

Chapter 26

A Public Evangelist

[The evangelist to whom these letters were written sometimes conducted several series of meetings in one area, then moved away to the next while his wife remained to carry on with the interest and follow up with Bible studies. This situation was far from ideal. He finally fell into the sin of adultery and even rejected the Spirit of Prophecy and the counsel of the General Conference leaders. The Review and Herald announced that his credentials were revoked. A few years before his death he repented and returned to the Lord.]

Strong to Move Crowds, Weak to Manage Self—You will see before this reaches you that the Lord has again visited His people by giving me a testimony. In this view I was shown that you were not standing in the clear light and you are in danger of bringing a reproach upon the cause of God by

moving as you happen to feel. It is Satan's intent to destroy you. He is seeking to keep your mind in a constant state of agitation, stirring it up that it may cast up mire and dirt instead of the peaceful fruits of righteousness....

But, Brother R, I was shown that you now should be very circumspect in your deportment and in your words. You are watched by enemies. You have great weaknesses for a man who is as strong as you are to move the crowd. As you are now separated from your wife there will be suspicion and jealousy, and falsehoods will be framed [even] if you give no occasion. But if you are not cautious, you will bring a reproach upon the cause of God which could not soon be wiped away. You may feel, as I saw you had felt, that if you were not going to live with your wife, you wished to be free from her. You are restless, uneasy, and unsettled. Satan is tempting you to make a foolish man of yourself. Now is the time for you to show yourself a man, to exhibit the grace of God by your patience, your fortitude, and courage....

Danger in Confidants—You need to consecrate yourself to God, and not dwell upon your troubles. Be careful how you are enticed to make women your confidants or to allow them to make you their confidant. Keep aloof from the society of women as much as you can. You will be in danger. Remember, we are living amid the perils of the last days. Almost everything is rotten and corrupt.

Look to God, pray, oh, pray, as you never have before to be kept by the power of God through faith. In God you can stand untainted, without a stain or blemish. Fasten your hold upon God. Look to Him in faith that you may be a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. God will bring you off victorious if you will live a humble life of prayer and dependent trust.—Letter 23, 1871.

No Relish for God's Word—In the last vision given me your case was presented before me. I have been waiting to see if you had a tender, sensitive, or a seared, conscience. I have had the

following written out for a long time but have thought I would wait till you made some move yourself. I was shown that you have not lived up to the light. You have departed far from the light. The Lord has been following you with reproofs and counsel to preserve you from ruining your own soul and bringing a reproach upon His cause. I was shown that you have been retrograding rather than advancing and growing in grace and the knowledge of truth....

You have made girls and women the theme of thought, rather than the Word of God. Your mind has been restless and dissatisfied if it could not be occupied with girls and women. You could not relish the study of the Word of God while your thoughts have been upon subjects which war against the soul. There is no excuse for your life of folly.

A Double-minded Minister—From what has been shown me you are a transgressor of the seventh commandment. How then can your mind be in harmony with the precious Word of God,

truths which cut you at every turn? If you had been betrayed into this folly unwittingly, it would be more excusable, but you have not. You have been warned. You have been reproved and counseled. You have apparently received the reproof, but not in heart sufficient to die to the carnal mind. You have not set to work to eradicate the evil. You have soon lost the smart of the chastening rod of the Lord, and rushed on in as great foolishness as ever, like a fool to the correction of stocks. Your love for self-indulgence has become a warring lust.

You love the society of girls and women. During a series of meetings you have allowed your mind to plan and contrive how you can get into the society of young girls or women and not betray your true feelings. You will run into temptation when you have not moral power to resist temptation. Your mind is constantly impure because the fountain is never cleansed. You have found no delight in diligent, careful searching of the Scriptures....

Unchastity of Thought and Action—God has

erected the barriers of testimonies as a wall about you to guard you from falling under the specious wiles of the enemy, but you break all these down and press over everything to follow your inclination. Your sorrow for your sins is like that of those who anciently rent their garments to express their grief but did not afflict their souls. You have not a correct sense of what sin is. The aggravating character of unchastity of thought and actions you have not sensed. Your mind is carnal, and that almost continually. If you really were sorry for your sins, if you really had a true sense of your wrongs, you would exercise that repentance that needeth not to be repented of.

More Harm Than Help to the Cause—I desire now to state facts. I have been shown that your life and your labors in the cause of God for some years have been a greater injury to the precious cause of present truth than a benefit. Had you had no part in this work and been separated entirely from it, you would have saved much heart sorrow to those who love the cause of God; and you would have saved them much hard labor which

has been forced upon them to counteract your wrong influence.

The labor that has been required to get you right and to keep you from disgracing the cause, had it been spent on converting souls from error to truth—and had the laborers had nothing whatever to do in regard to you—the interest and strength of the cause of present truth would stand better today in California as well as in the East.

Influence of an Erring Minister—Satan has made you his agent to carry out his mind. The great stir and great excitement you have made in discussions from time to time, and the apparent success you have had, has built you up in your own self-righteousness. Allowing you to labor as you have been permitted to labor when your heart was not right with God, has done you great injury. You have not searched your own heart and afflicted your soul before God. You have felt too lightly your terrible mistakes in the past. Everything has been done to save you from utter disgrace and ruin. You have been patiently borne with, and when

wholly unfit for the sacred work, in order to save your soul you have been permitted to continue your labors while hearts have groaned and ached under the burden of your foolish, sinful course.

Had you been left to yourself long ago, till you gave the evidence that God was indeed with you and that you were a thoroughly reformed man, you might now be of some use in this solemn work. But I saw that we were risking altogether too much in encouraging you to go out to labor to convert sinners to Christ when your way has been polluted before God, your heart all stained with sins. The true servants of God are judged to be like yourself. No longer should you mar the work of God with your corrupt, your carnal, heart, and thus miserably represent the cause of present truth.

Some Success No Evidence of God's Acceptance—In order for you to do good you must live a new life that is in harmony with God. Your perverse nature has not been transformed. You are not at peace with God or with yourself. You are in bondage to the great adversary of souls,

in subjection to the old man of sin. You are not a free man in Christ. There is needed a spiritual change in you before God can work with you. You may argue that you have success as you labor. So do many who are at war with God have a measure of success. If some do embrace the truth while the arguments you use are so convincing, it is no evidence you are in a state of even acceptance with God....

A Life of Known Mental Sin—If it had only stopped there—but it did not. You felt for a little time the evil of your course, but not as fully as you should, how you had been deceived by Satan, infatuated; and your eyes never did have the mist fully removed from them. You humbled your heart before God, and He accepted your humiliation. You soon became careless again, and allowed your mind to become filled again with vain and impure imaginings. You were a little more cautious, but full of deception. Your mind was active to invent means to gain your object....

The power of great passion has been your

apology for vice. Your life has been a shame—nothing in it of which you might glory. You have had great depression if you were not strained up to some excitement and not had some girl or woman to attract you and to listen to your troubles in regard to your wife. Shame, shame should cover you for your course.—Letter 52, 1876.

Daily Conversion for a Sacred Work—God has shown me your case so fully I dare not let you go on in deception as to your true condition. I greatly fear that you will fail of everlasting life, that after you have preached to others upon the binding claims of God's law you will fail to carry out in your own life the holy principles of the law of God, and will make shipwreck of faith.

You are so much swallowed up in yourself that unless you are consecrated to God and have a living daily faith in God and obtain His grace and power, you will be a hindrance to the advancement of the truth. I cannot see the cause of God marred and suffer through your inefficiency or through your blind mistakes. You must be a daily converted

man or you are unfit for the sacred work in which you are engaged. I know more of your peculiar temperament and your dangers than others can.

Appeal to Women for Sympathy—Your trouble with the sisters has come in consequence of your drawing upon their sympathies. You relate your trials and enlist their pity for you whom they think a great sufferer. You then yield to your feelings, put on an appearance as though you were enduring almost martyrdom. You lead them out to give you care and attention which is not really proper, and bring yourself in a position where you are easily tempted. You should have learned by your trials in the past to shun anything which has the least appearance of familiarity with the sisters, married or unmarried. Let your affections center upon God. Rely upon Him for support rather than on human sympathy.

You are very weak in this direction, but the cause of God must not be marred with your weakness and indiscretion. This is your danger, and you are overcome, and then a wound is brought

upon the cause of God that can never be fully healed.—Letter 53, 1876.

Attitude of the Evangelist After Loss of His Credentials—Dear Sir: I have been troubled exceedingly in regard to your case, and yet have not known what to say to you. I was very reluctant to say a word to discourage you, for I know what terrible sadness discouragement brings to the soul. I thought when your credentials were not renewed you would quietly settle down and be willing to be retired, that you would know if it was among the possibilities consistent with reason and religion in the great need we are of laborers, you would have received credentials. I could not use my influence in favor of this.

In the last vision given me, the great white throne was presented before me, with the Judge of all the earth to pass sentence upon the congregated multitude. The ledger of heaven was opened, and those about the throne were judged according to the deeds done in the body.

Your name was registered as weighed in the balance and found wanting. Your name was registered as a transgressor of the commandments of God.

Opportunity to Redeem the Past—God in His great mercy gave you opportunity to redeem the past. When you had shown repentance He pitied you.... You were placed in a good field of labor, and had you conducted yourself as a Christian should, you might then have had that repentance that needeth not to be repented of.

You were, for a time, humble and thankful, but your heart had so long been given up to perversity and to self-indulgence, that you could not see and sense your past course as so very offensive to God. Like Peter, you had been faithfully warned of your danger and of your defection of character; but you were self-confident and became jealous and acted like a spoiled child....

God's Rejection of Ministerial Labor—After God had borne so long with your perversity, while

you were professing to be a shepherd of the flock, you were granted another trial in answer to our sorrowful petitions in your behalf. The Lord opened the way before you. We felt very sad for you; and when we saw how the matter resulted, we felt worse than before.

I was shown that your labors as a minister would be no longer accepted of God. Your moral sense is in no way strengthened by your last test and trial. You did not take and keep the position of a penitent man, humbling yourself daily before God, under a sense of His great mercy and your sinfulness. God does not connect with you.

Contrition and prayer should have been your attitude; and if you had preserved this penitential position you would not be where you now are, unfit to be entrusted with the solemn work of laboring for souls, jealous, surmising evil, selfish, and uncourteous. You and your wife are an offense to God. It was your privilege to place yourselves where God could have worked through you, but you did not do this. You had not a love for the

study of the Word. You had no love for prayer.

David's Hour of Adversity—You did not take a humble position, as did David in view of his sin. After the commission of that great crime of his life, his entire character deteriorated. That crime recoiled terribly upon him. He was bearing a conscious sense of guilt. He felt that he had forfeited the love and loyalty of his subjects. He was weakened physically and morally. He lost his own self-respect and self-confidence. He scarcely dared trust his old and formerly tried advisers. Humbled and mournful was the procession that took that precipitate flight from his throne across the mount.

But David was never more worthy of admiration than in his hour of adversity. Never was this cedar of God truly greater than when wrestling with the storm and tempest. He was a man of the keenest temperament, which might have been raised to the strongest feelings of resentment. He was cut to the quick with the imputation of unmerited wrong. Reproach, he tells us, had broken

his heart.

And it would not have been surprising if, stung to madness, he had given vent to his feelings of uncontrollable irritation, to bursts of vehement rage, and expressions of revenge. But there was nothing of this which would naturally be expected of a man with his stamp of character. With spirit broken and in tearful emotion, but without one expression of repining, he turns his back upon the scenes of his glory and also of his crime, and pursues his flight for his life.

Shimei comes forth as David passes and, with a storm of curses, hurls against him invectives, throwing stones and dirt. Said one of David's faithful men, "Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head." David in his sorrow and humility says, "Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David.... Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life" (2 Samuel 16:9-11).

David's Refusal to Avenge Himself—In

David is seen the saint of God. His fine and deep sense of feeling is not blunted. He senses his sin most keenly....

At the same time I pled most earnestly with you not to make a failure this time, that now was your time, now your day of opportunity; if you failed here it would be disastrous to you. I wrote private letters, I urged upon you what you must do and the earnest efforts you must put forth. Read Testimony No. 28. [See Testimonies for the Church 4:306-383.]

An Unheeded Warning—When in Colorado one year ago, your course grieved me, not from any personal difference, but I saw that you were not doing as God had told you you must do. My heart sank within me. I gave you a warning, but you did not heed it. I knew then, as I know now, that you were making a failure. I had your course marked out plainly in regard to the fruit we should see in you, if you would sense your state and improve this last trial....

Character Demoralization by Vanity and Envy—When you went to Colorado you had an excellent field, an excellent home; and oh, so much better privileges than some of our brethren have. You were familiar with the truth which you presented to the people, and some responded to it. You were humble at first.... You continued to labor, but you began to think that you were really quite an acquisition to the cause, and resented everything that did not look as though your efforts were appreciated. Very early you began to complain and express your dissatisfaction....

When we tried to set things in order, you were not one to humble yourself as did David. Contrast your feelings and your sense of sin with his repentance and humiliation. Your influence was on the side of the enemy. You were as a man in a maze. You began to recount what great good you had done, to reckon up those who had embraced the truth since you came to Colorado, when had it not been for publications and other influences aside from yours, there would have been but very few that would have balanced on the side of truth as

your sheaves. You claim too much....

There will be those who will solicit you to labor among them, and you may in your unsanctified heart flatter yourself that this is in your favor, and that you are of value. But do you suppose for a moment, if they could read your heart or have opened before them your past course of wickedness, they would be eager for your labors? It is because they have not a knowledge of your course and what long forbearance the people of God have exercised toward you. They know not how aggravating has been your case, how many testimonies of warning have been given you, all of which have been unheeded. Should they know the matters as they are, they would give no encouragement to your preaching....

David's Well-learned Lessons—The fruits of repentance are seen in the example of David. He learned the lesson of resignation under affliction, patience under injuries, and of humble, childlike reliance upon God. In your discouraged, dark condition, you should have both commenced as

young converts, seeking to have no will nor way of your own, no surmising nor judging of the motives of others, and leaving forever the long, fretting, complaining years of the past. Many who see not as God seeth, but view matters from man's standpoint, might reason that with David there might have been excuse for repining, and that the sincerity of his repentance years before might have excepted him from present judgment.

David might have thought so himself. He might have said, I have for a long time been obedient, and this should offset against my disobedience. It is hard for me in my old age to meet this sweeping blast. My life generally has been a life of faithful discharge of duty as God's honored servant, the king of Israel, the singer of His church. It is hard now to hang my harp upon the willow and remain tuneless and become a wandering exile. "My own son seeketh my life."

Excuses for Sin of No Value With God—But David makes no excuse. Justice points to the broken tablets of the broken law and draws her

sword against the transgressor. All apologies or excuses for sin are of no value with God. The sentiment of the soul of David was, Who shall testify to lessen the guilt of the sinner when God testifies against him? God's verdict—guilty—has gone forth, and man cannot erase it. [David knows the Scripture]: “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” David utters no complaint. The most eloquent psalm he ever sang was when he was climbing Mount Olivet, weeping and barefooted, yet humbled in spirit, unselfish and generous, submissive and resigned.

The royal fugitive does not render evil for evil or railing for railing. He does not harbor revengeful feelings in his heart, but amid his own woes he is kind, noble, and sympathetic. Oh, what a marked contrast has been your course....

Law of Sowing and Reaping—You have had every opportunity, every privilege, every advantage, but you have not improved them. When you came to Colorado, if you had both sought God

like young converts, studied your Bibles, walked humbly with God, prayed earnestly, and watched thereunto, you would have shown that you prized the boon of eternal life.

But you would not appreciate heaven. Although you have, on account of your sins, been most terribly threatened of God and warned for years of His punishment which is sure to come for transgression, yet all the time you have been grieving the Saviour. He has made you the object of His unwearied love and tender solicitude. He and all heaven have been ashamed of you and looked upon your course with loathing.

When the husbandman sows corn, he reaps corn. If he sows wheat, he reaps wheat. If he sows poisonous seeds, he will have the same to harvest. Thus with yourself as a responsible agent. If you sow to the flesh, you will of the flesh reap corruption. If you sow licentiousness, you will reap that which you have sown. The seed sown produces its kind....

Possible Accomplishment of a Second Trial—God gave you another trial. Oh, that you could have appreciated it, and offered earnest, heartfelt prayer with true penitence and living faith to grasp the precious promise. Had you with willing heart practiced self-denial, resisted temptation, there would have been increased strength with every effort to overcome self. Every new achievement of principle will smooth the way for achievements of the same kind, the fruit of every moral victory. This victory is the seed sown which produces its kind, placing the sower on higher ground for every triumph of righteousness gained. Every virtuous action strengthens the spiritual sinews for new virtue, and every vice repeated rivets the fetters of vice. There is a growing strength in habit, and by it every action makes way for repetition....

Retired Life After Loss of Credentials—If you can save your own soul by a humble, penitent life, that is the greatest work you can do. God is merciful, but you should not attempt to teach others. You have lost the power of God to teach.

Your work is not acceptable to God.

It is alarming how rapidly the sin of licentiousness is coming in among us. While writing out these individual, personal testimonies, your case was urged upon me with great power in the night season; and I cannot forbear writing to you. My soul is burdened day and night for the Israel of God....

Loss of the Power of God—I hoped that you would be of sufficient understanding to know when no credentials were given you that you should keep humbled and retired. You might have known that it was my words that had to be spoken in answer to questions put directly, that settled the matter in regard to your receiving credentials.

But when I see your reports in the paper my heart is sad. No such reports should enter the columns of our paper. How do those whom you have sought to ruin look upon these reports? How do those in _____ regard them? It is because the fine perception is dimmed in those in charge of the

paper that any of your reports find access to its columns. The high standard of truth and purity is lowered. Your spirit of independence and self-esteem shown since the conference at Battle Creek is anything but the spirit you would have could you discern yourself and have a true sense of sin.—Letter 6, 1880.