

Chapter 38

Counsels to City Mission and Institutional Leaders

Conduct of City Mission Leaders—[This counsel was given in 1893, when “city mission” was a name for a particular form of evangelistic endeavor. It consisted of a team composed of ministers, colporteurs, nurses, and others. Today it is sometimes called a “field school.”] Missions are essential as the foundation of missionary effort in our cities; but unless those standing at the head of these missions make strenuous efforts to guard every post, so that Satan shall not control, losses will be sustained....

There should be connected with the mission, married persons who will conduct themselves with the strictest propriety. But the danger is not alone from youth, but from married men and women; workers must build up the walls of modesty and virtue about themselves so that women will not

allure men, and men will not allure women from strict propriety. Abstain from even the very appearance of evil.

Love-sick sentimentalism prevails—Married men receive attention from married or unmarried women; women also appear to be charmed, and lose reason and spiritual discernment and good common sense; they do the very things that the Word of God condemns.... Warnings and reproofs are before them in clear lines, yet they go over the same path that others have traveled before them. It is like an infatuating game which they are playing. Satan leads them on to ruin themselves, to imperil the cause of God, to crucify the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.

There is no safety for any man, young or old, unless he feels the necessity of seeking counsel of God at every step. Those only who maintain a close communion with God will learn to place His estimate upon men, to reverence the pure, the good, the humble, the meek. The heart must be garrisoned as was that of Joseph. Then temptations

to depart from integrity will be met with decision. “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” The strongest temptation is no excuse for sin. No matter how severe the pressure brought to bear upon you, sin is your own act. The seat of the difficulty is the unrenewed heart.

The Worst Kind of Traitor—A man who claims to have believed present truth for years, and is counted worthy by his brethren to fill positions of trust in missions or in our institutions, may become careless when a change of circumstances brings him into temptations, and in time he may tempt others. His case is sad indeed, for he reveals the workings of a corrupt heart, a want of that principle which every Christian should possess.

When one who is entrusted with great responsibilities betrays his sacred trust and gives himself into the hands of Satan as an instrument of unrighteousness to sow the seeds of evil, corrupting the hearts and minds of others, he is a traitor of the worst type. From one such tainted, polluted mind the youth often receive the first

impure thoughts that lead to a life of shame and defilement.

Workers Lacking in Firm Principle—If men placed at the head of a mission have not firmness of principle that will preserve them from every vestige of commonness and unbecoming familiarity with young girls and women, after the light which has been so plainly given, let them be discharged without a second trial. There is a depravity of the soul which leads to these careless habits and practices, which will far overbalance all the good such persons can do. We are living in an age of moral debasement; the world is as a second Sodom. Those who look for the coming of the Son of man, those who know that they are right upon the borders of the eternal world, should set an example in harmony with their faith. Those who do not maintain purity and holiness are not accepted of God. The true children of God have deep-rooted principles which will not be moved by temptations, because Christ is abiding in their hearts by faith.

A Second Trial Useless—A second trial would

be of no avail to those whose moral sense is so perverted that they cannot see their danger. If after they have long held the truth, [if] its sanctifying power has not established the character in piety, virtue, and purity, let them be disconnected from the missions without delay, for through these Satan will insinuate the same lax sentiments in the minds of those who ought to have an example of virtue and moral dignity. Anything that approaches love-sick sentimentalism, any imitation of commonness, should be decidedly rebuked.—The General Conference Bulletin, 1893, 162.

No Time for Corrupt Impulses—Our probation is short at best. We have no time to spend in indulging corrupt impulses. The familiarity of married men with married women and young girls is disgusting in the sight of God and holy angels. The forwardness of young girls in placing themselves in the company of young men, hanging around where they are at work, entering into conversation with them, talking common, idle talk, is belittling to womanhood. It lowers them, even in the estimation of those who themselves do

such things.

There is a positive necessity for reform in all our institutions. All frivolity, all undue attention of men and women, must be condemned and discontinued. Some, even married men, who have indulged in this trifling familiarity, have endeavored to excuse themselves and escape censure by claiming that they have done no moral wrong. Was it no moral wrong to jest, joke, and pay flattering attentions to young women? Are you not starting in their minds a train of thought which it is impossible for you to change? Do you not by your levity and coquetry, sanction such conduct?

You who hold positions of trust, and claim to be Christians, do you not give countenance to a familiarity which leads to sin? What record is made in the books of heaven by the divine Watcher? Was there no moral wrong done to the souls of those with whom you were so familiar? Indeed there was. Impressions were made that will be enduring. These girls are confirmed in coquetry and flirting. Every such indulgence tends to make them coarse

and bold. They become more and more infatuated with the society of men and women who are trifling and frivolous, whose conversation is anything but holy, pure, and ennobling.

Definition of Moral Wrong—“No moral wrong.” This has been the excuse made by everyone reproved for similar conduct. What is moral wrong? Have your spiritual senses become so blinded that you cannot discern the truth? Do you not know that grapevines will not bear thorns, nor a bramble bush grapes? If the truth is brought into the inner sanctuary of the soul, it will create a pure moral taste. Then all these objectionable, demoralizing practices will be seen to be a positive denial of Christ, a sin which will pollute the soul.... All trifling, jesting, joking, and flattery spoken to young girls or women, boys or men, are thornberries, and that which produces them is a thornbush, for the tree is known by its fruits.

Let not those who profess the religion of Christ descend to trifling conversation, to unbecoming familiarity with women of any class, married or

single. They should keep their proper places with all dignity. At the same time they may be sociable, kind, and courteous to all.

Young ladies should be reserved and modest. When they walk out, if in health, they do not need the supporting arm of any man. They should give no occasion for their good to be evil spoken of.

Every Health Institution a Missionary Field—Men should be chosen to stand at the head of our institutions who have not only good, sound judgment, but who have a high moral tone, who will be circumspect in their deportment, pure in speech, remembering their high and holy calling and that there is a Watcher, a true witness to every word and act. If men in our institutions exhibit a low grade of thought, if their conversation tends to corrupt rather than elevate, let them be removed at once from any connection with the institution, for they will surely demoralize others. The well-being of the entire institution is to be maintained. Ever bear in mind that each of our health institutions is a missionary field. God's eye is upon it day and

night. No one should feel at liberty to allow even the appearance of evil.—SpT Series B, No. 16, pp. 6, 7.