

DEALING WITH MINISTERS AND WORKERS WHO HAVE VIOLATED THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

CLEAN HANDS AND PURE HEARTS*

We are nearing the judgment, and those who bear the message of warning to the world must have clean hands and pure hearts. They must have a living connection with God. The thoughts must be pure and holy, the soul untainted, the body, soul, and spirit be a pure, clean offering to God, or He will not accept it. . . .

The youth, for misdemeanors of a comparatively light character, are treated with much severity; but when men and women of large experience, who have been considered patterns of piety, are revealed in their true character,--unsanctified, unholy, impure in thought, debased in conduct,--then it is time for such to be dealt with in a decided manner. The greater forbearance that is exercised toward them has only had, as far as my knowledge extends, the influence to cause them to regard their fornication and adultery as a very light matter, and all their pretense has proved to be like morning dew when the sun shines upon it.

No sooner are they placed in temptation than they reveal their moral defects--that they are not partakers of the divine nature, neither have they escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; but that they are earthly, sensual, devilish. Satan finds in them something that he can work up into marked iniquity, and he improves his opportunity, and the result is, those who claim to be shepherds of the flock are carnally minded, leading the sheep of their care, whose purity, modesty, and virtue they should strictly guard, into licentiousness and lewdness.

Angels of heaven are looking on with shame and grief and disgust. How can the pure angels of heaven minister unto this class? How can they bring heavenly light into the assemblies where such ministers are advocating the law of God, but breaking that law whenever a favorable opportunity presents itself; living a lie, pursuing an underhanded course, working in secret, nursing their polluted thoughts and inflaming their passions, and then taking advantage of women or men who are tempted, like themselves to break down all barriers and debase their bodies and pollute their souls? How can they do this thing? How can they have any fear of God before them? How can they have any love for God in their souls? Of what value is their faith in the truth?

The Church Held Responsible

Cleanse the camp of this moral corruption, if it takes the highest men in the highest positions. God will not be trifled with.

*See Section 16 in Testimonies to Ministers, pages 426-456.

Fornication is in our ranks; I know it, for it has been shown me to be strengthening and extending its pollutions. There is much we will never know; but that which is revealed makes the church responsible and guilty unless they show a determined effort to eradicate the evil. Cleanse the camp, for there is an accursed thing in it.

The words of God to Joshua are: "Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you." These things are written for our benefit, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Not To Be Entrusted With Souls

I have no real ground of hope for those who have stood as shepherds to the flock, and have for years been borne with by the merciful God, following them with reproof, with warnings, with entreaties, but who have hid their evil ways, and continued in them, thus defying the laws of the God of heaven by practicing fornication. We may leave them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, after all has been done to reform them; but in no case entrust to them the guardianship of souls. False shepherds! Oh, can it be that the men who have been engaged in this work for a long time will corrupt their ways before the Lord after great experience and special light?--Testimonies to Ministers, pp 426-428. (Italics Supplied)

NO SECOND TRIAL FOR UNFAITHFUL CITY MISSION LEADERS

(counsel given in 1893)

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 at 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.

A man who claims to have believed present truth for years and is counted worthy by his brethren to fill positions of trust in our missions or in our institutions, may become careless when a change of circumstances brings him into temptations, and in his 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.

No Second Trial

If men placed at the head of a mission have not firmness of principle that will preserve them from every vestage 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, and which will 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 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 sanctifying power has not established the character in piety, virtue, and purity, let them be disconnected with 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 intimation of commonness should be decidedly rebuked.

One who is guilty of encouraging this improper familiarity should not only be relieved of responsibilities which he was unworthy to bear, but should be placed under censure of the church, and that censure should remain upon him until he gives evidence in spirit and deportment, that he sees the sinfulness and heart corruption, and repents, like any other guilty sinner, and is converted. Then God for Christ's sake will heal him of his transgression.-- General Conference Bulletin, 1893, p. 162, also Special Testimonies Series B, No. 16, pp. 13-15.

ELLEN WHITE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD USING HER COUNSEL GIVEN IN SPECIFIC CASES

Down through the years certain cases were brought to Ellen White for counsel. Those in which she had specific light she dealt with clearly, as particular, specific cases. She desired, however, that what she wrote in these cases should not be made "a law or rule."

Her son, W. C. White, who assisted her for thirty-five years, on several occasions made reference to this. We present excerpts from two W. C. White letters quoted also in the document on "Adultery, Divorce, Re-marriage and Church Membership."

Oct. 6, 1911

Dear Brother: Your letter to Mother, dated October 1, has been handed to me with the request that I write to you in reply.

Mother has received during the last twenty years many letters making inquiry regarding the matters about which you write, and she has many times written in reply that she had no advice to give different from that of the apostle Paul. Recently she has refused to deal with letters of this character, and tells us not to bring them to her attention.

My own views regarding this matter, which I believe to be in harmony with the counsel that I have heard Mother give to individuals years ago, and which I believe to be in harmony with views of the leading brethren and with the teaching of the Scriptures is that there is no blessing to come by our breaking up families who may have sinned or been sinned against before or since they embraced present truth.

January 6, 1931

Dear Brother: Yesterday I was able to give some time to the study of your letter, and I will now send to you copy of several documents which may be considered by you as having more or less bearing upon the subject which you have under consideration. I do not think that you will find in any of them a very direct answer to the question that has been put up to you. . . .

After reading the documents I today send you, you will say, Well, he has not given me anything authoritative from Sister White that directly answers the question; but I think you will see from what I am sending you that it was Sister White's intention that there should not go forth from her pen anything that could be used as a law or a rule in dealing with these questions of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and adultery.

She felt that the different cases where the devil had led men into serious entanglement were so varied and so serious, that should she write anything that could be considered as a rule for settling such cases, it would be misunderstood and misused.

It is also my conviction, Brother _____, that it would not be wise for you to respond to the request of Mrs. _____ and endeavor to print something in the Review, that would be a guide for action, Whatever you write will be criticized by some and misused by others. It is my opinion that a letter giving counsel to the individual asking for it, will serve the purpose much better. (Italics Supplied)

When asked in 1913 to give counsel regarding the Will Wales case (presented in the document "Spirit of Prophecy Counsels on Adultery, Divorce, Remarriage and Church Membership") Ellen White wrote:

I do not think any such letters as that ought to be placed before me. I do not think it is my work to deal with any such thing, unless the case has been plainly opened before me. There should be brethren in the church who have wisdom, who can speak decidedly regarding this case. I cannot understand such things. I do not know this man,* and I do not believe God wants me to take any such burden upon me. If they cannot settle such things among themselves by prayer and fasting, then let them continue fasting and prayer till they can. . . .

[Elder W. C. White read portions of Elder McVagh's letter of August 15, 1911, after which Sister White said further:]

The case is such that I have had no particular light in regard to his case, therefore I dare not speak positively in regard to it.--
Ms 2, 1913

*Ellen White was now 85 years of age and her memory of this matter was evidently somewhat impaired.

Attitude of the White Estate

W. C. White, while he lived, and the White Estate staff since his death in 1937, have considered certain specific cases referred to or dealt with by Ellen White as illustrative and as of such a nature as to warn against the taking of unwarranted positions. In the light of her own stated relationship to these problems, the White Estate up to this time (1975) has released only those E. G. White statements on adultery, divorce and re-marriage which seemed to be clear-cut and fundamental. Such is found in the chapter on divorce in The Adventist Home, pages 340-347, and "Counsels on Certain Marriage Situations" in Selected Messages, Book 2, pages 339-342.

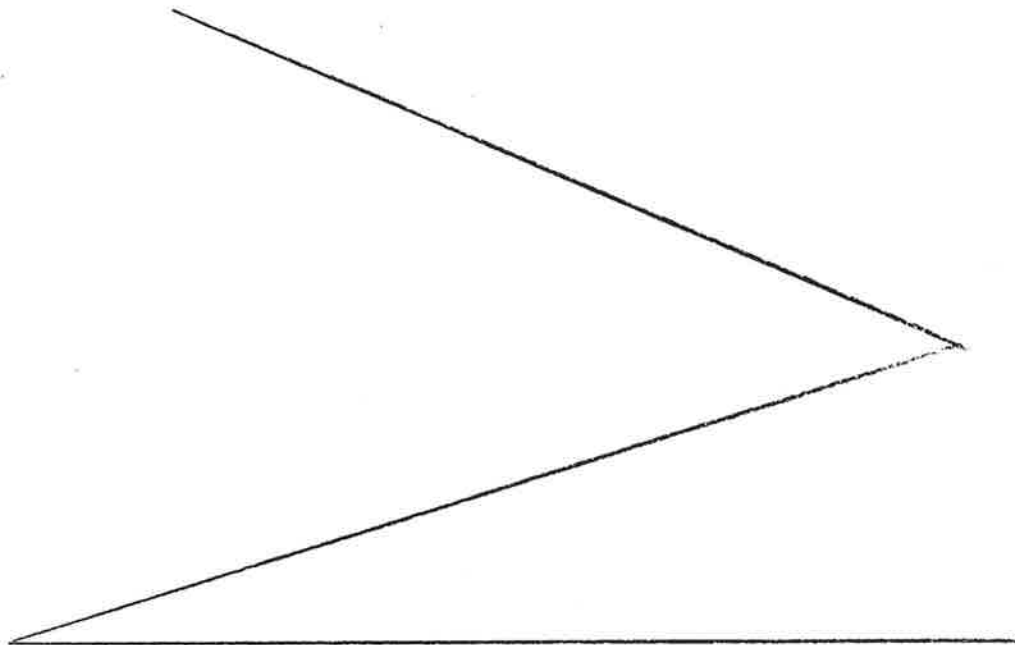
The White Estate is now called upon to make available certain illustrative materials in regard to ministers and workers who have violated the seventh commandment which may offer something not as hard and fast rules, but which may be useful in developing guidelines. In the Will Wales case most of the points of concern are illustrated: The question of the terrible nature of the sin, acceptance by God and the church when there is true repentance, the manifestation of compassion to those involved, the humble place to be taken by those involved, credentials, and the risk to the conference of their renewal to a minister who has violated the seventh commandment, are touched on in what follows:

CASE ITHE EXPERIENCE OF ELDER JA Second Trial -- The Lesson Still Unlearned

(Extracts from a letter written in 1880 to a trusted minister who had transgressed the seventh commandment.)

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.

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. . . .

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 Sincere Repentance

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 precipitant 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 spirits 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, "I pray thee let me go over 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."

II Sam. 16:10, 11.

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

The faithful Nathan had pronounced the judgment of God. The sword was never to leave his house; that which he had sown he was also to reap. He had often had a gloomy presentiment of the present hour. He had long wondered why the merited judgment was so long delayed. The God he had offended by bringing so great sin upon Israel as their leader, was now showing him that he is not a God that will lie and that by terrible things in righteousness would he show his hatred of sin. He did indeed realize, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

But David showed the fine gold of his character under adversity and while suffering the retributive justice of God, in refusing to be avenged on Shimei, and in refusing to stoop to strategy or the arts of base expediency to gain his honor and his kingdom. . . .

He recalled how oftentimes God had worked for him, and thought, "If he accepts my repentance He may yet give me His favor and turn my mourning to joy. He may remove my sackcloth and give me the garment of goodness. On the other hand if He has no delight in me, if He has forgotten me, if He will leave me to exile or to perish, I will not murmur. I deserve His judgments and will submit to it all. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until he plead my cause and execute judgment for me."

Oh what a wonderful change for David. From his throne and kingdom he is fleeing into a barren dry land with no water.

Not Truly Repentant -- A Contrast With David's Case

I bring before you this lesson that you may see the contrast between your course under the reproof and displeasure of God and the course pursued by David. You have ever been ready to charge your discomfiture to somebody prejudiced against you. Instead of seeing that no one can have too strong feelings against a man professing to be a shepherd of the flock, who will corrupt the minds of the unsuspecting, you act as though you were a martyr suffering unjustly,-- a persecuted man who deserves the sympathy of the people. You have not a proper sense of sin. You are not right before God in motive or spirit. . . .

After you changed your location to _____ and had shown by confessing some things, that you were sorry for your sins, your course was not what the course of a penitent man should be. You felt aggrieved that you were assailed and your name reproached. You sympathized with yourself in this matter, and then settled back in a state of helpless backsliding. your example and your influence was not that of a penitent man.

Meanwhile we felt sad indeed on your account and that of your wife. Both of you have had great light and great privileges, and both gave yourselves into the enemy's hands while in the midst of light and opportunities and privileges. But we felt deep sorrow for you. We placed ourselves in your place and made the case our own. To have once taken an active part in the cause and then be set aside, having no part in it, seemed so terrible. We thought you had repented. We prayed for you very earnestly and in a dream your case was presented before me.

Why You Were Given a Second Trial

I dreamed that although you were wholly unworthy, God would give you another trial. At once we made what efforts we could to get you to _____. We knew we were doing this in direct opposition to leading brethren who knew

your case. We took the responsibility upon ourselves. We told you this. When the vision was given me two years ago, some things were shown me in regard to your dangers which I faithfully wrote to you, informing you what course you must pursue. At the same time I plead most earnestly with you to not 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, pp 306-383].

When in _____ 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 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.

When you went to _____ 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. . . .

A Spirit of Humility Not Demonstrated

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 envy. 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 _____ as your sheaves. . . .

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. . . .

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."

No Man Can Erase God's Verdict of Guilty

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. Cursed is the man who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. David utters no complaint. The most eloquent psalm he ever sung 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! . . .

A Minister of Whom Heaven is Ashamed

You have had every opportunity, every privilege, every advantage, but you have not improved them. When you came to _____, had you 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. . . .

What the Second Trial Might Have Accomplished

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 of 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. . . .

You Have Lost the Power to Teach

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. . . .

I hoped that you would be of sufficient understanding to know when no credentials were given you that you should keep humble 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 (Sept 28, 1880).

CASE II

THE EXPERIENCE OF ELDER F

The Question of the Renewal of Credentials to a Fallen Minister

(Extracts from a letter written in 1886 to the General Conference president regarding a minister of long experience who had broken the seventh commandment, and an appeal to the transgressor.)

Dear Brother Butler: I am troubled in regard to Elder F. He writes me nothing and I feel deeply pained on his account. It seems sometimes to me that the Lord is testing us to see whether we will deal faithfully in regard to

sin in one of our honored men. The time is close at hand when the General Conference will have to decide the point whether or not to renew his credentials. If the Conference does this, they will be saying virtually, We have confidence in you as a man whom God recognizes as His messenger, one to whom He has entrusted the sacred responsibilities of caring for the sheep of the Lord's pasture, one who will be in all things a faithful shepherd, a representative of Christ. But can we do this? Have we not seen the workings of an unsanctified heart?

Like a Man Bewitched

The persistency in Elder F to accept and claim Mrs. L as his--what shall I call it--his affinity? What is this? Who can name it? Is Elder F one who has hated the light God has given him, showing that his preferences for Mrs. L's society, and his intimacy with her, was sinful as in the light of the Word of God? Or did he accept the message and act upon it?

Notwithstanding, I went to Elder F with the testimony given me of God, yet he did not reform. His course has said, I will do as I please in the matter, there is no sin in it. He promised before God what he would do, but he broke his promises made to Brother_____,_____, and myself, and his feelings did not decidedly change, but he seemed to act like a man bewitched, under the spell of the Devil, and who had no power over his own inclinations. Notwithstanding all the light given, he has evidenced no real conviction or sense of sin. No repentance, no reformation. Hearts have ached sorely over this state of things, but they had no power to change his heart or his purposes.

God-Given Power Perverted to Administer to Lust

Now we should be very grateful for the help of Elder F in England, and in Switzerland, but what can we decide upon? We must have evidence that he is clear before God. We do not want to make a light matter of sin and say to the sinner, It shall be well with thee. We do not want to connect Elder A with the work here unless he has a connection with God. We do not want to have the drawback that would come by connecting a man with the work who has a blot on his garments. We cannot pass lightly over this matter.

The plague of sin is upon Elder F and pain and sorrow are upon the souls of all who are aware of this chapter in his experience. Christ is dishonored. A man blessed with superior light and knowledge, endowed with great capacity for good that he may by a life of obedience and fidelity to God, become equal with angels, his life measure with the life of God, has perverted his God-given powers to administer to lust, coveting the wife of another. God finds Elder A setting at naught the most costly lessons of experience, violating the most solemn admonitions of God, that he may continue in sin.

I have hoped and prayed that he would restore reason to its right throne and break the fetters which for years Satan has been weaving about him, soul and body, and that the clouds that have shadowed his pathway be removed and Christ come to his soul to revive and bless it. Christ will lift the heavy burden from weary shoulders and give rest and peace to those who will wear His yoke, and lift His burdens.

An Appeal to the Fallen Minister

I will say, Elder F*, What can be the character of your experience when in the face of many warnings and reproofs you continue to pursue a course con-

*Note: The reader will please note the change in persons addressed, the following counsel and appeal being directed to the minister in trouble.

demned of God. Can you think well of yourself? Just think of Jesus crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross for our sins, and let it humble you, let it break your heart. Look at the meekness of Christ, His loveliness, and then bow in the dust with shame and humiliation.

Will you please to think what you would do in the case should one of our leading men be found in the position you are in? Could you without any greater evidence on his part of the sense of his sin, than you have given, advise that he have credentials as one of pure and holy purposes before God? Cannot you see you are placing your fellow-laborers in a very unpleasant and unenviable position? Will they venture to become responsible for your character and your influence in the future in the work and cause of God?

Your case has been shown me to be worse than that of Elder J, because you had greater light, capacity, and influence, and his course is a beacon to warn you off from following in his steps. Elder J's credentials were taken away from him; he is a deeply repenting man, humbled in the dust.

Supposing David should, after being reproved by Nathan, have repeated the same offense, would the Lord then have had compassion upon him? But he repented bitterly; he declared his transgression was ever before him. Hear his humiliating confession, and listen to his despairing cries.

The Camp Must be Cleansed

We must as a people arouse and cleanse the camp of Israel. Licentiousness unlawful intimacy, and unholy practices are coming in among us in a large degree and ministers who are handling sacred things are guilty of sin in this respect. They are coveting their neighbor's wives, and the seventh commandment is broken. We are in danger of becoming a sister to fallen Babylon, of allowing our churches to become corrupted, and filled with every foul spirit, a

cage for every unclean and hateful bird, and will we be clear unless we make decided movements to cure the existing evil? Will you have others follow your example? Will you wish them to pass over the ground you have traveled, and feel that they have done no great wrong? Without repentance and genuine conversion, you are a ruined man.

Hurt by Pity and Love and Special Treatment

I hear you are taking treatment at the Sanitarium, acting as chaplain, speaking in the Tabernacle. Now this does not look right for you to take such positions until you have done all in your power to correct past evils.

I have felt for your sake restrained from opening the matter of Mrs. E's infidelity to her husband, but I fear I have neglected my duty. If we had dealt with this matter as if it had been the case of a lay-member of the church, I believe God would have then sent you repentance that needeth not to be repented of.

Our pity, our love to save you from reproach, has hurt you. My heart is so sad and agonized at times for you, I can only weep. I say, Must he be lost? Must he, after suffering for the truth's sake, after standing in its defense until he is old and gray-headed, become an idolater as did Solomon? Will he for the love of a woman, trample down the law of God and look about him as much as to say, I do no sin, I am all right?

Change of Location Does Not Change Heart

Will we be clear to let such things be concealed and sins hidden with no real evidence of repentance or reform? Your leaving California does not give you a new heart. You are out of sight of the infatuating influence of your

"adorable charmer," but this does not change the affections or impulses of the heart. Elder P (a First-day Adventist minister) might have finished his course with joy had it not been for sensual practices, but he was led away of his own lusts and enticed. The days and years which might have been his very best were his worst. We see in the character of Solomon intellectual greatness combined with moral degradation. He might have gone forward from strength to strength, but instead of this, he went backward from weakness to weakness. After a life of promise, his history was one of deterioration.

Alarmed by the Inroads of Licentiousness

My dear brother, you have been attempting what other ministers have attempted, to harmonize light with darkness, Christ with Belial, purity with impurity, good with evil. The result will be moral ruin unless you can be aroused to see that you are standing upon the very brink of the precipice.

It alarms me to see how the sin of licentiousness is coming in upon us. We must elevate the standard and build up barriers about the soul so that nothing shall mar its simplicity and purity, and thus defile the religious character. God has given man intellect, and let every soul beware how this great gift is prostituted to the soul's eternal ruin.

Take Steps of Repentance, Faith and Baptism

There is no more hope of you than of any common sinner, nor as much unless you greatly humble your soul before God, repent and are converted. Take the first steps in the way to life, repentance, faith, and baptism. You have tampered with the divine safeguards of your peace. If you refuse to listen to the voice of reproof, if you choose your own course, if you will not allow the

grace of Christ to transform you, your guilt will be as much greater than that of the common sinner as your advantages of light and influence have been greater.

Avoid All Appearance of Evil

Great care should be exercised in companionship and friendship lest the soul be imperiled, lest there be even an appearance of evil which in the eyes of others would lower the standard of religious principle and sap the foundation of religious belief.

How many even in the ranks of Sabbath-keepers, are forming unsanctified connections. Men who have wives and women who have husbands are showing affection and giving undue attention to those of the opposite sex. How many men of promise there are in our ranks who no longer have pure faith and holy trust in God, because they have betrayed sacred trusts. Noble aspirations are quenched. Their steps are retrograding because they covet another man's wife or are unduly familiar with unmarried women. Thier frivolous conduct leads them to break the seventh commandment.

Of Solomon, the inspired record says, "His wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God." I Kings 11:4.

Coveting What God Has Forbidden

This is no theme to be treated with a smile. The heart that loves Jesus will not desire the unlawful affections of another. Every want is supplied in Christ. This superficial affection is of the same character as that exalted enjoyment which Satan promised Eve. It is coveting that which God has forbidden.

When it is too late, hundreds can warn others not to venture upon the precipice. Intellect, position, wealth can never, never take the place of moral

qualities. Clean hands, a pure heart, and noble, earnest devotion to God and the truth the Lord esteems above the golden wedge of Ophir. An evil influence has a perpetuating power. I wish I could set this matter before God's command-keeping people just as it has been shown me. Let the sad memory of Solomon's apostasy warn every soul to shun the same precipice. His weakness and sin is handed down from generation to generation.

Solomon Failed to Rule His Passions

The greatest king that ever wielded a scepter, of whom it had been said that he was the beloved of God, through misplaced affection became contaminated and was miserably forsaken of his God. The mightiest ruler of the earth had failed to rule his own passions. Solomon may have been saved "as by fire," yet his repentance could not efface those high places, nor demolish those stones, which remained as evidences of his crimes. He dishonored God, choosing rather to be controlled by lust than to be a partaker of the divine nature.

What a legacy Solomon's life has committed to those who would use his example to cover his own base actions. We must either transmit a heritage of good or evil. Shall our lives and our example be a blessing or a curse? . . .

Subjects of Satan's Special Seductive Efforts

Satan's special efforts are now directed toward the people who have great light. He would lead them to become earthly and sensual. There are men who minister in sacred things whose hearts are defiled with impure thoughts and unholy desires. Married men who have children are not satisfied. They place themselves where they invite temptations. They take liberties which should only be taken with their lawful wives. Thus they fall under the rebuke of God, and in the books of heaven adultery is written opposite their names.

There should be no approach to danger. If the thoughts were where they should be,

if they were stayed upon God, and the meditations of the soul were upon the truth and the precious promises of God, and the heavenly reward that awaits the faithful, they would be guarded against Satan's temptations. But by many vile thoughts are entertained almost constantly. They are carried into the house of God and even into the sacred desk.

I tell you the truth, Elder Butler, that unless there is a cleansing of the soul temple on the part of many who claim to believe and to preach the truth, God's judgments, long deferred, will come.

Firmness and Decision Lacking

These debasing sins have not been handled with firmness and decision. There is corruption in the soul, and unless it is cleansed by the blood of Christ there will be apostasies among us that will startle you.

I ask myself the question, How is it possible for men who are opening the Scriptures to others,--men who have abundance of light,--men who have good ability,--men who are living as in the face of the judgment, upon the very borders of the eternal world, to give their thoughts and bodies to unholy practices? Well may the words of the apostle be repeated with emphasis: "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourself in the sight of God and He will lift you up." James 4:8-10.--Letter 51, 1886 (Sept 6, 1886).

CREDENTIALS WITHHELD BECAUSE OF SERIOUS INDISCRETION

Words to the man concerned: I am sorry that you feel injured because I let Brother M have a copy of the letter I sent to you. I did not do this to injure you in any way. You had yourself written me that you had made matters

known to him concerning yourself, and he thought you should confess the whole matter to the church. I thought that letter would prevent any such movement, and keep the matter as private as possible. I do not in any way favor his reading the matter to your mother. She has an abundance of sorrows to carry. I did not sanction any public exposure. I thought that the letter, which condemned the sin,* also encouraged you to hope and trust in God. I supposed that it would help Brother M to help you. If it has added to your affliction, making matters any worse for you, I am sincerely sorry.

Whenever I have written a message of reproof, I have always sent one copy to the minister who is officiating in the church, that he may have wisdom to recover such ones as are in danger through temptation, giving them such advice as they need. I also knew, under existing circumstances, that it would not be possible to give you credentials as a shepherd, recommending you to the confidence of the people, because knowing your course of action, if you should in any way be overcome, the Lord would make the conference guilty of the sin of which you are guilty.--Letter 120, 1897.
(Italics Supplied)

A further word to the mother; I feel a deep interest for you and for your children. Your heart is sad and very sore. I feel deeply over the case of your son _____. He needs to draw nigh unto God. He needs His converting power upon the soul. There are circumstances that make it impossible at present to give him credentials. He knows why, and if he acts discreetly, it will be for his present and eternal good.--Letter 134, 1897.

*Note; One of serious indiscretion, but one in the strictest sense short of the violation of the seventh commandment.--A.L. White

COUNSEL CONCERNING WORKERS WHO HAD BROKEN THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENTThe Greater Gravity of Ministers Who Become Involved

It is a truth which should make every one of us weep, that those living in these last days, upon whom the ends of the world are come, are far more guilty than was Belshazzar. This is possible in many ways.

When men have taken upon themselves the vows of consecration, to devote all their powers to truth, and have received the solemn charge; when God and angles are summoned as witnesses to the solemn dedication of soul, body, and spirit to God's service,--then shall these men who minister in a most holy office, desecrate their God-given powers to unholy purposes. Shall the sacred vessel, whom God is to use for a high and holy work, be dragged from its lofty, controlling sphere to administer to debasing lust?

Is not this idol worship of the most degrading kind?--the lips uttering praises and adoring a sinful human being, pouring forth expressions of ravishing tenderness and adulation which belong alone to God,--the powers given to God in solemn consecration administering to a harlot; for any woman who will allow the addresses of another man than her husband, who will listen to his advances, and whose ears will be pleased with the out-pouring of lavish words of affection, of adoration, of endearment, is an adulteress and a harlot.--TM pp 434-435.

Counsel to an Involved Lady Colporteur and Bible Instructor

The law of God proclaimed upon Mount Sinai, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and yet you who transgressed that law in so marked a manner were teaching others the Bible. God did not accept your labors. . . .I could not present your sin before you in too strong language. . . .

If your moral sensibilities are quickened, it is through the converting power of God. If you are transformed in character, the Lord knows all about that. And if you have through repentance been uplifted to reach a high standard and holy, I cannot myself say the Lord will not regard your case. . . .

Now, please to take your case to the Lord, and if you are in communion with Him, He will hear your prayers, and will guide you in judgment. My heart pities you.

The first time the sin was committed, it was done without so much time for meditation, the second sins were committed after time to meditate, after time to consider the matter in the light of the word of God, in the face of the seventh commandment. . . .

I leave the matter where it is. I could say to you to go to trustworthy persons in the Conference (not men but women), and talk with them, but I am inclined to think that should you do this, you would be giving publicity to those things which would cause all to be removed from you, and they would not encourage you or accept you to engage in any branch of the work, when they should understand the matter as it is. I must now leave this matter between you and your God, and please do not trouble me any more about it. I have no disposition to expose you; but leave you to develop character. I pity you and hope that you will move in discretion, and become altogether that which God would have you.--Letter 95, 1893 (July 20 , 1893)

INVITED TO WORK IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

(A letter to a repentant minister who had broken the seventh commandment)

Dear Brother N: 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 _____. 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 _____.

. . .

Should you come to _____, 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 _____. 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 (April 7, 1886, written at Basel, Switzerland, to a minister in the U.S.)

A CALL FOR COMPASSION AND WISE MANAGEMENT IN DEALING WITH MINISTERS

WHO HAVE BROKEN THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

(Extracts from a letter written from Europe to George I. Butler, the General Conference President, concerning several ministers in the U.S. who had transgressed the seventh commandment.)

Dear Brother: Your last letter is received and the questions asked in reference to O and Brother N, I cannot answer further than I have done. I am inclined to the same opinion that I had when I wrote N. The counsel that I gave him, I think, was safe, and if my good brethren had acted in concert with that counsel [that he should go to _____ to labor. See Letter 41, 1886], I think they would have done that which was pleasing to the Lord. I think matters have now come in a bad shape for him. He has been entrusted with responsibilities which will have a tendency to elevate him. And it may be that he is not in as good a condition to go forth to labor in some far off field as he was months ago.

I have not changed my mind in his case. I do not think that it has been managed wisely, taking his soul into consideration. He proposed to prove himself, on his own responsibility, without expense to the Conference, and he should have had this chance.

Brother F to Have a Chance for His Life

In regard to Brother F, I do not think your management the wisest. I think he should have a chance for his life. If the man is willing and desirous of coming to Europe on his own responsibility, perhaps that would be wisdom. He will never recover himself where he is under present circumstances. I did have a dream many months ago, which showed him restored with the blessing of God resting upon him; but he was not brought to this position by the help of yourself or Elder Haskell, but would have as far as you both were concerned, the attitude you assumed toward him, have ever remained in the dark, and his light would have gone out in darkness.

That dream prompted the letter that W. C. White wrote him asking him in reference to coming to Europe, which your conference had voted one year ago that he should do, and made a mistake in sending him to Oakland instead of Europe. He should have come here at once.

We shall not urge anything more in his case, but shall do the uttermost in our power to save his soul from death and hide a multitude of sins. I am in great perplexity at times, and have about come to the conclusion when a case of error and grievous sin is presented before me, to say nothing to my ministering brethren if they do not know the matter themselves, but labor earnestly for the erring one, and encourage him to hope in God's mercy, and cling to the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, look to the Lamb of God in repentance and contrition and live in His strength.

"Come and let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet I will make them as white as wool, though they are as crimson, I will make them as snow."

Justice, Mercy and the Love of God

There is not the mingling of the elements of character that brings justice and mercy and the love of God into beautiful harmony. There is altogether too much talking, too many strong words and strong feelings that the Lord has nothing to do with, and these strong feelings influence our good brethren.

I am compelled to deal plainly and rebuke sin, and then I have it in my heart, placed there by the Spirit of Christ, to labor in faith, in tender sympathy and compassion for the erring. I will not let them alone, I will not leave them to become the sport of Satan's temptations. I will not myself act the part of the adversary of souls as is represented by Joshua and the Angel. Souls cost the price of my Redeemer's blood.

When men, themselves liable to temptation, erring mortals, shall be free to pronounce upon another's case, who is humbled in the dust, and shall take it on themselves to decide by their own feelings or the feelings of their brethren just how much feeling the erring one should manifest to be pardoned, [they are] taking on themselves that which God has not required of them.

When I know that there are those who have fallen into great sin, but we have labored with and for them, and God has afterwards accepted their labors, when these have pleaded for me to let them go and to not burden myself for them, I have said, "I will not give you up; you must gather strength to overcome." These men are now in active service. . . .

My mind is greatly perplexed over these things, because I cannot harmonize them with the course that is being pursued. I am fearful to sanction sin, and I am fearful to let go of the sinner and make no effort to restore him. I think if our hearts were more fully imbued with the spirit of Christ, we should have His melting love, and should work with spiritual power to restore the erring and not leave them under Satan's control.

We need good heart religion that we shall not only reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine, but we shall take the erring in our arms of faith and bear them to the cross of Christ. We must bring them in contact with the sin-pardoning Saviour.

So Little Aptitude to Save Souls

I am more pained than I can express to see so little aptitude and skill to save souls that are ensnared by Satan. I see such a cold Pharisaism, holding off at arm's length the one who has been deluded by the adversary of souls,

and then I think what if Jesus treated us in this way. Is this spirit to grow among us? If so, my brethren must excuse me, I cannot labor with them. I will not be a party to this kind of labor.

I call to mind the shepherd hunting the lost sheep and the prodigal son. I want those parables to have their influence upon my heart and my mind. I think of Jesus, what love and tenderness He manifested for erring, fallen man, and then I think of the severe judgment one pronounces upon his brother that has fallen under temptation, and my heart becomes sick. I see the iron in hearts, and think we should pray for hearts of flesh. . . .

I wish that we had much more of the spirit of Christ and great deal less self and less of human opinions. If we err, let it be on the side of mercy rather than on the side of condemnation and harsh dealing.--Letter 16-1887
(To G. I. Butler, April 21, 1887, written in Europe).

E. G. WHITE'S COUNSEL FOR PROFESSOR G

Oh, For Wisdom From on High

[Mrs. White expresses her perplexity over the case of Professor G who, five years earlier, had married a second time, after his first wife had divorced him. See W. C. White statement in the document "The Spirit of Prophecy and Adultery, Divorce, Remarriage, and Church Membership," pages 32-34. There were no Biblical grounds for the divorce. The first wife had not remarried. He was an educator, not a minister. There is no record that he ever held ministerial credentials and no indication Ellen White considered his entering the ministry in Australia.]

If only G had kept himself straight, he would be just the one to come. But the question is whether his record will not follow him. We scarcely dare venture the matter and run the risk. That the man has sincerely repented I have not a doubt, and I believe the Lord has forgiven him. But if obliged to make explanations it would not be an easy matter to do; so what shall we do

with G? Leave him where he is, a prey to remorse, and to be useless the remainder of his life? I cannot see what can be done. Oh for wisdom from on high! Oh for the counsel of One who reads the heart as an open book! How Satan watches for souls to bind them with his hellish cords that they become lost to the work and almost helpless in his hands. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."--Letter 13, 1892 (Aug 22, 1892, to S. N. Haskell, written from Australia).

Brother G. Urged to Involve Himself in Work for the Lord

(Mrs. White wrote this letter seven years after Elder G had remarried.)

Dear Bro. G: I have had my mind drawn out for you time and again. Had I felt at liberty to exercise my judgment, I should have given my counsel a long time ago for you to change your location. I had hoped my brethren would have had wisdom from above to give counsel to you that you should not be where you are today. If you have anything to do, it must be soon. Were you in this country I fully believe you would see doors opening where you could be at work to be a lightbearer to those who are in the darkness of error.

How would it be should you come to this country? Like Abraham, going out not knowing whither he went, and humbly seeking guidance, I plead that you make a break. . . Come here to Australia, while we are here. Come on your own responsibility. You will have means, if you sell your farm, to bring you here. Then I believe the way will open for you to work, and may the Lord direct you is my earnest wish, and sincere prayer. . . .

There is work in abundance for you to do in the great harvest field. Here are fields all ripe for the harvest; work to be entered upon in Sydney, of

about a million people, and Melbourne numbering still more. There is Queensland to be entered. There are thirty Sabbathkeepers in one place in Queensland that have never seen nor heard the living preacher, and others are scattered all through that region, waiting for the message of truth.

Will you please consider this matter, and write us what you think? What are your finances? What are you thinking of doing? How is the Lord leading your mind? Please consider the matter and may the Lord give you wisdom to move somewhere at once. In much love.--Letter 7a, 1894 (May 17, 1894).

Ellen G. White Estate
Washington, D. C.
August 25, 1975