

Chapter 28

An Influential Minister

A Minister on a Downward Course—Elder T, my brother and fellow laborer: For two nights I have not been able to sleep many hours. About 2:00 a.m. I have been awakened greatly burdened, and after devoting some time to prayer, have attempted to write.

Your case with many others has been before me. Several years ago I was shown that your danger was very great on account of your attentions to other women besides your wife. You have indulged your own inclinations in this direction, and you stand guilty before God. The root of the whole matter is unchaste thoughts [that] are entertained which lead to improper attentions and advances, then to improper actions. All this is bad enough in men who have only a common work to do, but it is a hundredfold worse in those who have accepted sacred positions of trust.

I have in your presence dwelt particularly upon the importance of abstaining from the very appearance of evil. I have presented in your hearing the special temptations of the enemy, thinking to arouse your consciousness, that you would barricade your soul against the temptations of the enemy. I have written especially upon the dangers of young men and also of married men showing special attention to young ladies and to other men's wives. When crossing the ocean on my way to Europe, I was mightily stirred and wrote out special warnings. This was in your behalf as well as for others. It was to stop your downward course, that you should in the strength of Israel's God arise and be a man, not a plaything for the devil.

Dwarfing of Spiritual Growth by Sensual Thoughts—I was shown that in consequence of temptations you could not lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting. Your thoughts and actions crippled your endeavors; your earthliness and sensual thoughts dwarfed your spiritual growth. You are far from being the man God

would have you to be, and you fail to qualify yourself for the work you might do, because your thoughts are not pure, but tainted and corrupt. Some things were shown me that are open to the eye that never slumbers nor sleeps.

This is written in the books of heaven, and in a little time your case will be decided, whether your name shall be blotted out from the Book of Life or not. It certainly will be unless you are a converted man, and humble your soul before God, and confess your sins, and turn unto the Lord with your whole heart, and purge from you every impure thought and corrupt action. Says the True Witness, “I know thy works.” Do not attempt to teach the people until you are a changed man, until you have in humble penitence sought the Lord with true contrition of soul, and have a new heart.

Satan’s Strong Attempts to Corrupt Ministers—I was shown that Satan would make his temptations strong to corrupt the ministers who are teaching the binding claims of the law of God. If he can tarnish the virtue, confuse the sense of

purity and holiness, if he can insinuate himself into their thoughts, suggest and plan for them to sin in thought and deed against God, then their defense is gone. They have separated themselves from God; they have not the power and Spirit of God with them, and the sacred message of truth they bear to the people is not blessed of God; the seed is not watered, and the increase is not realized.

Lust as a Hindrance to the Teaching of Truth—What you need, my brother, is a pure and holy heart. Cease at once from attempting to teach the truth until you know that in the strength of God you can overcome lust. If your mind had been, in the years you have professed to be a child of God, educated and taxed to dwell upon Jesus, to pray when traveling on the cars, when walking in the streets, and wherever you were, and had you been binding about your thoughts and teaching them to dwell upon pure and holy things, I should not have to address you as I do today. The Lord must be in all your thoughts, but this work is strangely neglected.

A Minister's Work Not Like Common Business—There are some of our ministers who are engaged in active service who have some sense of the importance of the work, but there is a large number who are handling sacred truth about as they would engage in any common business. They have not been refined, ennobled, sanctified by the truth. They have not advanced step by step, growing in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. They have not real, genuine faith in taking God at His word. They have not gone on from strength to a greater strength.

They have not increased in ability, but kept up the same low tone of efficiency. They have not become able men in the Scriptures, mighty men in God, and yet every privilege has been within their reach. The cause of God has not been glorified by their tame, Spiritless, Christless work. These have done great injury to the truth, and why? Because the heart is not cleansed. They have not a new, clean heart, but a heart that is open to the temptations of Satan. Such can never lead the people to the true, pure fountain of living waters.

They may make others acquainted with the reasons of our faith, but it will be impossible for them to do the work which a true shepherd of the flock will do, to “feed the flock of God.”...

Ministry of the Word Better Than Arguments—We must awaken to our God-given responsibilities. Your adversary the devil is intensely active, represented as a roaring lion, and we must be wide-awake and not ignorant of his devices. We shall surely be overcome by Satan’s devices unless our hearts, our minds, our wills, are in complete subjection to the will of Christ. We shall surely fail our salvation unless the natural elements in our character, the discordant elements, are brought daily and hourly into unity with Christ’s character. Unruly, debasing tendencies and passions cannot reign in the heart controlled by the Spirit of Christ. There are many who have never submitted their will and way fully, without any reserve, to Jesus Christ.

There need to be far more lessons in the ministry of the word of true conversion than of the

arguments of the doctrines; for it is far easier and more natural for the heart that is not under the control of the Spirit of Christ to choose doctrinal subjects rather than the practical. There are many Christless discourses given [that are] no more acceptable to God than was the offering of Cain. They are not in harmony with God.

Taint of Spiritual Malaria—The Lord calls upon you, my brother, to step down from the work, leave the walls of Zion, or be a converted man. When your own heart is sanctified through the truth, there will be in it no moral defilement. It will now require a most desperate resistance to unholy suggestions upon your part, because your soul is tainted with spiritual malaria. You have breathed a satanic atmosphere. You have not been a man in the sight of God. When your mind should have been growing, your ideas elevated, and your plans and labors broadened, you have been growing less and less efficient as a worker, because God is not blessing your efforts.

A Crime in God's Sight—The perversion of

our gifts, or their degradation to unworthy ends, is a crime in the sight of God; and yet this is constantly prevailing. The man who has capabilities for usefulness, and employs all that is winning and attractive to destroy others, to lead them astray, to bring them to a brackish, poison fountain to quench their thirst, rather than bringing them to Christ, is doing the devil's work. There are many who profess to believe the truth who are corrupt in morals and who tarnish the purity in thoughts and impulses of others, who ruin souls under the pretense of saving souls, who utter words to the unwary, Satan speaking through them, as he spoke through the serpent when he tempted Eve.

For all such there is a terrible retribution. They will reap that which they have sown. It is a terrible thing to use God's entrusted gifts, lent to bless the world, and perverted in their use, leaving a blight, a woe, a curse, instead of a blessing. But I have written largely upon this, as you have seen, in different forms.

Total Life Control Possible—And again I say,

“Seek ye 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). Go to work and confess your sins before God; seek God, for you know but very little of this kind of work. Put your thoughts to work upon pure, holy subjects; tax your powers; send your supplications to heaven in earnest contrition of soul; let your conversation, your thoughts, your deportment, be in harmony with the holy faith you claim to be defending.

And when all like yourself shall repent and find the pardoning love of God, we shall see that God will work in a wonderful manner with His people. Sinners will be converted; backsliders will be reclaimed.

The Necessity for a Cleansing of Moral Defilement—I leave these lines with you. I had hoped that the great light shining from the Word of God would have been accepted, brought into your

religious life, and [that] you [would] become a true, sincere Christian, doing the will of God from the heart. But I have been urged by the Spirit of the Lord to write you. The work must go forward. Everything impure must become pure and holy, or be purged from our hands; for all that is earthly, sensual, devilish, is a stumbling block to others and a curse to the cause of God.

The sooner the ranks are purged from this class, the more surely shall we see the salvation of God and the power of the truth in our midst. It is because we are loaded down with those who have not been partakers of the divine nature, who have failed to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust, that we have so much weakness and feebleness in our midst. We must arouse. We must cleanse the camp of Israel of its moral defilement.—Letter 5, 1886.

Public Exposure Not Always Necessary—I do not want, unless necessary, that the case of T shall be made public. I have a response from him which acknowledges the testimony, but I do not

want, for the sake of his wife and children, to make [it] public. I pity the man sincerely, and if I could do anything to recover either of these men from the snare of the devil, I would do so. T takes a far better position than Canright. Although both of these men have made many falsehoods against me and our people, I am not embittered against them and do not wish to injure [them], for I bear in mind that there is a judgment when every man's work will be brought in review before God, and every man will receive of the great Judge according to his works.—Letter 59, 1889.