

## Chapter 6

# Counsels to Walter and Laura

### **Binding Nature of the Marriage Vow—**

January 9, 1888. I had an interview with Brother C. His earnest solicitation prevailed upon me to go with him to St. Helena and have an interview with his wife....

January 11, 1888. I had a long talk with Sister C, showing her that the marriage vow is binding and could not release its claims upon any of the parties who entered into it, save from the cause of adultery, the violation of the marriage bed. We had much profitable talk upon this subject.—Ms 22, 1888.

Is an Oath Nothing? June 8, 1888. I wish to present before you [Laura] some few points. Why do you not regard facts as they are? You two registered an oath that has been recorded upon the record books of heaven by the recording angel, that

you would love one another until death does you part. Why do you not remember this? Do you so lightly put aside your vows? Should you yield to evil counsel your honor, your oath, your duty? If evil thoughts have come in upon you, if you have had evil advice suggesting your estrangement, is that a reason you should lightly cast aside your oath? Is an oath nothing? Are your own whims everything?

You may say you do not love your husband. Is that a reason you should not try to do so? Is this life so long and of such value to you that you will choose to have your own way and set aside God's law? I see no possible grounds for you to obtain a divorce. If your husband deceived you, even so, there is your oath. If he told you, as he says he did do, and denies that he deceived you, then you married him, how can you obtain a divorce? I wish you would pursue a course in accordance with the advice I gave you, for I cannot give you any other counsel.

**Imperfection No Reason for Dissolving a**

**Marriage**—My heart is sick when I see the loose way that the marriage vows are held. We are nearing the judgment. I ask you to consider carefully, candidly, your position. There is, perhaps, upon more thorough acquaintance, a dislike of your husband's ways and manners. Will not many people find the same, after the marriage novelty has passed? But when you made your vow before God and holy angels, you knew you were not perfect and your husband was not perfect; but this is no excuse for breaking your marriage vow. There is a need of training your mind and heart that you shall bear with one another, to be kind to one another, and not to allow distrust and hatred to come in.

**Resurrection of Dead Love**—I love you, my sister, and I do not want you to take a course to ruin your own happiness and that of your husband. Those who have come in to teach you to do this had better be searching their own hearts. When you bring your will more to your aid, and conscientiously move in the fear of God, then the love you now suppose to be dead will be found to

have a resurrection, unless you play upon each other's evil nature and stir up the worst qualities of the human heart. The fountain of love will increase day by day and in time will exclude all bitterness and disappointments.

You know you have kindly feelings toward your husband, for he is your husband and he loves you with all his heart. Your love would be precious to him, a light, an inspiration to his life. Your husband will appreciate your love; he will value it, and it will have a modifying, elevating influence upon his life. You may have fancies and ideas and whims that you may not at once surrender, and your husband may have to bear humbly and patiently with you. But you have noble traits of character that, if not disregarded and abused, will come to your help.

**Need of Forbearance**—Now, I tell you that you cannot break your marriage vow and be guiltless before God. Unite your interest with your husband. Love him and bear with him and work with him. Bid the evil advisers depart. The case is

between you and your husband and your God. It is a pride of heart that shuts your eyes that you cannot and do not discover the justice and righteousness in the case of fidelity to your husband. Adhere faithfully to your marriage vows because you are upright of heart, and will you regret this keeping of your vows when you shall be clothed in the garments of Christ's righteousness?

**Perfection Only in Christ**—We have only a brief season here upon the earth, a time when licentious practices under the marriage vow are ruining thousands and tens of thousands. While you have some cross to lift, do not, I beg you for Christ's sake, depart from justice and righteousness. Let your lives be in sobriety, and bring your will power into the matter, looking not for perfection in each other, but looking unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of your faith. Strive to run the Christian race with patience, keeping the crown of life in view, seeking to have a knowledge of the will of God, striving for precedence in His acquaintance and affections.

You will, I know, when convinced of the right way, act resolutely, not as a child, but according to your convictions and not according to your feelings. Give yourself to God without reserve, soul, body, and spirit. Go to work in the cause of God, doing good, and the Lord will bless you. Do not become self-centered. Think of someone's soul; think of the self-denying, self-sacrificing life of Jesus. Turn your attention away from yourself to Jesus and His life and His character.—Letter 57, 1888.

**Acceptance of the Facts**—August 29, 1888. I cannot see what more can be done in this case, and I think that the only thing that you [Walter C] can do is to give up your wife. If she is thus determined not to live with you, both she and you would be most miserable to attempt it. And as she has fully and determinedly set her stakes, you can only shoulder your cross and show yourself a man....

I hope you will be a man. Lay aside this matter, go to your labor, do your duty irrespective of everyone else on the earth, self-forgetting, self-

denying, self-sacrificing. In this will be your power. Jesus our Redeemer comes to men and says, I love you; I want to make you happy. He shows His hands and His feet and says, I have suffered for your sake; I bear the shafts that are aimed at you; I will carry your burdens; I will shelter you. Trust in My surety and you shall have the great reward of life forevermore.

**No Time for Self-pity**—I say, put your trust in God. Your mind has been perplexed and occupied with this matter regarding your wife. Now in the name of Jesus lay this matter down; leave your case with the Lord. Let your experience humble you. Christ is with the weak and the tempted and forsaken, to give them His divine sympathy and rest. You need rest of mind. Give up Laura and fasten your affections on God. He will give you relief. Time is short; you have no time to stop and pity yourself; go to work for the Master. Do your duty to the very best of your ability; do not give up to discouragement; walk humbly with God; seek communion with God. Do not let your disappointment make you self-centered, to think of

yourself, talk of yourself.... Live for God. Be kind, be courteous. Let not this disappointment ruin you. Cast off your melancholy. God will help you if you will be true to Him. Remember, the eye of God is upon you, searching the depths of your soul....

May the Lord help, strengthen, and bless you, to do your best. Look away from earthly things, earthly idols, and worship the Lord thy God, and serve Him with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and then you will be wholly devoted to the Lord.—Letter 40, 1888.

**Disregard of Light**—I hoped to meet you [Laura] and talk with you. I greatly fear that you disregard the light which the Lord has been pleased to give you through me. I know that the Lord has tender, pitying love toward you, and I hope you will not under temptation be led to pursue a course to separate your soul from God. There are many who are ready to give advice and confuse the mind with counsel, who have not God for their counselor; therefore all they may say will only make a mixed case of one that is already very



trying.

My sister, your disposition and temperament are such that I greatly fear for your soul. I fear that you will not choose for your companions those who are discreet and wise and humble in heart, who love God and who keep His commandments.

**Satan's Battle for the Soul**—We read that Satan has come down in great wrath, working with his deceiving power upon the hearts and minds of all who listen to his suggestions. You know something of the love of God; you know something of the peace of Christ; and Satan is at work playing the game of life for your soul. Shall he be victor? Will he gain his purpose? God forbid.

The Lord has been giving you light, but you have not walked in it. Are you satisfied in pursuing the course which you are pursuing? Your own way, your will, is not the best for you to follow. I am sure that Satan is trying to secure you to himself. Shall he do it? Will you choose to go your own way in the place of keeping the way of the Lord?

Will you place yourself upon the enemy's ground?

**Avoid Even the Appearance of Evil**—Abstain from even the appearance of evil, is the exhortation of the inspired apostle. Have you done this? With your temperament this is most difficult for you to do while you are traveling from place to place canvassing. Do you feel, my sister, that you are moving conscientiously? Are you not having in your character a one-sided development? Are not traits of character [which are] not the most desirable strengthening, which will mar your future life? The sensational and emotional are more fully developed than the intellectual. Everything, my sister, should be avoided that would exaggerate this tendency into a predominating power. You have motive power; let it be uncorrupted and wholly devoted to God. God has bestowed upon you capabilities and powers to be sanctified and exercised to His glory.

You have a history, and you are making history. The mind may in this crisis of your life take a turn, a bias of grossness rather than of

refinement. The contaminating influences of the world may mold your habits, your taste, your conversation, your deportment. You are on the losing side. The precious moments, so solemn, fraught with eternal results, may be wholly on Satan's side of the question, and may prove your ruin. I do not want it thus. I want you to be a Christian, a child of God, an heir of heaven.

**Importance of Parental Counsel**—You have been giving the complexion to your life. How stands your case as registered in heaven's record book? Above everything else seek for those things which make for your peace. Place yourself under influences which will not be deteriorating, destroying the fine sensibility of the soul. Keep your soul unspotted from the world. Let not any familiarity with young men put a blot on your life. You are in danger of giving up Christ, of becoming reckless and unwilling to listen to wise counsel. The counsel of parental affection is lost upon deaf ears. Will you, my sister, think seriously whether you will receive advice from the experienced? Will

you be guided by your friends? Will the parental counsel be unheeded? Will you take your case in your own hands?

Retracing One's Steps. I hope you will change your course of action, for if the Lord has ever spoken by me, He now speaks to you to retrace your steps. Your passions are strong; your principles are endangered; and you will not consider and will not follow advice which you know to be good and the only clear, safe, consistent thing for you to do. Will you resolve to do right, to be right, to heed the counsel I have given you in the name of the Lord? God has given you capabilities. Shall they be wasted at random? Unguided efforts will go more often in the wrong direction than the right. Will you let years of waywardness, disappointment, and shame pass, and you make so many wrong impressions on minds by your course of action that you can never have that influence which you might have had?

Your course of life has been of that character that all your good is evil spoken of. You become

soured, unsanctified, and unholy. In order to gain that which you think is liberty you pursue a course which, if followed, will hold you in a bondage worse than slavery. You must change your course of conduct and be guided by the counsel of experience, and, through the wisdom of those whom the Lord teaches, place your will on the side of the will of God.

**Stain on the Soul**—But if you are determined to listen to no counsels but your own, and you will work out every problem for yourself, then be sure you will reap that which you have sown. You will miss the right way altogether or else, wounded, bruised, and dwarfed in religious character, you will turn to the Lord, humbled, penitent, and confessing your errors. You will become tired of beating the air.

Are you sure that your course is right? I know you are not; but pride has taken possession of your soul. You are too giddy or too reckless to take counsel. Remember, every action and every course of action has a twofold character, be it virtuous or

demoralizing. God is displeased with you. Can you afford to pursue the course you are pursuing? A stain is being imprinted upon your soul.—Letter 47, 1889.

**Like Clay in Jesus' Hands**—I beg of you, Laura, to go to God for wisdom. The most difficult thing you will have to manage is your own self. Your own daily trials, your emotions, and your peculiar temperament, your inward promptings, these are difficult matters for you to control, and these wayward inclinations bring you often into bondage and darkness. Your only course is to give yourself unreservedly into the hands of Jesus—all your experiences, all your temptations, all your trials, all your impulses—and let the Lord mold you as clay is molded in the hands of the potter. You are not your own, therefore the necessity of giving your unmanageable self into the hands of One who is able to manage you; then rest, precious rest and peace, will come to your soul. Lie passive in the hands of God.

**Pictures in Heaven's Record Books—**

Remember, your character is being daguerreotyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb? “Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be” [Revelation 22:12]....

**Changing Before It Is Too Late**—Laura, it is not now too late for wrongs to be righted. It is not now too late to make your calling and your election sure. You may now begin to work upon the plan of addition. Add to your faith virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and patience, and every Christian grace. Everything else will perish in the great day of conflagration, but the gold of holy character is enduring. It knows no decay. It will stand the test of the fires of the last day. My dear child, I wish you to remember that “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it

be good, or whether it be evil” [Ecclesiastes 12:14].

Truth is unfolding to those who walk in the light of the sun of Christ’s righteousness. The truth sanctifies. We see vice prevailing everywhere. It is pampered and glorified, while true goodness, equity, justice, and purity are trampled underfoot. A large number are sowing seeds of baleful influence around them. What are you doing, Laura? Have you, since you decided to discard counsel, to refuse advice, been growing into a firm, well-developed Christian, or have you, in choosing your own way, found it brings unrest, cares, and worries?

**Life’s Most Crucial Choice**—Why not listen to the advice of your parents? Before you is the path that leads to certain ruin. Will you turn while you can? Will you seek the Lord while Mercy’s sweet voice is appealing to you, or will you still have your own way? The Lord pities you. The Lord invites you. Will you come? Will you return from your backslidings? May the Lord help you to



choose to be wholly the Lord's.—Letter 51, 1889.

**One's Own Counsel and Will**—Dear Sister Laura: I thought I would write you a few lines because I have interest in your soul, and I am sure your feet have been dangerously long in the path that leads to perdition. You have not been gaining any strength to overcome every defect of character, but you have been pursuing a course that is unchristian. Now, I know that had you followed the advice which I gave you in the name of the Lord, you would today be far in advance of what you now are spiritually. But all my advice was cast aside as naught, and I felt that it was no use to seek to do you good because my soul would be wounded and your soul unhelped, unless I should coincide with your ideas in regard to your marriage with Walter. This I shall never do because I know you are pursuing a course which is not right, and which the Lord will not approve. If your course were right, you would not have suffered as you have.

Your course since you left Walter has been

such as has not raised you in the estimation of anyone who has the love of God abiding in the heart. You have ever loved to be in the society, and have encouraged the attention, of young men. This you have done to your own injury. Advice and counsel in this matter have not done you any good, but created in you feelings of resentment. But will you consider how the heavenly angels look upon the course you have persistently pursued in having your own way, and your own will, strong, defiant, determined?

**Reflections in God's Mirror**—You have kept to your own ideas irrespective of right or righteousness. Does it pay, Laura? Can you afford to spend the few moments of probation in the kind of life you have chosen? Certainly had you consented to live with Walter, you would not have been any more unhappy than you have been. You have set up your will, but is it God's will? But I wish you to see yourself as God sees you. You once loved God, but you have lost your first love. You do not love God; you do not love holy things. Your influence is not to others a savor of life unto

life, but of death unto death. In the place of growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, you are separating farther and farther from the Lord.

**Spiritual Coldness and Declension**—If you were pursuing a right course, you would not reveal this spiritual declension. The Bible is not precious to you as it once was. You read it a little out of a sense of duty, but not because you wish to hear the voice of God in His Word. You pray sometimes, but it is only a form. You do not take all your troubles to God and plead with an humble heart to know His ways and His will. We cannot sanction your course; we have not felt that your example was safe for anyone to follow.

In the place of widening the mark that separates you from the world, you have been narrowing the mark until it is obliterated. Should the Lord say today, Cut down the tree; why cumbereth it the ground? you would have no part in the first resurrection. Your conversation is not refined and choice; no one would suppose you to be a Christian

by your loose, reckless talk, and the company you have chosen of late years. You are losing and so is your sister every day, making it harder and more difficult for you to retrace your steps.

**Entirely Reckless and Careless?**—Can you afford to do this? Have you become entirely reckless and careless in regard to your soul? I have a message from God to you that you need not despair, but return unto the Lord. “Seek the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6, 7).

Lose sight of everything but one thing, that is, How is it with my soul? Should sickness and sudden death come to me now, what is my hope of entering the mansions Jesus has gone to prepare for those who love Him? Shall Jesus have died for me in vain? Will you choose your way, your will, and refuse to keep the way of the Lord?

**Need of a Return to God**—Your heart has been growing harder and harder, but, Laura, fall on the Rock and be broken; surrender yourself to God; return to Jesus. The same sunshine that once shone into your heart and melted it, the same sunbeams of the Sun of Righteousness that illuminated your mind with their pure rays, are seeking your heart and mind today. The same Jesus who spoke pardon to your soul is speaking to you today. His blood has lost none of its efficacy; it can cleanse you from all sin. The same Spirit that once drew you to Jesus with the cords of His love, is waiting to lead you back to Him again. Do not think of anything except it is Jesus. Break your heart, confess your sins, forsake them and turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart. When you show a determination to be right before God, to forsake your way for God's way, then will He restore unto you His salvation.

**Weakened Will Power**—Some things that look impossible to you now will certainly change in appearance when your heart is changed by the

grace of God. Your heart has become sad at times as you know you are in an unsaved state and that you are grieving the Saviour by your wrong doings. When you come to yourself you are amazed at the distance you have placed between yourself and your Saviour. You have again and again resolved to reform, but you have as often failed because you made these resolutions in your own strength. Your moral power has become weak. Your will power is strong enough, but it is not strong on the Lord's side. You are not able to fix your mind upon the Word of God. You have talked enough, but it has only sunk you lower. Your heart does not feel when you try to pray.

**The Sinner's Cry**—Now make a desperate effort. Take your mind off from yourself, off from your securing a divorce, off from Walter, off from everything mortal; and commence with your own soul. Cry out in earnest, Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I; save, Lord, or I perish. "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow"

(Psalm 51:10, 7).

We are surrounded with iniquity in its various forms. You need a helper. The Lord knows all our works; even our thoughts are before Him as an open book. I now make my appeal to you. It is to change right about. Step from under Satan's hellish banner, and step under the blood-stained banner of Jesus Christ. Will you do this? Will you change your spirit for the spirit of Christ? When your mind delights to dwell upon heaven and heavenly things, there will be no desire with you to enjoy the society of young men. There will be kindled in the soul the most intense desire to be like Jesus. By beholding we become changed into the same image. Carnal thoughts, carnal feelings, will be no longer entertained. You will no longer be frivolous, cheap in talk, and unholy in life. Then you will reach, through the grace of Christ, the highest standard of purity and elevation of character.

I now commit you to God and to His grace. But work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both to

will and to do of His good pleasure.—Letter 14a,  
1891.