

An Earnest Admonition.

By Mrs. E. G. White

(Emphasis by D. Bauer)

"Norfolk Villa," Prospect St.,
Granville, N. S. W.,
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Dear Brother-----:--

I do not find rest in spirit. Scene after scene is presented in symbols before me, and I find no rest until I begin to write out the matter. I think we will institute, at least once each day, a season of prayer for the Lord to set things in order at the center of the work. Matters are being shaped so that every other institution is following in the same course. The General Conference is itself becoming corrupted with wrong sentiments and principles. In the working up of plans, the same principles are manifest that have controlled at Battle Creek for a long time.

Christ said of the Jews, "In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed." Thus it is with some men who are connected with the great and important interests in our institutions.

I have been shown that the Jewish nation were not brought suddenly into their condition of thought and practise. From generation to generation they were working on false theories, carrying out principles that were opposed to the truth, and combining with their religion, thoughts and plans that were the product of human minds: human inventions were made supreme.

So it is today. Men connected with the work of God have been dealing unjustly, and it is time to call a halt. The holy principles God has given are represented by the sacred fire; but common fire has been used in place of the sacred. **False propositions have been assumed as truth and righteousness, and everything has been managed in such a way as to carry out these propositions, which are a misrepresentation of God's character.** Plans contrary to truth and righteousness have been introduced in a subtle manner, on the plea that this must be done, and that must be done because it is for the advancement of the cause of God. Men have taken advantage of those whom they supposed to be under their jurisdiction. They were determined to bring the individuals to their terms; **they would rule or ruin. This devising leads to oppression, injustice, and wickedness.** There will be no material change for the better until a decided movement is made to bring in different state of things.

The plea some are so ready to urge, "The cause of God," or "Working in behalf of the cause of God," **to justify themselves in presenting robbery for burnt offering, is an offense to God. He accepts no such transactions; prosperity will not attend these movements.** The Lord of heaven does not accept the strange fire offered to him. Let men deal with men upon the principles of the ten commandments, bringing these principles into their business transactions; for the great and holy and merciful God will

never be in league with dishonest practises; not a single touch of injustice will he vindicate. The cause of God is free from every taint of injustice. It can gain no advantage by robbing the members of the family of God of their individuality or of their rights. All such practises are abhorrent to God.

Let all bear in mind that the Lord's eye is upon all their works, and that he expects fidelity from his servants. ***When the four Hebrew youth were receiving an education for the court of the Babylonish king, they did not feel that the blessing of the Lord was a substitute for the taxing effort required of them.*** They were diligent in study; for they discerned that through the grace of God, their destiny depended on their own will and action. They knew that they were to bring all their ability to their work, and by close, severe taxation of their powers, make the most of their opportunities for study and labor.

He who has created men, and has given them talent and intellect, seeks to bring their minds into association with the divine. When this is done, goodness, love for their fellow men, will be their natural instinct. He would have men love God supremely, and their fellow men impartially. It is his purpose that we should be closely attached to God, and tenderly attached to one another.

Such was the condition that existed in heaven before the disaffection of Satan. The heavenly current flowed through the universe of God without one cloud of evil to cast a shadow upon its bright waters. Everywhere spotless purity was reflected as in a mirror; and God was over all. But Satan fell. The human race were created. Adam and Eve fell.

And cannot men who have the history of the fall, the workings of the wily foe since Adam's day, see how the same principles are still at work, and what will be the end thereof? We are all on trial during probationary time. Satan is playing the game of life for every soul; Christ is at work for every soul. Those who consent to receive the moral image of God, become like him in character. But if they refuse the character of Christ, heaven is lost to them. When we have so gracious an opportunity of working out our own salvation through our choice of the character we form, why will we not lay hold of the Saviour, and ***by faith receive his merits, and perfect a character like his?***

The Lord Jesus himself has bridged the gulf that sin has made, and the whole scheme of redemption has been put in operation to restore the moral image of God in man. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." Infinite wisdom is revealed in Christ. He suffered in our stead, that men could have another test and trial to prove whether they would be safe subjects for his kingdom. His blood was our ransom, his death brings life and immortality within our reach. He has risen from the dead, and has ascended on high to intercede for the fallen race. He is now at the right hand of the throne of God,--our Representative before the Father. Whatever was given to Christ--the "all things" to supply every need of fallen man--was given to him as the head and representative of humanity. In and through him we are complete in every grace. We share his throne. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

There is a heaven of bliss, free from all dissension, free from all selfishness, free from poverty, sickness, and oppression, for those that overcome. Then I entreat you who have a heaven to gain and a hell to shun. Do not be presumptuous. Link up in the closest relationship with Christ, and depart from every species of iniquity. {PH080 29.1}

All who, before the universe of heaven, are adjudged to have, in Christ, endured the penalty of the law, and in him fulfilled its righteousness, will have eternal life. They will be one in character with Christ. His prayer for his followers will be fulfilled. "The glory [character] which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Shall we not strive to form characters after the divine similitude? Shall we not here be conformed to the image of Christ? O that God would give us divine perception to comprehend the breadth and length, the depth and height, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fulness of God! Then would man look upon his fellow men as God's own purchased possession. He would keep his own soul in the love of God, and would ***not undertake to lord it over God's heritage.***

It was a wonderful thing for God to create man, to make mind. He created him that every faculty might be the faculty of the divine mind. The glory of God is to be revealed in the creation of man in God's image, and in his redemption. One soul is of more value than a world. The Lord Jesus is the Author of our being, and he is also the Author of our redemption; and every one who will enter into the kingdom of God will develop a character that is the counterpart of the character of God. None can dwell with God in the holy heaven but those who bear his likeness. Those who are redeemed will be overcomers; they will be elevated, pure, one with Christ.

The divine decrees are to be vindicated; it will be demonstrated that they are not accessory to sin. There was no withdrawal of divine influence from Lucifer. Not in the slightest particular was there a deficiency in God's government that would afford a cause for disaffection in heaven. So in the administration of affairs in connection with God's work on earth, he requires that those who bear the responsibility of the work are to give no cause for disaffection. The principles that are according to heaven's order must be maintained.

Everything in our world is in agitation. Coming events cast their shadows before. The signs of the times are ominous indeed. There is assurance in nothing human or earthly. There are but two parties in this world. Satan works with his crooked, deceiving power, and through strong delusion he catches all who do not abide in the truth, and have turned their ears away from the truth, and have turned unto fables. Satan himself abode not in the truth, and he is the mystery of iniquity. **Through his subtlety he gives to his soul-destroying errors the appearance of truth.** Herein is their power to deceive. It is because they are a counterfeit of the truth that Spiritualism, theosophy, and the like deceptions gain such power over the minds of men. Herein is the masterly working of Satan. He pretends to be the Saviour of man, the benefactor of the human race, and thus he more readily lures his victims to destruction.

Rapidly men are ranging themselves under the banner they have chosen, restlessly waiting and watching the movements of their leaders. Some are watching and waiting and working for our Lord's appearing, but the greater part of the world are rapidly falling into line under the generalship of the first great apostate. They **look for a god in humanity, and Satan personifies the one they seek.** Multitudes will be so deluded through their rejection of truth, that they will accept the counterfeit; and ***humanity will be hailed as God.***

Satan's skill is exercised in devising plans and methods without number to accomplish his purpose. **Dissimulation has become a fine art with him, and he works in the guise of an angel of light.** God's eye alone discerns his schemes to contaminate the

world with false and ruinous principles, bearing on their face the appearance of genuine goodness. He works to restrict religious liberty, and to bring into the religious world a species of **slavery**. Organizations, institutions, unless kept by the power of God, will work under Satan's dictation to bring men under the control of men and fraud and guile will bear the semblance of zeal for truth, and for the advancement of the kingdom of God. Whatever in our practise is not as open as the day, belongs to the methods of the prince of evil.

We are warned in the word of God that sleepless vigilance is the price of safety. Only in the straight path of truth and righteousness can we **escape the tempter's power**. The winds are held by the four angels; a moment of respite has been graciously given us of God. Every power lent us of God, whether practical, mental, or moral, is to be sacredly cherished to do the work assigned us for our fellow men who are perishing in their ignorance. The warning is to go forth to all parts of the world. There must be no delay.

If men resist the warnings the Lord sends them, they become even leaders in evil practises; such men assume to exercise the prerogatives of God-- they presume to do that which God himself will not do in seeking to control the minds of men. They introduce their own methods and plans, and through their misconceptions of God, they weaken the faith of others in the truth, and bring in false principles that will work like leaven to taint and corrupt our institutions and churches. Anything that lowers men's conception of righteousness and equity and impartial judgment, **any device or precept that brings God's human agents under the control of human minds, impairs their faith in God; it separates the soul from God, for it leads away from the path of strict integrity and righteousness.**

God will not vindicate any device whereby man shall in the slightest degree rule or oppress his fellow man. The only hope for fallen man is to look to Jesus, and receive him as the only Saviour. As soon as man begins to make an iron rule for other men, as soon as he begins to harness up and drive men according to his own mind, he dishonors God, and imperils his own soul and the souls of his brethren.

God expects his workers to be tender-hearted. How merciful are the ways of God! (See Deut. 10:17-20; 2 Chron. 20:5-7, 9; 1 Peter 1:17.) But the rules God has given have been disregarded, and **strange fire** has been offered before the Lord. The spirit of domination is extending to the presidents of our conferences. But if a man is sanguine of his own powers, and seeks to exercise dominion over his brethren, feeling that he is invested with authority to make his will the ruling power, the best and only safe course is to remove him, lest great harm be done, and he lose his own soul, and imperil the souls of others. "All ye are brethren." Those in authority should manifest the spirit of Christ. They should deal as he would deal with every case that requires attention. They should go weighted with the Holy Spirit.

A man's position does not make him one jot or tittle greater in the sight of God; it is character alone that God values. The high-handed power that has been developed, as though position made men gods, makes me afraid, and ought to cause fear. It is a curse wherever, and by whomsoever exercised. This lording it over God's heritage will create such a disgust of man's jurisdiction that a state of insubordination will result. The people are learning that men in high positions of authority cannot be trusted to mold and fashion other men's minds and characters. The result will be a loss of confidence even in the management of faithful men. But the Lord will raise up laborers who realize their own nothingness apart from him.

Let men be connected with God's work who will represent his character. They may have much to learn in regard to business management; but if they pray to God as did Daniel, if with true contrition of mind they seek that wisdom which comes from above, the Lord will give them an understanding heart. Read carefully and prayerfully the third chapter of James, especially verses 13-16. The whole chapter is an eye-opener, if men wish to open their eyes.

The goodness, mercy, and love of God was proclaimed by Christ to Moses. This was God's character. **When men who profess to serve God, ignore his parental character, and depart from honor and righteousness in dealing with their fellow men, Satan exults; for he has inspired them with his attributes. They are following in the track of Romanism.** Those who are enjoined to represent the attributes of the Lord's character, step from the Bible platform, and in their own human judgment devise rules and resolutions to force the will of others. But when men are forced to follow the prescriptions of other men, an order of things is instituted that overrides sympathy and tender compassion, blinding the eyes of men to mercy, justice, and the love of God. **Moral influence and personal responsibility are trodden under foot.**

The righteousness of Christ by faith has been ignored by some; for it is contrary to their spirit, and their whole life-experience. Rule, rule, has been their course of action; and Satan has had an opportunity to represent himself through them. *When one who professes to be a representative of Christ, engages in sharp dealing, and presses men into hard places, those who are thus oppressed will either break every fetter of restraint, or will be led to regard God as a hard master.* They cherish hard feelings against God, and their souls are alienated from him, just as Satan planned it should be. **This hard-heartedness on the part of men who claim to believe the truth, Satan charges to the influence of truth itself,** and thus men become disgusted, and turn from the truth. For this reason no man should have a responsible connection with our institutions, who thinks it no important matter whether he have a heart of flesh or a heart of steel. Such men may think they are representing the justice of God, but they do not represent his tenderness, and the great love wherewith he has loved us. **Their human inventions, originating with the specious devices of Satan, appear fair enough to the blinded eyes of men, because they are inherent in their nature. A lie, believed and practised, becomes truth to them.** Thus the purpose of Satan, that men should reach these conclusions through the working of their own inventive minds, is accomplished.

Men fall into error by starting with false premises, and then bringing everything to bear to make the error true. In some cases the first principles have a measure of truth interwoven with the errors, but it does not lead to any just action; and this is why men are misled. In order to reign and become a power, they employ Satan's methods to justify their own principles. They exalt themselves as men of superior judgment, and profess to stand as representatives of God. **These are false gods.**

Sinful men can find hope and righteousness only in God; and **no human being is righteous any longer than he has faith in God, and maintains a vital connection with him.** A flower of the field must have its root in the soil; it must have air, dew, showers, and sunshine. It will flourish only as it receives these advantages, and all are from God. So with men. We receive from God that which ministers to the life of the soul. We are warned not to trust in man, nor to make flesh our arm. A curse is pronounced upon all that do this.

"Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. . . . O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living water." Jer. 17:5-10, 13

Let no plans or methods be brought into any of our institutions that will place mind or talent under the control of human judgment; for this is not in God's order. God has given to man, talents of influence which belong to him alone, and no greater dishonor can be done to God than for one finite agent to purchase from men their God-given talent, or the product of such talent, to be absolutely under his control, even though the benefits of the same be used to the advantage of the cause. In such arrangements, one man's mind is ruled by another man's mind, and the human agent is separated from God, and exposed to temptations. **Satan's methods tend to one end,-- to make men the slaves of men.** And when this is done, confusion and distrust, jealousies and evil surmisings, are the result. Such a course destroys man's faith in God, and in the principles which are to control his work, to purge from guilt and from every species of selfishness and hypocrisy.

The Lord of heaven, who made our world, and who created man, guards the interests of every soul. **To every man he has given this work.** We are laborers together with God. There are diversities of gifts, and every man should appreciate the moral and spiritual capital which God has entrusted to him. No one should treat these entrusted talents with indifference. No one is accountable for the talents he has never had; none should complain of the smallness of their gifts. Every one is to trade on that which God has entrusted to him, working where he can, doing the best possible service for the Master. Our talent, well used, will gain other talents, and these still others. The man with a few pence can serve God faithfully with his pence. If he does this, he is judged as faithful in the sight of God as the one who has improved pounds.

All are to realize their individual responsibility to employ their talents to the glory of God according to their ability. Let no man or council of men assume the responsibility of making as little as possible of these talents, according to their human estimate of God's entrusted qualifications. No man is to weigh in the balances of human judgment the talents God has given to other men. Let every man appreciate God's gifts to him, and faithfully trade upon them. No man is to merge his individuality into that of any other man. No man should be urged to make another man his steward. There are diversities of gifts, and a large work to be done in our world in the use of God's entrusted goods. Let us never forget that we are here to be fashioned by the hand of God, fitted to do the work he has given us to do. That work is our own, the accountability is our own; it cannot be transferred to another. Let not human agents interpose to take another's work out of the hands of God into their own finite hands.

Individual Responsibility.

Some men or councils may say, That is just what we wish you to do. The Conference Committee will take your capital, and will appropriate it for this very object. But the Lord has made us individually his stewards. We each hold a solemn responsibility to invest this means ourselves. A portion it is right to place in the treasury to advance the general interests of the work; **but the steward of means will not be guiltless before God, unless, so far as he is able to do this, he shall use that means as circumstances shall reveal the necessity.** We should be ready to help the suffering, and to set in operation plans to advance the truth in various ways. It is not in the province of the Conference or any other organization to relieve us of this stewardship. If you lack wisdom, go to God; ask him for yourself, and then work with an eye single to his glory.

By exercising your judgment, by giving where you see there is need in any line of the work, you are putting out your money to the exchangers. If you see in any locality that the truth is gaining a foothold, and there is no place of worship, then do something to meet the necessity. By your own action encourage others to act, in building a humble house for the worship of God. Have an interest in the work in all parts of the field.

While it is not your own property that you are handling, yet you are made responsible for its wise investment, for its use or abuse. God does not lay upon you the burden of asking the Conference or any council of men whether you shall use your means as you see fit to advance the work of God in destitute towns and cities, and impoverished localities. If the right plan had been followed, so much means would not have been used in some localities, and so little in other places where the banner of truth has not been raised. We are not to merge our individuality of judgment into any institution in our world. We are to look to God for wisdom, as did Daniel.

Age after age Jesus has been delivering his goods to his church. At the time of the first advent of Christ to our world, the men who composed **the Sanhedrin exercised their authority in controlling men according to their will.** If men's wills were always submerged into God's will, this would be safe; but when men are separated from God, and their own wisdom is made a controlling power, the souls for whom Christ has given his life to free from the bondage of Satan, are brought under bondage to him in another form.

Do we individually realize our true position, that as God's hired servants we are not to bargain away our stewardship; but that before the heavenly universe we are to administer the truth committed to us by God? Our own hearts are to be sanctified, our hands are to have something to impart as occasion demands, of the income that God entrusts to us. The humblest of us have been entrusted with talents, and made agents for God, using our gifts for his name's glory. **It is the duty of every one to realize his own responsibility,** and to see that his talents are turned to advantage as a gift that he must return, having done his best to improve it. He who improves his talents to the best of his ability, may present his offering to God as a consecrated gift, that will be as fragrant incense before him, a savor of life unto life.

Mrs. E. G. White in Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers, Series A, pgs 177-186, mimeographed edition.

“The trials of the children of Israel, and their attitude just before the first coming of Christ, have been presented before me again and again to illustrate the position of the

people of God in their experience before the second coming of Christ. How the enemy sought every occasion to take control of the minds of the Jews, and today he is seeking to blind the minds of God's servants, that they may not be able to discern the precious truth. RH, February 18, 1890 par. 1

“The Jews tried to stop the proclamation of the message that had been predicted in the word of God; but prophecy must be fulfilled. The Lord says, "Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." **Somebody is to come in the spirit and power of Elijah**, and when he appears, men may say, "You are too earnest, you do not interpret the Scriptures in the proper way. Let me tell you how to teach your message." ... RH, February 18, 1890 par. 16

“There are many among us who are prejudiced against the doctrines that are now being discussed. They will not come to hear, they will not calmly investigate, but they put forth their objections in the dark. They are perfectly satisfied with their position. "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." Rev. 3:17-19. ... RH, February 18, 1890 par. 18

“This scripture applies to those who live under the sound of the message, but who will not come to hear it. **How do you know but that the Lord is giving fresh evidences of his truth, placing it in a new setting, that the way of the Lord may be prepared?** What plans have you been laying that new light may be infused through the ranks of God's people? What evidence have you that God has not sent light to his children? All self-sufficiency, egotism, and pride of opinion must be put away. We must come to the feet of Jesus, and learn of him who is meek and lowly of heart. Jesus did not teach his disciples as the rabbis taught theirs. Many of the Jews came and listened as Christ revealed the mysteries of salvation, but they came not to learn; they came to criticise, to catch him in some inconsistency, that they might have something with which to prejudice the people. They were content with their knowledge, but the children of God must know the voice of the true Shepherd. Is not this a time when it would be **highly proper to fast and pray before God?** We are in danger of variance, in danger of taking sides on a controverted point; and should we not seek God in earnestness, with humiliation of soul, that we may know what is truth? ... RH, February 18, 1890 par. 19

“God wants us to depend upon him, and not upon man. He desires us to have a new heart; he would give us revealings of light from the throne of God. We should wrestle with every difficulty, **but when some controverted point is presented, are you to go to man to find out his opinion, and then shape your conclusions from his?--No, go to God.** Tell him what you want; take your Bible and search as for hidden treasures.” ... RH, February 18, 1890 par. 22

“God can teach you more in one moment by his Holy Spirit than you could learn from the great men of the earth.” RH, February 18, 1890 par. 23