

Chapter 18

Child Abuse

Dear Brother: I have just read your letter dated April 26. May the Lord help me to write you the very words that will be for your restoration and not for your destruction.

I feel sorry, very sorry, for you. Sin, my brother, is sin; it is the transgression of the law, and should I try to lessen that sin before you I would not be doing you any good. You as a Christian receive harm to your own soul. Your whole religious experience is cheapened, and you cannot have faith and trust in God while you have unclean thoughts and defiled hands. The work needs to begin at the soul, and then it will work out in the character. Your mind and heart are polluted, else all such actions would be loathsome. It is a great sin, especially for one who professes to be preaching the gospel of Christ.

I have had this class of sins presented to me as producing moral defilement. What can the impression be upon those youth whose bodies you degrade by your actions? How can you be a shepherd of the sheep and lambs while corrupting their minds, and tainting and polluting their moral sense? Would you consider this matter as lightly as you have done should a minister of the gospel, as Elder W, do such things to your sisters or to your children? This is a crime in the sight of God and I cannot cover it over as a light matter. It is a Sodomitish sin. It is tainting and polluting in all its tendencies, and an abomination in the sight of a holy God. It is practicing iniquity.

Any youth who would submit her body to be handled by a man is in no way fit for the kingdom of heaven. All this vile practice and commonness is what is ruining our youth. Would you practice this upon the body of your own child? Would you not consider it incest, discovering her nakedness? All who do such things are leading young women into abominable practices. I know what these things lead to. To lewdness, lustful practices. Consider

how you must dishonor and degrade the truth. Oh, God hates all such sins. How could you do this and at the same time be preaching the Word to sinners—yourself a sinner?

I know how God regards these sins. A married man, a minister of the gospel, leading the lambs of the flock into Sodomitish practices. Now for Christ's sake do not again practice this wicked work and destroy your own soul and the souls of others. It is well that you have not been permitted to continue this awful polluting practice. It is no light sin. The effect upon the mind of the one who submits herself to your touch cannot be measured. Human beings are the Lord's property, and to do any action to corrupt them is a terrible insult to Jesus Christ, who gave His life for these precious souls, that they should not perish in their sins, but have everlasting life, and such actions may ruin the souls for whom Christ has died. Will you continue this work to ruin souls?

Looking unto Jesus who is the Author and Finisher of your faith, you will be of good courage

in the Lord. We cannot but know that the end of all things is at hand. I come to you as a physician of souls; I tell you that it is not possible for you to act as a minister. What are you doing? Leading young women to the tree of knowledge of evil practices and teaching them to pluck the fruit which is only evil. This is doing Satan's work most effectually. It is poisoning minds and filling them with unholy imaginings.

These are the very sins which corrupted Sodom. Their evil practices did not come all at once. First one man and woman stupefied themselves by unholy, polluted habits. Then as inhabitants settled in Sodom, they did as you are doing, educating others in a line that is forbidden of God. And so as the inhabitants continued to multiply, these ministers of sin continued in educating them in their own defiling practices until if any person came into their midst their first thoughts were to educate them in their evil work, until Sodom became renowned for its pollutions. Their sins reached unto heaven, and the Lord would bear with them no longer. He destroyed

them and all that was beautiful, that made it as a second Eden, for the earth was defiled under the inhabitants thereof.

These bodies that you tamper with are the purchased property of Jesus Christ. I knew this was your sin, but I knew also that if the truth was enthroned in your heart it would make this sin appear to you in its true enormity, for truth brought into the soul temple will expel lust and defilement from the heart....

You say you did not commit adultery. God charges adultery against everyone who doeth these things, and all who will communicate these vile practices to another are polluting that soul with vile imaginations. Can you not see, can you not understand by your own experience, that you are leading youth into this habit of self abuse? You have given them the fruit of the tree of knowledge [of good and evil], and every evil communicated is causing them to partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge [of good and evil], which God has forbidden to be eaten....

How can I frame words to express the enormity of this awful sin? How can I present it in such a manner that you will no longer look upon it, as you have done, as no great wrong? I have granddaughters, the children of my son, W. C. White. If I were forced to choose whether these children should be exposed to these temptations, educated in these evil practices, or be cut down by death, I would say, Let them die in their innocence. Let them not be corrupted by eating the apples of Sodom....

If you will take hold of Christ by living faith, and humble your soul before Him, He will undertake your case and angels will guard you. But you must resist the devil. You must educate yourself to a different train of thought. Put no confidence in yourself. Never seek the companionship of women or girls. Keep away from them. Your moral taste is so perverted that you will ruin yourself and ruin many souls if you do not turn square about. Educate your mind to study the Word of God. Study it with your whole heart and

pray much. Everlasting life is worth a lifelong, persevering, untiring effort. Educate that mind which you have misused and directed in wrong channels of thought. Educate it to dwell on the life, the character, and the lessons of Christ....

Do not feel that the worst thing for you is to lose your credentials. You are not worthy to be entrusted with the care of the flock. You must know this without my telling you. A little time of probation is still granted you; make the most of it in searching the Word. Every lost blessing is a great loss to you, but if you come into a right position before God you may now receive forgiveness for the past, but do not let your future life have the dark blot of the past....

You ask me if you shall make a public confession. I say, No. Do not dishonor the Master by making public the fact that one ministering in the Word could be guilty of such sin as you have committed. It would be a disgrace to the ministry. Do not give publicity to this matter by any means. It would do injustice to the whole cause of God. It

would create impure thoughts in the minds of many even to hear these things repeated. Defile not the lips even by communicating this to your wife, to make her ashamed and bow her head in sorrow. Go to God and to the brethren who know this terrible chapter in your experience and say what you have to say, then let prayer be offered to God in your behalf. Cultivate sobriety. Walk carefully and prayerfully before God. Acquire moral stamina by saying, “I will not dishonor my Redeemer.”—Letter 106a, 1896.

Transmitting Messages of Reproof—I am sorry that you feel injured because I let Brother A have a copy of the letter I sent to you. I did not do this to injure you in any way. You had yourself written me that you had made matters known to him concerning yourself and he thought you should confess the whole matter to the church. I thought that letter would prevent any such movement and keep the matter as private as possible.

Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce, p. 129.1 (EGW)

I do not in any way favor his reading the matter to your mother. She has an abundance of sorrows to carry. I did not sanction any public exposure. I thought that the letter, which condemned the sin, also encouraged you to hope and trust in God. I supposed that it would help Brother A to help you. If it has added to your affliction, making matters any worse for you, I am sincerely sorry.

Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce, p. 129.2 (EGW)

Whenever I have written a message of reproof, I have always sent one copy to the minister who is officiating in the church, that he may have wisdom to recover such ones as are in danger through temptation, giving them such advice as they need. I also knew, under existing circumstances, that it would not be possible to give you credentials as a shepherd, recommending you to the confidence of the people, because knowing your course of action, if you should in any way be overcome, the Lord would make the conference guilty of the sin of

which you are guilty.—Letter 120, 1897.