and taught his disciples, there was one among the twelve who was a devil. Judas betrayed his Lord. Christ had a perfect knowledge of the life of Judas. He knew of his covetousness which he did not overcome. He gave him many lessons upon this subject in his sermons to others. Through indulgence Judas permitted this trait in his character to grow and take so deep root that it crowded out the good seed of truth sown in his heart, until evil predominated, and he, for love of money, could sell his Lord for a few pieces of silver.

Because Judas was not right at heart, because he was so corrupted with selfishness and love of money that it led him to commit a great crime, is no evidence that there were not true Christians—genuine disciples of Christ who loved their Saviour and tried to imitate his life and example, and to obey his teachings.

I was shown that the case of Judas, being numbered among the twelve, with all his faults and defects of character, is a lesson of instruction which Christians may be profited in studying. When Judas was chosen by our Lord, his case was not hopeless. He had some good qualities. In association with Christ in the work, he had [53] a favorable opportunity, by listening to his discourses, to see his evils, and to become acquainted with his defects of character if he really desired to be a true disciple. He was even placed in a position by our Lord where he could have his choice either to develop his covetous disposition, or see and correct it. He carried the little means collected for the poor, and for the necessary expenses of Christ and the disciples in their work of preaching.

This little money was to Judas a continual temptation, and he, from time to time, when he did a little service for Christ, or devoted a little time to religious purposes, paid himself out of the meager fund collected to advance the light of the gospel. He finally became so penurious that he made bitter complaint of the ointment poured upon the head of Jesus because it was expensive. He turned it over and over in his mind, and counted the money that might have been placed in his hands to expend, if that ointment had been sold. His selfishness grew stronger, until he felt that the treasury had really met with a great loss in not receiving the value of the ointment in

money. He finally made open complaint of the extravagance of this expensive offering to Christ. Our Saviour rebuked him for this covetousness. This rankled in the heart of Judas, until he, for a small sum of money, consented to betray his Lord.

There will be those among Sabbath-keepers who are no truer at heart than was Judas. But the cases of such should be no excuse to keep others from following Christ.

God loves the children of Bro. N., but they are in fearful danger of feeling whole, and in no need of a physician. Trusting in their own righteousness will never save them. They must feel the need of a Saviour. Christ came to save sinners. Said Jesus, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." The Pharisees who felt that they were righteous, and who trusted in their good works, felt no need of a Saviour. They felt that they were well enough off without Christ. [54]

These dear children of Bro. N. should plead with Jesus to reveal to them their sinfulness, and then ask him to reveal himself as their sin-pardoning Saviour. These precious children must not be deceived and miss eternal life. Except they are converted they cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. They must wash their robes of character in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus invites them to take the steps that sinners must take in order to become his children. He has given them an example in his life in submitting to the ordinance of baptism. He is our example in all things.

God requires these children to give him their heart's best and holiest affection. He has bought them with his own blood. He claims their service. They are not their own. Jesus has made infinite sacrifice for them. A pitying, loving Saviour will receive them if they will come to him just as they are and depend on his righteousness and not on their own merits.

God pities and loves the youth of P. G., and he wants them to find happiness in him. He died to redeem them. He will bless them if they come to him in meekness and sincerity. He will be found of them, if they seek him with all their hearts. [55]

Epistle Number Two.

BRO. —, I have been shown the condition of God's people. They are stupefied by the spirit of the world. They are denying their faith by their works. I was pointed back to ancient Israel. They had great light and exalted privileges; yet they did not live up to the light, nor appreciate their advantages, and their light became darkness. They walked in the light of their own eyes, instead of following the leadings of God. The history of the children of Israel was written for the benefit of those who live in the last days, that they may avoid following their example of unbelief.

[56] Bro. —, you were shown me enshrouded in darkness. The love of the world had taken entire control of your being. The very best of your days are past. Your vitality and power of endurance, as far as physical labor is concerned, are enfeebled, and now when you should be able to look back on a life of noble effort in blessing others, and glorifying God, you can only have regret, and realize a want of happiness and peace. You are not living that life which will meet the approval of God. Your spiritual and eternal interests are made secondary. Brain, bone, and muscle have been taxed to the utmost. Why all this expenditure of strength? Why this accumulation of cares and burdens for your family to bear? What is your reward? The satisfaction of laying up for yourself a treasure upon the earth, which Christ has forbidden and which will prove a snare to your soul.

In Christ's Sermon on the Mount he says, "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." If you lay up treasures in Heaven, you do it for yourself, you are working for your own interest.

Your treasure, my dear brother, is laid up on the earth, and your interest and affections are on your treasure. You have cultivated a love for money, for houses and lands, until it has absorbed the powers of your mind and being, and your love for worldly possessions has been greater than your love for your Creator, and souls for whom Christ died. The god of this world has blinded your eyes so that eternal things are not valued.

The great leading temptations that would assail man, Christ met in the wilderness of temptation. There he encountered, singlehanded, the wily, subtile foe, and overcame him. The first great temptation was appetite; second, presumption; third, the love of the world. Satan has overcome his millions by tempting them to the indulgence of appetite. Through the gratification of the taste the nervous system becomes excited, the brain power enfeebled, making it impossible to think calmly or rationally. The mind is unbalanced. Its higher, nobler properties are perverted to serve animal lust, and the sacred and eternal interests are not regarded. When this object is gained then Satan can come with his two other leading temptations and find ready access. His manifold besetments of sin grow out of these three great leading points. [57]

Presumption is a common temptation, and as Satan assails men with this, he obtains the victory nine times out of ten. Those who *profess* to be followers of Christ, and claim by their faith to be enlisted in the warfare against all evil in their nature, frequently plunge without thought, into temptations that would require a miracle to bring them forth unsullied. Meditation and prayer would have preserved them and led them to have shunned the critical, dangerous position in which they have placed themselves where they have given Satan the advantage over them. The promises of God are not for us rashly to claim while we rush on recklessly into danger, violating the laws of nature, and disregarding prudence, and the judgment with which God has endowed us. This is the most flagrant presumption.

The thrones and kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, were offered to Christ, If he would only bow down to Satan. Never will man be tried with temptations as powerful as those which assailed Christ. Satan came with worldly honor, wealth, and the pleasures of life, and presented them in the most attractive light to allure and deceive. "All this," said he to Christ, "will I give thee, if thou wilt worship me." Christ repelled the wily foe, and came off victor. [58]

Satan has better success in approaching man. All this money, all this gain, this land, this power, honor and riches will I give thee. For what? His conditions generally are, that integrity shall be yielded, conscientiousness blunted, and selfishness indulged. Through devotion to worldly interests Satan receives all the homage he asks. The

door is left open for him to enter as he pleases, with his evil train of impatience, love of self, pride, avarice, over-reaching, and his whole catalogue of evil spirits. Man is charmed, and treacherously allured on to ruin. If we yield ourselves to worldliness of heart and life, Satan is satisfied.

Christ's example is before us. He overcame Satan, showing us how we may also overcome. Christ resisted Satan with scripture. He might have had recourse to his own divine power, and used his own words; but he said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." With the second temptation he says, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Christ's example is before us. If the Sacred Scriptures were studied and followed, the Christian would be fortified to meet the wily foe; but the word of God is neglected, and disaster and defeat follow.

Dear Bro., you have neglected to heed the testimonies of warning given you years ago, showing you that the enemy was upon your track, to open before you the charms of this world, urging you to choose earthly treasure, and sacrifice the heavenly reward. Bro. L., you cannot afford to do this, there is too much at stake. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? " You are selling your soul at a cheap market. You cannot afford to make this great sacrifice. God has intrusted talents to your stewardship. They are your means and influence. He wishes to test and prove you. You should have lost no time but commenced immediately to increase your Master's store. Had you done this, your success would have been equal to your industry, perseverance and zeal in applying the capital placed in your hands. Had you done this, your talents of influence (setting aside the means which you could have called to your aid) would have turned many souls from error to truth and righteousness. These souls would have labored for other souls, and thus influence and means would be constantly increasing and multiplying in the Master's cause, and you, for the faithful improvement of your talents, would have heard from the Master the most *gracious* words that shall ever fall upon the ear: "Well done, thou 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.”

Bro. L., had you directed the powers of your intellect into the right channel, serving your Heavenly Father, you would have been growing stronger in the truth, stronger in spirit, and power, and would now be a pillar of the church in M., and a successful teacher of the truth, through your example as well as by giving the reasons of our faith from the Scriptures.

Had you used your powers of mind which you have employed in getting property, to bring souls from darkness to the light, you would have met the approval of God and been highly successful.

Those with but small capacities, sanctified by the love of God, can do good for the Master, but they who have quick, discerning minds may employ them for him in his high, exalted work, with grand results. To wrap them in a napkin, and hide them in the earth, and deprive God of the increase of the talents he has intrusted to them, is a great wrong.

We are probationers. The Master is coming to investigate our course, and he will inquire what use has been made of the talents lent us.

Bro. L., what use are you making of the talents God has placed in your care? Have you done what you could to enlighten the minds of men in regard to truth, or have you found no time from your business cares and perplexities, to devote to this work? It is a crime to use the bounties of God as you have done to diminish your physical strength, and separate your affections from God. “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” You cannot love this world and love the truths of God. “Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” You are not a happy man. Your family is not a happy family. Angels of God do not come in and abide with you. When the religion of Christ rules in the heart, conscience approves, peace and happiness reign; perplexity and trouble may surround, yet there is light in the soul.

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Submission, love, and gratitude to God, keep sunshine in the heart, though the day may be ever so cloudy. Self-denial, and the cross of Christ are before you. Will you lift the cross? Your children

have been blessed by a mother's prayers. They loved religion. They tried to resist temptation, and live lives of prayer. Sometimes they tried very hard, but your example before them, your love and devotion to the world, and your close application to business, withdrew their minds from spiritual things and turned them to earth again. They had Satan upon their track to lead them to love the world, and the things of the world. They gradually lost their confidence in God, and neglected secret prayer and religious duties, and have withdrawn their interest from holy things. Dear Bro. L., you have made a great mistake in giving this world your ambition. You have been exacting and sometimes impatient, and at times require too much of your son. He has become discouraged. At your house, from early morning until night, it has been work, work, work. Your large farm has brought extra cares and burdens into your house. You have talked upon business, for business was primary in your mind. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Has your example in your family exalted Christ and His salvation above your farming interest and your desire for gain? If your children fail of everlasting life the blood of their souls will surely be found on the garments of their father.

The mother did her duty faithfully. She will hear the "well done," as she rises in the resurrection morning. Her first inquiry will be for her children who were the burden of her prayers the latter portion of her life. Can you present them with beautiful characters giving them a moral fitness for the society of angels? or will they be tarnished and sullied by the pollution of the world? Will they be found partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust? Will they be as pillars polished after the similitude of a palace? or will they be found lovers of the world, cursed with the spirit of avarice, and their bright and noble qualities buried in oblivion? Your course will do much to determine the future destiny of your children. If you drown your powers of mind in worldly care and scheming you are a stumbling-block to them. They see that, while professing Christianity, you have made no spiritual advancement, but are morally dwarfed. This is true. Your mind has been concentrated on earthly things; as a result you have developed great power in this direction. You are decidedly a

worldly, business man, but God designed that you should use your ability and influence in a higher calling.

You are dazzled and blinded by the god of this world. Oh, what a terrible insanity is upon you. You may gather together earthly treasure, but it will be destroyed in the great conflagration. If you now return unto the Lord, and use your talents of means and influence, for the glory of God, and send your treasure before you into Heaven, you will not meet with a total loss.

The great conflagrations and disasters by sea and land that have visited our country, were the especial providence of God, a warning of what is about to come upon the world. God would show man that he can kindle a fire upon his idols that water cannot quench. The great general conflagration is but just ahead, when all this wasted labor of life will be swept away in a night and day. The treasure laid up in Heaven will be safe. No thief can approach nor moth corrupt it.

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A young man came to Christ and said, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus bade him keep the commandments. He returned answer, Lord, "all these have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet?" Jesus looked with love upon the young man, and faithfully pointed out to him his deficiency in keeping the commandments. He did not love his neighbor as himself. Christ showed him his true character. His selfish love of riches was his defect which if not removed would debar him from Heaven. "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come, and follow me." Christ would have him understand that he required nothing of him more than he himself had experienced. All he asked was that he should follow his example.

Christ left his riches and glory, and became poor, that man through his poverty might be made rich. He now requires him for the sake of these riches to yield earthly things, and secure Heaven. Christ knew that while the affections were upon worldly treasure, they would be withdrawn from God; therefore he said to the lawyer "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven; and come and follow me." How did he receive the words of Christ? Was he rejoiced that he could secure the heavenly treasure? He was very sorrowful for he had great pos-

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sessions. Riches to him were honor and power. The great amount of his treasure made such a disposal of it seem like an impossibility.

Here is the danger of riches to the avaricious man. The more he gains the harder it is for him. to be generous. To diminish his wealth is like parting with life. Rather than do this he turns from the attraction of the immortal reward in order to retain and increase his earthly possessions. He accumulates and hoards. Had he kept the commandments his worldly possessions would not have been so great. How could he, plotting and striving for self, love God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and with all his strength, and his neighbor as himself ? Had he distributed to the necessities of the poor, and blessed his fellow-men with a portion of his means, as their wants demanded, he would have been far happier, and would have had greater heavenly treasure, and less of earth to place his affections upon.

[66] Christ assured the young man who came to him, that if he would obey his requirements he should have treasure in Heaven. This world loving man was very sorrowful. He wanted Heaven but he desired to retain his wealth. He renounced immortal life for the love of money and power. Oh, what a miserable exchange! Yet many are doing this who profess to keep all the commandments of God. You, dear brother, are in danger of doing the same, but you do not realize it. Be not offended because I lay this matter so plainly before you. God loves you. How poorly have you returned his love!

I was shown that in your first experience your heart was all aglow with the truth; your mind was absorbed in the study of the Scriptures; you saw new beauty in every line. Then the good seed sown in your heart was springing up, and bearing fruit to the glory of God. But after a time, the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches choked the good seed of the word of God sown in your heart; and you failed to bring forth fruit. The truth struggled for supremacy in your mind; but the cares of this life, and the love of other things gained the victory, Satan sought through the attractions of this world to enchain you, and paralyze your moral powers, that you should have no sense of God's claims upon you. Satan has nearly succeeded.

Now, dear brother, you must make a most earnest, persevering effort to dislodge the enemy and assert your liberty, for he has made you a slave to this world, until your love of gain has become a ruling

passion. Your example to others has been bad : selfish interests have been prominent. You have, by profession, said to the world, my citizenship is not here, but above, while your works decidedly say you are a dweller on the earth. As a snare shall the day of Judgment come upon all those who dwell on the face of the earth. Your profession is only a hinderance to souls. You have not corresponding works. "I know thy works" (not thy profession), says the True Witness. God is now sifting his people—testing their purpose, and their motives. Many will be but as chaff. No wheat, no value in them. [67]

Christ has committed to your trust talents of means, and of influence; and he has said to you, improve these till I come. When the Master cometh and reckoneth with his servants, and all are called to the strictest account as to how they have used the talents intrusted to them, how will you, my dear brother, bear the investigation? Will you be prepared to return to the Master his talents doubled, laying before him both principal and interest, showing that you have been a judicious as well as faithful and persevering worker in his service? Bro. L., if you follow the course that you have pursued for years, your case is correctly represented by the servant who wrapped his talent in a napkin and buried it in the earth, that is, hid it in the world. Those to whom the talents were intrusted received reward for the labor expended in exact proportion to the fidelity, perseverance, and earnest effort made in trading with their Lord's goods.

God holds you as his debtor, and also as debtor to your fellowmen who have not the light and truth. God has given you light, not to hide under a bushel, but to set on a candlestick, that all in the house may be benefited. Your light should shine to others to enlighten souls for whom Christ died. The grace of God ruling in your heart, and bringing into subjection your mind and thoughts to Jesus, would make you a powerful man on the side of Christ and the truth. [68]

Said Paul, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." God had revealed to Paul his truth, and in so doing made him a debtor to those who were in darkness, to enlighten them. You have not had a proper sense of your accountability before God. You are handling your Lord's talents. You have powers of mind that if employed in the right direction would make you a co-worker with Christ and his angels. Had your

mind been turned in the direction of doing good, of placing the truth before others, you would now be qualified to become a successful laborer for God, and as your reward you would see many souls saved, that would be as stars in the crown of your rejoicing.

[69] How can the value of your houses and lands bear comparison with precious souls for whom Christ died? Through your instrumentality, these souls may be saved with you in the kingdom of glory; but you cannot, take with you there the smallest portion of your earthly treasure. Acquire what you may, preserve it with all the jealous care you are capable of exercising, and yet the mandate may go forth from the Lord, and in a few hours a fire which no skill can quench, has destroyed the accumulation of your entire life; they lay a mass of smouldering ruins. This was the case with Chicago. God's word had gone forth to lay the city of Chicago in ruins.

This is not the only city that will realize the visible marks of God's displeasure. He has made a beginning; but not an end. The sword of his wrath is stretched out over the people who have by their pride and wickedness provoked the displeasure of a just God. Storms, earthquakes, whirlwinds, fire and the sword will spread desolation everywhere, until men's hearts shall fail them for fear, looking for those things which shall come upon the earth. You know not how small a space is between you and eternity. You know not how soon your probation may close.

[70] Make ready, my brother, for the Master to demand your talents, both principal and interest ! To save souls should be the life work of every one who professes Christ. We are debtors to the world for the grace given us of God, for the light which has shone upon us, and the discovered beauty and power of the truth. You may devote your entire existence to laying up treasures upon earth, but what will they advantage you when your life here closes, or when Christ makes his appearance? Not a farthing can you take with you. And just as high as your worldly honors and riches have exalted you here, to the neglect of your spiritual life, just so much lower will you sink in moral worth before the great tribunal of God's Judgment.

How will this wealth for which you have bartered your soul, be appropriated, should you be suddenly called to close your probation, and your voice no longer control it. What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Your means are

of no more value than sand, only as used to provide for the daily necessities of life, and to bless others, and advance the cause of God. God has given you testimonies of warning and encouragement, but you have turned from them. You have doubted the testimonies. When you come back and gather up the rays of light, and take your position upon the testimonies, that they are from God, then you will be settled in your belief and not thus waver in darkness and weakness.

YOU can be a blessing to the church at M. You can be a pillar there even now, if you will come to the light, and walk in the light. God calls after you again. He seeks to reach you, girded about with selfishness as you are, and covered with the cares of this life. He invites you to withdraw your affections from the world, and place them upon heavenly things. In order to know the will of God, you must study it, rather than follow your inclinations, and the natural bent of your own mind. "What wilt thou have me to do," should be the earnest, anxious inquiry of your heart. [71]

The weight of the wrath of God will fall upon those who have misspent their time, and served mammon instead of their Creator. If you live for God and for heaven, pointing the way of life to others, you will go onward and upward to higher and holier joys. You will be rewarded with the "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The joy of Christ was that of seeing souls redeemed and saved in his glorious kingdom. "Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." To gain the treasures of this world, to use them as you have done, to separate your affections from God, will be to you in the end a terrible curse. You do not take time to read, to meditate or to pray, and you have not taken time to instruct your children, keeping before them their highest interest. God loves your children, but they have had little encouragement to live a religious life. If you destroy their faith in the testimonies you cannot reach them. The minds of poor, failing mortals should be disciplined and educated in religious and spiritual things. When the training is all in reference to the world, and to making a success of acquiring worldly property, how can the mind attain spiritual growth. It is an impossibility. You, my brother, and your family, might have risen [72]

to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, had you felt one-half the interest to perfect Christian character and to serve the Lord, that you have had to serve the world.

God is not well pleased that his servants should be ignorant of his divine will, novices in spiritual understanding, but wise in wordly wisdom and knowledge. Your earthly interests can bear no comparison with your eternal welfare. God has a work for you to do higher than that of acquiring property. You need a deep and thorough work accomplished for you. Your entire family need it, and may God help you all to attain perfection of Christian character. Your children can and should be a blessing to the youth of your community. They can, by their example, by their conversation and actions, glorify their Heavenly Father and grace the cause of religion.

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Epistle Number Three.

[73] DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER C —: I will now try to write what has been presented before me in regard to you, for I feel that it is time for this church to get their hearts in order and make diligent work for eternity. You both have the truth and want to obey it, but you are inexperienced. I was shown that you would be placed in circumstances where you would be tried and tested, and traits of character would be revealed which you were not aware that you possessed.

Many who have never been placed in positions of trial, appear to be excellent Christians, their lives faultless, but God sees that they have traits of character that must be revealed to them before they can perceive and correct them.

Simeon under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost prophesied. He said unto Mary in reference to Jesus, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against; yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." In the providence of God, we are placed in different positions to call into exercise qualities of mind calculated to develop character under a variety of

circumstances. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

Professed Christians may live unexceptionable lives as far as outward appearance is concerned, but when a change of circumstances throws them into entirely different positions, strong points of character are discovered, which would have remained hidden had their surroundings remained the same.

I was shown that you have selfish traits which you have need to strictly guard against. You will be in danger of regarding your prosperity and your convenience irrespective of the prosperity of others. You do not possess that spirit of self-denial that resembles the great Example. You should cultivate benevolence which will bring you more in harmony with the spirit of Christ in his dis-interested benevolence.

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You need more human sympathy. This is a quality of our natures which God has given us to render us charitable and kind to those with whom we are brought in contact. We find it in men and women whose hearts are not in unison with Christ, and it is a sad sight indeed when his professed followers lack this great essential of Christianity. They do not copy the Pattern, and it is impossible for them to reflect the image of Jesus in their lives and deportment.

When human sympathy is blended with love and benevolence, and sanctified by the spirit of Jesus, it is an element which can be productive of great good. Those who cultivate benevolence are not only doing a good work for others, and blessing those who receive the good action, but they are benefiting themselves by opening their hearts to the benign influence of true benevolence. Every ray of light shed upon others will be reflected upon our own hearts. Every kind and sympathizing word spoken to the sorrowful, every act to relieve the oppressed, and every gift to supply the necessity of our fellow-beings, given or done with an eye to God's glory, will result in blessings to the giver. Those who are thus working are obeying a law of Heaven and will receive the approval of God.

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The pleasure of doing good to others imparts a glow to the feelings which flashes through the nerves, quickens the circulation of the blood, and induces mental and physical health. Jesus knew the influence of benevolence upon the heart and life of the benefactor.

He sought to impress upon the minds of his disciples the benefits to be derived from the exercise of this virtue.

He says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." He illustrates the spirit of cheerful benevolence, which should be exercised towards friends, neighbors, and strangers, by the parable of the man who journeyed from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, "which stripped him of his raiment and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." The Priest and Levite, notwithstanding their exalted professions of piety, had not their hearts stirred with pitying tenderness for the sufferer. A Samaritan who made no such lofty pretensions to righteousness, passed that way, and when he saw the stranger's need, he did not regard him with mere idle curiosity, but he saw a human being in distress, and his compassion was excited. He immediately "went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." And on the morrow he left him in the charge of the host with an assurance that he would pay all charges on his return. Christ asks, "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him who fell among the thieves? And he said, he that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, go, and do thou likewise."

Here Jesus wished to give his disciples a lesson in the moral obligations binding upon man to his fellow-man. And whoever neglects to carry out these principles, illustrated by this lesson, are not commandment keepers, but, like the Levite, they break the law of God that they pretend to revere, while there are those who, like the Samaritan, make no pretensions to exalted piety, yet have a high sense of the moral obligation due their fellow-men, and whose charity and kindness is far greater than some who profess great love to God but fail in good works toward his creatures.

Those are truly loving their neighbor as themselves, who realize their responsibilities and the claims that suffering Humanity has upon them, and carry out the principles of God's law in their daily lives. "And behold a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and

thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.” Christ here shows the lawyer that the true fruits of piety are to love God with all the heart and our neighbor as ourselves. “ This do,” said he, not merely *believe* but do, “ and thou shalt live.” It is not alone the professed belief in the binding claims of God’s law, that makes the Christian, but also the carrying out of that law. [77]

In the parable Christ exalts the Samaritan above the Priest and Levite who were great sticklers for the letter of the law in the Ten Commandments. The one obeyed the spirit of these commandments, while the other was content to profess an exalted faith in them; but what is faith without works ?

When the advocates of the law of God plant their feet firmly upon its principles, showing that they are not merely loyal in name but loyal at heart, carrying out in their daily lives the spirit of God’s commandments, and exercising true benevolence to man, then will they have moral power to move the world. It is impossible for those who profess allegiance to the law of God, to correctly represent the principles of that , sacred decalogue while slighting its holy injunctions to love our neighbor as ourselves.

The most eloquent sermon that can be preached upon the law of the ten commandments, is to *do them*. Obedience should be made a personal duty. Negligence of this duty is flagrant sin. God lays us under obligations not only to secure Heaven ourselves, but to feel it a binding duty to show others the way, and, through our care and disinterested love, to lead towards Christ those who come within the sphere of our influence. [78]

The singular absence of principle that characterizes the lives of many professed Christians, is alarming. Their disregard of God’s law disheartens those who recognize its sacred claims, and operates to turn those from the truth who would otherwise accept it.

It is necessary for a proper knowledge of ourselves, to look into the mirror and there discover our own defects, and avail ourselves of the blood of Christ, the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, where we may wash our robes of character and remove the stains of sin. Many refuse to see their errors and correct them, they do not want a true knowledge of themselves.

If we would reach a high attainment in moral and spiritual excellence, we must live for it. We are under personal obligation to society to do this, in order to exert an influence continually in favor of God's law. We should let our light shine so that all may see that the influence of the sacred gospel is upon our hearts and lives, that we walk in obedience to its commands and violate none of its principles. We are accountable to the world, in a great degree, for the souls of those around us. Our words and deeds are constantly telling for or against Christ and the law of God, which he came upon earth to vindicate. Let the world see that we are not selfishly narrowed up to our own exclusive interests and our religious joys, but that we are liberal, and desire them to share our blessings and privileges, through the sanctification of the truth.

Let them see that the religion which we profess does not close up nor freeze over the avenues to the soul, making us unsympathizing and exacting. Let all who profess to have found Christ, minister as he did to the benefit of man, cherishing a spirit of wise benevolence. We should then see many souls following the light that shines from our precept and example.

We should all cultivate an amiable disposition and subject ourselves to the control of conscience. The spirit of the truth makes better men and women of those who receive it in their hearts. It works like leaven till the entire being is brought into conformity to its principles. It opens the heart that has been frozen by avarice; it opens the hand that has ever been closed to human suffering; and charity and kindness are seen as its fruits.

God requires that all of us should be self-sacrificing workers. Every part of the truth has a practical application to our daily lives. Blessed are they that hear the word of the Lord and keep it. *Hearing* is not enough, we must *act*, we must *do*. It is in the doing of the commandments that there is great reward. Those who give practical demonstrations of their benevolence by their sympathy and compassionate acts towards the poor the suffering and the unfortunate, not only relieve the sufferers, but contribute largely to their own happiness, and are in the way of securing health of soul and body. Isaiah has plainly described the work that God will accept and bless his people in doing.

“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? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity, and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.”

The sympathy which exists between the mind and the body is very great. When one is affected the other responds to that affection. The condition of the mind has much to do with the health of the physical system. If the mind is free and happy, under a consciousness of right-doing and a sense of satisfaction in causing happiness to others, it will create a cheerfulness that will react upon the whole system, causing a freer circulation of the blood and a toning up of the entire body. The blessing of God is a healer, and those who are abundant in benefiting others, will realize that wondrous blessing in their hearts and lives.

[81]

If your thoughts dear Bro. and Sr., were more directed in the channel of caring for others, your own souls would be more blessed. You both have too little human sympathy. You do not bring your feelings to the necessity of others. You hold yourselves too rigid and unsympathizing. You have become stern, exacting, and overbearing. You are in danger of making yourselves a conscience for others. You have your own ideas of Christian duties and propriety and you would gauge others by those ideas; this is overreaching the bounds of right.

Other people have opinions and marked traits of character which cannot be assimilated to your peculiar views. You also have defects and faults as well as your brethren and sisters, and it is well to

[82] remember this when a difference arises. Your wrongdoing is just as grievous to them as theirs is to you, and you should be as lenient to them as you desire that they should be to you. You both need greater love and sympathy for others, like unto the tenderness of Jesus.

In your own house you should exercise kindness, speaking gently to your child, treating him affectionately, refraining to reprove him for every little error, lest he become hardened by continual fault-finding.

You should cultivate the charity and long-suffering of Christ. You frequently counteract the good you have done by a watchful suspicious spirit in regard to the motives and conduct of others. You are cherishing a feeling that is chilling in its influence, that repulses but does not attract and win. You must be willing to become as yielding and forbearing in your disposition as you desire others to be. Selfish love of your own opinions and your own ways will, in a great measure, destroy your power to do the good you are desirous of doing.

[83] Sister C— , you have too much of the spirit of ruling. You are very sensitive; if your will is crossed you feel very much injured; self rises in arms for you have not a meek and teachable spirit. You will need to watch closely upon this point; in short, you need a thorough conversion before your influence can be what it should be. The spirit you manifest will make you miserable if you continue to cherish it. You will see the mistakes of others and be so eager to correct them that you will overlook your own faults and you will have hard work to remove the mote from your brother's eye while there is a beam obstructing your own vision.

God does not wish you to make your conscience a criterion for others. You have a duty to perform which is to make yourself cheerful and to cultivate unselfishness in your feelings until it will be your greatest pleasure to make all around you happy.

Both of you need to soften your hearts and be imbued with the spirit of Christ, that you may, while living in an atmosphere of cheerfulness and benevolence, help those about you to be healthy and happy also. You have imagined that cheerfulness was not in accordance with the religion of Christ. This is a mistake. We may have true Christian dignity and at the same time be cheerful and pleasant in our deportment. Cheerfulness without levity is one of

the Christian graces. You should guard against taking narrow views of religion or you will limit your influence and become an unfaithful steward of God.

Forbear reprimanding and censuring. You are not adapted to reprove. Your words would only wound and sadden, not cure and reform. You should overcome the habit of picking at little things you think amiss. Be broad, be generous and charitable in your judgment of people and things. Open your hearts to the light. Remember that Duty has a twin-sister which is Love; these unied can accomplish almost everything, but eparated, neither is capable of good.

It is right that you should both cherish integrity and be true to your sense of right. The straight path of duty should be yours from choice. The love of property, the love of pleasure and friendship, should never influence you to sacrifice one principle of right. You should be firm in the dictates of an enlightened conscience and your convictions of duty, but you should guard against bigotry and prejudice. Do not run into a Pharisaical spirit. [84]

You are now sowing seed in the great field of life. That which you now sow you will one day reap. Every thought of your mind, every emotion of your soul, every word of your tongue, every act you perform, is seed that will bear fruit for good or evil. The reaping time is not far distant. All our works are passing in review before God. All our actions and the motives which prompted them, are to be open for the inspection of angels and of God.

You should come into harmony, as much as possible, with your brethren and sisters. You should surrender yourselves to God and leave off your sternness and your disposition to find fault. You should yield your own spirit and take in its place the spirit of the dear Saviour. Reach up and grasp his hand that the touch may electrify you and charge you with the sweet properties of his own matchless character. You may open your hearts to his love and let his power transform you and his grace be your strength. Then will you have a powerful influence for good. Your moral strength will be equal to the closest test of character. Your integrity will be pure and sanctified. Then will your light break forth as the morning. [85]

You both need to come more in sympathy with other minds. Christ is our example; he identified himself with suffering humanity; he made the necessities of others a confideration of his own. When

his brethren suffered, he suffered with them. Any slight or neglect of his disciples is as done to Christ himself. Thus he says, "I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink."

Dear brother and sister, you should seek for more harmonious characters. The absence of one essential qualification may render the actions of the rest almost inefficient. The principles you profess should be carried into every thought, word, and act. Self should be crucified and the entire being made subordinate to the Lord.

[86] The church is greatly deficient in love and humanity. Some preserve a cold and chilling reserve and iron dignity that repels those who are brought within its influence. This spirit is contagious; it creates an atmosphere that is withering to good impulses and good resolves; it chokes the natural current of human sympathy, cordiality and love; under its influence people become constrained, and their social and generous attributes are destroyed for want of exercise. Not only is the spiritual health affected, but the physical health suffers by this unnatural depression. The gloom and chill of this unsocial atmosphere is reflected upon the countenance. The faces of those who are benevolent and sympathetic, will shine with the luster of true goodness, while those who do not cherish kindly thoughts and unselfish motives, express in their faces the sentiments cherished in their hearts.

Sister C—, your feelings toward your sister are not exactly as God would have them. She needed sisterly affection from you and less dictating and fault-finding. Your course with her has caused a depression of spirit and anxiety of mind injurious to her health. Be careful lest you oppress and discourage your own sister. You cannot bear anything from her, and you resent anything she says that has the appearance of crossing your track.

Your sister has a positive temperament. She has a work to do for herself in this respect. She should be more yielding, but you must not expect to exert a beneficial influence over her while you are so exacting, and lacking in love and sympathy towards one who bears to you the close relations of a sister, and is also united with you in the faith. You have both erred. You have both given room to the enemy, and self has had much to do with your feelings and actions in regard to each other.

Sister C—, you have an inclination to dictate to your husband, your sister, and all those around you. Your sister has suffered in her mind very much, but this she could have borne had she surrendered herself to God and trusted in him. But God is displeased with your course towards her. It is unnatural and all wrong. She is no more unyielding in her disposition than you are in yours. When two such positive temperaments come in contact with each other, it is very bad for both. You should both of you be converted anew and transformed into the divine likeness. You would better err, if you err at all, on the side of mercy and forbearance than that of intolerance. [87]

Mild measures, soft answers, and pleasant words, are much better fitted to reform and save, than severity and harshness. A little too much unkindness may place persons beyond your reach, while a conciliatory spirit would be the means of binding them to you, and you might then establish them in the right way. You should be actuated by a forgiving spirit also, and give due credit to every good purpose and action of those around you. Speak words of commendation to your husband, your child, your sister, and all with whom you are associated. Continual censure blights and darkens the life of any one.

Do not reproach the Christian religion by jealousy and intolerance towards others. This will but poorly recommend your belief to them. No one has ever been reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach, but many have thus been driven from the truth, and steeled their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle and winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. God requires us to have that charity that suffereth long and is kind. [88]

The religion of Christ does not require us to lose our identity of character, but merely to adapt ourselves, in some measure, to the feelings and ways of other; for many people may be brought together in a unity of religious faith, whose opinions, habits and tastes in temporal matters are not in harmony, but, with the love of Christ glowing in their bosoms, looking forward to the same Heaven as their eternal home, they may have the sweetest and most intelligent communion together, and a unity the most wonderful.

There are scarcely two whose experience is alike in every particular. The trials of one may not be the trials of another, and our

hearts should be ever open to kindly sympathy and all aglow with the love Jesus had for all his brethren.

[89] Conquer your disposition to be exacting with your son, lest too frequent reproof make your presence disagreeable to him, and your counsels hateful. Bind him to your heart, not by foolish indulgence, but by the silken cords of love. You can be firm yet kind. Christ must be your helper. Love will be the means of drawing other hearts to yours, and your influence may establish them in the good and right way.

I have warned you against a spirit of censure, and I would again caution you in regard to that fault. Christ sometimes reprov'd with severity, and in some cases it may be necessary for us to do so; but we should consider that while Christ knew the exact condition of the ones he rebuked, and just the amount of reproof they could bear, and what was necessary to correct their course of wrong, he also knew just how to pity the erring, comfort the unfortunate, and encourage the weak. He knew just how to keep souls from despondency, and to inspire them with hope, because he was acquainted with the exact motives and peculiar trials of every mind. He could not make a mistake.

But *we* may misjudge motives, we may be deceived by appearances, we may think we are doing right to reprove wrong, and go too far, censure too severely, wound where we wished to heal; or we may exercise sympathy unwisely, and counteract, in our ignorance, reproof that is merited and timely. Our judgment may be wrong, but Jesus was too wise to err. He reprov'd with pity, and loved those he rebuked with a divine love.

[90] The Lord requires us to be submissive to his will, subdued by his spirit, and sanctified to his service. Selfishness must be put away, and we must overcome every defect in our characters as Christ overcame. In order to accomplish this work we must die daily to self. Said Paul, "I die daily." He had a new conversion every day, an advance step toward Heaven. To gain daily victories in the divine life is the only course that God approves.

The Lord is gracious, of tender pity, and plenteous in mercy. He knows our needs and weaknesses, and he will help our infirmities if we only trust in him and believe that he will bless us and do great things for us.

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Epistle Number Four.

DURING the tent-meeting in 1874, and after its close was an important time for S— F— . Had there been a pleasant and commodious house of worship there, more than double the number that was really gained, would have taken their stand for the truth.

God works with our efforts. We may close the way for sinners by our negligence and selfishness. There should have been great diligence in seeking to save those who were still in error, yet interested in the truth. There is as wise generalship needed in the service of Christ, as over the batallions of an army that protects the life and liberty of the people. It is not every one who can labor judiciously for the salvation of souls. There is much close thinking to be done. We must not enter into the Lord's work hap-hazard and expect success. The Lord needs men of mind, men of thought. Jesus calls for co- workers, not blunderers. God wants right-thinking and intelligent men to do the great work necessary to the salvation of souls.

[91]

Mechanics, lawyers, merchants, men of all trades and professions, educate themselves for their business that they may become masters of it. Should the followers of Christ be less intelligent, and while professedly engaged in his service, be ignorant of the ways and means to be employed? The enterprise of gaining everlasting life is above every earthly consideration. In leading souls to Jesus there must be a knowledge of human nature and a study of the human mind. It requires much careful thought and fervent prayer in order to know how to approach men and women upon the great subject of truth.

Some rash, impulsive, yet honest souls, after a pointed discourse has been given, will accost those who are not with us in a very abrupt manner, and make the truth, which we desire them to receive, repulsive to them. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

Business men and politicians study courtesy. It is their policy to make themselves as attractive as possible. They study to render their address and manners such that they may have the greatest influence

over the minds of those about them. They use their knowledge and abilities as skillfully as possible in order to gain this object.

[92] There is a vast amount of rubbish brought forward by the professed believers in Christ, which blocks up the way to the cross. Notwithstanding all this, there are some who are so deeply convicted that they will come through every discouragement and will surmount every obstacle in order to gain the truth. But had the believers in the truth purified their minds by obeying the truth, had they felt the importance of knowledge and refinement of manners in Christ's work, where one soul has been saved there might have been twenty.

Again, after souls have been converted to the truth, they need to be looked after. The zeal of many seems to fail as soon as a measure of success attends their efforts. They do not seem to realize that these newly converted ones need nursing, watchful attention, help and encouragement. They should not be left alone, a prey to Satan's most powerful temptations; they need to be educated in regard to their duties, to be kindly dealt with, to be led along, visited and prayed with. These souls need the meat apportioned to every man in due season.

No wonder that some become discouraged and linger by the way and are left for wolves to devour. Satan is upon the track of all. He sends his agents forth to gather back to his ranks the souls he has lost. There should be more fathers and mothers to take these babes in the truth to their hearts and encourage them and pray for them, that their faith be not confused.

[93] Preaching is a small part of the work to be done for the salvation of souls. God's Spirit convicts sinners of the truth, and he places them in the arms of the church. The ministers may do their part, but they can never perform the work that the church should do. God requires his church to nurse those who are young in faith and experience, to go to them, not for the purpose of gossiping with them, but to pray, to speak unto them words that are "like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

We all need to study character and manner that we may know how to deal judiciously with different minds, that we may use our best endeavors to help them to a correct understanding of the word of God, and to a true Christian life. We should read the Bible with

them and draw their minds away from temporal things to their eternal interests.

It is the duty of God's children to be missionaries for him, to become acquainted with those who need help. If one is staggering under temptation, his case should be taken up carefully and managed wisely, for his eternal interest is at stake, and the words and acts of those laboring for him may be a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death.

Sometimes a case presents itself that should be made a prayerful study. The person must be shown his true character, understand his own peculiarities of disposition and temperament, and see his infirmities. He should be judiciously handled. If he can be reached, if his heart can be touched by this wise and patient labor, he can be bound with strong cords to Christ and led to trust in God. [94]

Oh, when a work like this is done, all the heavenly court look and rejoice, for a precious soul has been rescued from Satan's snare and saved from death ! Oh, will it not pay to work intelligently for the salvation of souls? Christ paid the price of his own life for them, and shall his followers ask, "Am I my brother's keeper ?" Shall we not work in unison with the Master? Shall we not appreciate the worth of souls for whom our Saviour died?

Some efforts have been made to interest children in the cause, but not enough. Our Sabbath-schools should be made more interesting. The public schools have of late years greatly improved their methods of teaching. Object lessons, pictures and blackboards are used to make difficult lessons clear to the youthful mind. Just so may present truth be simplified and made intensely interesting to the active minds of the children.

Parents who could be approached in no other way, are frequently reached through their children, Sabbath-school teachers can instruct the children in the truth, and they will, in turn, take it into the home circle. But few teachers seem to understand the importance of this branch of the work. The modes of teaching which have been adopted with such success in the public schools could be employed with similar results in the Sabbath-schools, and be the means of bringing children to Jesus and educating them in Bible truth. This will do far more good than religious excitement of an emotional character that passes off as rapidly as it comes. [95]

The love of Christ should be cherished. More faith is needed in the work we believe is to be done before the coming of Christ. There should be more self-denying, self-sacrificing labor in the right direction. There should be thoughtful, prayerful study how to work to the best advantage. Careful plans should be matured. We have minds among us that can invent and carry out if they will only be put to use. Great results would follow well-directed and intelligent efforts.

The prayer-meetings should be the most interesting gatherings that are held; but these are frequently ill-managed. Many attend the preaching, but neglect the prayer meeting. Here again thought is required. Plans should be laid, and wisdom sought of God, how to conduct the meetings so they will be interesting and attractive. The people hunger for the bread of life. If they find it at the prayer-meeting they will go there to receive it.

[96] Long, prosy talks and prayers are out of place anywhere and especially in the social meeting. Those who are forward and ever ready to speak, are allowed to crowd out the testimony of the timid and retiring. Those who are most superficial generally have the most to say. Their prayers are long spun and mechanical. They weary the angels and the people who listen to them. Our prayers should be short and right to the point. Let the long, tiresome petitions be left for the closet if any have such to offer. Let the spirit of God into your hearts and it will sweep away all dry formality.

Music can be a great power for good, yet we do not make the most of this branch of worship. The singing is generally done from impulse or to meet special cases, and then it is left to blunder along losing its proper effect upon the minds of those present. Music should have beauty, pathos, and power. Let the voices be lifted in songs of praise and devotion. Call to your aid, if practicable, instrumental music, and let the glorious harmony ascend to God, an acceptable offering.

But it is sometimes more difficult to discipline the singers and keep them in working order, than to improve the habits of praying and exhorting. Many want to do things after their own style, object to consultation, are impatient under leadership. Well matured plans are needed in the service of God. Common sense is an excellent thing in the worship of the Lord. The thinking powers should be

consecrated to Christ, and ways and means should be devised to serve him best. The church of God who are trying to do good by living out the truth and seeking to save souls, can be a power in the world if they will be disciplined by the Spirit of the Lord. They must not feel that they can go hap-hazard at work for eternity. [97]

As a people, we lose much by lack of sympathy one with the other, a want of sociability. He who talks of independence and shuts himself up to himself, is not filling the position that God designed he should. We are all children of God, mutually dependent upon each other for happiness. The claims of God and of Humanity are upon us. We must all act our part in this life. It is the proper cultivation of the social elements of our nature that brings us in sympathy with our brethren, and affords us happiness in our efforts to bless others. The happiness of Heaven is in the pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels, and with the redeemed who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. We cannot be happy while we are wrapped up in our interest for ourselves. We should live in this world to win souls to the Saviour. If we injure others, we injure ourselves also. If we bless others, we also bless ourselves, for the influence of every good deed is reflected back upon our own hearts.

We are in duty bound to help one another. It is not always that we are brought in contact with social Christians, those who are amiable and mild. Many have not received a proper education, their characters are warped, they are hard and gnarled and seem to be crooked in every way; while we help these to see and correct their defects, we must be careful not to become impatient and irritable over our neighbor's faults. There are disagreeable ones who profess Christ, but the beauty of Christian grace will transform them if they will set diligently about the work of obtaining the meekness and gentleness of Him they follow, remembering that "None of us liveth to himself." [98]

Co-workers with Christ, what an exalted position! Where is to be found the self-sacrificing missionaries in these large cities? The Lord needs workers in his vineyard. We should fear to rob God of the time he claims from us; we should fear to spend it in idleness or in the adornment of the body, appropriating to foolish purposes the precious hours God has given us to become conversant with our

Bibles, to devote to prayer, to labor for the good of our fellow-beings, and fit ourselves and them for the great work devolving upon us.

[99] Mothers spend unnecessary labor upon garments with which to beautify the persons of themselves and their children. It is our duty to dress ourselves plainly and to clothe our children neatly, without useless ornament, embroidery or display, taking care not to foster in them a love of dress that will prove their ruin, but seeking rather to cultivate the Christian graces. We can none of us be excused from our responsibilities, and in no case can we stand clear before the throne of God unless we do the work that the Master has left for us to do.

Missionaries for God are wanted, faithful men and women who will not shirk responsibility. Judicious labor will accomplish good results. There is real work to do. The truth should be brought before people in a careful manner by those who unite meekness with wisdom. We should not hold ourselves aloof from our fellow-men, but come close to them, for their souls are as precious as our own. We can carry the light into their homes, with a softened and subdued spirit plead with them to come up to the exalted privilege offered them, pray with them when it seems proper, and show them there are higher attainments they may reach, and then guardedly speak to them of the sacred truths of these last days.

There are more gatherings for singing than prayer among our people, but even these meetings can be conducted in so reverential, yet cheerful a manner that they may exert a good influence. There is, however, too much jesting, idle conversation and gossiping to make these seasons beneficial by elevating the thoughts and refining the manners.

[100] There has been too much of a divided interest at S— F— . When a new excitement is raised, there are those who cast their influence on the wrong side. Every man and woman should be on guard when there are deceptions abroad calculated to lead away from the truth. There are those who are ever ready to see and hear some new and strange tiling, and the enemy of souls has, in these large cities, plenty to inflame the curiosity and keep the mind diverted from the great and sanctifying truths of these last days.

If every fluctuating religious excitement leads some to neglect to sustain fully, by their presence and influence, the minority who

believe unpopular truth, there will be much weakness in the church where there should be strength. Satan takes various means by which to accomplish his purposes, and if, under the guise of popular religion, he can lead off vacillating and unwary ones from the path of truth, he has accomplished much in dividing the strength of the people of God.

This fluctuating revival enthusiasm, that comes and goes like the tides, carries a delusive exterior that deceives many honest persons into believing it the true Spirit of the Lord. It multiplies converts; those of excitable temperament, the weak and yielding flock to its standard, but when the wave recedes, they are found stranded on the beach. Be not deceived by false teachers, nor led by vain words. The enemy of souls is sure to have enough dishes of pleasing fables to suit the appetites of all.

There will ever be flashing meteors that arise, but the trail of light they leave goes out immediately in darkness that seems denser than it was before. These sensational religious excitements, that are created by the relation of anecdotes and the exhibition of excentricities and odities, are all surface work, and those of our faith who are charmed and infatuated by these flashes of light, will never build up the cause of God. They are ready to withdraw their influence upon the slightest occasion, and induce others to attend those gatherings where they hear that which weakens the soul, and brings confusion to tire mind. It is this withdrawal of the interest from the work that makes the cause of God languish. [101]

We must be steadfast in the faith, we must not be movable. We have our work before us which is to cause the light of truth, as revealed in the law of God, to shine in upon other minds and lead them out of darkness. This work requires determined, persevering energy, and a fixed purpose to succeed.

There are those in the church who need to cling to the pillars of our faith, to settle down and find rock bottom, instead of drifting on the surface of excitement and moving from impulse. There are spiritual dyspeptics in the church. They are self-made invalids; their spiritual debility is the result of their own wavering course; they are tossed about here and there by the changing winds of doctrine, often confused and thrown into uncertainty because they move entirely by feeling; sensational Christians; they are hungry for something new

and diverse; strange doctrines confuse their faith; they are worthless to the cause of truth.

[102] God calls for men and women of stability, of firm purpose, who can be relied upon in seasons of danger and trial, who are as firmly rooted and grounded in the truth as the eternal hills, who cannot be swerved to the right or to the left, but move straight onward and are always found on the right side. There are those who, in time of religious peril, may be almost always looked for among the ranks of the enemy, if they have any influence it is on the wrong side. They do not feel under moral obligation to give all their strength to the truth they profess. Such will receive a reward according to their works.

Those who do little for the Saviour in the salvation of souls, and in keeping themselves right before God, will gain but little spiritual muscle. We need to continually use the strength we have that it may increase and develop. As disease is the result of the violation of natural laws, so is spiritual declension the result of a continued transgression of the law of God. And yet the very transgressors may profess to keep all God's commandments.

[103] We must come nearer to God and place ourselves in a closer connection with Heaven, and many out the principles of the law in the minutest actions of our every-day lives, in order to be spiritually whole. God has given his servants ability, talents to be used for his glory, not to lay idle or be wasted. God has given his servants light and knowl- edge of his will, to be communicated to others and, in imparting to others, we become living channels of light. If we do not exercise our spiritual strength we become feeble, as the limbs of the body become powerless when the invalid is compelled to long inaction. It is use that gives power.

Nothing will give greater spiritual strength and increase earnestness and depth of feeling, than visiting and ministering to the sick and the desponding, helping them to see the light and to fasten their faith upon Jesus. There are disagreeable duties that somebody must do or souls will be left to perish. Christians will find a blessing in doing these duties, however unpleasant they may be. Christ took the disagreeable task upon himself of coming from the abode of purity and unsurpassed glory to dwell, a man among men, in a world seared and blackened by crime, violence, and iniquity. He did this to save

souls, and shall the objects of such amazing love and unparalleled condescension excuse their lives of selfish ease? shall they choose their own pleasure, and follow their own inclinations, and leave souls to perish in darkness because they will meet with disappointment and rebuffs if they labor to save them? Christ paid an infinite price for man's redemption, and shall he say, My Lord, I will not labor in the vineyard, I pray thee have me excused!

God calls for those who are at ease in Zion to be up and doing. Will they not listen to the Master's voice? God wants prayerful, faithful workers who will sow beside all waters. Those who labor thus will be surprised to find how trials, resolutely borne in the name and strength of Jesus, will give firmness to the faith, and renew the courage. In the path of humble obedience is safety and power, comfort and hope. The reward will finally be lost by those who do nothing for Jesus. Weak hands will be unable to cling to the Mighty One, feeble knees will fail to support in the day of adversity. Bible readers and Christian workers will receive the glorious prize, and hear the Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. [104]

The blessing of God will rest upon those in S— F— who have the cause of Christ at heart. The free-will offerings of our brethren and sisters, made in faith and love to the crucified Redeemer, will bring back blessings to them, for God marks and remembers every act of liberality in his saints. In preparing a house of worship there must be great exercise of faith and trust in God. In business transactions, those who venture nothing make but little advancement; why not have faith also in the enterprise of God and invest in His cause.

Some, when in poverty, are generous of their little, but become penurious as they acquire property. Why they have so little faith, is because they do not keep moving forward, as they prosper, and give even at a sacrifice to the cause of God. [105]

In the Jewish system it was required that beneficence should first be shown to the Lord. At the harvest and the vintage, the first fruits of the fields, corn, wine and oil, were to be consecrated as an offering to the Lord. The gleanings and the corners of the fields were reserved for the poor. Our gracious Heavenly Father has not neglected the wants of the poor. The first-fruits of the wool when the sheep were shorn, of the grain when the wheat was threshed, were tt

be offered to the Lord; and at the feast it was commanded that the poor, the widows, the orphans and the strangers, should be invited. At the close of every year all were required to make solemn oath whether or not they had done according to the command of God.

This arrangement was made by the Lord to impress upon the people that in every matter he must be first. They were, by this system of benevolence, to bear in mind that their gracious Master was the true proprietor of their fields, their flocks, and their herds. That the God of Heaven sent them sunshine and rain for their seed-time and harvest, and that everything they possessed was of his creation. All was the Lord's and he had made them stewards of his goods.

[106] The liberality of the Jews in the construction of the tabernacle and the erection of the temple, illustrate a spirit of benevolence which has not been equaled by Christians of any later date. They were just freed from their long bondage in Egypt, they were wanderers in the wilderness, yet scarcely were they delivered from the armies of the Egyptians who pursued them in their hasty journey, when the word of the Lord came to Moses, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring me an offering; of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering."

His people had small possessions and no flattering prospect of adding to them; but an object was before them, to build a tabernacle for God. The Lord had spoken and they must obey his voice. They withheld nothing. All gave with a willing hand, not a certain amount of their increase, but a large portion of their actual possessions. They devoted it gladly and heartily to the Lord. They pleased him by so doing. Was it not all his? Had he not given them all they possessed? If he called for it was it not their duty to give back to the lender his own?

[107] No urging was needed. The people brought even more than was required, and they were told to desist, for there was already more than could be appropriated. Again in building the temple, the call for means met with a hearty response. The people did not give reluctantly; they rejoiced in the prospect of a building being erected for the worship of God. They donated more than enough for the purpose. David blessed the Lord before all the congregation, and said, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able

to offer so willingly after this sort, for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.” Again, in his prayer David gives thanks in these words, “O Lord, our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand and is all thine own.”

David well understood from whom came all his bounties; would that those of this day who rejoice in a Saviour’s love could realize that their silver and gold is the Lord’s and should be used to promote his glory, not grudgingly retained to enrich and gratify themselves. He has an indisputable right to all that he has lent his creatures. All that they possess is his.

There are high and holy objects that require means; they will, thus invested, yield to the giver more elevated and permanent enjoyment than if they were expended in personal gratification or selfishly hoarded for the greed of gain. When God calls for our treasure, whatever the amount may be, the willing response makes the gift a consecrated offering to him, and lays up for the giver a treasure in Heaven that moth cannot corrupt, nor thieves break in and steal, nor fire consume. The investment is safe. The money is placed in bags that have no holes. It is secure.

Can Christians, who boast of a broader light than had the Hebrews, give less than they? Can Christians, living near the close of time, be satisfied with their offerings when not half so large as were the Jews? Their liberality was to benefit their own nation, the work in these last days extends to the entire world. The message of truth is to go to all nations, tongues and people; its publications, printed in many different languages, are to be scattered abroad like the leaves in Autumn.

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It is written, “Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind;” and again, “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked.’ Let us inquire what would our Saviour have done in our circumstances, what would have been his efforts for the salvation of souls? This question is answered by the example of Christ. He left his royalty, and lay aside his glory, and sacrificed his riches, and clothed his divinity with humanity that he might reach men where they were. His example shows that he lay down his life for sinners.

[109] Satan told Eve that a high state of felicity could be gained through the gratification of unlicensed appetite. But the promise of God to man is through denial of self. When Christ was suffering in agony upon the shameful cross, for man's redemption, human nature was exalted. Only by the cross can the human family be elevated to connect with Heaven. Self-denial and crosses meet us at every step of our Heavenward journey.

The spirit of liberality is the spirit of Heaven. The spirit of selfishness is the spirit of Satan. Christ's self-sacrificing love is revealed upon the cross. He gave all he had and then gave himself that man might be saved. The cross of Christ appeals to the benevolence of every follower of the blessed Saviour. The principle illustrated there is to give, give. This carried out in actual benevolence and good works is the true fruit of the Christian life. The principle of worldlings is to get, get, and thus they expect to secure happiness, but carried out in all its bearings, the fruit is misery and death.

To carry the truth to the population of the earth, to rescue them from their guilt and indifference, is the mission of the followers of Christ. Men must have the truth in order to be sanctified through it, and we are the channels of God's light. Our talents, our means, our knowledge, are not merely for our benefit, they are to use for the salvation of souls, to elevate man from his life of sin and bring him, through Christ, to the Infinite God.

[110] We should be zealous workers in this cause, seeking to lead sinners, repenting and believing, to a divine Redeemer, to impress them with a high and exalted sense of God's love to man. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life. What an incomparable love is this! A theme for the most profound meditation! The amazing love of God for a world that did not love him! The thought has a subduing power upon the soul, and brings the mind into captivity to the will of God. Men who are crazy for gain and are disappointed and unhappy in their pursuit of the world, need the knowledge of this truth to quiet the restless hungering and thirsting of their souls.

Missionaries for God are wanted in your large city, to carry light to those who sit in the shadow of death. Experienced hands are needed, in the meekness of wisdom and the strength of faith, to

lift weary souls to the bosom of a compassionate Redeemer. Oh, selfishness! What a curse! It prevents us from engaging in the service of God. It prevents us from perceiving the claims of duty, which should set our hearts aglow with fervent zeal. All our energies should be turned to the obedience of Christ.

To divide our interest with the leaders of error, is aiding the wrong side and giving advantage to our foes. The truth of God knows no compromise with sin, no connection with artifice, no union with transgression. Soldiers are wanted who will always answer to the roll-call and be ready for immediate action. Not those who, when needed, are found aiding the power of the enemy.

Ours is a great work. Yet there are many who profess to believe [111] these sacred truths but are paralyzed by the sophistry of Satan and are doing nothing for God but rather hinder his cause. When will they act like those who wait for the Lord? When will they show a zeal in accordance with their faith? Many people selfishly retain their means, and soothe their conscience with a plan for doing some great thing for the cause of God after their death. They make a will, donating a large sum to the church and its various interests, and then settle down with a feeling that they have done all that is required of them. Wherein have they denied self by this act? They have, on the contrary, exhibited the true essence of selfishness. When they have no longer any use for their money they propose to give it to God. But they will retain it as long as they can, till they are compelled to relinquish it by a messenger that cannot be turned aside.

Such a will is often an evidence of real covetousness. God has made us all his stewards, and in no case authorized us to neglect our duty or leave it for others to do. The call for means to advance the cause of truth will never be more urgent than now. Our money will never do a greater amount of good than at the present time. Every day of delay in rightly appropriating it, is limiting the period in which it will do good in the saving of souls. If we leave others to accomplish that which God has left for us to do, we wrong ourselves and him who gave us all we have. How can others do *our* work of [112] benevolence any better than we can do it ourselves? God would have every man an executor of his own will in this matter, during his lifetime.

Adversity, accident or intrigue, may cut off forever meditated acts of benevolence, when he who has accumulated a fortune is no longer by to guard it. It is sad that so many neglect the golden opportunity to do good in the present, but wait to be cast out of their stewardship before giving back to the Lord the means which he has lent them to be used for his glory.

One marked feature in the teachings of Christ, is the frequency and earnestness with which he rebuked the sin of covetousness and pointed out the danger of worldly acquisitions and the inordinate love of gain. In the mansions of the rich, in the temple and in the streets, he warned those who inquired after salvation, "Take heed and beware of covetousness." "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

It is this increasing devotion to money getting, the selfishness which the desire of gain begets, that deadens the spirituality of the church and removes the favor of God from her. When the head and hands are constantly occupied with planning and toiling for the accumulation of riches, the claims of God and Humanity are forgotten.

[113] If God has blessed us with prosperity it is not that our time and attentions should be diverted from him and given to that which he has lent us. The giver is greater than the gift. We have been bought with a price, we are not our own. Have we forgotten that infinite price paid for our redemption? Is gratitude dead in the heart? Does not the cross of Christ put to shame a life of selfish ease and indulgence?

What if Christ had left his work, becoming weary in consequence of the ingratitude and abuse that met him on every side! What if he had never reached that period when he said "It is finished!" What if he had returned to Heaven, discouraged by his receptions! What if he had never passed through that soul agony in the garden of Gethsemane that forced from his pores great drops of blood!

Christ was joined to his plan of labor to work out redemption for the race, by a love that is without parallel and a devotion to the Father's will. He toiled for the good of man up to the very hour of his humiliation. He spent his life in poverty and self-denial, for the degraded sinner. In a world that was his own he had no place to lay his weary head. We are reaping the fruits of this infinite self-sacrifice, and yet, when labor is to be done, when our money

is wanted to aid the work of the Redeemer in the salvation of souls, we shrink from duty and pray to be excused. Ignoble sloth, careless indifference, and wicked selfishness seal our senses to the claims of God.

Oh, must Christ, the Majesty of Heaven, the King of Glory, bear the heavy cross, and wear the thorny crown, and drink the bitter cup, while we recline at ease, glorify ourselves and forget the souls he died to redeem by his precious blood? No, let us give while we have the power. Let us do while we have the strength. Let us work while it is day. Let us devote our time and our means to the service of God, that we may have his approbation and receive his reward. [114]

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Epistle Number Five.

DEAR BRO. H— L— : I feel very anxious for you that you may accept light and come out of darkness. You have been greatly tempted of Satan; he has used you as his instrument to hinder the work of God. He has thus far succeeded with you, but it need not follow that you should, continue in the path of error. I look upon your case with great trembling. I know that God has given you great light. In your sickness last fall the providence of God was dealing with you that you might bear fruit to his glory.

Unbelief was taking possession of your soul, but the Lord afflicted you that you might gain a needed experience. He blessed us in praying for you, and he blessed you in answer to our prayers. The Lord designed to unite our hearts in love and confidence. The Holy Spirit witnessed with your spirit. The power of God in answer to prayer came upon you, but Satan came with temptations and you did not close the door upon him. He entered and has been very busy. [115]

It is the plan of the evil one to work first upon the mind of one, then, through him upon others. He has thus sought to hedge up our way and hinder our labors in the very place where our influence should be most felt, for the prosperity of the cause.

The Lord brought you into connection with his work at —, for a wise purpose; he designed that you should discover the defects in your character and overcome them. You know how quickly your

spirit chafes when things do not move according to your mind. Would you could understand that all this impatience and irritability must be overcome, or your life will prove an utter failure, you will lose Heaven, and it would have been better had you never been born.

Our cases are pending at the court of Heaven. We are rendering our accounts there day by day. Every one will receive reward according to his works. Burnt-offerings and sacrifices were not acceptable to God in ancient times, unless the spirit was light with which the gift was offered. Samuel said, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." All the money on earth cannot buy the blessing of God or ensure you a single victory.

[116] Many would make any and every sacrifice but the very one they *should* make, which is to yield themselves, to submit their wills to the will of God. Said Christ to his disciples, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." Here is a lesson in humility. We must all become humble as little children in order to inherit the kingdom.

Our Heavenly Father sees the hearts of men, and he knows their characters better than they do themselves. He sees that some have susceptibilities and powers which, directed in the right channel, might be used to his glory, to aid in the advancement of his work. He puts these persons on trial, and in his wise providence brings them into different positions and under a variety of circumstances, testing them that they may reveal what is in their hearts and the weak points in their characters which have been concealed from their own knowledge.

He gives them opportunities to correct these weaknesses, and polish off the rough corners of their natures, and fit themselves for his service, that when he calls them to action they will be ready, and that angels of Heaven may unite their labor with human effort in the work that must be done upon the earth.

[117] God in mercy reveals their hidden defects to men whom he designs shall fill responsible positions, that they may look within and examine critically the complicated emotions and exercises of their own hearts, and detect that which is wrong; thus they may modify their dispositions and refine their manners. The Lord in his

providence brings men where he can test their moral powers and reveal their motives of action, that they, may improve what is right in themselves and put away that which is wrong. God would have his servants become acquainted with the moral machinery of their own hearts. In order to bring this about, he often permits the fire of affliction to assail them that they may become purified. “ But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.”

The purification of the people of God cannot be accomplished without their suffering. God permits the fires of affliction to consume the dross, to separate the worthless from the valuable and let the pure metal shine forth. He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. If we cannot bear these trials, what will we do in the time of trouble! If prosperity or adversity discover falseness, pride or selfishness in our hearts, what shall we do when God tries every man’s work as by fire, and lays bare the secrets of all hearts!

True grace is willing to be tried; if we are loth to be searched by the Lord, our condition is serious indeed. God is the refiner fessors, having a name but no zeal. God signified that he wanted men at the great heart of the work to correct the state of things existing there and to stand like faithful sentinels at their post of duty. He has given them light at every point, to instruct, encourage and confirm them as the case required. But notwithstanding all this, those who should be faithful and true, fervent in Christian zeal, of gracious temper, knowing and loving Jesus earnestly, are found aiding the enemy to weaken and discourage those whom God is using to up the build work.

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The term lukewarm is applicable to this class. They profess to love the truth, yet are deficient in Christian fervor and devotion. They dare not give up wholly and run the risk of the unbeliever, yet they are unwilling to die to self and follow out closely the principles of their faith.

The only hope for the Laodiceans is a clear view of their standing before God, a knowledge of the nature of their disease. They are neither cold nor hot, they occupy a neutral position and at same time

flatter themselves that they are in need of nothing. The True Witness hates this Luke warmness. He loathes the indifference of this class of persons. Said he, "I would thou wert either cold or hot." They are, as lukewarm water, nauseous to his taste.

[121] They are either unconcerned or selfishly stubborn. They do not engage thoroughly and heartily in the work of God, identifying themselves with its interests, but hold aloof and are ready to leave their posts when their worldly personal interests demand it. The internal work of grace is wanting in their hearts; of such it is said, "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Faith and love are the true riches, the pure gold which the True Witness counsels the lukewarm to buy. However rich we may be in earthly treasure, all our wealth will not enable us to buy the precious remedies that cure the disease of the soul called lukewarmness. Intellect and earthly riches were powerless to remove the defects of the Laodicean church or remedy their deplorable condition. They were blind yet felt that they were well off. The Spirit of God did not illumine their minds and they did not perceive their sinfulness, therefore did not feel the necessity of help.

To be without the graces of the Spirit of God is sad indeed, but it is a more terrible condition to be thus destitute of spirituality and of Christ, and yet try to justify ourselves, by telling those who are alarmed for us, that we need not their fears and pity. Fearful is the power of self-deception on the human mind. What blindness! setting light for darkness and darkness for light.

[122] The True Witness counsels us to buy of him gold tried in the fire, white raiment and eye-salve. The gold here recommended as having been tried in the fire, is faith and love which maketh the heart rich, for if it has been purged until it is pure and the more it is tested the more brilliant is its luster. The white raiment is purity of character, the righteousness of Christ imparted to the sinner. This is indeed a garment of heavenly texture that can be bought only of Jesus Christ for a life of willing obedience. The eye-salve is that wisdom and grace which enables us to discern the evil from the good and detect sin under any guise. God has given eyes to his church, and he requires them to be anointed with wisdom that they may

see clearly, but many would put out the eyes of the church if they could, for they would not have their deeds come to the light lest they should be reprov'd. The divine eye-salve will impart clearness to the understanding. Christ is the repository of all graces. He says "Buy of me,"

Some may say it is exalting our own merits to expect favor from God through our good works. True we cannot buy one victory with our good works, yet neither can we be victors without them. The purchase which Christ recommends to us is only complying with the conditions he has given us. True grace, which, of inestimable value, which will endure the test of trial and adversity, is only obtained through faith and humble, prayerful obedience. Graces that will endure the proofs of affliction and persecution and evidence their soundness and sincerity, is the gold tried in the fire and found genuine. Christ offers to sell this precious treasure to man, "Buy of me gold tried in the fire." [123]

The dead and heartless performance of duty does not make us Christians, we must get out of a lukewarm condition and experience a true conversion or we shall fail of Heaven.

I was pointed to the providence of God among his people. I was shown that every trial made by the refining, purifying process upon professed Christians proves some to be dross. The fine gold does not always appear. In every religious crisis some fall under temptation. The shaking of God blows away multitudes like dry leaves. Prosperity multiplies a mass of professors. Adversity purges them out of the church. They are a class whose spirits are not steadfast with God. They go out from us because they are not of us. For when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, many are offended.

Let these look back a few months to the time when they were sitting on the cases of others who were in a similar condition to that which they now occupy. Let them carefully call to mind the exercise of their minds in regard to those tempted ones. Had any one told them then that notwithstanding their zeal and labor to set others right, they would at length be found in a similar position of darkness, they would have said, as did Hazael to the prophet, "Is thy sevant a dog, that he should do this thing ?" [124]

Self-deception is upon them. During the calm what firmness they manifest! what courageous sailors they make! But when the furious tempests of trial and temptation come, lo! their souls are shipwrecked. Men may have excellent gifts, good ability, splendid qualifications; but one defect, one secret sin indulged, will prove to the character what the worm-eaten plank does to the ship, utter disaster and ruin!

Dear Bro.: God in his providence brought you from your farm to — —, to bear the tests and trials which you could not have where you were. God has given you some testimonies of reproof which you professedly accepted, but your spirit was continually chafed under rebuke. You are like those who walked no more with Jesus after he brought to bear upon them some close, practical truths.

[125] Bro., you did not take hold in faith to correct the defects marked out in your character. You have not humbled your proud spirit before God. You have stood at warfare against the Spirit of God in reproof. Your carnal, unsubdued heart is not subject to control. You have not disciplined yourself. Time and again your uncontrolled temper and spirit of of insubordination has gained complete mastery over you. How can such an impulsive, unsubdued soul live among the pure angels? If it cannot be admitted into Heaven, as you yourself know, you cannot begin too soon to correct the evil in your nature, be converted, and become as a little child.

Brother, you are proud spirited, lofty in your thoughts and ideas of yourself. All this must be put away. Your relatives have learned to fear these outbreaks of temper. Your tender, God-fearing mother has done her best to soothe and indulge you, and has tried to remove every cause that would produce this self-rising and uncontrollable disposition in her son. But coaxing, and pleading, and seeking pacify, has led you to consider this impulsive temper as incurable, and that it is the duty of your friends to bear with it. All this petting, and excusing, has not remedied the evil, but rather given it license.

You have not fought with this wicked spirit and conquered it. When your way has been crossed you have felt the provocation sufficiently to forget your manhood and that you were created in the image of God and after his likeness. You have sadly defaced and marred that image. You have not had self-control nor power over your will. You have been headstrong and yielded to the power

of Satan. Every time that you have given up to passion, and self-rule, and let your feelings run away with your judgment, it has strengthened that set, uncontrolled will. The Lord saw that you knew not yourself, and that unless you saw yourself in your true light and the sinfulness of your course, and how aggravating in the sight of God were these outbreaks of temper which strengthened at every exhibition you would surely fail of gaining a seat by the side of the suffering Man of Calvary. [126]

God calls upon you Bro. —, to repent and be converted, and become as a little child. Unless the truth has a sanctifying influence upon your life to mould your character, you will fail of an inheritance in the kingdom of God.

The Lord in his providence selected you to come more directly into connection with his cause and his work. He took you like an undisciplined soldier, new to the army, and brought you under rules and regulations, through responsibilities and the drilling process. At first you did nobly, and tried to be faithful to your post. You bore trial better than ever before in your life. But Satan came with his specious temptations, and you fell a prey to them. The Lord pitied you and laid his hand upon you to save you. He gave you a rich experience which you have not benefited by as you should have done, but, like the children of Israel you soon forgot the dealings of God and his great mercies.

Bro. —, you were raised up in answer to prayer, and God gave you a new lease of life; but you have let jealousy and envy into your soul, and have greatly displeased him. He designed to bring you where you would develop character, see your defects and correct them.

There was a decided failure in your education and discipline during your childhood and youth. Now you have the great lessons of self-control to learn which ought to have been mastered in earlier days. God brought you where your surroundings would be changed, and you could be disciplined by his Holy Spirit, that you might acquire moral power and self-control to make you a conqueror. It will require the strongest effort, the most persevering and unfaltering determination, and the strongest energy to control self. Your spirit has long chafed under restraint, and your temper has raged like a caged lion when your will has been crossed. The education, which [127]

should have been the work of the parents, must now be wholly done by yourself. The twig might have been easily bent when young and small; but now how difficult the task after it has grown gnarled and crooked and strong. The parents permitted it thus to be deformed; and now only by the grace of God united with your own persistent efforts, can you become conqueror over your will. You may, through the merits of Christ, part with that which scars and deforms the soul, and develops a misshapen character. You must put away the old man with his errors, and take the new man, Christ Jesus. Adopt his life as your guide, then your talents and intellect will be devoted to God's service.

[128] Oh! if mothers would only work with wisdom, with calmness and determination, to train and subdue the carnal tempers of their children, what an amount of sin would be nipped in the bud, and what a host of church trials would be saved! How many families would be happy that are now miserable! Many souls will be eternally lost because of the neglect of parents to properly discipline their children, and teach them submission to authority in their youth. Petting faults and soothing outbreaks, is not laying the axe at the root of the evil, but proves the ruin of thousands of souls. Oh! how will parents answer to God for this fearful neglect of their duty.

Bro. —, you are willing to stand at the head and dictate to others; but will not be dictated to yourself. Your pride fires in a moment at the attempt. Self-love and a haughty spirit are unruly elements in your character, hindering spiritual advancement. Those who have this temperament must take hold of the work zealously and die to self or they will lose Heaven. God makes no compromise with this element as do fond, mistaken parents.

[129] In my last vision I was shown that if you, Bro. —, refused reproof and correction, and chose your own way, and will not be disciplined, God has no further use for you in connection with his holy work. If you had commenced the work of setting your own soul light with the Lord, you would have seen so great a work to be done for yourself that you would not have spent so much time over the supposed wrongs of Bro. W., dwelling upon them behind his back. The work of the last thirty years should inspire confidence in the integrity of Bro. W. "Honor to whom honor is due."

Men in responsible positions should improve continually. They must not anchor upon an old experience, and feel that it is not necessary to become scientific workers. Man, although the most helpless of God's creatures when he comes into the world, and the most perverse in his nature, is nevertheless capable of constant advancement. He may be enlightened by science, ennobled by virtue, and may progress in mental and moral dignity, until he reaches a perfection of intelligence and purity of character but little lower than the angels. With the light of truth shining in the minds of men, and the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, we cannot conceive what they may be, and what great work they may do.

I know that the human heart is blind to its own true condition. But I cannot leave you, without making an effort to help you. We love you, and we want to see you pressing on to victory. Jesus loves you. He died for you; and he wants you to be saved. We have no disposition to hold you in — —but we do want you should make thorough work with your own soul, and right every wrong there, and make every effort to master self lest you miss Heaven. This you cannot afford to do. For Christ's sake resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Epistle Number Six.

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DEAR BRO. AND SISTER L——: I have been shown that you have erred in the management of your children. You received ideas at — from Dr. — which you have spoken of before the patients, and before your children. They will not bear to be carried out. From Dr. —'s stand-point they may not appear so objectionable, but viewed from a Christian stand-point they are positively dangerous.

The instructions Dr. — has given in regard to shunning physical labor, has proved a great injury to many. The do-nothing system is a dangerous one. The necessity for amusements, as he teaches it and enjoins it upon his patients, is a fallacy. In order to occupy the time and engage the mind they are made a substitute for useful, healthful exercise and physical labor. Amusements, such as Dr. — recommends, excite the brain more than useful employment.

Physical exercise and labor combined has a happy influence upon the mind, strengthens the muscles, improves the circulation,

and gives the invalid the satisfaction of knowing his own power of endurance, whereas, if he is restricted from healthful exercise and physical labor, his attention is turned to himself. He is in constant danger of thinking himself worse than he really is, and of having established within him a diseased imagination which causes him to

[131] continually fear that he is overtaxing his powers of endurance. As a general thing if he should engage in some well directed labor, using his strength and not abusing it, he would find that physical exercise would prove a more powerful and effective agent in his recovery than even the water treatment he is receiving.

The inactivity of the mental and physical powers, as far as useful labor is concerned, is that which keeps many invalids in a condition of feebleness, which they feel powerless to rise above. It also gives them a greater opportunity to indulge in impure imagination, which indulgence has brought many of them where they are in point of feebleness. They are told they have expended too much vitality in hard labor, when, in nine cases out of ten, the labor they performed was the only redeeming thing in their lives, and has been the means of saving them from utter ruin. While their minds were thus engaged they could not have as favorable an opportunity to debase their bodies and complete the work of destroying themselves. To have all such persons cease to labor with brain and muscle, is to give them an ample opportunity to be taken captive by the temptations of Satan.

Dr. — has recommended that the sexes should mingle together; he has taught that their physical and mental health demand a closer association with each other. Such teaching has done, and is doing,

[132] great injury to inexperienced youth and children, and is a great satisfaction to men and women of questionable character, whose passions have never been controlled, and who, for this reason, are suffering from various debilitating disorders. These persons are instructed from a *health stand-point* to be much in the company of the opposite sex. Thus a door of temptation is opened before them, passion rouses like a lion within their hearts, and every consideration is overborne; everything elevated and noble is sacrificed to lust. This is an age when the world is teeming with corruption. Were the minds and bodies of men and women in a healthful condition, were the animal passions subject to the higher intellectual powers of the mind, it might be comparatively safe to teach that boys and girls, and the

youth of still more mature age, would be benefited by mingling much in each other's society. If the minds of the youth of this age were pure and un-corrupted, the girls might have a softening influence upon the minds and manners of the boys, and the boys, with their stronger, firmer natures, might have a tendency to ennoble and strengthen the characters of the girls.

But it is a painful fact that there is not one girl in a hundred who is pure minded, and there is not one boy in a hundred whose morals are untainted. Many that are older have gone to such lengths in dissipation that they are polluted soul and body, and corruption has taken hold of a large class who pass among men and women as polite gentlemen and beautiful ladies. It is not the time to recommend, as beneficial to health, the mingling of the sexes by being as much as possible in each other's society. The curse of this corrupt age is the absence of true virtue and modesty.

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Dr, L—, you have advanced these ideas in the parlor. The young have heard you, and your remarks have had as great an influence upon your own children as upon others. It would have been better to have left those ideas at —.

Close application to severe labor is injurious to the growing frames of the young, but where hundreds have broken down their constitutions by over work alone, inactivity, over-eating, and delicate idleness has sown the seeds of disease in the systems of thousands that are hurrying to swift and sure decay.

Why the youth have so little strength of brain and muscle is because they do so little in the line of useful labor. "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy; and they were haughty and committed abomination before me : therefore I took them away as I saw good." Ezk. 16 : 49, 50.

There are but few of the youth of this degenerate age who can even endure the study necessary to obtain a common education. Why is this? Why do the children complain of dizziness, headache, bleeding at nose, palpitation, and a sense of lassitude and general weakness? Should this be attributed mainly to their close study? Fond and indulgent parents will sympathize with their children because they fancy their lessons are too great a task, and that their close

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application to study is ruining their health. True, it is not advisable to crowd the minds of the young with too many and too difficult studies. But, parents, have you looked no deeper into this matter than merely to adopt the idea suggested by your children? Have you not given too ready credence to the apparent reason for their indisposition? It becomes parents and guardians to look beneath the surface for the cause of this evil.

In ninety-nine cases out of one hundred the cause searched out and revealed to you would open your understanding to see that it was not the taxation of study alone that was doing the work of injury to your children, but their own wrong habits were sapping the brain and the entire body of its vital energy. The nervous system has become shattered by being often excited, and thus has been laid the foundation for premature and certain decay. Solitary vice is killing thousands and tens of thousands.

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Children should have occupation for their time. Proper mental labor and physical out-door exercise will not break the constitutions of your boys. Useful labor and an acquaintance with the mysteries of house-work will be beneficial to your girls, and some out-door employment is positively necessary to their constitution and health. Children should be taught to labor. Industry is the greatest blessing that men, women, and children can have.

You have erred in the education of your children. You have been too indulgent. You have favored them and excused them from labor until, with some of them, it is positively distasteful. Inactivity, lack of well-regulated employment, has injured them greatly. Temptations are on every side ready to ruin the youth for this world and the next. The path of obedience is the only path of safety.

You have been blind to the power the enemy was having over your children. Household labor, even to weariness, would not have hurt them one-fiftieth part as much as indolent habits have done. They would have escaped many dangers, had they been instructed, at an earlier period, to occupy their time in useful labor. They would not have contracted such a restless disposition for change, and to go into society. They would have escaped many temptations to vanity and to engage in unprofitable amusements, light reading, idle talking, and nonsense. Their time would have passed more to their satisfaction, and without so great temptation to seek the society of

the opposite sex, and to excuse themselves in an evil way. Vanity and affectation, uselessness and positive sin, have been the result of this indolence. The parents, and especially you, the father, have flattered and indulged them to their great injury. [136]

Dear Bro., you have made a sad mistake in standing before the patients in the parlor, as you have frequently done, and exalting yourself and wife. Your own children have learned lessons from those remarks that have given shape to their characters. You will now find it not an easy matter to correct the impressions that have been made. They have thought that as your children they were superior to children in general. They have been proud and self-conceited. You have felt anxious lest the people should not give you the respect due your position as a physician of the Health Institute. This has shown a vein of weakness in you which has hindered your spiritual advancement. It has also led to a jealousy of others, fearing that they would supplant you, or not place the right estimate upon your position and value.

You also exalted your wife, placing her before the patients as a superior creature. You were like a blind man. You gave her credit for qualifications she did not possess. You should have remembered that your moral worth is estimated by your words, your acts, your deeds. These can never be hidden, but will place you upon the right elevation before your patients. If your interest is manifested for them, if your labor is devoted to them, they will know it, you will have their confidence and love. [137]

But talk will never make your patients believe that your arduous labor for them has taxed you and exhausted your vitality when they know that they have not had your special attention and care.

The patients will have confidence and love for those who manifest a special interest in them and who labor for their recovery.

If you are the one to do this work, which must be done, which cannot be left undone, which the patients pay their money to have done, then you need not by talking, seek to gain esteem and respect, you will as surely have it as you do the work.

You have not been free from selfishness, and therefore you have not had the blessing which God gives his unselfish workmen. Your interest has been divided. You have had such a special care for yourself and yours, that the Lord has had no reason to especially

work and care for you. Your course in this respect has disqualified you for your position.

[138] I saw one year ago that you felt competent to manage the Institute yourself alone. Were it yours and you the one to be especially benefited or injured by its losses and gains, you would see it your duty to have an especial care that losses should not occur, and that patients who were there upon charity should not drain the Institute of means. You would investigate, you would not have them remain a week longer than it was positively necessary. You would see many plans and ways by which you could reduce expenses and keep up the property of the Institute. But you were merely employed, and the zeal, interest, and ability which you think you possess, to carry on such an institution, does not appear. The patients do not receive the attention for which they have paid and which they have a right to expect. You was shown to me frequently turning away from invalids who were in need of your counsel and advice. You were presented before me as apparently indifferent, seeming rather impatient while scarcely listening to what they were saying which was to them of great importance. You seemed to be in a great hurry, putting them oft till some future time, when a very few appropriate words, spoken in sympathy and encouragement, would quiet a thousand fears, and give, in the place of disquietude and distress, peace and assurance. You appeared to dread to speak to the patients. You did not enter into their feelings, but held yourself aloof when you should have manifested more familiarity. You were too distant and unapproachable. They look to you as children to a parent, and have a right to expect and receive attentions from you which they do not obtain. "Me and mine" comes between you and the labor your position requires you to do. The patients and helpers need your advice frequently, but they feel an unwillingness to go to you, and do not feel free to speak with you.

[139] You have sought to maintain an undue dignity. In the effort you have not attained the object, but lost the confidence and love which you might have gained had you been unassuming, possessing meekness and humility of mind. True devotion and consecration to God will find for you a place in the hearts of all, and clothe you with a dignity not assumed but genuine. You have been exalted by the words of approval you have received. The life of Christ must

be your pattern, to do good in every place you occupy. In caring for others, God will care for you. The Majesty of Heaven did not avoid weariness. He traveled on foot from place to place to benefit the suffering and needy. Although you possess some knowledge and may have some understanding of the human system, and can trace disease to its cause, and even if you had the tongue of men and angels, there are yet qualifications necessary or all your gifts will be of no special value. You must have a power from God, which can only be realized by those who make him their trust and consecrate themselves with devotion to the work he has given them to do. Christ must be a portion of your knowledge. His wisdom instead of yours should be considered. Then will you understand how to be a light in the rooms of the sick. You lack freedom of spirit, power and faith. Your faith is feeble for want of exercise; it cannot be vigorous and healthful. Your efforts will not be as successful for those who are sick in heart and body, and they will not be gaining in physical and spiritual strength if you do not carry Jesus with you in your visits. His words and works you want to accompany you. Then you will feel that those whom your words of sympathy and prayers have blessed will bless you in return. [140]

You have not felt your whole dependence upon God, and your inefficiency and weakness without his especial wisdom and grace. You worry, fear, and doubt, because you have worked too much in your own strength. In God you can prosper. In humility and holiness of mind you will find great peace and strength. They shine brightest who feel most their own weakness and darkness, for such make Christ their righteousness. Your strength should come from your union with Christ. Be not weary in well doing.

The Majesty of Heaven has invited the weary ones, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Why the burden sometimes seems so heavy, and the yoke so galling, is because you have got above the meekness and the lowliness possessed by our divine Lord. Cease trying to gratify and exalt self; but rather let self be hidden in Jesus, and learn of him who has invited you and promised you rest.

[141] I saw that the Health Institute could never prosper while those who held responsible positions connected with it, had more interest for themselves than for the institution. God wants unselfish men and women as workers in his cause, and those who take charge of the Health Institute should have an oversight of every department there, practicing economy, caring for the trifles, guarding against losses, in short they should be as careful and judicious in their management as if they themselves were the actual proprietors.

You have been troubled with a feeling that this and that was not your business. Everything connected with the Institute is your business. If certain things come under your observation that you cannot attend to properly, being called in another direction, call for the help of someone who will give these matters immediate attention. If this work is too arduous for you, someone should take your place who can perform thoroughly all the duties devolving upon one holding your responsible position.

[142] You have frequently charged the patients and helpers, in your parlor talks, with bringing unnecessary burdens and cares upon you, while, at the same time, I saw you were not performing half the duties resting upon you as a physician. You were not properly attending to the cases of the sick under your care. The patients are not blind; they perceive your neglect of them. They are away from their homes and upon expense to obtain the care and treatment they could not receive there. All this scolding in the parlor is injurious to the institution and displeasing to God.

It is true you have had heavy burdens to bear, but in many cases you have blamed the patients and helpers when the trouble was in your own family. They require your constant help, but do not help you in return; there is no one in your home to stay up your hands or give you encouragement. Had you no burden outside the Institute, you could bear up much better, and not lose strength and fortitude. It is your duty to care for your family, but it is not at all necessary for them to be as helpless as they are, and so great a weight upon you. They could assist you if they would.

It is your duty also to preserve your health; and if your family cares are so great, and the work in which you are engaged is overtaxing you, and you are unable to devote the time and attention to the patients and the Institute which is actually their due, then you

should resign your position and seek to place yourself where you can do justice to your family, yourself, and to the responsibilities you assume.

The position you now occupy is an important one. It requires clear intellect, strength of brain, nerve and muscle. Earnest devotion to the work is necessary for its success, and nothing short of this will make the Institution prosperous. To be a living thing it must have live, disinterested workers to conduct it.

Sister L—, you have not been the help to your husband that you should have been. Your attention has been devoted more to yourself. You have not realized the necessity of arousing your dormant energies to encourage and strengthen your husband in his labors, or bless your children with the right influence. If you had set yourself diligently about the duties God enjoined upon you, had helped to bear the burdens of your companion and united with him to properly discipline your children, the order of things in your family would have been changed. [143]

But you have yielded to feelings of gloom and sadness which has brought a cloud upon your dwelling instead of sunshine. You have not encouraged hope and cheerfulness and your influence has been depressing upon those whom you should have aided by kindly words and deeds. All this is the result of selfishness. You have required the attention and sympathy of your husband and children, and yet have not felt that it was your duty to take your mind off yourself and labor for their happiness and well-being. You have given way to impatience, and have harshly reprov'd your children; this has only con-firmed them in their evil ways, and severed the cords of affection that should bind the hearts of parents and children together.

You have lacked self-control, and have censured your husband in the presence of your children, and this has lessened your authority over them as well as his. You have been very weak; when your children have come to you with complaints of others, you have immediately decided in favor of your children and have unwisely censured and blamed those of whom they complained. This has cherished in the minds of your children a disposition to murmur against those who do not pay them the deference they imagine they deserve. You have indirectly encouraged this spirit instead of [144]

silencing it. You have not dealt with your children as firmly and justly as you should have done.

You have had trials. You have been oppressed in mind. You have been discouraged but have charged this unhappiness unjustly upon others. The main cause is to be found in yourself. You have failed to make your home what it should be and what it might have been. It is yet in your power to correct the faults there. Come out of that cold and stiff reserve. Give more love, rather than exact it, cultivate cheerfulness, let the sunshine into your heart and it will shine upon those about you, be more social in your manners, seek to gain the confidence of your children that they may come to you for advice and counsel, encourage in them humility and unselfishness, and set before them the right sort of example.

Awake my dear brother and sister, to the needs of your family. Do not be blinded, but take hold of the work unitedly, calmly, prayerfully, and in faith. Set your house in order and God will bless your efforts.

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Epistle Number Seven.

I was shown on Dec. 10, 1872, the state of Bro. N.'s family. He has been a, true believer and lover of the truth but has been drinking in the spirit of the world.

Said Christ, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Bro. N—, your earthly treasure claims your interest and attention to such an extent that you do not afford time to serve God, yet your wife is dissatisfied that you give him the meager pittance that you do. A worldly insanity has taken possession of her heart. Neither of you give yourselves sufficient time for meditation and prayer. God is robbed of your daily service, and you yourselves are meeting with a greater loss than that of every earthly treasure.

Sr. N., you are still further from God than your husband is. Your conformity to the world has banished your Saviour from your heart, there is no room for him in your affections. You have but little inclination for prayer and searching your heart. You are yielding yourself to obey the prince of the powers of darkness. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye

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obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness."

Sister N—, you know not what you are doing, you do not realize that you are warring against your Creator, in drawing your husband away from the truth. Your attention is on the advantages that the world gives. You have not cultivated a love for devotion, but are better pleased with the stir and bustle of laboring to acquire wealth. You are absorbed in your desire to be like the world that you may receive the happiness that the world gives. Your earthly ambitions and interests are greater than your desire for righteousness and a part in the kingdom of God.

Your precious probationary time is spent in laboring for your temporal welfare, in dressing, and eating, and drinking after the manner of the world. Oh! how unsatisfying, how meager is the recompense obtained. In your worldly desires and pursuits you are carrying a heavier burden than your “Saviour has ever proposed to lay upon you. Your Redeemer invites you, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” My sister, Christ would have you lay down your heavy weight at his feet and submit your stubborn neck to his easy yoke.

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What if your probation should close at this time? How would you bear the investigation of the Master? How have you employed your talents of means and influence, lent you of God for wise improvement to his glory? God has not given you life and its blessings merely to devote to your own pleasure, or selfish gratification, but to benefit others and do good. The Master has intrusted to you talents, that you should put them out to the exchangers, that when he requires them again he may receive his own with usury. Your influence and means have been given you to test you, to reveal what is in your heart; you should use them to win souls to Christ, and thus advance the cause of your Redeemer.

If you fail to do this you are making a terrible mistake. Every day that you devote to serving yourself, and pleasing your friends by yielding to their influence in loving the world and neglecting your best friend, who died to give you life, you are losing much.

Sister N—, you have thought it was not well for you to be different from those around you. You are in a community that has been

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tested on the truth and has rejected it; and you have linked your interests and affections with this company, until you are to all intents one of them. You love their society, yet you are not happy though you flatter yourself that you are so. You have said in your heart, “It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts ?”

It is no small matter for a family, in an unbelieving community to stand as representatives for Jesus, keeping God’s law. We are required to be living epistles known and read of all men. This position involves fearful responsibilities. In order to live in the light you must come where the light shines. Bro. N—, at any sacrifice, should feel under solemn obligation to attend, with his family, at least the yearly gatherings of those who love the truth. It would strengthen him and them, and fit them for trial and duty.

[149] It is not well for them to lose the privilege of associating together with those of like faith with themselves, for the truth loses its importance in their minds their hearts cease to be enlightened and vivified by its sanctifying influence, and they lose spirituality. They are not strengthened by the words of the living preacher. Worldly thoughts and worldly enterprises are continually exercising their minds to the exclusion of spiritual subjects.

The faith of most Christians will waver if they constantly neglect to meet together for conference and prayer. If it were impossible for them to enjoy such religious privileges, then God would send light direct from Heaven by his angels, to animate, to cheer and bless his scattered people. But he does not propose to work a miracle to sustain the faith of his saints. They are required to love the truth enough to take some little pains to secure the privileges and blessings vouchsafed them of God. The least they can do is to devote a few days in the year to a united effort to advance the cause of Christ and to exchange friendly counsel and sympathy.

[150] Many devote nearly all their time to their own temporal interests and pleasures, and begrudge the few days spent and the expense involved in going a distance from their homes to meet with a company gathered together in the name of the Lord. The word of the Lord defines covetousness as idolatry; then how many idolaters are there even among those who profess to be the followers of Christ?

It is required that we meet together and bear testimony to the truth. The angel of God said:—

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

It will pay, then, to improve the privileges within our reach, and, even at some sacrifice, to assemble with those who fear God and speak for him. For he is represented as hearkening to those testimonies, while angels write them in a book. God will remember those who have met together and thought upon his name, and he will spare them from the great conflagration. They will be as precious jewels in his sight, but his wrath will fall on the shelterless head of the sinner. It is not a vain thing to serve God. There is a priceless reward for those who devote their life to his service. Dear Bro. and Sr. you have been gradually entering the darkness, until, almost imperceptibly, it has grown to appear like the light to you. Occasionally a feeble glimmer penetrates that gloom and arouses the mind, but surrounding influences shut out the ray of light, and the darkness seems denser than before. [151]

It would have been better for your spiritual welfare had you changed your place of residence some years ago. The light of truth tested the community in which you live. A few received the message of mercy and warning, while it was rejected by many. Still another class did not accept it because there was a cross to lift. They took a neutral position and thought if they did not war against the truth they would be doing quite well; but the light they neglected to receive and cherish went out in darkness.

They endeavored to quiet conscience by saying to the Spirit of God, Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season I will call for thee. That convenient season has never come. They neglected the golden opportunity that has never again returned to them, for the world has shut out the light that they refused. The interests of this life and the charm of exciting pleasures absorb their minds and hearts, while their best friend, the blessed Saviour, is rejected and forgotten.

[152] Sister N—, although possessing excellent natural qualities, is being drawn away from God by her unbelieving friends and relatives who love not the truth and have no sympathy with the sacrifice and self-denial that must be made for the truth's sake. Sister N— has not felt the importance of separation from the world as the command of God enjoins. The sight of her eyes and the hearing of her ears have perverted her heart.

John the Baptist was a man filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth, and if there was any one who could remain unaffected by the corrupting influences of the age in which he lived, it was surely he. Yet he did not venture to trust his strength; he separated himself from his friends and relatives, that his natural affections might not prove a snare to him. He would not place himself unnecessarily in the way of temptation, nor where the luxuries or even the conveniences of life would lead him to indulge in ease or gratify his appetite, and thus lessen his physical and mental strength. By such a course the important mission he came to fill would have failed in its accomplishment.

[153] He subjected himself to privation and solitude in the wilderness where he could preserve the sacred sense of the majesty of God, by studying his great book of nature and there becoming acquainted with the character of God, in his wonderful works. It was an atmosphere calculated to perfect moral culture and keep the fear of the Lord continually before him. John, the forerunner of Christ, did not expose himself to evil conversation and the corrupting influences of the world. He feared its effects upon his conscience, that sin might not appear to him so exceedingly sinful. He chose rather to have his home in the wilderness, where his senses would not be perverted by his surroundings. Should we not learn something from this example of one whom Christ honored and of whom he said, Among those born of women there are none greater than John the Baptist.

[154] The first thirty years of Christ's life was passed in retirement. Ministering angels waited upon the Lord of life, as he walked side by side with the peasants and laborers among the hills of Nazareth, unrecognized and unhonored. These high examples should teach us to avoid evil influences and shun the society of those who do not live aright. We should not flatter ourselves that we are too strong for any such influences to affect us, but we should, in humility guard

ourselves from danger.

Ancient Israel was especially directed by God to be and remain a people separate from all nations. They were not to be subjected to witnessing the idolatry of those about them, lest their own hearts should be corrupted, lest familiarity with ungodly practices should make them appear less wicked in their eyes. Few realize their own weakness, and that the natural sinfulness of the human heart too often paralyzes our noblest endeavors.

The baleful influence of sin poisons the life; of the soul. Our only safety is in separation from those who live in its darkness. The Lord has enjoined; upon us to come out from among them and be separate, and to touch not the unclean thing and he will receive us and will be a Father unto us, and we shall be his sons and daughters. If we wish to be adopted into the family of God, children of the Heavenly King, we must comply with his conditions; we should come out from the world and stand as a peculiar people before the Lord, obeying his precepts and serving him.

Lot chose Sodom for his home because he saw there were advantages to be gained there from a worldly point of view. But after he had established himself and grown rich in earthly treasure, he was convinced that he had made a mistake in not taking into consideration the moral standing of the community in which he was to make his home. [155]

The dwellers in Sodom were corrupt; vile conversation greeted his ears daily, and his righteous soul was vexed by the violence and crime he was powerless to prevent. His children were becoming like these wicked people, for association with them had perverted their morals. Taking all these things into consideration, the worldly riches he had gained seemed small and not worth the price he had paid for them. His family connections were extensive, his children having married among the Sodomites.

The Lord's anger was finally kindled against the wicked inhabitants of the city. The angels of God visited Sodom to bring forth Lot, that he should not perish in the overthrow of the city. They bade Lot bring his family, his wife, and the sons and daughters who had married in wicked Sodom, and they told him to flee from the place, "For," said the angels, "we will destroy this place, because the cry of

them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.”

[156] And Lot went out and entreated his children. He repeated the words of the angel. Up, get thee out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city! But he seemed unto his sons-in-law as one who mocked, for they had lived so long in Sodom they had become partakers of the sins of the people. And the daughters were influenced by their husbands to believe their father was mad. They were well enough off where they were. They were rich and had great possessions, they could not believe it possible that beautiful Sodom, a rich and fertile country, would be destroyed by the wrath of a sin-avenging God.

Lot returned sorrowfully to the angels, and repeated the story of his failure. Then the angels commanded him to arise, and take his wife, and the two daughters who were yet in his house, and leave the city. But Lot was sad, for the thought of leaving his children and his wife, for she refused to go without them, almost broke his heart. They would all have perished in the terrible ruin of Sodom, had not the Lord, in his great mercy, sent his angels to the rescue.

Lot was paralyzed by the great calamity about to occur, he was stupefied with grief at the thought of leaving all he held dear on earth. But as he lingered, the angels of God laid hold upon his hand, and the hands of his wife and two daughters, and brought them out of the city and charged them to flee for their lives, neither to look behind them, nor to stay upon all the plain, but to escape to the mountains. How reluctant was Lot to obey the angel and go as far as possible from corrupt Sodom, appointed to utter destruction.

[157] Lot plead to remain; he distrusted God. Living in the wicked city, had weakened his faith and confidence in the justice of the Lord. Lot plead that he could not do as he was required, lest some evil should overtake him and he should die. Angels were sent on a special mission to save the life of Lot and his family, but Lot had so long been surrounded by corrupting influences, that his sensibilities were blunted and he could not discern the works of God and his purposes; he could not trust himself in his hands to do his bidding. He was continually pleading for himself, and this unbelief caused him the life of his wife.

She looked back to Sodom and murmured against the dealings of God. She was changed to a pillar of salt, that she might stand as a warning to all those who disregarded the special mercies and providences of Heaven. After this terrible retribution, Lot no longer dared to linger by the way, but fled into the mountains, according to the directions of the angels. The sinful conduct of his daughters after leaving Sodom, was the result of wicked associations while there. The sense of right and wrong was confused in their minds, and sin did not appear as sin to them.

The case of Lot should be a warning to all those who wish to live godly lives, to separate themselves from all influences calculated to lead them away from God. Lot remained so long among the wicked that he was only able to save himself and two daughters, and even they were corrupted in morals by their sojourn in Sodom,

God means what he says and he will not be trifled with. Oh! how many short sighted, sinful mortals plead with God, to induce him to come to their terms, while if they would only yield themselves unreservedly into his hands he would compass their salvation and give them precious victories. [158]

Sister N—, you are in danger of making decisions that will be very injurious to you. God has a work for you to do, which none can do for you, and without this your soul cannot be saved. God loves you and is unwilling you should perish in the general ruin. He invites you to leave those things which hinder your spiritual advancement, and to find in him that strength and consolation you need. You have cares and burdens to bear in your family that often worry you, but if you do only those things necessary to your temporal comfort and happiness, you will find time to read your Bible with prayerful interest and perfect a Christian character.

Bro. N—, you have had many discouragements, but you must be earnest, firm and decided to do your duty in your family, and take them with you if possible. You should spare no effort to prevail upon them to accompany you on your heavenward journey. But if the mother and the children do not choose to accompany you but rather seek to draw you away from your duties and religious privileges, you must go forward even if you go alone. You must live in the fear of God. You must improve your opportunities of attending the meetings, and gain all the spiritual strength you can for you will [159]

need it in the days to come. Lot's property was all consumed, if you should meet with loss you should not be discouraged, and if you can save only a part of your family it is much better than to lose all.

Dear Bro. and Sr. you are parents, you are in a great measure, accountable for the souls of your children. You have brought them into existence and you should, by precept and example, lead them to the Lord and the courts of Heaven. You should impress them with the thought that their temporal interests are of little consequence when compared with their eternal welfare.

These dear children are living among worldly people, and they are imbibing a love for the vanities of life. Your son L—, is a kind-hearted, fine-spirited boy, but he needs the watchful care of a mother, whose daily experience in the Christian life will tit her to counsel and instruct him. He is at just that age when a tender, judicious mother can mould him by her influence; but I fear, sister N—, that you seek rather to mould your children after the fashion of this world, and neglect to teach them that the important work of life is to form characters that will insure immortality.

[160] If L— neglects to become acquainted with religious subjects and practical Christianity, his life will be a mistake. He should see that he needs an education in spiritual and divine things, that he may use his abilities wholly for God. The Lord calls for young men to work in his vineyard. Young men should not neglect the essential branches of education. But if they turn their entire attention to secular study, and neglect to become intelligent on the great subject of religion, and do not acquire a Christian experience, they are becoming disqualified for the work of God.

However favorable the educational advantage may be, something besides the knowledge of books is necessary to save the soul and lead others to repentance. Devoting a period of years to the acquisition of scientific knowledge alone, is not preparing to be an efficient laborer in the service of God.

Young men should devote much time to study, but they should also unite physical labor with their mental efforts, and put in practice the knowledge they have gained. That all the faculties of the mind, and powers of the body may be equally developed by useful exercise. But they should not neglect the things necessary to salvation, nor consider them secondary to anything in this life.

Dear Bro. and Sr. God loves your family and desires to shower his special blessings upon you, that you may become instruments of righteousness in leading others toward Heaven. But Bro. N— can do a great amount of good, if entirely consecrated to God, in a community where his advice and influence would be better received and appreciated. We have strong hopes that both of you will correct that which is wrong in your lives, and renew your faith and obedience to God, receiving new strength from him who has promised to help those who call upon his name. [161]

Young Bro. L—, you have made a mistake in your life. In closely pursuing your studies you have neglected the development of all your faculties. The moral growth should never be dwarfed in the effort to acquire education, but should be cultivated in a far higher degree than is usually deemed necessary.

My dear young brother, you have been ambitious to secure knowledge. This ambition is praise-worthy, but in order to gratify it, you have neglected your eternal interests and made them secondary to your studies. God and Heaven have occupied a subordinate position in your affections. The claims of God's holy law have not been sacredly observed in your daily life. You have desecrated the Sabbath by bringing your studies into that holy time which was not yours to occupy for your own purposes. God has said, in it thou shalt not do any work.

“If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” [162]

You have yielded to inclination rather than duty, and made your studies paramount to the expressed command of the Most High.

Our camp-meetings are arranged and held at great expense. God's ministers who advocate unpopular truth, labor excessively at these large gatherings to bear the message of mercy from a crucified Redeemer to poor fallen sinners. To neglect or treat these messages with indifference, is to slight the mercy of God, and his voice of warning and entreaty.

[163] Your absence from these meetings has been very detrimental to your spiritual welfare. You have missed the strength that you might have gained there in listening to the preached word of God, and mingling with the believers of the truth. Your mind has been lulled into a fatal apathy in regard to the well-being of your soul. You have exalted your secular education above the knowledge to be gained in the school of Christ. Experience in a true religious life is necessary in order to form a character acceptable to God and the pure virtues that will bear the light of Heaven.

What anxiety you have manifested to discipline your mind by study, to become properly conversant with your text-books, that you might creditably pass the examination before your instructors, friends and interested spectators! How ambitious you have been to prove that you have been a diligent student and faithfully employed your time in storing your mind with useful knowledge. You have been as sincerely anxious to progress in your studies, as to secure the commendation of your friends and teachers. You have justly earned the honors you have received for scholarship.

[164] But how has your mind been disciplined in religion? Have you not unthinkingly placed the kingdom of God and his righteousness below your advancement in the sciences? True, some of the human faculties were given more especially for the purpose of engaging in temporal matters, but the higher powers of the mind should be wholly consecrated to God. These control the man, these form his life and character. And while you should not neglect your secular studies, you have no right to give them all your attention, but should devote yourself especially to the moral and spiritual requirements of your Heavenly Father.

How little anxiety you have manifested to improve the religious advantages within your reach, to gain a more thorough knowledge of the laws of God, and a determination to abide by them! You have made little effort to become a loyal and intelligent Christian. How then will you be prepared to pass the grand review, where all your deeds and words, and the inmost thoughts of your heart will be laid open before the great Judge and the assembled saints and angels. You have had little ambition to obtain a spiritual fitness to bear this close examination in the presence of that exalted throng. What then

will be the final decision as to your moral and religious attainments, that decision from which there is no appeal?

What will be the honors accredited to you because of your faithfulness in preserving the required harmony between religion and the pursuit of the sciences? Will you stand as one possessing unfaltering moral courage, in whom is shown excellence of human knowledge united with a holy zeal for God and the obedience of his law?

My brother, you should consider the wisdom of God as all in all. Religion must go hand in hand with science in order to make your education a sanctified means of doing good and turning others to the truth. The more we learn in the school of Christ, the more eager we are to advance in that knowledge. All our acquirements are of little value unless the character is ennobled by religion. God has special duties for every individual to perform, and a decision will be passed upon every case as to the faithfulness with which these duties have been accomplished. [165]

The Lord frequently places us in difficult positions to stimulate us to greater exertion. In his providence special annoyances sometimes occur to test our patience and faith. God gives us lessons of trust. He would teach us where to look for help and strength in the time of need. Thus we obtain practical knowledge of his divine will, which we so much need in our life experience. Faith grows strong in earnest conflict with doubt and fear.

Brother, you may be a conqueror if you take careful heed to your ways. You should devote your young life to the cause of God and pray for success. You should not close your eyes to your danger, but resolutely prepare for every difficulty in your Christian advancement. Take time reflection and humble earnest prayer. Your talents are marked and you are hopeful in regard to your future success, but unless you comprehend the weakness of your natural heart you will be disappointed. [166]

You are just starting out in life, have arrived at an age to bear responsibilities for yourself. This is a critical period in your life. Now, in your youth, you are sowing in the field of life. That which you sow you shall also reap; as was the seed, so shall be the harvest. If you are neglectful and indifferent concerning eternal things, you will sustain a great loss yourself, and, through your influence, prevent others from fulfilling their obligations to God.

[167] Both worlds are before you, which will you choose ? Be wise and lay hold of eternal me. swerve not from your integrity, however unpleasant your duties may appear in the present emergency. It may seem that you are about to make great sacrifices to preserve your purity of soul but do not hesitate, press forward in the fear of God and he will bless your efforts and recompense you a thousand fold. Do not yield your religious claims and privileges in order to gratify the wishes of your unconsecrated friends and relatives You are called to take your position for the truth, even if it should be in direct opposition to those who are closely connected with you. God forbid that this last trial should ever come to you, to test and prove your integrity for the right.

Lay the foundation of your Christian character upon the eternal Rock of Salvation, and let the structure be firm and sound.

We hope that your mother will aid your efforts, and those of your brothers and sisters, to perfect a true character after the pattern of Christ, that you may have a moral fitness for the society of holy angels in the kingdom of glory.

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Epistle Number Eight.

[168] DEAR BRN. G—: In the vision given me last January, I was shown some things in reference to you both. I was shown that you are not growing in spirituality as it is your duty and privilege to do. The greatness of the work and the opening providences of God should stir your hearts. Christ designed that his believing children should be the light of the world, the salt of the earth. The holy life and Christian example of one good man in a community, sheds a light that is reflected upon others. How great then should be the influence of a company of believers all walking in the commandments of God.

The preaching of the word is ordained of God, to arouse and convict sinners. And God, to arouse and convict sinners. exemplifies in his own life the self-denial and sacrifices of Christ, when his conversation and acts are in harmony with the Divine Pattern, then his influence will be a powerful one upon those who listen to his voice. But all cannot be teachers of the word in the pulpit. The

individual duties of different persons vary, and there is work for all to do. All can aid the cause by giving unselfishly of their means to help the various branches of the work, to furnish means for the publication of tracts and periodicals to scatter among the people, and disseminate the truth. Those who give money to promote the cause, are bearing a part of the burden of the work; they are co-laborers with Jesus Christ, for God has furnished men with means, on trust, that they may use them for holy and wise purposes. They are the instrumentalities Heaven has ordained for doing good, and these talents men are to put out to the exchangers.

Dear brethren, ever bear in mind that you are the stewards of God, and that he holds you accountable for the temporal talents he has lent you to use wisely for his glory. Will you not closely search your hearts and investigate the motives which prompt you to action? I was shown that your danger was in loving your possessions. Your ears are not quick to hear the Master's call in the person of his saints and the wants of his cause. You do not invest your treasure gladly in the enterprise of Christianity. If you desire a treasure in Heaven you should be securing it while you have the opportunity. If you feel safer to apply your means toward the greater accumulation of earthly riches, and invest sparingly in the cause of God, then you should feel satisfied to receive heavenly treasure according to your investment in heavenly stock. [169]

You desire to see the cause of God progress, but you make little personal effort towards that end. If you, and others who profess our holy faith, could see your true position, and realize your accountability to God, you would become more earnest co-laborers with Jesus. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." There can be no divided interest in this, for the whole heart and mind and strength is all that composes the man. [170]

Says the apostle, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." When the poor, condemned sinner was lying under the curse of the Father's law, Jesus so loved him that he gave himself for the transgressor. He redeemed him by the virtue of his blood. We cannot estimate the precious ransom paid to redeem fallen man. The heart's best and holiest affections should be given in return for such

wondrous love. The temporal gifts you enjoy are merely lent you to aid in the advancement of the kingdom of God.

I speak of the tithing system, yet how meager it looks to my mind! How small the estimate! How vain the endeavor to measure with mathematical rules, time, money and love against a love and a sacrifice that is measureless and incomputable! Tithes for Christ! Oh, meager pittance, shameful recompense for that which cost so much! From the cross of Calvary, Christ calls for an unconditional surrender.

He promised the young ruler that if he sold all that he had and gave it to the poor, and lifted his cross and followed him, he should have treasure in Heaven. All we have should be consecrated to God.

[171] The Majesty of Heaven came to the world to die, a sacrifice for the sins of man. How cold and selfish is the human heart that can turn away from such incomparable love, and set itself upon the vain things of this world.

When selfishness is striving for the victory over you, bear in mind One who left the glorious courts of Heaven, and laid aside the robes of royalty for your sakes, becoming poor that, through his poverty, you might be made rich. Will you, then, disregard this great love and boundless mercy, by refusing to be inconvenienced, and to deny yourselves for his dear sake? Will you cling to the treasures of this life and neglect to aid in carrying forward the great work of truth?

The children of Israel were anciently commanded to make an offering for the entire congregation to purify them from ceremonial defilement. This sacrifice was a red heifer, and represented the more perfect offering that should redeem from the pollution of sin. This was an occasional sacrifice for the purification of all those who had necessarily or accidentally touched the dead. All who came in contact with death in any way were considered ceremonially unclean. This was to forcibly impress the minds of the Hebrews

[172] with the fact that death came in consequence of sin, and therefore is a representative of sin. The *one* heifer, the *one* ark, the *one* brazen serpent impressively point to the *one* great offering, the sacrifice of Christ.

This heifer was to be red without spot, which was a symbol of blood. It must be without blemish, and one that had never borne

a yoke. Here again was Christ typified. The Son of God came voluntarily to accomplish the work of atonement, There was no obligatory yoke upon him, for he was independent and above all law. The angels, as God's intelligent messengers, were under the yoke of obligation, no personal sacrifice of theirs would atone for the guilt of fallen man. Christ alone was free from the claims of the law to undertake the redemption of the sinful race. He had power to lay down his life and to take it up again. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

Yet this glorious being loved the poor sinner, and took upon himself the form of a servant, that he might suffer and die in man's behalf. Jesus might have remained at his Father's right hand, wearing his kingly crown and royal robes. But he chose to exchange all the riches, honor and glory of Heaven for the poverty of humanity, and his station of high command for the horrors of Gethsemane, and the humiliation and agony of Calvary. He became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, that, by his baptism of suffering and blood, he might purify and redeem a guilty world. Lo, "I come," was the joyful assent, "to do thy will, O God !"

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The sacrificial heifer was conducted without the camp, and slain in the most imposing manner. Thus Christ suffered without the gates of Jerusalem, for Calvary was outside the city walls. This was to show that Christ did not die for the Hebrews alone, but for all mankind. He proclaims to a fallen world that he has come to be their Redeemer, and urges them to accept the salvation he offers them.

The heifer having been slain in a most solemn manner, the priest clothed in pure white garments, took the blood in his hands as it issued from the body of the victim, and cast it towards the temple seven times. "And having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

The body of the heifer was burned to ashes, which signified a whole and ample sacrifice. The ashes were then gathered up by a person uncontaminated by contact with the dead, and placed in a vessel containing water from a running stream. This clean and pure person then took a cedar stick with scarlet cloth and a bunch of hyssop and sprinkled the contents of the vessel upon the tent and

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the people assembled. This ceremony was repeated several times in order to be thorough, and was done as a purification from sin.

Thus Christ in his own spotless righteousness, after shedding his precious blood, enters into the holy place to cleanse the sanctuary. And there the crimson current is brought into the service of reconciling God to man. Some may look upon this slaying of the heifer as a meaningless ceremony, but it was done by the command of God, and bears a deep significance that has not lost its application to the present time.

[175] The priest used cedar and hyssop, dipping them into the cleansing water and sprinkling the unclean. This symbolized the blood of Christ spilled to cleanse us from moral impurities. The repeated sprinklings illustrate the thoroughness of the work that must be accomplished for the repenting sinner. All that he has must be consecrated. Not only should his own soul be washed clean and pure, but he should strive to have his family, his domestic arrangements, his property and entire belongings consecrated to God.

After the sprinkling with hyssop of the tent, over the door of those cleansed was written, I am not my own; Lord, I am thine. Thus should it be with those who profess to be cleansed by the blood of Christ. God is no less exacting now than he was in olden times. The Psalmist, in his prayer, refers to this symbolic ceremony when he says, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit."

[176] The blood of Christ is efficacious but needs continually to be applied. God not only wants his servants to use the means he has intrusted to them for his glory, but he desires them to make a consecration of *themselves* to his cause. If you, my brethren, have become selfish and are withholding from the Lord that which you should cheerfully give to his service, then you need the blood of sprinkling thoroughly applied, consecrating you and all your possessions to God.

My much respected brethren, you have not that earnest and unselfish devotion to the work of God that he requires of you. You have given your attention to temporal matters. You have trained your minds for business in order to benefit yourselves thereby. But God

calls for you to come more closely into union with him, that he may mould and train you for his work. A solemn statement was made to ancient Israel that the man who should remain unclean and refuse to purify himself, should be cut off from among the congregation. This has a special meaning for us. If it was necessary in ancient times for the unclean to be purified by the blood of sprinkling, how essential for those living in the perils of the last days and exposed to the temptations of Satan, to have the blood of Christ applied to their hearts daily. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ? "

You should both do much more than you have done towards bearing the burdens of the work of the Lord. I adjure you to arouse from your lethargy, leave the vain idolatry of worldly things, and be in earnest to secure a title to your immortal inheritance. Work while it is day. Do not imperil your souls by forfeiting present opportunities. Do not make your eternal interests of secondary importance. Do not put the world before religion, and toil day after day to acquire its riches, while the peril of eternal bankruptcy threatens you. Every day is bringing you nearer to the final reckoning. Be ready to yield up the talents lent you with the increase gained by their wise use.

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You cannot afford to sacrifice Heaven, or jeopardize your safety. Do not let the deceitfulness of riches lead you to neglect the immortal treasure. Satan is a wily foe and he is ever on your track, striving to ensnare you and compass your ruin. We are in the waiting time, let your loins be girded about, and your lights shining, that you may wait for the Lord when he returneth from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh you may open unto him immediately.

Watch, brethren, the first dimming of your light, the first neglect of prayer, the first symptom of spiritual slumber. He that endureth unto the end shall be saved. It is by the constant exercise of faith and love that believers are made to shine as lights in the world. You are making but poor preparation for the Master's coming, if, when he appears, you must present to him talents that you have buried in the earth, talents neglected, abused, misused, a divided love, serving mammon while professedly serving God.

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You have both professed to be servants of Christ. How necessary that you should obey your Master's directions and be faithful to your duties. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." This love is without a parallel, giving to men the relationship of sons to God. Therefore the Father expects obedience from his children, therefore he requires a right disposition of the property he has placed in their hands. It is not their own to use for their personal gratification, but it is the capital of the Lord, for which they are responsible to him.

[179] Children of the Lord, how precious is the promise! How full the atonement of the Saviour for our guilt! The Redeemer, with a heart of unalterable love, still sheds his sacred blood in the sinner's behalf. The wounded hands, the pierced side, the marred feet plead eloquently for fallen man whose redemption is purchased at such an infinite cost. Oh, matchless condescension! Time nor events can lessen the efficacy of the atoning sacrifice. As the fragrant cloud of incense rose acceptably to Heaven, and Aaron sprinkled the blood upon the mercy-seat of ancient Israel, and cleansed the people from guilt, so the merits of the slain Lamb are accepted by God today as a purifier from the defilement of sin.

Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. There are stem battles for you to fight. You should put on the whole armor of righteousness and prove yourselves strong and true in your Redeemer's service. God wants no idlers in his field, but co-laborers with Christ, vigilant sentinels at their posts, valiant soldiers of the cross, ready to do and dare all things for the cause in which they are enlisted.

[180] It is not wealth or intellect that gives happiness, it is true moral worth and a sense of duty performed. You may have the overcomer's reward and stand before the throne of Christ to sing his praises in the day when he assembles his saints, but your robes must be cleansed in the blood of the Lamb, and charity must cover you as a garment and you be found spotless and without blemish.

John says:—" After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the

throne, and unto the Lamb.” “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Epistle Number Nine.

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DEAR BRO.—: In my last vision your case was presented before me. I was shown that there are defects in your Christian character that must be overcome before you can perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. You love the truth, but you need to be sanctified by the truth. You are not selfish nor niggardly in hospitality or in sustaining the cause of truth; but there is one kind of selfishness which exists in your heart. You are wedded to your own opinion, and extol your own judgment above that of others. You are in danger of exalting yourself above your brethren. You are exacting and inclined to carry out your own ideas, independent of your brethren, because you consider your intelligence and experience superior to theirs.

In this you fail to carry out the apostle’s injunction, “Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” You have your notions, your purposes and your plans, and imagine they can never be incorrect.

In your household you have always taken too much of the management upon yourself. When your opinions or plans have been crossed, instead of conceding to, or compromising with, those who opposed you, considering that they, as well as yourself, had a right to their independent judgment, you have felt vexed and hurt. You could not endure that your family should call your plans in question, or offer suggestions differing from your opinions. In consequence of this unpleasant state of affairs, your family have usually submitted their wishes to yours and allowed you to have your own way in order to preserve harmony at home. Therefore there has been in your family much long suffering and patient indulgence of your whims,

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which appears to you only a proper observance of your legitimate authority. This you consider sound and correct management on your part.

Whenever your determined spirit to carry out your own judgment at all hazards has driven your friends to the opposite extreme and to feel contempt for your arbitrary spirit, you have felt, and intimated, that all such opposition was instigated by the temptations of the enemy. This has made you more persistent in carrying out your own ideas, regardless of the wishes of others.

[183] You are in danger of having trouble because you are unwilling to grant liberty of judgment and opinion to those connected with you. It is well for you to remember that their ways and their opinions may be as dear to them as yours are to you. We are very apt to lose sight of this fact when we censure others for not agreeing with us. You govern the members of your family too rigidly. You are very punctilious in giving them line upon line and precept upon precept, and if they venture to differ with you, it only renders you more determined to act according to your own mind and show that you are master in your own house, and not to be interfered with.

You seem to consider that it is enough for you to say that a thing must be done in order to have it done in the very manner you indicated. In this arbitrary way you often place your mind and judgment between your family and their own good sense of what is right and proper under the circumstances. You have made a sad mistake in breaking down the will and judgment of your wife, and requiring her to unquestioningly yield to your superior wisdom or bring discord into the home.

[184] You should not seek to rule the actions of your wife or treat her as a servile dependent. Never lift yourself above her and excuse yourself by thinking, *She is inexperienced and inferior to me.*” Never seek to unreasonably bend her will to yours, for she has an individuality that can never be submerged in yours. I have seen many families shipwrecked through over management on the part of its head, whereas, through consultation and agreement together, all might have moved off harmoniously and well.

My brother, you are self-conceited. You go out of your proper province in order to exercise your authority. You imagine that you understand the best way of doing the work in your kitchen; and

in the working department you have your own peculiar ideas of how everything should be done. You expect all to adapt themselves like machinery to these ideas, and observe the particular order that pleases you.

These efforts to bring your friends into a position where they will meekly yield every wish and inclination to your will, is vain and futile. All minds are not moulded alike, and it is well that it is so, for if they were exactly similar, there would be less harmony and natural adaptability to each other than now. But we are all represented as being members of the body, united in Christ. In this body there are various members, and one member cannot perform exactly the same office as another. The eyes are made for seeing, and in no case can they perform the work of the ears, which is that of hearing, neither can the ears take the place of the mouth, nor the mouth perform the office of the nose. Yet all these organs are necessary to the perfect whole, and work in beautiful harmony with each other.

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The hands have their office and the feet theirs; one is not to say to the other "You are inferior to me;" the hands are not to say to the feet, "We have no need of you;" but all are united in the body, to do their specific work, and should be alike respected as they conduce to the comfort and usefulness of the perfect whole.

We cannot all have the same minds nor cherish the same ideas, but one is to be a benefit and blessing to the other, that where one lacks, another may supply what is requisite. You have certain deficiencies of character and natural biases that render it profitable for you to be brought in contact with a mind differently organized, in order to properly balance your own. Instead of superintending so exclusively, you should consult with your wife and mutually arrive at joint decisions. You do not encourage independent effort on the part of your family, but if your specific directions are not scrupulously carried out you too frequently find fault with the delinquents.

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Were your wife, and other members of your family, without tact or skill, you would be more excusable in taking the reins so entirely in your own hands, but this not being the case, your course is altogether unwarrantable. After you have kindly informed them concerning your views of cooking and the management of household matters, and intimated what your desires are in regard to it, go no farther, but let them use your suggestions as they choose. They will

be much more likely to be pleasantly influenced to please you than if you resorted to peremptory measures. And even if they do not adapt themselves to your opinions, do not persist in ruling everything to be done in your own way.

You must remember that the natural independence of others should be respected. If your wife does her work in a way convenient to herself, you have no right to interfere with her affairs and fret and burden her with your many suggestions and reflections upon her management.

[187] You have many good and generous traits of character. You are a courteous, affable man, in general, to those outside your own family. Perhaps this is attributable, in some measure, to the fact that you dare not exhibit to them your natural disposition, excepting to those whom you consider greatly your inferior. If your superiority is not sufficiently recognized in society, you are determined that it shall be at home, where you think that none will presume to dispute its claims.

You should go diligently about affecting a change in yourself. If you are willing to sacrifice your selfishness, your exacting disposition, your pet notions and ideas, you can have a peaceful and happy home that angels will delight to look upon. Is it sweeter to have your will than to see a proper freedom of action and spirit in your household? Your home is not always just what it should be, but you are the principal cause of its discord. If you stand as a representative of Christ upon the earth, do not, I beseech you, misrepresent your blessed Redeemer, who was meek and kind, gentle and forgiving.

[188] It is a fact well worth your consideration that it is a difficult thing for people who have sound minds and ideas of their own, to work precisely in the groove that another may lay out for them. Therefore you have no moral right to embarrass your wife and family with your whims and petulant notions concerning their employments. It will be hard for you to change at once your mode of operation; but make a firm determination that you will not enter your kitchen unless it be to encourage the efforts and praise the management of those who are laboring there. Let commendation take the place of censure.

Cultivate traits of character the opposite of those which are here reprov'd. Seek to develop goodness, patience, love, and all the graces which will have a transforming influence in your home and

brighten the lives of your family and your friends. Confess that you have done wrong and then turn squarely about and strive to be just and right. Do not endeavor to make your wife a slave to your will, but draw her into close sympathy with yourself by kindness and an unselfish desire to promote her comfort and happiness. Give her an opportunity to exercise her faculties, and do not try to warp her mind and mould her judgment till she loses her mental identity.

She is a child of God and a woman of fine capabilities and good taste, one who has a humble opinion of herself at best. And you have dictated to her so long and discouraged her independent thought, that it has had an influence to make her shut herself within herself and fail to develop the noble womanhood that is hers by right. While consulting with your wife upon matters that effect her interests equally with your own, you well know that if she expresses an opinion contrary to yours, a feeling of injury rises in your heart and self takes possession of you and excludes that feeling of deference that you should naturally cherish towards the companion of your life. [189]

The very same spirit that you exercise at home will be manifested more or less in your church relations. Your determined will, your rigid opinions will be urged and made a ruling power as far as possible. This will never do, you must feel the necessity of yielding your judgment occasionally to that of others, and not persist in your way to a degree that often approaches stubbornness. If you wish for the daily blessing of God you should modulate your imperious disposition, and make it correspond to the Divine Pattern.

You frequently grieve your wife unconsciously to yourself, because you do not guard your words and acts with that tenderness that you should. You thus lessen her love for you, and foster a coldness that is creeping into your home unawares. If you will think less of yourself and more of the treasures in your household, giving due consideration to the members of your family, and allowing them a proper exercise of their individual judgment, you will bring a blessing upon yourself and them, and increase the respect they feel for you. [190]

You have been inclined to look with a sort of contempt upon your brethren who were faulty, and, from their natural temperament, found it hard to overcome the evils that beset them. But Jesus pities

them, he loves them and bears with their infirmities, even as he does with yours. You do wrong to exalt yourself above those who are not so strong as you are. You do wrong to shut yourself up in a self-righteous spirit, thanking God that you are not like other men, but that your faith and zeal exceeds those of the poor, feeble ones striving to do right under discouragements and darkness.

Angels from a pure and holy Heaven come to this polluted world to sympathize with the weakest, the most helpless and needy, while Christ himself descended from his throne to help just such as these. You have no right to hold yourself aloof from these faltering ones, or assert your marked superiority to them. Come more in unison with Christ, pity the erring and lift up the hands that hang down-ward, strengthen the feeble knees, bid the fearful hearts be strong. Pity and help them even as Christ has pitied you.

[191] You have desired to do a work for the Master. Here is work for you to do that will be acceptable to him, the very work that angels are engaged in carrying forward. You may be a co-laborer with them. But you will never be called to preach the word to the people. You may have a generally correct knowledge of our faith, but you lack the qualifications of a teacher. You have not the faculty of adapting yourself to the needs and ways of others. You have not sufficient volume of voice; even in conference meetings you speak too low to be heard by those assembled. Also, my dear brother, you are frequently in danger of being tedious; even in small meetings, your remarks are too lengthy. Every word of what you say may be true, but in order to find its way to the soul, it should be accompanied with a fervor of spiritual power. What we say should be right to the point and not of sufficient length to weary the listeners, else the subject matter will find no lodgment in their hearts.

There is plenty of work for all to do. You, my dear brother, can with all safety do good service for the Lord in helping those who most need aid. You may feel that your work in this direction is not rightly appreciated, but remember that our Saviour's work was also

[192] lightly con- sidered by those whom he benefited. He came to save those who were lost, and the very ones he sought to rescue, refused his help and finally put him to death.

If you fail ninety-nine times in a hundred, but succeed in saving the one soul from ruin, you have done a noble deed for the Master's

cause. But to be a coworker with Jesus, you should have all patience with those for whom you labor, not scorning the simplicity of the work, but looking to the blessed result. When those for whom you labor do not exactly meet your mind, you often say in your heart, "Let them go, they are not worth saving." What if Christ had treated poor out-casts in like manner? He died to save miserable sinners, and if you, in the same spirit, work in the same manner indicated by the example of Him whom you follow, leaving the results with God, you can never measure, in this life, the amount of good you have accomplished.

You are inclined to reach for higher work than that which naturally presents itself to you. You would seek to influence only the intellectual and honorable among men. But this class will surely disappoint your expectations; if they continue long in transgressions, they seldom fully feel their lost and hopeless condition. You should work, as did Christ, in all humility, and you will not lose your reward. It is as honorable to work among the humble and lowly, leading them to the Saviour, as among the rich and great. Above all, do not undertake responsibilities that you are unable to carry. [193]

Everything possible should be done to make the meetings of our people interesting. You may be a great help in this if you take the proper course. Especially should our social meetings be properly conducted.

A few words spoken in a clear and audible voice, in an earnest manner, without any effort of speech, to the point, in relation to your progress in the divine life, would be to the edification of others and a blessing to your own soul.

You need the softening, subduing influence of the Spirit of God upon your heart. No one should receive the idea that a correct knowledge of the truth alone will meet the demands of God. A love and good will that exists only when our ways are acknowledged by our friends as right, is of no real value, for these are natural to the unregenerate heart. Those who profess to be children of God and walking in the right, should not feel annoyed or angered when their track is crossed. [194]

You love the truth, and are anxious for its advancement. You will be placed in various circumstances in order to prove and try you. You may develop a true Christian character if you will submit

yourself to discipline. Your vital interests are at stake, and true holiness and a spirit of self-sacrifice is what you most need. We may obtain a knowledge of the truth and read its most hidden mysteries, and even give our bodies to be burned for its sake, yet, if we have not love and charity, we are as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

Cultivate a disposition to esteem others better than yourself. Be less self-sufficient, less confident, cherish patience, forbearance and brotherly love. Be ready to help the erring, and have pity and tender sympathy towards those who are weak. You need not leave your business in order to glorify the Lord, but you may, from day to day, while pursuing your usual avocations, honor him whom you serve in every deed and word, thereby influencing for the right those with whom you are brought in contact.

[195] Be courteous, tender-hearted, forgiving towards others. Let self-sink into the love of Jesus, that you may honor your Redeemer and do the work that he has appointed for you to do. How little you know of the heart-trials of poor souls who have been bound in the chains of darkness, and lack resolution and moral power. Strive to understand the weakness of others. Help the needy, crucify self, and let Jesus take possession of your soul in order that you may carry out the principles of truth in your daily life.” Then will you be as never before, a blessing to the church and all those with whom you come in contact.

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Epistle Number Ten.

DEAR SISTER :—I have been shown that you have certain faults that you should feel the importance of correcting, in order to enjoy the blessing of God. Many of your trials you have brought upon yourself, because of your freedom of speech. You feel that it is a virtue to talk plainly and tell people just what you think of them and their acts; you call this frankness, but it is down-right discourtesy, and arouses the combativeness of those with whom you are brought in contact. If others should pursue the same course toward you, it would be more than you could bear. Those who are

accustomed to speak plainly and severely to others, are not pleased to receive the same treatment in return.

You have brought upon yourself many grievances that could have been avoided, had you possessed a meek and quiet spirit. You provoke contention, for when your will has been crossed your spirit has arisen for conflict. Your disposition to rule is a constant source of trouble to yourself. Your nature has become jealous and distrustful. You are overbearing and stir up strife by fault-finding and hasty condemnation. You have so long cultivated a spirit of retaliation, that you need continually the grace of God to soften and subdue your nature. The dear Saviour has said, "Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." [196]

Dear sister, I was shown that you bring darkness into your own soul by dwelling upon the mistakes and imperfections of others. You will never have their sins to answer for, but you have a work to do for your own soul, and for your own family that no other can do for you. You need to crucify self, to check the disposition to magnify your neighbors' faults and talk thoughtlessly.

There are subjects upon which you may converse with the very best results; it is always safe to speak of Jesus, of the Christian's hope, and the beauties of our faith. Let your tongue be sanctified to God, that your speech may be ever seasoned with grace.

"Finally, brethren, 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."

The apostle's exhortation should be explicitly followed. There is often a great temptation to talk of things which do not profit the speaker or hearer, but bring barrenness of evil to both. Our probationary time is too brief to spend in dwelling upon the short-comings of others. We have a work before us which requires the closest diligence, and the strictest watchfulness, united with unceasing prayer, or we shall be unable to overcome the defects in our characters, and copy the Divine Pattern. [197]

We should all study to imitate the life of Christ, then we shall have a sanctifying influence upon those with whom we associate. It is a wonderful thing to be a Christian, truly Christ-like, peaceable, pure and undefiled. Dear sister, God must be with us in all our

efforts or they will avail nothing. Our good works will end in self-righteousness.

[198] In your own family there is much to correct. You have failed to give your children the attention and encouragement they need. You have not bound them to your heart by the tenderest cords of love. Your business is a great tax upon your time and energies, and causes you to neglect your home duties. Yet you have become so accustomed to this burden that it would seem a great sacrifice to lay it down; still, if you could do this, it would be for your spiritual interest, and for the happiness and morals of your children. It would be well for you to lay by your perplexing cares, and find a retreat in the country where there is not so strong an influence to corrupt the morals of the young.

True, you would not be entirely free from annoyances and perplexing cares in the country, but you would there avoid many evils and close the door against a flood of temptations which threatens to over-power the minds of your children. They need employment and variety, the sameness of their home makes them uneasy and restless, and they have fallen into the habit of mingling with the vicious lads of the town, obtaining a street education.

You have devoted so much time to missionary work, which has no connection with our faith, and been so pressed with cares and responsibilities that you have not kept pace with the work of God for this time, and have had little leisure to afford your children innocent attractions within the narrow precincts of their home. You have not studied their needs, nor understood their active, developing minds, therefore you have withheld from them simple indulgences that would have gratified them without injury. It would have been a trifling tax upon you to have given your children greater attention, and it would have been of the greatest value to them.

[199] To live in the country would be very beneficial to them; an active out-door life would healthfully develop both their minds and bodies. They should have a garden to cultivate, where they might find both useful employment and amusement. The training of plants and flowers tends to the improvement of taste and judgment, while an acquaintance with God's useful and beautiful creations has a refining and ennobling influence upon the mind, referring it to the Maker and Master of all.

The father of your children was harsh, relentless and unfeeling, cold and stern in his associations with them, severe in his discipline, and unreasonable in his demands. He was a man of peculiar temperament, wrapt up in himself, thinking only of his own pleasure, and reaching out for means to gratify himself and secure the esteem of others. His indolence and dissipated habits, together with his lack of sympathy and love for you and his children, weaned your affections from him at an early day. Your life was filled with hard and peculiar trials, while he was utterly indifferent to your cares and burdens.

These things have left their impress upon you and your children, especially have they tended to warp your character. You have almost unconsciously developed an independent spirit. Finding that you could not depend upon your husband, you have taken that course which you thought best, without taking him into your confidence. As your best endeavors were not appreciated, you mentally braced yourself to move forward according to your best judgment, regardless of censure or approval. Conscious of being wronged and misjudged by your husband, you have cherished a feeling of bitterness against him, and when censured you have retaliated upon those who questioned your course.

But while you have fully realized your husband's faults, you have failed to mark your own. You have erred in talking of his failings to others, thus cultivating a love to dwell upon disagreeable topics, and keeping your disappointments and trials constantly before you. You have thus fallen into the habit of making the most of your sorrows and difficulties, many of which you create by exaggeration and talking to others.

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If you should turn your attention away from outside annoyances and center them upon your family, you would be happier and become the means of doing good. The very fact that your children have missed the proper counsel and example of a father, renders it more obligatory upon you to be a tender and devoted mother. Your duty is more in your home and with your family. Here is real missionary labor to perform. This responsibility cannot be shifted upon another, it is the life-work God has appointed for you.

In devoting yourself so entirely to the details of business you are robbing yourself of time for meditation and prayer, and you are robbing your children of the patient care and attention that they have

a right to claim from their mother. You find it easier and quicker to hurry through with many tasks yourself, than to patiently teach your children to do them for you, yet it would be much better to put certain responsibilities upon them and instruct them to be useful. This would encourage and occupy them, as well as relieve you in part.

[201] You give considerable time to those who have no special claims upon you; in so doing you neglect the sacred duties of a mother. God has not laid upon you many of the burdens which you have assumed. You have visited and helped those who did not need your time and care half so much as your own children, who are now forming characters for heaven or perdition. God will not sustain you in ministering to many who are really suffering under the curse of God for their dissolute and wicked lives.

The first great business of your life is to be a missionary at home. Clothe yourself with humility and patience, forbearance and love, and go about the work that God has ordained you should do, which no other one can do for you. It is a work for which you will be held responsible in the day of retribution. God's blessing cannot rest upon an ill-disciplined household. Kindness and patience must rule in the home to make it happy.

From a worldly point of view money is power, but from the Christian standpoint love is power. Intellectual and spiritual strength are involved in this principle. Pure love has special efficacy to do good, and can do nothing but good. It prevents discord and misery, and brings the truest happiness. Wealth is often an influence to corrupt and destroy; force is strong to do hurt; but truth and goodness are the properties of pure love.

[202] My sister, if you could see yourself as God sees you, it would be plain to your mind that without a thorough conversion you can never enter the kingdom of God. If you would bear in mind that whatever measure you mete to others it shall be meted to you again, you would be more cautious in your speech, milder and more forgiving in your disposition. Christ came into the world to bring all resistance and authority into subjection to himself, but he did not claim obedience through the strength of argument or the voice of command; he went about doing good and teaching his followers the things which belonged to their peace. He stirred up no strife,

he resented no personal injuries, he met with meek submission the insults, the false accusations and cruel scourging of those who hated and condemned him to death. Christ is our example. His life is a practical illustration of his divine teachings. His character is a living exhibition of the way to do good and overcome evil.

You have nursed your resentment against your husband and others who have wronged you, but have failed to perceive wherein you have erred and made matters worse by your own wrong course. Your spirit has been bitter against those who have done you injustice, and your feelings have found vent in reproaches and censure; this would give momentary relief to your burdened heart, but leave a lasting scar upon your soul. The tongue is a little member, but you have cultivated its improper use until it has become a consuming fire.

All these things have tended to check your spiritual advancement. But God sees how hard it is for you to be patient and forgiving, he knows how to pity and to help. He requires you to reform your life, to correct your defects. He desires that your firm and unyielding spirit should be subdued by his grace. You should seek the help of God, for you need peace and quiet instead of storm and contention. The religion of Christ enjoins upon you to move less from impulse, and more from sanctified reason and calm judgment. [203]

You allow your surroundings to affect you too much. Let daily watchfulness and prayer be your safe-guard; then the angels of God will be around you to shed clear and precious light upon your mind and uphold you with their heavenly strength. Your influence over your children, and your course toward them should be such as to attract these holy visitors to your dwelling, that they may assist you in your efforts to make your family and your home as God would have them. When you essay to independently fight your own way through, the heavenly angels are repelled and retire from your presence in grief, leaving you to struggle on alone.

Your children have the stamp of character that their parents have given them; then how careful should be your treatment of them, how tenderly should you rebuke and correct their faults. You are too stern and exacting, and have frequently dealt with them when you were excited and angry; this has almost fretted away the golden cord of love that binds their hearts to yours. You should ever impress upon your children the fact that you love them, that you are laboring for [204]

their interest, that their happiness is dear to you, and you design to do only that which is for their good.

You should gratify their little wants whenever you can reasonably do so. There is but little variety or amusement that your present location affords their young and restless minds, and every year the difficulty increases. Your first consideration should be in the fear of God for your children. As a Christian mother you have obligations to them neither light nor small, and in order to fill them properly, you should lay down some of your other burdens and devote your time and energies to this work. The home of your children should be the most desirable and happy place in the world to them, and the mother's presence should be the greatest attraction.

[205] The power of Satan over the youth of this age is fearful. Unless the minds of the young are firmly balanced by religious principles, their morals will become corrupted by the vicious children with whom they come in contact. You think you understand these things but you fail to fully comprehend the seducing power of evil upon youthful minds. Their greatest danger is from a lack of proper training and discipline. Indulgent parents do not teach their children self-denial. The very food they place before their children is such as to irritate the tender coats of the stomach; this excitement is communicated to the brain through the nerves, and the result is that the animal passions are roused and control the moral powers. Reason is thus made a servant to the lower qualities of the mind. Anything which is taken into the stomach and converted into blood, becomes a part of the being. Children should not be allowed to eat gross articles of food, such as pork, sausage, spices, rich cakes and pastry, for by so doing their blood becomes fevered, the nervous system unduly excited, and the morals are in danger of being affected. It is impossible for any one to live intemperately in regard to diet, and yet retain a large degree of patience. Our Heavenly Father sent the light of Health Reform to guard against the evils resulting from a debased appetite, that those who love purity and holiness may use with discretion the good things he has provided for them, and exercise temperance in their daily lives, that they may be sanctified through the truth.

You are not uniform in your treatment of your children. At times you indulge them to their injury, while at other times you refuse

them some innocent gratification that would make them very happy. You turn from them with impatience, and scorn their simple requests, forgetting that they can enjoy pleasures that to you seem foolish and childish. You do not stoop from the dignity of your age and station, to understand and minister to the wants of your children.

In this you fail to imitate Christ. He identified himself with the lowly, the needy and the afflicted. He took little children in his arms and descended to the level of the young. His large heart of love could comprehend their trials and necessities, and he enjoyed their happiness. His spirit, wearied with the bustle and confusion of the crowded city, tired of association with the crafty and hypocritical men, found rest and peace in the society of innocent children. His presence never repulsed them, the Majesty of Heaven condescended to answer their questions, and simplify his important lessons to meet their childish understanding. He planted in their young, expanding minds the seeds of truth, that would spring up and produce plentiful harvest in their riper years. [206]

In these children, who were brought to him that he might bless them, he saw the future men and women who should be heirs of his grace and subjects to his kingdom, and some of whom would become martyrs for his name's sake. Certain unsympathizing disciples commanded that the children be taken away lest they should trouble the Master; but as they were turning away in sadness, Christ rebuked his followers, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

He knew that these children would listen to his counsel and accept him as their Redeemer, while those who were world-wise and hard-hearted, would be less likely to follow him and find a place in the kingdom of God. These little ones, coming to Christ and receiving his advice and benediction, had his image and his gracious words stamped upon their plastic minds, never to be effaced. We should learn a lesson from this act of Christ, that the hearts of the young are most susceptible to the teachings of Christianity, easy to influence towards piety and virtue, and strong to retain the impressions received. But these tender, youthful ones should be approached with kindness, and taught with love and patience. [207]

My sister, bind your children to your heart by affection. Give them proper care and attention in all things. Furnish them with

becoming garments, that they may not be mortified by their appearance, for this would be injurious to their self-respect. You have seen that the world is devoted to fashion and dress, neglecting the mind and morals to decorate the person ;but in avoiding this evil you verge upon the opposite extreme, and do not pay sufficient attention to your own dress and that of your children. It is always right to be neat and appropriately clad, as becomes your age and station in life.

[208] Order and cleanliness is the law of Heaven; and in order to come in harmony with the divine arrangement, it is our duty to be neat and tasteful. Your ideas are perverted upon this subject. While condemning the extravagance and vanity of the world, you fall into the error of stretching economy into penuriousness. You deny yourself that which is right and proper you should have, and which God has furnished you means to procure. You do not suitably clothe yourself or your children. Our outward appearance should not dishonor the One we profess to follow, but reflect credit upon his cause.

The apostle says : “Charge them that ate 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 rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.” Your means are given you to use where needed, not to hoard up for destruction in the great conflagration. You are bidden to enjoy the good gifts of the Lord, and should use them for your own comfort and to advance His cause, by charity and good works, thereby laying up for yourself treasure in Heaven.

Many of your afflictions have been visited upon you, in the wisdom of God, to bring you closer to the Throne of Grace. He softens and subdues his children by sorrows and trials. This world is God’s work-shop, where he fashions us for the courts of Heaven. He uses the planing knife upon our quivering hearts until the roughness and irregularities are removed, and they are fitted for their proper places in the heavenly building.

Through tribulation and distress, the Christian becomes purified and strengthened, developing a character after the model Christ has given. The influence of a true godly life cannot be measured. It reaches beyond the immediate circle of home and friends, shedding a light that wins souls to Jesus.

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