

Chapter 29

Four Unholy Ministers

Satan's Devices—[Written to a minister who was fantasizing regarding a woman not his wife, with whom he was sentimentally involved. He thought of living with this woman and having children by her in heaven.] I have much to say to you. You have been represented to me as being in great peril. Satan is on your track, and at times he has whispered to you pleasing fables, and has shown you charming pictures of one whom he represents as a more suitable companion for you than the wife of your youth, the mother of your children.

Satan is working stealthily, untiringly, to effect your downfall through his specious temptations. He is determined to become your teacher, and you need now to place yourself where you can get strength to resist him. He hopes to lead you into the maze of spiritualism. He hopes to wean your

affections from your wife, and to fix them upon another woman. He desires that you shall allow your mind to dwell upon this woman until through unholy affection she becomes your god.

Fantasy About Families in Heaven—The enemy of souls has gained much when he can lead the imagination of one of Jehovah's chosen watchmen to dwell upon the possibilities of association in the world to come, with some woman whom he loves, and of there raising up a family. We need no such pleasing pictures. All such views originate in the mind of the tempter.

We have the plain assurance of Christ that in the world to come, the redeemed “neither marry, nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Luke 20:35, 36).

It is presented to me that spiritual fables are taking many captive. Their minds are sensual, and, unless a change comes, this will prove their ruin.

To all who are indulging in these unholy fancies I would say, Stop, for Christ's sake, stop right where you are. You are on forbidden ground. Repent, I entreat of you, and be converted.

First Place in a Husband's Affections—To married men I am instructed to say, “It is to your wives, the mothers of your children, that your respect and affection are due. Your attentions are to be given to them, and your thoughts are to dwell upon plans for their happiness....”

My brother U, remember that the woman who receives the least manifestation of affection from a man who is the husband of another woman, shows herself to be in need of repentance and conversion. And the man who allows his wife to occupy the second place in his affections is dishonoring himself and his God. This thing is one of the signs of the last days. But surely you do not desire to fulfill this sign. This is the part that the wicked are to act. Christ will take charge of the affections of those who love and honor God, causing them to center upon proper objects.

My brother, your wife has her faults, but so have you. She is your wife still. She is the mother of your children, and you are to respect, cherish, and love her. Guard yourself carefully, that impurity may not abide in mind or heart....

True as Steel to the Marriage Vow—Brother U, your case was presented to me some time ago, but I have delayed writing, thinking that I might see you and talk with you. You are being imprisoned with a dangerous sentimentalism, and this has nearly spoiled you and the one also who has permitted you to make her your favorite. You need not ask God to bless you in pursuing this course. In this matter your mind has been worked by the enemy who stands ready to control those who give place to spiritualistic affection.

You have a wife, and you are bound to her by the law of God. “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery

with her already in his heart.... It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (Matthew 5:27-32).

May the Lord help you is my prayer. Now is the time to fight the good fight of faith. Now is the time to wrestle against the prompting of the natural heart. Now is your time to be as true as steel to your marriage vows, refusing, in thought, word, or deed, to spoil your record as a man who fears God and obeys His commandments. You have been imbibing spiritualistic ideas. But if you will now turn wholly to God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will be imparted to you, and truth will triumph in your life.—Letter 231, 1903.

A Public Reproof—[Written to a young unmarried minister.] We have some hard labor to do here. There was a spirit of lightness [on the ground]. The young men were mating [pairing] up

[with] the young girls, and when reproved, were, some of them, defiant, hardhearted, reckless. We had to get this cleared away before we could get the spirit of freedom into our meeting. But Sabbath everything seemed to break away. Elder Y, who has been preaching, has been running after the girls, married women, and widows, and this seemed to be his inclination out of the desk from State to State. Sunday morning I called him out by name and told him and all present we had no use for any such men, for they would only make the work of the burden-bearing laborers double what it is now.

If they would only take themselves out of the way and act out just what was in their heart, without doing this evil work under a pretense of godliness, the cause would be relieved. He has made no confession yet. Do not know as he will do so. But light came into our meetings, and the young who had been following his example came out decidedly and confessed their wrong course of action. When will those who profess Christ be wise?—Letter 53, 1884.

Invitation to Work in Another Country—[A letter written to a repentant minister who had broken the seventh commandment.] Dear Brother V: I have this morning received and read your letter, and if I do not answer at once I fear it will pass from my mind....

In regard to your changing your location, I would mention to you England. There is a large field and but few workers, plenty of work to be done in which all may act a part—all of your family, if they desire to give themselves to the Lord and act a part in His cause. You will find room enough to work, and if you go forth to labor in meekness and humility, redeeming the past errors of your life, God will accept you. There is need of laborers in England, and the advantage of that country over other parts of Europe is that our American brethren do not have to work through an interpreter....

Should you come to England you will certainly find work enough to do, and God is merciful; He

pities our weakness; He forgives our transgressions; and, if we will only live humble and penitent, if we will cease from evil and do well, the Lord will approve. May the Lord teach you and work for you.

I wish that there were many more men who would give themselves to the missionary work in England. That kingdom has but few workers. We want missionaries whom God can work with and bless. We want men who will feel the burden of souls, men who will work as Christ worked, zealously, disinterestedly, to save sinners and enlighten those in darkness. I write this short letter to you, thinking it is as well as more that might be written. Your sister in Christ.—Letter 41, 1886.

Impure Thoughts and Imaginings—[Written to an unrepentant minister.] Elder Z, I have much distress of soul for you. I fear, yes, greatly fear, you will never enter into the kingdom of God. I have much pain at heart as I consider your case, standing in the light of the delegated servant of Jesus Christ, yet so clouded with defilement that

holy angels cannot come near you. It is no new thing that your thoughts are corrupted by impure desires and imaginings. You have not dismissed unlawful desires and lustful thoughts. When you met me in Healdsburg and told me that you had gained the victory, you told me a falsehood, for you knew this was not the truth.

The Fly in the Spider's Web—Your past life had been presented before me as one who had no internal strength to resist evil if it put on an inviting aspect. You have obtained the confidence of women in you as a man of piety and righteousness, then you have taken advantage of this confidence to take liberties with them—kissing them, and going just as far with them in seductive, lustful practices as they would allow you to go, not only with Sister X but with others. And I am pained to the heart when I consider that you have tainted and polluted more than one or two or three or four with your insinuations and your fawning and caressing which have led souls to dissipation and vice. And you a watchman, you a shepherd! ...

You have made evil and lustful practices appear harmless, and some have been led away with their own lust and enticed because they had not moral courage to rebuke you, a minister, for your iniquitous practices. There have been not a few who have sacrificed conscience, peace of mind, and the favor of God, because a man whom the people have set as a watchman on the walls of Zion has been their tempter—a wolf in sheep's clothing.

And these who had been uncorrupted fall into the snare [which] Satan, through the bad shepherd, has set for them under different pretenses and excuses. You have hid your evil heart of deadly opposition to purity and holiness. The fly enticed into the spider's web, the fish which is lured on by the bait on the hook, has been ensnared and taken.

Erroneous Approach to Marriage Counseling—You have by your course of action debased sacred things to the level of the common. Many have come near being ruined who have, as it were, been plucked as a brand from the burning;

but the performance of yours to break down the barriers which preserve the sanctity of the family relation between husband and wife, the arranged plans to make the wife communicate to you the secrets of her married life, induce those who are yielding in disposition, who have become captivated with you, to open their heart to you as to a Catholic confessor; and you encourage in them the thought that they have made a mistake in the married life.

In every family there are at times misunderstandings. There are thoughts and feelings expressed that Satan takes advantage of, but if both husband and wife will resist the devil and humble their hearts before God, then the difficulties soon will be healed without leaving ugly scars. But you have done a work to encourage alienation in the place of healing the difficulties; and peace of mind, harmony, and the usefulness not only of women but of men has been destroyed, and the seeds of licentious practices that you have sown have produced a bitter, bitter harvest. The wanderings from God in this way are common, but the fact is,

so few return.

Sacred Interwoven With the Impure—The coy, complying disposition of women or girls to the advances and familiarity of men, married men, leads them to be easily entrapped. The man who should watch for souls in order to save them, watches for opportunities and occasions to ruin them. There are so many who have little fixedness of principle, who come into contact with the men who preach the truth; and some of these educate and refine iniquity before them, clothing it in angel robes, and as their own hearts are not garrisoned with fixed, unswerving principles, the work of ruin is speedily accomplished.

The sacred is brought down and so interwoven with lust and impure, unholy practices that the victim is confused, and the soul temple becomes a sink of iniquity. At first the unsuspecting only listen; they receive the liberties of preference shown them; then the education goes on until “as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks” (Proverbs 7:22), they

follow in the steps of the tempter and go fully as far as he would lead them.—Letter 82, 1886.