

Warnings and Reproofs

— WHY THEY ARE NOT WANTED

Every school teacher knows that a major reason why the public schools are in shambles is because the teachers are not permitted to provide any discipline.

Every conscientious church member knows that a major cause of the growing problems in our denomination is due to the fact that warnings and reproofs are either not given or are ignored; so those working to lower our standards and change our doctrines have no fear of discipline or disfellowshipment.

This study will tell you what God's Word says about the matter. It is one of the most solemn collections of statements ever produced by the present compiler.

“ ‘And the people answered him not a word.’ **Not one in that vast assembly dared utter one word for God and show his loyalty to Jehovah.**

“**What astonishing deception and fearful blindness had, like a dark cloud, covered Israel!** This blindness and apostasy had not closed about them suddenly; **it had come upon them gradually as they had not heeded the word of reproof and warning which the Lord had sent to them** because of their pride and their sins. And now, in this fearful crisis, in the presence of the idolatrous priests and the apostate king, they remained neutral. **If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God.**”—3 Testimonies, 280-281.

“Another and still another will arise and bring in supposedly great light, and make their assertions. But we stand by the old landmarks. [1 John 1:1-10, quoted]. I am instructed to say that these words we may use as appropriate for this time, for **the time has come when sin must be called by its right name.** We are hindered in our work by men who are not converted, who seek their own glory. **They wish to be thought originators of new**

theories, which they present claiming that they are truth. But if these theories are received, they will lead to a denial of the truth that for the past fifty years God has been giving to His people, substantiating it by the demonstration of the Holy Spirit.”—Letter 329, 1905; 1 Selected Messages, 162.

“We can read from cause to effect and see **the greatness of the act is not that which constitutes sin; but the disobedience of God's expressed will, which is a virtual denial of God,** refusing the laws of His government.”—1 Bible Commentary, 1083.

“I must speak the truth to all. Those who have accepted the light from God's Word are **never, never to leave an impression upon human minds that God will serve with their sins.** His Word defines sin as the transgression of the law.”—Manuscript 16, 1901; 1 Selected Messages, 115.

“When our eyes look by faith into the Sanctuary, and take in the reality, the importance and holiness, of the work there being done, everything of a selfish nature will be abhorred by us. **Sin will appear as it is,—the transgression of God's holy law.**”—4 Bible Commentary, 1141.

“**It is not the greatness of the act of disobedience that constitutes sin, but the fact of variance from God's expressed will in the least particular;** for this shows that there is yet communion between the soul and sin. The heart is divided in its service. **There is a virtual denial of God, a rebellion against the laws of His government.**

“**Were men free to depart from the Lord's requirements and to set up a standard of duty for themselves,** there would be a variety of standards to suit different minds and the government would be taken out of the Lord's hands. **The will of man would be made supreme,** and the high and holy will of God—His purpose of love toward His creatures—would be dishonored, disrespected.

“**Whenever men choose their own way, they place themselves in controversy with God. They will have no place in the kingdom of heaven, for**

THE PEOPLE WHOM GOD ESPECIALLY USES

Who are the men of God most honored of Heaven in holy Scripture? The name of Enoch comes to mind. Then there is Moses. And, of course, Elijah and Daniel. We cannot forget John the Baptist and Paul. Others could be mentioned, but those are the outstanding ones.

What trait of character did they all have in common? Well, they with many others loved God and were kind to others.

But there is a special trait the above six men had in common, superior to that of most Bible heroes. That trait sets them apart as special men whom God could use to do a special work.

It was not fancy robes, polished shoes, and flowery sermons that they were distinguished for. No, these men stood out for a different reason.

They fearlessly reprovved sin. Forgetful of how doing so would surely cause problems for themselves, they defended God and His law at a time in history when others were afraid to do so.

To that list, we could have added the names of Noah, Christ, and Ellen White, all of whom strongly rebuked wrongdoing.

It is not by accident that all those individuals ranked high in the estimation of God. **Their sincere concern for the honor and defense of God could not permit them to be content with merely living a good life.**

What special trait did all the major and minor prophets have in common? Men such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah, Joel, and Malachi and their brethren. It was not ordination into the ministry. Not one of them was a minister or priest. **They fearlessly reprovved sin. That is why God called them to be His special messengers.** You and I cannot read a page in their writings without quickly coming across their strong denunciation of iniquity. What is it that made Samuel and Nathan so special? They defended God, even in the presence of kings. (Read *PK 147-148*, not quoted here.)

Throughout human history, the people of God have continually veered toward apostasy. Enticed by Satan's temptations, compromise and sin has always been thought the pleasant way to go. And in every age, there have been the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee. **But a few have stepped forward;** and, in spite of the reviling and contempt it would bring upon themselves, they declared to everyone, "There is sin in the camp. Unless you put it away, you will ere long share in it. We must return to God in humility of soul and heart-

felt surrender—or we will be lost!"

Would you like to be among that special number? Think not that it is predestination which selects the special ones whom God appoints to defend Him in a time of growing apostasy. He selects those who are selectable! Individuals who love Him, His Word, and His cause more than they love their own ease and security.

There is a reason why, of the millions who lived before the time of Christ, that only Enoch and Elijah were taken to heaven without seeing death, and Moses alone was raised from the dead. There is a reason. **Read again their bibliographies, as given in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.** There is a reason why Jesus spoke so highly of John the Baptist. Read his story too, and be inspired to emulate his life of self-sacrificing devotion to God. Read about Jeremiah, Nehemiah, and Noah.

Who were the martyrs? Men and women who openly defended God, when they knew it would cost them their lives. **Who were the leaders in the Great Reformation? Men who, at the peril of their lives, condemned religious apostasy.**

Throughout this compilation, you will frequently come across many of the above-named champions of past ages. It is quite obvious why they were mentioned.

God wants to use you also. A new century has begun, and **our denomination is now nearly 150 years old.** With the passing of years, it has steadily moved closer to the world. Its preachers are trained under men who were taught liberal religion in outside universities.

On all sides, we see lowered standards; restructured doctrines; worldly entertainment; changed church services; sports and music; and ecumenical books.

Public sins, lowered standards, changed doctrines in our church should be publicly reprovved. Yet none of us can name even one of our ministers or leaders who does it.

God has a work for you to do. Oh, but you say, "I will get into trouble if I openly defend our historic beliefs and standards." But is it better to be honored by God or by men? There are those around you who need the encouragement you can give them. They are watching your example.

Many of our people will awaken, as from a dream, when they discover how very far we have wandered from God's blueprint. **Show it to them. Explain the utter seriousness of the situation.**

they are at war with the very principles of heaven. In disregarding the will of God, they are placing themselves on the side of Satan, the enemy of God and man. **Not by one word, not by many**

words, but by every word that God has spoken, shall man live. We cannot disregard one word, however trifling it may seem to us, and be safe. There is not a commandment of the law that is not for the

MATTHEW EIGHTEEN

What is the meaning of Matthew 18:15-17 and how does it relate to 1 Timothy 5:20, which seems to say the opposite? Only the Word of God can explain this.

The following passage of Inspiration explains that Matthew 18:15-17 refers to secret sins, which are known to no one except the one indulging it, while 1 Timothy 5:20 refers to sins which are known by others in the local congregation or, of course, more generally to God's people.

Never, in his writings, has the present compiler ever published about a secret sin known only to one, or even a few people; a private sin which would be covered by Matthew 18:15-17. He has only written about sins more generally known, which are, by their nature, injuring the entire church. —*vf*

"Thursday morning we went to Watrousville, a distance of sixteen miles. I wrote sixteen pages, and attended an evening meeting, **in which I gave a very pointed testimony to one present.** The next morning I wrote twelve pages before breakfast, and returned to Tuscola, and wrote eight pages more.

"Sabbath my husband spoke in the forenoon, and I followed for two hours before taking food. The meeting was then closed for a few moments, and I took a little food, and **afterward spoke in a social meeting for one hour, bearing pointed testimonies for several present.** These testimonies were generally received with feelings of humility and gratitude. I cannot, however, say that all were so received.

"The next morning, as we were about to leave for the house of worship to engage in the arduous labors of the day, **a sister** for whom I had a testimony that she lacked discretion and caution, and did not fully control her words and actions, **came in with her husband and manifested feelings of great unreconciliation and agitation.** She commenced to talk and to weep. She murmured a little, and confessed a little, and justified self considerably. She had a wrong idea of many things I had stated to her. **Her pride was touched as I brought out her faults in so public a manner. Here was evidently the main difficulty. But why should she feel thus? The brethren and sisters knew these things were so, therefore I was not informing them of anything new.** But I doubt not that it was

new to the sister herself. She did not know herself, and could not properly judge of her own words and acts. This is in a degree true of nearly all, hence the necessity of faithful reproofs in the church and the cultivation by all its members of love for the plain testimony.

"Her husband seemed to feel unreconciled to my bringing out her faults before the church and stated that if Sister White had followed the directions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 he should not have felt hurt: 'Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.'

"My husband then stated that he should understand that these words of our Lord had reference to cases of personal trespass, and could not be applied in the case of this sister. She had not trespassed against Sister White. **But that which had been reproved publicly was public wrongs which threatened the prosperity of the church and the cause.** Here, said my husband, is a text applicable to the case: 1 Timothy 5:20: **"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."**

"The brother acknowledged his error like a Christian and seemed reconciled to the matter. It was evident that since the meeting of Sabbath afternoon they had got many things about the matter wonderfully magnified and wrong. It was therefore proposed that the written testimony be read. When this was done, the sister who was reproved by it, inquired: 'Is that what you stated yesterday?' I replied that it was. She seemed surprised and quite reconciled to the written testimony. This I gave her, without reserving a copy. Here I did wrong. But I had such tender regard for her and her husband, and such ardent desires and hopes for their prosperity, that, in this case, I broke over an established custom."

—2 Testimonies, 14-16 [italics mine]

good and happiness of man, both in this life and in the life to come. In obedience to God's law, man is surrounded as with a hedge and kept from the evil. **He who breaks down this divinely erected barrier at one point has destroyed its power to protect him; for he has opened a way by which the enemy can enter to waste and ruin.**

"By venturing to disregard the will of God upon one point, our first parents opened the floodgates of woe upon the world. And every individual who follows their example will reap a similar result. The love of God underlies every precept of His law, and **he who departs from the commandment is working his own unhappiness and ruin.**"—*Mount of Blessing, 51-52.*

"The True Witness says: 'I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot.' And again, **'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.'** Then comes the promise: 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.' 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.'

"The people of God must see their wrongs and arouse to zealous repentance and a putting away of those sins which have brought them into such a deplorable condition of poverty, blindness, wretchedness, and fearful deception. I was shown that the pointed testimony must live in the church. This alone will answer to the message to the Laodiceans. **Wrongs must be reproved, sin must be called sin, and iniquity must be met promptly and decidedly, and put away from us as a people.**"—*3 Testimonies, 259-260.*

"The great reason why so few of the world's great men and those having a college education are led to obey the commandments of God is that they have separated education from religion, thinking that each should occupy a field by itself. God presented a field large enough to perfect the knowledge of all who should enter it. This knowledge was obtained under divine supervision; it was bound about with the immutable law of Jehovah, and the result would have been perfect blessedness.

"God did not create evil, He only made the good, which was like Himself. But Satan would not be content to know the will of God and do it. **His curi-**

osity was on the stretch to know that which God had not designed he should know. Evil, sin, and death were not created by God; they are the result of disobedience, which originated in Satan. But the knowledge of evil now in the world was brought in through the cunning of Satan. These are very hard and expensive lessons; but men will learn them, and **many will never be convinced that it is bliss to be ignorant of a certain kind of knowledge, which arises from unsatisfied desires and unholy aims.** The sons and daughters of Adam are fully as inquisitive and presumptuous as was Eve in seeking forbidden knowledge. **They gain an experience, a knowledge, which God never designed they should have,** and the result will be, as it was to our first parents, the loss of their Eden home."—*5 Testimonies, 503-504.*

"If men resist the warnings the Lord sends them, they become even leaders in evil practices; 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. Thus they follow in the track of Romanism. 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 work like leaven to taint and corrupt institutions and churches.**

"Anything that lowers man'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 and separates the soul from Him.

"God will not vindicate any device whereby man shall in the slightest degree rule or oppress his fellow man. As soon as a man begins to make an iron rule for other men, he dishonors God and imperils his own soul and the souls of his brethren."—*7 Testimonies, 181.*

"Never was there greater need of faithful warnings and reproofs, and close, straight dealing, than at this very time. Satan has come down with great power, knowing that his time is short. **He is flooding the world with pleasing fables, and the people of God love to have smooth things spoken to them. Sin and iniquity are not abhorred.** I was shown that God's people must make more firm, determined efforts to press back the incoming darkness. The close work of the Spirit of God is needed now as never before. Stupidity must be shaken off.

Warnings and Reproofs

**PART TWO
OF SIX**

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

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We must arouse from the lethargy that will prove our destruction unless we resist it. Satan has a powerful, controlling influence upon minds. **Preachers and people are in danger of being found upon the side of the powers of darkness. There is no such thing now as a neutral position.** We are all decidedly for the right or decidedly with the wrong. Said Christ: 'He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.'—*3 Testimonies, 327-328.*

"I urge you to consider Isaiah 58, which opens a wide and extensive vineyard to be worked upon the lines which the Lord has pointed out. When this is done there will be an increase of moral sources and the church will no more remain almost stationary. There will be blessing and power attending their labor."—*Manuscript 28, 1900; 4 Bible Commentary, 1148.*

"My brethren, you need to study more carefully the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. This chapter marks out the only course that we can follow with safety. . . **The prophet receives this word from the Lord—a message startling in its clearness and force:**

"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.' Though they are called the people of God, the house of Jacob, though they profess to be linked with God in obedience and fellowship, they are far from Him. Wonderful privileges and promises have been given to them, but they have betrayed their trust. **With no words of flattery must the message be given them. 'Show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.'** Show them where they are making a mistake. **Set their danger before them. Tell them of the sins they are committing,** while at the same time they pride themselves on their righteousness. Apparently seeking God, they are forgetting Him, forgetting that He is a God of love and compassion, long suffering and goodness, dealing justly and loving mercy. **Worldly policy has come into their business and religious life. Their hearts are not purified through the truth. God looks on their outward ceremonies of humility as a solemn mockery.** He regards all religious sham as an insult to Himself."—*Letter*

76, 1902; 4 Bible Commentary, 1149 [italics hers].

"Our work now is to rouse the people. Satan with all his angels has come down with great power, to work with every conceivable deception to counterwork the work of God. The Lord has a message for His people. This message will be borne, whether men will accept or reject it. As in the days of Christ, there will be the deep plottings of the powers of darkness, **but the message must not be muffled with smooth words or fair speeches, crying peace, peace,** when there is no peace, to those who are turning away from God. 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked' [Isa. 58:1-2, quoted.]

"The whole chapter is applicable to those who are living in this period of the earth's history. **Consider this chapter attentively; for it will be fulfilled.**"—*MS 36, 1897; 4 Bible Commentary, 1149.*

"The testimony of the Word of God is against this ensnaring doctrine of faith without works. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions upon which mercy is to be granted, it is presumption; for genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.

"Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while willfully violating one of God's requirements. The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God. 'Sin is the transgression of the law.' And 'whosoever sinneth [transgresseth the law] hath not seen Him, neither known Him.' 1 John 3:6."—*Great Controversy, 472.*

"Christ calls for unity. But **He does not call for us to unify on wrong practices.** The God of heaven draws a sharp contrast between pure, elevating, ennobling truth and false, misleading doctrines. **He calls sin and impenitence by the right name.** He does not gloss over wrong doing with a coat of untempered mortar. **I urge our brethren to unify upon a true, Scriptural basis.**"—*Manuscript 10, 1905; 1 Selected Messages, 175.*

There is constant need of earnest, decided messages of warning. **God will have men who are true to duty. At the right time He sends His faithful messengers to do a work similar to that of Elijah.**"—*5 Testimonies, 254.*

“The mountain was covered with people full of eager expectation. The king [Ahab] came in great pomp, and the idolaters, confident of triumph, shouted his welcome. **But God had been greatly dishonored. One man, and only one man, appeared to vindicate the honor of God. With clear, trumpetlike tones Elijah addressed the vast multitude:** ‘How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.’ **The result was that the Lord God, who ruleth in the heavens, was vindicated,** and the Baal worshipers were slain. **Where are the Elijahs of today?**”—5 *Testimonies*, 526-527.

The history of Achan teaches the solemn lesson that **for one man’s sin the displeasure of God will rest upon a people or a nation till the transgression is searched out and punished. Sin is corrupting in its nature.** One man infected with its deadly leprosy may communicate the taint to thousands. **Those who occupy responsible positions as guardians of the people are false to their trust if they do not faithfully search out and reprove sin. Many dare not condemn iniquity, lest they shall thereby sacrifice position or popularity.** And by some it is considered uncharitable to rebuke sin. The servant of God should never allow his own spirit to be mingled with the reproof which he is required to give; but **he is under the most solemn obligation to present the Word of God, without fear or favor. He must call sin by its right name. Those who by their carelessness or indifference permit God’s name to be dishonored by His professed people, are numbered with the transgressor,**—registered in the record of heaven as partakers in their evil deeds . . .

“**The love of God will never lead to the belittling of sin;** it will never cover or excuse an unconfessed wrong. Achan learned too late that God’s law, like its Author, is unchanging. It has to do with all our acts and thoughts and feelings. It follows us, and reaches every secret spring of action. **By indulgence in sin, men are led to lightly regard the law of God.** Many conceal their transgressions from their fellow men, and **flatter themselves that God will not be strict to mark iniquity.** But His law is the great standard of right, and with it every act of life must be compared in that day when God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil. Purity of heart will lead to purity of life. **All excuses for sin are vain. Who can plead for the sinner when God testifies against him?**”—*Signs*, April 21, 1881; 2 *Bible Commentary*, 996-997.

“There are many false prophets in these days,

to whom sin does not appear specially repulsive. **They complain that the peace of the people is unnecessarily disturbed by the reproofs and warnings of God’s messengers. As for them, they lull the souls of sinners into a fatal ease by their smooth and deceitful teachings.** Ancient Israel was thus charmed by the flattering messages of the corrupt priests. **Their prediction of prosperity was more pleasing than the message of the true prophet, who counseled repentance and submission.**

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

“Those who seek to cloak sin and make it appear less aggravating to the mind of the offender are doing the work of the false prophets and may expect the retributive wrath of God to follow such a course. **The Lord will never accommodate His ways to the wishes of corrupt men.**”—4 *Testimonies*, 185.

“**Those who have in the fear of God ventured out to faithfully meet error and sin,** calling sin by its right name, **have discharged a disagreeable duty with much suffering of feelings to themselves;** but they get the sympathy of but few and suffer the neglect of many. The sympathizers are on the wrong side, and they carry out the purposes of Satan to defeat the design of God.

“Reproofs always hurt human nature. Many are the souls that have been destroyed by the unwise sympathy of their brethren; for, **because the brethren sympathized with them, they thought they must indeed have been abused, and that the reprover was all wrong and had a bad spirit. The only hope for sinners in Zion is to fully see and confess their wrongs, and put them away.** Those who step in to destroy the edge of sharp reproof that God sends, saying that the reprover was partly wrong and the reproofed was not just right, please the enemy.

“**Any way that Satan can devise to make the reproofs of none effect will accomplish his design.** Some will lay blame upon the one whom God has sent with a message of warning, saying, He is too severe; and **in so doing they become responsible for the soul of the sinner** whom God desired to save, and to whom, because He loved him,

1 He sent correction, that he might humble his soul
0 before God and put his sins from him. **These false**
7 **sympathizers will have an account to settle with**
9 **the Master by-and-by for their work of death.**—3
Testimonies, 328-329.

“When the Jews rejected Christ they rejected the foundation of their faith. And, on the other hand, **the Christian world of today who claim faith in Christ, but reject the law of God are making a mistake similar to that of the deceived Jews.** Those who profess to cling to Christ, centering their hopes on Him, while they pour contempt upon the moral law, and the prophecies, are in no safer position than were the unbelieving Jews. **They cannot understandingly call sinners to repentance, for they are unable to properly explain what they are to repent of.** The sinner, upon being exhorted to forsake his sins, has a right to ask, What is sin? Those who respect the law of God can answer, Sin is the transgression of the law. In confirmation of this the apostle Paul says, I had not known sin but by the law.”—1 *Selected Messages, 229.*

“Rebuke sin firmly, and give it no sanction. **The refuge of lies for the covering up of sin must be torn away in order that poor deluded souls may not sleep on to their everlasting ruin.**”—*Testimonies to Ministers, 182.*

“**God pities men struggling in the blindness of perversity; He seeks to enlighten the darkened understanding by sending reproofs and threatenings designed to cause the most exalted to feel their ignorance and to deplore their errors.** He endeavors to help the self-complacent to become dissatisfied with their vain attainments and to seek for spiritual blessing through a close connection with heaven.

“**God’s plan is not to send messengers who will please and flatter sinners; He delivers no messages of peace to lull the unsanctified into carnal security.** Instead, He lays heavy burdens upon the conscience of the wrongdoer and pierces his soul with sharp arrows of conviction. **Ministering angels present to him the fearful judgments of God, to deepen the sense of need and to prompt the agonizing cry, ‘What must I do to be saved?’** Acts 16:30. But the Hand that humbles to the dust, rebukes sin, and puts pride and ambition to shame, is the Hand that lifts up the penitent, stricken one. With deepest sympathy He who permits the chastisement to fall, inquires, “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?”

“**When man has sinned against a holy and merciful God, he can pursue no course so noble as to repent sincerely and confess his errors in**

tears and bitterness of soul. This God requires of him; He accepts nothing less than a broken heart and a contrite spirit.”—*Prophets and Kings, 435-436.*

“God has no sympathy with the evildoer. **He gives no one liberty to gloss over the sins of His people, nor to cry, ‘Peace, peace,’** when He has declared that there shall be no peace for the wicked.

“**Those who stir up rebellion against the servants whom God sends to deliver His messages are rebelling against the word of the Lord.**”—4 *Testimonies, 185.*

“To the end of time, men will arise to create confusion and rebellion among those who claim to be representatives of the true God. **Those who prophesy lies will encourage men to look upon sin as a light thing.** When the terrible results of their evil deeds are made manifest, **they will seek, if possible, to make the one who has faithfully warned them, responsible for their difficulties,** even as the Jews charged Jeremiah with their evil fortunes. But as surely as the words of Jehovah through His prophet were vindicated anciently, so surely will the certainty of His messages be established today.”—*Prophets and Kings, 442.*

“**The only definition we find in the Bible for sin is that ‘sin is the transgression of the law’** (1 John 3:4). The Word of God declares, ‘All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God’ (Rom. 3:23). ‘There is none that doeth good, no, not one’ (Rom. 3:12). **Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts.** They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God.

“We may measure ourselves by ourselves, we may compare ourselves among ourselves, **we may say we do as well as this one or that one, but the question to which the judgment will call for an answer is, Do we meet the claims of high heaven? Do we reach the divine standard?** Are our hearts in harmony with the God of heaven?”—1 *Selected Messages, 320-321.*

“**The warning is for all time.** Christ’s act in cursing the tree which His own power had created stands as a **warning to all churches and to all Christians.**”—*Desire of Ages, 584.*

“**Men cannot with impunity reject the warnings that God in mercy sends them. From those**

who persist in turning from these warnings, God withdraws His Spirit, leaving them to the deceptions that they love.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, 266.

“In the final victory **God will have no use for those persons who are nowhere to be found in time of peril and danger**, when the strength, courage, and influence of all are required to make a charge upon the enemy. **Those who stand like faithful soldiers to battle against wrong, and to vindicate the right**, warring against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, will each receive the commendation from the Master: **‘Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’**”—*3 Testimonies*, 327.

“**You have heard the Word of God in reproofs, in counsels, in warnings**, as well as in the entreaties of love. **But hearing is not enough**. ‘Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.’ It is easy to be borne along by the current, and to cry Hosannah with the multitude; but in the calm of everyday life, when there is no special excitement or exaltation, then comes the test of true Christianity. It is then that your heart becomes cold, and your zeal abates, and religious exercises become distasteful to you.”—*4 Testimonies*, 187-188.

“**If wrongs are apparent among His people, and if the servants of God pass on indifferent to them, they virtually sustain and justify the sinner, and are alike guilty and will just as surely receive the displeasure of God; for they will be made responsible for the sins of the guilty**. In vision I have been pointed to many instances where the displeasure of God has been incurred by a **neglect on the part of His servants to deal with the wrongs and sins existing among them**. Those who have excused these wrongs have been thought by the people to be very amiable and lovely in disposition, simply because **they shunned to discharge a plain Scriptural duty. The task was not agreeable to their feelings**; therefore they avoided it.”—*3 Testimonies*, 265-266.

“God’s authority should be held in as much greater reverence as He is holier than man. **Our Creator and our Commander, infinite in power, terrible in judgment, seeks by every means to bring men to see and repent of their sins. By**

the mouth of His servants He predicts the dangers of disobedience; He sounds the note of warning and faithfully reproves sin. His people are kept in prosperity only by His mercy, through the vigilant watchcare of chosen instrumentalities. **He cannot uphold and guard a people who reject His counsel and despise His reproofs**. For a time He may withhold His retributive judgments; yet He cannot always stay His hand.”—*Prophets and Kings*, 426.

“**Not one in twenty of those who have a good standing with Seventh-day Adventists is living out the self-sacrificing principles of the word of God.**”—*1 Testimonies*, 632.

“God’s people of today are in danger of committing errors no less disastrous [than did King Saul]. **We cannot, we must not, place blind confidence in any man, however high his profession of faith or his position in the church. We must not follow his guidance, unless the Word of God sustains him**. The Lord would have His people individually **distinguish between sin and righteousness**, between the precious and the vile.”—*Signs*, August 17, 1882; *2 Bible Commentary*, 1016.

“**Deal faithfully with wrong doing. Warn every soul that is in danger. Leave none to deceive themselves**. Call sin by its right name.”—*Desire of Ages*, 805-806.

“**The hearts of men are hardened. They recognize not the warning voice of God**. They will not flee to the only refuge from the gathering storm.

“Many who have been placed upon the walls of Zion, to watch with eagle eye for the approach of danger and lift the voice of warning, are themselves asleep. **The very ones who should be most active and vigilant in this hour of peril are neglecting their duty and bringing upon themselves the blood of souls**.

“My brethren, **beware of the evil heart of unbelief**. The Word of God is plain and close in its restrictions; it interferes with your selfish indulgence; therefore you do not obey it. The testimonies of His Spirit call your attention to the Scriptures, point out your defects of character, and rebuke your sins; therefore you do not heed them. **And to justify your carnal, ease-loving course you begin to doubt whether the testimonies are from God. If you would obey their teachings you would be assured of their divine origin**. Re-

Warnings and Reproofs

**PART THREE
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W member, your unbelief does not affect their truth-
M fulness. If they are from God they will stand. Those
1 who seek to lessen the faith of God's people in these
0 testimonies, which have been in the church for the
8 last thirty-six years, are fighting against God. It is
0 not the instrument whom you slight and insult, but
God, who has spoken to you in these warnings and
reproofs."—5 Testimonies, 234-235.

"We must study the warnings and corrections He has given His people in past ages. We do not lack light. We know what works we should avoid and what requirements He has given us to observe; so **if we do not seek to know and do that which is right, it is because wrong doing suits the carnal heart** better than right doing."—5 Testimonies, 532-533.

"Before the Lawgiver shall come to punish the disobedient, transgressors are warned to repent, and return to their allegiance; **but with the majority these warnings will be in vain.** Says the apostle Peter, 'There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.' 2 Peter 3:3."—Patriarchs and Prophets, 102-103.

"As the Word of God is walled in with these [Spirit of Prophecy] books and pamphlets, **so has God walled you in with reproofs, counsel, warnings, and encouragements.** Here you are crying before God, in the anguish of your souls, for more light. I am authorized from God to tell you that not another ray of light through the Testimonies will shine upon your pathway until you make a practical use of the light already given. **The Lord has walled you about with light; but you have not appreciated the light; you have trampled upon it. While some have despised the light, others have neglected it or followed it but indifferently.** A few have set their hearts to obey the light which God has been pleased to give them."—2 Testimonies, 606.

"Warning, admonition, promise, all are for us, upon whom the ends of the world are come. **'Therefore let us not sleep, as do others;** but let us watch and be sober.' 1 Thessalonians 5:6."—6 Testimonies, 410.

"In prophetic vision he [Enoch] was instructed concerning the death of Christ, and was shown His

coming in glory, attended by all the holy angels, to ransom His people from the grave. **He also saw the corrupt state of the world when Christ should appear the second time—that there would be a boastful, presumptuous, self-willed generation,** denying the only God and the Lord Jesus Christ, **trampling upon the law and despising the atonement.**"—Patriarchs and Prophets, 85-86.

"While we cannot now comprehend the works and ways of God, we can discern His great love, which underlies all His dealings with men. He who lives near to Jesus will understand much of the mystery of godliness. **He will recognize the mercy that administers reproof, that tests the character, and brings to light the purpose of the heart.**

"When Jesus presented the testing truth that caused so many of His disciples to turn back, He knew what would be the result of His words; but He had a purpose of mercy to fulfill. He foresaw that in the hour of temptation every one of His beloved disciples would be severely tested. His agony in Gethsemane, His betrayal and crucifixion, would be to them a most trying ordeal. **Had no previous test been given, many who were actuated by merely selfish motives would have been connected with them.**"—Desire of Ages, 394.

"There was a coming out, **a decided separation from the wicked, an escape for life.** So it was in the days of Noah; so with Lot; so with the disciples prior to the destruction of Jerusalem; and **so it will be in the last days. Again the voice of God is heard in a message of warning, bidding His people separate themselves from the prevailing iniquity.**"—Patriarchs and Prophets, 166.

"Seventh-day Adventists, above all other people in the world, should be patterns of piety, holy in heart and in conversation. I related in the presence of N. Fuller that **the people whom God had chosen as His peculiar treasure were required to be elevated, refined, sanctified, partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption** that is in the world through lust. **Should they who make so high a profession indulge in sin and iniquity, their guilt would be very great.** The Lord reproves the sins of one, that others may take warning and fear . . .

"They signify their loyalty to the God of heaven by yielding obedience to the laws of His government. They are God's representatives upon the earth. **Any**

sin in them separates them from God and, in a special manner, dishonors His name by giving the enemies of His holy law occasion to reproach His cause and His people, whom He has called 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people,' that they should show forth the praises of Him that hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light."—2 Testimonies, 451-452.

"The word is: **Go forward; discharge your individual duty, and leave all consequences in the hands of God.** If we move forward where Jesus leads the way we shall see His triumph, we shall share His joy. **We must share the conflicts if we wear the crown of victory. Like Jesus, we must be made perfect through suffering.** Had Christ's life been one of ease, then might we safely yield to sloth. Since His life was marked with continual self-denial, suffering, and self-sacrifice, we shall make no complaint if we are partakers with Him. **We can walk safely in the darkest path if we have the Light of the world for our guide.**

"**The Lord is testing and proving you. He has counseled, admonished, and entreated.**"—5 Testimonies, 71-72.

"**When the watchman, seeing the sword coming, gives the trumpet a certain sound, the people along the line will echo the warning,** and all will have opportunity to make ready for the conflict. **But too often the leader has stood hesitating, seeming to say: 'Let us not be in too great haste. There may be a mistake.** We must be careful not to raise a false alarm.' The very hesitancy and uncertainty on his part is crying: 'Peace and safety.' Do not get excited. Be not alarmed . . . Thus he virtually denies the message sent from God, and the warning which was designed to stir the churches fails to do its work.

"The trumpet of the watchman gives no certain sound, and the people do not prepare for the battle. **Let the watchman beware lest, through his hesitancy and delay, souls shall be left to perish,** and their blood shall be required at his hand."—5 Testimonies, 715-716.

"When warnings and entreaties come to them, they say: 'Doth she not speak in parables?' **Words of warning and reproof have been treated as idle tales.**

"When Christ looked down from the crest of Olivet, **He saw this state of things existing in every church.** The warnings come down to all that are following in the tread of the people of Jerusalem, who had such great light. This people is before us as a warning. **By rejecting God's warnings**

in this our day, men are repeating the sin of Jerusalem. The Lord sees what the human agent does not see and will not see—the outcome of all the human devising in Battle Creek. He has done all that a God could do. **He has flashed light before the eyes of the people, that their sins might not reach the boundary where repentance cannot be felt.** But by a long process of departure from just and righteous principles, **men have placed themselves where light and truth, justice and mercy, are not discerned. This course has become part of their very nature.**"—8 Testimonies, 68.

"The Lord clearly defined **obedience as the way to the City of God.**"—Prophets and Kings, 179.

"**The prevailing spirit of our time is one of infidelity and apostasy**—a spirit of avowed illumination because of a knowledge of truth, but in reality of the blindest presumption. **Human theories are exalted and placed where God and His law should be. Satan tempts men and women to disobey, with the promise that in disobedience they will find liberty and freedom** that will make them as gods. There is seen a spirit of opposition to the plain Word of God, of **idolrous exaltation of human wisdom above divine revelation.**

"Men have allowed their minds to become so darkened and confused by conformity to worldly customs and influences that they seem to have lost all power to discriminate between light and darkness, truth and error. So far have they departed from the right way that **they hold the opinions of a few philosophers, so-called, to be more trustworthy than the truths of the Bible.** The entreaties and promises of God's Word, its threatenings against disobedience and idolatry—these seem powerless to melt their hearts. **A faith such as actuated Paul, Peter, and John they regard as old-fashioned,** mystical, and unworthy of the intelligence of modern thinkers."—Prophets and Kings, 178.

"Looking down to the last days, the same Infinite Power declares, concerning **those who 'received not the love of the truth,** that they might be saved': **'For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:** that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but **had pleasure in unrighteousness.'** 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. **As they reject the teachings of His Word, God withdraws His Spirit** and leaves them to the deceptions which they love."—Great Controversy, 431.

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“The people who are at war with the law of the great Jehovah, **who consider it a special virtue to talk, write, and act the most bitter and hateful things to show their contempt of that law**, may make exalted profession of love to God, and apparently have much religious zeal, as did the Jewish chief priests and elders; yet, in the day of God, ‘Found wanting’ will be said of them by the Majesty of heaven. ‘By the law is the knowledge of sin.’

“The mirror which would discover to them the defects in their characters, they are infuriated against, because it points out their sins. **Leading Adventists who have rejected the light are fired with madness against God’s holy law**, as the Jewish nation were against the Son of God. They are in a terrible deception, deceiving others and being deceived themselves. **They will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved**. Such will not be taught.”—2 *Testimonies*, 452-453.

“The Lord had repeatedly set before the ten tribes the evils of disobedience. **But notwithstanding reproof and entreaty, Israel had sunk lower and still lower in apostasy**. ‘Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer,’ the Lord declared: ‘My people are bent to backsliding from Me.’ Hosea 4:16; 11:7.”—*Prophets and Kings*, 281.

“**God requires prompt and unquestioning obedience of His law; but men are asleep or paralyzed by the deceptions of Satan, who suggests excuses and subterfuges, and conquers their scruples**, saying as he said to Eve in the Garden: ‘Ye shall not surely die.’ **Disobedience not only hardens the heart and conscience of the guilty one, but it tends to corrupt the faith of others**. That which looked very wrong to them at first, gradually loses this appearance by being constantly before them, till finally they question whether it is really sin and unconsciously fall into the same error.”—4 *Testimonies*, 146.

“Such has been Satan’s work from the days of Adam to the present, and he has pursued it with great success. **He tempts men to distrust God’s love and to doubt His wisdom. He is constantly seeking to excite a spirit of irreverent curiosity**, a restless, inquisitive desire to penetrate the secrets of divine wisdom and power. **In their efforts to search out what God has been pleased to withhold, multitudes overlook the truths which He has revealed**, and which are essential to salvation. **Satan tempts men to disobedience by leading them to believe they are entering a wonderful field of knowledge**. But this is all a deception. Elated with their ideas of progression, they are, by trampling on God’s requirements, setting their feet

in the path that leads to degradation and death.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 54-55.

“**Many have a name to live while they have become spiritually dead**. These will one day say: ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?’ And then will I profess unto them, **‘I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.’**

“**Woe will be pronounced against thee, if thou loiter and linger until the Sun of Righteousness shall set; the blackness of eternal night will be thy portion**. Oh, that the cold, formal, worldly heart may be melted! Christ shed not only tears for us, but His own blood. Will not these manifestations of His love arouse us to deep humiliation before God? **It is humility and self-abasement that we need, to be approved of God.**”—5 *Testimonies*, 73.

“**In vain were the king’s threats. He could not turn these noble men** [Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego] **from their allegiance** to the great Ruler of nations. **They had learned from the history of their fathers that disobedience to God is dishonor, disaster, and ruin**; that the fear of the Lord is not only the beginning of wisdom but the foundation of all true prosperity. They look with calmness upon the fiery furnace and the idolatrous throng. They have trusted in God, and He will not fail them now. **Their answer is respectful, but decided: ‘Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up’** (Dan. 3:18).”—*Sanctified Life*, 37.

“**Like will attract like. Those who are drinking from the same fountain of blessing will draw nearer together. Truth dwelling in the hearts of believers will lead to blessed and happy assimilation**. Thus will be answered the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one even as He is one with the Father. For this oneness every truly converted heart will be striving.

“**With the ungodly there will be a deceptive harmony that but partially conceals a perpetual discord**. In their opposition to the will and the truth of God they are united while on every other point they are rent with hatred, emulation, jealousy, and deadly strife.

“**The pure and the base metal are now so mingled that only the discerning eye of the infinite God can with certainty distinguish between them. But the moral magnet of holiness and truth will attract together the pure metal while it will repel the base and counterfeit.**

“The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly”; **but where do we behold the true advent spirit? Who are preparing to stand in that time of temptation which is just before us? The people to whom God has entrusted the sacred, solemn, testing truths for this time are sleeping at their post.** They say by their actions: We have the truth; we are ‘rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing’ while the True Witness declares: Thou ‘knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’

“With what fidelity do these words portray the present condition of the church: ‘Knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’ **Messages of warning, dictated by the Holy Spirit, are borne by the servants of God, defects of character are presented before the erring; but they say: ‘That does not represent my case.** I do not accept the message you bring. I am doing the best I can. I believe the truth.’

“**That evil servant who said in his heart, ‘My Lord delayeth His coming,’ professed to be waiting for Christ. He was a ‘servant,’ outwardly devoted to the service of God while at heart he had yielded to Satan.** He does not, like the scoffer, openly deny the truth, but reveals in his life the sentiment of the heart—that the Lord’s coming is delayed. Presumption renders him careless of eternal interests. **He accepts the world’s maxims and conforms to its customs and practices.** Selfishness, worldly pride, and ambitions predominate.”—*5 Testimonies, 100-102.*

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

“**While men will not heed repeated warnings, they are pleased with false teachers who flatter their vanity and strengthen their iniquity,** but

who will fail to help them in the day of trouble. God’s chosen servants should meet with courage and patience whatever trials and sufferings befall them through reproach, neglect, or misrepresentations because they faithfully discharge the duty that God has given them to do. They should remember that the prophets of old and the Saviour of the world also endured abuse and persecution for the Word’s sake. They must expect to meet just such opposition as was manifested by the burning of the roll that was written by the dictation of God.

“The Lord is fitting a people for heaven. The defects of character, the stubborn will, the selfish idolatry, the indulgence of faultfinding, hatred, and contention, provoke the wrath of God and must be put away from His commandment-keeping people. **Those living in these sins are deceived and blinded by the wiles of Satan. They think that they are in the light when they are groping in darkness.** There are murmurers among us now, even as there were murmurers among ancient Israel. **Those who by unwise sympathy encourage men in rebellion when their self-love is smarting beneath merited reproof are not the friends of God,** the great Reprover. God will send reproof and warning to His people as long as they continue upon earth.”—*4 Testimonies, 180.*

“**The Lord has His appointed agencies;** and if these are not discerned and respected by those who are connected with His work, if men feel free to disregard God’s requirements, they must not be kept in positions of trust. **They would not listen to counsel, nor to the commands of God through His appointed agencies.** Like Saul, they would rush into a work that was never appointed them, and the mistakes they would make in following their human judgment would place the Israel of God where their Leader could not reveal Himself to them. **Sacred things would become mingled with the common.**”—*Youth’s Instructor, November 17, 1898; 2 Bible Commentary, 1014.*

During these years of apostasy [during Solomon’s reign], the spiritual decline of Israel progressed steadily. **How could it be otherwise when their king had united his interests with satanic agencies? Through these agencies the enemy worked to confuse the minds of the Israelites in regard to true and false worship,** and they became an easy prey. Commerce with other nations brought them into **intimate contact with those who had no**

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love for God, and their own love for Him was greatly lessened. Their keen sense of the high, holy character of God was deadened. **Refusing to follow in the path of obedience, they transferred their allegiance to the enemy of righteousness.**—*Prophets and Kings, 58-59.*

“The reproofs, the cautions, the corrections of the Lord, have been given to His church in all ages of the world. These warnings were despised and rejected in Christ’s day by the self-righteous Pharisees, who claimed that they needed no such reproof and were unjustly dealt with. They would not receive the word of the Lord through His servants because it did not please their inclinations. **Should the Lord give a vision right before this class of people in our day, pointing out their mistakes, rebuking their self-righteousness and condemning their sins, they would rise up in rebellion,** like the inhabitants of Nazareth when Christ showed them their true condition.

“If these persons do not humble their hearts before God, **if they harbor the suggestions of Satan, doubt and infidelity will take possession of the soul, and they will see everything in a false light.** Let the **seeds of doubt** once be sown in their hearts and they will have an abundant harvest to reap. **They will come to mistrust and disbelieve truths which are plain and full of beauty** to others who have not educated themselves in unbelief. Those who train the mind to seize upon everything which they can use as a peg to hang a doubt upon, and suggest these thoughts to other minds, will always find occasion to doubt.”—*5 Testimonies, 689-690.*

“Those who valiantly take their position on the right side, who encourage submission to God’s revealed will and strengthen others in their efforts to put away their wrong doings **are the true friends** of the Lord, who in love is trying to correct the errors of His people, that He may wash them and, cleansing them from every defilement, fit them for His holy kingdom.”—*1 Testimonies, 181.*

“The great sin of the Jews was that of neglecting and rejecting present opportunities. As Jesus views the state of His professed followers today, **He sees base ingratitude, hollow formalism, hypocritical insincerity, pharisaical pride**

and apostasy.

“The tears which Christ shed on the crest of Olivet were for the impenitence and ingratitude of every individual to the close of time. He sees His love despised. The soul’s temple courts have been converted into places of unholy traffic. Selfishness, mammon, malice, envy, pride, passion, are all cherished in the human heart. His warnings are rejected and ridiculed, **His ambassadors are treated with indifference, their words seem as idle tales.** Jesus has spoken by mercies, but these mercies have been unacknowledged; **He has spoken by solemn warnings, but these warnings have been rejected.**

“I entreat you who have long professed the faith and who still pay outward homage to Christ: **Do not deceive your own souls.** It is the whole heart that Jesus prizes. The loyalty of the soul is alone of value in the sight of God. ‘If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace!’ ‘Thou . . . even thou’—**Christ is at this moment addressing you personally,** stooping from His throne, yearning with pitying tenderness **over those who feel not their danger,** who have no pity for themselves.”—*5 Testimonies, 72-73.*

“If God’s people would recognize His dealings with them and accept His teachings, they would find a straight path for their feet and a light to guide them through darkness and discouragement. David learned wisdom from God’s dealings with him and bowed in humility beneath the chastisement of the Most High. **The faithful portrayal of his true state by the prophet Nathan made David acquainted with his own sins and aided him to put them away.** He accepted counsel meekly and humiliated himself before God. The law of the Lord, he exclaims, is perfect, converting the soul.”—*4 Testimonies, 14-15.*

“Judas had the same opportunities as had the other disciples. He listened to the same precious lessons. But **the practice of the truth, which Christ required, was at variance with the desires and purposes of Judas, and he would not yield his ideas** in order to receive wisdom from Heaven . . . He [Christ] presented before Judas the heinous character of greed, and many a time the disciple realized that his character had been portrayed, and his sin pointed out; **but he would not confess and forsake his unrighteousness. He was self-suffi-**

cient and, instead of resisting temptation, he continued to follow his fraudulent practices . . . He [Christ] presented before him the highest incentives for right doing; and **in rejecting the light of Heaven, Judas would be without excuse.**

“Instead of walking in the light, **Judas chose to retain his defects.** Evil desires, revengeful passions, dark and sullen thoughts, were cherished, **until Satan had full control of the man. Judas became a representative of the enemy** of Christ . . .

“**All the disciples had serious faults when Jesus called them** to His service. Even John, who came into closest association with the meek and lowly One, was not himself naturally meek and yielding. He and his brother were called ‘the sons of thunder’. . . **Jesus reproved His disciples, He warned and cautioned them; but John and his brethren did not leave Him;** they chose Jesus, notwithstanding the reproofs. The Saviour did not withdraw from them because of their weakness and errors. They continued to the end to share His trials and to learn the lessons of His life. By beholding Christ, they became transformed in character.”—*Desire of Ages*, 294-296.

“**Those whom God has chosen for an important work have ever been received with distrust and suspicion. Anciently, when Elijah was sent with a message from God to the people, they did not heed the warning.** They thought him unnecessarily severe. **They even thought that he must have lost his senses because he denounced them, the favored people of God,** as sinners, and their crimes as so aggravated that the judgments of God would awaken against them. **Satan and his host have ever been arrayed against those who bear the message of warning and who reprove sins.** The unconsecrated will also be united with the adversary of souls, to make the work of God’s faithful servants as hard as possible.”—*3 Testimonies*, 261.

“**All your efforts to save the erring may be unavailing. They may repay you evil for good. They may be enraged rather than convinced.** What if they hear to no good purpose and pursue the evil course they have begun? **This will frequently occur.** Sometimes the mildest and tenderest reproof will have no good effect. In that case the blessing you wanted another to receive by pursuing a course of righteousness, ceasing to do evil and learning to do well, will return into your own bosom.

“If the erring persist in sin, treat them kindly, and leave them with your heavenly Father. **You have delivered your soul; their sin no longer rests**

upon you; you are not now partaker of their sin. But if they perish, their blood is upon their own head.”—*2 Testimonies*, 53-54.

“**It is a fearful thing for a man to set his will against the will of God,** as revealed in his specified requirements. All the honor that a man could receive on the throne of a kingdom, would be a poor compensation for the loss of the favor of God through an act of disloyalty to heaven. **Disobedience to the commandments of God can only bring disaster and dishonor at last.**”—*2 Bible Commentary*, 1018.

“Jesus is coming; and will He find a people conformed to the world? and will He acknowledge these as His people that He has purified unto Himself? Oh, no. **None but the pure and holy will He acknowledge as His.** Those who have been purified and made white through suffering, and have kept themselves separate, unspotted from the world, He will own as His.

“**As I saw the dreadful fact that God’s people were conformed to the world, with no distinction, except in name,** between many of the professed disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus and unbelievers, my soul felt deep anguish. I saw that Jesus was wounded and put to an open shame. **Said the angel, as with sorrow he saw the professed people of God loving the world, partaking of its spirit, and following its fashions: ‘Cut loose! Cut loose!** lest He appoint you your portion with hypocrites and unbelievers outside the city. **Your profession will only cause you greater anguish, and your punishment will be greater because ye knew His will, but did it not.’**”—*1 Testimonies*, 133.

“**Why do not men, who are wholly dependent upon God, seek to be at peace with Him by willing obedience?** He is infinite in wisdom, and there is no limit to His power. He controls the heavens with their numberless worlds. He preserves in perfect harmony the grandeur and beauty of the things which He has created. **Sin is the transgression of God’s law, and the penalty of sin is death.** There would have been no discord in heaven or in the earth if sin had never entered. **Disobedience to God’s law has brought all the misery** that has existed among His creatures. Why will not men be reconciled to God?”—*Sanctified Life*, 75-76.

“The spirit of opposition to reproof, that led to the persecution and imprisonment of Jeremiah, exists today. **Many refuse to heed repeated warnings, preferring rather to listen to false teachers who flatter their vanity and overlook their evil**

doing. In the day of trouble such will have no sure refuge, no help from heaven. **God's chosen servants should meet with courage and patience the trials and sufferings that befall them through reproach, neglect, and misrepresentation.** They should continue to discharge faithfully the work God has given them to do, ever remembering that the prophets of old and the Saviour of mankind and His apostles also endured abuse and persecution for the Word's sake."—*Prophets and Kings*, 437.

"Saul endeavored to vindicate his own course and blamed the prophet instead of condemning himself.

"There are today many who pursue a similar course. Like Saul, they are blinded to their errors. **When the Lord seeks to correct them, they receive reproof as insult, and find fault with the one who brings the divine message.**

"Had Saul been willing to see and confess his error, this bitter experience would have proved a safeguard for the future. He would afterward have avoided the mistakes which called forth divine reproof. **But feeling that he was unjustly condemned, he would, of course, be likely again to commit the same sin.**"—*2 Bible Commentary*, 1014-1015.

"They are transgressors of the law of God, and they will be punished for the sins which they commit and for those which they have influenced others to commit through the temptations which they have placed in their way."—*5 Testimonies*, 359.

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

"God is as powerful to save from sin today as He was in the times of the patriarchs, of David, and of the prophets and apostles. **The multitude of cases recorded in sacred history where God has delivered His people from their own iniquities should make the Christian of this time eager to receive divine instruction and zealous to perfect a character that will bear the close inspection of the judgment.**"—*4 Testimonies*, 15.

"Paul commanded Titus: 'These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no

man despise thee.' **There are ever those who will despise the one who dares to reprove sin; but there are times when reproof must be given.** Paul directs Titus to rebuke a certain class sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. Men and women who, with their different organizations, are brought together in church capacity have peculiarities and faults. As these are developed, they will require reproof. **If those who are placed in important positions never reprovved, never rebuked, there would soon be a demoralized condition of things that would greatly dishonor God.** But how shall the reproof be given? Let the apostle answer: 'With all long-suffering and doctrine.' **Principle should be brought to bear upon the one who needs reproof, but never should the wrongs of God's people be passed by indifferently.**"—*3 Testimonies*, 359.

"It is not alone those who openly reject the *Testimonies*, or who cherish doubt concerning them, that are on dangerous ground. **To disregard light is to reject it.**

"Some of you in words acknowledge reproof, but you do not in heart accept it. You go on the same as before, only being less susceptible to the influence of the Spirit of God, becoming more and more blinded, having less wisdom, less self-control, less moral power, and less zeal and relish for religious exercises; and, **unless converted, you will finally yield your hold upon God entirely. You have not made decided changes in your life when reproof has come,** because you have not seen and realized your defects of character and the great contrast between your life and the life of Christ. What do your prayers amount to while you regard iniquity in your hearts? **Unless you make a thorough change, you will, not far hence, become weary of reproof, as did the children of Israel; and, like them, you will apostatize from God.**"—*5 Testimonies*, 680.

"When men's hearts are softened and subdued by the constraining influence of the Holy Spirit, they will give heed to counsel; but **when they turn from admonition until their hearts become hardened,** the Lord permits them to be led by other influences. **Refusing the truth, they accept falsehood, which becomes a snare to their own destruction.**"—*Prophets and Kings*, 425.

"The Lord is testing and proving you. He has counseled, admonished, and entreated. All these solemn admonitions will either make the church better or decidedly worse. **The oftener the Lord speaks to correct or counsel, and you disregard His voice, the more disposed will you be to re-**

ject it again and again, till God says: 'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but **ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;** when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of My counsel: **they despised all My reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.'**"—5 Testimonies, 72.

"God always has men to whom He intrusts His message. His Spirit moves upon their hearts, and constrains them to speak. Stimulated by holy zeal, and with the divine impulse strong upon them, they enter upon the performance of their duty without coldly calculating the consequences of speaking to the people the word which the Lord has given them. But the servant of God is soon made aware that he has risked something. **He finds himself and his message made the subject of criticism.** His manners, his life, his property are all inspected and commented upon. **His message is picked to pieces and rejected in the most illiberal and un-sanctified spirit,** as men in their finite judgment see fit. Has that message done the work God designed it should accomplish? No; it has signally failed, because the hearts of the hearers were un-sanctified.

"**If the minister's face is not flint, if he has not indomitable faith and courage, if his heart is not made strong by constant communion with God, he will begin to shape his testimony to please the un-sanctified ears and hearts of those whom he is addressing. In endeavoring to avoid the criticism to which he is exposed, he separates from God, and loses the sense of the divine favor, and his testimony becomes tame and lifeless.** He finds that his courage and faith are gone, and his labors are powerless. **The world is full of flatterers and dissemblers who have yielded to the desire to please; but the faithful men, who do not study self-interest, but love their brethren too well to suffer sin upon them, are few indeed.**"—Review, April 7, 1885; 2 Bible Commen-

tary, 1034.

"God had pleaded with Judah not to provoke Him to anger, **but they had hearkened not. Finally sentence was pronounced against them.** They were to be led away captive to Babylon. The Chaldeans were to be used as the instrument by which God would chastise His disobedient people. **The sufferings of the men of Judah were to be in proportion to the light they had had and to the warnings they had despised and rejected. Long had God delayed His judgments,** but now He would visit His displeasure upon them as a last effort to check them in their evil course."—*Prophets and Kings*, 425.

"**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.**"—4 Testimonies, 391.

"We do not know what great interests may be at stake in the proving of God. **There is no safety except in strict obedience to the Word of God. All His promises are made upon condition of faith and obedience,** and a failure to comply with His commands cuts off the fulfillment to us of the rich provisions of the Scriptures. We should not follow impulse, nor rely on the judgment of men; **we should look to the revealed will of God and walk according to His definite commandment, no matter what circumstances may surround us.** God will take care of the results; **by faithfulness to His Word we may in time of trial prove before men and angels that the Lord can trust us** in difficult places to carry out His will, honor His name, and bless His people."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 621-622.

"The very beginning of the evil was a ne-

Warnings and Reproofs

**PART FIVE
OF SIX**

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

glect of watchfulness and secret prayer, then came a neglect of other religious duties, and thus the way was opened for all the sins that followed. Every Christian will be assailed by the allurements of the world, the clamors of the carnal nature, and the direct temptations of Satan. **No one is safe. No matter what our experience has been, no matter how high our station, we need to watch and pray continually.** We must be daily controlled by the Spirit of God or we **are** controlled by Satan.

“The Saviour’s instructions to His disciples were given for the benefit of His followers in every age. **He had those in view who were living near the close of time, when He said: ‘Take heed to yourselves.’** It is our work, each for himself, to cherish in the heart the precious graces of the Holy Spirit.

“**Satan is working with unflinching perseverance and intense energy to draw into his ranks the professed followers of Christ.** He is working ‘with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.’ But Satan is not the only worker by whom the kingdom of darkness is supported. **Whoever solicits to sin is a tempter. Whoever imitates the great deceiver becomes his aid.** Those who give their influence to sustain an evil work are doing Satan’s drudgery.

“**Actions reveal principles and motives.** The fruit borne by many who claim to be plants in the Lord’s vineyard shows them to be but thorns and briars. **A whole church may sanction the wrong course of some of its members, but that sanction does not prove the wrong to be right.** It cannot make grapes of thorn berries.

“If some who profess to believe present truth could understand their true position, they would despair of the mercy of God. **They have been exerting all their influence against the truth, against the voice of warning,** against the people of God. **They have been doing the work of Satan.** Many have become so infatuated by his deceptions that they will never recover. Such a state of backsliding cannot exist without causing the loss of many souls.

“**The church has received warning after warning.** The duties and dangers of God’s people have been plainly revealed. **But the worldly element has proved too strong for them. Customs, practices, and fashions which lead the soul away from God**

have been for years gaining ground in defiance of the warnings and entreaties of the Holy Spirit, until at last their ways have become right in their own eyes, and the Spirit’s voice is scarcely heard. **No man can tell how far he may go in sin when once he yields himself to the power of the great deceiver.** Satan entered into Judas Iscariot and induced him to betray his Lord. Satan led Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Ghost. Those who are not wholly consecrated to God may be led to do the work of Satan while yet they flatter themselves that they are in the service of Christ.”—*5 Testimonies, 102-103.*

“**The obedient ear will receive reproof with humility, patience, and teachableness.**”—*Sons and Daughters of God, 166.*

“**Moses did not feel the guilt of sin and did not hasten away at the word of the Lord** and leave the congregation to perish, as the Hebrews had fled from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram the day before. Moses lingered; for he could not consent to give up all that vast multitude to perish, although he knew that they deserved the vengeance of God for their persistent rebellion. **He prostrated himself before God because the people felt no necessity for humiliation; he mediated for them because they felt no need of interceding in their own behalf.**

“Moses here typifies Christ. At this critical time Moses manifested the True Shepherd’s interest for the flock of His care. **He pleaded that the wrath of an offended God might not utterly destroy the people of His choice. And by his intercession he held back the arm of vengeance,** that a full end was not made of disobedient, rebellious Israel.”—*3 Testimonies, 357-358*

“With one accord, Satan and his host **threw the blame of their rebellion wholly upon Christ, declaring that if they had not been reproofed, they would never have rebelled.** Thus stubborn and defiant in their disloyalty, seeking vainly to overthrow the government of God, yet blasphemously claiming to be themselves the innocent victims of oppressive power, the archrebel and all his sympathizers were at last banished from heaven.

“**The same spirit that prompted rebellion in heaven still inspires rebellion on earth.** Satan has continued with men the same policy which he pursued with the angels. **His spirit now reigns in**

the children of disobedience. Like him they seek to break down the restraints of the law of God and promise men liberty through transgression of its precepts. Reproof of sin still arouses the spirit of hatred and resistance. When God's messages of warning are brought home to the conscience, Satan leads men to justify themselves and to seek the sympathy of others in their course of sin. **Instead of correcting their errors, they excite indignation against the reprover, as if he were the sole cause of difficulty.** From the days of righteous Abel to our own time such is the spirit which has been displayed toward those who dare to condemn sin."—*Great Controversy*, 499-500.

"Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth ruins if it does not save. The soul that refuses to listen to the invitations of mercy from day to day can soon listen to the most urgent appeals without an emotion stirring his soul. As laborers with God we need more fervent piety and less self-exaltation."—*5 Testimonies*, 134.

"Reproof is more to be prized than flattery. Not all who are preaching the truth realize that their testimony and example are deciding the destiny of souls. **If they are unfaithful in their mission, and become careless in their work, souls will be lost as the result.**"—*2 Testimonies*, 338.

"It is not pleasing to human nature to receive reproof, nor is it possible for the heart of man, unenlightened by the Spirit of God, **to realize the necessity of reproof or the blessing it is designed to bring.** As man yields to temptation, and indulges in sin, his mind becomes darkened. The moral sense is perverted. **The warnings of conscience are disregarded, and its voice is less clearly heard. He gradually loses the power to distinguish between right and wrong,** until he has no true sense of his standing before God. He may observe the forms of religion and zealously maintain its doctrines while destitute of its spirit."—*5 Testimonies*, 682.

"When obliged to declare the messages, I would often soften them down, and make them appear as favorable for the individual as I could, and then would go by myself and weep in agony of spirit. I looked upon those who had only their own souls to care for, and thought if I were in their condition I would not murmur. **It was hard to relate the plain, cutting testimonies** given me of God. I anxiously watched the result, and if the persons reproved rose up against the reproof, and afterward opposed the truth, these queries would arise in my mind: Did I deliver the message just as I should?

Could there not have been some way to save them? And then such distress pressed upon my soul that I often felt that death would be a welcome messenger, and the grave a sweet resting place.

"I did not realize the danger and sin of such a course, until in vision I was taken into the presence of Jesus. He looked upon me with a frown, and turned His face from me. It is not possible to describe the terror and agony I then felt. I fell upon my face before Him, but had no power to utter a word. Oh, how I longed to be covered and hid from that dreadful frown! **Then could I realize, in some degree, what the feelings of the lost will be** when they cry: 'Mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.'

"Presently an angel bade me rise, and the sight that met my eyes can hardly be described. Before me was a company whose hair and garments were torn, and whose countenances were the very picture of despair and horror. They came close to me, and rubbed their garments upon mine. As I looked at my garments, I saw that they were stained with blood. Again I fell like one dead at the feet of my accompanying angel. **I could not plead one excuse,** and longed to be away from that holy place. The angel raised me to my feet, and said: 'This is not your case now, but this scene has passed before you to let you know what your situation must be **if you neglect to declare to others what the Lord has revealed to you.** But if you are faithful to the end, you shall eat of the tree of life, and shall drink of the river of the water of life. **You will have to suffer much, but the grace of God is sufficient.'** I then felt willing to do all that the Lord might require me to do, that I might have His approbation, and not feel His dreadful frown."—*1 Testimonies*, 73-74.

"It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But 'they could not enter in because of unbelief.' Hebrews 3:19. **Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up** to enter the Promised Land. **In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world** of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity

to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out.

“Now as in former ages, the presentation of a truth that reproveth the sins and errors of the times will excite opposition. ‘Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproveth.’ John 3:20. As men see that they cannot maintain their position by the Scriptures, many determine to maintain it at all hazards; and, **with a malicious spirit, they assail the character and motives of those who stand in defense of unpopular truth. It is the same policy which has been pursued in all ages.** Elijah was declared to be a troubler in Israel, Jeremiah a traitor, Paul a polluter of the temple. **From that day to this, those who would be loyal to truth have been denounced as seditious, heretical, or schismatic.** Multitudes who are too unbelieving to accept the sure word of prophecy will receive with unquestioning credulity an accusation against those who dare to reprove fashionable sins. This spirit will increase more and more. And the Bible plainly teaches that a time is approaching when the laws of the state will so conflict with the law of God that whosoever would obey all the divine precepts must brave reproach and punishment as an evildoer.

“In view of this, what is the duty of the messenger of truth? Shall he conclude that the truth ought not to be presented, since often its only effect is to arouse men to evade or resist its claims? **No; he has no more reason for withholding the testimony of God’s Word, because it excites opposition, than had earlier Reformers.** The confession of faith made by saints and martyrs was recorded for the benefit of succeeding generations. **Those living examples of holiness and steadfast integrity have come down to inspire courage in those who are now called to stand as witnesses for God.** They received grace and truth, not for themselves alone, but that, through them, the knowledge of God might enlighten the earth. Has God given light to His servants in this generation? Then they should let it shine forth to the world.

“Anciently the Lord declared to one who spoke in His name: **‘The house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto Me.’** Nevertheless He said: **‘Thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.’** Ezekiel 3:7; 2:7. To the servant of God at this time is the command addressed: **‘Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.’**

“So far as his opportunities extend, everyone

who has received the light of truth is under the same solemn and fearful responsibility as was the prophet of Israel, to whom the word of the Lord came, saying: **‘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.** 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.’** Ezekiel 33:7-9.

“The great obstacle both to the acceptance and to the promulgation of truth is the fact that **it involves inconvenience and reproach.** This is the only argument against the truth which its advocates have never been able to refute. But this does not deter the true followers of Christ. These do not wait for truth to become popular. **Being convinced of their duty, they deliberately accept the cross,** with the apostle Paul counting that ‘our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;’ with one of old, ‘esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.’ 2 Corinthians 4:17; Hebrews 11:26.

“Whatever may be their profession, it is only those who are world servers at heart that act from policy rather than principle in religious things. We should choose the right because it is right, and leave consequences with God. To men of principle, faith, and daring, the world is indebted for its great reforms. **By such men the work of reform for this time must be carried forward.**

“Thus saith the Lord: ‘Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law; **fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.** For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but My righteousness shall be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation.’ Isaiah 51:7-8.”—*Great Controversy*, 458-460.

“Let our periodicals be devoted to the publication of living, earnest matter . . . There are times when words of reproof and rebuke are called for. Those who are out of the right way must be aroused to see their peril. A message must be given that shall startle them from the lethargy which enchains their senses. Moral renovation must take place, else souls will perish in their sins. Let the message of truth, like a sharp, two-edged sword, cut its way to the heart. Make appeals that will

arouse the careless and bring foolish, wandering minds back to God.

“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, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.” 1 Kings 18:21.”—*7 Testimonies, 155.*

“It is an extremely delicate thing to tell people of their faults. **The reprover is likely to find that in those reprovved, pride and stubbornness assert themselves, and the will is arrayed in defiance and opposition.** But for all this, advice should be given, and faults should be laid bare . . . It may seem that we are to study our own hearts, and square our own actions by some standard of our own; but this is not the case. This would but work deform instead of reform. **The work must begin in the heart, and then the spirit, the words, the expression of the countenance, and the actions of the life, will make manifest that a change has taken place.** In knowing Christ through the grace that He has shed forth abundantly, we become changed . . . **In humility we shall correct every fault and defect** of character; because Christ is abiding in the heart, we shall be fitted up for the heavenly family above.”—*Sons and Daughters of God, 117.*

“The honor accorded him who is concluding his work is of far more worth than the applause and congratulations which those receive who are just entering upon their duties, and who have yet to be tested. One may easily lay off his burdens, when even the enemies of truth acknowledge his fidelity. **But how many of our great men close their official labors in disgrace,** because they have sacrificed principle for gain or honor. **The desire to be popular, the temptations of wealth or ease, lead them astray. Men who connive at sin may appear to prosper; they may triumph because their undertakings seem crowned with success; but God’s eye is upon these proud boasters.** He will reward them as their works have been. The greatest outward prosperity cannot bring happiness to those who are not at peace with God or with themselves.”—*Signs, July 27, 1882; 2 Bible Commentary, 1014.*

“Reproofs must be given, and that even rebuke may have to be spoken to cut off some evil doing.”—*Fundamentals of Education, 457.*

“He [Christ] fearlessly denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity, but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes. **He wept over Jerusalem,** the city He loved, that refused to receive Him, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. They rejected Him, the Saviour, but He regarded them with pitying tenderness, and sorrow so deep that it broke His heart. Every soul was precious in His eyes.”—*Desire of Ages, 353.*

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

“In these days He has instituted no new plan to preserve the purity of His people. As of old, He entreats the erring ones who profess His name to repent and turn from their evil ways. **Now, as then, by the mouth of His chosen servants He predicts the dangers before them. He sounds the note of warning and reprovves sin just as faithfully as in the days of Jeremiah.** But the Israel of our time have **the same temptations to scorn reproof and hate counsel** as had ancient Israel. They too often turn a deaf ear to the words that God has given His servants for the benefit of those who profess the truth. Though the Lord in mercy withholds for a time the retribution of their sin, as in the days of Jeremiah, **He will not always stay His hand, but will visit iniquity with righteous judgment.**”—*4 Testimonies, 164-165.*

“‘If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye . . . not sons.’ Our Lord has said: ‘As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.’ ‘No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.’ **Though bitter the discipline, it is appointed by a Father’s tender love,** that we might be partakers of His holiness.”—*5 Testimonies, 683.*

Warnings and Reproofs

**PART SIX
OF SIX**

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

“The end of God’s forbearance with those who persist in disobedience is approaching rapidly.

“Ought men to be surprised over a sudden and unexpected change in the dealings of the Supreme Ruler with the inhabitants of a fallen world? Ought they to be surprised when punishment follows transgression and increasing crime? Ought they to be surprised that God should bring destruction and death upon those whose ill-gotten gains have been obtained through deception and fraud? Notwithstanding the fact that increasing light regarding God’s requirements has been shining on their pathway, **many have refused to recognize Jehovah’s rulership**, and have chosen to remain under the black banner of the originator of all rebellion against the government of heaven.

“The forbearance of God has been very great—so great that when we consider the continuous insult to His holy commandments, we marvel. The Omnipotent One has been exerting a restraining power over His own attributes. But He will certainly arise to punish the wicked, who so boldly defy the just claims of the Decalogue.

“God allows men a period of probation; but there is a point beyond which divine patience is exhausted, and the judgments of God are sure to follow.”—*Prophets and Kings*, 276.

“In the places where men have gone to the greatest lengths in speaking against the Most High, the voice of stern rebuke will be heard. Boldly will men of God’s appointment denounce the union of the church with the world.”—*Prophets and Kings*, 187.

“As the people had been held responsible for Achan’s sin, and had suffered from its consequences, they were, through their representatives, to take part in its punishment. ‘All Israel stoned him with stones.’ ”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 495. [In ancient Israel, under a theocracy, the wicked in the church were slain; today they should be disfellowshipped, as indicated in the following three quotations.]

“Many make a superficial change in their habits and practices, and then suppose that they are Christians. They are received into church fellowship, but they are a great trouble and a great care.”—

8 Testimonies, 184.

“The names of those who sin and refuse to repent should not be retained on the church books, lest the saints be held accountable for their evil deeds. Those who pursue a course of transgression should be visited and labored with, and if they then refuse to repent, they should be separated from church fellowship, in accordance with the rules laid down in the Word of God . . .

“Those who refuse to hear the admonitions and warnings given by God’s faithful messengers are not to be retained in the church. They are to be disfellowshipped; for they will be as Achan in the camp of Israel—deceived and deceiving.

“Who, after reading the record of Achan’s sin and punishment, can think it according to the will of God that those who do wickedly, refusing to repent, are to be retained in the church? To retain them would be an insult to the God of heaven.”—*Letter 215*, 1902; *5 Bible Commentary*, 1096.

“The test of discipleship is not brought to bear as closely as it should be upon those who present themselves for baptism. **It should be understood whether those who profess to be converted are simply taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists or whether they are taking their stand on the Lord’s side to come out from the world** and be separate and touch not the unclean thing. **When they give evidence** that they fully understand their position, they are to be accepted. But when they show that they are following the customs and fashions and sentiments of the world, they are to be faithfully dealt with. **If they feel no burden to change their course of action, they should not be retained as members** of the church. The Lord wants those who compose His church to be true, faithful stewards of the grace of Christ.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 128.

“In the work of reform to be carried forward today, there is need of men who, like Ezra and Nehemiah, will not palliate or excuse sin, nor shrink from vindicating the honor of God. Those upon whom rests the burden of this work **will not hold their peace when wrong is done**, neither will they cover evil with a cloak of false charity. They will remember that God is no respecter of persons, and that severity to a few may prove mercy to many. They will remember also that in the one who re-

bukes evil the spirit of Christ should ever be revealed.

“In their work, Ezra and Nehemiah humbled themselves before God, confessing their sins and the sins of their people, and entreating pardon as if they themselves were the offenders. **Patiently they toiled and prayed and suffered. That which made their work most difficult was not the open hostility of the heathen, but the secret opposition of pretended friends, who, by lending their influence to the service of evil, increased tenfold the burden God’s servants. These traitors furnished the Lord’s enemies with material to use in their warfare upon His people. Their evil passions and rebellious wills were ever at war with the plain requirements of God.**

“The success attending Nehemiah’s efforts shows what prayer, faith, and wise, energetic action will accomplish. **Nehemiah was not a priest; he was not a prophet; he made no pretension to high title. He was a reformer raised up for an important time.** It was his aim to set his people right with God. Inspired with a great purpose, he bent every energy of his being to its accomplishment. High, unbending integrity marked his efforts. As he came into contact with evil and opposition to right **he took so determined a stand that the people were roused to labor with fresh zeal and courage.** They could not but recognize his loyalty, his patriotism, and his deep love for God; and, seeing this, they were willing to follow where he led.”—*Prophets and Kings*, 675-676.

“**We are near the close of time. I have been shown that the retributive judgments of God are already in the land. The Lord has given us warning of the events about to take place.** Light is shining from His Word; yet darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. ‘When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them . . . and they shall not escape.’

“It is our duty to **inquire the cause** of this terrible darkness, **that we may shun the course** by which men have brought upon themselves so great delusion. God has given the world an opportunity to learn and to obey His will. **He has given them, in His Word, the light of truth; He has sent them warning, counsel, and admonition; but few will obey His voice. Like the Jewish nation, the majority, even of professed Christians, pride themselves on their superior advantages, but make no returns to God for these great blessings.** In infinite mercy a last warning message has been sent to the world, announcing that Christ is at the door and calling attention to God’s broken

law. **But as the antediluvians rejected with scorn the warning of Noah, so will the pleasure lovers of today reject the message of God’s faithful servants.** The world pursues its unvarying round, absorbed as ever in its business and its pleasures, while the wrath of God is about to be visited on the transgressors of His law.

“**Our compassionate Redeemer, foreseeing the perils that would surround His followers at this time, has given them special warning: ‘Take heed to yourselves,** lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.’ **If the church pursue a course similar to that of the world, they will share the same fate. Nay, rather, as they have received greater light, their punishment will be greater than that of the impenitent.**”—5 *Testimonies*, 99-100.

“When the church is in difficulty, when coldness and spiritual declension exist, giving occasion for the enemies of God to triumph, then, **instead of folding their hands and lamenting their unhappy state, let its members inquire if there is not an Achan in the camp.** With humiliation and searching of heart, let each seek to discover the hidden sins that shut out God’s presence.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 497.

“**Today there is need of the voice of stern rebuke; for grievous sins have separated the people from God.** Infidelity is fast becoming fashionable. ‘We will not have this man to reign over us,’ is the language of thousands. Luke 19:14. **The smooth sermons** so often preached make no lasting impression; the trumpet does not give a certain sound. **Men are not cut to the heart by the plain, sharp truths of God’s Word.**

“There are many professed Christians who, if they should express their real feelings, would say, What need is there of speaking so plainly? They might as well ask, **Why need John the Baptist have said to the Pharisees, ‘O generation of vipers,** who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?’ Luke 3:7. Why need he have provoked the anger of Herodias by telling Herod that it was unlawful for him to live with his brother’s wife? **The forerunner of Christ lost his life by his plain speaking.** Why could he not have moved along without incurring the displeasure of those who were living in sin?

“So men who should be standing as faithful guardians of God’s law have argued, till **policy has taken the place of faithfulness and sin is allowed to go unreproved. When will the voice of faithful rebuke be heard once more in the church?**

“‘Thou art the man.’ 2 Samuel 12:7. **Words as unmistakably plain as these spoken by Nathan to David are seldom heard in the pulpits of today,** seldom seen in the public press. **If they were not so rare, we should see more of the power of God revealed among men.** The Lord’s messengers should not complain that their efforts are without fruit until they repent of their own love of approbation and their desire to please men, which leads them to suppress truth.

“**Those ministers who are men pleasers, who cry, Peace, peace, when God has not spoken peace,** might well humble their hearts before God, asking pardon for their insincerity and their lack of moral courage. **It is not from love for their neighbor that they smooth down the message entrusted to them, but because they are self-indulgent and ease-loving. True love seeks first the honor of God and the salvation of souls.** Those who have this love will not evade the truth to save themselves from the unpleasant results of plain speaking. When souls are in peril, God’s ministers will not consider self, but will speak the word given them to speak, refusing to excuse or palliate evil.

“**Would that every minister might realize the sacredness of his office and the holiness of his work, and show the courage that Elijah showed!** As divinely appointed messengers, **ministers are in a position of awful responsibility.** They are to ‘reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering,’ 2 Timothy 4:2. In Christ’s stead they are to labor as stewards of the mysteries of heaven, **encouraging the obedient and warning the disobedient. With them worldly policy is to have no weight.** Never are they to swerve from the path in which Jesus has bidden them walk. They are to go forward in faith, remembering that they are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. They are not to speak their own words, but words which One greater than the potentates of earth has bidden them speak. Their message is to be, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ God calls for men like Elijah, Nathan, and John the Baptist—**men who will bear His message with faithfulness, regardless of the consequences;** men who will speak the truth bravely, though it call for the sacrifice of all they have.

“**God cannot use men who,** in time of peril, when the strength, courage, and influence of all are needed, **are afraid to take a firm stand for the**

right. He calls for men who will do faithful battle against wrong, warring against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. **It is to such as these that He will speak the words: ‘Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’** Matthew 25:23.”—*Prophets and Kings, 140-142.*

Would you like to know about the dangers our people are in? Read Satan’s plans to destroy the Advent people: *Testimonies to Ministers, 472-475.* (Originally in *Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 4, pp. 337-340*, which is the beginning of the “*Snares of Satan*” chapter, in the *1884 Great Controversy*. It is also in our 1884 edition and at the back of our 1888 edition.

“**As the people of God approach the perils of the last days, Satan holds earnest consultation with his angels as to the most successful plan of overthrowing their faith.** He sees that the popular churches are already lulled to sleep by his deceptive power. By pleasing sophistry and lying wonders he can continue to hold them under his control. **Therefore he directs his angels to lay their snares especially for those who are looking for the second advent of Christ and endeavoring to keep all the commandments of God.**

“Says the great deceiver: **‘We must watch those who are calling the attention of the people to the Sabbath of Jehovah;** they will lead many to see the claims of the law of God; and the same light which reveals the true Sabbath reveals also the ministration of Christ in the heavenly Sanctuary, and shows that the last work for man’s salvation is now going forward. **Hold the minds of the people in darkness till that work is ended, and we shall secure the world and the church also.**

“The Sabbath is the great question which is to decide the destiny of souls. We must exalt the sabbath of our creating. We have caused it to be accepted by both worldlings and church members; **now the church must be led to unite with the world in its support.** We must work by signs and wonders to blind their eyes to the truth, and lead them to lay aside reason and the fear of God and follow custom and tradition.

“I will influence popular ministers to turn the attention of their hearers from the commandments of God. That which the Scriptures declare to be a perfect law of liberty shall be represented as a yoke of bondage. The people accept their minister’s explanations of Scripture and do not investigate for themselves. **Therefore, by working through the ministers, I can control the people according to**

my will.

“**But our principal concern is to silence this sect of Sabbathkeepers.** We must excite popular indignation against them. We will enlist great men and worldly-wise men upon our side, and induce those in authority to carry out our purposes. Then the sabbath which I have set up shall be enforced by laws the most severe and exacting. Those who disregard them shall be driven out from the cities and villages, and made to suffer hunger and privation. **When once we have the power, we will show what we can do with those who will not swerve from their allegiance to God.** We led the Romish Church to inflict imprisonment, torture, and death upon those who refused to yield to her decrees; and now that we are bringing the Protestant churches and the world into harmony with this right arm of our strength, we will finally have a law to exterminate all who will not submit to our authority. **When death shall be made the penalty of violating our sabbath, then many who are now ranked with commandment keepers will come over to our side.**

“**But before proceeding to these extreme measures, we must exert all our wisdom and subtlety do deceive and ensnare those who honor the true Sabbath. We can separate many from Christ by worldliness, lust, and pride.** They may think themselves safe because they believe the truth, but **indulgence of appetite or the lower passions,** which will confuse judgment and destroy discrimination, will cause their fall.

“**Go, make the possessors of lands and money drunk with the cares of this life. Present the world before them in its most attractive light,** that they may lay up their treasure here and fix their affections upon earthly things. **We must do our utmost to prevent those who labor in God’s cause from obtaining means to use against us. Keep the money in our own ranks.** The more means they obtain, the more they will injure our kingdom by taking from us our subjects. **Make them care more for money than for the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom and the spread of the truths we hate, and we need not fear their influence;** for we know that every selfish, covetous person will fall under our power, and will finally be separated from God’s people.

“**Through those that have a form of godliness but know not the power, we can gain many who would otherwise do us harm. Lovers of plea-**

sure more than lovers of God will be our most effective helpers. Those of this class who are apt and intelligent will serve as decoys to draw others into our snares. Many will not fear their influence, because they profess the same faith. **We will thus lead them to conclude that the requirements of Christ are less strict than they once believed, and that by conformity to the world they would exert a greater influence with worldlings.** Thus they will separate from Christ; then they will have no strength to resist our power, and **erelong they will be ready to ridicule their former zeal and devotion.**

“**Until the great decisive blow shall be struck, our efforts against commandment keepers must be untiring.** We must be present at all their gatherings. In their large meetings especially our cause will suffer much, and we must exercise great vigilance and employ all our seductive arts, to prevent souls from hearing the truth and becoming impressed by it.

“**I will have upon the ground, as my agents, men holding false doctrines mingled with just enough truth to deceive souls. I will also have unbelieving ones present who will express doubts in regard to the Lord’s messages of warning to His church.** Should the people read and believe these admonitions, we could have little hope of overcoming them. But **if we can divert their attention from these warnings, they will remain ignorant of our power and cunning, and we shall secure them in our ranks at last.** God will not permit His words to be slighted with impunity. If we can keep souls deceived for a time, God’s mercy will be withdrawn and He will give them up to our full control.

“**We must cause distraction and division. We must destroy their anxiety for their own souls,** and lead them to criticize, to judge, and to accuse and condemn one another, and to cherish selfishness and enmity. For these sins, God banished us from His presence; and **all who follow our example will meet a similar fate.**”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 472-475.

It is impossible for a church, over a period of time, to remain uncorrupted—if there are none in it who are calling attention to the ways it is veering away from Scripture; and, in the name of the Lord, warning, pleading, weeping, urging, and demanding that changes be made before it is forever too late. —*v*