

Chapter 22

A Sanitarium Superintendent

[This man, an ordained minister, had been a widower for about five years when these letters were written. The occasional blanks are reproduced as they appear in the file copies of the letters in the White Estate vault.] Equal Guilt of Two Persons. In the night season I saw you in the company of the matron of the institution. As far as your attentions to each other were concerned, you might have been man and wife. Your conduct toward each other was wrong in the sight of God, and my heart was grieved by the condition of things. I asked, “Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?” God is displeased. You have grieved his holy spirit. Sister n will never again be what she once was. Both of you are guilty before God.—Letter 30, 1887 (Written June 11, 1887).

Ministers Not Above Suspicion and Temptation—Elder M has been very imprudent

with Mrs. or Sister N, and I have handled this familiarity with decision in the fear of God, under a great burden. He stated that it was his privilege for the superintendent to ride with the matron; and he told me, quite aggrieved, that the church members had much talk of his always taking Sister N to the meeting; and when the matter came up in the camp meeting at Oakland in the presence of about twenty, he justified himself that he had, he said, been spoken to in regard to Sister N riding with him and her husband not being with them, but he knew that this was no moral wrong, and therefore he went on just the same.

I just arose and told him plainly he was not a Bible Christian; that the Word of the Lord was positive, abstaining from the very appearance of evil and to give no action [or] reproach to fall upon the cause of God. But, knowing that much talk was being made over his close association with another man's wife, he had not sought in his own course of action to cut off the reproach, but justified his course. Had he seen another man taking the same liberties with his wife when she was living, he

would have felt indignant. Had he seen any of the men connected with the institution, young or old, thus intimate with a married woman or young girls, he would have seen the evil and with no soothing words would have made short work of this matter.

He stated he should have done so, but that he considered he was a minister, above suspicion and above temptation, he had thought, and therefore it was safe for him to do that which would be sin in another. He acknowledged that this was wrong reasoning, but every time the matter was talked upon he brought forward the same excuses.—Letter 53, 1888 (written Feb. 10, 1888).

No Confession, No Conversion—Dear Brother C: You may say, Has the Lord shown you this peculiar case of Elder M and Mrs. N?

If I had my diary here, written during my last trip to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, I could read to you some things therein. In a vision of the night I was passing through the rooms of the institution, and saw the very scenes which did take

place there in this familiarity, men with women and women with men. My soul was deeply troubled, and I arose and wrote out these things at one o'clock in the morning....

I was shown at a certain time when the Spirit of the Lord was working upon those connected with the institution, some confessions were made. They seemed to be assembled in a meeting of worship. Elder M was standing upon his feet, and the Spirit of God was deeply moving upon his heart to confess his way out of darkness into the light. But he spoke only in general terms. He in no wise cleared his soul from the stains of wrong on his part in connection with Sister N. He trembled for a while under the prompting of the Spirit of God, but refused to humiliate his soul before God in lifting the cross.

A Diverging Path With Satan as Leader—
From that time he began to walk in darkness, contrary to light and truth. He had a molding influence upon Sister N. She felt at one time that she could never be free, unless she made a humble

confession. But Elder M molded matters to please himself. He might have made straightforward work; he might have come out of darkness into the light; he might have drawn near to God; and the Lord would have forgiven his sins, and lifted up a standard for him against the enemy. But he has verily turned away from the light and the convictions of the Spirit of God, as did the assembly of the Jews at Nazareth, when Christ announced Himself as the Anointed One.... It is a dangerous thing under circumstances like these to open the heart to unbelief, which causes the Spirit of God to depart....

It is Satan's constant work to lead minds to deny the light. It takes but a step to leave the straightforward path, and enter a diverging path where Satan leads the way.—Letter 33, 1888 (written March 21, 1888).

Healing From Sin's Wound—Dear Brother M: I have had much burden of soul in your behalf, but at the same time strong confidence in God that He would on this occasion lead you to see your

mistakes and errors. I so much desire that you, for your sake and for Christ's sake, should so humble your heart by confessing your sins, that the burden shall be lifted from your soul, and the prayers of your brethren be united with your prayers, and you be healed from the wound sin has made....

My brother, you have walked away from the light into dark places. When I was laboring with you so earnestly, when in an agony of distress in your behalf in _____, oh, why did you not there pity me as well as yourself? Why did you not lift this soul-crushing burden from my heart by acknowledging your sins? Why did you not consider Jesus who was being by you pierced afresh and put to open shame? Why did you deny Christ? Oh, my brother, my soul feels deeply for you! I urged home upon you the light in which your case was presented to me, and I am not exaggerating when I tell you that my soul was wrung with anguish. Why did you stand back, as if unimpressed?

Need of True Repentance—Why did you

justify yourself at every point, and let this weight press heavier and heavier upon your own soul, and bring so heavy labor upon me? Why manifest this cold, icy hesitancy to acknowledge your wrongs? Is the high standard of God's holy law too severe? Is the self-denial, the lofty purity of thought that is demanded, too much of a constraint, too irksome to be endured? No requirement is given you which it will not increase your happiness to obey. I know you are suffering. I know you are not happy, and I suffer with you, because you are a member of the body of Christ.

You have enjoyed the love of Jesus, the peace of Christ, in large measure. Most terrible doubts and waverings are torturing your soul. Why not submit to God? Why encase your soul in barriers that will not let the light in? Will my brother see and appreciate the value of his own soul and Christ's work that the gift of eternal life might be placed within his reach? There is great power in the atonement. Your mind is troubled, and the whole soul is in desperate need of a physician.

I cannot give you up. I must see you what God would have you to be, filled with repentance and remorse, which will be followed by a sweet sense of pardon and pure, holy joy. Jesus is sorry for you; He pities you; He wants to save you. He is not willing that you should perish but that you should have eternal life.

God's Law the Only Standard of Righteousness—God has not separated from you, but your sins and your iniquities have separated your soul from God. You are sin-sick, and you need a physician. Look into the mirror, God's holy law, which is the only standard of righteousness. It is the sin detector. Will you see your sins in the light of the law? Will you have faith in Jesus as the sin-pardoning Saviour? The royal law is before you, and you must meet its requirements. It is the only standard of righteousness; it measures your life and your character. I am sad to be compelled to tell you that you are a transgressor of the law. Practical faith in Jesus Christ is the only thing that will save you; the precious blood of Jesus alone will cleanse from every spot and stain of sin.

A Vivid Vision of Adultery—While in Europe the things that transpired in _____ were opened before me. A voice said, “Follow me, and I will show you the sins that are practiced by those who stand in responsible positions.” I went through the rooms, and I saw you, a watchman upon the walls of Zion, were very intimate with another man’s wife, betraying sacred trusts, crucifying your Lord afresh. Did you consider that there was a Watcher, the Holy One, who was witnessing your evil work, seeing your actions and hearing your words, and these are also registered in the books of heaven?

She was sitting on your lap; you were kissing her, and she was kissing you. Other scenes of fondness, sensual looks and deportment, were presented before me, which sent a thrill of horror through my soul. Your arm encircled her waist, and the fondness expressed was having a bewitching influence. Then a curtain was lifted, and I was shown you in bed with Sister N. My guide said, “Iniquity, adultery.”...

Unimpressible as a Stone—When I tried to show you the aggravated character of sin in the sight of God of a watchman upon the walls of Zion, you did not seem to feel or to sense the sin, but you seemed as unimpressible as a stone. I know you are seeking to cover your ways from the Lord. I did not then open them to you, as I have done now, with my pen. And I do not wish to have this opened to others, for I do hope that you will see and sense the evil and confess your sin to God and to your brethren and make clean work, that you may have this foul blot removed from you by the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. You have not confessed your wrongs. You have done great wickedness; you have committed adultery, broken the seventh commandment.

I have carried this heavy load upon my soul all this time. When we had the meetings in _____, you knew just what you ought to confess. You knew the warnings were sent of God; you knew the communications I sent to you from Europe were truth. And when I carried the burdens until my soul seemed crushed, you obtained [the] sympathy of

your friends by leaving the impression upon their minds that I was not just, but partial, and very severe; that you were suffering under accusations which were very difficult to bear; that the testimonies I had given were my own judgment, my own words; that I had wronged you; and that false reports had been brought to me. But my brother, nothing could be more deceptive than this....

Doubts Upon Satan's Hooks—I showed you that your position as a minister of the gospel would make any such course as you had pursued a reproach to the cause of God, a matter of scandal, and your actions a savor of death rather than of life. When the standard-bearer falls, who will fight? When the cross is torn down by the ones who should point it out, whom will you believe? What can be more dreadful than a minister of Jesus Christ a commandment breaker? I see only one way for your escape—break with the temptations of Satan at once, and rush for the light! Even ministers who claim to believe the truth are only blind guides if the truth is not enthroned in the

heart, and a thorough transition from darkness to light has [not] taken place. They are clouds without water. I urge upon you, if you care for your own eternal welfare, the positive necessity of having the truth enthroned in your heart, for then its principles will sanctify your character....

You have talked over matters as you viewed them, that the communications from Sister White are not all from the Lord, but a portion is her own mind, her own judgment, which is no better than anybody else's judgment and ideas. This is one of Satan's hooks to hang your doubts upon to deceive your soul and the souls of others who will dare to draw the line in this matter and say, This portion which pleases me is from God, but that portion which points out and condemns my course of conduct is from Sister White alone, and bears not the holy signet. You have in this way virtually rejected the whole of the messages, which God in His tender, pitying love has sent to you to save you from moral ruin.

The Truth Which Condemns—God presents

to you His will and ways which are in marked contrast in just that way which your case requires, and you are hereby tested whether you will accept the reproof, fall on the Rock and be broken, or will you become vexed over plain statements that come close to your soul, because it [the reproof] is the truth and condemns you, and then you feel at enmity with me. Hebrews 4:12. There is One back of me which is the Lord who has prompted the message, which you now reject, and disregard, and dishonor. By tempting God you have unnerved yourself, and confusion and blindness of mind have been the result. A fierce determination has sprung up in your heart in a spirit of defiance to brave it through....

You have a work to do for your soul that no one else can do for you. Your course of error and wrong has been the means of helping others in the same direction. You were never alone. The same hand that traced the characters over against the wall of Belshazzar's palace was registering in the books of heaven the deeds and words that made Christ ashamed of you. You had no respectful

courtesy for those whom you should have treated with respect and to whose wants you should have been attentive. These unholy things unfitted you to do the work of the Lord; but in your unholy hands you took your Bible and led the worship, and as mouthpiece for God you were foremost to preach to the people. Where was your conscience? Where was your humility? Where was your fear of God? Where was your faithful work to keep the Health Retreat up to the highest standard?—Letter 16, 1888 (written April 30, 1888).

The Lord Lives—We had a private meeting where humble confessions were made by Elder M and Brother and Sister N....

Well, the Lord lives—I have had a hard battle and some precious victories gained. Elder M is clothed and in his right mind, humble, tender, and broken before God. Humble as a child. I see no way but to keep bearing the plain testimony in love, in patience.—Letter 27, 1888 (written May 29, 1888).