

Ellen G. White Estate

TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH — NO.29

ELLEN G. WHITE



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**TESTIMONY FOR  
THE CHURCH.  
— No.29**

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**Ellen G. White**

**1880**

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

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## Words To The Reader

WE trust, dear reader, that you will recognize in the following pages the Lord's merciful voice to his people in reproof and instruction. The points to which we call your especial attention are,—

1. The description of the Judgment. The influence of this upon the large congregation at Battle Creek has been great and good. May all who read it be moved to make their wrongs right, and, for time to come, walk before the Lord with that carefulness and faithfulness which will secure a pure record in Heaven.

2. The Lord's appeal to his people relative to the sacredness of pledges. It seems quite evident that our sins of unfaithfulness to pay our vows, or pledges, and the disposition in some to take back what they have actually given, has called forth this warning. Those who have been faithful to their vows will read these pages with pleasure. Those who have been unfaithful can redeem the past, and then enjoy the sweet consciousness of having done their duty.

3. Our publications. The value and influence of our publications, and the importance of their circulation, are set forth in a most cheering manner. And the duty of diligence, faithfulness, and economy, and the united influence both of those laboring at our Offices, and our people generally, are points of deep interest to the reader, if he properly values the great influence of the press in the advancement of our cause.

4. The appeal to our people on the subject of wills shows the fearful mistakes which many have made, and others are liable to make, if not aroused to their duty to the cause of God.

5. The qualifications and duties of the ambassadors for Christ are set forth in the pages that follow, and also the great gift of God through his servants in the organization of the tract and missionary societies, which may be a means under God of doing a great work.

J.W.

## TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH.

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### THE JUDGMENT.

ON the morning of Oct. 23, 1879, about two o'clock, the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and I beheld scenes in the coming Judgment. Language fails me in which to give an adequate description of the things which passed before me, and of the effect they had upon my mind.

The great day of the execution of God's judgment seemed to have come. Ten thousand times ten thousand were assembled before a large throne, upon which was seated a person of majestic appearance. Several books were before him, and upon the covers of each was written in letters of gold, which seemed like a burning flame of fire, "Ledger of Heaven." One of these books containing the names of those who claimed to believe the truth was then opened. Immediately I lost sight of the countless millions about the throne, and only those who were professedly children of the light and of the truth engaged my attention. As these persons were named, one by one, and their good deeds mentioned, their countenances would light up with a holy joy that was reflected in every direction. But this did not seem to rest upon my mind with the greatest force.

Another book was opened, wherein were recorded the *sins* of those who professed the truth. Under the general heading of selfishness came every other sin. There were also headings over every column, and underneath these, opposite each name, were recorded in their respective columns the lesser sins. Under covetousness came falsehood, theft, robbery, fraud, and avariciousness; under ambition came pride and extravagance; jealousy stood at the head of malice, envy, hatred; and intemperance headed a long list of fearful crimes, such as lasciviousness, adultery, indulgence of animal passions, etc. As I beheld, I was filled with inexpressible anguish, and exclaimed, Who can be saved? who will stand justified before God? whose

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robes are spotless ? who are faultless in the sight of a pure and holy God?

As the Holy One upon the throne slowly turned the leaves of the Ledger, and his eyes rested for a moment upon individuals, his glance seemed to burn into their very souls, and at the same moment every word and action of their lives passed before their minds as clearly as if traced before their vision in letters of fire. Trembling seized them, and their faces turned pale. Their first appearance when around the throne was that of careless indifference. But how changed their appearance now! The feeling of security is gone, and in its place is a nameless terror. A dread is upon every soul lest he shall be found among those who are wanting. Every eye is riveted upon the face of the One upon the throne; and as his solemn, searching eye sweeps over that company, there is a quaking of heart, for they are self-condemned without one word being uttered. In anguish of soul each declares his own guilt, and with terrible vividness sees that by sinning he has thrown away the precious boon of eternal life.

One class were registered as cumberers of the ground. As the piercing eye of the Judge vested upon these, their sins of neglect were distinctly revealed. With pale and quivering lips they acknowledged that they had been traitors to their holy trust. They had had warnings and privileges, but they had not heeded nor improved them. They now see that they presumed too much upon the mercy of God. True, they had not such confessions to make as had the vile and basely corrupt; but like the fig-tree they were cursed because they bore no fruit, because they had not put to use the talents intrusted to them.

This class had made *themselves* supreme, laboring only for selfish interests. They were not rich toward God, not having responded to his claims upon them. Although professing to be servants of Jesus Christ, they brought no souls to him. Had the cause of God been dependent on their efforts, it would have languished; for they not only withheld the means lent them of God, but they withheld themselves. But these now see and feel that in occupying an irresponsible position in reference to the work and cause of God, they have placed themselves on the left hand. They had opportunity, but would not do the work that they could and should have done.

[6] The names of all who professed the truth were mentioned. Some were reproved for their unbelief, others for having been slothful ser-

vants. They allowed others to do the work in the Master's vineyard, and to bear the heaviest responsibilities, while they were selfishly serving their own temporal interests. By cultivating the abilities God had given them, they could have been reliable burden-bearers, working for the interest of the Master. Said the Judge, All will be justified by their faith, and judged by their works. How vividly then appeared their neglect, and how wise the arrangement of God in giving to every man a work to do to promote the cause and save his fellow-men. Each was to demonstrate a living faith in his family and in his neighborhood, by showing kindness to the poor, sympathizing with the afflicted, engaging in missionary labor, and by aiding the cause of God with his means. But like Meroz, the curse of God rested upon them for what they did not do. They loved that work which would bring the greatest profit in this life; and opposite their names in the Ledger devoted to good works there was a mournful blank.

The words spoken to these were most solemn : You are weighed in the balances, and found wanting. You have neglected spiritual responsibilities because of busy activity in temporal matters, while your very position of trust made it necessary that you should have more than human wisdom and greater than finite judgment. This you needed in order to perform even the mechanical part of your labor; and when you disconnected God and his glory from your business, you turned from his blessing. [7]

The question was then asked, Why have you not washed your robes of character, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb ? God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that through him it might be saved. My love for you has been more self-denying than a mother's love. It was that I might blot out your dark record of iniquity, and put the cup of salvation to your lips, that I suffered the death of the cross, bearing the weight and curse of your guilt. The pangs of death, and the horrors of the darkness of the tomb, I endured that I might conquer him who had the power of death, unbar the prison-house, and open for you the gates of life. I submitted to shame and agony because I loved you with an infinite love, and would bring back my wayward, wandering sheep to the paradise of God, to the tree of life. That life of bliss which I purchased for you at such a cost, you have disregarded. Shame,

reproach, and ignominy, such as your Master bore for you, you have shunned. The privileges he died to bring within your reach have not been appreciated. You would not be partaker of his sufferings, and you cannot now be partaker with him of his glory. Thou were uttered these solemn words: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” The book then closed, and the mantle fell from the person on the throne, revealing the terrible glory of the Son of God.

[8] The scene then passed away, and I found myself still upon the earth, inexpressibly grateful that the day of God had not yet come, and that precious probationary time was still granted us in which to prepare for eternity.

\* \* \* \* \*

### OUR PUBLICATIONS.

SOME things of grave importance have not been receiving due attention at our Offices of publication. Men in responsible positions should have worked up plans whereby our books could be circulated, and not lie on the shelves, falling dead from the press. Our people are behind the times, and are not following the opening providence of God.

Many of our publications have been thrown into the market at so low a figure that the profits are not sufficient to sustain the Office and keep good a fund for continual use. And those of our people who have no special burden of the various branches of the work at Battle Creek, and at Oakland, do not become informed in regard to the wants of the cause, and the capital required to keep the business moving. They do not understand the liability to losses, and the expense every day occurring to such institutions. They seem to think that everything moves off without much care or outlay of means, and therefore they will urge the necessity of the lowest figures on our publications, thus leaving scarcely any margin. And after the prices have been reduced to almost ruinous figures, they manifest but a feeble interest in increasing the sales of the very books on which they have asked such low prices. The object gained, their burden ceases, when they ought to have an earnest interest and a real care to

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press the sale of the publications, thereby sowing the seeds of truth, and bringing means into the Offices to invest in other publications.

There has been, on the part of ministers, a very great neglect of duty in not interesting the churches in the localities where they labor, in regard to this matter. When once the prices of books are reduced, it is a very difficult matter to get them again upon a paying basis, as men of narrow minds will cry speculation, not discerning that no one man is benefited, and that God's instrumentalities must not be crippled for want of capital. Books that ought to be widely circulated are lying useless in our Offices of publication, because there is not interest enough manifested to get them circulated.

The press is a power; but if its products fall dead for want of men who will execute plans to widely circulate them, its power is lost. While there has been a quick foresight to discern the necessity of laying out means in facilities to multiply books and tracts, plans to bring back the means invested, so as to reproduce other publications, have been neglected. The power of the press with all its advantages is in their hands, and they can use it to the very best account, or they can be half asleep, and through inaction, lose the advantages which they might gain. They can extend the light, by judicious calculation, in the sale of books and pamphlets. They can send them into thousands of families who now sit in the darkness of error.

With other publishers, there are regular systems of introducing into the market books of no vital interest. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." Golden opportunities occur almost daily where the silent messengers of truth might be introduced into families and to individuals but no advantage is taken of these opportunities by the indolent, thoughtless ones. Living preachers are few. There is only one where there should be a hundred. Many are making a great mistake in not putting their tale; to use in seeking to save the souls of their fellow-men. Hundreds of men should be engaged in carrying the light all through our cities, villages, and towns. The public mind must be agitated. God says, Let light be sent out into all parts of the field. He designs that men shall be channels of light, bearing it to those who are in darkness.

Missionaries are wanted everywhere. In all parts of the field canvassers should be selected, not from the floating element in society, not from men and women who are good for nothing else,

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and have made a success of nothing; but they should be persons of good address, of tact, keen foresight and ability. Such are needed to make a success as colporteurs, canvassers, and agents. Men suited to this work undertake it; but some injudicious minister will flatter them that their gift should be employed in the desk instead of simply working as colporteurs. Thus the work of the colporteur is belittled. They are influenced to get a license to preach, and the very ones [11] who might have been trained to make good missionaries to visit families at their homes, and talk and pray with them, are caught up to make poor ministers, and the field where so much labor is needed and where so much good might be accomplished for the cause, is neglected. The efficient colporteur, if his work is faithfully done, should have a sufficient remuneration for his services as well as the minister.

If there is one work more important than another, it is that of getting before the public our publications which will lead men to search the Scriptures. Missionary work—introducing our publications into families, conversing, and praying with and for them—is a good work, and one which will educate men and women to do pastoral labor.

Everyone is not fitted for this work. Those of the best talent and ability, who will take hold of the work understandingly and systematically, and carry it forward with persevering energy, are the ones who should be selected. There should be a most thoroughly organized plan; and this should be faithfully carried out. Churches in every place should feel the deepest interest in the tract and missionary work.

The volumes of Spirit of Prophecy, and also the Testimonies, should be introduced into every Sabbath-keeping family, and the brethren should know their value, and be urged to read them. It was not the wisest plan to place these books at a low figure and have only one set in a church. They should be in the library of every [12] family, and read again and again. Let them be kept where they can be read by many, and let them be worn out in being read by all the neighbors.

There should be evening readings, in which one should read aloud to those assembled at the winter fireside. There is but little interest manifested to make the most of the light given of God. Much

of it is concerning family duties and instruction is given to meet almost every case and circumstance. Money will be expended for tea, coffee, ribbons, ruffles, and trimmings, and much time and labor spent in preparing the apparel, while the inward work of the heart is neglected. God has caused precious light to be brought out in publications, and these should be owned and read by every family. Parents, your children are in danger of going contrary to the light given of Heaven, and you should both purchase and read the books, for they will be a blessing to you and yours.

You should lend Spirit of Prophecy to your neighbors, and prevail upon them to buy copies for themselves. Missionaries for God, you should be earnest, active, vigorous workers

Many are going directly contrary to the light which God has given to his people, because they do not read the books which contain the light and knowledge in cautions reproofs, and warnings. The cares of the world the love of fashion, and the lack of religion, have turned the attention from the light God has so graciously given, while books and periodicals containing error are traveling all over the country. Skepticism and infidelity are increasing everywhere. Light, so precious, coming from the throne of God, is hid under a bushel. God will make his people responsible for this neglect. An account must be rendered to him for every ray of light he has let shine upon our pathway, whether it has been improved to our advancement in divine things, or rejected because it was more agreeable to follow inclination. [13]

We now have great facilities for spreading the truth, but our people are not coming up to the privileges given them. They do not see and sense the necessity in every church of using their abilities in saving souls. They do not realize their duty to obtain subscribers for our periodicals, including our health journal, and to introduce our books and pamphlets. Men should be at work who are willing to be taught as to the best way of approaching individuals and families. Their dress should be neat, but not foppish, and their manners such as not to disgust the people. There is a great want of true politeness among us as a people. This should be cultivated by all those who take hold of the missionary work.

Our publishing houses should show marked prosperity. Our people can sustain them if they will show a decided interest to work

our publications into the market. But, should as little interest be manifested in the year to come as has been shown in the year past, there will be but small margin to work upon.

[14] The wider the circulation of our publications, the greater will be the demand for books that make plain the Scriptures of truth. Many are becoming disgusted with the inconsistencies, errors, and the apostasy of the churches, and with the festivals, fairs, lotteries, and numerous inventions to extort money for church purposes. There are many who are seeking for light in the darkness. If our papers, tracts, and books, expressing the truth in plain Bible language, could be widely circulated, many would find that they are just what they want. But many of our brethren act as if the people were to come to them or send to our Offices to obtain publications, when thousands do not know that they exist.

God calls upon his people to act like living men, and not to be indolent, sluggish, and indifferent. We must carry the publications to the people, and urge them to accept, showing them that they will receive much more than their money's worth. Exalt the value of the books you offer. You cannot regard them too highly.

[15] My soul was agonized as I saw the indifference of our people who make so high a profession. I was shown that the blood of souls will be on the garments of very many who now feel at ease and irresponsible for souls that are perishing around them for want of light and knowledge. They have come in contact with them, but have never warned them, never prayed with or for them, and never made earnest efforts to present the truth to them. I was shown that there has been a wonderful negligence on this point. Ministers are not doing one-half what they might do to educate the people for whom they labor upon all points of truth and duty; and, as a consequence, the people are spiritless and inactive. The stake and scaffold are not appointed for this time to test the people of God, and for this very reason the love of many has waxed cold. When trials arise, grace is proportioned for the emergency. We must individually consecrate ourselves on the very spot where God has said he would meet us.

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**CHRISTS AMBASSADORS.**

AMBASSADORS for Christ have a solemn and important work, which rests upon some altogether too lightly. While Christ is the minister in the sanctuary above, he is also, through his delegates, the minister of his church on earth. He speaks to the people through chosen men, and carries forward his work through them, as when, in the days of his humiliation, he moved visibly upon the earth. Although centuries have passed, the lapse of time has not changed his parting promise to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." From Christ's ascension to the present day, men ordained of God, deriving their authority from him, have become teachers of the faith. Christ, the True Shepherd, superintends his work through the instrumentality of these under-shepherds. Thus the position of those who labor in word and doctrine becomes very important. In Christ's stead they beseech the people to be reconciled to God.

The people should not regard their ministers as mere public speakers and orators, but as Christ's ambassadors, receiving their wisdom and power from the great Head of the church. To slight and disregard the word spoken by Christ's representative, is not only showing disrespect to the man, but also to the Master who has sent him. He is in Christ's stead. The voice of the Saviour should be heard in his representative. [16]

Many of our ministers have made a great mistake in giving discourses which were wholly argumentative. There are souls who listen to the theory of truth and are impressed with the evidences brought out, and then if a portion of the discourse presents Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, the seed sown might spring up and bear fruit to the glory of God. But in many discourses the cross of Christ is not presented before the people. Some may be listening to the last sermon they will ever hear. And some will never again be situated where they can have the chain of truth brought before them and a practical application made of it to their hearts. That golden opportunity lost, is lost forever. Had Christ and his redeeming love been exalted in connection with the theory of truth, it might have balanced them on the side of Jesus Christ.

[17] There are more souls longing to understand how they may come to Christ than we imagine. Many listen to popular sermons from the pulpit and know no better how to find Jesus and the peace and rest which their souls desire, than before they listened. Ministers who preach the last message of mercy to the world should bear in mind that Christ is to be exalted as the sinner's refuge. Many ministers think that it is not necessary to preach repentance and faith, with a heart all subdued by the love of God ; they take it for granted that their hearers are perfectly acquainted with the gospel, and that matters of a different nature must be presented in order to hold their attention. If their hearers are interested, they take it as evidence of success. The people are more ignorant in regard to the plan of salvation, and need more instruction upon this all-important subject, than upon any other.

Those who assemble to listen to the truth should expect to be profited, as did Cornelius and his friends: " Now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

Theoretical discourses are essential, that all may know the form of doctrine, and see the chain of truth, link after link, uniting in a perfect whole. But no discourse should ever be delivered without presenting Christ and him crucified as the foundation of the gospel, making a practical application of the truths set forth, and impressing upon the people the fact that the doctrine of Christ is not yea and nay, but yea and amen in Christ Jesus.

After the theory of truth has been presented, then comes the laborious part of the work. The people should not be left without instruction in the practical truths which relate to their every-day life. They must see and feel that they are sinners, and need to be converted to God. What Christ said, what he did, and what he taught, should be brought before them in the most impressive manner.

[18] The work of the minister is but commenced when the truth is opened to the understanding of the people. Christ is our mediator and officiating high priest in the presence of the Father. He was shown to John as a Lamb that had been slain,—as in the very act of pouring out his blood in the sinner's behalf. When (the law of God is set before the sinner, showing him the depth of his sins, he should then be pointed to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the

world. He should be taught repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus will the labor of Christ's representative be in harmony with his work in the heavenly sanctuary.

Ministers would reach many more hearts if they would dwell more upon practical godliness. Frequently, when efforts are made to introduce the truth into new fields, the labor is almost entirely theoretical. The people are unsettled. They see the force of truth, and are anxious to obtain a sure foundation. As their feelings are softened, then is the time, above all others, to urge the religion of Christ home upon the conscience; but too often the course of lectures has been allowed to close without that work being done for the people which they needed. That effort was too much like the offering of Cain; it had not the sacrificial blood to make it acceptable to God. Cain was right in making an offering, but he left out all that made it of any value,—the blood of the atonement.

It is a sad fact that the reason why many dwell so much on theory, and so little on practical godliness, is because Christ is not abiding in their hearts. They do not have a living connection with God. Many souls decide in favor of the truth, from the weight of evidence, without being converted. Practical discourses were not given in connection with the doctrinal, that as the hearers should see the beautiful chain of truth they might fall in love with its Author, and be sanctified through obedience. The minister's work is not done until he has urged upon his hearers the necessity of change of character in accordance with the pure principles of the truth which they have received.

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A formal religion is to be dreaded ; for in it is no Saviour. Plain, close, searching, practical discourses were given by Christ. His ambassadors should follow his example in every discourse. Christ and his Father were one; in all the Father's requirements Christ cheerfully acquiesced. He had the mind of God. The Redeemer was the perfect pattern. Jehovah was manifested in him. Heaven was enshrined in humanity, and humanity inclosed in the bosom of Infinite Love. If ministers will in meekness sit at the feet of Jesus, they will soon obtain right views of God's character, and will be able to teach others also. Some enter the ministry without deep love to God or to their fellow-men. Selfishness and self-indulgence will be manifested in the lives of such, and while these unconsecrated,

unfaithful watchmen are serving themselves instead of feeding the flock and attending to their pastoral duties, the people perish for want of proper instruction.

[20] In every discourse fervent appeals should be made to the people to forsake their sins and turn to Christ. The popular sins and indulgences of our day should be condemned, and practical godliness enforced. The minister should be deeply in earnest himself, feeling from the heart the words he utters, and unable to repress his feelings of concern for the souls of men and women for whom Christ died. Said the Master, “The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.” The same earnestness should be felt by his representatives.

An infinite sacrifice has been made for man, and made in vain for every soul who will not accept of salvation. How important, then, that the one who presents the truth shall do so under a full sense of the responsibility resting upon him. How tender, pitiful, and courteous should be all his conduct in dealing with the souls of men, when the Redeemer of the world has evidenced that he valued them so highly. The question is asked by Christ, “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household?” Jesus asks, Who? and every minister of the gospel should repeat the question to his own heart. As he views the solemn truths, and his mind beholds the picture drawn of the faithful and wise steward, his soul should be stirred to the very depths.

[21] To every man is given his work; not one is excused. Each has a part to act, according to his capacity, and it devolves upon the one who presents the truth to carefully and prayerfully learn the ability of all who accept the truth, and then to instruct them and lead them along, step by step, letting them realize the burden of responsibility resting upon them to do the work that God has for them to do. It should be urged upon them again and again that no one will be able to resist temptation, to answer the purpose of God, and live the life of a Christian, unless he shall take up his work, be it great or small, and do that work with conscientious fidelity. There is something for all to do besides going to church, and listening to the word of God. They must practice the truth heard, carrying its principles into their every-day life. They must be doing work for Christ constantly, not from selfish motives, but with an eye single to the glory of Him who made every sacrifice to save them from ruin.

Ministers should impress upon those who accept the truth that they must have Christ in their homes ; that they need grace and wisdom from him in guiding and controlling their children. It is a part of the work which God has left for them to do, to educate and discipline these children, bringing them in subjection. Let the kindness and courtesy of the minister be seen in his treatment of children. He should ever bear in mind that they are miniature men and women, younger members of the Lord's family. These may be very near and dear to the Master, and, if properly instructed and disciplined, will do service for him, even in their youth. Christ is grieved with every harsh, severe, and inconsiderate word spoken to children. Their rights are not always respected, and they are frequently treated as though they had not an individual character which needs to be properly developed, that it may not be warped, and the purpose of God in their lives prove a failure. [22]

From a child, Timothy knew the Scriptures; and this knowledge was a safeguard to him against the evil influence surrounding him, and the temptation to choose pleasure and selfish gratification before duty. Such a safeguard all our children need; and it should be a part of the work of parents, and of Christ's ambassadors, to see that the children are properly instructed in the word of God.

If the minister would meet the approval of his Lord, he must labor with fidelity to present every man perfect in Christ. He should not, in his manner of labor, carry the impression that it is of little consequence whether men do or do not accept the truth, and practice true godliness; but the faithfulness and self-sacrifice manifested in his life should be such as to convince the sinner that eternal interests are at stake, and his soul is in peril unless he responds to the earnest labor put forth in his behalf. Those who have been brought from error and darkness to truth and light have great changes to make, and unless the necessity of thorough reform is pressed home upon the conscience, they will be like the man who looked in the mirror, the law of God, and discovered the defects in his moral character, but went away and forgot what manner of man he was. The mind must be kept awake to a sense of responsibility, or it will settle back into a state of even more careless inattention than before it was aroused.

The work of the ambassadors for Christ is far greater and far more responsible than many dream of. They should not be at all [23]

satisfied with their success until they can, by their earnest labors and the blessing of God, present to him serviceable Christians, who have a true sense of their responsibility, and will do their appointed work. The proper labor and instruction will result in bringing into working order those men and women whose characters are strong, and their convictions so firm that nothing of a selfish character is permitted to hinder them in their work, to lessen their faith, or deter them from duty. If the minister has properly instructed those under his care, when he leaves for other fields of labor, the work left will not ravel out, for it is bound off so firmly that it is secure. Unless those who receive the truth are thoroughly converted, and there is a radical change in their life and character, the soul is not riveted to the eternal Rock; and after the labor of the minister ceases, and the novelty is gone, the impression soon wears away, the truth loses its power to charm, and they exert no holier influence, and are no better for their profession of the truth.

I am astonished, that with the examples before us of what man may be, and what he may do, we are not stimulated to greater exertion to emulate the good works of the righteous. All may not occupy a position of prominence, yet all may fill positions of usefulness and trust, and may, by their persevering fidelity, do far more good than they have any idea that they can do. Those who embrace the truth should seek a clear understanding of the Scriptures, and an experimental knowledge of a living Saviour. The intellect should be cultivated, the memory taxed. All intellectual laziness is sin, and spiritual lethargy is death.

Oh, that I could command language of sufficient force to make the impression I wish to make upon my fellow-laborers in the gospel! My brethren, you are handling the words of life, and you are dealing with minds that are capable of the highest development, if directed in the right channel. But there is too much exhibition of self in the discourses given. Christ crucified, Christ ascended into the heavens, Christ coming again, should so soften, gladden, and fill the mind of the minister of the gospel that he will present these truths to the people in love and deep earnestness. The minister will then be lost sight of, and Jesus magnified. The people will be so impressed with those all-absorbing subjects that they will talk of them, and praise them, instead of praising the minister, the mere instrument. But if

the people have little interest in the word preached, while they praise the minister, he may know that the truth is not sanctifying his own soul. He does not speak it out to the hearers in such a manner that Jesus is honored, and his love magnified.

Said Christ, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." Let your light so shine that the glory will redound to God instead of to yourselves. If the praise comes to you, well may you tremble and be ashamed, for the great object is defeated; God is not magnified, but the servant. Let your light so *shine*; be careful, minister of Christ, in what manner your light shines. If it flashes heavenward, revealing the excellence of Jesus Christ, it shines aright. If it is turned upon yourself, if you exhibit yourself, and attract the people to admire you, it would be better for you to hold your peace altogether; for your light shines in the wrong way. [25]

Ministers of Christ, you may be connected with God, if you will watch and pray. Let your words be seasoned with salt, and let Christian courtesy and true elevation pervade your demeanor. If the peace of God is ruling within, its power will not only strengthen but soften your hearts, and you will be living representatives of Jesus Christ. The people who profess the truth are backsliding from God. Jesus is soon to come, and they are unready. The minister must reach a higher standard himself, a faith marked with greater firmness, an experience that is living and vivid, not dull and common-place like that of the nominal professors. The word of God sets a high mark before you. Will you, through fasting, and prayerful effort, attain to the completeness and consistency of Christian character? You should make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way. A close connection with God will bring to you, in your labor, that vital power which arouses the conscience, and convicts the sinner of sin, leading him to cry, What shall I do to be saved? [26]

The commission which Christ gave to the disciples, just prior to his ascension to Heaven, was, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on thee through their word." The

commission reaches those who shall believe on his word through his disciples. And all who are called of God to stand as ambassadors for him, should take the lessons upon practical godliness given them by Christ in his word, and teach them to the people.

Christ opened the Scriptures to his disciples, beginning at Moses and the prophets, and instructed them in all things concerning himself, and also explained to them the prophecies. The apostles in their preaching, went back to Adam's day, and brought their hearers down through prophetic history, and ended with Christ and him crucified, calling upon sinners to repent and turn from their sins to God. The representatives of Christ in our day should follow their example, and in every discourse magnify Christ as the Exalted One, as all and in all.

[27] Not only is formality taking possession of the nominal churches, but it is increasing to an alarming extent among those who profess to be keeping the commandments of God, and looking for the soon appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven. We should not be narrow in our views, and limit our facilities for doing good; yet while we extend our influence, and enlarge our plans as Providence opens the way, we should be more earnest to avoid the idolatry of the world. While we make greater efforts to increase our usefulness, we must make corresponding efforts to obtain wisdom from God to carry on all the branches of the work after his own order, and not from a worldly standpoint. We should not pattern after the customs of the world, but make the most of the facilities which God has placed within our reach to get the truth before the people.

When we as a people have our works correspond with our profession, we shall see very much more accomplished than now. When we have men as devoted as Elijah, and possessing the faith which he possessed, we shall see that God will reveal himself to us as he did to holy men of old. When we have men, who, while they acknowledge their deficiencies, will plead with God in earnest faith, as did Jacob, we shall see the same results. Power will come from God to man in answer to the prayer of faith. There is but little faith in the world. There are but few who are living near to God. And how can we expect more power, and that God will reveal himself to men, when his word is handled negligently, and when hearts are not sanctified through the truth ? Men who are not half converted, self-confident,

and self-sufficient in character, preach the truth to others. But God does not work with them, for they are not holy in heart and life. They do not walk humbly with God. We must have a converted ministry, and then we shall see the light of God, and his power aiding all our efforts. [28]

The watchmen, anciently placed upon the walls of Jerusalem and other cities, occupied a most responsible position. Upon their faithfulness depended the safety of all within those cities. When danger was apprehended, they were not to keep silent day nor night. Every few moments they were required to call to one another, to see if all were awake, and no harm had come to any. Sentinels were stationed upon some eminence overlooking the important posts to be guarded, and the cry of warning or of good cheer was sounded from them. This was borne from one to another, each repeating the words till it went the entire rounds of the city.

These watchmen represent the ministry upon whose fidelity depends the salvation of souls. The stewards of the mysteries of God should stand as watchmen upon the walls of Zion; and if they see the sword coming they should sound the note of warning. If they are sleepy sentinels, and their spiritual senses are so benumbed that they see and realize no danger, and the people perish, God will require their blood at the watchmen's hands.

“O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.” The watchmen will need to live very near to God to hear his word and be impressed with his Spirit, that the people may not look to them in vain. “When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.” Ambassadors of Christ should take heed that they do not, through their unfaithfulness, lose their own souls and the souls of those who hear them. [29]

I was shown the churches in different States who profess to be keeping the commandments of God, and looking for the second coming of Christ. There is an alarming amount of indifference, of pride, love of the world, and cold formality existing among them.

And these are the people who are fast coming to resemble ancient Israel, as far as the want of piety is concerned. Many make high claims to godliness, and yet are destitute of self-control. Appetite and passion bear sway; self is made prominent. Many are arbitrary, dictatorial, overbearing, boastful, proud, and unconsecrated. Yet some of these persons are ministers, handling sacred truths. Unless they repent, the candlestick will be removed out of its place. The Saviour's curse pronounced upon the fruitless fig-tree is a sermon to all formalists and boasting hypocrites who stand forth to the world in pretentious leaves, but are devoid of fruit. What a rebuke to those who have a form of godliness, while in their unchristian lives they deny the power thereof! He who treated with tenderness [30] the very chief of sinners, he who never spurned true meekness and penitence, however great the guilt, came down with scathing denunciations upon those who made high professions of godliness, but in works denied their faith.

### *MANNER OF SPEAKING.*

Some of our most talented ministers are doing themselves great injury by their defective manner of speaking. While teaching the people their duty to obey God's moral law, they should not be found violating the laws of God in regard to health and life. Ministers should stand erect, and speak slowly, firmly, and distinctly, taking a full inspiration of air at every sentence, and throwing out the words by exercising the abdominal muscles. If they will observe this simple rule, giving attention to the laws of health in other respects, they may preserve their life and usefulness much longer than men in any other profession.

The chest will become broader, and by educating the voice, the speaker need seldom become hoarse, even by constant speaking. Instead of our ministers becoming consumptives by speaking, they may, by care, overcome all tendency to consumption.

I would say to my ministering brethren, Unless you educate yourselves to speak according to physical law, you will sacrifice life, and many will mourn the loss of "those martyrs to the cause of truth," when the facts in the case are that by indulging in wrong habits, you did injustice to yourselves and to the truth which you

represented, and robbed God and the world of the services you might have rendered. God would have been pleased to have you live, but you slowly committed suicide. [31]

The manner in which the truth is presented often has much to do in determining whether it will be accepted or rejected. All who labor in the great cause of reform should study to become efficient workmen, that they may accomplish the greatest possible amount of good, and not detract from the force of the truth by their own deficiencies.

Ministers and teachers should discipline themselves to clear and distinct articulation, giving the full sound to every word. Those who talk rapidly, from the throat, jumbling the words together and raising their voices to an unnatural, high pitch, soon become hoarse, and the words spoken lose half the force which they would have if spoken slowly, distinctly, and not so loud. The sympathies of the hearers are awakened for the speaker, for they know that he is doing violence to himself, and they fear that he will break down at any moment. It is no evidence that a man is having zeal for God because he works himself up into a frenzy of excitement and gesticulation. “Bodily exercise,” says the apostle, “profiteth little.”

The Saviour of the world would have his colaborers represent him; and the more closely a man walks with God, the more faultless will be his manner of address, his deportment, his attitude, and his gestures. Coarse and uncouth manners were never seen in our Pattern, Christ Jesus. He was a representative of Heaven, and his followers must be like him.

Some reason that the Lord will qualify a man by his Spirit to speak as he would have him; but the Lord does not propose to do the work which he has given man to do. He has given us reasoning powers, and opportunities to educate the mind and manners. And after we have done all we can for ourselves, making the best use of the advantages within our reach, then we may look to God with earnest prayer to do by his Spirit that which we cannot do for ourselves, and we will ever find in our Saviour power and efficiency. [32]

### *QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE MINISTRY.*

A great injury is often done our young men by permitting them to commence to preach when they have not sufficient knowledge of the Scriptures to present our faith in an intelligent manner. Some who enter the field are mere novices in the Scriptures. In other things they are also incompetent and inefficient. They cannot read the Scriptures without hesitating, miscalling words, and jumbling them together in such a manner that the word of God is abused. Those who are not qualified to present the truth in a proper manner need not be perplexed with regard to their duty. Their place is as learners, not as teachers. Young men who wish to prepare for the ministry are greatly benefited by attending our College; but advantages are still needed that they may be qualified to become acceptable speakers. A teacher should be employed to educate the youth to speak without wearing the vocal organs. The manners, also, should receive attention.

[33] Some young men who enter the field are not successful in teaching the truth to others, because they have not been educated themselves. Those who cannot read correctly should learn, and they should become apt to teach before they attempt to stand before the public. The teachers in our schools are obliged to apply themselves closely to study, that they may be prepared to instruct others. These teachers are not accepted until they have passed a critical examination, and their capabilities to teach have been tested by competent judges. No less caution should be used in the examination of ministers; those who are about to enter upon the sacred work of teaching Bible truth to the world should be carefully examined by faithful, experienced persons.

After these have had some experience, there is still another work to be done for them; they should be presented before the Lord in earnest prayer that he would indicate by his Holy Spirit if they are acceptable to him. The apostle says, “Lay hands suddenly on no man.” In the days of the apostles, the ministers of God did not dare to rely upon their own judgment in selecting or accepting men to take the solemn and sacred position as mouth-piece for God. They selected the men whom their judgment would accept, and then they placed them before the Lord to see if he would accept them to go forth as his representatives. No less than this should be done now.

In many places we meet men who have been hurried into responsible positions as elders of the church, when they are not qualified for such a position. They have not proper government over themselves. Their influence is not good. The church is in trouble continually in consequence of the defective character of the leader. Hands have been laid too suddenly upon these men. [34]

Ministers of God should be of good repute, capable of discreetly managing an interest after they have aroused it. We stand in great need of competent men who will bring honor instead of disgrace upon the cause which they represent. Ministers should be examined especially to see if they have an intelligent understanding of the truth for this time, so they can give a connected discourse upon the prophecies, and also upon practical subjects. If they cannot clearly present Bible subjects, they need to be hearers and learners still. They should earnestly and prayerfully search the Scriptures, and become conversant with them, in order to be teachers of Bible truth to others. All these things should be carefully and prayerfully considered before men are hurried into the field of labor.

The plan that has been adopted, to have Eld. Smith hold Biblical Institutes in different States, is approved of God. Great good has been accomplished by these Institutes, but all the time is not devoted to this work that would be profitable to our young ministers and to the cause of God. The fruits of the efforts that have already been made can never be fully realized in this life, but will be seen in eternity.

*Denison Texas,*

### MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

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BRO. — : I have been shown that you are not prepared to labor successfully in the ministry. At one time a measure of success attended your efforts; but while this should have inspired you with greater earnestness and zeal, the effect was the opposite. A sense of the goodness of God should have led you to continue to labor in humility, distrustful of self. But especially after your ordination you began to feel that you were a full-grown minister, capable of presenting the truth in large places; and you became indolent, feeling no burden for souls, since which time your labor has been of but

little value to the cause of God. Possessing physical strength, you do not realize that you are as responsible for the use of it as the man of means is for the use of his money. You do not love manual labor; yet you have a constitution which requires severe physical taxation for the preservation of health as well as for the quickening of the mental powers. As far as health is concerned, physical exercise would be of the greatest value to all our ministers; and whenever they can be released from active service in the ministry, they should feel it a duty to engage in physical labor for the support of their families.

[36] Bro. —, the time you have idled away in sleep, instead of being essential to your health, has been detrimental to it. The precious hours you have lost, doing no good to yourself or to anyone else, stand against you in the Ledger of Heaven. Your name was shown me under the heading of “Slothful Servants.” Your work will not bear the test of the Judgment. You have spent so much precious time in sleep that all your powers seem paralyzed. Health may be earned by proper habits of life, and may be made to yield interest and compound interest. But this capital, more precious than any bank deposit, may be sacrificed by intemperance in eating and drinking, or by leaving the organs to rust by inaction. Pet indulgencies must be given up; laziness must be overcome.

The reason why many of our ministers complain of sickness is because they fail to take sufficient exercise, and indulge in overeating. They do not realize that such a course endangers the strongest constitution. Those who are sluggish in temperament, like yourself, should eat very sparingly, and not shun physical taxation. Many of our ministers are digging their graves with their teeth. The system, in taking care of the burden placed upon the digestive organs, suffers, and a severe draught is made upon the brain. For every offense committed against the laws of health, the transgressor must pay the penalty in his own body.

[37] When not actively engaged in preaching, the apostle Paul labored at his trade as a tentmaker. This he was obliged to do on account of having accepted unpopular truth. Before he embraced Christianity he had occupied an elevated position, and was not dependent for sustenance upon labor. Among the Jews it was customary to teach the children some trade, however high the position they were expected to fill, that a reverse of circumstances might not leave them incapable

of sustaining themselves. In accordance with this custom, Paul was a tent-maker. When his means had been expended to advance the cause of Christ and for his own support, he resorted to his trade in order to gain a livelihood.

No man ever lived who was a more earnest, energetic, and self-sacrificing disciple of Christ than was Paul. He was one of the world's greatest teachers. He crossed the seas, and traveled far and near, until a large portion of the world had learned from his lips the story of the cross of Christ. He possessed a burning desire to bring perishing man to a knowledge of the truth through a Saviour's love. His soul was wrapped up in the work of the ministry, and it was with feelings of pain that he withdrew from this work to toil for his own bodily necessities; but he seated himself to the drudgery of the craftsman, that he might not be burdensome to the churches which were pressed with poverty. Although he had planted many churches, he refused to be supported by them, fearing that his usefulness and success as a minister of the gospel might be interfered with by suspicions of his motives. He would remove all occasion from his enemies to misrepresent him and thus detract from the force of his message.

Paul appeals to his Corinthian brethren to understand that, as a laborer in the gospel, he might claim his support, instead of sustaining himself; but this right he was willing to forego, fearing that the acceptance of means for his support might possibly stand in the way of his usefulness. Although feeble in health, he labored during the day in serving the cause of Christ, and then toiled a large share of the night, and frequently all night, that he might make provision for his own and others' necessities. The apostle would also give an example to his brethren, thus dignifying and honoring industry. When our ministers feel that they are suffering hardships and privations in the cause of Christ, let them in imagination visit the work-shop of the apostle Paul, bearing in mind that while this chosen man of God is fashioning the canvas, he is working for bread which he has justly earned by his labors as an apostle of Jesus Christ. At the call of duty, this great apostle would lay aside his business to meet the most violent opponents, and stop their proud boasting, and then resume his humble employment. His religious industry is a rebuke to the

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indolence of some of our ministers. When they have opportunity to labor to help sustain themselves, they should do so with gladness.

[39] God never designed that man should live in idleness. When Adam was in Eden, means were devised for his employment. Though the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, yet he that dealeth with a slack hand will become poor. Those who are diligent in business may not always be prospered, but drowsiness and indolence are sure to grieve the Spirit of God and destroy true godliness. A stagnant pool becomes offensive, but a pure, flowing brook spreads health and gladness over the land. A man of persevering industry will be a blessing anywhere. The exercise of man's physical and mental powers is necessary to their full and proper development.

Young ministers should study to make themselves useful wherever they are. When invited to visit persons at their homes, they should not sit idle, making no effort to help the ones whose hospitality they share. Obligations are mutual; if the minister shares the hospitality of his friends, it is his duty to respond to their kindness by being thoughtful and considerate in his conduct toward them. The entertainer may be a man of care and hard labor. By manifesting a disposition not only to wait upon himself, but to render timely assistance, the minister may often find access to the heart and open the way for the reception of truth.

[40] God has no use for lazy men in his cause; he wants thoughtful, kind, affectionate, earnest workers. Active exertion will do our preachers good. Indolence is proof of depravity. Every faculty of the mind, every bone in the body, every muscle of the limbs, show that God designed them to be used, not to remain inactive. Bro. — is too indolent to put his energies into the work, and engage in persevering labor. Men who will unnecessarily take the precious hours of daylight for sleep, have no sense of the value of precious, golden moments. Such men will only prove a curse to the cause of God. Bro. — is self-inflated. He is not a close Bible student. He is not what he ought to be, or what he may become by earnest exertion. He rouses up occasionally to do something ; but his natural love of ease and laziness leads him to fall back again into the same sluggish channel. Persons who have not acquired habits of close industry and

economy of time should have set rules to prompt them to regularity and dispatch.

Washington, the nation's statesman, was enabled to perform a great amount of business because he was thorough in preserving order and regularity. Every paper had its date and its place, and no time was lost in looking up what had been mislaid. Men of God must be diligent in study, earnest in the acquirement of knowledge, never wasting an hour. Through persevering exertion they may rise to almost any height of eminence as Christians, as men of power and influence. But many will never attain superior rank in the pulpit or in business because of their unfixedness of purpose, and the laxness of habits contracted in their youth. Careless inattention is seen in everything they undertake. A sudden impulse now and then is not sufficient to accomplish a reformation in those ease-loving, indolent ones; this is a work which requires patient continuance in well-doing. Men of business can only be truly successful by having regular hours for rising, for prayer, for meals, and for retirement. If order and regularity are essential in worldly business, how much more so in doing work for God.

The bright morning hours are wasted by many in bed. Those precious hours are gone never to return ; they are lost for time and for eternity. Only one hour lost each day, and what a waste of time in the course of a year! Let the slumberer think of this, and pause to consider how he will give an account to God for lost opportunities.

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Ministers should devote time to reading, to study, to meditation and prayer. They should store the mind with useful knowledge, committing to memory portions of Scripture, tracing out the fulfillment of the prophecies, and learning the lessons which Christ gave to his disciples. Take a book with you to read when traveling on the cars, or waiting in the depot. Employ every spare moment in doing something. In this way an effectual door will be closed against a thousand temptations. Had King David been occupied with useful employment, he would not have been guilty of the murder of Uriah. Satan is ever ready to employ him who does not employ himself. The mind which is continually striving to rise to the height of intellectual greatness will find no time for cheap, foolish thoughts, which are the parent of evil actions. There are men of good ability among us, who, by proper cultivation, might become eminently useful; yet

they do not love exertion, and failing to see the crime of neglecting to put to the best use the faculties with which they were endowed by the Creator, they settle down at their ease to remain uncultivated in mind. But very few are meeting the mind of God. Of these slothful servants God will inquire, What hast thou done with the talents I gave thee ? Many will be found in that day, who, having had one talent, bound it in a napkin, and hid it in the earth. These unprofitable servants will be cast into outer darkness; while those who had put out their talents to the exchangers and doubled them, will receive the plaudit, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

When responsibilities are to be intrusted to an individual, the question is not asked whether he is eloquent or wealthy, but whether he is honest, faithful, and industrious; for whatever may be his accomplishments, without these qualifications, he is utterly unfit for any position of trust. Many who have begun life with fair prospects, fail of success because they lack industry. Young men who habitually mingle in the little groups gathered in stores or on the street, ever engaging in discussion or gossip, will never grow to the proportions of men of understanding. Continual application will accomplish for man what nothing else can. Those who are never content without the consciousness that they are growing every day, will truly make a success of life.

Many have failed, signally failed, where they might have made a success. They have not felt the burden of the work; they have taken things as leisurely as though they had a temporal millennium in which to work for the salvation of souls. Because of this lack of earnestness and zeal, but few would receive the impression that they really meant what they said. It is not preachers that the cause of God is so much in need of as earnest, persevering workers for the Master. God alone can measure the powers of the human mind. It was not his design that man should be content to remain in the lowlands of ignorance, but that he should secure all the advantages of an enlightened, cultivated intellect. Every man and woman should feel that obligations are resting upon them to reach the very height of intellectual greatness. While none should be puffed up because of the knowledge acquired, it is the privilege of all to enjoy the satisfaction

of knowing that with every advance step they are rendered more capable of honoring and glorifying God. They may draw from an inexhaustible fountain, the Source of all wisdom and knowledge.

Having entered the school of Christ, the student is prepared to engage in the pursuit of knowledge without becoming dizzy from the height to which he is climbing. As he goes on from truth to truth, obtaining clearer and brighter views of the wonderful laws of science and of nature, he becomes enraptured with the amazing exhibitions of God's love to man. He sees with intelligent eyes the perfection, knowledge, and wisdom of God stretching beyond into infinity. As his mind enlarges and expands, pure streams of light pour into his soul. The more he drinks from the fountain of knowledge, the purer and happier his contemplation of God's infinity, and the greater his longing for wisdom sufficient to comprehend the deep things of God.

Mental culture is what we, as a people, need, and what we must have in order to meet the demands of the time. Poverty, humble origin, and unfavorable surroundings need not prevent the cultivation of the mind. The mental faculties must be kept under the control of the will, and the mind not allowed to wander or become distracted with a variety of subjects at a time, being thorough in none. Difficulties will be met in all studies; but never cease through discouragement. Search, study, and pray; face every difficulty manfully and vigorously; call the power of will and the grace of patience to your aid, and then dig more earnestly till the gem of truth lies before you, plain and beautiful, all the more precious because of the difficulties involved in finding it. Do not then continually dwell upon this one point, concentrating all the energies of the mind upon it, constantly urging it upon the attention of others, but take another subject, and carefully examine that. Thus, mystery after mystery will be unfolded to your comprehension. Two valuable victories will be gained by this course. You have not only secured useful knowledge, but the exercise of the mind has increased mental strength and power. The key found to unlock one mystery, may develop also other precious gems of knowledge heretofore undiscovered. [44]

Many of our ministers can present to the people only a few doctrinal discourses. The same exertion and application which made them familiar with these points, will enable them to gain an understanding of others. The prophecies and other doctrinal subjects should [45]

be thoroughly understood by them all. But some who have been engaged in preaching Tor years, are content to confine themselves to a few subjects, being too indolent to search the Scriptures diligently and prayerfully, that they may become giants in the understanding of Bible doctrines and the practical lessons of Christ. The minds of all should be stored with a knowledge of the truths of God's word, that, they may be prepared at any moment when required, to present from the store-house things new and old. Minds have been crippled and dwarfed for want of zeal, and earnest, severe taxation. The time has come when God says, Go forward, and cultivate the abilities I have given you.

The world is teeming with errors and fables. Novelties in the form of sensational dramas, are continually arising to engross the mind; and absurd theories abound which are destructive to moral and spiritual advancement. The cause of God needs men of intellect, men of thought, men well versed in the Scriptures, to meet the inflowing tide of opposition. We should give no sanction to arrogance, narrow-mindedness, and inconsistencies, although the garment of professed piety may be thrown over them. Those who have the sanctifying power of the troth upon their hearts will exert a persuasive influence. Knowing that the advocates of error cannot create or destroy truth, they can afford to be calm and considerate.

[46] It is not enough for our ministers to have a superficial knowledge of the truth. Subjects which are handled by men who have perverted their God-given powers to tear down the truth, are constantly coming up for investigation. Bigotry must be laid aside. The Satanic delusions of the age must be met clearly and intelligently with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The same unseen Hand that guides the planets in their courses, and upholds the worlds by his power, has made provision for man formed in his image, that he may be little less than the angels of God while in the performance of his duties on earth. God's purposes have not been answered by men who have been intrusted with the most solemn truth ever given to man. He designs that we should rise higher and higher toward a state of perfection, seeing and sensing at every step the power and glory of God. Man does not know himself. Our responsibilities are exactly proportioned to our light, opportunities, and privileges. We are responsible for the good we might have done but failed to do

because we were too indolent to use the means for improvement which were placed within our reach.

The precious book of God contains rules of life for men of every class and every vocation. Examples are here found which it would be well for all to study and imitate. “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” The true honor and glory of the servant of Christ consists, not in the number of sermons preached, nor in the amount of writing accomplished, but in the work of faithfully ministering to the wants of the people. If he neglects this part of his work, he has no right to the name of minister. [47]

Men are needed for this time who can understand the wants of the people, and minister to their necessities. The faithful minister of Christ watches at every outpost to warn, to reprove, to counsel, to entreat, and to encourage his fellow-men, laboring with the Spirit of God which worketh in him mightily, that he may present every man perfect in Christ. Such a man is acknowledged in Heaven as a minister, treading in the footsteps of his great Exemplar.

Our preachers are not particular enough in regard to their habits of eating. They partake of too large quantities of food, and of too great a variety at one meal. Some are reformers only in name. They have no rules by which to regulate their diet, but indulge in eating fruit or nuts between their meals, and thus impose too heavy burdens upon the digestive organs. Some eat three meals a day, when two would be more conducive to physical and spiritual health. If the laws which God has made to govern the physical system are violated, the penalty must surely follow.

Because of the imprudence in eating, the senses of some seem to be half paralyzed, and they are sluggish and sleepy. These pale faced ministers who are suffering in consequence of selfish indulgence of the appetite, are no recommendation of health reform. When suffering from overwork, it would be much better to drop out a meal occasionally, and thus give nature a chance to rally. Our laborers could do more by their example to advance health reform than by preaching it. When elaborate preparations are made for them by well-meaning friends, they are strongly tempted to disregard principle. But by refusing the dainty dishes, the rich condiments, the tea and coffee, they may prove themselves to be practical health reformers. Some are now suffering in consequence of transgressing [48]

the laws of life, thus causing a stigma to rest on the cause of health reform.

Excessive indulgence in eating, drinking, sleeping, or seeing, is sin. The harmonious healthy action of all the powers of body and mind result in happiness; the more elevated and refined the powers, the more pure and unalloyed the happiness. An aimless life is a living death. The powers of the mind should be exercised upon themes relating to our eternal interest. This will be conducive to health of body and of mind. There are many, even among our preachers, who want to rise in the world without effort. They are ambitious to do some great work of usefulness, while they disregard the little every-day duties which would render them helpful and make them ministers after Christ's order. They wish to do the work others are doing, but have no relish for the discipline necessary to fit them for it. This yearning desire by both men and women to do something far in advance of their present capabilities, is simply causing them to make decided failures in the outset. They indignantly refuse to climb the ladder, wishing to be elevated by a less laborious process.

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### OUR COLLEGE.

THE education and training of the youth is an important and solemn work. The great object to be secured should be the proper development of character, that the individual may be fitted rightly to discharge the duties of the present life, and to enter at last upon the future, immortal life. Eternity will reveal the manner in which the work has been performed. If ministers and teachers could have a full sense of their responsibility, we should see a different state of things in the world to-day. But they are too narrow in their views and purposes. They do not realize the importance of their work, or its results.

God could not do more for man than he has done in giving his beloved Son, nor could he do less and yet secure the redemption of man, and maintain the dignity of the divine law. He poured out in our behalf the whole treasure of Heaven; for in giving his Son he throws open to us the golden gates of Heaven, making one infinite gift to those who shall accept the sacrifice and return to their allegiance to God. Christ came to our world with love as broad as eternity in

his heart, offering to make man heir of all his riches and glory. In this act he unveiled to man the character of his Father, showing to every human being that God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

The Majesty of Heaven pleased not himself. Whatever he did was in reference to the salvation of man. Selfishness in all its forms stood rebuked in his presence. He assumed our nature that he might suffer in our stead, making his soul an offering for sin. He was stricken of God and afflicted, to save the blow from falling upon man which he deserved because of transgression of God's law. By the light shining from the cross, Christ proposed to draw all men unto him. His human heart yearned over the race. His arms were opened to receive them, and he invited all to come to him. His life on earth was one continued act of self-denial and condescension.

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Since man cost Heaven so much, the price of God's dear Son, how carefully should ministers, teachers, and parents, deal with the souls of those brought under their influence. It is nice work to deal with minds, and it should be entered upon with fear and trembling. The educators of youth should maintain perfect self-control. To destroy one's influence over a human soul through impatience, or in order to maintain undue dignity and supremacy, is a terrible mistake, for it may be the means of losing that soul for Christ. The minds of youth may become so warped by injudicious management that the injury done may never be entirely overcome. The religion of Christ should have a controlling influence in the education and training of the young. The Saviour's example of self-denial, universal kindness, and long-suffering love is a rebuke to impatient ministers and teachers. He inquires of these impetuous instructors, Is this the manner in which you treat the souls of those for whom I gave my life ? Have you no greater appreciation of the infinite price I paid for their redemption ?

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All connected with our College must be men and women who have the fear of God before them and his love in their hearts. They should make their religion attractive to the youth who come within the sphere of their influence. The professors and teachers should constantly feel their dependence upon God. Their work is in this world, but the Source of wisdom and knowledge from which they must continually draw, is above. Self must not obtain the mastery.

The Spirit of God must control. They must walk humbly with God, and they should feel their responsibility, which is not less than that of the minister. The influence which professors and teachers exert upon the youth in our College will be carried wherever these youth may go. A sacred influence should go forth from that College to meet the moral darkness existing everywhere. When I was shown by the angel of God that an institution should be established for the education of our youth, I saw that it would be one of the greatest means ordained of God for the salvation of souls.

[52] Those who would make a success in the education of the youth must take them as they are, not as they ought to be, nor as they will be when they come from under their training. With dull scholars they will have a trial, and must bear patiently with their ignorance. With sensitive, nervous students they must deal tenderly and very kindly, remembering that they are hereafter to meet their students before the Judgment seat of Christ. A sense of their own imperfections should constantly lead educators to cherish feelings of tender sympathy and forbearance for those who are struggling with the same difficulties. They may help their students, not by overlooking their defects, but by faithfully correcting wrong in such a manner that the one reprov'd shall be bound still closer to the teacher's heart.

God has linked old and young together by the law of mutual dependence. The educators of youth should feel an unselfish interest for the lambs of the flock, as Christ has given us an example in his life. There is too little pitying tenderness, and too much of the unbending dignity of the stern judge. Exact and impartial justice should be given to all, for the religion of Christ demands this; but it should ever be remembered that firmness and justice have a twin sister, which is mercy. To stand aloof from the students, to treat them indifferently, to be unapproachable, harsh, and censorious, is contrary to the spirit of Christ.

We need individually to open our hearts to the love of God, to overcome selfishness and harshness, and let Jesus in to take possession of the soul. The educator of youth will do well to remember that with all his advantages of age, education, and experience, he is not yet a perfect overcomer; he is himself erring and makes many failures. As Christ deals with him, he should endeavor to deal with the youth under his care, who have had fewer advantages, less fa-

avorable surroundings, than he himself has enjoyed. Christ has borne with the erring through all his manifest perversity and rebellion. His love for the sinner does not grow cold, his efforts do not cease, and he does not give him up to the buffeting of Satan. He has stood with open arms to welcome again the erring, the rebellious, and even the apostate. By precept and example, teachers should represent Jesus Christ in the education and training of youth ; and in the day of Judgment they will not be put to shame in meeting their students, and the history of their management of them. [53]

Again and again has the educator of youth carried into the school-room the shadow of darkness which has been gathering upon his soul. He has been overtaxed, and is nervous; or dyspepsia has colored everything a gloomy hue. He enters the school-room with quivering nerve and irritated stomach. Nothing seems to be done to please him, and his sharp criticisms and censures are given on the right hand and on the left. He thinks that his scholars are bent upon showing him disrespect.

Perhaps one or more commit errors, or are unruly. The case is exaggerated to his mind, and he becomes unjust, and is severe and cutting in reproof, even taunting the one whom he considers at fault. This same injustice afterward prevents him from admitting that he has not taken the proper course. To maintain the dignity of his position he has lost a precious, golden opportunity to manifest the spirit of Christ, perhaps to gain a soul for Heaven.

Men and women of experience should understand that this is a time of especial danger for the young. Temptations surround them on every hand; and while it is easy work to float with the current, the strongest effort is required to press against the tide of evil. It is Satan's studied effort to secure the youth in sin, for then he is more sure of the man. The enemy of souls is filled with intense hatred against every endeavor to influence the youth in the right direction. He hates everything which will give correct views of God and our Saviour, and his efforts are especially directed against all who are placed in a favorable position to receive light from Heaven. He knows that any movement on their part to come in connection with God will give them power to resist his devices. Those who are at ease in their sins, are safe under his banner. But as soon as efforts are [54]

made to break his power, his wrath is aroused, and he commences in earnest his work to thwart the purpose of God if possible.

[55] If the influence in our College is what it should be, the youth who are educated there will be enabled to discern God and glorify him in all his works. And while engaged in cultivating the faculties which God has given them, they are preparing to render to him more efficient service. The intellect, sanctified, will unlock the treasures of God's word, and gather its precious gems to present to other minds, and lead them also to search for the deep things of God. A knowledge of the riches of his grace will ennoble and elevate the human soul, and through connection with Jesus Christ it becomes a partaker of the divine nature and obtains power to resist the advances of Satan.

Students must be impressed with the fact that knowledge alone may be a power in the hands of the enemy of all good to destroy them. It was a very intellectual being, one who occupied a high position among the angelic throng, who finally became a rebel; and many a mind of superior intellectual attainments is now being led captive by his power. The sanctified knowledge which God imparts is of the right quality, and will tell to the glory of God.

The work of the teachers in our College will be laborious. Among those who attend the school there will be some who are nothing less than Satan's agents. They have no respect for the rules of the school, and they demoralize all who associate with them. After the teachers have done all they can do to reform this class, after they have, by personal effort, by entreaties and prayer, endeavored to reach them, and they refuse all the efforts made in their behalf, and continue in their course of sin, then it will be necessary to separate them from the school, that others may not be contaminated by their evil influence.

[56] To maintain proper discipline and yet exercise pitying love and tenderness for the souls of those under his care, the teacher needs a constant supply of the wisdom and grace of God. Order must be maintained. But those who love souls, the purchase of the blood of Christ, should do their utmost to save the erring. These poor sinful ones are too frequently left in darkness and deception to pursue their own course, and those who should help them let them alone to go to ruin. Many excuse their neglect of these careless,

wayward ones, by referring to the religious privileges at Battle Creek. They say, if these do not call them to repentance, nothing will. The opportunity of attending Sabbath-school, and listening to the sermons from the desk are indeed precious privileges, but they may be passed by all unheeded, while if one with true interest should come close to these souls in sympathy and love, he might succeed in reaching them. I have been shown that personal effort, judiciously put forth, will have a telling influence upon these cases, considered so hardened. All may not be so hard at heart as they appear. Our people in Battle Creek should feel a deep interest for the youth whom the providence of God has brought under their influence. We have seen a good work done in the salvation of many who have come to our College, but much more can be accomplished by personal effort.

The selfish love of “me and mine,” keeps many from doing their duty to others. Do they think that all the work they have to do is for themselves and their own children? “In as much,” says Christ, “as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.” Are your own children of more value in the sight of God than the children of your neighbors? God is no respecter of persons. We are to do all we can to save souls. None should be passed by because they have not the culture and religious training of more favored children. Had these erring, neglected ones enjoyed the same home advantages, they might have shown far more nobility of soul and greater talent for usefulness than many who have been watched over day and night with gentlest care and overflowing love. Angels pity these stray lambs; angels weep, while human eyes are dry, and human hearts are closed against them. If and had not given me another work, I would make it the business of my life to care for those whom others will not take the trouble to save. In the day of God, somebody will be held responsible for the loss of these dear souls. [57]

Parents who have neglected their God-given responsibilities must meet that neglect in the Judgment. The Lord will then inquire, Where are the children that I gave you to train for me? Why are they not at my right hand? Many parents will then see that unwise love blinded their eyes to their children’s faults and left them to develop deformed characters, unfit for Heaven. Others will see that they did not give their children time and attention, love and tenderness; their own neglect of duty made the children what they are. Teachers will

see where they could have worked for the Master by seeking to save the apparently incorrigible cases they cast off in the youth of tender years. And the members of the church will see that they might have done good service for the Master in seeking to help those who most needed help. While their interest and love were lavished upon their own families, there were many inexperienced youth who might have been taken to their hearts and homes; and whose precious souls could have been saved by interest and kindly care.

- [58] Educators should understand how to guard the health of their students. They should restrain them from taxing their minds with too many studies. If they leave college with a knowledge of the sciences, but with shattered constitutions, it would have been better had they not entered the school at all. Some parents feel that their children are being educated at considerable expense, and they urge them forward in their studies. Students are desirous of taking many studies in order to complete their education in as short a time as possible. The professors have allowed some to advance too rapidly. While some may need urging, others need holding back. Students should ever be diligent, but they ought not to crowd their minds so as to become intellectual dyspeptics. They should not be so pressed with study as to neglect the culture of the manners; and above all, they should let nothing interfere with their seasons of prayer, which bring them in connection with Jesus Christ, the best teacher the world has ever known. In no case should they deprive themselves of religious privileges. Many students have made their studies the first great object, and have neglected prayer, and absented themselves from the Sabbath school and the prayer-meeting; and from neglect of religious duties they have returned to their homes backslidden from God. A most important part of their education has been neglected. That which lies at the foundation of all true knowledge should not have been made a secondary consideration. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” This must not be made last, but first. The student must have opportunities to become conversant with his Bible. He needs time for this. A student who makes God his strength, who is becoming intelligent in the knowledge of God as revealed in his word, is laying the foundation for a thorough education.
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God designs that the College at Battle Creek shall reach a higher standard of intellectual and moral culture than any other institution of the kind in our land. The youth should be taught the importance of cultivating their physical, mental, and moral powers, that they may not only reach the highest attainments in science, but, through a knowledge of God, may be educated to glorify him; that they may develop symmetrical characters, and thus be fully prepared for usefulness in this world, and obtain a moral fitness for the immortal life.

I wish I could find language to express the importance of our College. All should feel that it is one of God's instrumentalities to make known the knowledge of himself to man. The teachers may do a greater work than they have hitherto calculated upon. Minds are to be molded and character developed by interested experiment. In the fear of God, every endeavor to develop the higher faculties, even if it is marked with great imperfection, should be encouraged and strengthened. The minds of many of the youth are rich in talents which are put to no available use, because they have lacked opportunity to develop them. Their physical powers have been strengthened by exercise; but the faculties of the mind lie hidden, because the discernment and God-given tact of the educator have not been exercised in bringing them into use. Aids to self-development must be given to the youth; they must be drawn out, stimulated, encouraged, and urged to action. [60]

Workers are needed all over the world. The truth of God is to be carried to foreign lands, that those in darkness may be enlightened by it. God requires that a zeal be shown in this direction infinitely greater than has hitherto been manifested. As a people, we are almost paralyzed. We are not doing one-twentieth part of the good we might, because selfishness prevails to a large extent among us. Cultivated intellect is now needed in the cause of God, for novices cannot do the work acceptably. God has devised our College as an instrumentality for developing workers of whom he will not be ashamed. The height man may reach by proper culture, has not hitherto been realized. We have among us more than an average of men of ability. If their talents were brought into use, we should have twenty ministers where we now have one.

Teachers should not feel that their duty is done when their pupils have been instructed in the sciences. But they should realize that they have the most important missionary field in the world. If the capabilities of all engaged as instructors are used as God would have them, they will be most successful missionaries for God. It must be remembered that the youth are forming habits which will, in nine cases out of ten, decide their future. The influence of the company they keep, the associations they form, and the principles they adopt, will be carried with them through life.

It is a terrible fact, and one which should make the hearts of parents tremble, that the colleges to which the youth of our day are sent for the cultivation of the mind endanger their morals. As innocent youth when placed with hardened criminals learn lessons of crime they never before dreamed of, so pure-minded young people through association with college companions of corrupt habits lose their purity of character, and become vicious and debased. Parents should awake to their responsibilities, and understand what they are doing in sending their children from home to colleges where they can expect nothing else but that they will become demoralized. The College at Battle Creek should stand higher in moral tone than any other college in the land, that the safety of the children intrusted to her keeping may not be endangered. If teachers do their work in the fear of God, working with the spirit of Christ for the salvation of the souls of the students, God will crown their efforts with success. God-fearing parents will be more concerned in regard to the character their children bring home with them from college than in regard to the success and advancement made in their studies.

I was shown that our College was designed of God to accomplish the great work of saving souls. It is only when brought under full control of the Spirit of God that the talents of an individual are rendered useful to the fullest extent. The precepts and principles of religion are the first steps in the acquisition of knowledge, and lie at the very foundation of true education. Knowledge and science must be vitalized by the Spirit of God in order to serve the noblest purposes. The Christian alone can make the right use of knowledge. Science, in order to be fully appreciated, must be viewed from a religious standpoint. The heart which is ennobled by the grace of God can best comprehend the real value of education. The attributes

of God, as seen in his created works, can be appreciated only as we have a knowledge of the Creator. The teachers must not only be acquainted with the theory of the truth, but must have an experimental knowledge of the way of holiness in order to lead the youth to the fountain of truth, to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Knowledge is a power when united with true piety.

### *DUTY OF PARENTS TOWARD THE COLLEGE.*

Our brethren and sisters abroad should feel it their duty to sustain this institution which God has devised. Some of the students return home with murmuring and complaints, and parents and members of the church give an attentive ear to their exaggerated, one-sided statements. They would do well to consider that there are two sides to the story; but instead, they allow these garbled reports to build up a barrier between them and the College. They then begin to express fears, questionings, and suspicions, in regard to the way the College is conducted. Such an influence does great harm. The words of dissatisfaction spread like a contagious disease, and the impression made upon minds is hard to efface. The story enlarges with every repetition, until it becomes of gigantic proportions; when investigation would reveal the fact that there was no fault with teachers or professors. They were simply doing their duty in enforcing the rules of the school, which must be carried out or the school will become demoralized. [63]

Parents do not always move wisely. Many are very exacting in wishing to bring others to their ideas, and become impatient and overbearing if they cannot do this; but when their own children are required to observe rules and regulations at school, and these children fret under the necessary restraint, too often their parents, who profess to love and fear God, join with the children instead of reproving them and correcting their faults. This often proves the turning point in the character of their children. Rules and order are broken down, and discipline is trampled under foot. The children despise restraint, and are allowed to speak disparagingly of the institutions at B. C. If parents would only reflect, they would see the evil result of the course they are pursuing. It would indeed be a most wonderful thing if, in a school of four hundred students, managed

by men and women subject to the frailties of humanity, every move should be so perfect, so exact, as to challenge criticism.

[64] If parents would place themselves in the position of the teachers, and see how difficult it must necessarily be to manage and discipline a school of hundreds of students of every grade of class and minds, they might upon reflection see things differently. They should consider that some children have never been disciplined at home. Having always been indulged and never trained to obedience, it would be greatly for their advantage to be removed from their injudicious parents, and placed under as severe regulations and drilling as soldiers in an army. Unless something shall be done for these children who have been so sadly neglected by unfaithful parents, they will never be accepted of Jesus; unless some power of control shall be brought to bear upon them, they will be worthless in this life, and will have no part in the future life.

In Heaven is perfect order, perfect obedience, perfect peace and harmony. Those who have had no respect for order or discipline in this life would have no respect for the order which is observed in Heaven. They can never be admitted into Heaven, for all worthy of an entrance there will love order and respect discipline. The characters formed in this life will determine the future destiny. When Christ shall come, he will not change the character of any individual. Precious, probationary time is given to be improved in washing our robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb. To remove the stains of sin requires the work of a life-time. Every day renewed efforts in restraining and denying self are needed. Every day there are new battles to fight, and victories to be gained.

[65] Every day the soul should be called out in earnest pleading with God for the mighty victories of the cross. Parents should neglect no duty on their part to benefit their children. They should so train them that they may be a blessing to society here, and may reap the reward of eternal life hereafter.

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## THE CAUSE IN IOWA.

I Was shown that the cause in Iowa is in a deplorable condition. Young men have been connected with the different branches of the work, who have not been in a condition spiritually to benefit the people. Quite a number of inexperienced and inefficient men have been laboring in the cause, who need a great work done for them.

### COLLEGE STUDENTS.

The influence of Bro. N — has not been altogether what it should be. While at the College in B. C. he was in many respects an exemplary young man; but he, with other young gentlemen and ladies, in a secretive manner made an excursion to —. This was not noble, frank, and just. They all knew that it was a breach of the rules; but they ventured in the path of transgression. These young men, by this act and their attitude since in relation to their wrong course, have cast reflections upon the College that are most unjust.

When the brethren in Iowa accepted the labors of Bro. N — under these circumstances, they did wrong. If they pursue a similar course in other cases, they will greatly displease God. The fact that he had been a young man of excellent deportment, gave him greater influence over others; and his example in standing in defiance of the rules and authority which sustain and control the school, influenced others to do as he had done. Laws and regulations will be of no force in conducting the school, if such things are sanctioned by our brethren at large. A demoralizing influence is easily introduced into a school. Many will readily partake of the spirit of rebellion and defiance, unless prompt and vigilant efforts are continually put forth to maintain the standard of the school by strict rules regulating the conduct of the students.

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The labors of Bro. N — will not be acceptable to God until he shall fully see and acknowledge his wrong in violating the rules of the College, and shall endeavor to counteract the influence he has exerted to injure its reputation. Many more students would have come from Iowa had it not been for this unhappy circumstance. Could you, Bro. N—, see and sense the influence of this one wrong step, and the feelings of passion, of jealousy, and almost hatred, that filled your heart because your course was questioned by Prof.

Brownsberger, you would tremble at the sight of yourself, and at the triumph of those who cannot bear restraint, and who wage war against rules and regulations which check them from pursuing their own course. Being a professed disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus, your influence and responsibility are greatly increased.

[67] Bro. N —, I hope you will go over the ground carefully, and consider the first temptation to depart from the rules of the College. Study critically the character of the government of our school. The rules which were enforced were none too strict. But anger was cherished; for the time being, reason was dethroned, and the heart was made a prey to ungovernable passion. Before you were aware, you had taken a step which a few hours previous you would not have taken under any pressure of temptation. Impulse had overcome reason, and you could not recall the injury done to yourself nor to an institution of God. Our only safety under all circumstances is in being always master of ourselves in the strength of Jesus our Redeemer.

Our College has not that influence of popular opinion to sustain it in exercising government and enforcing its rules, which others have. In one respect it is a denominational school; but, unless guarded, a worldly character and influence will be given to it. Sabbath keeping students must possess more moral courage than has hitherto been manifested, to preserve the moral and religious influence of the school, or it will differ from the colleges of other denominations only in name. God devised and established this College, designing that it should be molded by high religious interests ; and that every year unconverted students who are sent to B. C. should return to their homes as soldiers of the cross of Christ.

[68] Professors and teachers should reflect upon the best means of maintaining the peculiar character of our College; all should highly esteem the privileges which we enjoy in having such a school, and should faithfully sustain it and guard it from any breath of reproach. Selfishness may chill the energies of students, and the worldly element may gain a prevailing influence over the entire school. This would bring the frown of God upon that institution. Those students who profess to love God and obey the truth should possess that degree of self-control, and strength of religious principle, that will enable them to remain unmoved amid temptations, and to stand

up for Jesus in the College, at their boarding-houses, or wherever they may be. Religion is not to be worn merely as a cloak in the house of God, but religious principle must characterize the entire life. Those who are drinking at the fountain of life will not, like the worldling, manifest a longing desire for change and pleasure. In their deportment and character will be seen the rest, and peace, and happiness that they have found in Jesus Christ by daily laying their perplexities and burdens at his feet. They will show that there is contentment and even joy in the path of obedience and duty. Such will exert an influence over their fellow students which will tell upon the entire school. Those who compose this faithful army will refresh and strengthen the teachers and professors in their efforts, by discouraging every species of unfaithfulness, of discord, and of neglect to comply with the rules and regulations. Their influence will be saving, and their works will not perish in the great day of God, but will follow them into the future world ; and the influence [69] of their life here will tell throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. One earnest, conscientious, faithful young man in school is an inestimable treasure. Angels of Heaven look lovingly upon him. His precious Saviour loves him, and in the Ledger of Heaven will be recorded every work of righteousness, every temptation resisted, every evil overcome. He will thus be laying up a good foundation against the time to come, that he may lay hold on eternal life.

The course pursued at the College by Bro. B—, in seeking the society of young ladies, was wrong. This was not the object for which he was sent to B. C. Students are not sent here to form attachments, to indulge in flirtation or courting, but to obtain an education. Should they be allowed to follow their own inclinations in this respect, the College would soon become demoralized. Several have used their precious school days in slyly flirting and courting, notwithstanding the vigilance of professors and teachers. When a teacher of any of the branches takes advantage of his position to win the affections of his students, with a view to marriage, his course is worthy of severest censure.

The influence of the sons of Bro. H—, and of several others from Iowa, also that of Mr. W— of Illinois, has been no benefit to our school. The relatives and friends of these students have sustained them in casting reflections upon the College. The sons of Bro. H—

[70] have ability and aptness which is a source of gratification to the parents; but when the ability of these young men is exerted to break down the rules and regulations of the College, it is nothing that should excite pleasure in the hearts of any. The paper containing that apt and sharp criticism concerning one who teaches in the College, will not be read with such gratification in the day when every man's work shall pass in review before God. Bro. and Sister H— will then meet a record of the work they did in giving their son poorly concealed justification in this matter. They must then answer for the influence they have exerted against the school, one of God's instrumentalities, and for making the colored statements which have prevented youth from coming to the College, where they might have been brought under the influence of truth. Some souls will be lost in consequence of this wrong influence. The great day of God's Judgment will unfold the influence of the words spoken, and the attitude assumed. Bro. and Sister H— have duties at home which they have neglected. They have been drunken with the cares of this life. Work, and hurry, and drive is the order of the day, and their intense worldliness has had its molding influence upon their children, upon the church, and upon the world. It is the example of those who hold the truth in righteousness which will condemn the world.

[71] Upon Christian youth depend in a great measure the preservation and perpetuity of the institutions which God has devised as means by which to advance his work. This grave responsibility rests upon the youth of to-day who are coming upon the stage of action. Never was there a period when so important results depended upon a generation of men. Then how important that the young should be qualified for the great work, that God may use them as his instruments. Their Maker has claims upon them which are paramount to all others.

It is God that has given life, and every physical and mental endowment they possess. He has bestowed upon them capabilities for wise improvement, that they may be intrusted with a work which will be as enduring as eternity. In return for his great gifts he claims a due cultivation and exercise of their intellectual and moral faculties. He did not give them merely for their amusement, or to be abused in working against his will and his providence, but that they might use them to advance the knowledge of truth and holiness in the world.

He claims their gratitude, their veneration and love, for his continued kindness and infinite mercies. He justly requires obedience to his laws, and to all wise regulations which will restrain and guard the youth from Satan's devices, and lead them in paths of peace. If youth could see that in complying with the laws and regulations of our institutions they are only doing that which will improve their standing in society, elevate the character, ennoble the mind, and increase their happiness, they would not rebel against just rules and wholesome requirements, nor engage in creating suspicion and prejudice against these institutions. Our youth should have a spirit of energy and fidelity to meet the demands upon them, and this will be a guaranty of success. The wild, reckless character of many of the youth in this age of the world is heart-sickening. Much of the blame lies upon their parents at home. Without the fear of God, no one can be truly happy. [72]

Those students who have chafed under authority, and have returned to their homes to cast reproach upon the College, will have to see their sin and counteract the influence they have cast, before they can have the approval of God. The believers in Iowa have displeased God in their credulity in accepting the reports brought them. They should ever be found on the side of order and discipline, instead of encouraging lax government. A youth is sent from a distant State to share the benefits of the College at B. C. He goes forth from his home with the blessing of his parents upon his head. He has listened daily to the earnest prayers offered at the family altar, and he is apparently well started in a life of noble resolve and purity. His convictions and purposes when he leaves home are right. In Battle Creek he will meet with associates of all classes. He becomes acquainted with some whose example is a blessing to all who come within the sphere of their influence. Again, he meets with those who are apparently kind and interesting, and whose intelligence charms him; but they have no religious faith, and a low standard of morality. For a time he resists every inducement to temptation; but as he observes that those who profess to be Christiana seem to enjoy the company of this irreligious class, his purposes and high resolves begin to waver. He enjoys the lively sallies and jovial spirit of these youth, and he is almost imperceptibly drawn more and more into their company. His stronghold seems to be giving way, his [73]

hitherto brave heart is growing weak. He is invited to accompany them for a walk, and they lead him to a saloon. Oysters or other refreshments are called for, and he is ashamed to draw away and refuse the treat. Having once overstepped the bounds, he goes again and again. A glass of beer is thought to be unobjectionable, and he accepts it; but still, with all, there are sharp twinges of conscience. He does not openly take his stand on the side of God, and truth, and righteousness; the society of the sly, deceptive class with which he is associated pleases him, and he is led a step farther. His tempters urge that it is certainly harmless to play a game of cards, and to watch the players in a billiard hall, and he yields repeatedly to the temptation. Young men attend our College, who, unsuspected by parents or guardians, hang about saloons, drink beer, and play cards and games in billiard halls.

[74] These things the students try to keep a profound secret among themselves; and professors and teachers are kept in ignorance of the Satanic work going on. When this young man is enticed to pursue some evil course which must be kept secret, he has a battle with conscience, but inclination triumphs. He meant to be a Christian when he came to Battle Creek, but he is being led steadily and surely in the downward road. Evil companions and seducers found among the youth of Sabbath-keeping parents, some of them living in B. C., find that he can be tempted; and they secretly exult over their power, and the fact that he is weak and will yield so readily to their seductive influences. They find that he can be shamed and confused by those who have had light, and who have hardened their hearts in sin. Just such influences as these will be found wherever youth associate together.

The time will come when that young man who left his father's house pure and true, with noble purposes, is ruined. He has learned to love the evil and reject the good. He did not sense his danger, not being armed by watchfulness and prayer. He did not place himself at once under the guardian care of the church. He was made to believe that it was manly to be independent, not allowing his liberty to be restricted. He was taught that to ignore rules and defy laws was to enjoy true freedom ; that it was slavish to be always fearing and trembling lest he do wrong. He yielded to the influence of ungodly persons, who, while carrying a fair exterior, were practicing

deception, vileness, and iniquity; and he was despised and derided because so easily duped. He went where he could not expect to find the pure and good. He learned ways of life and habits of speech which were not elevating and ennobling. Many are in danger of being thus led away imperceptibly, until they become degraded in their own estimation, In order to gain the applause of the heartless and ungodly, they are in danger of yielding the purity and nobleness of manhood, and of becoming slaves to Satan. [75]

### *YOUNG MINISTERS.*

I was shown that Iowa will be left far behind other States in the standard of pure godliness, if young men are permitted to have influence in her Conference while it is evident that they are not connected with God. I feel it to be a most solemn duty resting upon me to say that Iowa would be in a better condition to-day if Brn. K— and W— had remained silent. Not having experimental godliness themselves, how can they lead the people to that fountain with which they themselves are unacquainted ?

A prevailing skepticism is continually increasing in reference to the testimonies of the Spirit of God; and these youth encourage questionings and doubts instead of removing them, because they are ignorant of the spirit, and power, and force of the testimonies. While thus unsanctified in heart, their labor can do the people no good. They may apparently convince souls that we have the truth ; but where is the Spirit and power of God to impress the heart and awaken conviction of sin ? Where is the power to carry the convicted forward to an experimental knowledge of vital godliness? They have not a knowledge of this themselves; then how can they represent the religion of Jesus Christ? If young men would enter the field, in nowise discourage them; but first let them learn the trade.

Bro. W— might have united his efforts with the physicians at the Sanitarium, but he could not harmonize with them. He was too self-sufficient to be a learner. He was puffed up and egotistical. He had just as good a prospect as other young men ; but while they were willing to receive instruction, and to occupy any position where they could be of the greatest service, he would not adapt himself to the situation. He thought he knew too much to occupy a secondary [76]

position. He did not commend himself to the patients. He was so overbearing and dictatorial that his influence could not be tolerated in the Sanitarium. He was not lacking in ability, and had he been willing to be taught, he might have gained a practical knowledge of the work of a physician ; had he preserved his spirit in the meekness of humility, he might have made a success. But natural defects of character have not been seen and overcome. There has been a disposition on his part to deceive, to prevaricate. This will destroy the usefulness of any one's life, and would certainly close to him the doors of the ministry. The strictest veracity should be cultivated, and all deception shunned as one would shun the leprosy. He has felt embarrassed because of his diminutive stature. This cannot be remedied; but it is within his power to remedy his defective character, if he will. Mind and character may, with care, be molded after the divine Pattern.

[77] It is not an affecting of superiority that makes the man, but the true elevation of the mind. The proper cultivation of the mental powers makes man all that he is. These ennobling faculties are given to aid in forming character for the future, immortal life. Man was created for a higher, holier state of enjoyment than this world can afford. He was made in the image of God for high and noble purposes, such as engage the attention of angels.

The youth of to-day do not generally think deeply or act wisely. Were they aware of the dangers besetting their every step, they would move cautiously, and escape many snares that Satan has prepared for their feet. Be careful, my brother, not to appear what you are not. Gilded imitation will be readily distinguished from the pure metal. Examine yourself with the greatest care, and the position which each one of your family occupies. Trace the history of each, and meditate as to the result of the course pursued. Consider why it is that some persons are loved and respected by the truly good, while others are despised and shunned. Look upon these things in the light of eternity, and wherein you discover that others have failed, carefully avoid the course they pursued. It will be well to remember that tendencies of character are transmitted from parents to children. Meditate seriously upon these things, and then in the fear of God gird on the armor for a life conflict with hereditary tendencies, imitating none but the divine Pattern. You must work with perseverance,

constancy, and zeal, if you would succeed. You will have yourself to conquer, which will be the hardest battle of all. Determined opposition to your own ways and your wrong habits will secure for you precious and everlasting victories. But while your strong traits of character are cherished, while you wish to lead instead of being willing to follow, you will make no success. Your feelings are quick, and unless you are guarded, you indulge in temper. Upon the young must rest responsibilities and the discharge of important duties. Are you qualifying yourself to do your part in the fear of God ?

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Bro. K— is not fitted for his work. He has nearly everything to learn. His character is defective. He was not educated from childhood to be a care-taker, a laborer, a burden bearer. He has not seen and felt the work to be done for himself, and hence is not prepared to appreciate the work to be done for others. He is self-sufficient. He assumes to know more than he really does. When he becomes thoroughly consecrated by the Spirit of God, and fully realizes the solemnity and responsibility of the work of a minister of Jesus Christ, he will feel himself entirely insufficient for the task. He is deficient in many respects; and his deficiencies will be reproduced in others, giving to the world an unfavorable impression of the character of our work, and of the ministers who are engaged in it. He must become acquainted with the burdens and duties of practical life before he can be fitted to engage in the most responsible work ever given to mortal man. All young ministers need to be learners before they become teachers. While I would encourage young men to enter the ministry, I would say that I am authorized of God to recommend and urge upon them a fitness for the work in which they are to engage.

The Brn. K— are not inclined to be care-takers, burden-bearers. Carelessness and imperfection are seen in all they undertake. They are reckless in their conversation and deportment. The solemn, elevating, ennobling influence which should characterize every minister of the gospel cannot be exerted in their lives until they have been transformed and molded after the divine image. Selfishness exists more or less in each of them, though in a much larger degree in some than in others. There is a spirit of self-sufficiency and self-importance in these young men that unfits them for the work of God. They need to severely discipline themselves before they

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can be accepted of God as laborers in his cause. There is a natural laziness that must be overcome. They should have a faithful drilling in the temporal affairs of life. They must be learners; and when they show a marked success in the lesser responsibilities, then they will be fitted to be intrusted with greater ones. The different Conferences are better off without such inefficient workers. The burden of souls can no more rest upon men in their state of unconsecration than upon babies. They are ignorant of vital godliness, and need a most thorough conversion before they can be even Christians.

[80] Bro. V— K— needs a thorough drill in our College. His language is defective. There is a coarseness and want of refinement in his deportment; yet, notwithstanding this, he is self-sufficient, and entirely deceived in regard to his ability. He has had no real faith in the testimonies of the Spirit of God. He has not carefully studied them, and practiced the truths brought out. While he has so little spirituality, he will not understand the value of the testimonies, nor their real object. These young men read the Bible, but they have very little experience in prayerful, earnest, humble searching of the Scriptures, that they may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

There is great danger of encouraging a class of men to enter the field who have no genuine burden for souls. They may be able to interest the people, and engage in controversy, while they are by no means men of thought, who will improve their ability and enlarge their capacities. We have a dwarfed and defective ministry. Unless Christ shall abide in the men who preach the truth, they will lower the moral and religious standard wherever they are tolerated. One example is given them, even Christ. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." In the Bible we have the unerring counsel of God. Its teachings practically carried out will fit men for any position of duty. It is the voice of God speaking every day to the soul. How carefully should the young study the word of God, and treasure up its sentiments in the heart, that its precepts may be made to govern the whole conduct. Our young ministers, and those who have been some time preaching, show a marked deficiency in their understanding of the Scriptures.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to enlighten the darkened understanding, to melt the selfish, stony heart, to subdue the rebellious transgressor, and save him from the corrupting influences of the world. The prayer of Christ for his disciples was, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, pierces the heart of the sinner, and cuts it in pieces. When the theory of the truth is repeated without its sacred influence being felt upon the soul of the speaker, it has no force upon the hearers, but is rejected as error, the speaker making himself responsible for the loss of souls. We must be sure that our ministers are converted men, humble, meek, and lowly of heart.

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There must be a decided change in the ministry. A more critical examination is necessary in respect to the qualifications of a minister. Moses was directed of God to obtain an experience in care-taking, in thoughtfulness, in tender solicitude for his flock, that he might as a faithful shepherd be ready when God should call him to take charge of his people. A similar experience is essential for those who engage in the great work of preaching the truth. In order to lead souls to the life-giving fountain, the preacher must first drink at the fountain himself. He must see the infinite sacrifice of the Son of God to save fallen men, and his own soul must be imbued with the spirit of undying love. If God appoints us hard labor to perform, we must do it without a murmur. If the path be difficult and dangerous, it is God's plan to have us follow in meekness, and cry unto him for strength. A lesson is to be learned from the experience of some of our ministers who have known nothing comparatively of difficulties, of trials, yet ever look upon themselves as martyrs. They have yet to learn to accept the way of God's choosing, with thankfulness, remembering the Author of our salvation. The work of the minister should be pursued with an earnestness, energy, and zeal, as much greater than that put forth in business transactions as the labor is more sacred and the result more momentous. Each day's work should tell in the eternal records as "well done;" so that if no other day should be granted in which to labor, the work will be thoroughly finished. Our ministers, young men especially, should realize the work of preparation necessary to fit them for their solemn work, and to prepare them for the society of pure angels. In Order to be at home in Heaven, we must have Heaven enshrined in our hearts here.

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If this is not the case with us, it were better that we had no part in the work of God.

[83] The ministry is corrupted by unsanctified ministers. Unless there shall be altogether a higher and more spiritual standard for the ministry, the truth of the gospel will become more and more powerless. The human mind is represented by the rich soil of a garden. Unless it shall receive proper cultivation, it will be overgrown with the weeds and briars of ignorance. The mind and heart need culture daily; and neglect will be productive of evil. The more natural abilities God has bestowed upon an individual the greater improvement he is required to make, and the greater his responsibility to use his time and talents for the glory of God. The mind must not remain dormant. If it is not exercised in the acquisition of knowledge, there will be a sinking into ignorance, superstition, and fancy. If the intellectual faculties are not cultivated as they should be to glorify God, they will become strong and powerful aids in leading to perdition.

[84] While young men should guard against being pompous and independent, they should be continually making marked improvement. They should accept every opportunity to cultivate the more noble, generous traits of character. If young men would feel their dependence upon God every moment, and cherish a spirit of prayer, a breathing out of the soul to God at all times and in all places, they might better know the will of God. But I have been shown that Brn. K— and W— are almost wholly unacquainted with the operations of God's Spirit. They have been working in their own strength, and have been so fully wrapped up in themselves that they have not seen and sensed their great destitution. They will talk flippantly of the testimonies given of God for the benefit of his people, and will pass judgment upon them, giving their opinions and criticising this and that, when they would better place their hands upon their lips, and lie with their faces in the dust; for they know no more of the spirit of the testimonies than they do of the Spirit of God. They are novices in the truth, and dwarfs in religious experience. The greatest victories which are gained to this cause are not labored argument, ample facilities, abundance of influence, and plenty of means; but they are those victories which are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power. When Jacob found himself utterly prostrate and in a

helpless condition, he poured out his soul in an agony of earnestness to God. The angel of God pleads to be re-leased; but Jacob will not let go his hold. The stricken man, suffering with bodily pain, presents his earnest supplication with the boldness which living faith imparts. He answers, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

There are deep mysteries in the word of God, which will never be discovered by minds that are unaided by the Spirit of God. There are also unsearchable mysteries in the plan of redemption, which finite minds can never comprehend. Inexperienced youth might better tax their minds and exercise their ability to gain an understanding of matters that are revealed ; for unless they possess more spiritual enlightenment than they now have, it would take a life-time to learn the revealed will of God. When they have cherished the light they already have, and made a practical use of it, they will be able to take a step forward. God's providence is a continual school, in which he is ever leading men to see the true aims of life. None are too young, and none too old, to learn in this school, by paying diligent heed to the lessons taught by the divine Teacher. He is the true Shepherd, and he calls his sheep by name. By the wanderers his voice is heard, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

Young men who have never made a success in the temporal duties of life will be equally unprepared to engage in the higher duties. A religious experience is attained only through conflict, through disappointment, through severe discipline of self, through earnest prayer. Living faith must grasp the promises unflinchingly, and then many may come from close communion with God with shining faces, saying, as did Jacob, "I have seen the Lord face to face, and my life is preserved."

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The steps upward to Heaven must be taken one at a time; every advance step strengthens us for the next. The transforming power of the grace of God upon the human heart is a work which but few comprehend, because they are too indolent to make the necessary effort. The lessons which young ministers learn in going about and being waited upon, when they have not a fitness for the work, have a demoralizing influence upon them. They do not know their place and keep it. They are not balanced with firm principles. They talk knowingly of things they know nothing of, and hence those who accept them as teachers are misled. One such person will inspire

[86] more skepticism in minds than several will be able to counteract, do the best they can. Men of small minds delight to quibble, to criticise, to seek for something to question, thinking this a mark of sharpness; but instead it shows a mind lacking refinement and elevation. How much better to be engaged in seeking to cultivate themselves, and to ennoble and elevate their minds. As a flower turns to the sun that the bright rays may aid in perfecting its beauty and symmetry, so should the youth turn to the Sun of Righteousness, that Heaven's light may shine upon them, perfecting their characters and giving them a deep and abiding experience in the things of God. Then they may reflect the divine rays of light upon others. Those who choose to gather doubts, and unbelief, and skepticism, will experience no growth in grace or spirituality, and are unfitted for the solemn responsibility of bearing the truth to others.

The world is to be warned of its coming doom. The slumbers of those who are lying in sin and error are so deep, so death-like, that the voice of God through a wide-awake ministry is needed to awaken them. Unless the ministers are converted, the people will not be. The cold formalism that is now prevailing among us must give place to the living energy of experimental godliness. There is no fault with the theory of the truth; it is perfectly clear and harmonious. But young ministers may speak the truth fluently, and yet have no real sense of the words they utter. They do not appreciate the value of the truth they present, and little realize what it has cost those, who, with prayers and tears, through trial and opposition, sought for it as for hid treasures. Every new link in the chain of truth was to them as precious as tried gold. These links are now united in a perfect whole. Truths have been dug out of the rubbish of superstition and error, by earnest prayer for light and knowledge, and have been presented to the people as precious pearls of priceless value.

[87] The gospel is a revelation to man of beams of light and hope from the eternal world. All the light does not burst upon us at once, but as we can bear it. Inquiring minds that hunger for the knowledge of God's will are never satisfied; the deeper they search, the more they sense their ignorance, and deplore their blindness. It is beyond the power of man to conceive the high and noble attainments that are within his reach, if he will combine human effort with the grace of God, who is the Source of all wisdom and all power. And there

is an eternal weight of glory beyond. “ Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

We have the most solemn message of truth ever borne to the world. This truth is more and more respected by unbelievers, because it cannot be controverted. In view of this fact, our young men become self-confident and self-inflated. They take the truths which have been brought out by other minds, and without study or earnest prayer meet opponents and engage in contest, indulging in sharp speeches and witticisms, flattering themselves that this is doing the work of a gospel minister. These men need as thorough a conversion as did Paul, in order to be fitted for God’s work. Ministers must be living representatives of the truth they preach. They must have greater spiritual life, characterized by greater simplicity. The words must be received from God and given to the people. The attention of the people must be arrested. Our message is a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. The destinies of souls are balancing. Multitudes are in the valley of decision. A voice should be heard crying, “ If the Lord be God, serve him; but if Baal, then serve him.”

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Prompt, energetic, and earnest action may save an undecided soul. No one can tell how much is lost by attempting to preach without the unction of the Holy Spirit. There are souls in every congregation who are hesitating, almost persuaded be wholly for God. The decision is being made for time and for eternity ; but it is too often the case that the minister has not the spirit and power of the message of truth in his own heart, hence no direct appeals are made to those souls that are trembling in the balance. The result is that impressions are not deepened upon the hearts of the convicted ones ; and they leave the meeting feeling less inclined to accept the service of Christ than when they came. They decide to wait for a more favorable opportunity; but it never comes. That godless discourse, like Cain’s offering, lacked the Saviour. The golden opportunity is lost, and the oases of these souls are decided. Is not too much at stake to preach in an indifferent manner, and without feeling the burden of souls ?

In this age of moral darkness it will take something more than dry theory to move souls. Ministers must have a living connection with God. They must preach as if they believed what they said. Living

[89] truths, falling from the lips of the man of God, will cause sinners to tremble, and the convicted to cry out, “Jehovah is God,” I am resolved to be wholly on the Lord’s side. Never should the messenger of God cease his strivings for greater light and power from above. He should toil on, pray on, hope on, amid discouragement and darkness, determined to gain a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, and to come behind in no gift. As long as there is one soul to be benefited, he should press forward, with new courage at every effort. There is work, earnest work, to be accomplished. Souls for whom Christ died are in peril. As long as Jesus has said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” as long as the crown of righteousness is offered to the overcomer, as long as our Advocate pleads in the sinner’s behalf, ministers of Christ should labor in hope, with tireless energy and persevering faith.

But while the truth of God is carried by young and inexperienced men whose hearts are scarcely touched by the grace of God, the cause will languish. Brn. K— and W— are more ready to argue than to pray; they are more ready to contend than to persuade, endeavoring to impress the people with the solemn character of the work for this time. Men who dare to assume the responsibility of receiving the word from the mouth of God and giving it to the people, make themselves accountable for the truth they represent and the influence they exert. If they are truly men of God, their hope is not in themselves, but in what he will do for them and through them. They do not go forth self-inflated, calling the attention of the people to their smartness and aptness; they feel their responsibility, and work with spiritual energy, treading in the path of self-denial which the Master trod. Self-sacrifice is seen at every step, and they mourn because of their inability to do more in the cause of God. Their path is one of trial and of conflict, but it is marked by the footprints of their Redeemer, the Captain of their salvation, who was made perfect through suffering.

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In their labor, the under-shepherds must closely follow the directions, and manifest the spirit, of the Chief Shepherd. Skepticism and apostasy are met everywhere. God wants men to labor in his cause who have hearts as true as steel, and who will stand steadfast in integrity, and undaunted by circumstances. Amid trial and gloom, they are just what they were when their prospects were brightened

by hope, and when outward surroundings were all that they could desire. Daniel in the lion's den is the same Daniel who stood before the king, enshrouded by the light of God. Paul in the dark dungeon, awaiting the sentence which he knew was to come from the cruel Nero, is the same Paul who addressed the court of the Areopagus. A man whose heart is stayed upon God in the hour of his most afflicting trials and most discouraging surroundings, is just what he was in prosperity, when the light and favor of God seemed to be upon him. Faith reaches to the unseen, and grasps eternal things.

There are many in Iowa who are tearing down rather than building up, casting unbelief and darkness rather than light; and the cause of God is languishing when it should be flourishing. Ministers should dare to be true. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth ; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them ; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them ; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." The word and will of God are expressed in the Scriptures by inspired penmen. We should bind them as frontlets between our eyes, and walk according to their precepts; then we shall walk safely. Every chapter and every verse is a communication of God to man. In studying the word, the soul which hungers and thirsts for righteousness will be impressed by the divine utterances. Skepticism can have no power over a soul who with humility searches the Scriptures.

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### OUR PUBLISHING HOUSES.

GOD would have all who are connected with his institutions show aptness, discrimination, and forethought. He would have them become men and women of cultivated intellect, coming behind in no qualification ; and as they shall individually feel the necessity of this, and shall work to the point, Jesus will aid them in their endeavors. As they work upon the plan of addition in securing the graces of the Spirit, God will work upon the plan of multiplication in their behalf. Connection with God will give the soul expansion, will exalt

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it, transform it, and make it sensible of its own powers, and will give a clearer sense of the responsibility resting upon each individual to make a wise use of the faculties which God has bestowed.

Every one should study strict economy in the outlay of means; and he should exercise even greater faithfulness in handling that which belongs to another than in managing his own affairs. But this is seldom the case. No individual is personally benefited with the profits of our Offices, or made to suffer by the losses incurred ; but the property belongs to the Lord, and his cause is materially affected by the manner in which the labor is performed. If the cause of God is limited in its resources, important work which might and should be done is neglected.

[93] While economy should always be practiced, it should never degenerate into meanness. All who work in our Offices should feel that they are handling God's property, that they are responsible for the increase of the capital invested, and they will be accountable in the day of God if through lack of diligence and careful thought it decreases in their hands. All are called upon to avoid waste of time and means. The faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the workers to their present trust will determine their fitness to be intrusted with eternal riches. Everyone is required of God to execute the work assigned him with thoroughness and dispatch. The example of each should serve to excite diligence and thoughtfulness on the part of others. By earnest, conscientious faithfulness in everything, earth may be brought nearer Heaven, and precious fruit may be borne for both worlds.

The hands employed in the various departments of our Offices of publication do not accomplish the amount of work which they would be required to perform in any other office of the kind. Much time is wasted in unnecessary conversation, in visiting away the precious hours, while the work is suffered to lag. In several of the departments, loss is occasioned to the Office because of persons engaging in the work who have not exercised care and economy. Were these persons engaged in doing work for themselves, some would accomplish a third more work in a day than now. Others would do no more than they now perform.

Business hours should be faithfully employed. To be wasteful of time or of material is dishonesty before God. A few moments

are squandered here, and a few moments there, which amount in the course of a week to nearly or quite a day, sometimes even exceeding this. "Time is money," and a waste of time is a waste of money to the cause of God. When those who profess the faith are dilatory, and reckless of time, showing that they have not a heart interest for the prosperity of the work, unbelievers employed will follow their example. If all would use their time to the best account, very much means would be saved to the cause of truth. When the heart is in the work, it will be done with earnestness, energy, and dis- patch. All [94] should be awake to see what needs to be done, and apt and quick to execute, working as though under the direct supervision of the great Master, Jesus Christ.

Again, losses occur from lack of thoughtful care in the use of material and machinery. There is a failure to look after all the larger and smaller matters, that nothing be wasted or damaged through neglect. A little squandered here and there amounts to a large sum in the course of a year. Some have never learned to exercise their faculties to save the remnants, notwithstanding the injunction of Christ, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." Material should not be slashed into, to obtain a small piece. A little thoughtful care would lead to the gathering up and using of the little pieces that are now thrown aside and wasted. Attention should be given to saving even so trifling a matter as waste paper, for it can be turned into money.

By a lack of personal interest, many things go to waste which a few moments thoughtful attention at the right time would save. "I forgot" causes much loss to our Offices. And some feel no interest in any work or in anything which does not come under their special branch of the work. This is all wrong. Selfishness would suggest the thought, "It does not belong to me to care for that;" but faithfulness and duty would prompt every one to care for all that comes under his observation. The example of the head workers in the bindery is followed by the hands employed; all become careless and reckless; and an amount is wasted equal to their wages. A care-taking person [95] at the head of the work would save hundreds of dollars yearly to the Office in that one department.

A principle should exist all through the Office to economize. In order to save the dollars, dimes and pennies must be carefully

treasured. Men who have been successful in business have always been economical, persevering, and energetic. Let all connected with the work of God begin now to educate themselves thoroughly as care-takers. Even though their work may not be appreciated on earth, they should never degrade themselves in their own eyes by unfaithfulness in anything they undertake. It takes time for a person to become so accustomed to a given course of life as to be happy in pursuing it. We shall be individually, for time and eternity, what our habits make us. The lives of those who form right habits, and are faithful in the performance of every duty, will be as shining lights, shedding bright beams upon the pathway of others; but if habits of unfaithfulness are indulged, if lax, indolent, neglectful habits are allowed to strengthen, a cloud darker than midnight will settle on the prospects in this life, and forever debar the individual from the future life.

[96] One selfish thought indulged, one duty neglected, prepares the way for another. What we venture to do once, we are more apt to do again. Habits of sobriety, of self-control, of economy, of close application, of sound, sensible conversation, of patience and true courtesy, are not gained without diligent, close watching over self. It is much easier to become demoralized and depraved than to conquer defects, keeping self in control, and cherishing true virtues. Persevering efforts will be required if the Christian graces are ever perfected in our lives.

Important changes should take place in our Offices. To defer work which needs immediate attention until a more convenient time, is a mistake, and results in loss. The work of repairing sometimes amounts to double what it would, had it received attention in season. Many fearful losses and fatal accidents have occurred by putting off matters which should have received immediate attention. The season for action is spent in hesitancy, thinking that to-morrow will do; but to-morrow is frequently found to be too late. Our Offices suffer financially every day on account of indecision, dallying, recklessness, indolence, and, with some, downright dishonesty. There are those employed in these Offices who pass along as indifferently as though God had given them no mental powers to be exercised in care-taking. Such are unfitted for any post of duty; they can never be depended

upon. Men and women who shun duties in which difficulties are involved will remain weak and inefficient.

Those who educate themselves to do their work with dispatch, as well as with economy, will drive their business instead of allowing their business to drive them. They will not be constantly hurried and perplexed because their work is in confusion. Diligence and earnest fidelity are indispensable to success. Every hour's work passes in review before God, and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. The record of wasted moments and unimproved opportunities must be met when the Judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, and every one shall be judged according to the things written in the books. Selfishness, envy, pride, jealousy, idleness, or any other sin which is cherished in the heart, will exclude one from the blessedness of Heaven. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are."

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Our Offices are suffering for the want of men of stability and firmness. As I was shown from room to room, I saw that the work was conducted with indifference. Losses are sustained at every position of trust. The lack of thoroughness is apparent. While some have borne the burdens of care and responsibility, others, instead of sharing these burdens, have pursued a course to increase anxiety and care. Those who have not learned the lessons of economy and acquired the habit of making the most of their time in childhood and youth, will not be prudent and economical in any business in which they engage. It is a sin to neglect to so improve our faculties that they may be used to the glory of God. All have responsibilities to bear ; not one can be excused.

There is a variety of minds, and all need more or less cultivation and training. Every movement in connection with the cause of God should be characterized by caution and decision. Without decision an individual is fickle and unstable as water, and can never be truly successful. All who profess Christ should be workers. There are no drones in the household of faith. Every member of the family has some task assigned him, some portion of the vineyard of the Lord in which to work. The only way to meet the demand of God is to be constantly persevering in our endeavors for higher usefulness. It is but little we can accomplish at best; but every day's effort will

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increase our ability to labor effectually, and to bear fruit to the glory of God.

Some do not exercise control over their appetites, but indulge taste at the expense of health. As the result, the brain is clouded, their thoughts are sluggish, and they fail to accomplish what they might if they were self-denying and abstemious. These rob God of the physical and mental strength which might be devoted to his service if temperance were observed in all things. Paul was a health reformer. Said he, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." He felt that a responsibility rested upon him to preserve all his powers in their strength, that he might use them to the glory of God. If Paul was in danger from intemperance, we are in greater danger, because we do not feel and sense as he did the necessity of glorifying God in our bodies and spirits which are his. Overeating is the sin of this age.

[99] The word of God places the sin of gluttony in the same catalogue with drunkenness. So offensive was this sin in the sight of God that he gave directions to Moses that a child who would not be restrained on the point of appetite, but would gorge himself with anything his taste might crave, should be brought by his parents before the rulers in Israel, and should be stoned to death. The condition of the glutton was considered hopeless. He would be of no use to others, and was a curse to himself. No dependence could be placed upon him in anything. His influence would be ever contaminating others, and the world would be better without such a character; for his terrible defects would be perpetuated. None who have a sense of their accountability to God will allow the animal propensities to control reason. Those who do this are not Christians, whoever they may be, and however exalted their profession. The injunction of Christ is, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." He here shows us that we may be as perfect in our sphere as God is in his sphere.

Those who are employed in our publishing houses are not improving as God would have them. There is a want of earnest, unselfish interest in the work in which they are engaged. God requires these laborers in his cause to advance in knowledge daily. They should make a wise improvement of the faculties which God has

given them, that they may become efficient, thorough workmen, and perform their labor without loss to the Office.

The wisest of men may learn useful lessons from the ways and habits of the little creatures of the earth. The industrious bee gives to men of intelligence an example that they would do well to imitate. [100] These insects observe perfect order, and no idler is allowed in the hive. They execute their appointed work with an intelligence and activity that is beyond our comprehension. The ants, which we consider as only pests to be crushed under our feet, are in many respects superior to man; for he does not as wisely improve the gifts of God. The Wise Man calls our attention to the small things of the earth: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer." We may learn from these little teachers a lesson of faithfulness. Should we improve with the same diligence the faculties which an all-wise Creator has bestowed upon us, how greatly would our capacities for usefulness be increased. God's eye is upon the smallest of his creatures; does he not then regard man formed in his image, and require of him corresponding returns for all the advantages he has given him?

The Offices of publication should be set in order. Those who labor in these institutions should have high aims, and a deep and rich experience in the knowledge of God's will. They should ever stand on the side of right, and exert a saving influence. Every soul who names the name of Christ should make the most of the privileges enjoyed, and faithfully perform the duties assigned him, without murmuring or complaining. The conversation of each should be [101] of an elevated character, calculated to lead other minds in the right channel. The little mention that is made of divine goodness and the love of God, shows marked ingratitude, and that Christ is not enshrined in the heart.

The Offices will never prosper unless there are more disinterested, unselfish workers, who are truly God fearing men and women, self-denying and conscientiously independent for God and the right. The local editor of the *Review and Herald* will have occasion to speak with earnestness and firmness. He should stand in defense

of the right, exerting all the influence his position grants him. Eld. Waggoner has been placed in an unenviable position, but he has not been left alone. God has helped him, and under the circumstances he has done nobly. The Lord has not released him from his position; he must still labor in Oakland and San Francisco.

From those to whom God has intrusted much, he requires much, while those who have but little are required to give accordingly; but all may give themselves, and in their actions show their fidelity to the precious cause of Christ. Many can retrench their expenditures, and thus increase their liberality for Christ. Self-denial for Christ's sake, is the battle before us.

[102] “The love of Christ,” said Paul, “constraineth me.” It was the actuating principle of his conduct; it was his motive power. If ever his ardor in the path of duty for a moment flagged, one glance at the cross and the amazing love of Christ revealed in his unparalleled sacrifice, was enough to cause him to gird up anew the loins of his mind and press forward in the path of self-denial. In his labors for his brethren he relied much upon the exhibition of infinite love in the wonderful condescension of Christ, with all its subduing, constraining power.

How earnest, how touching his appeal: “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” You know the height from which he stooped; you are acquainted with the depth of humiliation to which he descended. His feet entered upon the path of self-denial and self-sacrifice, and turned not aside until he had given his life. No rest for him between the throne in Heaven and the cross. His love for man led him to welcome every indignity, and suffer every abuse. “For their sakes I sanctify myself.” I appropriate all my glory, all I am, to the work of man's redemption. How very little are men moved now to sanctify themselves to the work of God that souls may be saved through them.

Paul admonishes us to “look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” He bids us imitate the life of the great Exemplar, and exhorts us to possess the mind “which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was

made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." The apostle lingers over point after point, that our minds may grasp and fully comprehend the wonderful condescension of the Saviour in behalf of sinners. He presents Christ before us as he was when equal with God and receiving the adoration of angels, and then traces his descent until he reaches the lowest depths of humiliation, that with his human arm he might reach fallen man, and lift him from his degradation to hope, joy, and Heaven. [103]

Paul was deeply anxious that the humiliation of Christ should be seen and sensed. He was convinced that if the minds of men could be brought to comprehend the amazing sacrifice made by the Majesty of Heaven, all selfishness would be banished from their hearts. He directs the mind first to the position which Christ occupied in Heaven, in the bosom of his Father; he reveals him afterward as laying off his glory, voluntarily subjecting himself to all the humbling conditions of man's nature, assuming the responsibilities of a servant, and becoming obedient unto death, and that the most ignominious and revolting, the most shameful, the most agonizing,—the death of the cross. Can Christians contemplate this wonderful exhibition of the love of God to man without emotions of love, and a realizing sense of the fact that we are not our own? Such a master should not be served from grudging, covetous, selfish motives.

"Ye know," says Peter, "that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold." Oh, had these been sufficient to purchase the salvation of man, how easily it might have been accomplished" by Him who says, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine." But the transgressor of God's holy law could be redeemed only by the precious blood of the Son of God. Those who, failing to appreciate the wonderful sacrifice made for them, withhold their means and their physical, mental, and moral powers from the service of Christ, will perish in their selfishness. [104]

"Whosoever hath not [put to the best use his ability and means], from him shall be taken away even that which he hath." Those who are too indolent to realize their responsibilities and exercise their faculties will fail of receiving the blessing of God, and the ability which they had will be taken away and given to the active, zealous workers who increase their talents by constant use. "Seest thou a

man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." A person who diligently labors under the direction of the Spirit of God, will possess power and influence; for all may see in him a spirit of untiring devotion to the cause of God in any department where duty calls him.

[105] All the hands in our Offices should place themselves in the most favorable condition for the formation of good and correct habits. Several times each day, precious, golden moments should be consecrated to prayer and the study of the Scriptures, if it is only to commit a text to memory, that spiritual life may exist in the soul. The varied interests of the cause furnish us with food for reflection, and inspiration for our prayers. Communion with God is highly essential for spiritual health; and here only may be obtained that wisdom and correct judgment so necessary in the performance of every duty.

The strength acquired in prayer to God, united with individual effort in training the mind to thoughtfulness and care-taking, prepares the person for daily duties and keeps the spirit in peace under all circumstances, however trying. The temptations to which we are daily exposed make prayer a necessity. In order that we may be kept by the power of God through faith, the desires of the mind should be continually ascending in silent prayer for help, for light, for strength, for knowledge. But thought and prayer cannot take the place of earnest, faithful improvement of the time. Work and prayer are both required in perfecting Christian character.

[106] We must live a two-fold life, of thought and action, silent prayer and earnest work. All who have received the light of truth should feel it their duty to shed rays of light upon the pathway of the impenitent. They should be witnesses for Christ in our Offices as verily as in the church. God requires us to be living epistles, known and read of all men. The soul that turns to God for its strength, its support, its power, by daily, earnest prayer, will have noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth and of duty, lofty purposes of action, and a continual hungering and thirsting after righteousness. By maintaining a connection with God we shall be enabled to diffuse to others, through our association with them, the light, the peace, the serenity, that rule in our hearts, and set before them an example of unwavering fidelity to the interests of the work in which we are engaged.

With many who are laboring in our Offices there is an almost entire absence of the love and fear of God. Self-rules, self-controls, and God and Heaven scarcely enter into the mind. If these persons could see that they are upon the very borders of the eternal world, and that their future interests will be determined by their present action, there would be a marked change in every hand employed in these Offices.

But many of those who are engaged in the sacred work of God are paralyzed by Satan's deceptions. They are asleep on the enchanted ground. Days and months are passing, while they remain careless and unconcerned, as if there were no God, no future, no Heaven, no punishment for neglect of duty, for shunning responsibilities. But the day is fast approaching when the case of every one will be decided according to his works. Many have a fearfully spotted record in the Ledger of Heaven.

When these workers shall arouse to their own accountability, when they shall lay their polluted souls before God just as they are, and their earnest cry shall take hold on his strength, they will then know for themselves that God does hear and answer prayer. And when they do awake, they will see what they have lost by their indifference and unfaithfulness. They will then find that they have reached only a low standard, when, had the mind and capabilities been cultivated and improved for God, they might have had a rich experience, and might have been instrumental in saving their fellowmen. And even should they be saved at last, they will realize through all eternity the loss of opportunities wasted in probationary time.

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Religious privileges have been too much neglected by those employed in the Offices. None should engage in the work of God who treat these privileges with indifference; for all such connect with evil angels, and are a cloud of darkness and a hindrance to others. In order to make the work a success, every department in these Offices must have the presence of heavenly angels. When the Spirit of God shall work upon the heart, cleansing the soul temple of its defilement of worldliness and pleasure-loving, all will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty, and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefit they can gain. The faithful worker for the Master will improve every opportunity to place himself directly under the rays

of light from the throne of God; and this light will be reflected upon others.

[108] And not only should the prayer-meeting be faithfully attended, but as often as once each week, a praise-meeting should be held. Here the goodness and manifold mercies of God should be dwelt upon. Were we as free to give expression to our thankfulness for mercies received as we are to speak of grievances, doubts, and unbelief, we might bring joy to the hearts of others, instead of casting discouragement and gloom upon them. The complainers and murmurers, who are ever seeing the discouragements in the way, and talking of trials and hardships, should contemplate the infinite sacrifice which Christ has made in their behalf. Then can they estimate all their blessings in the light of the cross. While looking upon Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, whom our sins have pierced and our sorrows have burdened, we shall see cause for gratitude and praise, and our thoughts and desires will be brought into submission to the will of Christ.

[109] In the gracious blessings which our Heavenly Father has bestowed upon us, we may discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite, and a tender pity surpassing a mother's yearning sympathy for her wayward child. When we study the divine character in the light of the cross, we see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness, blended with equity and justice. In the language of John, we exclaim, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." We see in the midst of the throne One bearing, in hands, and feet, and side, the marks of the suffering endured to reconcile man to God, and God to man. Matchless mercy reveals to us a Father, infinite, dwelling in light unapproachable, yet receiving us to himself through the merits of his Son. The cloud of vengeance which threatened only misery and despair, in the reflected light from the cross reveals the writing of God, Live, sinner, live! ye penitent and believing souls, live! I have paid a ransom.

We must gather about the cross. Christ and him crucified must be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion. We should have these special appointments for the purpose of keeping fresh in our thoughts everything which we receive from God, and of expressing our gratitude for his great love, and our

willingness to trust everything to the hand that was nailed to the cross for us. We should learn here to talk the language of Canaan, to sing the songs of Zion. By the mystery and glory of the cross we can estimate the value of man, and then we shall see and sense the importance of working for our fellow-men, that they may be exalted to

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### SACREDNESS OF VOWS.

THE brief but terrible history of Ananias and Sapphira is traced by the pen of inspiration for the benefit of all who profess to be the followers of Christ. This important lesson has not had sufficient weight upon the minds of our people. It will be profitable for all to thoughtfully consider the nature of the grievous offense for which these guilty ones were made an example. This one marked evidence of God's retributive justice is fearful, and should lead all to fear and tremble to repeat sins which brought such a punishment. Selfishness was the great sin which had warped the character of this guilty couple. [110]

Ananias and his wife Sapphira were privileged, with others, to hear the preaching of the gospel by the apostles. The power of God attended the word spoken, and deep conviction rested upon all present. The softening influence of the grace of God had the effect upon their hearts to cause them to release their selfish hold upon their earthly possessions. While under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, they made a pledge to give to the Lord certain lands. But when they were from under this heavenly influence, the impression was less forcible, and they began to question and draw back from fulfilling the pledge which they had made. They thought they had been too hasty, and wished to reconsider the matter. Thus a door was opened by which Satan at once entered, and gained control of their minds.

This case should be a warning to all to guard against the first approach of Satan. Covetousness was first cherished; then, ashamed to have their brethren know that their selfish souls grudged that which they had solemnly dedicated and pledged to God, deception

was practiced. They talked the matter over together, and deliberately decided to withhold a part of the price of the land. When convicted of their falsehood, their punishment was instant death. They knew that the Lord whom they had defrauded had searched them out, for Peter said, “ Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land ? While it remained, [111] was it not thine own ? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart ? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”

A special example was necessary to guard the young church from becoming demoralized; for their numbers were rapidly increasing. A warning was thus given to all who professed Christ at that time, and to all who should afterward profess his name, that God requires faithfulness in the performance of vows. But notwithstanding this signal punishment of deception and lying, the same sins have often been repeated in the Christian church, and are widespread in our day. I was shown that God gave this example as a warning to all who should be tempted to act in a similar manner. Selfishness and fraud are being practiced daily in the church, in withholding from God that which he claims, thus robbing him and conflicting with his arrangements to diffuse the light and knowledge of truth throughout the length and breadth of the land.

God, in his wise plans, made the advancement of his cause dependent upon the personal efforts of his people, and upon their free-will offerings. By accepting the co-operation of man in the great plan of redemption, he has placed a signal honor upon him. The minister cannot preach except he be sent. The work of dispensing light does not rest upon ministers alone. Every person, upon becoming a member of the church, pledges himself to be a representative of Jesus Christ by living out the truth he professes. The followers of [112] Christ should carry forward the work which he left for them to do when he ascended into Heaven.

Institutions that are God’s instruments to carry forward his work on earth must be sustained. Churches must be erected, schools established, and publishing houses furnished with facilities for doing a great work in the publication of the truth to be sent to all parts of the world. These institutions are ordained of God, and should be sustained by tithes and liberal offerings. As the work enlarges,

means will be needed to carry it forward in all its branches. Those who have been converted to the truth, and been made partakers of his grace, may become co-workers with Christ by making voluntary sacrifices and free-will offerings to him. And when the members of the church wish in their hearts that there would be no more calls for means, they virtually say that they are content that the cause of God shall not progress.

“ And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God ; and this stone which is set for a pillar, shall be God’s house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.” The circumstances which prompted Jacob to vow to the Lord were similar to those which prompt men and women to vow to the Lord in our time. He had sinned in obtaining the blessing which he knew had been promised him by the sure word of God. In this he showed great lack of faith in God’s power to carry out his purposes, however discouraging present appearances might be. Instead of placing himself in the position he coveted, he was obliged to flee for his life from the wrath of Esau. With only his staff in his hand, he traveled hundreds of miles through a desolate country. His courage was gone, and he was filled with remorse and timidity, seeking to avoid men lest he should be traced by his angry brother. He had not the peace of God to comfort him, for he was harassed with the thought that he had forfeited divine protection. [113]

The second day of his journey is drawing to a close. He is weary, hungry, and homeless, and he feels that he is forsaken of God. He knows that he has brought this upon himself by his own wrong course. Dark clouds of despair inclose him, and he feels that he is an outcast. His heart is filled with a nameless terror, and he hardly dares to pray. But he is so utterly lonely that he feels the need of protection from God as he never has done before. He weeps and confesses his sin before God, and entreats for some evidence that he has not utterly forsaken him. But his burdened heart finds no relief. He has lost all confidence in himself, and he fears that the God of his fathers has cast him off. But God, the merciful God, pities the

desolate, sorrowstricken man, who gathers the stones for his pillow, and has only the canopy of heaven for his covering.

[114] In a vision of the night he sees a mystic ladder, its base resting upon the earth, and its top reaching above the starry host, to the highest heavens. Angel messengers are ascending and descending this ladder of shining brightness, showing him the pathway of communication between earth and Heaven. A voice is heard by him renewing the promise of mercy and protection and of future blessings. When Jacob awoke from his dream, he said, “ Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.” He looked about him as if expecting to see the heavenly messengers; hut only the dim outline of earthly objects, and the heavens above, brilliant with the gems of light, met his earnest, wondering gaze. The ladder and the bright messengers were gone, and the glorious Majesty above it he could see only in imagination.

Jacob was awed with the deep stillness of the night, and with the vivid impression that he was in the immediate presence of God. His heart was full of gratitude that he was not destroyed. There was no more sleep for him that night; gratitude deep and fervent, mingled with holy joy, filled his soul. “ And Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.” And here he made his solemn vow to God.

[115] Jacob made his vow while refreshed by the dews of grace, and invigorated by the presence and assurance of God. After the divine glory had passed away, he had temptations like men in our time; but he was faithful to his vow, and would not harbor thoughts as to the possibility of being released from the pledge which he had made. He might have reasoned much as men do now, that this revelation was only a dream, that he was unduly excited when he made his vow, and that therefore it need not be kept; but he did not.

Long years intervened before Jacob dared to return to his own country; but when he did, he faithfully discharged his debt to his Master. He had become a wealthy man, and a very large amount of property passed from his possessions to the treasury of the Lord.

Many in our day fail where Jacob made a success. Those to whom God has given the greatest amount have the strongest inclination to retain what they have, because they must give a sum

proportionate to their property. Jacob gave the tenth of all that he had, and then reckoned the use of the tenth, and gave the Lord the benefit of that which he had used for his own interest during the time he was in a heathen land and could not pay his vow. This was a large amount, but he did not hesitate; that which he had vowed to God he did not regard as his, but as the Lord's. According to the amount bestowed will be the amount required. The larger the capital intrusted, the more valuable is the gift which God requires to be returned to him.

If a Christian has ten or twenty thousand dollars, God's claims are imperative upon him, not only to give his proportion according to the tithing system, but to present his sin-offerings and thank-offerings to God. The Levitical dispensation was distinguished in a remarkable manner by the sanctification of property. When we speak of the tithe as the standard of the Jewish contributions to religious purposes, we do not speak understandingly. The Lord kept his claims paramount, and in almost every article they were reminded of the Giver by being required to make returns to him. They were required to pay a ransom for their firstborn son, for the first-fruits of their flocks, and for the first gathering of the harvest. They were required to leave the corners of their harvest-fields for the destitute. Whatever dropped from their hands in reaping was left for the poor, and once in every seven years their lands were allowed to produce spontaneously for the needy. Then there were the sacrificial offerings, the trespass-offerings, the sin-offerings, and the remission of all debts every seventh year. There were also numerous expenses for hospitalities and gifts to the poor, and there were assessments upon their property. [116]

At stated periods, in order to preserve the integrity of the law, the people were interviewed as to whether they had faithfully performed their vows or not. A conscientious few made returns to God of about one-third of all their income for the benefit of religious interests and for the poor. These exactions were not from a particular class of the people, but from all, the requirement being proportioned according to the amount possessed. Besides all these systematic and regular donations, there were special objects calling for free-will offerings, such as the tabernacle built in the wilderness and the temple erected at Jerusalem. These draughts were made by God upon the people [117]

for their own good, as well as to sustain the service of God. There must be an awakening among us as a people upon this matter.

There are but few men who feel conscience-stricken if they neglect their duty in beneficence. But few feel remorse of soul because they are daily robbing God. If a Christian deliberately or accidentally underpays his neighbor, or refuses to cancel an honest debt, his conscience, unless seared, will trouble him; he cannot rest although no one may know but himself. There are many neglected vows and unpaid pledges, and yet how few trouble their minds over the matter; how few feel the guilt of this violation of duty. We must have new and deeper convictions on this subject. The conscience must be aroused, and the matter receive earnest attention; for an account must be rendered to God in the last day, and his claims must be settled.

The responsibilities of the Christian business man, however large or small his capital, will be in exact proportion to his gifts from God. The deceitfulness of riches has ruined thousands and tens of thousands. These wealthy men forget that they are stewards, and that the day is fast approaching when it shall be said to them, "Give an account of thy stewardship." As is shown by the parable of the talents, every man is responsible for the wise use of the gifts bestowed. The poor man in the parable, because he had the least gift, [118] felt the least responsibility, and made no use of the talent intrusted to him; therefore he was east into outer darkness.

Said Christ, How hardly shall they that, have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And his disciples were astonished at his doctrine. When a minister who has labored successfully in securing souls to Jesus Christ, abandons his sacred work in order to secure temporal gain, he is called an apostate, and he will be held accountable to God for the talents that he has misapplied. When men of business, farmers, mechanics, merchants, lawyers, etc., become members of the church, they become servants of Jesus Christ; and although their talents may be entirely different, their responsibility to advance the cause of God by personal effort, and with their means, is no less than that which rests upon the minister. The woe which will fall upon the minister if he preach not the gospel, will just as surely fall upon the business man if he, with his different talents, will not be a co-worker with Christ in accomplishing the same results. When

this is brought home to the individual, some will say, "This is a hard saying;" nevertheless it is true, although continually contradicted by the practice of men who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ.

God provided bread for his people in the wilderness by a miracle of his mercy, and he could have provided everything necessary for religious service. But he did not, because in his infinite wisdom he saw that the moral discipline of his people depended upon their cooperating with him, every one of them doing something. As long as the truth is progressive, the claims of God are upon men to give of that which he has intrusted to them for this very purpose. God, the creator of man, by instituting the plan of systematic benevolence has made the work to bear equally upon all according to their several abilities. Every one is to be his own assessor, and is left to give as he purposes in his heart. But there are those who are guilty of the same sin as Ananias and Sapphira, thinking that if they withhold a portion of what God claims in the tithing system, the brethren will never know it. Thus thought the guilty couple whose example is given us as a warning. God in this case evidenced that he searches the heart. The motives and purposes of man cannot be hidden from him. He has left a perpetual warning to Christians of all ages to beware of the sin to which the hearts of men are continually inclined. [119]

Although no visible marks of God's displeasure follow the repetition of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira now, yet the sin is just as heinous in the sight of God, and will as surely be visited upon the transgressor in the day of Judgment; many will feel the curse of God even in this life. When a pledge is made to the cause, it is a vow made to God, and should be sacredly kept. In the sight of God it is no better than sacrilege to appropriate to our own use that which has been once pledged to advance his sacred work.

When a verbal or written pledge has been made in the presence of our brethren, to give a certain amount, they are the visible witnesses of a contract made between us and God. The pledge is not made to man, but to God ; and is as a written note given to a neighbor. No legal bond is more binding upon the Christian for the payment of money, than a pledge made to God. [120]

Persons who thus pledge to their fellowmen, do not generally think of asking to be released from their pledges. A vow made to God, the giver of all favors, is of still greater importance; then why

should we seek to be released from our vows to God? Will man consider his promise less binding because made to God? Because his vow will not be put to trial in courts of justice, is it less valid? Will a man who professes to be saved by the blood of the infinite sacrifice of Jesus Christ, “rob God?” Are not his vows and his actions weighed in the balance of justice in the heavenly courts?

Each of us has a case pending in the court of Heaven. Shall our course of conduct balance the evidence against us? The case of Ananias and Sapphira was of the most aggravated character. In keeping back part of the price they lied to the Holy Ghost. Guilt likewise rests upon every individual in proportion to like offenses. When the hearts of men are softened by the presence of the Spirit of God, they are more susceptible to the impressions of the Holy Spirit, and resolves are made to deny self and to sacrifice for the cause of God. It is when divine light shines into the chambers of the mind with unusual clearness and power, that the feelings of the natural man are overcome, that selfishness loses its power upon the heart, and that desires are awakened to imitate the Pattern, Jesus Christ, in practicing self-denial and benevolence. The disposition of the naturally selfish man then becomes kind and pitiful toward lost sinners, and he makes a solemn pledge to God, as did Abraham and Jacob. Heavenly angels are present on such occasions. The love of God and love for souls triumphs over selfishness and love of the world. Especially is this the case when the speaker, with the Spirit and power of God, presents the plan of redemption, laid by the Majesty of Heaven in the sacrifice of the cross. By the following scriptures we may see how God regards the subject of vows:—

“Then Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded. If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.” Num. 30 :1, 2. “Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error; wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands?” Eccl. 5:6. “I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings; I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.” Ps. 66:13, 14. “It is a snare to the man who devoureth

that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry.” Prov. 20 : 25. “ When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it; for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform ; even a free-will offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.” Deut. 23:21-23. [122]

“Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God; let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.” Ps. 76: 11. “ But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand ? saith the Lord. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.” Mal. 1:12-14.

“ When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou vowest. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.” Eecl. 5:4, 5.

God has given man a part to act in accomplishing the salvation of his fellow-men. He can work in connection with Christ by doing acts of mercy and beneficence. But he cannot redeem them, not being able to satisfy the claims of insulted justice. This the Son of God alone could do, by laying aside his honor and glory, clothing his divinity with humanity, and coming to earth to humiliate himself, and shed his blood in behalf of the human race. [123]

In commissioning his disciples to go “ into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” Christ assigned to men the work of spreading the gospel. But while some go forth to preach, he calls upon others to answer to his claims upon them for tithes and offerings with which to support the ministry, and to spread the printed truth all over the land. This is God’s means of exalting man. It is just the work which he needs ; for it will stir the deepest

sympathies of his heart, and call into exercise the highest capabilities of the mind.

[124] Every good thing of earth was placed here by the bountiful hand of God, as an expression of his love to man. The poor are his, and the cause of religion is his. He has placed means in the hands of men, that his divine gifts may flow through human channels in doing the work appointed us in saving our fellow-men. Every one has his appointed work in the great field; and yet none should receive the idea that God is dependent upon man. He could speak the word, and every son of poverty would be made rich. In a moment of time, he could heal the human race of all their diseases. He might dispense with ministers altogether, and make angels the ambassadors of his truth. He might have written the truth upon the firmament, or imprinted it upon the leaves of the trees and upon the flowers of the field; or he might with an audible voice have proclaimed it from Heaven. But the all-wise God did not choose any of these ways. He knew that man must have something to do in order that life might be a blessing to him. The gold and silver are the Lord's, and he could rain it from Heaven if he chose; but instead of this he has made man his steward, intrusting him with means, not to hoard, but to use to benefit others. He thus makes man the medium through which to distribute his blessings on earth. God planned the system of beneficence, in order that man might become, like his Creator, benevolent and unselfish in character, and finally be a partaker with him of the eternal, glorious reward.

God works through human instrumentalities; and whoever shall awaken the consciences of men, provoking them to good works and a real interest in the advancement of the cause of truth, does not do it of himself, but by the Spirit of God which worketh in him. Pledges made under these circumstances are of a sacred character, being the fruit of the work of the Spirit of God. When these pledges are canceled, Heaven accepts the offering, and these liberal workers are credited for so much treasure invested in the bank of Heaven. Such are laying up a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

[125] But when the immediate presence of the Spirit of God is not so vividly felt, and the mind becomes exercised in the temporal concerns of life, then they are tempted to question the force of

the obligation which they voluntarily assumed; and, yielding to Satan's suggestions, they reason that undue pressure was brought to bear upon them, and that they acted under the excitement of the occasion; that the demand for means to use in the cause of God was overstated, and that under false pretenses they were induced to pledge, without fully understanding the subject, and therefore they wish to be released. Have ministers the power to accept their excuses, and say, " You shall not be holden to your pledge; you are released from your vow " ? If they venture to do this, they become partakers of the sin of which the withholder is guilty.

Of all our income we should make the first appropriation to God. In the system of beneficence enjoined upon the Jews, they were required either to bring to the Lord the first of all his gifts, whether in the increase of their flocks or their herds, or in the produce of their fields, orchards, or vineyards, or they were to redeem it by substituting an equivalent. How changed the order of things in our day! The Lord's requirements and claims, if they receive any attention, are left till the last. Our work needs tenfold more means now than was needed by the Jews. The great commission given to the apostles was to go throughout the world, and preach the gospel. This shows the extension of the work, and the increased responsibility resting upon the followers of Christ in our day. If the law required tithes and offerings thousands of years ago, how much more essential are they now! If the rich and poor were to give a sum proportionate to their property in the Jewish economy, it is doubly essential now.

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The majority of professed Christians part with their means with great reluctance. Many of them do not give one-twentieth of their income to God, and many give far less than that; while there is a large class who rob God of the little tithe, and others who will give only the tithe. If all the tithes of our people flowed into the treasury of the Lord as they should, such blessings would be received that gifts and offerings for sacred purposes would be multiplied tenfold, and thus the channel between God and man would be kept open. The followers of Christ should not wait for thrilling missionary appeals to arouse them to action. If spiritually awake, they would hear in the income of every week, whether much or little, the voice of God and conscience with authority demanding the tithes and offerings due the Lord.

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Not only are the gifts and labors of Christ's followers desired, but in one sense they are in-dispensable. All Heaven is interested in the salvation of man, and waiting for men to become interested in their own salvation, and in that of their fellow-men. All things are ready, but the church is apparently upon the enchanted ground. When they shall arouse, and their prayers, their wealth, and all their energies and resources be laid at the feet of Jesus, the cause of truth will triumph. Angels are amazed that Christians do so little, when such an example has been given them by Jesus, who even withheld not himself from death,—a shameful death. It is a marvel to them that when professors come in contact with the selfishness of the world they should fall back to their narrow views and selfish motives.

One of the greatest sins in the Christian world of to-day, is dissembling and covetousness in dealing with God. There is an increasing carelessness on the part of many in regard to meeting their pledges to the various institutions and religious enterprises. Many look upon the act of pledging as though it imposed no obligation to pay. If they think that their money will bring them considerable profits by being invested in bank stock or in merchandise, or if there are individuals connected with the institution which they have pledged to help to whom they take exceptions, they feel perfectly free to use their means as they please. This lack of integrity is prevailing to quite an extent among those who profess to be keeping the commandments of God, and looking for the soon appearing of their Lord and Saviour.

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The plan of systematic benevolence was of God's own arrangement; but the faithful payment of God's claims is often refused or postponed, as if solemn promises were of no significance. It is because church-members neglect to pay their tithes and meet their pledges that our institutions are not free from embarrassment. If all, both rich and poor, would bring their tithes into the store-house, there would be a sufficient supply of means to release the cause from financial embarrassment, and to nobly carry forward the missionary work in its various departments. God calls upon those who believe the truth to render to him the things that are his. Those who have thought that to withhold from God is gain, will eventually experience the curse of God as the result of their robbery of the Lord. Nothing but utter inability to pay can excuse one in neglecting to

meet promptly his obligations to the Lord. Indifference in this matter shows that you are in blindness and deception, and are unworthy of the name of a Christian.

A church is responsible for the pledges of its individual members. If they see that there is a brother who is neglecting to fulfill his vows, they should labor with him kindly but plainly. If he is not in circumstances which render it possible for him to pay his vow, and he is a worthy member and has a willing heart, then let the church compassionately help him. Thus they can bridge over the difficulty, and receive a blessing themselves.

God would have the members of his church consider their obligations to him as binding as their indebtedness to the merchant or the market. Let every one review his past life and see if any unpaid, unredeemed pledges have been neglected, and then make extra exertions to pay the “uttermost farthing;” for we must all meet and abide the final issue of a tribunal where nothing will stand the test but integrity and veracity.

### WILLS AND LEGACIES.

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“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” Selfishness is a soul-destroying sin. Under this head comes covetousness, which is idolatry. All things belong to God. All the prosperity we enjoy is the result of divine beneficence. God is the great and bountiful giver. If he requires any portion of the liberal supply he has given us, it is not that he may be enriched by our gifts, for he needs nothing from our hand; but it is that we may have an opportunity to exercise self-denial, love, and sympathy for our fellow-men, and thus become highly exalted. In every dispensation, from Adam’s time to ours, God has claimed the property of man, saying, I am the rightful owner of the universe, therefore consecrate to me thy first fruits, bring a tribute of loyalty, surrender to me my own, thus acknowledging my sovereignty, and you shall be free to retain and enjoy my bounties, and my blessing shall be with you. “

Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase.”

[130] God’s requirements come first. We are not doing his will if we consecrate to him what is left of our income after all our imaginary wants have been supplied. Before any part of our earnings is consumed, we should take out and present to him that portion which he claims. In the old dispensation, an offering of gratitude was kept continually burning upon the altar, thus showing man’s endless obligation to God. If we have prosperity in our secular business, it is because God blesses us. A part of this income is to be devoted to the poor, and a large portion to be applied to the cause of God. When that which God claims is rendered to him, the remainder will be sanctified and blessed to our own use. But when a man robs God by withholding that which he requires, his curse rests upon the whole.

God has made men the channels through which his gifts are to flow, to sustain the work which he would have carried forward in the world. He has given them property to be wisely used, not selfishly hoarded, or extravagantly expended in luxury and selfish gratification either in dress or in the embellishment of their houses. He has intrusted them with means with which to support his servants in their labor as preachers and missionaries, and to sustain the institutions he has established in our midst. Those who rejoice in the precious light of truth should feel a burning desire to have it sent everywhere. There are a few faithful standard-bearers who never flinch from duty, or shirk responsibilities. Their hearts and purses are always open to every call for means to advance the cause of God. Indeed, some seem ready to exceed their duty, as if fearful that they will lose an opportunity of investing their portion in the bank of Heaven.

[131] There are others who will do as little as possible. They hoard their treasure, or lavish means upon themselves, grudgingly doling out a mere pittance to sustain the cause of God. If they make a pledge or a vow to God, they afterward repent of it, and will avoid the payment of it as long as they can, if not altogether. They make their tithe as small as possible, as if afraid that that which they return to God is lost. Our various institutions may be embarrassed for means, but this class act as though it made no difference to them whether they prosper or not. And yet they are God’s instrumentalities with which to enlighten the world.

These institutions have not, like other institutions of the kind, received endowments or legacies. And yet God has greatly prospered and blessed them, and made them the means of great good. There are aged ones among us who are nearing the close of their probation ; but for the want of wide-awake men to secure to the cause of God the means in their possession, it passes into the hands of those who are serving Satan. This means was only lent them of God to be returned to him. But in nine cases out of ten, these brethren, when passing from the stage of action, appropriate God's property in a way that cannot glorify him, for not one dollar of it will ever flow into the Lord's treasury. In some cases, these apparently good brethren have had unconsecrated advisers, who counseled from their own standpoint and not according to the mind of God. Property is often bequeathed to children and grandchildren only to their injury. They have no love for God, or for the truth, and therefore this means, all of which is the Lord's, passes into Satan's ranks, to be controlled by him. Satan is much more vigilant, keen-sighted, and skillful in devising ways to secure means to himself than our brethren are to secure the Lord's own to his cause. Some wills are made in so loose a manner that they will not stand the test of the law, and thus thousands of dollars have been lost to the cause. [132]

Our brethren should feel that a responsibility rests upon them, as faithful servants in the cause of God, to exercise their intellect in regard to this matter, and secure to the Lord his own. Many manifest a needless delicacy upon this point. They feel that they are stepping upon forbidden ground when they introduce the subject of property to the aged or to invalids, in order to learn what disposition they design to make of it. But this duty is just as sacred as the duty to preach the word to save souls. Here is a man with God's money or property in his hands. He is about to change his stewardship. Will he place the means which God has lent him to be used in his cause, in the hands of wicked men, just because they are his relatives ?

Should not Christian men feel interested and anxious for that man's future good, as well as for the interest of God's cause, that he shall make a right disposition of his Lord's money,— the talents lent him for wise improvement? Will his brethren stand by, and see him losing his hold on this life, and at the same time robbing the treasury of God? This would be a fearful loss to himself and to the cause; [133]

for by placing his talent of means in the hands of those who have no regard for the truth of God, he would, to all intents and purposes, be wrapping it in a napkin and hiding it in the earth.

The Lord would have his followers dispense their means while they can do it themselves. Some may inquire, Must we actually dispossess ourselves of everything which we call our own ? We may not be required to do this now; but we must be willing to do so for Christ's sake. We must acknowledge that our possessions are absolutely his, by using of them freely whenever means is needed to advance his cause. Some close their ears to the calls made for money to be used in sending missionaries to foreign countries, and in publishing the truth and scattering it like autumn leaves all over the world. Such excuse their covetousness by informing you that they have made arrangements to be charitable at death. They have considered the cause of God in their wills. Therefore they live a life of avarice, robbing God in tithes and in offerings, and in their wills return to God but a small portion of that which he has lent them, while a very large proportion is appropriated to relatives who have no interest in the truth. This is the worst kind of robbery. They have not only robbed God of his just due all through life, but also at death.

[134] It is utter folly to defer to make a preparation for the future life until nearly the last hour of the present life. It is also a great mistake to defer to answer the claims of God for liberality to his cause until the time comes when you are to shift your stewardship upon others. Those to whom you intrust your talents of means may not do as well with them as you have done. How dare rich men run so great risks! Those who wait till death before they make a disposition of their property, surrender it to death rather than to God. In thus doing many are acting directly contrary to the plan of God plainly stated in his word. If they would do good they must seize the present golden moments, and labor with all their might, as if fearful that they may lose the favorable opportunity.

Those who neglect known duty by not answering to God's claims upon them in this life, and who soothe their consciences by calculating on making their bequests at death, will receive no words of commendation from the Master, nor will they receive a reward. They practiced no self-denial, but selfishly retained their means as long as they could, yielding it up only when death claimed them. That

which many propose to defer until they are about to die, if they were Christians indeed, they would do while they have a strong hold on life. They would devote themselves and their property to God, and, while acting as his stewards, they would have the satisfaction of doing their duty. By becoming their own executors they could meet the claims of God themselves, instead of shifting the responsibility upon others.

We should regard ourselves as the stewards of the Lord's property, and God as the supreme proprietor, to whom we are to render his own when he shall require it. When he shall come to receive his own with usury, the covetous will see that instead of multiplying the talents intrusted to them, they have brought upon themselves the doom pronounced upon the unprofitable servant. The Lord designs that the death of his servants shall be regarded as a loss, because of the influence for good which they exerted and the many willing offerings which they bestowed to replenish the treasury of God. [135]

Dying legacies are a miserable substitute for living benevolence. The servants of God should be making their wills every day, in good works and liberal offerings to God. They should not allow the amount given to God to be disproportionately small when compared with that appropriated to their own use. In making their wills daily, they will remember those objects and friends that hold the largest place in their affections. Their best friend is Jesus. He did not withhold his own life for them, but for their sakes became poor, that through his poverty they might be made rich. He deserves the whole heart, the property, all that they have and are. But many professed Christians put off the claims of Jesus in life, and insult him by giving him a mere pittance at death. Let all of this class remember that this robbery of God is not an impulsive action, but a well-considered plan which they preface by saying, "Being in sound mind." After having defrauded the cause of God through life, they perpetuate the fraud after death. And this is with the full consent of all the powers of their mind. Such a will many are content to cherish for a dying pillow. Their will is a part of their preparation for death, and is prepared so that their possessions shall not disturb their dying hours. Can these dwell with pleasure upon the requirement that will be made of them to give an account of their stewardship ? [136]

We must all be rich in good works in this life, if we would secure the future, immortal life. When the Judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened, every man will be rewarded according to his works. Many names are enrolled on the church book that have robbery recorded against them in the Ledger of Heaven. And unless these repent, and work with disinterested benevolence for the Master, they will certainly share the doom of the unfaithful steward.

It often happens that an active business man is cut down without a moment's warning, and on examination his business is found to be in a most perplexing condition. In the effort to settle his estate, the lawyers' fees eat up a large share, if not all, of the property, while his wife and children and the cause of Christ are robbed. Those who are faithful stewards of the Lord's means will know just how their business stands, and, like wise men, they will be prepared for any emergency. Should their probation close suddenly, they would not leave such great perplexity upon those who are called to settle their estate.

[137] Many are not exercised upon the subject of making their wills while they are in apparent health. But this precaution should be taken by our brethren. They should know their financial standing, and should not allow their business to become entangled. They should arrange their property in such a manner that they may leave it at any time.

Wills should be made in a manner to stand the test of law. After they are drawn, they may remain for years and do no harm if donations continue to be made from time to time as the cause has need. Death will not come one day sooner, brethren, for having made your will. In disposing of your property by will to your relatives, be sure that you do not forget God's cause. You are his agents, holding his property; and his claims should have your first consideration. Your wife and children, of course, should not be left destitute; provision should be made for them if they are needy. But do not, simply because it is customary, bring into your will a long line of relatives who are not needy.

Let it be ever kept in mind that the present selfish system of disposing of property is not God's plan, but man's device. Christians should be reformers, and break up this present system, giving an entirely new aspect to the formation of wills. Let the idea be ever

present that it is the Lord's property which you are handling. The will of God in this matter is law. If man had made you the executor of his property, would you not closely study the will of the testator, that the smallest amount might not be misapplied? Your heavenly Friend has intrusted you with property, and given you his will as to how it should be used. If this will is studied with an unselfish heart, that which belongs to God will not be misapplied. The Lord's cause has been shamefully neglected, when he has provided men with sufficient means to meet every emergency, if they only had grateful, obedient hearts. [138]

Those who make their wills should not feel that when this is done they have no further duty. But they should be constantly at work, using the talents intrusted to them, for the upbuilding of the Lord's cause. God has devised plans that all may work intelligently in the distribution of their means. He does not propose to sustain his work by miracles. God has a few faithful stewards who are economizing and using their means to advance his cause. Instead of self-denial and benevolence being an exception, they should be the rule. The growing necessities of the cause of God require means. Calls are constantly coming in from men in our own and foreign countries for messengers to come to them with light and truth. This will necessitate more laborers and more means to support them.

Only a small amount of means flows into the Lord's treasury to be appropriated to the saving of souls, and it is with hard labor that even this is obtained. If the eyes of all could be opened to see how prevailing covetousness has hindered the advancement of the work of God, and how much more might have been done, had all acted up to God's plan in tithes and in offerings, there would be a decided reform with many; for they would not dare to hinder the work of advancing the cause of God as they have done. The church is asleep as to the work it might do if it would give up all for Christ. A true spirit of self-sacrifice would be an argument for the reality and power of the gospel which the world could not misunderstand or gainsay, and abundant blessings would be poured upon the church. [139]

I call upon our brethren to cease their robbery of God. Some are so situated that wills must be made. But in doing this, care should be taken not to give to sons and daughters means which should flow into the treasury of God. These wills often become the subject of

quarrels and dissensions. It is recorded to the praise of God's ancient people, that he was not ashamed to be called their God; and the reason assigned is that instead of selfishly seeking for and coveting earthly possessions, or seeking their happiness in worldly pleasures, they placed themselves and all they had in the hands of God. They lived only for his glory, declaring plainly that they sought a better country, even a heavenly. Of such a people God was not ashamed. They did not disgrace him in the eyes of the world. The Majesty of Heaven was not ashamed to call them brethren.

[140] There are many who urge that they cannot do more for God's cause than they now do; but they do not give according to their ability. The Lord sometimes opens the eyes blinded by selfishness by simply reducing their income to the amount they are willing to give. Horses are found dead in the field or stable, houses or barns are destroyed by fire, or crops fail. In many cases God tests man with blessings, and if unfaithfulness is manifested in rendering to him tithes and offerings, his blessing is withdrawn. He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly. By the mercies of Christ and the riches of his goodness, and for the honor of truth and religion, we beseech you who are followers of Christ to dedicate yourselves and your property anew to God. In view of the love and compassion of Christ which brought him from the royal courts to suffer self-denial, humiliation, and death, let each ask himself the question, How much do I owe my Lord? and then let your grateful offerings be in accordance with your appreciation of the great gift of Heaven in God's dear Son.

[141] In determining the proportion to be given to the cause of God, be sure to exceed rather than to fall short of the requirements of duty. Consider for whom the offering is to be made. This recollection will put covetousness to flight. Only consider the great love wherewith Christ hath loved us, and our richest offering will seem unworthy of his acceptance. When Christ is the object of our affections, those who have received his pardoning love will not stop to calculate the value of the alabaster box of precious ointment. Covetous Judas could do this; but the receiver of the gift of salvation will only regret that the offering has not a richer perfume and greater value. Christians must look upon themselves as only channels through which mercies and blessings are to flow from the Fountain of all

goodness to their fellow-men, by whose conversion they may send to Heaven waves of glory in praise and offerings from those who thus become partakers with them of the heavenly gift.

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### RELATION OF CHURCH-MEMBERS.

EVERY man who is striving to overcome, will have his own weaknesses to contend with. But it is so much easier for persons to see the faults of their brethren than to see their own, that, they should be much more diligent and critical with themselves than with others.

All the members of the church, if they are sons and daughters of God, will have to undergo a process of discipline before they can be lights in the world. God will not make men and women channels of light while they are in darkness and are content to remain so, making no special efforts to connect with the Source of light. Those who feel their own need, and arouse themselves to the deepest thought, and the most earnest, persevering prayer and action, will receive divine aid. There is much for each to unlearn with respect to himself, as well as much to learn. Old habits and customs must be shaken off; and it is only by earnest struggles to correct these errors, and a full reception of the truth in carrying out its principles, by the grace of God, that the victory can be gained.

I wish I could speak words which would impress us all that our only hope as individuals is to connect with God. Purity of soul must be obtained; and there is much heart-searching to be done, and much obstinacy and self-love to be overcome, which will require constant, earnest prayer. [142]

Men who are harsh and censorious, often excuse or try to justify their lack of Christian politeness because some of the reformers worked with such a spirit, and they claim that the work for this time requires the same spirit; but this is not so. A spirit which is calm and under perfect control, is better in any place, even in the roughest company. A furious zeal does no good to anyone. God did not select the reformers because they were overbearing, passionate men. He accepted them as they were, notwithstanding these traits

of character; but he would have placed tenfold more responsibilities upon them, had they been of humble mind, having their spirits under the control of reason. While ministers of Christ must denounce sin and ungodliness, impurity and falsehood, while they are sometimes called to rebuke iniquity among the high as well as the low, showing them that the indignation of God will fall upon the transgressors of his law, yet they should not be overbearing or tyrannical; they should manifest kindness and love, a spirit to save rather than to destroy.

[143] The long-suffering of Jehovah teaches ministers and church-members who aspire to be colaborers with Christ, unmistakable lessons of forbearance and love. Christ connected Judas and impulsive Peter with himself, not because Judas was covetous and Peter passionate, but that they might learn of him, their great Teacher, and become, like him, unselfish, meek, and lowly of heart. He saw good material in both these men. Judas possessed financial ability, and would have been of value to the church, had he taken home to his heart the lessons which Christ was giving by rebuking all selfishness, fraud, and avarice, oven in the little matters of life. These lessons were oftpeated : “ He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much ; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.”

Our Saviour sought to impress upon his hearers that a man who would advantage himself by overreaching his neighbor in the smallest item, would, if the opportunity were favorable, overreach in larger matters. The least departure from strict rectitude breaks down the barriers and prepares the heart to do greater injustice. Christ, by precept and example, taught that the strictest integrity should govern our actions toward our fellow-men. “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” Christ was continually portraying the defective lives of the Pharisees, and reproofing them. They professed to be keeping the law of God, yet in their daily acts were practicing iniquity. Many widows and orphans were robbed of their little all to gratify an avaricious desire for gain.

[144] Judas might have been benefited by all these lessons, had ho possessed a desire to be right at heart; but his acquisitiveness overcame him, and the love of money became a ruling power. He carried the purse containing the means to be used in carrying forward the work of Christ, and little sums were from time to time applied to his own

use. His selfish heart grudged the offering made by Mary, of the alabaster box of ointment, and he reprov'd her for her imprudence. Thus, in the place of a learner, he would be a teacher, and instruct our Lord in regard to the propriety of her action.

These two men alike had the opportunities and privileges of the continual lessons and example of Christ to correct their sinful traits of character. While they heard his withering rebukes and denunciations against hypocrisy and corruption, they saw that those so terribly denounced were the objects of solicitous and unwearied labor for their reformation. The Saviour wept because of their darkness and error. He yearned over them with unbounded compassion and love, exclaiming to Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not."

Peter was prompt and zealous in action, bold and uncompromising, and Christ saw in him material that would be of great value to the church. He therefore connected him with himself in order that all which was good and valuable might be preserved, and that by his lessons and example he might soften whatever was harsh in his temper, and smooth whatever was rugged in his deportment. If the heart was indeed transformed by divine grace, an external change would be seen, in true kindness, sympathy, and courteousness. Jesus was never cold and unapproachable. The afflicted often broke in upon his retreat when he needed refreshment and rest; but he had a kind look and an encouraging word for all. He was a pattern of true courtesy. Peter denied his Lord, but afterward repented, and was deeply humbled because of his great sin; and Christ showed that he forgave his erring disciple, in condescending to mention him by name after his resurrection. [145]

Judas yielded to the temptations of Satan, and betrayed his best friend. Peter learned and profited by the lessons of Christ, and carried forward the work of reform which was left to the disciples when their Lord ascended on high. These two men represent the two classes whom Christ connects with himself, giving to them the advantages of his lessons, and the example of his unselfish, compassionate life, that they may learn of him.

The more man views his Saviour, and becomes acquainted with him, the more he will become assimilated to his image, and work

the works of Christ. The age in which we live calls for reformatory action. The light of truth which shines upon us calls for men of determined action, and sterling moral worth, to labor diligently and perseveringly to save the souls of all who will hear the invitation of the Spirit of God.

[146] The love which should exist between churchmembers frequently gives place to criticism and censure; and these appear, even in the religious exercises, in reflections and severe personal thrusts. Such things should not be countenanced by ministers, elders, or people. The services of the church should be carried forward with an eye single to the glory of God. When men with their peculiar organizations are brought together in church capacity, unless the truth of God softens and subdues the sharp points in the character, the church will be affected, and its peace and harmony sacrificed to indulge these selfish, unsanctified traits. Many neglect the investigation of their own hearts, and the purification of their own lives, in their close watch to discover the faults of their brethren. This brings the displeasure of God. The individual members of the church should be jealous for their own souls, critically watching their own actions, lest they shall move from selfish motives, and be a cause of stumbling to their weak brethren.

God takes men as they are, with the human element in their character, and then trains them for his service, if they will be disciplined, and learn of him. The root of bitterness, envy, distrust, jealousy, and even hatred, which exists in the hearts of some churchmembers, is the work of Satan. Such elements have a poisonous influence upon the church. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” The religious zeal which is manifested in a raid upon brethren, is a zeal not according to knowledge. Christ has nothing to do with such testimony.

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### **DISHONESTY IN THE CHURCH.**

THE love of money is the root of all evil. Some who profess the truth do not withstand temptation on this point. Among worldlings in this generation the greatest crimes are perpetrated through the love of money. If wealth cannot be secured by honest industry, men will resort to fraud, deception, and crime, in order to obtain it. The

cup of iniquity is nearly filled, and the retributive justice of God is about to descend upon the guilty. Widows are robbed of their scanty pittance by lawyers and professedly interested friends, and poor men are made to suffer for the necessaries of life, because of the dishonesty which is practiced in order to gratify extravagance. The terrible record of crime in our world is enough to chill the blood and fill the soul with horror; but the fact that even among those who profess to believe the truth the same evils are creeping in, the same sins indulged to a greater or less degree, calls for deep humiliation of soul.

A man who sincerely fears God would rather toil day and night, suffer privation, and eat the bread of poverty, than to indulge a passion for gain which would oppress the widow and the fatherless, or turn the stranger from his right. The crimes that are committed through love of display and love of money, constitute this world a den of thieves and robbers, and cause angels to weep. But Christians are professedly not dwellers upon the earth; they are in a strange country, stopping as it were only for a night. Our home is in the mansions which Jesus has gone to prepare for us. This life is but a vapor which passeth away.

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Every time the golden rule is violated, Christ is abused in the person of his saints. Every advantage that is taken of fellow-mortals, be they saints or sinners, will stand as fraud in the Ledger of Heaven.

The acquisition of property becomes a mania with some. God designed that our lives should represent the life of our great Pattern in doing good to others, and in acting a holy part in the elevation of man. About this work there hovers a true dignity, and a glory which may never be seen and realized in this life, but which will be fully appreciated in the future life. The record of kindly deeds and generous actions will reach into eternity. Just to the extent that man would advantage himself at the disadvantage of his fellow-man will his soul become calloused to the influence of the Spirit of God. Gain obtained thus is a fearful loss.

There have been men in important places who have not been guardians of the interests of others. They have been wholly absorbed in their own interests, and have neglected to preserve the reputation of the church. They have been selfish and avaricious, not moving with an eye single to the glory of God. The church as a whole is in a

[149] degree responsible for the wrongs of its individual members, because they countenanced the evil in not lifting up their voice against it. The favor of God is not enjoyed for several reasons. His Spirit is grieved by the pride, extravagance, dishonesty, and overreaching, which are indulged by some professing godliness. All these things bring the frown of God upon his people.

The unbelief and sins of ancient Israel were presented before me, and I saw that similar wrongs and iniquity exist among modern Israel. The pen of inspiration recorded their crimes for the benefit of those who live in these last days, that we might shun their evil example. Achan coveted and secreted a wedge of gold and a goodly Babylonish garment, that were taken as spoil from the enemy. God had commanded the people not to take of the spoil of their enemies for their own use. The Lord had pronounced the city of Jericho accursed. “ And ye in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.”

[150] But Achan, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. When the armies of Israel went out to fight against the enemy, they were repulsed and driven back, and some of them were slain. This brought great discouragement upon the people. Joshua, their leader, was perplexed and confounded. In the greatest humiliation he fell upon his face and prayed: “ Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us; would to God we had been content and dwelt on the other side of Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us around, and cut off our name from the earth; and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? ”

The answer of the Lord to Joshua was, “ Get thee up, wherefore liest thou upon thy face ? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them ; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.” Achan

had stolen that which was to be reserved for God and placed in his treasury; he had also dissembled, in that when he saw the camp of Israel troubled he did not confess his guilt; for he knew that Joshua had repeated the words of the Lord to the people, that if they should appropriate to themselves that which God had reserved, the camp of Israel would be troubled.

While he is rejoicing in his ill-gotten gain, his security is broken in upon; he hears that an investigation is to be made. This makes him uneasy. He repeats over and over to himself, What does it concern them? I am accountable for my acts. He apparently puts on a brave face, and in the most demonstrative manner condemns the one guilty. If he had confessed, he might have been saved: but sin hardens the heart, and he continues to assert his innocence. Amid so large a crowd, he thinks he will escape detection. Lots are cast to search out the offender; the lot falls upon the tribe of Judah. Achan's heart now begins to throb with guilty fear, for he is one of that tribe; but still he flatters himself that he will escape. The lot is again cast, and the family to which he belongs is taken. Now in his pallid face his guilt is read by Joshua, The lot cast again singles out the unhappy man. There he stands, pointed out by the finger of God as the guilty one who has caused all this trouble. [151]

If, when Achan yielded to temptation, he had been asked if he wished to bring defeat and death into the camp of Israel, he would have answered, "No, no! is thy servant a dog that he should do this great wickedness?" But he lingered over the temptation to gratify his own covetousness, and when the opportunity was presented he went farther than he had purposed in his heart. It is exactly in this way that individual members of the church are imperceptibly led on to grieve the Spirit of God and defraud their neighbors, bringing the frown of God upon the church. No man liveth to himself. Shame, defeat, and death were brought upon Israel by one man's sin. That protection which had covered their heads in the time of battle was withdrawn. Varied sins that are cherished and practiced by professed Christians bring the frown of God upon the church. In the day when the Ledger of Heaven is opened, the Judge will not in words express to man his guilt, but will cast one penetrating, convicting glance, and every deed, every transaction of life, will be vividly impressed upon the memory of the wrong-doer. The person will not, as in Joshua's [152]

day, need to be hunted out from tribe to family, but his own lips will confess his shame, his selfishness, covetousness, dishonesty, dissembling, and fraud. Hidden from the knowledge of man, they will then be proclaimed as it were upon the house-top.

The influence most to be feared by the church is not that of open opposers, infidels, and blasphemers, but of inconsistent professors of Christ. These are the ones who keep back the blessing of the God of Israel, and bring weakness upon the church,—a reproach that is not easily wiped away. While Joshua was lying on his face upon the ground, pouring out his soul to God with agony of spirit and with tears, God's command was a reproof: "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? "

The popular churches are filled with men who, while they make a pretense of serving God, are thieves, murderers, adulterers, and fornicators; but those who profess our lowly faith claim a higher standard. They should be Bible Christians; and they must be diligent in the study of the Chart of life. Carefully and prayerfully should they examine the motives which prompt them to action. Those who would put their trust in Christ should begin to study the beauties of the cross now. If they would be living Christians, they must begin to fear and obey God now. If they will, they can save their souls from ruin, and make a success of winning eternal life.

[153] The custom of overreaching in trade, which exists in the world, is no example for Christians. They should not deviate from perfect integrity, even in small matters. To sell an article for more than it is worth, taking advantage of the ignorance of purchasers, is fraud. Unlawful gains, petty tricks of trade, exaggeration, competition, underselling a brother who is seeking to pursue an honest business,—these things are corrupting the purity of the church, and are ruinous to her spirituality. The business world does not lie outside the limits of God's government.

Christianity is not to be merely paraded on the Sabbath, and displayed in the sanctuary ; it is for every day in the week, and for every place. Its claims must be recognized and obeyed in the work-shop, at home, and in business transactions, with brethren, and with the world. With many, an absorbing worldliness eclipses the true sense of Christian obligation. The religion of Christ will have such an influence upon the heart that it will control the life.

Men possessing the genuine article of true religion will in all their business transactions show as clear a perception of right as when offering their supplications at the throne of grace. The life, with all its capabilities, belongs to God, and should be used to promote his glory, instead of being perverted to the service of Satan in defrauding our fellow-men.

Satan has been the adviser of some. He tells them that if they would prosper they must hearken to his counsel: “Do not be over-conscientious in regard to honor or honesty; look out sharply for your own interest, and do not be carried away with pity, softness, and generosity. You need not care for the widow and the fatherless. Do not encourage them to look to you and depend on you; leave them to look out for themselves. Do not inquire whether they have food, or if you can bless them with thoughtful, kindly attention. Take care of yourself. Get all into your hands that you can. Rob the widow and the fatherless, and turn away the stranger from his right, and you will have means to supply your various wants.” Some have heeded this counselor, and despised Him who has said, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” [154]

Satan offers to men the kingdoms of the world if they will yield to him the supremacy. Many do this, and sacrifice Heaven. It is better to die than to sin; better to want than to defraud ; better to hunger than to lie. Let all who are tempted, meet Satan with these words: “Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands; happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with-thee.” Here is a condition and a promise which will be unmistakably realized. Happiness and prosperity will be the result of serving the Lord.

### IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CONTROL

SISTER L—: I know but little of your life before you professed Christ; but since that time you have not been a truly converted woman ; you have not rightly represented Christ, your Master. You accepted the theory of the truth, but failed to become sanctified through it. You have not practiced self-control, but have gratified [155]

your desires and wishes at the expense of health and religion. You are easily irritated, and instead of putting a strict guard upon your words and actions, you have given loose rein to your passions. The mind is controlled either by Satan or by Jesus; and when you practice no self-control, Satan rules, and leads you to do and say things wholly satanic. This has been repeated so often that it has become habitual.

Since living with your present husband, you have allowed yourself to become exasperated at very trivial matters; and at such times you seem to have a frenzied passion, while Satan stands by and laughs at the misery you are bringing upon yourself and upon those whom it is your duty to make happy. Your children have had transmitted to them your traits of character, and besides this they are daily copying your example of blind, unreasonable passion, impatience, and fretfulness.

[156] In the human heart there is natural selfishness and corruption which can only be overcome by most thorough discipline and severe restraint; and even then it will require years of patient effort and earnest resistance. God permits us to experience the ills of poverty, and places us in difficult positions, that the defects in our character may be revealed, and its asperities be smoothed away. But after privileges and opportunities have been given of God, after light and truth have been brought home to the understanding, if persons still make excuses for their deformity of character, and continue in their selfishness and jealousy, their hearts become as granite, making it impossible for them to be reformed except by the chisel, the hammer, and the polishing of the Spirit of God.

I was pointed back to your life and experience when you first came to — Your conduct was not consistent; your associations were not right. Your course in visiting the beer gardens with your children, did not make a favorable impression upon others in reference to your moral standing. These are sad chapters in your experience. You had light and knowledge, but your inclinations and follies had separated you from God.

Many circumstances which occurred while you were living in —, were shown me. Your strong, perverse will led you to disgrace the truth which you professed. Your conduct before the world was not justifiable. The punishment which your daughter received in school for willful disobedience was exaggerated in your mind till it

became so heinous an offense as to lead you to seek the protection of the law. The deception you there practiced, your exaggeration of the truth, was a lesson most dangerous to morals. These things stand registered against you in the books of Heaven. You have a stubborn disposition, and will not humble your heart to confess a wrong, but will justify your course before men, without reference to how it appears in the sight of God. Can you wonder that, under such deceptive training, your daughter has become what she is? What influence could such a course of training, have upon the youthful mind but to make her feel that no one had a right to control her perverse will? The seed sown by your own hand has blossomed and borne fruit which is most bitter. [157]

Love for your soul causes me to write at the present time. I am oppressed with the burden of responsibility which I now take upon myself in writing out these things for you. By your own course you are closing the gates of Heaven against yourself and your children; for neither you nor they will ever enter there with your present defective characters. You, my sister, are playing a sad, losing game of life. Holy angels are watching you with sadness, and evil spirits are looking on with triumph, as they see you losing, fast losing, the graces that adorn the Christian character, while in their place Satan is implanting his own evil traits.

You have indulged in novel and story reading until you live in an imaginary world. The influence of such reading is injurious to both the mind and the body; it weakens the intellect and brings a fearful tax upon the physical strength. At times your mind is scarcely sane, because the imagination has been overexcited and diseased by reading fictitious stories. The mind should be so disciplined that all its powers will be symmetrically developed. A certain course of training may invigorate special faculties, and at the same time leave other faculties without improvement, so that their usefulness is crippled. The memory is greatly injured by ill-chosen reading, which has a tendency to unbalance the reasoning powers, and to create nervousness, weariness of the brain, and prostration of the entire system. If the imagination is constantly overfed and stimulated by fictitious literature, it soon becomes a tyrant, controlling all the other faculties of the mind, and causing the taste to become fitful, and the tendencies perverse. [158]

You are a mental dyspeptic. Your mind has been crammed with knowledge of all sorts,—politics, history, theology, and anecdote,—only a part of which can be retained by the abused memory. Much less information, with a mind well disciplined, would be of far greater value. You have neglected to train your mind to vigorous action, therefore your will and inclination have controlled you and been your masters instead of your servants. The result is a loss of physical and mental power.

[159] For years your mind has been like a babbling brook, nearly filled with rocks and weeds, the water running to waste. Were your powers controlled by high purposes, you would not be the invalid that you now are. You fancy you must be indulged in your caprice of appetite, and in your excessive reading. I saw the midnight lamp burning in your room, while you were poring over some fascinating story, thus stimulating your already overexcited brain. This course has been lessening your hold upon life, and enfeebling you physically, mentally, and morally. Irregularity has created disorder in your house, and if continued, will cause your mind to sink in imbecility. Your God-given probation has been abused, your God-given time wasted.

God bestows upon us talents for wise improvement, not for abuse. Education is but a preparation of the physical, intellectual, and moral powers for the best performance of all the duties of life. Improper reading gives an education that is false. The power of endurance, and the strength and activity of the brain, may be lessened or increased according to the manner in which they are employed. There is a work before you to dispose of your light reading. Remove it from your house. Do not have before you the temptation to pervert your imagination, to unbalance your nervous system, and to ruin your children. By much reading you are unfitting yourself for the duties of a wife and mother, and, in fact, are disqualifying yourself to do good anywhere.

[160] The Bible is not studied as it should be, therefore you do not become wise in the Scriptures, and are not thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Light reading fascinates the mind, and makes the reading of God's word uninteresting. You seek to make others believe that you are conversant with the Scriptures ; but this cannot be, for your mind is filled with rubbish. The Bible requires thought,

and prayerful research. It is not enough to skim over the surface. While some passages are too plain to be misunderstood, others are more intricate, demanding careful and patient study. Like the precious metal concealed in the hills and mountains, its gems of truth are to be searched out, and stored in the mind for future use. Oh, that all would exercise their minds as constantly in searching for celestial gold as for the gold that perisheth ! When you search the Scriptures with an earnest desire to learn the truth, God will breathe his Spirit into your heart, and impress your mind with the light of his word.

The Bible is its own interpreter, one passage explaining another. By comparing scriptures referring to the same subjects you will see beauty and harmony of which you have never dreamed. There is no other book the perusal of which strengthens and enlarges, elevates and ennobles the mind, as does this Book of books. Its study imparts new vigor to the mind, which is thus brought in contact with subjects requiring earnest thought, and is drawn out in prayer to God for power to comprehend the truths revealed. If the mind is left to deal with common-place subjects, instead of deep and difficult problems, it will become narrowed down to the standard of the matter which it contemplates, and will finally lose its power of expansion. [161]

That which is to be the most deplored in regard to your course is that your errors and mistakes are being reproduced in your children. — is being absorbed in reading ; her mental powers are being injured, permanently injured, by following your example. She will have no taste nor aptitude for study. In early life the mind is impressible. Let the good seed then be sown upon good soil, and it will bear fruit unto eternal life.

The habits formed in youth, although they may in after-life be somewhat modified, are seldom essentially changed. Your entire life has been molded by the legacy of character transmitted to you at birth. Your father's perverse temperament is seen in his children. The grace of God can overcome these wrong tendencies, but what a battle must be fought. Thus it is with your children. You indulge them as you indulge yourself. You have no power to deny the appetite of what you desire, and you thus place terrible burdens upon your digestive organs. No woman can have good health and indulge her fancy as you do. The same is true of your children. Their

mother's wrong discipline, when she has been able to care for them, and their being left so much of the time without a mother's care, have nearly ruined them.

[162] Yet even now a firm, undeviating course will make great improvement in your children ; they are not beyond control, although it will be most difficult to make them what they might have been, had the parents been right. The mother can see the result of the course she has pursued, if she wishes; or she can reform, and try to counteract the wrong done. The path now being entered upon by her children may lead to virtue or vice, to honor or infamy, to Heaven or hell. The influence of a praying, God-fearing mother will last through eternity. She may die, but her work endures.

Bro. and sister L —, neither of you realize the sad condition of your children. Bro. L — has neglected to take a decided stand to control them. The little boy, to a great extent, rules the household. The management of your two elder children was entirely wrong. While at times Bro. L — was too severe and exacting, requiring of them that which he would not have required of his own children, your course, sister L—, was far worse. You took the part of the children in their presence, and fired their young hearts with revenge. You gave them lessons of insubordination, and talked disrespectfully of your husband before them. This course was just calculated to lead them to despise restraint. An indelible impression was thus made upon their minds.

[163] You are now beginning to see, in your elder children, the results of this training. Yet you are doing the same work, to a great extent, with, the children that God has since intrusted to your care. Your inconsistent, uncontrollable spirit is like an insidious poison taken into the system, and its bitter results will appear, sooner or later. Its mark is being made, not on sand, but on rock, and in after-years it will testify of your work.

My sister, you have not a sensitive conscience. You must consider carefully what habits you are forming, and pray earnestly that your perverse character may be washed from its defilement in the blood of the Lamb. The conscience must be enlightened, the passions restrained, and the love of truth cherished in the soul, before you can see the kingdom of God.

All through your life you have needed fixed and settled principles. Satan is still on your track. Your only hope now is in a thorough conversion to God. Do not be deceived, for God is not mocked. Should your probation close to-day, I could have no hope of your being saved. Your own physical, mental, and moral health depends upon a proper government of your temper. You will doubtless meet with things that will ruffle your spirit and severely test you ; but self-control may be yours in the strength of Jesus. Solomon places the one who controls himself above him who conquers in battle. “ He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.”

By permitting yourself to become unduly excited, you have established a condition of things in your system which will, unless changed, cost you your life. You abuse your husband; you say things to him which no wife should be guilty of saying. You have prevaricated again and again, and have gone so far as to be guilty of deliberate falsehoods to accomplish your ends. A determination to carry out their own will at all hazards is a leading characteristic of your family. [164]

The course of Bro. L— has not been what it should have been. His likes and dislikes are very strong, and he has not kept his own feelings under the control of reason. Bro. L—, your health is greatly injured by overeating, and eating at improper times. This causes a determination of blood to the brain. The mind becomes confused, and you have not the proper control of yourself. You appear like a man whose mind is unbalanced. You make strong moves, are easily irritated, and view things in an exaggerated and perverted light. Plenty of exercise in the open air, and an abstemious diet, are essential to your health. You should not eat more than two meals a day. If you feel that you must eat at night, take a drink of cold water, and in the morning you will feel much better for not having eaten.

Your children should not be allowed to eat candies, fruits, nuts, or anything in the line of food, between their meals. Two meals a day are better for them than three. If the parents set the example, and move from principle, the children will soon fall into line. Irregularities in eating destroy the healthy tone of the digestive organs. and when your children come to the table they do not relish wholesome food ; their appetites crave that which is the most hurtful for them. [165]

Many times your children have suffered with fever and ague brought on by improper eating, when their parents were accountable for their sickness. It is the duty of parents to see that their children form habits conducive to health, thereby saving much distress.

Bro. L— is in danger of apoplexy, and if he continues to disobey the laws of health, his life will be cut short suddenly. As a family, you can be happy or miserable. It rests within yourselves. Your own course of action will determine the future. You both need to soften the sharp points of your character, and speak such words only as you will not be ashamed to meet in the day of God. Make it the rule of your life to go straight forward in the path of duty. In defiance of numerous temptations which will assail you, be true to a good conscience and to God, and your pathway will be plain to your feet. You may contend about little things that are not worthy of contention, and the result will be trouble. The path of the upright is the path of peace. It is so plain that the humble, God-fearing man can walk in it without stumbling, and without making crooked paths. It is a narrow path ; but men of different temperaments can walk side by side, if they but follow the Captain of their salvation. Those [166] who wish to carry along all their evil traits and selfish habits cannot walk in this path, for it is too straight and narrow.

What pains the great Shepherd takes to call his sheep by name, and invite them to follow in his footsteps. He seeks the wandering. He flashes the light from his word to show them their peril. He speaks to them from Heaven in warnings and reproofs, and in invitations to return to the right path. He seeks to help the erring by his presence, and to lift them when they fall. But many have followed the path of sin so long that they will not hear the voice of Jesus. They leave all that can give them rest and security, yield themselves up to a false guide, and presumptuously hurry on in blind self-confidence, going farther and farther from light and peace, from happiness and rest.

I implore you to heed the light which God has given, and reform. The cross of Christ is our only hope. It reveals to us the greatness of only Father's love, and the fact that the Majesty of Heaven submitted to insult, mockery, humiliation, and suffering, for the joy of seeing perishing souls saved in his kingdom. If you love your children, let it be your chief study to prepare them for the future, immortal life.

With the unhappy dispositions they now possess, they will never see the paradise of God. Work while it is day ; redeem the time, and win the crown of immortal glory. Save yourself and your household, for the salvation of the soul is precious.

### UNSCRIPTURAL MARRIAGES.

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WE are living in the last days, when the mania upon marriage constitutes it one of the signs of the near coming of Christ. God is not consulted in these matters. Religion, duty, and principle are sacrificed to carry out the promptings of the unconsecrated heart. There should be no great display and rejoicing over the union of the parties. There is not one marriage in one hundred that results happily, bearing the sanction of God and placing the parties in a position better to glorify him. The evil consequences of ill-marriages are numberless. They are contracted from impulse. A candid review of the matter is scarcely thought of, and consultation with those of experience is considered old-fashioned.

Impulse and unsanctified passion exist in the place of pure love. Many imperil their own souls, and bring the curse of God upon them, by entering into the marriage relation merely to please the fancy. The cases of some who profess to believe the truth were shown me, who have made a great mistake by marry-ing unbelievers. The hope was cherished by them that the unbelieving party would embrace the truth ; but after his object is gained, the unbelieving one is farther from the truth than before. And then begin the subtle workings of the enemy in continued efforts to draw away the believing one from the faith.

Many are now losing their interest and confidence in the truth, because they have taken unbelief into close connection with themselves. They breathe the atmosphere of doubt, of questioning, of infidelity. They see and hear unbelief, and finally they cherish it. Some may have the courage to resist these influences; but in many cases their faith is imperceptibly undermined, and finally destroyed. Satan has then succeeded in his plans. But his work, carried on by his agents, has been so silent that the barriers of faith and truth were swept away before the believing ones had any thought of where they were drifting.

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It is a dangerous thing to make a worldly alliance. Satan well knows that the hour that witnesses the marriage of many young men and women closes the history of their religious experience and usefulness. They are lost to Christ. They may for a time make an effort to live a Christian life; but all their strivings are made against a steady influence in the opposite direction. It was once, to them, a privilege and joy to speak of their faith and hope; but they become unwilling to mention the subject, knowing that the one with whom they have linked their destiny takes no interest in it. As the result, faith in the precious truth dies out of the heart, and Satan insidiously weaves about them a web of skepticism.

[169] It is carrying that which is lawful to excess that makes it a grievous sin. Those who profess the truth trample on the will of God in marrying unbelievers ; they lose his favor, and make bitter work for repentance. The unbelieving may possess excellent moral character; but the fact that he or she has not answered to the claims of God, and has neglected so great salvation, is sufficient reason why such a union should not be consummated. The character of the unbelieving may be similar to that of the young man whom Jesus addressed in these words: " One thing thou lackest; " that was the one thing needful.

The plea is sometimes made that the unbeliever is favorable to religion, and is all that could be desired in a companion except that one thing, he is not a Christian. Although the better judgment of the believer may suggest the impropriety of a union for life with an unbeliever, yet in nine cases out of ten, inclination triumphs. Spiritual declension commences the moment the vow is made at the altar; religious fervor is dampened ; and one stronghold after another is broken down, until both stand side by side under the black banner of Satan. Even in the festivities of the wedding, the spirit of the world triumphs against conscience, faith, and truth. In the new home the hour of prayer is not respected. The bride and bridegroom have chosen each other, and dismissed Jesus.

At first, the unbelieving one may make no show of opposition in the new relation; but when the subject of Bible truth shall be presented for attention and consideration, the feelings arise at once, " You married me, knowing that I was what I am; I do not wish to be disturbed. From henceforth let it be understood that conversation

upon your peculiar views is to be interdicted.” If the believer should manifest any special earnestness in regard to his profession of faith, it might seem like unkindness toward the one who has no interest in the Christian experience. [170]

The believing one reasons that he must concede somewhat in his new relation to the companion of his choice. Social, worldly amusements are patronized. At first there is great reluctance of feeling in doing this; but the interest in the truth becomes less and less, and faith is exchanged for doubt and unbelief. No one would have suspected that the once firm, conscientious believer and devoted follower of Christ could ever become the doubting, vacillating person that he now is. Oh, the change wrought by that unwise marriage !

What ought every Christian to do when brought into the trying position which tests the soundness of religious principle ? With a firmness worthy of imitation, he should say frankly, “I am a conscientious Christian. I believe the seventh day of the week to be the Sabbath of the Bible. Our faith and principles are such that they lead in an opposite direction. We cannot be happy together, for if I follow on to gain a more perfect knowledge of the will of God, I shall become more and more unlike the world, and assimilated to the likeness of Jesus Christ. If you continue to see no loveliness in Christ, no attractions in the truth, you will love the world, which I cannot love, while I shall love the things of God, which you cannot love. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Without spiritual discernment you will be unable to see the claims of God upon me, or to sense my obligations to the Master whom I serve; therefore you will feel that I neglect you for religious duties. You will not be happy; you will be jealous on account of the affections which I give to God, and I shall be alone in my religious belief. When your views shall change, when your heart shall respond to the claims of God, and you shall learn to love my Saviour, then our relationship may be renewed.” [171]

The believer thus makes a sacrifice for Christ which his conscience approves, showing that he values eternal life too highly to run the risk of losing it. He feels that it would be better to remain unmarried than to link his interests for life with one who chooses the world rather than Jesus, and who would lead away from the cross of Christ. But the danger of giving the affections to unbelievers is not

realized. In the youthful mind, marriage is clothed with romance, and it is difficult to divest it of this feature, with which imagination covers it, and to impress the mind with a sense of the weighty responsibilities involved in the marriage vow. This vow links the destinies of the two individuals with bonds which naught but the hand of death should sever.

[172] Shall one who is seeking for glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life, form a union with another who refuses to rank with the soldiers of the cross of Christ? Will you who profess to choose Christ for your master, and to be obedient to him in all things, unite your interests with one who is ruled by the prince of the powers of darkness? “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.” But how strange the sight! While one of those so closely united is engaged in devotion, the other is indifferent and careless; while one is seeking the way to everlasting life, the other is in the broad road to death.

Hundreds have sacrificed Christ and Heaven in consequence of marrying unconverted persons. Can it be that the love and fellowship of Christ is of so little value to them that they prefer the companionship of poor mortals? Is Heaven so little esteemed that they are willing to risk its enjoyments for one who has no love for the precious Saviour?

The happiness and prosperity of the married life depend upon the unity of the parties. How can the carnal mind harmonize with the mind that is assimilated to the mind of Christ? One is sowing to the flesh, thinking and acting in accordance with the promptings of his own heart; the other is sowing to the Spirit, seeking to repress selfishness, to overcome inclination, and to live in obedience to the Master, whose servant he professes to be. Thus there is a perpetual difference of taste, of inclination, and of purpose. Unless the believer shall, through his steadfast adherence to principle win the impenitent, he will, as is much more common, become discouraged and sell his religious principles for the poor companionship of one who has no connection with Heaven.

[173] God strictly forbade the intermarrying of his ancient people with other nations. The plea is now offered that this prohibition was

made in order to prevent the Hebrews from marrying idolaters, and forming connection with heathen families. But the heathen were in a more favorable condition than are the impenitent in this age, who, having the light of truth, yet persistently refuse to accept it. The sinner of today is far more guilty than the heathen, because the light of the gospel shines clearly all around, him. He violates conscience, and is a deliberate enemy of God. The reason which God assigned for forbidding these marriages was, "For they will turn away thy son from following me." Those among ancient Israel who ventured to disregard the prohibition of God, did it at the sacrifice of religious principle. Take the case of Solomon, for example. His wives turned away his heart from his God.

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### THE LORD'S POOR.

I WAS shown that our people living out of Battle Creek do not appreciate the cares and burdens which come upon those at the heart of the work. They allow their church-members who are not able to support themselves to come to Battle Creek, thinking that they can obtain work in our institutions. These do not first write and ascertain if there is an opening for them; but crowd themselves upon the church, and find upon application that there is already a surplus of hands employed, many of whom are as needy as themselves. They were taken in out of pity, and are still retained, not because they are of the most service to the institutions, but because they are so needy. [174]

There are families residing in Battle Creek who have seen these institutions grow up in their midst, and who need and are worthy of positions in them, but who are not able to obtain them because of so many from abroad who will suffer if not employed. This brings upon the church and these institutions burdens of perplexity to know how to treat all these cases with wisdom, offending none, and showing mercy to all. Our institutions have sustained loss by seeking to help these cases; for frequently the applicants are in poor health, and therefore not to be relied upon. Could their places be supplied with

able, efficient workers, it would save quite a sum to the cause of God.

It is the duty of every church to feel an interest for its own poor. But many selfish ones have felt gratified to have their poor members move to Battle Creek, for then they would not be required to help support them. From one to five hundred dollars are spent by the Battle Creek church every year for the support of the poor and sick, whose families must suffer unless they are sustained by charity. God would not be pleased to have this church allow the poor in their midst to suffer for the necessaries of life; therefore there is a continual draught upon the funds of those at the heart of the work.

[175] Our brethren must retain their poor at home, and take those already at Battle Creek off from the hands of the church. They could do very much more than they now do for the poor by furnishing them with work, thus helping them to help themselves. It would be much better to employ these persons in your temporal matters than to send them to the great heart of the work and let the cause of God be burdened by this inefficient class of workers. Only men and women of culture and of physical and mental strength, care-takers who have been accustomed to using their own brains rather than the brains of others, are needed at Battle Creek. Would you think it advisable, my brethren, to crowd into responsible positions persons who are incompetent to obtain a livelihood in the common business of life ?

There are youth, and men and women, who need to be taught how to employ their ability just where they are. This is no pleasant duty; but every church is responsible for its individual members, and it should not allow a class who cannot obtain a living where they are in the country, to move to Battle Creek. Brethren in the country have farms, and can raise their own supplies. It is therefore much less expensive for the poor to be supported in the country, where provisions are cheap, than to have them come to Battle Creek, where, instead of helping the church and our institutions, means must be continually drawn from the treasury to help them. Those living in the city have to buy nearly all their provisions, and it costs something to take care of the poor.

Brethren in smaller churches, if God has left a work for you to do in caring for his poor, in comforting the desponding, in visiting

the sick, in dispensing to the needy, do not be so liberal as to want the Battle Creek church to have all the blessings of this work. You will be justifiable in coveting the blessings God has promised to those who will care for the poor and sympathize with the suffering. [176]

There must be a charity fund raised to meet the necessities of the poor who are permitted to come to Battle Creek. Each year the Sanitarium gives thousands of dollars to charity patients. But who appreciates this great tax upon the institution ? None whose names are on the church book should be left to suffer year after year from sickness, when a few months at the Sanitarium would give them relief, and a valuable experience how to take care of themselves and others when sick. Every church should feel it a Bible duty devolving upon them to care for their own worthy poor and sick.

When a worthy child of God needs the benefit of the Sanitarium, and can pay but a small amount toward his expenses, let the church act a noble part, and make up the sum. Some may not be able to pay anything themselves, hut do not let them continue to suffer because of your selfishness. Send them to the Sanitarium, and send your pledges and your money with them to pay their expenses. In this you will gain a precious blessing. It costs something to run such an institution, and it should not be required to treat the sick for nothing. Could the sum which that institution has expended for charity-patients be refunded, it would go a long way toward relieving it of its present embarrassments.

Brethren, do not leave the burden of your poor upon the people and institutions at Battle Creek, but come up nobly to the work and do your duty. Deny yourselves of some things in your houses or in your dress, and lay by in some safe place a sum for the needy poor. Let not your tithes and thank-offerings to God be less, but let this be in addition. God does not propose to rain means from Heaven with which to sustain the poor, but he has placed his goods in the hands of agents. They are to recognize Christ in the person of his saints. And what they do for his suffering children they do for him, for he identifies his interest with suffering humanity. [177]

God calls upon the young to deny themselves of needless ornaments and articles of dress, even it they cost but a few dimes, and place the amount in the charity box. He also calls upon those of mature age to stop when they are examining a gold watch or

chain, or some expensive article of furniture, and ask themselves the question, Would it be right to expend so large an amount for that which we could do without or when a cheaper article would serve our purpose just as well ? By denying yourselves and lifting the cross for Jesus, who for your sakes became poor, you can do much toward relieving the suffering of the poor among us; and by thus imitating the example of your Lord and Master you will receive his approval and blessing.

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### THE CAUSE AT BATTLE CREEK.

MANY who have come to Battle Creek have not come for the purpose of bearing burdens. They have not come because they feel any special anxiety for the prosperity of the cause here, but for their own interest, because they wish to advantage themselves. They hope to secure the benefits to be derived from the institutions located here, without bearing any responsibilities themselves.

Some who have located in Battle Creek in order to have a more favorable opportunity to benefit themselves, are guilty of selfishness, and even fraud, in dealing with our brethren who have come from abroad. If there are any advantages to be gained, our institutions should receive them, and not those individuals who have done nothing toward building them up, and who have only a selfish interest in them. Many who come to Battle Creek are no strength, religiously, to the cause. At heart, they are like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and if a favorable opportunity were presented, they would follow the example of these wicked men. True, their fraudulent transactions may be concealed from the eyes of their brethren generally, but God marks their course, and will finally reward them according to their works.

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Some who have been long in Battle Creek, and who ought to be responsible men, are occupying positions of trust only in name. They have been made guardians of our institutions, but their course of action shows that they have no special interest in them, nor burden for them. Their thoughts center upon themselves. If we were to judge them by their works, we would decide that they consider their own energies too precious to be exercised for these instrumentalities of God, unless they can secure temporal advantages to themselves.

These are neglecting to keep the fort, not because they cannot do it, but because they are self-caring, and are content to rock themselves to sleep in the cradle of carnal security.

Men who make it their aim and object in life to please and benefit themselves, ought not to remain at this important post. They have no right to be here, for they stand directly in the way of the work of God. Those who neglect the Lord's poor, and who feel no burden for the widow and the fatherless, not making these eases their own and laboring to see justice and equity between man and man, are guilty of neglecting Christ in the person of his saints, because the cause that they know not they do not search out. They have no burdens, and make no effort to sustain the right. If most earnest vigilance is not manifested at the great heart of the work to protect the interests of the cause, the church will become as corrupt as those of other denominations.

All who live in Battle Creek will have a fearful account to render to God if they suffer sin upon a brother. It is an alarming fact that indifference, sleepiness, and apathy have characterized men in responsible positions, and that there is a steady increase of pride and an alarming disregard of the warnings of the Spirit of God. The barriers which God's word places about his people are being broken down. Men who are acquainted with the way in which God has led his people in the past, instead of inquiring for the old paths and defending our position as a peculiar people, have linked hands with the world. The most alarming feature in the case is that warning voices have not been heard in remonstrance, entreaties, and warnings. The eyes of God's people seem to be blinded, while the church is fast drifting in the channel of worldlings. [180]

God does not desire wooden men to guard the interests of his institutions and the church, but he wants living, working men, who have ability and quick perception, men who have eyes and open them that they may see, and hearts that are susceptible to the influences of his Spirit. He holds men to a strict accountability in guarding the interests of his cause at Battle Creek.

There are those in Battle Creek who have never fully submitted to reproof. They have taken a course of their own choosing. They have ever, to a greater or less degree, exerted an influence against those who have stood up to defend the right and reprove the wrong.

The influence of these persons upon individuals who come here, and are brought in contact with them as roomers or boarders, is very bad. They fill the minds of these new-comers with questionings and doubts in regard to the testimonies of the Spirit of God. They put [181] false constructions upon the testimonies; and instead of leading persons to become consecrated to God, and to listen to the voice of the church, they teach them to be independent, and not to mind the opinions and judgment of others. The influence of this class has been secretly at work. Some are unconscious of the harm they are doing; but unconsecrated, proud, and rebellious themselves, they lead others in the wrong track. A poisonous atmosphere is inhaled from these unconsecrated ones. The blood of souls is in the garments of such, and Christ will say to them in the day of final settlement, “Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.” Astonished they will be; but their professedly Christian lives were a deception, a fraud.

If all in Battle Creek stood true to the light God has given them, true to the interests of the church, feeling the worth of souls for whom Christ died, a different influence would be exerted. But here we see acted over to a great extent the experience of the children of Israel. As the people stood before Mount Sinai, listening to the voice of God, they were so forcibly impressed with his sacred presence that they retreated in terror, and cried out to Moses, “Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” There before the mount they made solemn vows of allegiance to God; but scarcely had the thunders, and the trumpet, and the voice of the Lord ceased, when they were bowed upon their knees before an idol. Their leader had been called away from their sight, and was enveloped in a thick cloud, in converse with God.

[182] The fellow laborer of Moses, who was left with the solemn charge of the people in his absence, heard them uttering complaints that Moses had left them, and expressing a desire to return to Egypt; yet, through fear of offending the people, he was silent. He did not stand up boldly for God; but to please the people he made a golden calf. He seemed to be asleep to the beginning of the evil. When the first rebellious word was spoken, Aaron might have checked it; but so fearful was he of offending the people, that he apparently united with them, and was finally persuaded to make a golden calf for them to worship.

Ministers should be faithful watchmen, seeing the evil, and warning the people. Their dangers must be set before them continually, and pressed home upon them. The exhortation given to Timothy was, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine."

There have been marriage relations formed in Battle Creek, with which God has had nothing to do. Marriages have been ill-assorted in some cases, immature in others. Christ has warned us that this state of things would exist prior to his second appearing. It constitutes one of the signs of the last days. A similar state of things existed before the flood. The minds of the people were bewitched upon the subject of marriage. When there is so much uncertainty, so great danger, there is no reason why we should make great parade or display, even if the parties were perfectly suited to each other; but that remains to be tested.

When those who profess to be reformers, those in humble life, ape the customs and fashions of the worldly wealthy, it is a reproach to our faith. There are those to whom God gave the word of warning; but did that stop them? No; they did not fear God, for the bewitching power of Satan was upon them. And there were those in Battle Creek who influenced these poor infatuated ones to follow their own judgment, by doing which they have crippled their usefulness and incurred the displeasure of God. [183]

God wants men to cultivate force of character. Those who are merely time servers are not the ones who will receive a rich reward by and by. He wants those who labor in his cause to be men of keen feeling and quick perception. They should be temperate in eating; rich and luxurious food should find no place upon their tables; and when the brain is constantly taxed, and there is a lack of physical exercise, they should eat sparingly even of plain food. Daniel's clearness of mind and firmness of purpose, his strength of intellect in acquiring knowledge, were due in a great degree to his plainness of diet, in connection with his life of prayer.

Eli was a good man, pure in morals; but he was too indulgent. He incurred the displeasure of God because he did not strengthen the weak points in his character. He did not want to hurt the feelings of any one, and had not the moral courage to rebuke and reprove sin. His sons were vile men, yet he did not remove them from their position of trust. These sons profaned the house of God. He

[184] knew this and felt sad in consequence of it, for he loved purity and righteousness; but he had not moral force sufficient to suppress the evil. He loved peace and harmony, and became more and more insensible to impurity and crime. But the great God takes the matter in hand himself. When the rebuke falls upon him, through the instrumentality of a child, he accepts it, feeling that it is what he deserves. He does not show any resentment toward Samuel, the messenger of God; he loves him as he has done, but condemns himself.

The guilty sons of Eli were slain in battle. He could endure to hear that his Sons were slain, but he could not bear the news that the ark of God was taken. He knew that his sin of neglect in failing to stand for the right and restrain wrong had at last deprived Israel of her strength and glory. The pallor of death came upon his face, and he fell backward and died.

What a lesson have we here for parents and guardians of youth, and for those who minister in the service of God. When existing evils are not met and checked, because men have too little courage to reprove wrong or because they have too little interest or are too indolent to tax their own powers, in putting forth earnest efforts to purify the family, or the church of God, they are accountable for the evil which may result in consequence of neglect to do their duty. We are just as accountable for evils that we might have checked in others, by reproof, by warning, by exercise of parental or pastoral authority, as if we were guilty of the acts ourselves.

[185] Eli should have first attempted to restrain evil by mild measures; but if that would not avail, he should have subdued the wrong by the most stern measures. God's honor must be sacredly preserved, even if it separates us from the nearest relative. One defect in a man otherwise talented may destroy his usefulness in this life, and cause him to hear, in the day of God, the unwelcome words, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Eli was gentle, loving, kind, and had a true interest in the service of God and the prosperity of his cause. He was a man who had power in prayer. He never rose up in rebellion against the words of God. But he was wanting; he had not the firmness of character to reprove sin and execute justice against the sinner, so that God could not depend upon him to keep Israel pure. He did not add to his faith

the courage and power to say “ No ” at the right time and in the right place. Sin is sin; righteousness is righteousness. The trumpet note of warning must be sounded. We are living in a fearfully wicked age. The worship of God will become corrupted unless there are wide-awake men at every post of duty. It is no time now for any to be absorbed in selfish ease. Not one of the words which God has spoken must be allowed to fall to the ground.

While some in Battle Creek have professedly believed the testimonies, they have been trampling them under their feet. But few have read them with interest; but few have heeded them. The indulgence of self, pride, fashion, and display is mingled with the worship of God. He wants brave men for action, who will not regard the setting up of idols, and the coming in of abominations without lifting up the voice like a trumpet, showing the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins. [186]

As soon as Samuel began to judge Israel, even in his youth, he called an assembly of the people for fasting, and prayer, and deep humiliation before God. He bore his solemn testimony from the mouth of God. The people then began to learn where their strength was. They entreated Samuel to cease not to cry unto God for them. Their enemies were aroused to meet them in battle; but God heard in their behalf. He wrought for them, and victory turned on the side of Israel.

There is a great work to be done in Battle Creek. Duties have been neglected, important trusts have been betrayed. Men have come here who have added nothing to the strength of the cause, but who are constantly at work to gather the little means possessed by others into their own hands, and thus rob God’s treasury. The natural selfishness of their hearts is exhibited wherever a favorable opportunity presents itself to advantage themselves at the disadvantage of others. They have done so until the standard of the worldling is met, and there is but little difference between their manner of dealing and that of the world.

Our people in Battle Creek have greater responsibilities to bear than those in any other place. All who choose to locate here, should do so, not merely for their own convenience and benefit, but with an eye single to the glory of God. They should be fully prepared to lift the burdens where and when they need to be lifted; and with self- [187]

sacrificing devotion sustain the institutions which God has placed in their midst. Those who are unwilling to follow this course should go where there are not so heavy burdens to be borne. At this important post, where so much depends upon personal effort, all must act their part unflinchingly ; they must be wide awake, that the cause of their Master may not suffer the loss of one soul. Many fail to come up to the gospel standard; they have a selfish regard for their own interest, and neglect to see what they can do to be a blessing to their fellow-men. Christ wants no idlers in his vineyard. He requires that every one shall work for time and for eternity.

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### IMPROVEMENT OF TALENTS.

GOD designs that improvement shall be the life-work of all his followers, and that it shall be guided and controlled by correct experience. The true man is one who is willing to sacrifice his own interest for the good of others, and who exercises himself in binding up the brokenhearted. The true object of life is scarcely begun to be understood by many; and that which is real and substantial in their life is sacrificed because of cherished errors.

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Nero and Caesar were acknowledged by the world as great men; but did God regard them as such? No! they were not connected by living faith to the great Heart of humanity. They were in the world, and ate, and drank, and slept, as men of the world; but they were satanic in their cruelty. Wherever these monsters of humanity went, bloodshed and destruction marked their pathway. They were lauded by the world while they were living; but when they were buried, the world rejoiced. In contrast with the lives of these men, is that of Luther. He was not born a prince. He wore no royal crown. From a cloistered cell his voice was heard, and his influence felt. He had a humane heart, which was exercised for the good of men. He stood bravely for truth and right, and breast the world's opposition, that he might benefit his fellow-men.

Intellect alone does not make the man, according to the divine standard. There is a power in intellect, if sanctified and controlled by the Spirit of God. It is superior to riches and to physical power; yet it

must be cultivated in order to make the man. The right which one has to claim to be a man is determined by the use made of his intellect. Byron had intellectual conception, and depth of thought, but he was not a man according to God's standard. He was an agent of Satan. His passions were fierce and uncontrollable. He was sowing seed through his life which blossomed into a harvest of corruption. His life-work lowered the standard of virtue. This man was one of the world's distinguished men; still the Lord would not acknowledge him as a man, but only as one who had abused his God-given talents. Gibbon, the skeptic, and many others whom God endowed with giant minds, and whom the world called great men, rallied under the banner of Satan, and used the gifts of God for the perversion of truth and the destruction of the souls of men. Great intellect, when made a minister of vice, is a curse to the possessor and to all who come within the circle of its influence.

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That which will bless humanity is spiritual life. If the man is in harmony with God, he will depend continually upon him for strength. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." Our life-work is to be reaching forward to the perfection of Christian character, striving continually for conformity to the will of God. The efforts begun upon earth will continue through eternity. God's standard of man is elevated to the highest meaning of the term, and if he acts up to his God-given manhood he will promote happiness in this life, which will lead to glory and an eternal reward in the life to come.

The members of the human family are entitled to the name of men and women only when they employ their talents, in every possible way, for the good of others. The life of Christ is before us as a pattern, and it is when ministering, like angels of mercy, to the wants of others that man is closely allied to God. It is the nature of Christianity to make happy families and happy society. Discord, selfishness, and strife will be put away from every man and woman who possesses the true spirit of Christ.

Those who are partakers of Christ's love have no right to think that there is a limit to their influence and work in trying to benefit humanity. Did Christ become weary in his efforts to save fallen man? Our work is to be continuous and persevering. We shall find work to do until the Master shall bid us lay our armor at his feet. God is a

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moral governor and we must wait, submissive to his will, ready and willing to spring to our duty whenever work needs to be done.

Angels are engaged night and day in the service of God, for the uplifting of man in accordance with the plan of salvation. Man is required to love God supremely, that is, with all his might, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself. This he cannot possibly do unless he shall deny himself. Said Christ, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Self-denial means to rule the spirit when passion is seeking for the mastery; to resist the temptation to censure and to speak faultfinding words; to have patience with the child that is dull, and whose conduct is grievous and trying; to stand at the post of duty when others may fail; to lift responsibilities wherever and whenever you can, not for the purpose of applause, not for policy, but for the sake of the Master, who has given you a work to be done with unwavering fidelity; when you might praise yourself, to keep silent and let other lips praise you. Self-denial is to do good to others where inclination would lead you to serve and please yourself. Although your fellow-men may never appreciate your efforts, or give you credit for the same, you are to work on.

[191] Search carefully and see whether the truth which you have accepted has, with you, become a firm principle. Do you take Christ with you when you leave the closet of prayer? Does your religion stand guard at the door of your lips? Is your heart drawn out in sympathy and love for others outside of your own family? Are you diligently seeking a clearer understanding of scriptural truth that you may let your light shine forth to others? These questions you may answer to your own souls." Let your speech be seasoned with grace, and your demeanor show Christian elevation.

A new year has commenced. What has been the record of the past year in your Christian life? How stands your record in Heaven? I entreat of you to make an unreserved surrender to God. Have your hearts been divided? Give them wholly to the Lord now. Make a different life history the coming year from the one of the past. Humble your souls before God. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him." Put away all

pretense and affectation. Act your simple, natural self. Be truthful in every thought, and word, and deed, and “in all lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” Ever remember that moral nature needs to be braced with constant watchfulness and prayer. As long as you look to Christ, you are safe, but the moment you think of your sacrifices and your difficulties, and begin to sympathize with and pet yourself you lose your trust in God and are in great peril,

Many limit the divine Providence, and divorce mercy and love from his character. They urge that the greatness and majesty of God would forbid his interesting himself in the concerns of the weakest of his creatures. “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

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It is difficult for human beings to give attention to the lesser matters of life while the mind is engaged in business of vast importance. But should not this union exist? Man formed in the image of his Maker should unite the larger responsibilities with the smaller. He may be engrossed with occupations of overwhelming importance, and neglect the instruction which his children need. These duties may be looked upon as the lesser duties of life, when they in reality lie at the very foundation of society. Happiness of families and churches depends upon *home influences*. Eternal interests depend upon the proper discharge of the duties of this life. The world is not so much in need of great minds, as of good men who will be a blessing in their homes.

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