

Ellen G. White Estate

TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH — NO.27

ELLEN G. WHITE

**TESTIMONY FOR
THE CHURCH.
— No.27**

Ellen G. White

1878

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About the Author

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

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TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH.

* * * * *

Willing Obedience.

ABRAHAM was an old man when he received the startling command from God to offer up his son Isaac for a burnt offering. Abraham was considered an old man even in his generation. The ardor of his youth had faded away. It was no longer easy for him to endure hardships and brave dangers. In the vigor of youth man may breast the storm with a proud consciousness of strength, and rise above discouragements that would cause his heart to fail later in life when his steps are faltering towards the grave.

But God in his providence reserved his last most trying test for Abraham, until the burden of years was Heavy upon him and he longed for rest from anxiety and toil. The Lord spoke unto him, saying, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt-offering." The heart of the old man stood still with horror. The loss of such a son by disease would have been most heart-rending to the fond father, it would have bowed his whitened head with sorrow; but now he is commanded to shed the [4] precious blood of that son with his own hand. It seemed to him a fearful impossibility.

Yet God had spoken and his word must be obeyed. Abraham was stricken in years, but this did not excuse him from his duty. He grasped the staff of faith, and in dumb agony, took his child by the hand, beautiful in the rosy health of youth, and went out to obey the word of God. The grand old patriarch was human; his passions and attachments were like unto ours; he loved this boy who was the solace of his old age, and unto whom the promise of the Lord had been given.

But Abraham did not stop to question how God's promises could be fulfilled if Isaac was slain, he did not stay to reason with his

aching heart; but he carried out the divine command to the very letter, till, just as the knife is about to be plunged into the quivering flesh of the child, the word came, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad," "for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."

This great act of faith is pencilled on the pages of sacred history to shine forth upon the world as an illustrious example to the end of time. Abraham did not plead that his old age should excuse him from obeying God. He did not say, "My hairs are gray, the vigor of my manhood is gone; who will comfort my waning life when Isaac is no more? How can an aged father spill the blood of an only son?"

No; God had spoken, and man must obey without questioning or murmuring or fainting by the way. We need the faith of Abraham in our churches to-day, to lighten the darkness that gathers round them, shutting out the sweet sunlight of God's love, and dwarfing spiritual growth. [5]

Age will never excuse us from obeying God. Our faith should be prolific of good works, for faith without works is dead. Every duty performed, every sacrifice in the name of Jesus, brings an exceeding great reward. In the very act of duty, God speaks and gives his blessing. But he requires of us an entire surrender of the faculties. The mind and heart, the whole being must be given to him, or we fall short of becoming a true Christian.

God has withheld nothing from man that can secure to him eternal riches. He has clothed the earth with beauty and furnished it for his use and comfort during his temporal life. He has given his son to die for the redemption of a world that had fallen through sin and folly. Such matchless love, such infinite sacrifice claims our strictest obedience, our holiest love, our unbounded faith. Yet all these virtues, exercised to their fullest, can never be commensurate with the great sacrifice that has been offered for us.

God requires prompt and unquestioning obedience of his law. But men are asleep or paralyzed by the deceptions of Satan who suggests excuses and subterfuges, and conquers their scruples, saying as he did to Eve in the garden, "Ye shall not surely die." [6] Disobedience not only hardens the heart and conscience of the guilty one, but it tends to corrupt the faith of others. That which looked

very wrong to them at first, gradually loses this appearance by being constantly before them, till finally they question whether it is really sin, and unconsciously fall into the same error.

Through Samuel, God commanded Saul to go and smite the Amalekites and utterly destroy all their possessions. But Saul only partially obeyed the command; he destroyed the inferior cattle, but reserved the best, and spared the wicked king. The next day he met the prophet Samuel with flattering self-congratulations. Said he, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, I have performed the commandment of the Lord." But the prophet immediately answered, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

Saul was confused and sought to shirk responsibility by answering, "*They* have brought them from the Amalekites, for the *people* spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed." Samuel then reproved the king, reminding him of the explicit commands of God, directing him to destroy all things belonging to Amalek. He pointed out his transgressions and declared that he had disobeyed the Lord.

[7] But Saul refused to acknowledge that he had done wrong; he again excused his sin by pleading that he had reserved the best cattle to sacrifice unto the Lord.

Samuel was grieved to the heart by the persistency with which the king refused to see his sin and confess it. He sorrowfully asked, "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. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

We should not look in the face of duty and delay meeting its demands. Such delay gives time for doubts, unbelief creeps in, the judgment is perverted, the understanding darkened. At length the reproofs of God's Spirit do not reach the heart of the deluded person, who has become so blinded as to think that they cannot possibly be intended for him or apply to his case.

The precious time of probation is passing, and few realize that it is given them for the purpose of preparing for eternity. The golden

hours are squandered in worldly pursuits, in pleasure, in absolute sin. God's law is slighted and forgotten, yet every statute is none the less binding. Every transgression will bring its punishment. Worldly love of gain desecrates the Sabbath, yet the claims of that holy day are not abrogated or lessened. God's command is clear and unquestionable on this point; he has peremptorily forbidden us to labor upon the seventh day. He has set it apart as a day sanctified to himself. [8]

Many are the hindrances that lay in the path of those who would follow in obedience the commandments of God. There are strong and subtle influences that bind them to the ways of the world; but the power of the Lord can break these chains. He will remove every obstacle from before the feet of his faithful ones, or give them strength and courage to conquer every difficulty, if they earnestly beseech his help. All hindrances will vanish before an earnest desire and persistent effort to do the will of God at any cost to self, even if life itself is sacrificed. Light from Heaven will illuminate the darkness of those, who, in trial and perplexity, go forward looking unto Jesus as the author and finisher of their faith.

In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouths of prophets and apostles. In these days he speaks to them by the testimonies of his Spirit. There was never a time when God more earnestly instructed his people concerning his will, and the course that he would have them pursue, than now. But will they profit by his teachings, will they receive his reproofs and heed his warning? God will accept of no partial obedience nor sanction any compromise with self.

The Twelve Spies.

[9]

THE Lord commanded Moses to send men to search the land of Canaan, which he would give unto the children of Israel. A ruler of each tribe was to be selected for this purpose. They went, and after forty days returned from their search, and came before Moses and Aaron, and all the congregation of Israel, and showed them the fruit of the land. All agreed that it was a good land, and they exhibited the rich fruit which they had brought as evidence. One cluster of grapes was so large that two men earned it between them on a staff. They also brought of the figs, and the pomegranates, which grew

there in abundance. After they had spoken of the fertility of the land, all but two spoke very discouragingly of their being able to possess it. They said that the people were very strong that dwelt in the land, and the cities were surrounded with great and high walls, and, more than all this, they saw the children of the giant Anak there. They then described how the people were situated around Canaan, and the impossibility of their ever being able to possess it.

[10] As the people listened to this report, they gave vent to their disappointment with bitter reproaches and wailing. They did not wait, and reflect, and reason that God, who had brought them out thus far, would certainly give them the land. They left God out of the question. They acted as though in the taking of the city of Jericho, the key to the land of Canaan, they must depend solely on the power of arms. God had declared that he would give them the country, and they should have fully trusted him to fulfill his word. But their unsubdued hearts were not in harmony with his plans. They did not reflect how wonderfully he had wrought in their behalf, bringing them out of their Egyptian bondage, cutting a path for them through the waters of the sea, and destroying the pursuing host of Pharaoh.

In their unbelief they were limiting the work of God, and distrusting the hand that had hitherto safely guided them. In this instance they repeated their former error of murmuring against Moses and Aaron. "This then, is the end of all our high hopes," said they "This is the land we have traveled all the way from Egypt to possess." They blamed their leaders with bringing trouble upon Israel, and again charged them with deceiving and leading their people astray. Moses and Aaron lay prostrate before God, their faces in the dust.

[11] Caleb and Joshua, the two who, of all the twelve spies, trusted in the word of God rent their clothes in distress, when they perceived that these unfavorable reports had discouraged the whole camp. They endeavored to reason with them, but the congregation were filled with madness and disappointment, and refused to listen to these two men Finally Caleb urged his way to the front, and his clear, ringing voice was heard above all the clamor of the multitude. He opposed the cowardly views of his fellow-spies, which had weakened the faith and courage of all Israel.

He commanded the attention of the people, and they hushed their complaints for a moment to listen to him. He spoke of the land he

had visited. Said he, "Let us go up at once; for we are well able to overcome it." But as he spoke, the unfaithful spies interrupted him, crying, "We be not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we!"

These men, starting upon a wrong course, set their hearts against God, against Moses and Aaron, and against Caleb and Joshua. Every step they advanced in this wrong direction made them firmer in their design to discourage every attempt to possess the land of Canaan. They distorted the truth in order to carry their baneful influence. They represented the climate as being unhealthful, and all the people of giant stature. Said they, "And there we saw the giants, the sons of the giants, the sons of Anak, which came of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

This was not only an evil, but a lying report. It was contradictory; for if the land was unhealthy and "had eaten up the inhabitants," how was it that they attained to such massive proportions. When men in responsible positions yield their hearts to unbelief, there are no bounds to the advance they will make in evil. Few realize, when they start upon this dangerous course, the length that Satan will lead them. [12]

The evil report had a terrible effect upon the people. They reproached Moses and Aaron bitterly. Some groaned and wailed saying, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or, Would God we had died in the wilderness!" Then their feelings rose against the Lord, they wept and mourned saying, "Wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another: Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

Thus they manifested their disrespect for God and for the leaders he had appointed to conduct them. They did not ask the Lord what they should do, but said, "Let *us* make a captain. They took matters in their own hands, feeling themselves competent to manage their affairs without divine aid. They not only accused Moses of deception, but also God, in promising a land which they were not able to possess. They actually went so far as to appoint one of their number as a captain, to lead them back to the land of their suffering and

bondage, from which God had delivered them with his strong arm of omnipotence.

[13] Moses and Aaron still remained prostrate before God in the presence of all the assembly, silently imploring divine mercy for rebellious Israel. Their distress was too deep for words. Again Caleb and Joshua press to the front, and the voice of Caleb once more rises in sorrowful earnestness above the complaints of the congregation.

“The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land that floweth with milk and honey; only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us. Their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Fear them not.”

The Canaanites had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Lord would no longer bear with them. His defense being removed from them, they would fall an easy pray to the Hebrews. They were not prepared for battle, for they felt so strong that they deceived themselves with the idea that no army was formidable enough to prevail against them. Caleb reminded the people that by the covenant of God the land was insured to Israel. But their hearts were filled with madness and they would hear no more. If only the two men had brought the evil report, and all the ten had encouraged them to possess the land in the name of the Lord, they would still have taken the advice of the two in preference to the ten, because of their wicked unbelief.

[14] But there were only two advocating the right, while ten were in open rebellion against their leaders and against God. The greatest excitement now raged among the people, their worst passions were aroused, and they refused to listen to reason. The ten unfaithful spies join them in their denunciations of Caleb and Joshua, and the cry is raised to stone them. The insane mob seize missiles with which to slay those faithful men. They rush forward with yells of madness, when, Lo! the stones drop from their hands, a hush falls upon them, and they shake with terror. God has interposed to check their rash design. The glory of his presence, like a flame of light, illuminates the tabernacle. All the congregation behold the signal of the Lord.

A mightier one than they, had revealed himself, and not one dared continue his resistance. Every murmurer was silenced. The

spies who had brought the evil report, crouched terror-stricken and with bated breath. Moses now arose from his humiliating position and entered the tabernacle, to commune with God. Then the Lord proposed to immediately destroy this rebellious people. He desired to make of Moses a greater nation than Israel; but the meek leader of his people would not consent to this proposition. "And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them; and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land, for they have heard that thou, Lord, art among this people, that thou, Lord, art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by daytime in a pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now, if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, there-fore he hath slain them in the wilderness." [15]

Moses again refuses to have Israel destroyed, and himself made a mightier nation than was Israel. This favored servant of God manifests his love for Israel, and shows his zeal for the glory of his Master, and the honor of his people. Thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now, thou hast been long-suffering and merciful hitherto toward this ungrateful nation; and however unworthy they may be, thy mercy is the same. He pleads, Wilt thou not, therefore, spare them this once, and add this one more instance of divine patience to the many thou hast already given?

Moses prevailed with God to spare the people; but because of their arrogance and unbelief, the Lord could not go with them to work in a miraculous manner in their behalf. Therefore, in his divine mercy, he bade them adopt the safest course, and turn back into the wilderness, towards the Red Sea. He also decreed that, as a punishment for their rebellion, all the adults who left Egypt, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, should be forever excluded from Canaan. They had utterly failed to keep their promise of obedience to God, and this released him from the covenant that they had so repeatedly violated. He promised that their children should possess the goodly land, but their own bodies should be buried in the wilderness. And the ten unfaithful spies, whose evil report had [16]

caused Israel to murmur and rebel, were destroyed by the power of God, before the eyes of the people.

When Moses made known to Israel the will of God concerning them, they seemed to sincerely repent of their sinful conduct. But the Lord knew that their sorrow was because of the result of their evil course, rather than a deep sense of their ingratitude and disobedience. But their repentance came too late; the just anger of God was awakened, and their doom was pronounced from which there was no reprieve. When they found that the Lord would not relent in his decree, their self-will again arose, and they declared that they would not return into the wilderness.

[17] In commanding them to retire from the land of their enemies, God tested their apparent submission and found it was not real. They knew that they had deeply sinned in allowing their rash feelings to control them, and seeking to slay the spies who had urged them to obey God. But they were only terrified to find that they had made a fearful mistake, the consequences of which would prove disastrous to themselves. Their hearts were unchanged, and they only needed an excuse to occasion a similar outbreak. This presented itself when Moses, by the authority of God, commanded them to go back into the wilderness.

They had rebelled against his commands, when he bade them go up and take the land he had promised them, and now, that he directed them to retreat from it, they were equally insubordinate, and declared they would go to battle with their enemies. They arrayed themselves in their warriors' dress and armor, and presented themselves before Moses, prepared for conflict, in their own estimation, but sadly deficient in the sight of God and his sorrowful servant. They refused to listen to the solemn warnings of their leaders that disaster and death would be the consequence of their audacity.

When God directed them to go up and take Jericho, he promised to go with them. The ark containing his law was to be a symbol of himself. Moses and Aaron, God's appointed leaders, were to conduct the expedition under his watchful direction. With such supervision, no harm could have come to them. But now, contrary to the command of God, and the solemn prohibition of their leaders, without the ark of God and without Moses, they march out to meet the armies of the enemy.

During the time consumed by the Israelites in their wicked insubordination, the Amalekites and Canaanites had prepared for battle. The Israelites presumptuously challenged the foe that had not dared to attack them. But just as they had fairly entered the enemy's territory, the Amalekites and Canaanites met them in force and fiercely repulsed them, driving them back with great loss. The field of carnage was red with the blood of the Hebrews, and their dead bodies strewed the ground. They were utterly routed and defeated. Destruction and death was the result of their rebellious experiment.

[18]

But the faith of Caleb and Joshua was richly rewarded. According to his word, God brought these faithful two into the land he had promised to them. The cowards and rebels perished in the wilderness, but the righteous spies did eat of the grapes of Eschol.

The history of the twelve spies' report has an application to us as a people. The scenes of cowardly complaining and drawing back from action when here are risks to encounter, are re-enacted among us to day. The same unwillingness is manifested to heed faithful reports and true counsel, as in the days of Caleb and Joshua. The servants of God, who bear the burden of his cause, practicing strict self-denial and suffering privation for the sake of helping his people, are seldom better appreciated now than then.

Ancient Israel was repeatedly tested and found wanting. Few received the faithful warnings given them of God. Darkness and unbelief does not decrease as we near the time of the second advent of Christ. Truth becomes less and less palatable to the carnal minded; their hearts are slow to believe, and tardy to repent. The servants of God might well become discouraged, were it not for the continual evidences their Master gives them of his wisdom and assistance. Long has the Lord borne with his people. He has forgiven their wanderings, and waited for them to give him room in their hearts; but false ideas, jealousy and distrust have crowded him out.

[19]

Few who are professedly of Israel, and whose minds have been enlightened by the revelations of divine wisdom, dare to come boldly forward, as did Caleb, and stand firmly for God and the right. Because those whom the Lord has chosen to conduct his work, will not be swerved from the course of integrity, to gratify the selfish and unconsecrated, they become the target for hatred and malicious falsehood. Satan is wide awake and working warily in these last

days. God calls for men of spiritual nerve and stamina to resist his artifices.

[20] Thorough conversion is necessary among those who profess to believe the truth, in order for them to follow Jesus, and obey the will of God. Not a submission born of circumstances as was that of the terrified Israelites, when the power of the Infinite was revealed to them, but a deep and heart-felt re- pentance and renunciation of sin. Those who are but half-converted, are as a tree whose boughs hang upon the side of truth, but whose roots, firmly bedded in the earth, strike out into the barren soil of the world. Jesus looks in vain for fruit upon its branches, he finds nothing but leaves.

Thousands would accept the truth, if they could do so without denying self; but this class would never build up the cause of God. These would never march out valiantly against the enemy, which is the world, the love of self and the lusts of the flesh, trusting their divine Leader to give them the victory. The church needs faithful Calebs and Joshuas, who are ready to accept eternal life on God's simple conditions of obedience. Our churches are suffering for laborers. The world is our field. Missionaries are wanted in cities and villages that are more certainly bound by idolatry than the pagans of the East, who have never seen the light of truth. The true missionary spirit has deserted the churches that make so exalted a profession; their hearts are no longer aglow with love for souls, and a desire to lead them into the fold of Christ. We want earnest workers. Are there none to respond to the cry that goes up from every quarter: "Come over and help us?"

[21] Can those who profess to be the repositories of God's law, and who look for the soon coming of Jesus in the clouds of heaven, stand acquitted of the blood of souls, if they turn a deaf ear to the crying needs of the people who walk in shadows? There are books to prepare and to distribute, there are lessons to give, there are self-sacrificing duties to perform! Who will come to the rescue? Who will, for Christ's sake, deny self and spread the light to those who sit in darkness?

* * * * *

The Taking of Jericho.

AFTER the death of Moses, Joshua was appointed the leader of Israel, to conduct them to the promised land. He had been prime minister to Moses during the greater part of the time the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness. He had seen the wonderful works of God wrought by Moses, and well understood the disposition of the people. He was one of the twelve spies who were sent out to search for the promised land, and one of the two who gave a faithful account of its richness, and who encouraged the people to go up and possess it in the strength of God. He was well qualified for his important office. The Lord promised Joshua to be with him as he had been with Moses, and he would make Canaan an easy conquest to him, provided he would be faithful to observe all his commandments.

Joshua had been anxious concerning the execution of his commission to lead the people into the land of Canaan; but this assurance removed his fears. He commanded the children of Israel to make ready for a three-days' journey, and all the men of war to prepare for battle. "And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee; only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death; only be strong and of a good courage."

[22]

God willed that the passage of the Israelites over Jordan should be miraculous. Joshua commanded the people to sanctify themselves, for upon the morrow the Lord would do wonders among them. At the appointed time, he directed the priests to take up the ark containing the law of God, and bear it before the people. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, this day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee."

The priests obeyed the commands of their leader and went before the people carrying the ark of the covenant. The Hebrew host took up the line of march and followed this symbol of the divine presence.

The wide column filed down the bank of Jordan, and, as the feet of the priests were dipped in the brim of the river, the water was

[23] cut off from above, the volume below rolled on, leaving the bed of the stream dry. The priests passed on bearing the ark of God, and Israel followed in the rear. Half way over Jordan the priests were commanded to stand still in the channel of the river, till all the Hebrew host had crossed over. This was to impress upon their minds more forcibly the fact that the power which stayed the waters of Jordan was the same that enabled their fathers to cross the Red Sea forty years before.

Many who passed through the Red Sea when they were children, now, by a similar miracle, crossed over Jordan, men of war equipped for battle. After the host of Israel had all passed over, Joshua commanded the priests to come up out of the river. When they, bearing the ark of the covenant, stood safe upon the farther shore, God removed his mighty hand, and the accumulated waters rushed down, a mighty cataract in the natural channel of the stream. Jordan rolled on, a resistless flood, overflowing all its banks.

But before the priests had come up out of the river, that this wonderful miracle might never be forgotten, the Lord bade Joshua select men of note from each tribe to take up stones from the spot in the river-bed where the priests had stood, and bear them upon their shoulders to Gilgal, and there erect a monument in remembrance of the fact that God had caused Israel to pass over Jordan upon dry land. This would be a continual reminder of the miracle the Lord had worked for them. As years passed on, their children would inquire concerning the monument, and they would recount to them this wonderful history again and again, till it would be indelibly impressed upon their minds to the latest generation.

When all the kings of the Amorites, and the kings of the Canaanites heard that the Lord had stayed the waters of Jordan before the children of Israel, their hearts melted with fear. The Israelites had slain two of the kings of Moab, and their miraculous passage over the swollen and impetuous Jordan filled them with great terror. Joshua then circumcised all the people which had been born in the wilderness. After this ceremony, they kept the passover in the plains of Jericho. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you."

Heathen nations had reproached the Lord and his people because the Hebrews had failed to possess the land of Canaan, which they

expected to inherit soon after leaving Egypt. Their enemies had triumphed because Israel had wandered so long in the wilderness, and they proudly lifted themselves up against God, declaring that he was not able to lead them into the land of Canaan. The Lord had now signally manifested his power and favor, in leading his people over Jordan on dry land, and their enemies could no longer reproach them. The manna, which had continued up to this time, now ceased as the Israelites were about to possess Canaan and eat of the fruits of that goodly land, so there was no more need of it. [25]

As Joshua withdrew from the armies of Israel to meditate and pray for God's special presence to attend him, he saw a man of lofty stature, clad in war-like garments, with drawn sword in his hand. Joshua did not recognize him as one of the warriors of Israel, and yet he had no appearance of being an enemy. In his zeal he accosted him, saying, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

The glory of God hallowed the sanctuary, and for this reason the priests never entered the place sanctified by God's presence with shoes upon their feet. Particles of dust might cleave to them, which would desecrate the holy place. Therefore the priests were required to leave their shoes in the court, before entering the sanctuary. In the court, beside the door of the tabernacle, stood a brazen laver, wherein the priests washed their hands and their feet before entering the tabernacle, that all impurity might be removed. All who officiated in the sanctuary were required of God to make special preparation before entering the place where his glory was revealed. [26]

It was the Son of God who stood as an armed warrior before the leader of Israel. It was the One who had conducted the Hebrews through the wilderness, enshrouded in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

In order to convey to the mind of Joshua that he was no less than Christ, the Exalted One, he says, "Put off thy shoe from off thy foot." He then instructed Joshua what course to pursue in order to take Jericho. All the men of war should be commanded to compass the

city once each day for six days, and on the seventh day they should march around Jericho seven times.

Accordingly Joshua gave orders to the priests and the people as the Lord directed him. He marshalled the hosts of Israel in perfect order.

[27] First was a select body of armed men, clad in their war-like dress; not now to exercise their skill in arms, but only to believe and obey the directions given them. Next followed seven priests with trumpets. Then came the ark of God, glittering with gold, a halo of glory hovering over it, borne by priests in the rich and peculiar dress denoting their sacred office. The vast army of Israel followed in perfect order, each tribe under its respective standard. Thus they compass the city with the ark of God. No sound was heard but the tread of that mighty host and the solemn voice of the trumpets, echoing among the hills and resounding through the streets of Jericho.

With wonder and alarm the watchmen of the doomed city marked every move, and reported to those in authority. They could not imagine what all this display meant. Jericho had defied the armies of Israel and the God of heaven; but when they beheld that mighty host marching around their city once each day, in all the pomp and majesty of war, with the added grandeur of the sacred ark and the attendant priests, the impressive mystery of the scene struck terror to the hearts of princes and people. Then again they would inspect their strong defenses, feeling certain they could successfully resist the most powerful attack. Many ridiculed the idea that any harm could come to them through these singular demonstrations on the part of their enemies. But others were awed as they beheld the majesty and splendor of the procession that each day wound grandly about the city. They remembered that forty years before the Red Sea had parted before this people, that a passage had just been opened for them through the river Jordan. They knew not what farther wonders God might work for them. They kept their gates carefully closed, and guarded them with mighty warriors.

[28] For six days the host of Israel performed their circuit around the city. The seventh day came, and with the first dawn of light, Joshua marshalled the armies of the Lord. Now they were directed to march

seven times around Jericho, and at a mighty note of the trumpets to shout with a loud voice, for God had then given them the city.

The imposing army marched solemnly around the devoted walls. The resplendent ark of God lighting the early dusk of morning, the priests with their glittering breast-plates and jeweled badges, and the warriors with their flashing armor, presented a magnificent pageant. They were silent as the dead, save the measured tread of many feet, and the occasional blare of the trumpet, cutting the blank stillness of the early morning. The massive walls of solid stone frowned darkly down, defying the siege of men.

Suddenly the vast army halts. The trumpets break forth in a blast that shakes the very earth. The united voices of all Israel rend the air with a mighty shout. The walls of solid stone with their massive towers and battlements totter and heave from their foundations, and, with a crash like a thousand thunders, fall in shapeless ruin to the earth. The inhabitants and the army of the enemy, paralyzed with terror and amazement, offer no resistance, and Israel marches in and takes captive the mighty city of Jericho.

How easily the armies of Heaven brought down the walls that had seemed so formidable to the spies who brought the false report. The word of God was the only weapon used. The Mighty One of Israel had said, "I have given Jericho into thine hand." If a single warrior had brought his strength to bear against the walls, the glory of God would have been lessened and his will frustrated. But the work was left to the Almighty; and had the foundation of the battlements been laid in the center of the earth and their summits reached the arch of heaven, the result would have been all the same, when the Captain of the Lord's host led his legions of angels to the attack.

Long had God designed to give the city of Jericho to his favored people, and magnify his name among the nations of the earth. Forty years before, when he led Israel out of bondage, he had proposed to give them the land of Canaan. But, by their wicked murmurings and jealousy, they had provoked his wrath, and he had caused them to wander for weary years in the wilderness till all those who had insulted him with their unbelief were no more. In the capture of Jericho God declared to the Hebrews that their fathers might have

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possessed the city forty years before, had they trusted in him as did their children.

The history of ancient Israel is written for our benefit. Paul says, “But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted,” [30] “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

Many who profess to keep God’s commandments, as did ancient Israel, have hearts of unbelief, while outwardly observing the statutes of God. Favored with great light and precious privileges, they will nevertheless lose the heavenly Canaan, even as the rebellious Israelites failed to enter the earthly Canaan that God had promised them as the reward of their obedience.

As a people we lack faith. Few would in these days follow the directions of God, through his chosen servant, as obediently as did the armies of Israel at the taking of Jericho. The Captain of the Lord’s host did not reveal himself to all the congregation. He communicated only with Joshua, who related the story of this interview to the Hebrews. It rested with them to believe or doubt the words of Joshua, to follow the commands given by him in the name of the Captain of the Lord’s host, or to rebel against his directions and deny his authority.

[31] *They* could not see the host of angels, marshalled by the Son of God who led their van; and they might have reasoned: “What unmeaning movements are these, and how ridiculous the performance of marching daily around the walls of the city, blowing trumpets of rams’ horns meanwhile! This can have no effect upon those strong and towering fortifications.”

But the very plan of continuing this ceremony through so long a time prior to the final overthrow of the walls, afforded opportunity for the increase of faith among the Israelites. They were to become thoroughly impressed with the idea that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to putting themselves out of the question and relying wholly upon their divine Leader.

Would those who to-day profess to be God's people conduct themselves thus, under similar circumstances? Doubtless many would wish to follow out their own plans, would suggest ways and means of accomplishing the desired end. They would be loth to submit to so simple an arrangement, and one that reflected no glory upon themselves, save the merit of obedience. They would also question the possibility of a mighty city being conquered in that manner. But the law of duty is supreme. It should wield authority over human reason. Faith is the living power that presses through every barrier, overrides all obstacles, and plants its banner in the heart of the enemy's camp.

God will do marvelous things for those who trust in him. The reason that his professed people have no more strength, is because they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal his power in their behalf. He will help his believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in him, and implicitly obey him. [32]

There are deep mysteries in the Word of God, there are unexplainable mysteries in his providences, there are mysteries in the plan of salvation that man can not fathom. But the finite mind, strong in its desire to satisfy its curiosity, and solve the problems of infinity, neglects to follow the plain course indicated by the revealed will of God, and pries into the secrets hidden since the foundation of the world. Man builds his theories, loses the simplicity of true faith, becomes too self-important to believe the declarations of the Lord, and hedges himself in with his own conceits.

Many who profess our faith are in this position. They are weak and powerless because they trust in their own strength. God works mightily for a faithful people, who obey his word without questioning or doubt. The Majesty of Heaven, with his army of angels, leveled the walls of Jericho, with no human aid. All the armed warriors of Israel had no cause to glory in their achievements. All was done through the power of God. Let the people give up self, and the desire to work after their own plans, let them humbly submit to the divine will, and God will revive his strength and bring freedom and victory to his children.

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Jeremiah.

The Lord gave Jeremiah a message of reproof to bear to his people, charging them with the continual rejection of God's counsel; saying, "I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers."

God plead with them not to provoke him to anger with the work of their hands and hearts; "but they hearkened not." Jeremiah then predicted the captivity of the Jews, as their punishment for not heeding the word of the Lord. The Chaldeans were to be used as the instrument by which God would chastise his disobedient people. Their punishment was to be in proportion to their intelligence, and the warnings they had despised. God had long delayed his judgments, because of his unwillingness to humiliate his chosen people; but now he would visit his displeasure upon them, as a last effort to check them in their evil course.

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In these days he has instituted no new plan to preserve the purity of his people. He entreats the erring ones who profess his name, to repent and turn from their evil ways, in the same manner that he did of old. He predicts the dangers before them, by the mouth of his chosen servants now as then. He sounds his note of warning, and reproves sin just as faithfully as in the days of Jeremiah. But the Israel of our time have the same temptations to scorn reproof and hate counsel, as did ancient Israel. They too often turn a deaf ear to the words that God has given his servants for the benefit of those who profess the truth. Though the Lord in mercy withholds for a time the retribution of their sin, as in the days of Jeremiah, he will, not always stay his hand, but will visit iniquity with righteous judgment.

The Lord commanded Jeremiah to stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the people of Judah who came there to worship, those things which he would give him to speak, diminishing not a word; that they might hearken and turn from their evil ways. Then God would repent of the punishment which he had purposed to

do unto them because of their wickedness. The unwillingness of the Lord to chastise his erring people is here vividly shown. He stays his judgments, he pleads with them to return to their allegiance.

He brought them out of bondage that they might faithfully serve himself, the only true and living God; but they had wandered into idolatry, they had slighted the warnings given them by his prophets; yet he defers his chastisement to give them one more opportunity to repent and avert the retribution for their sin. Through his chosen prophet, he now sends them a clear and positive warning, and lays before them the only course by which they can escape the punishment which they deserve. This is a full repentance of their sin, and a turning from the evil of their ways.

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The Lord commanded Jeremiah to say to the people: "Thus saith the Lord: If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early and sending them, but ye have not hearkened ; then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." They understood this reference to Shiloh, and the time when the Philistines overcame Israel and the ark of God was taken.

The sin of Eli was in passing lightly over the iniquity of his sons, who were occupying sacred offices. The neglect of the father to reprove and restrain his sons, brought upon Israel a fearful calamity. The sons of Eli were slain, Eli himself lost his life, the ark of God was taken from Israel, and thirty thousand of their people were slain. All this was because sin was lightly regarded, and allowed to remain in their midst. What a lesson is this to men holding responsible positions in the church of God! It adjures them to faithfully remove the wrongs that dishonor the cause of truth.

Israel thought, in the days of Samuel, that the presence of the ark containing the commandments of God, would gain them the victory over the Philistines, whether or not they repented of their wicked works. Just so the Jews, in Jeremiah's time, believed that the divinely appointed services of the temple being strictly observed, would preserve them from the just punishment of their evil course.

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The same danger exists to-day among that people who profess to be the repository of God's law. They are too apt to flatter themselves that the regard in which they hold the commandments should

preserve them from the power of divine justice. They refuse to be reprov'd of evil, and blame God's servants with being too zealous in putting sin out of the camp. A sin-hating God calls upon those who profess to keep his law to depart from all iniquity. Neglect to repent and obey his word will bring as serious consequences upon God's people to-day, as did the same sin upon ancient Israel. There is a limit beyond which he will no longer delay his judgments. The correction of God through his chosen instruments cannot be disregarded with impunity. The desolation of Jerusalem stands as a solemn warning before the eyes of modern Israel.

[37] When the priests and the people heard the message that Jeremiah delivered to them in the name of the Lord, they were very angry, and declared that he should die. They were boisterous in their denunciations of him, crying, "Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord." Thus was the message of God despised, and the servant with whom he entrusted it threatened with death. The priests, the unfaithful prophets, and all the people turned in wrath upon him who would not speak to them smooth things and prophesy deceit.

The unfaltering servants of God have usually suffered the bitterest persecution from false teachers of religion. But the true prophets will ever prefer reproach and even death rather than unfaithfulness to God. The Infinite eye is upon the instruments of divine reproof, and they bear a heavy responsibility. But God regards the injury done to them through misrepresentation, falsehood or abuse, the same as though it were done unto himself, and will punish accordingly.

[38] The princes of Judah had heard concerning the words of Jeremiah, and came up from the king's house, and sat in the entry of the Lord's house. "Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears." But Jeremiah stood boldly before the princes and the people declaring, "The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words which ye have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath

pronounced against you. As for me, behold, I am in your hand; do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.”

Had the prophet been intimidated by the threats of those in high authority, and the clamoring of the rabble, his message would have been without effect, and he would have lost his life. But the courage with which he discharged his painful duty commanded the respect of the people, and turned the princes of Israel in his favor. Thus God raised up defenders for his servant. They reasoned with the priests and false prophets, showing them how unwise would be the extreme measures which they advocated.

The influence of these powerful persons produced a reaction in the minds of the people. Then the elders united in protesting against the decision of the priests regarding the fate of Jeremiah. They cited the case of Micah, who prophesied judgments upon Jerusalem, saying, “Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountains of the house as the high places of a forest.” They put to them the question: “Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the Lord, and beseech the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.”

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So, through the pleading of Ahikam and others, the prophet Jeremiah’s life was spared; although many of the priests and false prophets would have been pleased had he been put to death on the plea of sedition; for they could not endure the truths that he uttered exposing their wickedness.

But Israel remained unrepented and the Lord saw that they must be punished for their sin, so he instructed Jeremiah to make yokes and bonds and place them upon his neck, and send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, of the Ammonites, of Tyrus and Zidon, commanding the messengers to say that God had given all these lands to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. That all these nations should serve him and his descendants for a certain time, till God should deliver them. They were to declare that if those nations

refused to serve the king of Babylon they should be punished with the famine, with the sword, and pestilence, till they should be consumed. “Therefore,” said the Lord, “Hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon; for they prophesy a lie unto you to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish. But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord; and they shall till it, and dwell therein.”

Jeremiah declared that they were to wear the yoke of servitude for seventy years, and the captives that were already in the hands of the king of Babylon, and the vessels of the Lord’s house which had been taken, were also to remain in Babylon till that time had elapsed. But at the end of the seventy years God would deliver them from their captivity, and would punish their oppressors, and bring into subjection the proud king of Babylon.

Ambassadors had come from the various nations named to consult with the king of Judah as to the matter of engaging in battle with the king of Babylon. But the prophet of God, bearing the symbols of subjection, delivered the message of the Lord to these nations, commanding them to bear it to their several kings. This was the lightest punishment that a merciful God could inflict upon so rebellious a people; but if they warred against this decree of servitude, they were to feel the full vigor of his chastisement. They were faithfully warned not to listen to their false teachers who prophesied lies.

[41] The amazement of the assembled council of nations knew no bounds when Jeremiah, carrying the yoke of subjection about his neck, made known to them the will of God. But Hananiah, one of the false prophets against whom God had warned his people through Jeremiah, lifted up his voice in opposition to the prophecy declared. Wishing to gain the favor of the king, and his court, he affirmed that God had given him words of encouragement for the Jews. Said he: “Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord’s house, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon. And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah,

with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the Lord; for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.”

Jeremiah, in the presence of all the priests and the people, said that it was the earnest wish of his heart that God would so favor his people that the vessels of the Lord’s house might be returned and the captives brought back from Babylon. But this could only be done on condition that the people repented and turned from their evil way to the obedience of God’s law. Jeremiah loved his country and ardently wished that the desolation predicted might be averted by the humiliation of the people; but he knew the wish was vain. He hoped the punishment of Israel would be as light as possible; therefore he earnestly entreated them to submit to the king of Babylon for the time that the Lord specified. [42]

He entreated them to hear the words that he spoke. He cited them to the prophecies of Hosea, Habakuk, Zephaniah, and others whose messages of reproof and warning had been similar to his own. He referred them to events which had transpired in their history in fulfillment of the prophecies of retribution for unrepented sins. Sometimes, as in this case, men had arisen in opposition to the message of God, and predicted peace and prosperity, to quiet the fears of the people, and gain the favor of those in high places. But in every past instance the judgment of God had been visited upon Israel, as the true prophets had indicated. Said he’ “The prophet which prophesieth of peace’ when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known that the Lord hath truly sent him.” If Israel chose to run the risk, future developments would effectually decide which was the false prophet.

But Hananiah, incensed at this, took the yoke from Jeremiah’s neck and broke it. “And Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying, Thus saith the Lord: Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the necks of all nations within the space of two full years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.”

He had done his work, he had warned the people of their danger, he had pointed out the only course by which they could regain the favor of God. But they had mocked his words; men in responsible positions had denounced him, and tried to arouse the people to put [43]

him to death. Yet his only crime was in faithfully delivering the message of God to an unbelieving people.

But another message was given to Jeremiah. "Go and tell Hana-niah, saying, Thus saith the Lord: Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him; and I have given him the beasts of the field also. Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hana-niah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah: The Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth. This year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month." This false prophet had strengthened the unbelief of the people in Jeremiah and his message. He had wickedly declared himself to be the Lord's messenger, and he suffered death in consequence of his fearful crime.

[44] In the fifth month Jeremiah prophesied the death of Hananiah, and in the seventh month his death proved the words of the prophet true.

God had said that his people should be saved, that the yoke he would lay upon them should be light, if they submitted uncomplainingly to his plan. Their servitude was represented by the yoke of wood, easily borne. But resistance would be met with corresponding severity, represented by the yoke of iron. God designed to hold the king of Babylon in check that there should be no loss of life nor galling oppression. But by scorning his warning and commands they brought upon themselves the full rigor of bondage. It was far more agreeable to the people to receive the message of the false prophet, who predicted prosperity. Therefore they received the counsel which pleased them best. It wounded their pride to have their sins brought continually before their eyes; they would much rather put them out of sight. They were in such moral darkness that they did not realize the enormity of their guilt, nor appreciate the messages of reproof and warning given them of God.

Had they had a proper sense of their disobedience, they would have acknowledged the justice of the Lord's course, and recognized

the authority of his prophet. God entreated them to repent that he might spare them humiliation, and that a people called by his name should not become tributary to a heathen nation; but they scoffed at his counsel and went after false prophets. [45]

The Lord then commanded Jeremiah to write letters to the captains, elders, priests, prophets, and all the people who had been taken as captives to Babylon, bidding them not to be deluded into believing their deliverance nigh, but to quietly submit to their captors, quietly pursue their avocations, and make for themselves peaceful homes among their conquerors. He bade them not to allow their prophets or diviners to deceive them with false expectations. But the Lord assured them by the words of Jeremiah that after seventy years of bondage they should be delivered and return to Jerusalem. He would listen to their prayers and give them his favor when they turned to him with all their hearts. "And I will be found of you, saith the Lord; and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive."

With what tender compassion did God inform his captive people in regard to his plans for Israel. He knew what suffering and disaster they would experience, were they led to believe that they should speedily be delivered from bondage and brought back to Jerusalem, according to the prediction of the false prophets. He knew that this belief would make their position a very difficult one. Any demonstration of insurrection upon their part would have awakened the vigilance and severity of the king, and their liberty would have been restricted in consequence. He desired them to quietly submit to their fate and make their servitude as pleasant as possible. [46]

There were two other false prophets, Ahab and Zedekiah, who prophesied lies in the name of the Lord. These men professed to be holy teachers, but their lives were corrupt, and they were slaves to the pleasures of sin. The prophet of God had condemned the evil course of these men, and warned them of their danger; but instead of repenting and reforming, they were angry with the faithful reprove of their sins, and sought to thwart his work by stirring up the people to disbelieve his words, and act contrary to the counsel of God, in the matter of subjecting them-selves to the king of Babylon. The

Lord testified through Jeremiah that these false prophets should be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon and slain before his eyes, all of which prediction was fulfilled in good time.

Other false prophets arose to sow confusion among the people, by turning them away from obeying the divine commands given through Jeremiah; but God's judgments were pronounced against them in consequence of their grievous sin of bringing rebellion against him.

[47] Just such men rise in these days and breed confusion and rebellion among the people who profess to obey the law of God. But just as certainly as divine judgment was visited upon the false prophets, just so surely will these evil workers receive their full measure of retribution; for the Lord has not changed. Those who prophesy lies encourage men to look upon sin as a small matter. When the terrible results of their crimes are made manifest, they seek, if possible, to make the one who has faithfully warned them responsible for their difficulties, even as the Jews charged Jeremiah with their evil fortunes.

Those who pursue a course of rebellion against the Lord can always find false prophets who will justify them in their acts and flatter them to their destruction. Lying words often make many friends, as in the case of Ahab and Zedekiah. These false prophets, in their pretended zeal for God, found many more believers and followers than the true prophet who delivered the simple message of the Lord.

God commanded Jeremiah to gather the Rechabites into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers, and set wine before them, and invite them to drink. Jeremiah did as the Lord commanded him. "But they said, We will drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons, forever."

[48] "Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the Lord. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment."

Here God contrasts the obedience of the Rechabites with the disobedience and rebellion of his people who will not receive his words of reproof and warning. The Rechabites obeyed the commandment of their father, and refused to be enticed into transgression of his requirements. But Israel refuses to hearken unto me, saith the Lord, “notwithstanding I have spoken unto you rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me.

“I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers; but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me. Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me: Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them; because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered.

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“And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Because ye have obeyed the commandments of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you; therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me forever.”

The Rechabites were commended for their ready and willing obedience, while God’s people refused to be reprov’d by their prophets. “Because I have spoken unto them, and they have not heard; but I have called unto them and they have not answered,” for this God pronounced judgment against them. Jeremiah repeated the words of commendation from the Lord to the faithful Rechabites, and pronounced blessings upon them in his name. Thus God taught his people that faithfulness and obedience of his requirements would be reflected back upon them in blessings, as the Rechabites were blessed for their obedience to their father’s command.

If the directions of a good and wise father, who took the best and most effectual means to secure his posterity against the evil

[50] of intemperance, were to be so strictly obeyed, in as much greater reverence should God's authority be held as he is holier than man. He is our Creator and Commander, infinite in power and terrible in judgment. In mercy he employs a variety of means to bring men to see and repent of their sins. If they will continue to disregard the reproofs he sends them, and act contrary to his declared will, ruin must follow, for God's people are kept in prosperity only by his mercy, through the care of his heavenly messengers. He will not uphold and guard a people who disregard his counsel and despise his reproofs.

Jeremiah was already deprived of his liberty because he would obey God and give to the king and others occupying responsible positions in Israel, the words of warning which he had received from the mouth of God. The Israelites would not accept these reproofs, nor allow their course to be questioned. They had manifested great anger and contempt at the words of rebuke and the judgments which were predicted to come upon them if they continued in rebellion against the Lord. Although Israel would not hear the words of divine counsel, it did not make that word of less effect, neither did God cease to reprove and threaten with his displeasure and his judgments those who refused to obey his requirements.

[51] The Lord directed Jeremiah saying, "Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin."

Here the Lord is shown as reluctant to give up his sinning people. And lest Israel had so far neglected his reproofs and warnings as to let them pass from their memory, he delays his judgments upon them and gives them a full rehearsal of their disobedience and aggravating sins from the days of Josiah down to their own time, and of the judgments he had pronounced in consequence of their transgression. Thus they had another opportunity to see their iniquity and repent. In this we see that God does not delight in afflicting his people. But with a care which surpasses that of a pitying father for a wayward child, he entreats his wandering people to return to their allegiance.

The prophet Jeremiah, in obedience to the commands of God, dictated the words that the Lord gave him to Baruch his scribe, who wrote them upon a roll. (See Jer. 36 : 4.) It was a reproof of the many sins of Israel and a warning of the consequences that would follow a continuance of their evil course. It was an earnest appeal for them to renounce their sins. After it was written, Jeremiah, who was a prisoner, Bent his scribe to read the roll to all the people who had assembled “in the Lord’s house upon the Fasting day.” Said [52] the prophet, “It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way; for great is the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people.”

The scribe obeyed the prophet, and the roll was read before all the people of Judah. But this was not all; he was summoned to read it before the princes. They listened with great interest, and fear was stamped upon their faces as they questioned Baruch concerning the mysterious writing. They promised to tell the king all they had heard in regard to him and his people, but counseled the scribe to hide himself, as they feared that the king would reject the testimony God had given through Jeremiah, and seek to slay not only the prophet, but his scribe.

When the king was told by the princes of what Baruch had read, he immediately ordered the roll brought and read to him. But instead of heeding its warnings, and trembling at the danger of himself and his people, in a frenzy of rage he flung it into the fire, notwithstanding certain ones who were high in his confidence had begged him not to burn it. Then the wrath of this wicked monarch rose against Jeremiah and his scribe, and he forthwith sent for them to be taken, “but the Lord hid them.” After the king had burned the sacred roll, the word of God came to Jeremiah, saying, “Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in [53] the first roll, which Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, hath burned. And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the Lord :Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast?”

A merciful God had graciously warned the people for their good. “It may be,” said the compassionate Creator, “that the house of Judah

will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them ; that they may return every man from his evil way ; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.”

God pities the blindness and perversity of man; he sends light to their darkened understanding in reproof and threatenings which are designed to make the most exalted feel their ignorance and deplore their errors. He would cause the self-complacent to feel dis-satisfied with their attainments and seek greater blessings by closer connection with Heaven.

God’s plan is not to send messengers who will please and flatter sinners, he delivers no messages of peace to lull the unsanctified into carnal security. But he lays heavy burdens upon the conscience of the wrong-doer, and pierces his soul with sharp arrows of conviction. The ministering angels present to him the fearful judgments of God to deepen the sense of his great need and prompt the agonizing cry [54] “what shall I do to be saved?” The very hand that humbles to the dust, rebukes sin, and puts pride and ambition to shame, lifts up the penitent, stricken one, and inquires with deepest sympathy, “What wilt thou that I shalt do unto thee?”

When man has sinned against a holy and merciful God, there is no course for him to pursue so noble, as to sincerely repent and confess his errors in tears and bitterness of soul. This God requires of him and will accept of nothing less than a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

But the king and his lords, in their arrogance and pride, refused the invitation of God to return; they would not heed this warning and repent. This gracious opportunity was their last. God had declared that if they refused to hear his voice he would inflict upon them fearful retribution. They did refuse to hear, and he pronounced his judgment upon Israel; and visited with his special wrath the man who had proudly lifted himself up against the Almighty.

“Therefore thussaith the Lord of Jehoiakim king of Judah : He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not.”

The burning of the roll was not the end of the matter. The written words were more easily disposed of than the reproof and warning which they contained, and the swiftcoming punishment which God had pronounced against rebellious Israel. But even the written roll was reproduced at the command of the Lord. The words of the Infinite were not to be destroyed. “Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and there were added besides unto them many like words.” [55]

God does not send judgments upon his people without first giving them warning to repent. He will use every means to bring them back to obedience, and does not visit their iniquity with judgments until he has given them ample opportunity to repent. The wrath of man sought to prevent the labors of the prophet of God by depriving him of his liberty. But God can speak to men through prison walls, and even increase the usefulness of his servants, through the very means by which their persecutors seek to limit their influence.

Many now despise the faithful reproof given of God in testimony. I was shown that some in these days have even gone so far as to burn the written words of rebuke and warning, as did the wicked king of Israel. But opposition to God’s threatenings will not hinder their execution. To defy the words of the Lord, spoken through his chosen instruments, will only provoke his anger, and eventually bring certain ruin upon the offender. Indignation often kindles in the heart of the sinner against the agent whom God chooses to deliver his reproofs. It has ever been thus; and the same spirit exists today that persecuted and imprisoned Jeremiah for obeying the word of the Lord. [56]

While men will not heed repeated warnings, they are pleased with false teachers who flatter their vanity and strengthen their iniquity, but who will fail to help them in the day of trouble. God’s chosen servants should meet with courage and patience whatever trials and sufferings befall them through reproach, neglect or misrepresentations, because they faithfully discharge the duty God has given them to do. They should remember that the prophets of old and the Saviour of the world also endured abuse and persecution for the Word’s sake. They must expect to meet just such opposition as

was manifested by the burning of the roll that was written by the dictation of God.

[57] The Lord is fitting a people for Heaven. The defects of character, the stubborn will, the selfish idolatry, the indulgence of faultfinding, hatred and contention, provoke the wrath of God, and must be put away from his commandment keeping people. Those living in these sins are deceived and blinded by the wiles of Satan. They think they are in the light when they are groping in darkness. God will send reproof and warning to his people as long as they continue upon earth. There are murmurers among us now even as there were murmurers in ancient Israel. Those who encourage men in rebellion by their unwise sympathy for them, when their self-love is smarting beneath merited reproof, are not the friends of God the great Reprover.

They who valiantly take their position on the right side, who encourage submission to God's revealed will, and strengthen others in their efforts to put away their wrong-doings, are the true friends of the Lord, who, in love, is trying to correct the errors of his people, that he may wash them and cleanse them from every defilement, and fit them for his holy kingdom.

[58] Zedekiah succeeded Jehoiakim, in reigning at Jerusalem. But neither the new king, nor his court, nor the people of the land hearkened to the words of the Lord, spoken through Jeremiah. The Chaldeans commenced the siege against Jerusalem, but were diverted for a time to turn their arms against the Egyptians. Zedekiah sent a messenger to Jeremiah, asking him to pray to the God of Israel in their behalf; but the prophet's fearful answer was that the Chaldean army would return and destroy the city. Thus the Lord showed them how impossible it is for men to avert divine judgment. "Thus saith the Lord: Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us; for they shall not depart. For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and bum this city with fire."

Jeremiah considered his work done and attempted to leave the city, but was prevented by a son of one of the false prophets, who reported that he was about to join the enemy. Jeremiah denied the lying charge, but nevertheless he was brought back. The princes

were ready to believe the son of the false prophet, because they hated Jeremiah. They seemed to think that he had brought upon them the calamity which he had predicted. In their wrath they smote him and imprisoned him.

After he had remained in the dungeon many days, Zedekiah, the king, sent for him and asked him secretly if there was any word from the Lord. Jeremiah again repeated his warning that the nation would be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.

“Moreover Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? Where are now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land? Therefore hear now, I pray thee, [59] O my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee; that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there. Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the baker’s street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.”

The wicked king dared not openly manifest any faith in Jeremiah; but his fear drove him to seek information of him. Yet he was too weak to brave the disapprobation of his nobles and the people, by submitting to the will of God, as declared by the prophet. At last, men in authority, who were enraged because Jeremiah persisted in prophesying evil, went to the king and told him that as long as the prophet lived, he would not cease to predict calamity. They urged that he was an enemy to the nation, and his words had weakened the hands of the people and brought misfortune upon them. They wanted him put to death.

The cowardly king knew these charges were false, but in order to propitiate those who occupied high and influential positions in the nation, he feigned to believe their falsehoods, and gave Jeremiah into their hands to do with as they pleased. Accordingly the prophet was taken and cast “into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison; and they let down Jeremiah [60] with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire; so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.” But God raised up friends for him, who

besought the king in his behalf, and had him again re-moved to the court of the prison.

Once more the king sent privately for Jeremiah, and bade him faithfully relate the purpose of God towards Jerusalem. “Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death? and if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me? So Zedekiah the king swore secretly unto Jeremiah, saying, As the Lord liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life.” Then Jeremiah again sounded the Lord’s note of warning in the ears of the king. Said he, “Thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon’s princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire ; and thou shalt live, and thine house.

[61] “But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon’s princes, then shalt this city be given into the hands of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand. And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me. But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord, which I speak unto thee; so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live.”

Here was exhibited the long-suffering mercy of God. Even at that late hour, if there was submission to his requirements, the lives of the people would be spared, and the city saved from conflagration. But the king thought he had gone too far to retract. He was afraid of the Jews, afraid of becoming a subject of ridicule, afraid for his life. It was too humiliating, at that late day, to say to the people: “I accept the word of the Lord, as spoken through his prophet Jeremiah. I dare not venture to war against the enemy, in the face of all these warnings.”

Jeremiah, with tears, entreated the king to save himself and his people. With anguish of spirit he assured him that he could not escape with his life, and that all his possessions would fall to the king of Babylon. He could save the city if he would. But he had started upon the wrong track and would not retract. He decided to follow the counsel of false prophets, and men whom he really

despised, and who ridiculed his weakness of character in yielding so readily to their wishes. He yielded the noble freedom of his manhood to become a cringing slave to public opinion. While he had no fixed purpose of evil, he also had no resolution to stand boldly for the right. While he was convicted of the truth, as spoken by Jeremiah, he had not moral stamina to obey his counsel, but advanced steadily in the wrong direction. [62]

He was even too weak to be willing that his courtiers and people should know that he had held a conference with the prophet, so far had the fear of man taken possession of his soul. If this cowardly ruler had stood bravely before his people and declared that he believed the words of the prophet, already half-fulfilled, what desolation might have been averted. He should have said, "I will obey the Lord and save the city from utter ruin. I dare not disregard the commands of God for the fear or favor of men. I love the truth, I hate sin. I will follow the counsel of the Mighty One of Israel."

Then the people would have respected his courageous spirit, those who were wavering between faith and unbelief would have taken a firm stand for the right. The very fearlessness and justice of this course would have inspired his subjects with admiration and loyalty. He would have had ample support. Israel would have been spared the untold woe of fire and carnage and famine.

But the weakness of Zedekiah was a crime for which he paid a fearful penalty. The enemy swept down like a resistless avalanche, and devastated the city. The Hebrew armies were beaten back in confusion. The nation was conquered. Zedekiah was taken prisoner, and his sons were slain before his sight. Then he was led away from Jerusalem a captive, hearing the shrieks of his wretched people, and the roaring of the flames that were devouring their homes. When he arrived at Babylon his eyes were put out and he perished miserably. This was the punishment of unbelief and following ungodly counsel. [63]

There are many false prophets in these days, to whom sin does not appear specially repulsive. They complain that the peace of the people is unnecessarily disturbed by the reproofs and warnings of God's messengers. As for them they lull the souls of sinners into a fatal ease by their smooth and deceitful teachings. Ancient Israel was thus charmed by the flattering messages of the corrupt priests.

Their prediction of prosperity was more pleasing than the message of the true prophet who counseled repentance and submission.

The servants of God should manifest a tender, compassionate spirit, and show to all that they are not actuated by any personal motives, in their dealings with the people, nor take delight in giving messages of wrath in the name of the Lord. But they must never flinch from pointing out the sins that are corrupting the professed people of God, nor cease striving to influence them to turn from their errors and obey the Lord.

[64] Those who seek to cloak sin and make it appear less aggravating to the mind of the offender, are doing the work of the false prophets, and may expect the retributive wrath of God to follow such a course. The Lord will never accommodate his ways to the wishes of corrupt men. The false prophet condemned Jeremiah for afflicting the people with his severe denunciations. Therefore he sought to re-assure them by promising them prosperity, thinking that the poor people should not be continually reminded of their sins, and threatened with punishment. This course strengthened the people to resist the true prophet's counsel, and intensified their enmity towards him.

God has no sympathy with the evil-doer. He gives no one liberty to gloss over the sins of his people, nor cry Peace, peace! when he has declared there shall be no peace for the wicked. Those who stir up rebellion against the servants whom God sends to deliver his messages, are rebelling against the word of the Lord.

[65] **Testimony Given Jan. 5, 1875.**

THE following testimony, given in my last vision, I wrote in my tent between the services of the Vermont Camp-Meeting, August, 1875. It sets forth the condition of things at B— C— in January, 1875. Developments during the following summer fully justified the apparent severity of the testimony. In September I read portions of it to that church, and a great work commenced under our labors, yet, for the benefit of that church and others, I give the testimony in this humble work.

Darkness is getting the control where only the Spirit of God should rule. But few who were engaged in the work realized the necessity of personal effort and individual responsibility in whatever

department they occupied. Few felt the sacredness of the work in which they were engaged. They regarded it as upon a common level with ordinary enterprises.

Selfishness predominated with many, who should know that a life of self-sacrificing love is a life of peace and liberty. Those who seek happiness by gratifying themselves and looking out mainly for their own interests are on the wrong track to secure happiness even upon earth. Whoever is unfaithful in the least of his duties, is unfaithful in much. If he neglects to faithfully perform the small tasks devolving upon him, he proves himself incapable of bearing weightier responsibilities, and indicates that he is not wholehearted in the work, and does not have an eye single to the glory of God. [66]

Some are ready to define the duties that belong to others, and realize the full importance of *their* responsibilities, but fail to readily perceive their own. Personal fidelity and individual responsibility is needed in the Health Institute especially, and in the Office, the church and school. If each one connected with these institutions were listening eagerly to hear what Jesus directed *them* to do, instead of turning to ask what this man or that man shall do, we should witness a great change in every department of the work. If the language of each heart was, I must listen to Christ's teachings and obey his voice, no one can do my work for me, the attention of others can never repair my negligence, then we might see the cause of God advancing as it has never done before.

It is this holding back, waiting for others to do, that brings spiritual feebleness. To reserve one's energies is a sure way to lessen them. Jesus requires implicit obedience and willing submission from all his servants. There must be no halting or self-indulgence in the service of Christ. There is no concord between Christ and Belial. What a lack of devotion to the work of God, what a want of care-taking has there been at B— C—.

The heart of W— B— has not been devoted to God. He has capabilities and talents for which he must render an account to the great Giver of all. His heart has been unconsecrated and his life unworthy of his profession. Yet he has been closely connected with the sacred work of God for more than a score of years. What light he has had, what privileges ! He has enjoyed the rarest opportunities to develop a substantial Christian character. The words of Christ when [67]

he wept over Jerusalem, are applicable to him: “Oh, that thou hadst known, even thou, the things that belong unto thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes.” W— , the retribution of God hangs over you, because “thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”

B — S — is of the same cast of mind, but not so thoroughly selfish. Both are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Their course is entirely inconsistent with the Christian life. They lack stability, sobriety, and devotion to God. With B— S— the work of grace is altogether too superficial. He desires to be a Christian but does not strive to maintain the victory over self and act up to his convictions of right and wrong. Deeds, not idle words and empty intentions, are acceptable to God.

[68] W— B— , you have heard the Word of God in reproofs, in counsels, in warnings, as well as in the entreaties of love. But hearing is not enough. “Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” It is easy to be borne along by the current, and to cry, Hosannah! with the multitude; but in the calm of every-day life, when there is no special excitement or exaltation, then comes the test of true Christianity. It is then that your heart becomes cold, and your zeal abates, and religious exercises become distasteful to you.

You positively neglect to do the will of God. “Ye are,” says Christ, “my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. This is the condition imposed, this is the test that proves men’s characters. Feelings are often deceiving, emotions are no sure safe-guard, for they are variable and subject to external circumstances. Many are deluded by relying on sensational impressions. What are you *doing* for Christ, that is the question? What sacrifices are you making? What victories are you gaining? A selfish spirit overcome, a temptation to neglect duty resisted, passion subdued, and willing, cheerful obedience rendered to the will of Christ, is far greater evidence that you are a child of God than spasmodic piety and emotional religion.

You have both been averse to reproof; it has ever awakened disaffection and murmuring in your hearts against your best friend, who has ever sought to do you good, and whom you have every reason to respect. You have separated yourselves from him, and thereby vexed the Spirit of God, by rising up against the words he has given his servants to speak in regard to your course. You have

not listened to those admonitions, and have thus rejected the Spirit of God and turned it from your hearts, and have become careless and indifferent in your deportment. [69]

Bro. W—, you should have gained a valuable experience during the many years you have been blessed by the great light God has permitted to shine upon your pathway. I heard a voice saying in reference to you, “It is an unfruitful tree, why should its fruitless branches shadow the space that a fruitful tree might occupy? Cut it down, for why cumbereth it the ground?” Then I heard the pleading tones of Mercy’s sweet voice, saying, “Spare it a little longer; I will dig about its roots, I will prune it. Give it one more trial; if it fails to be fruitful then, you may cut it down.” So a little longer probation is granted the unproductive tree, a little longer time for the barren life to blossom and bear fruit. Will the opportunity given be improved? Will the warnings of God’s Spirit be heeded? The words of Jesus in regard to Jerusalem, after she had slighted the salvation graciously offered by her Redeemer, are also, in substance, spoken unto you: “Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not.” Christ plead, he invited, but his love was unrequited by the people he came to save. You have done no better in *your* day than did the poor, self-deceived and blinded Jews in theirs. You might have improved your blessed privileges and opportunities, and perfected Christian character, but your heart has been rebellious and you “*would not*” humble yourself to be properly converted and live in obedience to God’s requirements. [70]

The unreconciled feelings and murmurings which have been expressed by some, have also been festering in your soul, although you have not dared to speak out plainly to the same effect. It would have been better for the Office and all concerned, had you been separated from it years ago. The more light you have had, the more privileges you have enjoyed, the less sincerity and righteousness have you manifested. Your heart has been carnal, and you have neglected the expressed Word of God. Although you have been hedged about with warnings and counsels, and have had the strongest evidence that God was in this work and that his voice was speaking to you, yet you have slighted and rejected solemn reproofs, and gone on your own selfish, willful way.

Sometimes your fears have been aroused, but still you have never realized your wretched spiritual condition, and absolute danger. You have repeatedly fallen back again into the same state of indifference and selfishness. Your repentance has never gone deep enough to perfect a thorough reformation. You have had a surface work, but not the entire transformation necessary to bring you into acceptance with God. “He that followeth me,” says Christ, “shall not walk in darkness.” Through the greater part of your professed Christian life you have walked in darkness because you failed to connect with Heaven and receive the pure light of God’s Spirit.

If you were in daily communion with the Lord, and cultivated a love for souls, you would grow out of self and become an earnest worker in the vineyard of the Lord. You would perceive how the faithful performance of the duties of life would preserve you from self-love and gratification. You have not been diligent and sought to gain an advanced experience every day. You should be at this time a trusty man in any position of responsibility, but selfishness has marked the performance of everything you have set your hand to do. You have been wise in your own conceit, but have failed to gain wisdom from many years’ experience.

B— S— has been vain. He might have moved steadily forward, growing in grace, but the external appearance has seemed to him more important than the inward adorning, even the garment of a meek and quiet spirit, which God accounts of great value. Unbelievers, who have been engaged in the Office, but have not had the light of present truth as you have had, nevertheless have been far more faithful and conscientious than either of you whom I am addressing.

If you had been diligently gathering with Christ, some of these would now be with us in the truth. But your lives were a stumbling-block to them. God looks upon those unbelievers with greater pity and favor than upon those who believe the truth yet deny him in their works. That belief that is laid aside when convenient, put on and off like a garment, is not the religion of Christ, but a spurious article that will not bear the tests even of this world.

True religion is ever distinctly seen in our words and deportment and in every act of life. Religion should never be divorced from business with the followers of Christ. They should go hand in hand, and God’s commandments should be strictly regarded in all the

details of worldly matters. The knowledge that we are children of God should give a high tone of character even to the every-day duties of life, making us not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit. Such a religion as this bears the scrutiny of a critical world with a grand consciousness of integrity.

Every workman in the Office should consider himself as God's steward, and should do his work with exactness and faithful vigilance. The constant inquiry should be, "Is this in accordance with the will of God? Will this please my Redeemer?" Bible religion elevates the reason until Christ is blended with all the thoughts. Every action, every word and every moment of our lives should bear the impress of our holy faith. The end of all things is at hand and we have no time to be idle or to live in pleasure, at cross-purposes with God.

The Lord will not be trifled with. Those who neglect his mercies and blessings in this day of opportunities will bring impenetrable darkness upon themselves, and be candidates for the wrath of God. Sodom and Gomorrah were visited with the curse of the Almighty, for their sins and iniquities. There are those in our day who have equally abused the mercies of God and slighted his warnings. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment, than for those who bear the name of Christ yet dishonor him by living unconsecrated lives. This class are laying up for themselves a fearful retribution, when God in his wrath shall visit them with his judgments. [73]

Sinners who have not had the light and privileges of Seventh-day Adventists, will be in a more favorable position before God, in their ignorance, than those who have been unfaithful while in close connection with his work, professing to love and serve him. The tears of Christ upon the mount came from an anguished, breaking heart because of his unrequited love and the ingratitude of his chosen people. He had labored untiringly to save them from the fate that they seemed determined to bring upon themselves. But they refused his mercy, and knew not the time of their visitation. Their day of privilege was ending, yet they were so blinded by sin that they knew it not.

Jesus looked down through the centuries, even to the close of time, and, taking in the cases of all who had and would repay his love and admonitions with selfishness and neglect, addressed to [74]

them those solemn words declaring that they knew not the time of their visitation. The Jews were gathering over them the dark clouds of retribution, and many to-day, in like manner, are drawing upon themselves the wrath of God, because of opportunities unheeded, the counsels and love of Jesus scorned, and his servants despised and hated for speaking the truth.

There is no place on the face of the earth where so great a light has been granted, as at B— C— . Even Jerusalem of old was not more greatly favored with the beams of Heaven's light shining upon the way that her people should tread. Yet they have failed to walk in the full radiance of the light, by faithful obedience, serving God night and day. A sickly, dwarfed religion is the result of neglecting to follow the revealed light of the Spirit of the Lord. Energy and love increase as we exercise them, and the Christian graces can only develop by careful cultivation.

[75] The state of many in B— C— is truly alarming, especially is this the case with a majority of the youth. Families have moved to the place with the understanding that they were not to burden the church, but to be a help to it. With a considerable number the result has been quite the contrary. The neglect of parents to properly discipline their children, has been a fruitful source of evil in many families. The youth have not been restrained, as they should have been. Parents have neglected to follow the directions of the Word of God in this matter, and the children have taken the reins of government in their own hands. The consequence has been that they have generally succeeded in ruling their parents, instead of being under their authority.

The parents are blind to the true state of their children, who have entirely succeeded in deceiving them. But those who have lost the control of their children are not pleased when others seek to control them, or point out their defects for the purpose of correcting them. The cause of God has been retarded in B— C— , by parents bringing their unruly and undisciplined children into this large church. Many are living in constant neglect of their duty to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, yet these very ones have most to say concerning the wickedness of the youth in B— C— , when it is the wrong example and evil influence of their own

children that has demoralized the young people with whom they have associated.

Such families have brought upon this church its heaviest burdens. They come with false ideas. They seem to expect the church to be faultless, and that it will take the responsibility of making their children Christians, those very children whom they, as parents, are unable to control or keep within bounds. They throw themselves upon the church, a terrible and crushing weight. They might be of some help if they would yield their selfishness and strive to honor God, and try to repair the mistakes they have made in their lives.

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But they do no such thing, they hold themselves aloof, ready to criticize the lack of spirituality in the church, whose greatest calamity is the numbering among its members too many like themselves, dead weights, persons whose hearts and lives are unconsecrated and whose course is all wrong. The institutions located at B— C— have carried along too many diseased and lifeless bodies for their own prosperity and spiritual vitality.

The church is suffering for want of unselfish Christian workers. If all those who are, as a rule, unable to resist temptation, and are too weak to stand alone, would remain away from B— C—, there would be a much purer spiritual atmosphere in that place. Those who live upon the husks of others failings and deficiencies, and who gather to themselves the unwholesome miasma of their neighbor's neglects and shortcomings, making themselves church scavengers, are no advantage to the society of which they form a part, but are an actual burden to the community upon which they inflict themselves.

The church is in need, not of burdens, but earnest workers, not fault-finders, but builders in Zion. Missionaries are really needed at the great heart of the work. Men who will keep the fort, men who will be true as steel to preserve the honor of those whom God has placed at the head of his work, men who will do their utmost to sustain the cause in all its departments, even at the sacrifice of their own interests and lives if need be.

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But I was shown that there are but few who have the truth wrought in their very souls, who can bear the searching test of God. There are many who have taken hold of the truth, but the truth has not taken hold of them, to transform their hearts and cleanse them from all selfishness. There are those who come to B— C— to

help in the work, as well as many of the old members, who have a fearful account to render to God for the hindrance they have been to the work through their self-love and unconsecrated lives.

Religion has no saving virtue if the characters of those professing it do not correspond with their profession. God has graciously given great light to his people in B— C— , but Satan has his work to accomplish, and he brings his power to bear strongest at the great heart of the work. He seizes men and women who are selfish and unconsecrated, and makes of them sentinels to watch the faithful servants of God, and question their words, their actions and their motives, to find fault and murmur at their reproofs and warnings. Through them he creates suspicion and jealousy and seeks to weaken the courage of the faithful, to please the unsanctified and turn to naught the labors of God's servants.

Satan has had great power over the minds of parents through their undisciplined children. The sin of parental neglect stands marked against many Sabbath-keeping parents. The spirit of gossip and tale bearing is one of Satan's special agents to sow discord and strife, to separate friends and undermine the faith of many in the truthfulness of our position. Brethren and sisters are too ready to talk of the faults and errors that they think exist in others, and especially those who have borne unflinchingly the messages of reproof and warning given them of God.

The children of these complainers listen with open ears, and receive the poison of disaffection. Parents are thus blindly closing the avenues through which the hearts of their children might be reached. How many families season their daily meals with doubt and questionings? They dissect the characters of their friends and serve them up as a dainty dessert. A precious bit of slander is passed around the board, to be commented upon, not only by adults but by children. In this God is dishonored. Jesus has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done this to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Therefore Christ is slighted and abused by those who slander his servants.

The names of God's chosen servants have been handled with disrespect, and in some cases with absolute contempt, by certain persons whose duty it should be to uphold them. What a work are these parents doing in making infidels of their children even in their

childhood! These children have not failed to hear the disrespectful remarks of their parents in reference to the solemn reproofs and warnings of God's servants. They have understood the scornful jests and deprecatory speeches that from time to time have met their ears and tended to bring sacred and eternal interests on a level with the common affairs of the world in their minds.

This is the way that children are taught to be irreverent and to rebel against Heaven's reproof of sin. Spiritual declension can but prevail where such evils exist. These very fathers and mothers are blinded by the enemy to marvel why their children are so inclined to unbelief and to doubt the truth of the Bible. They wonder that they are so difficult to reach by moral and religious influences. Had they spiritual eye-sight they would at once discover that this deplorable condition of things is the result of their own home influence, the offspring of their jealousy and distrust. Thus many infidels are educated in the family circle of professed Christians.

There are many who find a special enjoyment in discoursing and dwelling upon the defects, whether real or imaginary, of those who bear the heavy responsibilities in connection with the institutions of God. They overlook the good that has been accomplished, the benefits that have resulted from arduous labor and unflinching devotion to the cause; and fasten their attention upon some apparent mistake, some matter that, after it has been done and the consequences have followed, they fancy could have been done in a better manner with fairer results. When the truth is, had they been left to do the work, they would either have refused to move at all under the attending discouragements of the case, or would have managed more indiscreetly than those who *did* the work, following the opening of God's providence.

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But these unruly talkers will fasten upon the more disagreeable features of the work, even as the lichen clings to the roughness of the rock. These persons are spiritually dwarfed by continually dwelling upon the failings and faults of others. They are morally incapable of discerning good and noble actions, unselfish endeavors, true heroism and self-sacrifice. They are not becoming nobler and loftier in their lives and hopes, more generous and broad in their ideas and plans. They are not cultivating that charity that should characterize the Christian's life. They are degenerating every day, they are becoming

narrower in their prejudices and views. Littleness is their element, and the atmosphere that surrounds them is poisonous to peace and happiness.

[81] The great sin of B— C— is neglecting to cherish the light which God has given them through his servants. Said Christ to his apostles, “He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.” Here it is made plain that those who reject the messages of God’s servants, reject not only the Son but also the Father.

Again he says, “But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you; notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.”

[82] How awfully solemn are these words! How important that we should not be found rejecting the warnings and admonitions that God delivers through his humble instruments; for in slighting the light brought by his messengers, we slight the Saviour of the world and the King of Glory. Many are running this terrible risk and bringing upon themselves the condemnation of God. The Almighty will not be trifled with nor allow his voice to be disregarded with impunity.

Brn. L— and G— did not bring that relief to the cause at B— C— that they should have brought. Had they both taken hold humbly, in the fear of God, and persevered in well-doing both in the church and Office, they would have been a great blessing to the work of God. Had they felt their accountability to God for the training and discipline of their children, they would have been worthy examples to others. These children needed not only the education acquired at school, but they needed home training that their mental and

moral powers should be developed in due proportion, each having its required exercise. The physical, mental and spiritual capabilities should be developed in order to form a properly balanced character.

Children should be watched, guarded, and disciplined in order to successfully accomplish this. It requires skill and patient effort to mould the young in the right manner. Certain evil tendencies are to be carefully restrained and tenderly rebuked, the mind is to be stimulated in favor of the right. The child should be encouraged in attempting to govern self, and all this is to be done judiciously, or [83] the very purpose desired is frustrated.

Parents may well inquire, "Who is sufficient for these things?" God alone is the sufficiency, and if they leave him out of the question, seeking not his aid and counsel, hopeless indeed is the task of the parents.

But, by prayer, and study of the Bible, by earnest zeal on their part, they may succeed nobly in this important duty, and be repaid an hundred-fold for all their time and care. But gossiping and anxiety for the external appearance has taken the precious time that should have been devoted to prayer and the seeking of wisdom and strength from God to fulfill their most sacred trusts. Parents who are wise unto salvation, will so order their surroundings that they will be favorable to the formation of correct characters in their children. This is almost always in their power. The source of wisdom is open from which they may draw all necessary knowledge in this direction.

The Bible should be their text-book, a volume rich in instruction. If they train their children according to its precepts, they not only set their young feet in the right path, but they educate themselves in their most holy duties. Impressions made upon the minds of the young are hard to efface. How important then that these impressions should be of the right sort, bending the elastic faculties of youth in the right direction.

Certain parents have come to B— C— with their children and dropped them into the church, as if they resigned from thenceforth all responsibility of their moral and religious training. Brother and sister L. and brother and sister G. have made a decided failure in disciplining their children, as well as in properly regulating themselves. Their children have gloried in their freedom to do as they [84]

pleased. They have been released from home responsibilities and have despised restraint.

A life of usefulness appears to them like a life of drudgery. Lax government at home has unfitted them for any position, and, as a natural consequence, they have rebelled against school discipline. Their complaints have been received and credited by their parents, who, in sympathizing with their imaginary troubles, have encouraged their children in wrong-doing. These parents have in many instances believed positive untruths that have been foisted upon them by their deceiving children. A few such cases of unruly and dissembling children would do much towards breaking down all authority in the school and demoralizing the young people of our church.

[85] There is perfect order in Heaven, perfect concord and agreement. If parents so neglect to bring their children under proper authority here, how can they hope that they will be considered fit companions for the holy angels in a world of peace and harmony. Indulgent parents who justify their children in their wrong-doing are thereby creating an element that will bring discord into society and subvert the authority of both school and church.

Children need watchful care and guidance as never before, for Satan is striving to gain the control of their minds and hearts, and driving out the Spirit of God. The fearful state of the youth of this age constitutes one of the strongest signs that we are living in the last days. But the ruin of many may be traced directly to the wrong management of the parents. The spirit of murmuring against reproof has been taking root and is bearing its fruit of insubordination. While the parents are not pleased with the characters their children are developing, they fail to see the errors that make them what they are.

Eli remonstrated with his sons, but did not act promptly in restraining them. The ease-loving, affectionate father was warned of God that retribution would follow his neglect, but even then he did not feel the importance of at once putting the disgusting evil away from Israel. He should have taken prompt measures himself, but instead of this he, with remarkable submission, says, "Let the Lord do as seemeth him good." If he had been aroused to the full guilt of his neglect, Israel might have been saved from the humility of defeat, and the ark of God would not have fallen into the enemy's hands.

God condemns the negligence that dallies with sin and crime, and the insensibility that is slow to detect its baleful presence in the families of professed Christians. He holds parents accountable, in a great degree, for the faults and follies of their offspring. God visited with his curse, not only the sons of Eli, but Eli himself, and this fearful example should be a warning to the parents of this time. [86]

As I looked upon the perilous situation of our youth, and was shown how indifferent the parents were to their welfare, my heart was sick and faint, angels were troubled and wept with grief. The youth are passing into the world and into the hands of Satan. They are becoming less susceptible to the sweet influences of the grace of God, bolder and more defiant, with increasing disrespect for eternal interests. I saw Satan planting his banner in the households of those who profess to be God's chosen ones; but they who are walking in the light should be able to discern the difference between the black banner of the adversary and the bloodstained standard of Jesus Christ.

Children should be taught by precept and example. Parents should meet this grave responsibility with fear and trembling. Fer-vent prayers should be offered by them for divine strength and guidance in this task. In many families the seeds of vanity and selfishness are sown in the hearts of the children almost during babyhood. Their little cunning sayings and doings are commented upon and praised in their presence, and repeated with exaggerations to others. The little ones take note of this and swell with self importance, they pre-sume to interrupt conversation and become forward and impudent. Flattery and indulgence fosters their vanity and willfulness, until the youngest not unfrequently rules the whole family, father and mother included. [87]

The disposition formed by this sort of training cannot be laid aside as the child matures to riper judgment. It grows with his growth, and what might have appeared cunning in the baby, becomes contemptible and wicked in the man or woman. They seek to rule over their associates, and if any refuse to yield to their wishes, they consider themselves aggrieved and insulted. This is because they have been indulged to their injury in youth instead of being taught the self-denial necessary to bear the hardships and toils of life.

Parents frequently pet and indulge their young children because it appears easier to manage them in that way. It is smoother work to let them have their own way than to check the unruly inclinations that rise so strongly in their breasts. Yet this course is cowardly, it is a wicked thing thus to shirk responsibility, for the time will come when these children, whose inclinations, unchecked, have strengthened into absolute vices, will bring reproach and disgrace upon themselves and their families. They go out into busy life, unprepared for its temptations, not strong enough to endure perplexities and troubles, passionate, overbearing, undisciplined, they seek to bend others to their will, and, failing in this, consider themselves illuded by the world, and turn against it.

The lessons of childhood, good or bad, are not learned in vain. Character is developed in youth for good or evil. At home there may be praise and false flattery. In the world each stands on his own merits. The pampered ones, to whom all home authority has yielded, are there daily subjected to mortification by being obliged to yield to others. Many are even then taught their true places by these practical lessons of life. By rebuffs and disappointments and plain language from their superiors, they often find their true level, and are humbled to understand and accept their proper places. But this is a severe and unnecessary ordeal for them to pass, and could be prevented by proper training in their youth.

The majority of these ill-disciplined ones go through life at cross-purposes with the world, making a failure where they should have succeeded. They grow to feel that the world owes them a grudge, because it does not flatter and caress them, and they take revenge by holding a grudge against the world, and bidding it defiance. Circumstances sometimes oblige them to affect a humility they do not feel, but it does not fit them with a natural grace, and their true characters are sure to be exposed sooner or later.

If such persons have families of their own, they become arbitrary rulers at home, and display there the selfish and unreasonable disposition they are forced to partially conceal from the outside world. Their dependents feel to the utmost all the faults of their early training. Why will parents educate their children in such a manner as to be at war with those who are brought in contact with them.

Their religious experience is moulded by the education of their childhood. The sad trials, which prove so dangerous to the prosperity of a church, and which cause the unbelieving to stumble and turn away with doubt and dissatisfaction, usually arise from an unsubdued and rebellious spirit, the offspring of parental indulgence in early youth.

How many lives are wrecked, how many crimes are committed under the influence of a quick-rising passion, that might have been checked in childhood, when the mind was impressible, and the heart easily influenced for right and was subject to a fond mother's will. Inefficient training of children lies at the foundation of a vast amount of moral wretchedness.

Children who are allowed to have their own way are not happy. The unsubdued heart has not within itself the elements of rest and contentment. The mind and heart must be disciplined and brought under proper restraint, in order for the character to harmonize with the wise laws that govern our being. Restlessness and discontent are the fruits of indulgence and selfishness. The soil of the heart, like a garden, will produce weeds and brambles unless the seeds of precious flowers are planted there and receive care and cultivation. As in visible nature, so is it with the human soul. [90]

The youth of B— C— are in a startling condition. While some of the church have been burdened in regard to those occupying responsible positions, and have been finding fault and murmuring against reproof, insinuating their doubts, and gossiping of the affairs of others, their own souls have been enshrouded in darkness, and their children have been leavened with the spirit that was working upon their parents. This disposition is calculated to break down all restraint and authority. God holds these parents responsible for the malice and rebellion of the youth in their midst.

Satan has succeeded wonderfully in his plans. Men of experience, fathers of families, who manifest a headstrong defiance when their track is crossed, show plainly that they cannot or do not control *themselves*. Then how can they succeed in controlling their children, who follow in their steps, and rebel against their authority and all other restraint, even as they themselves rebel against the authority of the church, and the institutions with which they are connected. Some of these professed Christians have yielded themselves into the hands [91]

of Satan and have become his instruments. They influence souls against the truth, by exhibiting their insubordination and restless discontent. While professing righteousness, they are flying into the face of the Almighty, and before they are aware of the enormity of their sin, they have accomplished the object of the adversary. The impression has been made, the shadow of darkness has been cast, the arrows of Satan have found their mark. Verily, a little leaven has leavened the entire lump. Unbelief creeps in, takes hold, fastens its grasp upon minds that would have wholly accepted the truth.

Meanwhile these spasmodic workers for Satan, look innocently upon those who have drifted into skepticism, who stand unmoved under reproof or entreaty, and go farther in unbelief than even they had dared to venture, and flatter themselves that they are, in comparison with these persons, virtuous and righteous. They fail to understand that these sad cases are the result of their own unbridled tongues and wicked rebellion, that these tempted ones have fallen through their evil influence. They started the difficulty, they sowed the seeds of anarchy and unbelief.

[92] No family is justified in bringing children to B— C— who are not under the control of their parents. If their parents have disregarded the Word of God in the matter of instructing and training their children, B— C— is no place for them. They will only be the means of demoralizing the young people of that place, and bringing discord where peace and prosperity should reign. Let such parents take up the neglected work of restraining and disciplining their children before they venture to impose them upon the church at B— C— .

Many are as guilty of neglect towards their children as was Eli, and the punishment of God will as surely rest upon them as upon him. The case of Bro. Ingraham was a marked one. God's hand was stretched out in the wrath of his retribution, not only over his children, but himself. The Word of God was plain, but its admonitions had been trampled underfoot; warnings had been given unto him, reproofs administered, but all were unheeded and the curse fell upon him. It is a terrible thing to neglect the education of children. Not only will they be lost in consequence, but the parents themselves, who have so far departed from God as to lose all sense

of their sacred responsibility, stand in a very perilous position as regards eternal life.

Fond and indulgent parents, let me present the case of a rebellious son as recorded in Bible history for your instruction. "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them, then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, this our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die. So shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear."

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Both the young and old who are connected with the Office should be looked after closely, lest their influence should be such as to work directly against the object designed by the Office. If there are any employees whose influence is of a character to lead away from God and the truth, there should not be a moment's question as to the disposal of their cases. They should be separated from the Office at once, for they are scattering from Christ instead of gathering with him. They are virtually servants of Satan.

If there are young people connected with the Office who do not respect the authority of parents, and are ungovernable at home, despising counsel and restraint, the curse of God will fall upon them, and not only upon them, but upon the Office, should they retain their services, and give them farther opportunity to pervert the young with whom they are brought in contact there. Those who occupy responsible positions in the Office are accountable for the prevailing influence there. And if they are indifferent to the course of the insubordinate and impenitent in their employ, they become partakers of their sin.

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There has been a covering up of iniquity in B— C—. God calls for a different order of things. The youth connected with his work should be select, those who will be improved, refined and ennobled by being associated with the cause of God. Faithful minute-men are needed at every post of duty, especially at the great heart of the work. Those who profess the truth should guard, like sleepless sentinels,

the interest of the cause at the Office, and sacredly guard themselves and each other from spiritual contamination.

Those who have imbibed the spirit of independence, and come to B— C— as students in our schools, thinking to do as they please in all matters, should be quickly undeceived and brought under proper discipline. But especially should the youth residing at B— C—, be brought under the strictest rules, to guard their integrity and morality. If they refuse to submit to these regulations, they should be expelled from the school, and cut off from association with those whom they are demoralizing by their wrong example.

[95] Parents living at a distance send their children to B— C— to educate them, feeling perfect confidence that they will there receive the proper moral training and not be exposed to wrong influences. It is due these patrons of our school, to purify the moral atmosphere there. A lack of propriety and a laxness of strict virtue has been developing among a certain class of young men and women in B— C—. Some of these are low in the scale of morality, and are influencing the young students, who have been sent there from a distance, and have not the advantages of parental advice and protection. This should be attended to at once for it is a matter of grave importance.

The influence of some youth in B— C— is demoralizing. They seem to think it praise-worthy to appear independent and to disrespect the authority of their parents. Timothy gives a faithful description of this class of youth in these words, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”

[96] The influence of this class upon the youth of B— C— is doing much harm. Their conversation and example is contemptibly low. The young whose morals are established, and whose minds are of an elevated character, would find no attraction in their society and would therefore be beyond the reach of their influence. But there are young men and women who find pleasure in the company of just such persons. Satan has marked success in benumbing the spiritual sensibilities of certain minds who have believed the truth,

and clouding them with false ideas until they are unable to discern right from wrong. Then suggestions are made to undermine their confidence in the chosen servants of God, and they are led into positive unbelief.

If the young would choose the company of those whose lives are an honor to their profession, they would escape many serious dangers. Satan is constantly seeking the ruin of those who are ignorant concerning his devices, yet feel not their special need of the prayers and counsel of experienced and godly friends. Many of the youth who come to B— C— with good resolutions to live Christian lives, fall in with a class of young people who take them by the hand, under the guise of friendship, and lead them directly into Satan's snare. The enemy does not always come as a roaring lion, he frequently appears as an angel of light, assuming friendly airs, presenting peculiar temptations, difficult for the inexperienced to withstand. Sometimes he accomplishes his purpose of deluding the unwary, by exciting the pity of their sympathetic natures, when he presents himself before them as a righteous being who has been persecuted without a cause.

Satan finds willing instruments to do his work. He exercises a skill in this direction that years of experience has perfected. He uses the accumulated knowledge of ages to execute his malicious designs. Ignorant youth play themselves into the hands of Satan for him to use as instruments to lead souls to ruin. Those who yield to Satan's power gain no happiness thereby. They are never contented or at rest. They are dissatisfied, querulous and irritable, unthankful and rebellious. Such an one is the young man now under review. But God will have mercy upon him, if he sincerely repents, and becomes converted. His sins may be washed away by the atoning blood of Jesus.

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The Saviour of the world offers to the erring the gift of eternal life. He watches for a response to his offers of love and forgiveness with a more tender compassion than that which moves the heart of an earthly parent to forgive a wayward, repenting, suffering son. He cries after the wanderer, Return unto me and I will return unto you. If the sinner still refuses to heed the voice of mercy which calls after him with tender, pitying love, his soul will be left in darkness.

But if he neglects the opportunity presented him and goes on in his evil course, the wrath of God will, in an unexpected moment, break forth upon him. Those who, being often reprov'd, harden their hearts, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy. This young man has made light of his father's authority, and despised restraint. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It lays at [98] the foundation of a proper education. Those who, having a favorable opportunity, have failed to learn this first great lesson, are not only disqualified for service in the cause of God, but are a positive injury to the community in which they live.

Solomon exhorts the youth, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother, for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the opening of the gates; in the city she uttereth her words, saying, how long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel; [99] they despised all my reproof. There fore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

Order should be maintained in the different institutions of our church at B— C—. Insubordination should be overruled. None should be retained in the Office who have been instructed by Sabbath-keeping parents, and have been privileged to hear the truth, yet rebel against its teachings. No persons should be connected with the

sacred work of God who speak lightly of it, or treat our holy faith with disrespect. Those who have been connected with the Office for quite a length of time, and have had ample opportunity to become acquainted with our faith, yet manifest opposition to the truth, should not longer be retained in the Office.

Their influence is against the truth if they continue to neglect the light, and slight salvation. This very indifference has a chilling influence upon the faith of others, to draw them away from God. These impenitent, unimpressible ones should not occupy positions that might be filled by persons who will respect the truth and yield to the influence of the Spirit of God by being so closely connected with this sacred work.

The influence of our young people in the Office is not what it should be. W— and B— have virtually worked against the cause. [100] The influence of their conversation and deportment has been such as to disgust unbelievers and turn them from our faith and from Christ. The young who heed not the warnings of the Word of God, and slight the testimonies of the Spirit of God can only be a living curse to the Office, and should be separated from it.

The youth whose influence is demoralizing, should have no connection with our college. Those who are possessed of a love-sick sentimentalism, and make their attendance at school an opportunity for courting and exchanging improper attentions, should be brought under the closest restrictions. Authority must be maintained. Justice and Mercy are twin sisters standing side by side.

If no efforts are made to correct the state of things existing at B— C—, it will soon be a place for the encouragement of immorality and dissipation. Will parents and those in charge of our institutions sleep while Satan is taking possession of the mind of the children? God abhors the sins that are fostered and concealed by the church, cherished in the Office, and sheltered under the paternal roof. Let parents, and those in authority, earnestly take hold of the work and purge this evil from their midst.

We are living in the last days. John exclaims: “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea ! for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” Jesus Christ is the only refuge in these perilous times. [101] Satan is at work in secrecy and darkness. Cunningly he draws away

the followers of Christ from the cross, and brings them into self-indulgence and wickedness.

Vital interests are located at B— C— , and Satan is opposed to everything that will strengthen the cause of Christ and weaken his own power. He is diligently laying plans to undermine the work of God. He never rests for a moment when he sees that the right is gaining the ascendancy. He has legions of evil angels that he sends to every point where light from Heaven is shining upon the people. Here he stations his pickets to seize every unguarded man, woman, or child, and pass them over to his service.

B— C— is the great heart of the work, and, as the human heart throws out its living current of blood into the body, so does the management of this headquarters of our church affect the whole body of believers. If the physical heart is healthy, the blood that is sent from it through the system is also healthy; but if this fountain is impure, the whole organism becomes diseased by the poison of the vital fluid. So it is with us. If the heart of the work becomes corrupt, the whole church, in its various branches and interests, scattered abroad over the face of the earth, suffers in consequence.

[102] Satan's chief work is at the headquarters of our faith. He spares no pains to corrupt men in responsible positions, and persuade them to be unfaithful to their trusts. He insinuates his suspicions and jealousies in the minds of those whose business it is to do God's work faithfully. While God is testing and proving these helpers, and fitting them for their posts, Satan is doing his utmost to deceive and allure them, that they may not only be destroyed but influence others to do wrong and injure the great work. He seeks by all the means in his power to shake the confidence of God's people in the voice of warning and reproof, by which God designs to purify the church and prosper his cause.

It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the testimonies. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the testimonies, once believed, are doubted, and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this, but he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction.

Satan has gained marked advantage in B— C—, because the people of God have not guarded the outposts. The very men whose labors God has signified he would accept if they were fully consecrated, have been the ones to be deceived, to fail in their duties, and to prove a terrible burden and discouragement, instead of the help and blessing that they should have been. These men who were trusted to keep the fort, have well nigh betrayed it into the hands of the enemy. They have opened the gates to a wily foe who sought to destroy them.

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Men of experience have seen stealthy hands slipping the bolts that Satan might enter, yet they have held their peace with apparent indifference as to the results. Some have been glad to see this, as it seemed an extenuation of their past neglect, which made it a necessity to call for others to fill the posts of responsibility that they had abused or neglected. This lack of watchfulness on the part of these newer incumbents seemed to excuse the former for their own want of faithfulness, pointing the fact that others were fully as derelict in their duty.

These persons do not realize that God holds them responsible for every advantage gained by the foe who is admitted to the fort. The desolation and ruin following lays at the door of the unfaithful sentinels, who, by their neglect, become agents in the hands of the adversary to win souls to destruction. Men in responsible positions should seek wisdom and guidance of God and not trust in their own judgment and knowledge. They should, like Solomon, earnestly pray for faith and light, and he will give them freely of his abundant supply.

God would have his work done intelligently, not in a hap-hazard manner. He would have it done with faith and careful exactitude, that he may place the sign of his approval upon it. Those who love him and walk with fear and humility before him, he will bless, and guide, and connect them with Heaven. If the workers rely upon him he will give them wisdom and correct their infirmities, so that they will be able to do the work of the Lord with perfection.

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We must put on the armor and be prepared to successfully resist all the attacks of Satan. His malignity and cruel power is not sufficiently estimated. When he finds himself foiled upon one point, he assumes new ground and fresh tactics, and tries again, working

wonders in order to deceive and destroy the children of men. The youth should be carefully warned against his power, and patiently and prayerfully directed how to endure the trials sure to come upon them in this life. They should be led to cling to the Word of God and give attention to counsel and advice.

Living faith in the merits of a crucified Redeemer will carry them through the fiery furnace of affliction and trial. The form of the Fourth will be with them in the fierce heat of the furnace, which will not leave even the smell of fire upon their garments. Children should be encouraged to become Bible students and have firm religious principles that will stand the test of the perils sure to be experienced by all those who live upon earth during the last days, in the closing history of the world.

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Epistle Number One.

THE following testimony was written Jan., 1875, and was acknowledged by Bro. L— to be true, and that it gave him light and hope.

Bro. H— L— , you are backslidden from God. Your views of God's requirements have never been too well defined nor too strict. It is no excuse for you to become lax in your duties and less vigilant because the course of so many professed Christians is wrong. You have not been consecrated to God. You have not felt your dependence upon him to keep you, and therefore you have been overcome and brought into the slavery of doubt; and the bondage of unbelief has chained your soul. You do not glorify God in your life. Our faith sometimes looks to you very questionable. The reason of this is with yourself. In the world, truth and falsehood are so mixed that one is not always clearly discerned from the other. But why has one who professes the truth so little strength? Because he understands not his own ignorance and his own weakness. If he knew this, if he was distrustful of himself, he would feel the importance of Divine help to preserve him from the wiles of the enemy. We need to be active, working Christians, unselfish in heart and life, having an eye single to the glory of God. Oh! what wrecks of weakness we meet everywhere! Silent lips, and fruitless lives! This, said the

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angel, is because of falling under temptation. Nothing mars the

peace of the soul like sinful unbelief.

You should not give up in despair, thinking you must live and die in the bondage of doubt and unbelief. In the Lord we have righteousness and strength. Lean upon him, through his power you may quench all the fiery darts of the adversary, and come off more than conqueror. You may still become sanctified through the truth; or you may, if you choose, walk in the darkness of unbelief, lose Heaven, and lose all. By walking in the light and working out the will of God, you may overcome your selfish nature.

You have been ready to give of your means, but withheld yourself. You have not felt called upon to make sacrifices which would involve care and a willingness to do any work for Christ, be it ever so humble. God will bring you over the ground again and again until you, with humble heart and subdued mind, bear the test that he inflicts, and are sanctified wholly to the service and the work of God. Then you may win immortal life. Which will you choose? God will not be trifled with. You may be a fully developed man in Christ Jesus; or you may be a spiritual dwarf, gaining no victories. You may live for yourself and lose Heaven. Will you, my brother, choose a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice, doing your work with cheerfulness and joy, perfecting Christian character, and pressing on for the immortal reward? Christ accepts no divided service. He asks for all. It will not do to withhold anything. He has purchased you with an infinite price, and he requires that all you have shall be yielded to him a willing offering. If you are fully consecrated to him in heart and life, faith will take the place of doubts, and confidence the place of distrust and unbelief. [107]

My brother, you are in positive danger through neglecting to carry out health reform more strictly in your own life and in your family. Bro. L—, your blood is impure, and you are still corrupting and inflaming it by the gratification of taste. Never be betrayed into indulging in stimulants, for this will be followed not only by reaction and loss of physical strength, but with benumbed intellect. Strictly temperate habits in eating and drinking, with firm trust in God, will improve your physical, mental, and moral health. You are of a highly excitable temperament. You have but little self-control, and frequently say and do things under excitement, which you afterwards regret. You should call a determined will to your aid in the warfare

against your own inclinations and propensities. You need to keep the avenues of your soul open for the reception of light and truth. But when something occurs to test and prove you, prejudice frequently comes in, and you arise at once against what you deem a restriction of your liberty or an infringement upon your rights.

[108] The Word of God plainly presents this truth before us: that our physical nature will be brought into warfare with the spiritual. The apostle charges us to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. Every perverted appetite becomes a warring lust. Appetite indulged to the injury of physical strength, causes disease of the soul. The lust which the apostle mentions is not confined to the violation of the seventh commandment, but every indulgence of the taste which lessens physical vigor is a warring lust. The apostle declares that he who would gain special victories and make higher attainments in righteousness, must be “temperate in all things. Temperance in eating and drinking at our tables as well as the exercise of temperance in every other respect, is essential if we would overcome as Christ overcame. God has given us light not to be treated indifferently, but to be our guide and help.

You need to cultivate self-control. The lesson you should have learned in your youth should be mastered now. Discipline yourself to die to self, to bring your will in subjection to the will of Christ. A deep and thorough conversion is essential, or you, my dear brother, will fail of eternal life. Your service in the cause of God must be more hearty, full and thorough. You cannot perfect Christian character by serving God when you feel inclined to do so, and neglecting it when you please. A decided change must take place in your life, and you must obtain a different experience from what you have yet had or your service will not be accepted of God. Our Heavenly Father has been very gracious to you. He has dealt tenderly with you. Sick-ness and disease came upon you when you were unprepared to die, for you had not perfected Christian character and had not a moral fit-ness for Heaven.

[109] Satan stood by your side to afflict and destroy, that you might be numbered with the transgressors. Fervent and effectual prayer prevailed in your behalf. Angels were sent to wait and watch about you to guard and protect you from Satan’s power and preserve your life. God has, in his matchless love, granted you another trial. Not

because of any goodness or virtue in you, but because of his mercy he has answered the prayers of faith. Your probation was lengthened that you might have an opportunity to redeem the past, overcome the defects in your character, and show in your life that devotion to God which he claims from you. You have had emotions of gratitude, but you have not experienced that heart felt thankfulness and becoming humility that should have been kindled by his unsurpassed love.

You have not sufficiently felt your obligations to God for sparing your life. You have, for pettish reasons of your own, excused yourself time and again from religious duties which devolve upon us at all times and under all circumstances. Feelings of discouragement are no apology before God for the neglect of a single duty. You are not your own, you have been purchased by the blood of Christ. He claims all that you are capable of doing; your time and strength are not your own. [110]

God indicated that you could be educated to act a part in his cause; but it was necessary that your mind should be trained and disciplined to work in harmony with the plan of God. You could gain the required experience if you would; you had the privilege presented before you of denying your inclination, as your Saviour had given you an example in his life. But you have not placed yourself in a position to learn all that you could and all that it was important for you to learn in order to make a correct worker in the cause of God. There were some things to reform in yourself before the Lord could use you effectually as his instrument.

Bio. L—, it was a sacrifice for you to leave your farm, you enjoyed your life there You did not come to Battle Creek from choice You had no knowledge of the work in connection with the publishing interest. But you was determined to do the best you could and you have in many respects done well. But many things have arisen as stumbling-blocks in your way. The course of Bro. A— was wrong in many respects, but you also did not preserve your consecration to God, you united with Bro. A— in spirit, and did not stand free; you displeased God in many things and separated your soul from him. Satan was obtaining great power over you, your steps had well nigh slipped, you were almost gone in unbelief when sickness arrested your course. It was in great mercy that God spared you and gave you a new lease of life. But you have not made an [111]

entire surrender to him, your stubborn will has not been subdued and softened, you need a new conversion. You have been easily fretted and annoyed, you have braced yourself to resist everything that you thought reflected upon you, your feelings have arisen like a flash when anything has touched your pride. Now my dear brother, this is all wrong. This you must overcome or the enemy will gain the victory over you.

You have felt sick at heart because you did not love the work in B— C—. You have looked back towards O— for your heart is there, and your body should be where your heart is. God has been testing and proving you; how have you borne the test? You needed to be planed and polished, to have the rough and jagged points of your character removed, that you might become refined for the Kingdom of Heaven. How hard it is for human nature to deny inclination, to leave flattering worldly inducements and, through love of their Saviour and their fellow-men, to deny their own pleasure in order to engage more directly in the service of God.

[112] Bro. L—, you do not enter heart and soul into the work. You have never made it a direct personal interest, and it is not agreeable to you. If you had been so disposed, you could have trained your mind to better understand the work; but you have, in a manner, held aloof from it, you have not connected yourself closely with it, and tried to become familiar with its various branches.

You are not as social and courteous as you should be, and your cold, unapproachable manner is not pleasing to God. You allow your feelings to be easily excited. No man can properly fill a position in connection with the work of God who is controlled by feeling and moves from impulse. Your mind must come in closer connection with God, and your sympathies and interest be more identified with those who are engaged in his work, or you can be of no use in advancing the cause in B— C—. You are too independent and exclusive, you need to soften and assimilate your disposition to the mind and feelings of others. You can, as a business man and as a Christian, do much valuable service for the cause of God if you only surrender your will and your way to the Lord. You need to be sanctified by the truth, your mind elevated above every personal consideration and every selfish interest.

I point you to the life of Jesus as a perfect pattern. His life was characterized by disinterested benevolence. Precious Saviour! What sacrifices has he made for us that we should not perish but have everlasting life. Heaven will be cheap enough if we resign every selfish interest to obtain it. Can we afford to have our own way and take ourselves out of the hands of God because it is more pleasing to our nature? God requires perfect submission and perfect obedience. Eternal life is worth everything to us. You may come in close connection with God if you will agonize to enter into the straight gate. [113]

You could never be aware of your deficiencies unless you were brought where these deficiencies were developed by circumstances. You have not felt as you should since you have come to B— C—. You have not entered freely and heartily into the work and made it your chief interest. You have cherished an independence that could not be maintained if you realized your true position; that you are an apprentice, learning how to work in the very best manner for the prosperity of God's cause, that you are a scholar, seeking to obtain knowledge concerning that with which you are unacquainted. You could have made much greater progress had you earnestly tried to serve God as an efficient worker.

You have been too reserved, you have not come into close relation with men engaged in the different departments of the work, you have not been familiar enough to consult with them as you should and move understandingly. You might have been a more efficient helper had you done this. You have moved too much according to your own judgment and carried out your own ideas and plans. There has been a lack of harmonious connection between the workers. Those who might have helped you, have been reluctant to impart their knowledge to you on account of this lack of familiarity on your part, and also because you move so much from impulse and feeling that they dreaded to approach you. [114]

The Saviour of the world was the adored of the angels, he was a prince in the royal courts of Heaven. But he laid aside his glory and clothed his divinity with humanity. He became the meek and lowly Jesus. His riches and glory he left in Heaven, and he became poor that we, through his poverty, might be made rich. Three years he was going from place to place, a homeless wanderer. But selfish

men will repine and murmur if called to leave their little earthly treasure for Christ's sake, or to labor in the work of saving souls for whom Christ gave his precious life. Oh, what ingratitude! No one can appreciate the blessings of redemption unless he feels that he can joyfully afford to make any and every sacrifice for the love of Christ. Every sacrifice made for Christ enriches the giver, and every suffering and privation endured for his dear sake increases the over-comer's final joy in Heaven.

You know but little of real sacrifice and genuine denial of self. You have had but little experience in hardships and taxation of your energies. Your burden has been light, while others have been loaded down with serious responsibilities. The young man who asked Jesus what he should do that he might have eternal life, was answered [115] "Keep the commandments." He confidently and proudly replied, "All these have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?" Jesus looked pityingly upon the young man, he loved him and he knew the words which he spoke would separate him from himself forever. Nevertheless Jesus touches the plague-spot of his soul. He says to the young man, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." The young man wanted Heaven but not enough to withdraw his affection from his earthly treasure. He refused to yield to the conditions required by God in order to enter into life. He was very sorrowful, for he had great possessions which he thought were too valuable to exchange for eternal rewards. He had asked what he must do to be saved and the answer had been given. But his worldly heart could not make the sacrifice of his wealth to become Christ's disciple. His decision was to give up heaven and to cling to his earthly treasure. How many are now making the very same decision which fixed the destiny of this young man.

Have we any of us an opportunity of doing something for Christ, how eagerly should we seize it and with the greatest earnestness do all we can to be co-workers with him. The very trials that task our faith most severely, and make it seem that God has forsaken us, are to lead us more closely to Christ, that we may lay all our burdens at his feet and experience the peace he will give us in exchange. [116] You need a new conversion, to be sanctified through the truth, to become in spirit like a little child, meek and humble, relying wholly

upon Christ as your Redeemer. Your pride and independence is closing your heart to the blessed influences of the Spirit of God and rendering your heart as unimpressible as the hard-beaten highway.

You have yet to learn the great lesson of faith. When you surrender yourself entirely to God, when you fall all broken upon Jesus, you will then be rewarded by a victory, the joy of which you have never yet experienced. As you review the past with a clear vision, you will see that at the very time when life seemed to you only a perplexity and a burden, Jesus himself was near you, seeking to lead you into the light. Your Father was by your side, bending over you with unutterable love, afflicting you for your good, as the refiner purifies the precious ore. When you have thought yourself forsaken, he was near you to comfort and sustain. We seldom view Jesus as he is, and are never so ready to receive his help as he is to help us.

What a victory you will gain when you learn to follow the opening providences of God with grateful heart and a determination to live with an eye single to his glory, in sickness or health, in abundance or want. Self is alive and quivering at every touch. Self must be crucified before you can overcome in the name of Jesus and receive the reward of the faithful.

Necessity of Harmony.

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THE Spirit of God will not abide where there is disunion and contention among believers in the truth. Even if these feelings are unexpressed they take possession of the heart and drive out the peace and love that should characterize the Christian church. They are the result of selfishness in its fullest sense. This evil may take the form of inordinate self-esteem, or an undue longing for the approbation of others, even if it is obtained undeservedly.

Self-exaltation must be renounced by those who profess to love God and keep his commandments, or they need not expect to be blessed by his divine favor.

The moral and religious influence at the Health Institute must be elevated in order to meet the approbation of Heaven. The indulgence of selfishness will surely grieve the Spirit of God from the place. Physicians, superintendent and helpers should work harmoniously in the spirit of Christ, each esteeming other better than himself.

[118] The apostle says, “with some have compassion, making a difference.” This difference is not to be exercised in a manner of favoritism. No countenance should be given to a spirit that implies “if you favor me, I will favor you.” This is unsanctified worldly policy, which displeases God. It is paying favors and admiration for the sake of gain. It is showing a partiality for certain ones whereby we expect to secure advantage by them. It is seeking their good will by indulgence that we may be held in greater estimation than others fully as worthy as ourselves. It is a hard thing to see one’s own errors, but everyone should realize how cruel is the spirit of envy, rivalry, distrust, faultfinding, and dissension.

We call God our Father. We claim to be children of one family, and when there is a disposition to lessen the respect and influence of one another, to build up ourselves, we please the enemy and grieve Him whom we profess to follow. The tenderness and mercy that Jesus has revealed in his own precious life, should be an example to us of the manner in which we should treat our fellow-beings, and especially those who are our brothers in Christ.

God is continually benefiting us, but we are too indifferent to his favors. We have been loved with an infinite tenderness, and yet many of us have little love for one another. We are too severe upon those we suppose to be in error, and are very sensitive to the least blame or question in regard to our own course.

[119] Hints are thrown out, and sharp criticisms of each other, but at the same time the very ones who do this are blind to their own failings. Others can see their errors, but they cannot see their own mistakes. We are daily recipients of the bounties of Heaven, and should have loving gratitude springing up in our hearts to God, which should cause us to sympathize with our neighbors and make their interests our own. Thoughts and meditations upon the goodness of God to us would close the avenues of the soul to Satan’s suggestions.

God’s love for us is proved daily, yet we are thoughtless of his favors and indifferent to his entreaties. He seeks to impress us with his Spirit of tenderness, his love and forbearance; but we scarcely recognize the marks of his kindness, and have little sense of the lesson of love he desires us to learn.

Some, like Haman, forget all God’s favors, because Mordecai is before them and is not disgraced, because their hearts are filled

with enmity and hatred rather than love and the spirit of our dear Redeemer, who gave his precious life for his enemies. We profess to have the same Father, and are bound to the same immortal home, enjoy the same solemn faith, believe the same testing message, and yet many are at strife with each other like quarrelsome children. Some who are engaged in the same branch of the work are at variance with one another and therefore at variance with the spirit of Christ.

The love of praise has corrupted many hearts. Those who have been connected with the Health Institute have at times manifested a spirit of finding fault with the plans of others, and Satan has given them a hold upon the minds of others there, who have accepted these persons as blameless, while innocent people have been charged with wrong. It is a wicked pride that delights in the vanity of one's own works, boasts of one's excellent qualities, seeking to make others seem inferior, in order to exalt self, claiming more glory than the cold heart is willing to give to God. [120]

The disciples of Christ will heed the Master's instruction. He has bade us love one another even as he has loved us. Religion is founded upon love to God, which also leads us to love each other. It is full of gratitude, humility, long-suffering. It is self-sacrificing, forbearing, merciful and forgiving. It sanctifies the whole life, and extends its influence over others.

Those who love God cannot harbor hatred or envy. When the heavenly principle of eternal love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not merely because favors are received of them, but because love is the principle of action, and modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and elevates and ennoble the affections. This love is not contracted so as merely to include "me and mine," but is as broad as the world, and as high as heaven, and is in harmony with that of the angel workers. This love cherished in the soul sweetens the entire life and sheds a refining influence on all around. Possessing it, we can but be happy, let fortune smile or frown. If we love God with all the heart we must also love his children. This love is the Spirit of God. It is the heavenly adorning that gives true nobility and dignity to the soul, and assimilates our lives to that of the Master. No matter how many good qualities we may have, however honorable and refined we may consider ourselves, if the soul is not baptized with the heavenly grace [121]

of love to God and one another, we are deficient in true goodness, and unfit for Heaven, where all is love and unity.

Some who have formerly loved God and lived in the daily enjoyment of his favor, are now in continual unrest. They wander in darkness and despairing gloom. This is because they are nourishing self. They are seeking so hard to favor themselves that all other considerations are swallowed up in this. God, in his providence, has willed that no one can secure happiness by living for himself alone. The joy of our Lord was in enduring toil and shame for others that they might reap a benefit thereby. We are capable of being happy in following his example and living to bless our fellow-men.

We are invited by our Lord to take his yoke and bear his burden. In doing this we may be happy. In bearing our own self-imposed yoke and carrying our own burdens, we find no rest; but in bearing the yoke of Christ there is rest to the soul. Those who want some great work to do for the Master can find it just where they are, in doing good and in being self-forgetful and self-sacrificing, remembering others and carrying sunshine wherever they go.

[122] There is great need that the pitying tenderness of Christ should be manifested at all times and in all places, not that blind sympathy which would gloss over sin and allow God's cause to be reproached by ill doing, but that love which is a controlling principle of the life, which flows out naturally to others in good works, remembering that Christ has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Those at the Health Institute are engaged in a great work. During the life of Christ the sick and afflicted were special objects of his care. When he sent out his disciples he commissioned them to heal the sick as well as to preach the gospel. When he sent forth the seventy, he commanded them to heal the sick and next to preach that the kingdom of God had come nigh unto them. Their physical health was to be first cared for, in order that the way might be prepared for their minds to be reached by those truths which the apostles were to preach.

The Saviour of the world devoted more time and labor to healing the afflicted of their maladies, than in preaching. His last injunction to his apostles, his representatives upon the earth, was to lay hands on the sick that they might recover. When the Master shall come,

he will commend those who have visited the sick and relieved the necessities of the afflicted.

We are slow to learn the mighty influence of trifles, and their bearing upon the salvation of souls. Those who desire to be missionaries, have at the Health Institute a large field in which to work. God does not mean that any of us shall constitute a privileged few, who shall be looked upon with great deference, while others are neglected. He was the Majesty of Heaven, yet he stooped to minister to the humblest, having no respect to persons nor station. [123]

Those who have their whole hearts in the work, will find at the Health Institute enough to do for the Master in relieving the suffering ones placed under their care. Our Lord, after performing the most humiliating office for his disciples, recommended them to follow his example. This was to keep constantly before them the thought that they must not feel superior to the lowliest saint.

Those who profess our exalted faith, who are keeping God's commandments and expecting the soon coming of our Lord, should be distinct and separate from the world around them, a peculiar people zealous of good works. Among the peculiarities which should distinguish God's people from the world in these last days, is their humility and meekness. "Learn of me," says Christ, "for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls." Here is the repose which so many crave and in vain spend time and money to obtain.

Instead of being ambitious to be equal with, or higher than another in honor and position, we should seek to be the humble, faithful servants of Christ. This spirit of self-aggrandizement made contention among the apostles even while Christ was with them. They disputed who should be greatest among them. Jesus sat down and called the twelve and said unto them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." [124]

When the mother of two sons made a request that her sons should be especially favored, one sitting on the right hand and the other on the left in his kingdom, Jesus impressed upon them that the honor and glory of his kingdom was to be the reverse of the honor and glory of this world. Whoever would be great must be a humble minister unto others, and who would be chief must be a servant even

as the Son of God was a minister and servant unto the children of men.

Again, our Saviour taught his disciples not to be anxious for position and name. "Be not ye called Rabbi, neither be ye called Master; but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant, and whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased." Jesus cited the lawyer to the sacred law code, given from Sinai: "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." He told him that if he did this he should enter into life.

[125] "Thy neighbor as thyself,"—The question arises, "Who is my neighbor?" His reply is the parable of the good Samaritan, which teaches us that any human being, who needs our sympathy and our kind offices, is our neighbor. The suffering and destitute of all classes are our neighbors, and when their wants are brought to our knowledge it is our duty to relieve them as far as possible. A principle is brought out in this parable that it would be well for the followers of Christ to adopt. First meet the temporal necessities of the needy, and relieve their physical wants and sufferings, and you will then find an open avenue to the heart, where you may plant the good seeds of virtue and religion.

In order to be happy we must strive to attain to that character which Christ exhibited. One marked peculiarity of Christ was his self-denial and benevolence. He came not to seek his own. He went about doing good, and this was his meat and drink. We may, by following the example of the Saviour, be in holy communion with Him, and in daily seeking to imitate his character and follow his example, we shall be a blessing to the world, and shall secure for ourselves contentment here, and eternal reward hereafter.

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Epistle Number Two.

I was shown, January 3, 1875, that there was a great work to be done for those who profess to believe the truth in California, before God can work for them. Many are flattering themselves that they are right with God, when they have not the principles of the truth in their hearts. Thus class can only be brought into working order by seeking, with diligent, persevering earnestness, to heed the counsel

of the True Witness. They are in a cold, formal, backslidden state. These are addressed by the True Witness : “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 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. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent.”

Bro. C—, God has claims upon you to which you do not respond. Your spiritual strength and growth in grace will be proportionate to the labor of love and good works which you do cheerfully for your Saviour who has withheld nothing, not even his own life, that he might save you. You have the injunction of the apostle, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” It is not enough to merely profess faith in the commandments of God; you must be a doer of the work. You are a transgressor of his law, You do not love God with all your heart, might, mind, and strength, neither do you live in obedience to the last six commandments, and love your neighbor as yourself. You love yourself more than God, and more than your neighbor. Keeping the commandments of God requires more of us than you are willing to perform. God requires of you good works, self-denial, self-sacrifice, and devotion to the good of others, that souls, through your instrumentality, may be brought to the truth. [127]

Our good works alone will not save any of us, but we cannot be saved without good works. And after we have done all that we can do, in the name and strength of Jesus we are to say, “We are unprofitable servants.” We are not to think we have made great sacrifices and should receive great reward for our feeble services.

Self-righteousness and carnal security have closed you about as with bands of iron. You need to be zealous and repent. You have been unfortunate in sympathizing with the disaffected, whose course has been in opposition to the work the Lord was doing through his servants upon this coast. The wrong men had your sympathy. [128]

Because your heart was not right with God you did not receive the light he sent to you. You set up your stubborn will to resist the reproof which the Lord gave to you in love. You knew these things were true, but tried to close your eyes to the true state of your case. Whether you heed the voice of reproof and warning God has sent to you or not; whether you reform, or retain your defects of character, you will one day realize what you have lost by placing yourself in a defiant position, warring in spirit against the servants of God. Your bitterness of feeling towards Eld. L— is astonishing. He has endured, and sacrificed, and toiled on this coast to do the work of God. But in your blindness, while unconsecrated in heart and life, you have ventured to handle the servant of God, in connection with S— and B—, in a cruel manner. ” Touch not mine annointed,” saith God, “and do my prophets no harm.” It is not a small matter for you to array yourself as you have done, against men whom God has sent with light and truth for the people. Beware how your influence turns souls from the truth which God has sent his servants to declare, for a heavy woe hangs over you.

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Satan has been using you as his agent to insinuate doubts, and to reiterate insinuations and misrepresentations which have originated in an unsanctified heart which God would have cleansed from its pollution. But you refused to be instructed; refused correction; rejected reproof and followed your own will and way. Souls are defiled by this root of bitterness, and are, through these questioning, murmuring ones, placed where the testimony of reproof which God sends will not reach them. The blood of these souls will be chargeable to you and to the spirits with whom you are in harmony. God has given us, as his servants, our work. He has given us a message to bear to his people. For thirty years we have been receiving the words of God and speaking them to his people.

We have trembled at the responsibility which we have accepted with much prayer and meditation. We have stood as God’s ambassadors, beseeching souls in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God. We have warned of danger as God has presented before us the perils of his people. Our work has been given us of God. What then will be the condition of those who refuse to hear the words which God has sent them, because they cross their track or reprove their wrongs 1 If you are thoroughly convinced that God has not spoken by us, why

not act in accordance with your faith and have no more to do with a people who are under so great a deception as this people are? If you have been moving according to the dictates of the Spirit of God, you are right and we are wrong. God is either teaching his church, reproving their wrongs and strengthening their faith, or he is not. [130] This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work, for the past thirty years, bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no half-way work in the matter. The Testimonies are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil. You are, in arraying yourself against the servants of God, either doing a work for God, or for the devil. "By their fruits ye shall know them." What stamp does your work bear? It will pay to look critically at the result of your course.

It is not a new thing for a man to be deluded by the arch deceiver and array himself against God. Consider your course critically before you venture to go any further in the path you are traveling. The Jews were self-deceived. They rejected the teachings of Christ; because he exposed the secrets of their hearts and reprov'd their sins. They would not come to the light, fearing their deeds would be reprov'd. They chose darkness rather than light. "This is the condemnation," said Christ, "that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." The Jews pursued their course of rejecting Christ until, in their self-deceived, deluded state, they thought in crucifying him they were doing God service. This was the result of their refusing light. You are in danger of a similar deception. It will be profitable for your soul, Bro. C—, [131] to consider where the path which you are now traveling will end. God can do without you, but you cannot afford to do without God. He does not compel any man to believe. He Bets light before men, and Satan presents his darkness. While the deceiver is constantly crying, Light is here ; Truth is here, Jesus is saying, I am the truth ; I have the words of eternal life. If any man follow me he shall not walk in darkness. God gives to us all evidence sufficient to balance our faith on the side of truth. If we surrender to God we will choose the light and reject the darkness. If we desire to maintain the independence of the natural heart and refuse the correction of God, we will, as did the Jews, stubbornly carry out our purposes and our ideas in the face of the plainest evidence, and will be in danger of as

great deception as came upon them, and may go to as great lengths in our blind infatuation as they did, and yet flatter ourselves that we are doing work for God.

[132] Bro. C—, you will not long stand where you now are. The path you have started upon is diverging from the true path, and separating you from the people whom God is testing, in order to purify them for the final victory. You will either come into union with this body, and labor earnestly to answer the prayer of Christ, or you will become more and more unbelieving. You will question point after point of the established faith of the body; become more self-willed in your opinion; grow darker and darker in regard to the work of God for this time, until you set light for darkness, and darkness for light.

Satan has great power to entangle souls by confusing the minds of those who do not cherish the light and privileges which Providence sends them. Minds which are submitted to Satan's control are led continually from the light of truth into error and darkness. If you give Satan the least advantage, he will claim more, and will watch the outposts to make the most of any circumstance to advantage his cause and ruin your soul.

[133] You are, brother and sister C—, neither of you in a safe position. You despise reproof. Had smooth words been spoken to you, rather than words of reproof; had you been praised and flattered, you would now occupy a very different position from what you do, in regard to your belief in the Testimonies. There are those who will, in these last days, cry, "Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." But this is not my work, God has set me as a reprove of his people; and as he has laid upon me the heavy burden, just as surely will he make them to whom this message is given responsible for the manner in which they treat it. God will not be trifled with, and they who despise his work will receive according to their works. I have not chosen this unpleasant labor for myself. It is not a work which will bring to me the favor or praise of men. It is a work which but few will appreciate. But they who seek to make my labor doubly hard by their misrepresentations, jealous suspicions, and unbelief, thus creating prejudice in the minds of others against the testimonies God has given me, and limiting my work, have the matter to settle with God, while I shall go forward as Providence and my brethren may open the way before me. I shall do what I can in the name and

strength of my Redeemer. I shall warn, and counsel, and reprove, and encourage, as the Spirit of God dictates, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. My duty is not to please myself, but to do the will of my Heavenly Father, who has given me my work.

Christ warned his disciples, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Here is a test. Bro. C—, this you can apply if you will. You need not go in uncertainty and doubt. Satan is at hand to suggest a variety of doubts, but if you will open your eyes in faith you will find sufficient evidence for belief. But God will never remove from any man all causes for doubts. Those who love to dwell in the atmosphere of doubt and questioning unbelief can have the unenviable privilege. God gives sufficient evidence for the candid mind to believe. He who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things which he cannot make plain to his finite understanding, will be left in the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and questioning doubts, and will make shipwreck of faith. Bro. C—, you have seemed to consider it a virtue to be on the side of the doubting rather than on the side of the believing. Jesus never praised unbelief; never commended doubts. He gave to his nation evidences of his messiahship in the miracles he wrought, but there were those who considered it a virtue to doubt, and who would reason these evidences away, and find something in every good work to question and censure.

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The centurion who desired Christ to come and heal his servant felt unworthy to have Jesus come under his roof, but his faith was so strong in the power of Christ that he entreated him to just say the word and the work would be done. "When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of Heaven. But the children of the king- dom shall be cast out into outer darkness;

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there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou has believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.”

Here Jesus exalted faith in contrast with doubt. He showed that the children of Israel would stumble because of their unbelief, which would lead to the rejection of great light, and would result in their condemnation and overthrow.

Thomas declared he would not believe unless he put his finger into the prints of the nails, and thrust his hand into the side of his Lord. Christ gave him the evidence he desired, and then reprov'd his unbelief. “Because thou has seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.”

In this age of darkness and error, men who profess to be followers of Christ seem to think they are at liberty to receive or reject the servants of the Lord at pleasure, and that they will not be called to account for thus doing. Unbelief and darkness lead them to this. Their sensibilities are blunted by their unbelief. They violate their consciences and become untrue to their own convictions, and weaken themselves in moral power. They view others in the same light with themselves.

[136] When Christ sent out the twelve he commanded them, ” And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide until ye go thence. And when ye come into a house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment, than for that city.” They were warned to beware of men, for they should be delivered up to the councils and scourged in the synagogues. Men’s hearts are no softer to-day than when Christ was upon the earth. They will do all that is in their power to aid the great adversary in making it as hard as possible for the servants of Christ, just as the people did with Christ when he was upon the earth. They will scourge with the tongue of slander and falsehood. They will criticise, and turn against the servant of God the very efforts he is leading them to make.

They will, with their evil surmisings, see fraud and dishonesty where all is right, and where perfect integrity exists. They lay selfish motives to the charge of God's servants when he himself is leading them, and when they would give even their own lives if God required, and if by so doing they could advance his cause. They who have done the least and made the least investment in the cause of truth, are the most forward to express their unbelief in the integrity of the servants of God who are placed in a position to bear financial responsibilities in the great work. They who have confidence in the work of God are willing to venture something for its advancement; and their spiritual prosperity will be in proportion to their works of faith. [137]

God's Word is our standard, but how few follow it. Our religion will be of but little worth to our fellow-men if it is only theoretical and not practical. The influence of the world and of selfishness is carried about by many who profess to be following the Bible. They are like a cloud chilling the atmosphere in which others move. Bro. C—, it will be an up-hill work for you to cultivate pure, unselfish love, and disinterested benevolence. You have not much experience in yielding your opinions and ideas, and in sometimes giving up your own judgment, and being guided by the counsel of others. Bro. and sister C—, you both need to have less of self and more of the grace of God. You both need to acquire a habit of self-government, that your thoughts may be brought into subjection to the Spirit of Christ. It is the grace of God that you need in order that your thoughts may be disciplined to flow in the right channel, that the words you utter may be right words, and that your passions and appetites may be subject to the control of reason, and the tongue be bridled against levity and unhallowed censure and fault-finding. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." The greatest triumph given to us by the religion of Christ is control over ourselves. Our natural propensities must be controlled or we can never overcome as Christ overcame. [138]

There are those among the professed followers of Christ who are spiritual dyspeptics. They are self-made invalids. Their spiritual debility is the direct result of their own short-comings. They do not obey the laws of God and carry out the principles of his commandments. They are indolent in the cause and work of God, doing

nothing. But when they think they see something with which they can find fault, then they are active and zealous. A Christian who does not work cannot be healthy. Spiritual disease is the result of neglected duty. In order for a man's faith to be strong, he must be much with God in secret prayer. How can a man's benevolence be a blessing to him if he never exercises it? How can we ask God to help in the conversion of souls unless we are doing all in our power to bring them to the knowledge of the truth? You have brought upon yourself a debility which has made you useless to yourself and to the church, and the remedy is repentance, confession, and reform. You need moral power and the real nourishment of the grace of God. Nothing will give sinew and bone to your piety like working to advance the cause you profess to love, instead of binding it. There is but one genuine cure for spiritual laziness, and that is, work; working for souls who need your help. Instead of strengthening souls you have been discouraging and weakening the hearts and hands of those who would see the cause of God advance.

God has given you abilities which you can use to good account if you will, or you can abuse to your injury and to the injury of others. You have not realized the claims that God has upon you.

It should be ever borne in mind that we are living in this world to form characters for the next. And all our associations with our fellow-mortals should be with reference to their eternal interest, and to our own. But if these interviews are devoted only to pleasure and to our own selfish gratification; if we are light and trifling; if we indulge in wrong acts, we are not co-workers with God, but are decidedly working against him. The precious lives God has given us are not to be moulded by unbelieving relatives in order to please the carnal mind, but to be spent in a manner which God can approve.

If Bro. B— enjoyed the love of God, he would be a channel of light. He has too little moral power, with strong tendencies to unbelief. He is pitied by the heavenly angels, for he is surrounded with darkness. His ears hear words of unbelief and darkness almost continually. He has doubts and questionings constantly thrown before him. The tongue is a world of iniquity. "The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." If Bro. B— would cling to God more firmly, and feel that he would preserve his integrity before God even if it cost his natural life, he would

receive strength from above. If he allows the darkness and unbelief that surrounds him, and the doubts and questioning and much talk, to affect his faith, he will soon be all darkness and doubt and unbelief, and will have no light or strength in the truth.

He need not think that, by seeking to compromise with his friends, who are embittered against our faith, he will make it easier for himself. If he stands forth with one purpose to obey God at any cost, he will have help and strength. God loves and pities Bro. B—. He knows every perplexity,

every discouragement, every bitter speech. He is acquainted with it all. If he will lay aside his unbelief and stand in God unmoved, his faith will strengthen by exercise. "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

I— saw Brn. B— and C— in special danger of losing eternal life. They did not see that they were standing directly in the way of the advancement of the work of God in—.

When the tent-meeting was held in S— the first time we were upon this coast, hundreds were convicted of the truth; but God knew the material of which that church was composed. If souls came out into the truth there were none to nourish and cherish them, and to lead them along to an elevated life. S— was a man of an envious, fault-finding, jealous spirit. Unless he could be first he would not do anything. He esteemed himself far higher than God esteemed him. A man of his temperament will not, long at a time, be in agreement with any one, for it is his element to contend and array himself in opposition to anything that does not suit his ideas. The Lord left him to take his own course and to manifest what manner of spirit he was of. The very same spirit he carried out in his family he brought into the church and sought to carry it out there. His bitterness, and cruel speeches against the servants of God, are written in the book. He will meet them again. "He went out from us because he was not of us." And in no case should the church encourage him to unite with them again, for with the spirit he now has he would quarrel even with the angels of God. He would wish to rule and dictate the work of the angels. No such spirit can enter Heaven. S— and B—, whom God frowns upon, have dared to withstand the servants of God, to malign them and to impute to them evil motives. They have tried to destroy the confidence of the brethren in these workers, as well as in

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[142] the Testimo- nies. If the work is of God they cannot overthrow it. Their efforts will be in vain.

Bro. C—, you were in such darkness that you thought these men were right. You have repeated their words, and talked of the “one-man power.” Oh, how little you knew what you were talking about.

Some have been ready to say anything, to prefer any charge against the servants of God, and to be jealous and fault-finding. And if they can find any instance where they think the ministers have spoken decidedly, and perhaps severely, in their zeal for the cause of God, they have been willing to make the most of their words, and have felt at liberty to cherish the most bitter, wicked spirit, and to charge the Lord’s servants with wrong motives. Let these fault-finders ask what they would have done under similar circumstances, bearing similar burdens. Let them look, and search, and condemn their own wrong, overbearing course, and their own impatience and fretfulness, and when without sin themselves let them cast the first stone of censure at the brethren, who are trying to get them into working order. A holy God will not bring out souls to the truth, to come under such an influence as has existed in the church! Our Heavenly Father is too wise to bring souls into the truth, to be moulded by the influence of these men who are unconsecrated in heart and life. These men are not in harmony with the truth. They are not in union with the body, but are drawing off from the church. They are working at cross-purposes with those whom God is using to bring souls into the truth.

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Who would nourish those who should take their stand to obey all of God’s commandments ? Who would be nursing fathers and nursing mothers to those who need help and strength? Do these brethren know what they are doing? They are standing directly in the way of sinners. They are blocking up the way by their own wrong course. The blood of souls will be on their garments unless they repent and entirely change their course. Do these disaffected ones think they are right, and the body of Sabbath-keepers deluded? “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Whom is God blessing, and whom is he leading? Who are at work for him ? Who are doing good in laboring to get the truth before other minds? Do these men think that the body will come to them and give up their experience

and their views to follow their judgment? or will they come into harmony with the body ?

Bro. C— boasts of his independence of mind and judgment, while he is blocking up the way of sinners by his own unconsecrated life and his opposition to the work, in blindly warring against Christ in the persons of his servants. Bro. C—, you are deceived in the quality of true independence. Independence is not obstinacy, although this is often confounded with independence. When Bro. C— has formed an opinion and expressed it in his family or in the church with considerable confidence and with some publicity, he is then inclined to make it appear that he is right by every argument he can produce. He is then in danger, great danger of closing his eyes, and violating his conscience by his persistency, for the temptation of the enemy is strong upon him. His pride of opinion is hard to yield even in the face of light and evidence sufficient to convince him if he would be convinced. He thinks that if he should admit that he was wrong it would be a reflection on his judgment and discernment.

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Bro. C—, you are in great danger of losing your soul. You want to have the pre-eminence. At times you feel deeply if you think you are slighted. You are not a happy man. You will not be happy if you leave the people of God, taking offence at plain words and facts as did many of the followers of Christ, because the truth spoken was too close. You will not be a happy man, for you will take yourself with you. You are not right; you make trouble for yourself. Your temperament is your enemy; and go where you will you will take yourself with your burden of unhappiness. It is an honor to confess a wrong as soon as it is discerned.

There are many matters in connection with the work of God with which you find fault because it is natural for you to find fault. And since you turned your face against the light God revealed to you in regard to yourself, you are fast losing your discernment, and are more ready to find fault with everything. You give your opinion with dictatorial confidence, and treat the queries of others in regard to your opinion as an abuse of you. True refined independence never disdains to seek counsel of the experienced and of the wise, and it treats the counsel of others with respect.

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Bro. C—, you must be a converted man or you will lose eternal life. You cannot be a happy man until you obtain the meekness of

wisdom. You and your wife have too long worked at cross-purposes. You must lay down this fault-finding, these suspicions, jealousies, and unhappy bickerings. The same spirit which is developed in your family is developed in your religious experience. Be careful how you speak of the faults of each other in the presence of your children; and be careful how you let your spirit control you. You see only the bad and evil in your oldest son; you give him no credit for good qualities which, should he die, you would suddenly become convinced he had possessed. You have neither of you pursued a consistent course toward your son. His faults you dwell upon and make apparent to him in the presence of others, and show that you have no confidence in his good traits of character.

[146] There is a disposition in both of you to see the faults of each other, and of all others, but you are blind to your own faults and many errors. You are both nervous, easily excited and irritated. You need the meekness of wisdom. You cling tenaciously to your own frailties, passions, and prejudices, as though if you let them go you would no more have happiness in this life, when they are thorns—pricking, bruising thorns. Jesus invites you to lay down the yoke you have been bearing, which has been galling your neck, and take his yoke which is easy, and his burden which is light. How wearisome is the load of self-love, covetousness, pride, passion, jealousy, and evil surmising. Yet how closely do men clasp these curses, and are loth to give them up. Christ understood how grievous these self-imposed burdens, and he invites were us to give them up. The heavy laden and weary souls he invites to come to him and take his burden, which is light, in exchange for the burdens which they bind upon themselves. He says, “Ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” The requirements of our Saviour are all consistent and harmonious, and, if cheerfully borne, will bring peace and rest to the soul.

[147] When Bro. C— once takes a position on the wrong side, it is not easy for him to confess he has erred. But if he can let his wrong course pass out of his mind and pass from the memory of others, and he can make some changes for the better without an open acknowledgment of his wrong, he will do so. But all these errors and unconfessed sins stand registered in Heaven, and will not be blotted out until he complies with the direction given in the Word of

God : “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.” If Bro. C— has found another plan besides that given us by our Lord, it is not a safe way, and will prove his ruin at last. This other way is ruinous to the church—ruinous to the prosperity and happiness of his family. He needs to soften his heart, and to let tenderness, humility, and love, into his soul. He needs to cultivate unselfish qualities. Both Bro. and sister C— should cultivate qualities of mind which will make them pure, forgetful of self, and more interested in those with whom they are brought in contact. There is a vein of self-love and care for self which does not increase their happiness, but brings to them grief and sorrow. You have a conflict with yourselves in which you alone can act a part. You should both control the tongue, and keep many things back to which you give utterance.

The first evil is in thinking wrong; then come the words which are wrong. But you leave undone the work of cultivating love, deference, and respect for each other. Be kindly considerate of each other’s feelings, and seek to sacredly guard each other’s happiness. You can do this only in the strength and name of Jesus. Sister C— has made strong efforts to gain victories, but she has not had much encouragement from her husband. Instead of both seeking God in earnest prayer for strength to overcome the defects in their characters, they have been watching the course of each other, and weakening themselves by finding fault with the course of others. The garden of the heart has not had attention.

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If Bro. C— had received the light the Lord sent to him months ago, and frankly conversed with his wife, and both had broken their hard hearts before the Lord, how different would be their present state. They both slighted the words of reproof and entreaty of the Spirit of God, and did not reform their lives. But closing their eyes to the light God had sent them did not make one of their faults less grievous in the sight of God, nor lessen their accountability. They have hated the reproof which the Lord, in pitying tenderness, gave them. Bro. C— has naturally a kind and tender heart, but it is crusted over with self-love, vanity, and evil surmising. His heart is not callous, but he lacks moral power. He is a coward as soon as the necessity is brought before him of self-denial and self-sacrifice, for he loves himself. To control self; to put a watch upon his words; to

acknowledge that he has done wrong or spoken wrong, is a cross which he feels is too humiliating to lift; and yet if he is ever saved this cross must be lifted.

[149] You both need to watch your words, for just as surely as there is not a sentinel placed over your thoughts and actions you will discourage one another, and make it a sure case that neither of you can be saved. You both need to guard against a hasty spirit which prompts hasty words and actions. Resentment which is indulged because you think you have been misused, is the spirit of Satan, and leads to great moral evil. When you are controlled by a hasty spirit you deprive your reason for the time of the power of regulating your words and your conduct, while at the same time you make yourselves responsible for all the evil consequences. That which is done in haste and anger is not excusable. The action is bad. You may, by a single word spoken in haste and passion, leave a sting in the hearts of friends which may never be forgotten. Unless you exercise self-control you will be a most unhappy couple. You ascribe your unhappy life to the faults of each other, but do this no more. Make it a rule never to speak a word of censure to each other, but commend and praise whenever you can.

[150] Some think it is a virtue to be unrestrained, and they will speak in praise of their out-spoken habit of talking out disagreeable things which are in the heart. They let an angry spirit exhaust itself in a torrent of reproach and fault-finding. The more they talk the more excited they become, and Satan stands by to help on the work, for it suits him. The words irritate the one to whom they are spoken, and they will be thrown back, giving provocation for still harder words, until a little matter has blazed into a great flame. You both feel that you have all the trials that you can possibly endure, and that your lives are the most unhappy. Resolutely commence the work of controlling your thoughts, your words, your actions. When you feel the rising of resentment, make it a rule to go by yourself and humbly pray to God, who will hearken to the prayer which goeth not forth from feigned lips.

Every passion must be under the control of enlightened conscience. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any

man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

If you live upon the plan of addition, adding grace unto grace, God will multiply unto you his grace. While you add, God multiplies. If you cherish a habitual impression that God sees and hears all that you do and say, and keeps a faithful record of all your words and actions, and that you must meet it all, then in all you do and say you will seek to follow the dictates of an enlightened and wakeful conscience. Your tongue will be used to the glory of God, and will be a source of blessing to yourself and to others. But if you separate from God, as you have been doing, take heed lest your tongue shall [151] prove a world of iniquity, and bring upon you fearful condemnation, for souls will be lost through you.

The appetites of our animal natures ought to be kept in rigid subjection. These appetites were given us for important purposes, for good, and not to become the ministers of death by being perverted and becoming a warring lust. The appetite for tobacco, which you strengthen by indulgence, is becoming a warring lust against your soul. An intemperate man cannot be a patient man. The almost imperceptible indulgence of the taste will create an appetite for stronger stimulants. If the thoughts, and passions, and appetites, are kept in due subjection, the tongue will be controlled.

Bro. C—, call to your aid moral power, and leave the use of tobacco forever. You have tried to hide from others the fact that you used tobacco. But you did not hide the matter from God. “Cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purify your hearts ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” I commend these words to you in the name of Jesus who has given me my commission. Do not reject them.

You would never have rejected the Testimonies as you have, had your wrong doings not been reprov'd. You thought it would [152] be easier to sacrifice the Testimonies and close your eyes to the light God has given you, than to leave your tobacco and cease your life of levity and joking with the unbeliever. The cleansing process

involves denial and restraint which you have not moral power to endure, therefore you think to excuse your sins by your unbelief of the light God has sent you. Remember, you must meet all these things again, for they are written in the book, with all the warnings and reproofs God has committed to me to give to you.

Bro. B— is to be pitied, for he has naturally a defective organization. His hope is small. His unbelief and doubts control his judgment. It is in his nature to place himself on the side of doubting and questioning. The only way to overcome this great evil is to cultivate opposite traits of character. He should repress and not cultivate unbelief. He should not express his doubts. He has no right to thrust the defect of his character before others to cause them sadness and discouragement. If he must be affected with this sad evil, unbelief, he should not imbitter the happiness of others by introducing his unbelief to chill the faith of his brethren. He is inclined to pass over almost everything in every discourse and exhortation from which he might draw comfort and encouragement, and he picks up something which he thinks will afford an excuse for his questioning and criticism. The avenues of his soul are thrown open and left un-guarded for Satan to come in and to mould his mind to his purposes.

I was shown that your meetings are losing interest because God's Spirit does not attend them. The brethren and sisters are in complete bondage because of these two men. They dare not exercise their freedom, and speak out their faith in the simplicity of their souls, for here is Bro. B. with his cool, severe, critical eye, watching and ready to catch at any word which will give him a chance to exercise the faculties of his unbelieving mind. Between these two the Spirit of God is grieved away from the meetings. When brethren manifest the spirit of the dragon, to make war upon those who believe that God has communicated light and comfort to them through the Testimonies, it is time for the brethren and sisters to assert their liberty and perfect freedom of conscience. God has given them light, and it is their privilege to cherish the light and to speak of it to strengthen and encourage one another. Bro. B— would confuse the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the Testimonies is an addition to the Word of God. But in this he presents it in a false light. God has seen fit in this manner to

bring the minds of his people to his Word, to give them a more clear understanding of it.

The church of — are growing weaker and weaker because of the influence which has been exerted over them. Not an influence to help them advance, but to clog the wheels. It is the privilege of Bro. B— to cast aside his unbelief, and to advance with the light, if he will. If he refuses to do this, the cause of God will advance all the same without his aid. But God designs that a change shall be made in the church at —. They will either advance or retrograde. God can do more with six souls united, of the same mind and of the same judgment, than with scores of men who do as Brn. B— and C— have been doing. They have not brought angels of light with them into the meeting, but angels of darkness. The meetings have been unprofitable, and sometimes a positive injury. God calls for these men to come over on the Lord's side, and to be united with the body, or to cease hindering those who would be wholly for the Lord. [154]

The great reason why so many professed disciples of Christ fall into grievous temptation and make work for repentance, is, they are deficient in a knowledge of themselves. Here is where Peter was so thoroughly sifted by the enemy. Here is where thousands will make shipwreck of faith. You do not take your wrongs and errors to heart and afflict your souls over them. I entreat you to purify your souls by obeying the truth. Connect yourselves with Heaven. And may the Lord save you from self-deception,

Epistle Number Three.

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Much respected Bro. — I was shown in Jan., 1875, that there are hinderances in the way of the spiritual prosperity of the church. The Spirit of God is grieved because many are not right in heart and life; their professed faith does not harmonize with their works. The sacred rest-day of Jehovah is not observed as it should be. Every week God is robbed by some infringement upon the borders of his holy time; and the hours that should be devoted to prayer and meditation are given to worldly employments.

God has given us his commandments, not only to believe in, but to obey. The great Jehovah, when he had laid the foundations of the earth, and dressed the whole world in the garb of beauty, and filled

it with things useful to man, when he had created all the wonders of the land and sea, instituted the Sabbath day and made it holy. God blessed and sanctified the seventh day because he rested upon it from all his wondrous work of creation. The Sabbath was made for man, and God would have him put by his labor on that day, as he himself rested after his six days work of creation.

[156] Those who reverence the commandments of Jehovah, after light has been given them in reference to the fourth precept of the decalogue, will obey it without questioning the feasibility or convenience of such obedience, God made man in his own image, and then gave him an example of observing the seventh day which he sanctified and made holy. He designed that upon that day man should worship him, and engage in no secular pursuits. No one who disregards the fourth commandment, after becoming enlightened concerning the claims of the Sabbath, can be held guiltless in the sight of God.

Bro. —, you acknowledge the requirements of God to keep the Sabbath ; but your works do not harmonize with your declared faith. You give your influence to the side of the unbelievers, in so far as you transgress the law of God. When your temporal circumstances seem to require attention, you violate the fourth commandment without compunction. You make the keeping of God's law a matter of convenience, obeying or disobeying as your business or inclination indicates. This is not honoring the Sabbath as a sacred institution. You grieve the Spirit of God, and dishonor your Redeemer by pursuing this reckless course.

[157] A partial observance of the Sabbath law is not accepted by the Lord, and has a worse effect upon the minds of sinners than if you made no profession of being a Sabbathkeeper. They perceive that your life contradicts your belief, and lose faith in Christianity. The Lord means what he says, and man cannot set aside his commands with impunity. The example of Adam and Eve in the garden should sufficiently warn us against any disobedience of the divine law.

The sin of our first parents, in listening to the specious temptations of the enemy, brought guilt and sorrow upon the world, and led the Son of God to leave the royal courts of Heaven and take a humble place on earth. He was subjected to insult, rejection and crucifixion by the very ones he came to bless. What infinite expense

attended that disobedience in the Garden of Eden! The Majesty of Heaven was sacrificed to save man from the penalty of his crime.

God will not more lightly pass over any transgression of his law now than in the day when he pronounced judgment against Adam. The Saviour of the world raises his voice in protest against those who regard the divine commandments with carelessness and indifference. Said he, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven."

The teaching of our lives is wholly for or against the truth. If your works seem to justify the transgressor in his sin, if your influence makes light of breaking the commandments of God, then your guilt rests not only with yourself, but you are, to a certain extent, responsible for the consequent errors of others.

At the very beginning of the fourth precept, God has said [158] "*Remember;*" knowing that man in the multitude of his cares and perplexities, would be tempted to excuse himself from meeting the full requirements of the law; or in the press of worldly business forget its sacred importance. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work:" —meaning the usual business of life, for worldly profit or pleasure. These words are very explicit, there can be no mistake. Brother, how dare you venture to transgress a commandment so solemn and important? Has the Lord made an exception, by which you are absolved from the law he has given to the world? Are your transgressions omitted from the book of record? Has he agreed to excuse your disobedience when the nations come before him for judgment ?

My brother, do not for a moment deceive yourself with the thought that your sin will not bring its merited punishment. Your transgressions will be visited with the rod, because you have had the light, yet have walked directly contrary to it. "He that knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

God has given man six days in which to do his own work, and carry on the usual business of his life. But the Lord claims one which he has set apart and sanctified. He gives it to man as a day in which he may rest from labor, and devote himself to worship and the improvement of his spiritual condition. What a flagrant outrage it is

[159] for man to steal the one sanctified day of Jehovah, and appropriate it to his own selfish purposes !

It is the grossest presumption for mortal man to venture upon a compromise with the Almighty, in order to secure his own petty, temporal interests. It is as ruthless a violation of the law to occasionally use the Sabbath for secular business as to entirely reject it; for it is making the Lord's commandments a matter of convenience. "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God," is thundered from Sinai! No partial obedience, no divided interest is accepted by him who declares that the iniquities of the fathers shall be visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate him, and that he will show mercy unto thousands that love him and keep his commandments.

It is not a small matter to rob a neighbor, and great is the stigma attached to one who is found guilty of such an act. Yet he who would scorn to defraud his fellow-man will without shame rob his Heavenly Father of the time that he has blessed and set apart for a special purpose.

[160] My dear brother, your works are at variance with your professed faith, and your only excuse is the poor plea of convenience. The servants of God in past times have been called upon to lay down their lives in vindication of their faith. Your course illy harmonizes with that of the Christian martyrs who suffered hunger and thirst, torture and death rather than renounce their religion, or yield the principles of truth.

It is written, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" Every time you put your hands to labor on the Sabbath day, you virtually deny your faith. The Holy Scriptures teach us that faith without works is dead, and that the testimony of one's life proclaims to the world whether or not he is true to the faith he professes. Your conduct lessens God's law in the estimation of your worldly friends. It says to them, "You may or may not obey the commandments. I believe that the law of God is, in a manner, binding upon men, but, after all, the Lord is not very particular as to a strict observance of its precepts, and an occasional transgression is not visited with severity on his part."

Many excuse themselves for violating the Sabbath by referring to your example. They argue that if so good a man, who believes the seventh day is the Sabbath, can engage in worldly employments on that day, if circumstances seem to require it, surely they can do so without condemnation. Many souls will face you in the Judgment, making your influence an excuse for their disobedience of God's law. Although this will be no apology for their sin, yet it will tell fearfully against you.

God has spoken, and he means that man shall obey. He does not inquire if it is convenient for him to do so. The Lord of life and glory did not consult his convenience or pleasure when he left his station of high command to become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, accepting ignominy and death in order to deliver man from the consequence of his disobedience. Jesus died, not to save man *in* his sins, but *from* his sins. He is to leave the error of his ways, to follow the example of Christ, take up his cross and follow him, denying self, and obeying God at any cost.

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Said Jesus, "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

If we are true servants of God there should be no question in our minds as to whether we should obey his commandments or follow our own temporal interests.

If the believers in the truth are not sustained by their faith in these comparatively peaceful days, what will uphold them when the grand test comes, and the decree goes forth against all those who will not worship the image of the beast, and receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands? This solemn period is not far off. Instead of becoming weak and irresolute, the people of God should be gathering strength and courage for the time of trouble.

Jesus, our great example, in his life and death, taught the strictest obedience. He died, the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty, that the honor of God's law might be preserved and yet man not utterly perish. Sin is the transgression of the law. If the sin of Adam brought such inexpressible wretchedness, requiring the sacrifice of God's dear Son, what will be the punishment of those, who, seeing the light of truth, set at naught the fourth commandment of the Lord?

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Circumstances will not justify any one in working upon the Sabbath for the sake of worldly profit. If God excuses one man, he may excuse all. Why may not Bro. S—, who is a poor man, work upon the Sabbath to earn means for a livelihood when he might by so doing be better able to support his family? Why may not other brethren, or all of us, keep the Sabbath only when it is convenient to do so? The voice from Sinai makes answer: “Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.”

Wrongs perpetrated by believers in the truth, bring great weakness upon the church. They are stumbling blocks in the way of sinners, and prevent them from coming to the light. Brother, God calls you to come out fully upon his side, and let your works show that you regard his precepts, and keep inviolate the Sabbath. He [163] bids you wake up to your duty and be true to the responsibilities that devolve upon you. These solemn words are addressed to you: “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.”

Like many of our brethren, you are becoming entangled with the transgressors of God’s law, viewing matters in their light and falling into their errors. God will visit with his judgments those who are professedly serving him, yet *really* serving mammon. They who disregard the Lord’s express injunction in order to advantage themselves, are heaping future woe upon themselves. The church in — should inquire closely if they have not, like the Jews, made the temple of God a place of merchandise. Christ said, “My Father’s house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.”

Are not many of our people falling into the sin of sacrificing their religion for the sake of worldly gain; preserving a form of piety, yet giving all the mind to temporal pursuits? God’s law must be [164] considered first of all, and obeyed in spirit and in letter. If God’s word, spoken in awful solemnity from the holy mountain, is lightly

regarded, how will the testimonies of his spirit be received? Minds that are so darkened as not to recognize the authority of the Lord's commandments given directly to man, can receive little good from a feeble instrument whom he has chosen to instruct his people.

Your age does not excuse you from obeying the divine commands. Abraham was sorely tested in his old age. The words of the Lord seemed terrible and uncalled-for to the stricken old man; yet he never questioned their justice or hesitated in his obedience. He might have plead that he was old and feeble, and could not sacrifice the son who was the joy of his life. He might have reminded the Lord that this command conflicted with the promises that had been given in regard to this son. But the obedience of Abraham was without a murmur or reproach. His trust in God was implicit.

The faith of Abraham should be our example ; yet how few will patiently endure a simple test of reproof of the sins which imperil their eternal welfare. How few receive reproof with humility and profit by it. God's claim upon our faith, our services, our affections, should meet with a cheerful response. We are infinite debtors to the Lord, and should unhesitatingly comply with the least of his requirements. To be a commandment breaker it is not necessary that we should trample upon the whole moral code. If one precept is disregarded, we are transgressors of the sacred law. And if we would be a true commandment-keeper, we should strictly observe every requirement that God has enjoined upon us.

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God allowed his own Son to be put to death in order to answer the penalty of the transgression of the law; then how will he deal with those who, in the face of all this evidence, dare venture upon the path of disobedience, having received the light of truth? Man has no right to question his convenience or wants in this matter. God will provide; he who fed Elijah by the brook, making a raven his messenger, will not suffer his faithful ones to want for food.

The Saviour asked his disciples who were pressed with poverty, why they were anxious and troubled in regard to what they should eat or how they should be clothed. Said he: "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" He pointed to the lovely flowers, formed and tinted by a divine hand, saying: "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the

[166] lillies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothed the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? ”

Where is the faith of God’s people? Why are they so unbelieving and distrustful of him who provides for their wants, and upholds them by his strength? The Lord will test the faith of his people; he will send rebukes which will be followed by afflictions, if these warnings are not heeded. He will break the fatal lethargy of sin at any cost to those who have departed from their allegiance to him, and awaken them to their sense of duty.

Brother, your soul must be quickened and your faith enlarged. You have so long excused yourself in your disobedience, on one plea or another, that your conscience has been lulled to rest, and ceases to remind you of your errors. You have so long followed your own convenience in regard to keeping the Sabbath, that your mind has been rendered unimpressible as to your course of disobedience; yet you are none the less responsible, for you have brought yourself into this condition. Brother, begin at once to obey the divine commandments, and trust in God. Provoke not his wrath, lest it visit you with terrible punishment. Return to him before it is too late, and find pardon for your transgressions. He is rich and abundant in mercies, he will give you his peace and approbation if you come to him in humble faith.

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Epistle Number Four.

DEAR BRO. —: I have been shown in vision that you have defects in your character which must be remedied. You are not right in your views and in your feelings in regard to your wife. You do not appreciate her. She has not received words of sympathy and love from you that you should have given her. It would not have lessened the dignity of your manhood to have praised her for the care and the burdens she bears in the family.

You are selfish and exacting. You mark little things and talk of small errors in your wife and children. In short, you seek to gauge their consciences by your own. In other words, you try to be conscience for them. Your wife has an identity of her own which can

never be submerged in her husband. She has an individuality which she would preserve, for she is accountable before God for herself. You cannot, Bro. — , be responsible before God for the character your wife forms. She alone will bear this responsibility. God is just as willing to impress the conscience of your God-fearing wife as he is to impress your conscience for her.

You expect too much of your wife and of your children. You censure too much. If you would encourage a cheerful, happy temper yourself, and speak kindly and tenderly to them, you would bring [168] sunlight into your dwelling instead of clouds, and sorrow, and unhappiness. You think too much of your opinion, and have taken positions that were extreme, and have not been willing that your wife's judgment should have the weight it should in your family. You have not encouraged respect for your wife yourself, nor educated your children to respect her judgment. You have not made her your equal, but have rather taken the reins of government and control in your own hands and held them with a firm grasp. You have not an affectionate, sympathetic disposition. These traits of character you need to cultivate if you want to be an overcomer, and if you want the blessing of God in your family.

You are very set and unyielding in your opinion, which makes it very hard for your family. You need to have your heart softened by the grace of God. You need such love in your heart as characterized the works of Christ. Love proceeds from God. It cannot live and flourish in the natural heart. It is a plant of heavenly growth. Where it exists there is truth and life and power. But it cannot live without action, and whenever it is exercised it increases and extends. It will not observe little mistakes and be quick to mark little errors. It will prevail when argument and any amount of words will prove vain and useless.

The very best way to reform the character and regulate the conduct of your family, is through the principles of love. It is indeed a [169] power, and will accomplish that which money or might never can.

Brother, the words you address to others, if addressed to you, you would quickly resent. Your words that are harsh and unsympathizing cut and wound. It is very easy for you to censure and find fault. This is only productive of unhappiness. You have looked upon it as a weakness to be kind, tender and sympathizing, and have thought it

beneath your dignity to speak tenderly, gently and lovingly to your wife. Here you mistake in what true manliness and dignity consist. The lack of doing the deeds of kindness you should do, is a manifest weakness and defect in your character. That which you would look upon as weakness, God regards as true Christian courtesy that should be exercised by every Christian. For this was the spirit which Christ manifested.

You have a very selfish disposition, and think more highly of yourself than you ought to think. You frequently take extremely singular and fanciful views of the Scriptures, and often cling to these as zealously as did the Jews to their traditions. Not possessing a teachable spirit, you will therefore be constantly in danger of making trouble in the church, unless you set yourself at the work of correcting these wrongs in the strength of the mighty Conqueror.

[170] That which makes your case alarming, is that you think you know these things better than your brethren, and you are very difficult to be approached. You have a self-righteous, pharisaical spirit which would say, Stand off, come not near me, for I am holier than thou.

You have not seen the corruptions of your own heart, and that you have made life almost a failure. Your opinions cannot and must not rule in the church of God. You need to be cultivating all the Christian graces, but especially charity which suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, “doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” “Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on charity (love), which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

You mark little deviations from what you think is right, and you sternly seek to correct them. While you are thus overbearing and dictatorial, quick to observe a brother's faults, you do not closely search your own heart to see the evils existing in your life. You show great moral weakness in the indulgence of your appetite and

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passions. The slavery of appetite for tobacco has such control of you that although you resolve and re-resolve to overcome the habit, you do not accomplish it. This wrong habit has perverted your senses. My brother, where is your self-denial? Where is your moral power to overcome. Christ overcame the power of appetite in the wilderness of temptation on your account, making it possible for you to overcome on your own account. Now the battle is yours. In the name of the Conqueror you have an opportunity to deny your appetite and gain a victory for yourself. You require much of others, what are you willing to do to get the victory over a disgusting, health-destroying, soul-polluting indulgence? The battle is yours. No one can fight it for you. They can pray for you, but the work must be wholly your own.

God calls upon you to no longer dally with the tempter, but to cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. You need to work fast to remove the defects from your character. You are in God's workshop. If you will submit to the process of hewing and squaring and planing, that the rough edges may be removed, the knots and uneven surface smoothed and fitted by the planing knife of God, you will be fitted by his grace for the heavenly building. But if you cling to self and are not willing to endure the trying process of fitting for the heavenly building, you will have no place in that structure, which will come together without the sound of an ax or hammer. If your nature is not transformed, if you are not refined and elevated by the sanctifying truth for these last days, you will be found unworthy of a place among the pure and holy angels. [172]

Can you afford to cling to your defiling habits, and at last be found among the un-believers and unsanctified? Can you afford to run any risk in this matter? There is too much at stake for you to venture to pursue the course of self-indulgence that you have done. You have been forward to talk the truth to unbelievers in a very positive, objectionable manner, which has had a very bad influence upon their minds. When there is one inconsistent advocate of the truth, Satan uses him to his special advantage to disgust those who would, under a proper influence, have been favorably impressed. You should soften your manners, and when you advocate the truth let it be with a spirit of meekness.

[173] “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” The fear here spoken of does not mean dis-trust or indecision, but with due caution, guarding every point lest an unwise word be spoken, or excitement of feeling should get the advantage, and thus leave unfavorable impressions upon minds, and balance them in the wrong direction. Godly fear, humility and meekness are greatly needed by all in order to correctly represent the truth of God.

One of your greatest dangers is a spirit of self-confidence and pride. The great unhappiness which exists with you and in your family, results immediately from the operation of pride. The usefulness of a man who has this pride must be greatly limited, for his pride and self-love keeps him in a narrow sphere. His spirit is not generous. His efforts are not extended but contracted. By his conversation and deportment, this pride will be discovered if it exists.

[174] Dear brother, the influence under which your character has been formed has given you a haughty, overbearing spirit. This spirit you act out in your family, among your neighbors, and all with whom you associate. In order to overcome these wrong habits, you must watch unto prayer. You should now be thoroughly in earnest, for you have little time in which to work. Do not feel that you are sufficient in your own strength. Only in the name of the mighty Conqueror can you gain the victory. In conversation with others, dwell upon the mercy and goodness and love of God instead of upon his strict judgment and justice. Cling fast to his promises. You can do nothing in your own strength, but in the strength of Jesus you can do all things. If you are in Christ, and Christ in you, you will be transformed, renewed, and sanctified. “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” Be sure that Christ is in you, that your heart is broken and submissive and humble. God will accept only the humble and contrite. Heaven is worth a life-long, persevering effort. Yes, it is worth everything. God will help you in your efforts if you strive only in him. There is a work to be done in your family which God will help you to perform if you take hold of it aright. I entreat of you to set your own heart in order, and then seek patiently to work for the salvation of your family, that the angels of God may come into your house and abide with you.

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Appeal to Ministers.

WE are living in a most solemn time. All have a work to do requiring diligence. Especially is this true of the pastor who is to care for and feed the flock of God. The one whose special work is to lead the people into the path of truth, should be an able expositor of the Word, and capable of adapting his teachings to the wants of the people. He should be so closely connected with Heaven as to become a living channel of light, a mouth piece of God. [175]

A pastor should have a correct understanding of the Word and also of the human character. Our faith is unpopular. The people are unwilling to be convinced that they are so deeply in error; a great work is to be done, and at present there are but few to do it. One man usually performs the labor which should be shared by two, for the work of evangelist and pastor are necessarily combined, bringing a double burden upon the worker in the field.

The minister of Christ should be a Bible student, that his mind may be stored with Bible evidence; for a minister is only strong when he is fortified with scripture truth. Argument is good in its place, but far more can be reached by simple explanations of the Word of God. The lessons of Christ were illustrated so clearly that the lowest and most simple-minded could readily comprehend them. Jesus did not employ long and difficult words in his discourses, but used plain language adapted to the minds of the common people. He ventured no farther into the subject he was expounding than they were able to follow him.

There are many men of good minds, and intelligent in regard to the Scriptures, whose usefulness is greatly hindered by their defective method of labor. Some ministers who engage in the work of saving souls fail to secure the best results, because they do not carry through with thoroughness the work that they commenced with so much enthusiasm. [176]

Others are not acceptable because they cling tenaciously to preconceived notions, making these prominent, and thereby failing to conform their teachings to the actual needs of the people. Many have no idea of the necessity of adapting themselves to circumstances and

meeting the people where they are. They do not identify themselves with those whom they wish to help and elevate to the true Bible standard of Christianity.

In order to be a truly successful minister one must wholly consecrate himself to the work of saving souls. It is highly essential that he should be closely united with Christ, seeking continual counsel from him, and depending upon his aid.

Some fail of success because they trust to the strength of argument alone, and do not cry earnestly to God for his wisdom to direct them and his grace to sanctify their efforts. Long discourses and tedious prayers are positively injurious to a religious interest, and fail to carry conviction to the consciences of the people. This propensity for speech-making frequently dampens a religious interest that might have produced great results.

[177] The true ambassador of Christ is in perfect union with him whom he represents, and his engrossing object is the salvation of souls. The wealth of earth dwindles into insignificance when compared with the worth of a single soul for whom our Lord and Master died. He who weigheth the hills in scales and the mountains in a balance regards a human soul as of infinite value.

In the work of the ministry there are battles to fight, and victories to gain. "I come not," said Christ, "to send peace on earth, but a sword." The opening labors of the Christian church were attended with hardships and bitter griefs; and the successors of the early apostles find that they must meet with trials similar to theirs; privations, calumny, and every species of opposition meet them in their labors. They must be men of staunch, moral courage and spiritual muscle.

Great moral darkness prevails, and only the power of truth can drive away the shadows from a single mind. We are battling with giant errors and the strongest prejudices, and our efforts will fail either to convert souls or elevate our own moral natures without the special help of God. Human skill, and the very best natural abilities and acquisitions are powerless to quicken the soul, to discern the enormity of sin and banish it from the heart.

[178] Ministers should be careful not to expect too much from persons who are still groping in the darkness of error. They should do their work well, relying upon God to impart to inquiring souls that mysterious, quickening influence of his Holy Spirit, knowing that

without this their labors will be unsuccessful. They should be patient and wise in dealing with minds, remembering how manifold are the circumstances that have developed such different traits in individuals. They should strictly guard themselves also, lest self should get the supremacy and Jesus should be left out of the question.

Some ministers fail of success because they do not give their undivided interest to the work when very much depends upon persistent and well directed labor. Many are not laborers; they do not pursue their business outside of the pulpit. They shirk the duty of going from house to house and laboring wisely in the home circle. They need to cultivate that rare Christian courtesy, which would render them kind and considerate toward the souls under their care, working for them with true earnestness and faith, teaching them the way of life.

Ministers can do much toward moulding the characters of those with whom they are associated. If they are sharp, critical, and exacting, they will be sure to meet these unhappy elements in the people upon whom their influence is strongest, though not, perhaps, of the nature which they desire, yet none the less the effect of their own example.

It cannot be expected that the people will enjoy peace and harmony unless their religions teachers, whose foot-steps they follow, have those traits of character largely developed and manifested in their lives. The minister of Christ has great responsibilities to bear if he would become an example for his people and a correct exponent of his Master's doctrine. Men were awed by the purity and moral dignity of our Saviour, while his unselfish love and gentle benignity won their hearts. He was the embodiment of perfection. If his representatives would see like fruits attending their labors as crowned the ministry of Christ, they should earnestly strive to imitate his virtues and cultivate those traits of character which would make them like unto him.

[179]

It requires much forethought and wisdom from God to labor successfully for the salvation of sinners. If the soul of the laborer is filled with the grace of God, his teachings will not irritate his hearers but melt its way to their hearts, and open them for the reception of the truth.

The workers in the field should not allow themselves to be discouraged, but whatever their surroundings they should exercise hope and faith. The minister's work is but just begun when he has presented the truth from the pulpit. He is then to become acquainted with his hearers. Many greatly fail in not coming in close sympathy with those who most need their help. With the Bible in their hand [180] they should seek in a courteous manner to learn the objections which exist in the minds of those who are beginning to inquire, "What is truth?"

They should be carefully and tenderly led and educated as pupils in school. Many have to unlearn theories which have been ingrafted into their lives. As they become convinced that they have been in error concerning Bible subjects, they are thrown into perplexity and doubt. They need the tenderest sympathy and the most judicious help; they should be carefully instructed; they should be prayed for and prayed with, watched and guarded with the kindest solicitude. Those who have fallen under temptation and have backslidden from God need help. This class is represented in the lessons of Christ, by the lost sheep. The shepherd left the ninety and nine in the wilderness and hunted for the one lost sheep until he found it and returned with it on his shoulder with rejoicing. Also in the illustration of the woman who searched for the lost piece of silver until she found it, and called together her neighbors to rejoice with her that the lost was found. The connection of heavenly angels with the Christian's work is here brought clearly to light. There is more joy in the presence of the angels in Heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. There is joy with the Father and with Christ. All Heaven is interested in the salvation of [181] man. He who is instrumental in saving a soul is at liberty to rejoice, for angels of God have witnessed his efforts with the most intense interest, and rejoice with him in his success.

How thorough then should be the labor and how deep the sympathy of man for his fellow-man. It is a great privilege to be a co-worker with Jesus Christ in the salvation of souls. He, with patient, unselfish efforts, sought to reach man in his fallen condition and rescue him from the consequences of sin. Therefore his disciples, who are the teachers of his word, should closely imitate their great example.

It is necessary, in order to pursue this great and arduous work, that the ministers of Christ should possess physical health. To attain this end they must become regular in their habits, and adopt a healthful system of living. Many are continually complaining and suffering from various indispositions. The reason is almost always because they do not labor wisely nor observe the laws of health. They frequently remain too much indoors, occupying heated rooms filled with impure air. Here they apply themselves closely to study or writing, taking little physical exercise, and having little change of employment. As a consequence, the blood becomes sluggish and the powers of the mind are enfeebled.

The whole system needs the invigorating influence of exercise in the open air. A few hours of manual labor each day would tend to renew the bodily vigor, and rest and relax the mind. In this way the general health would be promoted and a greater amount of pastoral labor could be performed. [182]

The incessant reading and writing of many ministers unfits them for pastoral work. They consume valuable time in abstract study, which should be expended in helping the needy at the right moment.

Some ministers have given themselves to the work of writing during a period of decided religious interest, and it was frequently the case that their writings had no special connection with the work in hand. This is a glaring error, for at such times it is the duty of the minister to use his entire strength in pushing forward the cause of God. His mind should be clear and centered upon the one object of saving souls. Should his thoughts be pre-occupied with other subjects, many might be lost to the cause who could have been saved by his timely instruction. Some ministers are easily diverted from their work. They become discouraged or are attracted to their homes, and leave a growing interest to die for want of attention. The harm done the cause in this way can scarcely be estimated. When an effort to promulgate the truth is started, the minister in charge should feel the responsibility on him to carry it through successfully. If his labors appear to be without result, he should seek by earnest prayer to discover if his labors are what they should be. He should humble his soul before God in self-examination, and by faith, cling to the divine promises, humbly continuing his efforts till he is satisfied [183]

that he has faithfully discharged his duty, and done everything in his power to gain the desired result.

Ministers frequently report that they left the best of interest at one point to enter a new field. This is wrong, they should have finished the work they began, for in leaving it incomplete, they accomplished more harm than good, in spoiling the field for the next laborer. No field is so unpromising as that which has been cultivated just enough to give the weeds a more luxuriant growth.

Much prayer and wise labor is needed in new fields. Men of God are wanted, not merely men who can talk, but those who have an experimental knowledge of the mystery of godliness, and who can meet the urgent wants of the people; those who solemnly realize the importance of their position as servants of Jesus, and will cheerfully take up the cross that he has taught them how to bear.

[184] When the temptation comes to seclude themselves and indulge in reading and writing, at a time when other duties should claim their immediate attention, they should be strong enough to deny self and devote themselves to the work that lays directly before them. This is undoubtedly one of the most trying tests that a studious mind is called to undergo.

The duties of pastor are often shamefully neglected because the minister lacks sufficient strength to sacrifice his personal inclinations for seclusion and study. The pastor should visit from house to house among his flock, teaching, conversing and praying with each family, and looking out for the welfare of their souls. Those who have manifested a desire to become acquainted with the principles of our faith should not be neglected, but thoroughly instructed in the truth. No opportunity to do good should be lost by the watchful and zealous minister of God.

Certain ministers who have been invited to houses by the heads of families, have spent the few hours of their visit in secluding themselves in an unoccupied room to indulge their inclination for reading or writing. The family that entertained them derived no benefit from their visit. They accepted the hospitality extended them without giving an equivalent in the labor that was so much needed.

People are easily reached through the avenues of the social circle. But many dread the task of visiting; they have not cultivated the social qualities, have not acquired that genial spirit that wins its

way to the hearts of the people. It is highly important that a pastor should mingle much with his people that he may become acquainted with the different phases of human nature, readily understand the workings of the mind, adapt his teachings to the intellect of his people, and learn that grand charity only possessed by those who closely study the nature and needs of men. [185]

Those who seclude themselves from the people are in no condition to help them. A skillful physician must understand the nature of various diseases, and must have a thorough knowledge of the human structure. He must be prompt in attending to his patients. He knows that delays are dangerous. When his experienced hand is laid upon the pulse of the sufferer, and he carefully notes the peculiar indication of his malady, his previous knowledge enables him to determine concerning the nature of his disease and the treatment necessary to arrest its progress. As the physician deals with physical disease, so does the pastor minister to the sin-sick soul. And his work is as much more important than the former's as eternal life is more valuable than the temporal existence.

The pastor meets with an endless variety of temperaments, and it is his duty to become acquainted with the members of families that listen to his teachings, in order to determine what means will best influence them in the right direction.

In view of these grave responsibilities the question will arise, "who is sufficient for these things?" The heart of the laborer will almost faint as he considers the various arduous duties devolving upon him; but the words of Christ strengthen the soul with the comforting assurance: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." [186]

The difficulties and dangers that threaten the safety of those he loves, should make him cautious and circumspect in his manner of dealing with them, and watchful of them as one who must give an account. He should judiciously employ his influence in winning souls to Christ, and impress the truth upon inquiring minds. He should take care that the world, by its delusive attractions, should not lead them away from God and steal their hearts to the influence of his grace.

The minister is not to rule imperiously over the flock entrusted to his care; but to be their ensamples, and to show them the way to

Heaven. Following the example of Christ, he should intercede with God for the people of his care till he sees his prayers are answered.

[187] Jesus exercised human and divine sympathy toward man. He is our example in all things. God is our Father and Governor, and the Christian minister is the representative of his Son on earth. The principles which rule in Heaven should rule upon earth; the same love that animates the angels, the same purity and holiness that reigns in Heaven, should, as far as possible, be re-produced upon earth. The minister of God is responsible to him for the power he exercises, and he does not justify his servants in perverting that power into a despotism over the flock of his care.

God has given to his servants precious knowledge of his truth, and he desires that they shall closely connect themselves with Jesus and, through sympathy, draw near to their brethren, that they may do them all the good that lays in their power. The Redeemer of the world did not consult his own pleasure, but went about doing good. He bound himself closely to the Father that he might bring their united strength to bear upon the souls of men to save them from eternal ruin. In like manner should his servants cultivate spirituality if they expect to succeed in their work.

Jesus pitied poor sinners so much that he left the courts of Heaven, and laid aside the robes of royalty, humiliating himself to humanity, that he might become acquainted with the needs of man and help him to rise above the degradation of the fall. When he has given to man such unquestionable evidence of his love and tenderest sympathy, how important that his representatives should imitate his example in coming close to their fellow-men, and helping them to form a true Christian character.

[188] But some have been too ready to engage in church trials, and have borne sharp and un-sympathizing testimony against the erring. In thus acting they have yielded to a natural propensity that should have been firmly subdued. This is not the calm justice of the Christian executive, but the harsh criticism of a hasty temperament.

The churches need education more than censure. Instead of blaming them too severely for their want of spirituality and neglect of duty, the minister should, by precept and example, teach them to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. ” Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is

given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory; whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present ever; man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”

Our ministers who have reached the age of forty or fifty years should not feel that their labor is less efficient than formerly. Men of years and experience are just the ones to put forth strong and well-directed efforts. They are specially needed at this time, the churches cannot afford to part with them. Such ones should not talk of physical and mental feebleness, nor feel that their day of usefulness is over. [189]

Many of them have suffered from severe mental taxation, unrelieved by physical exercise. The result is a deterioration of their powers, and a tendency to shirk responsibilities. That they need is more active labor. This is not alone confined to those whose heads are white with the frost of time, but men young in years have fallen into the same state, and have become mentally feeble. They have a list of set discourses, but if they get beyond the boundaries of these they lose their soundings.

The old-fashioned pastor who traveled on horseback and spent much time in visiting his flock enjoyed much better health, notwithstanding the hardships and exposures, than our ministers of today who avoid, as far as possible, all physical exertion and confine themselves to their books.

Ministers of age and experience should feel it their duty, as God's hired servants, to go forward, progressing every day, continually becoming more efficient in their work and constantly gathering fresh, new matter to set before the people. Each effort to expound the gospel should be an improvement upon that which preceded it. Each year they should develop a deeper piety, a tenderer spirit, a greater spirituality and a more thorough knowledge of Bible truth, The greater their age and experience, the nearer should they be able to approach the hearts of the people, having a more perfect knowledge of them. [190]

Men are needed for this time who are not afraid to lift their voices for the right, whoever may oppose them. They should be of strong integrity and tried courage. The church calls for them, and God will work with their efforts to uphold all branches of the gospel ministry.

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