

TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH. No. 16.

INTRODUCTION.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS: The Lord has again manifested himself to me. June 12, 1868, while speaking to the brethren in the house of worship at Battle Creek, Mich., the Spirit of God came upon me, and in an instant I was in vision. The view was extensive. I have commenced to write the fifth volume of Spiritual Gifts; but as I had testimonies of a practical nature which you should have immediately, I left that work to prepare this little pamphlet.

In this last vision, I was shown that which fully justifies my course in publishing personal testimonies. When the Lord singles out individual cases, and specifies their wrongs, others, who have not been shown in vision, frequently take it for granted that they are right, or nearly right. If one is reproved for a special wrong, brethren and sisters should carefully examine themselves to see wherein they have failed, and wherein they were guilty of the same things. They should possess the spirit of humble confession. If others think them right, it does not make them so. God looks at the heart. He is proving and testing souls in this manner. In rebuking the wrongs of one, he designs to correct many. But if they fail to take the reproof to themselves, and flatter themselves that God passes over their errors, because he does

not especially single them out, they deceive their own souls, and will be shut up in darkness, and be left to their own ways, to follow the imagination of their own hearts.

Many are dealing falsely with their own souls, and are in a great deception in regard to their true condition before God. He employs ways and means to best serve his purpose, and to prove what is in the hearts of his professed followers. He will make plain the wrongs of some, and then it is his design that others may be warned, and fear, and shun the errors they see are rebuked in another. By self-examination, they may find that they are doing the same things which God condemns in another. If these are really desirous to serve God from the heart, and fear to offend him, they will not wait for their sins to be specified before they make confession and with humble repentance return unto the Lord. They will forsake these things which have displeased God, according to the light given to others. If, on the contrary, those who are not right see that they are guilty of the very things that have been reprov'd in others, yet continue in the same unconsecrated course, because they have not been especially named, they endanger their own souls, and will be led captive by Satan at his will.

MOVING.

IN the vision given me June 12, 1868, I was shown that a great work might be accomplished in bringing souls to the knowledge of the truth, were proper exertions made. In every town, and village, and city, there are more or less who would

embrace the truth if it was brought before them in a judicious manner. Missionaries are needed among us, self-sacrificing missionaries, who, like our great Exemplar, would not please themselves, but live to do others good.

I was shown that as a people we are deficient. Our works are not in accordance with our faith. Our faith testifies that we are living under the proclamation of the most solemn and important message that was ever given to mortals. Yet in full view of this fact, our efforts, our zeal, our spirit of self-sacrifice, do not compare with the character of the work. I was shown that we should awake from the dead, and Christ will give us life.

There is a strong inclination with many of our brethren and sisters to live in Battle Creek. Families have been coming to reside there from all directions, and many more have their faces set that way. Some who have come to Battle Creek held offices in the little churches from whence they moved, and their help and strength were needed there. When such arrive at Battle Creek, and meet with the numerous Sabbath-keepers there, they frequently feel that their testimonies are not needed, and their talent is therefore buried.

Some choose Battle Creek because of the religious privileges it affords, yet wonder that their spirituality decreases after their sojourn there a few months. Is there not a cause? The object of many has been to advantage themselves pecuniarily—to engage in business which will yield them greater profits. Their expectations in this particular may be realized, while they have dearth of soul, and become dwarfed in spiritual things.

They do not take any special burden upon themselves, because they think they would be out of place. They do not know where to take hold to labor in so large a church, and therefore become idlers in their Master's vineyard. All who pursue this course only increase the labor of those who have the burden of the work in the church upon them. They are as so many dead weights. There are many in Battle Creek who are fast becoming withered branches.

Some who have been workers, and who have an experience in the cause of present truth, move to Battle Creek and lay off their burden. Instead of feeling the necessity of double energy, watchfulness, prayer, and diligent performance of duty, they do scarcely anything at all. Those who have burdens to bear in the Office, and have not time for duties aside from their work, are obliged to fill responsible positions in the church, and have important, taxing labor to perform in the church, which if they do not do will remain undone, because these others will not take the burden.

Brethren who wish to change their location, who have the glory of God in view, and feel that individual responsibility rests upon them to do others good, to benefit and save souls for whom Christ withheld not his precious life, should move into towns and villages where there is but little or no light, and where they can be of real service, and bless others with their labor and experience. Missionaries are wanted to go into towns and villages and raise the standard of truth, that God may have his witnesses scattered all over the land, that the light of truth may penetrate where it has not yet reached, and the standard of truth be raised

where it is not yet known. The brethren should not flock together because it is more agreeable to them, but seek to fulfill their high calling to do others good, to be instrumental in the salvation of at least one soul. But more may be saved than one.

The sole object of this work should not be merely to increase our reward in Heaven. Some are selfish in this respect. In view of what Christ has done for us, and has suffered for sinners, we should, out of pure, disinterested love for souls, imitate his example in sacrificing our own pleasure and convenience for their good. The joy set before Christ, which sustained him in all his sufferings, was the salvation of poor sinners. This should be our joy, and the spur of our ambition in the cause of our Master. In thus doing, we please God and manifest our love and devotion to him as his servants. He first loved us, and withheld not from us his beloved Son, but gave him from his bosom to die that we might have life.

Love, true love for our fellowmen, evinces love to God. We may make a high profession, yet without this love it is nothing. Our faith may lead us to even give our bodies to be burned, yet without love, self-sacrificing love, such as lived in the bosom of Jesus, and was exemplified in his life, we are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

There are families which receive spiritual strength by moving to Battle Creek. It is just the place to help some, while it would be the wrong place for others. Bro. and Sr. Booth are a sample of the class who may be benefited in moving to Battle Creek. The Lord directed them to take this course. Battle Creek was just

the place to benefit that family, and has proved a blessing to the entire family. They have, in coming here, gained strength to plant their feet firmly upon the platform of truth, and if they continue in the path of humble obedience, they may rejoice for the help they have received in Battle Creek.

TO MINISTERS.

IN the vision given me June 12, 1868, I was deeply impressed with the great work to be accomplished to prepare a people for the coming of the Son of man. I saw that the harvest is great, but the laborers are few. Many who are at the present time in the field laboring to save souls, are feeble. They are greatly lacking in physical strength. They have borne heavy burdens, which have tried and worn them. Yet, I was shown, that with some of our ministers there has been too great an expenditure of strength, which was not actually required. Some pray too long, and too loud, which greatly exhausts their feeble strength, and needlessly expends their vitality.

In preaching, their discourses are protracted, frequently one-third or one-half longer than they should be. In thus doing, they become excessively weary, and the interest of the people decreases before the discourse closes, and much is lost to them, for they cannot retain it. One-half that was said would be better than more. Although all the matter may be important, the success would be much better were the praying and talking less lengthy. The result would be reached without so great weariness. Vitality is being used up needlessly, and

strength wasted, which, for the good of the cause, it is so necessary to retain. It is the long-protracted effort, after laboring to the point of weariness, which wears and breaks.

I saw that it was this extra labor, when the system was exhausted, that consumed the life of dear Bro. Sperry, and brought him prematurely to the grave. Had he worked with reference to health, he might have lived to labor until the present time. It was, also, this extra labor that exhausted the life-force of our dear Bro. Cranson, and caused his life of usefulness to be extinguished.

Much singing wearies to a great degree, as well as long and protracted praying and talking. Our ministers generally should not continue their efforts longer than one hour. They should leave preliminaries, and come to the subject at once. ~~They should study to close the discourse while the interest is the greatest.~~ They should not continue the effort until their hearers desire them to cease speaking. They are often too weary to be benefited by what they may hear. Much of this extra labor is lost upon the people, and who can tell how great is the loss that is sustained by the ministers who thus labor? Nothing in the end is gained by this draft upon the vitality.

The strength is frequently exhausted at the commencement of a protracted effort. And at the very time when there is much to be gained or much to be lost, the devoted minister of Christ, who has an interest—a will to labor, cannot command the strength. He used that up in singing, in lengthy prayers, and protracted preaching, and the victory is lost for want of earnest, well-directed labor at the right time. The golden moment is

lost. Impressions that were made were not followed up. It would have been better had no interest been awakened; for when convictions have been once resisted and overcome, it is very difficult to impress the mind again with the truth.

I was shown in regard to our ministers, that in the space of one year, with the care that should be exercised to preserve the strength, instead of needlessly expending it, much more could be accomplished by judicious, well-directed labor, than by long talking, and praying, and singing, which exhausts and wears. In this case, the people are frequently deprived of labor which they much need at the right time, but cannot have it, for the laborer is in need of rest, and will endanger his health and life if he continue his effort.

Our dear Brn. D. T. Bourdeau and Matteson have made a mistake here, and should reform in their manner of laboring. They should speak short and pray short. They should come to the point at once, and stop short of exhaustion in their labors. They can both accomplish more good by doing thus, and at the same time preserve strength to continue their labors which they love, without breaking down entirely.

LOOK TO JESUS.

IN the vision given me June 12, 1868, I was shown the danger of the people of God in looking to Bro. and Sr. White, and thinking that they must come to us with their burdens, and seek counsel of us. This ought not so to be. They are invited by their compassionate, loving Saviour,

to come unto him, when weary and heavy laden, and he will relieve them. In him they will find rest. In taking their perplexities and trials to Jesus, they will find the promise in regard to them fulfilled. As they experience the relief in their distress, which is found alone in Jesus, they obtain an experience which is of the highest value to them. Bro. and Sr. White are striving for purity of life, and to bring forth fruit unto holiness; yet they are nothing but erring mortals. Many come to us with the inquiry, Shall I do this? Shall I engage in this enterprise? Or, in regard to my dress, shall I wear this article or that? I tell them, You profess to be disciples of Christ. Study your Bibles. Read carefully and prayerfully the life of our dear Saviour, when he lived among men upon the earth. Imitate his life, and you will not be found straying from the narrow path. We utterly refuse to be conscience for you. If we tell you just what you must do, you will look to us to guide you, instead of going directly to Jesus for yourselves. Your experience will be founded in us. You must have an experience for yourselves, which shall be founded in God. Then can you stand amid the perils of the last days, and be purified and not consumed amid the fire of affliction, through which every saint must pass, in order to have the impurities removed from their character preparatory to their receiving the finishing touch of immortality.

Many of our dear brethren and sisters think that they cannot have a large gathering unless Bro. and Sr. White attend. In many places they realize that something must be done to move the people to more earnestness and decided action in the work

and cause of truth. They have had ministers to labor among them, yet they realize that a greater work must be done, and look to Bro. and Sr. White to do it. This, I saw, was not as God would have it. In the first place, there is a deficiency with some of our ministers. They lack thoroughness. They do not take on the burden of the work and reach out to lift just where the people need help. They do not possess discernment to see and feel just where the people need to be corrected, reprov'd, built up, and strengthened. Some of them labor weeks and months in a place, and there is actually more to do when they leave than when they commenced. Systematic Benevolence is dragging. It is one part of the minister's labor to keep up this branch of the work. Because this is not agreeable, some neglect their duty. They talk the truth from the word of God, but do not impress the people with the necessity of obedience. Therefore many are hearers, but not doers. The people feel the deficiency. Things are not set in order among them, and they look to Bro. and Sr. White to make up the deficiency.

Some of our ministering brethren have glided along without settling deep into the work, and getting hold of the hearts of the people. They have excused their lack with the thought that Bro. and Sr. White would bring up these things. They were especially adapted to the work. These men have labored, but not in the right way. They have not borne the burden. They have not helped where help was needed. They have not corrected deficiencies which needed to be corrected. They have not entered, whole heart, and soul, and ener-

gies, into the wants of the people, and time has passed, and they have nothing to show for it. The burden of their deficiencies falls back on us. And they encourage the people to look to us. They present the idea that nothing will accomplish the work but our special testimony. God is not pleased with this. Ministers should take greater responsibilities, and not entertain the thought that they cannot bear that message which will help the people where they need help. If they cannot do this, they should tarry in Jerusalem till they be endowed with power from on high. They should not engage in a work which they cannot perform. They should go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, and return from their effort rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.

Ministers should impress upon the people the necessity of individual effort. No church can flourish unless its members are workers. The people must lift where the ministers lift. But I saw that nothing lasting can be accomplished for churches in different places unless they are aroused to feel that a responsibility rests upon them. Every member of the body should feel that the salvation of their own souls depends upon their own individual effort. Souls cannot be saved without exertion. The minister cannot save the people. He can be a channel through which God will impart light to his people; but then, after the light is given, it is left with the people to appropriate the light, and, in their turn, let their light shine forth to others. The people should feel that an individual responsibility rests upon them, not only to save their own souls, but to earnestly engage in the salvation of those who remain

in darkness. Instead of the people's looking to Bro. and Sr. White to help them out of their darkness, such should be earnestly engaged in helping themselves. If they should begin to hunt up others worse off than themselves, and should try to help them, they would help themselves into the light sooner than in any other way. If the people lean upon, and trust in, Bro. and Sr. White, God will humble them among you, or remove them from you. You must look to God and trust in him. Lean upon him, and he will not forsake you. He will not leave you to perish. Precious is the word of God. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life." These are the words of Christ. The words of inspiration, carefully and prayerfully studied and practically obeyed, will thoroughly furnish you unto all good works. Ministers and people must look to God.

We are living in an evil age. The perils of the last days thicken around us. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. Enoch walked with God three hundred years. Now the shortness of time seems to be urged as a motive to seek righteousness. Should it require that the terrors of the day of God be held before us in order to compel us to right action? Enoch's case is before us. Hundreds of years he walked with God. He lived in a corrupt age, when moral pollution was teeming all around him. He trained his mind to devotion, to love purity. His conversation was upon heavenly and divine things. He educated his mind to run in this channel, and he bore the impress of the divine. His countenance was lighted up with the light which shineth

in the face of Jesus. Enoch had temptations as well as we. He was not surrounded with society any more friendly to righteousness than we. The atmosphere he breathed was tainted with sin and corruption, the same as ours; yet he lived a life of holiness. He was unsullied with the prevailing sins of the age in which he lived. And so may we remain as pure and uncorrupted as did the faithful Enoch. He was a representation of the saints living amid the perils and corruptions of the last days. For his faithful obedience to God, he was translated. So, also, those who are alive and remain, who are faithful, will be translated to Heaven. They will be removed from a sinful and corrupt world to the pure joys of Heaven.

The course of God's people should be upward and onward to victory. A greater than Joshua is leading on the armies of Israel. One is in our midst, even the Captain of our salvation, who has said for our encouragement, "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." He will lead us on to certain victory. What God promises, he is able at any time to perform. And the work he gives his people to do, he is able to accomplish by them. If we live the life of perfect obedience, his promises will be fulfilled toward us.

God requires his people to shine as lights in the world. It is not merely the ministers who are required to do this, but every disciple of Christ. Their conversation should be heavenly. And while they enjoy communion with God, they will wish to have intercourse with their fellowmen, in order to express by their words and acts

the love of God which animates their hearts. In this way will they be lights in the world, and the light transmitted through them will not go out, or be taken away. It will indeed become darkness to those who will not walk in it; but it will shine with increasing brightness on the path of those who will obey and walk in the light.

The Spirit, wisdom, and goodness of God, revealed in his word, are to be exemplified through the disciples of Christ, and will condemn the world. God requires of his people according to the grace and truth given them. All his righteous demands must be fully met. Accountable beings must walk in the light that shines upon them. If they fail to do this, their light becomes darkness, and their darkness is great according to the degree that their light was abundant. Accumulated light has shone upon God's people. Many have neglected to follow the light, and for this reason are in a state of great spiritual weakness.

It is not for lack of knowledge that God's people are now perishing. They will not be condemned because they do not know the way, the truth, and the life. The truth that has reached their understanding, the light which has shone on the soul, that has not been cherished, and which they have neglected, or refused to be led by, will condemn them. Those who never had the light to reject, will not be in condemnation. What more could have been done for God's vineyard than has been done? Light, precious light, shines upon them; but the light will not save them, unless they consent to be saved by it, and fully live up to the light, and transmit their light to others in darkness. God calls upon his people to act.

It is an individual work of confessing and forsaking of sins and returning unto the Lord, which is needed. One cannot do this work for another. Religious knowledge has accumulated, which has increased corresponding obligations. Great light has been shining upon the church, and they are condemned by the light, because they refuse to walk in it. If they were blind, they would be without sin. But they have seen light, and have heard much truth, yet are not wise and holy. Many have not advanced in knowledge and true holiness from what they were years since. They are spiritual dwarfs. Instead of going forward to perfection, they are taking back tracks to the darkness and bondage of Egypt. Their minds are not exercised unto godliness and true holiness.

Will the Israel of God awake? Will every one who professes godliness seek to put away from them every wrong, confess to God every secret sin, and afflict the soul before him? Will they, with great humility, investigate the motives of every action, and know that the eye of God reads all—searches out every hidden thing. Let the work be thorough, the consecration to God be entire. He calls for a full surrender of all that we have and are. Ministers and people need a new conversion—a transformation of the mind, without which we are not savors of life unto life, but of death unto death. Great privileges belong to the people of God. Great light has been given them, that they may attain to their high calling in Christ Jesus; yet they are not what God would have them to be, and what he designs they shall be.

FOR THE CHURCH AT ———.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS: God designed that the light of the church should increase, and grow brighter and brighter, unto the perfect day.

Precious promises are made to God's people, upon condition of obedience. If, like Caleb and Joshua, you had wholly followed the Lord, he would have magnified his power in your midst. Sinners would have been converted, and backsliders reclaimed, by your influence; and even the enemies of our faith, although they might oppose and speak against the truth, could but admit that God was with you.

Many of the professed, peculiar people of God are so conformed to the world that their peculiar character is not discerned, and it is difficult to distinguish "between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." God would do great things for his people if they would come out from the world and be separate. He would make them a praise in all the earth, if they would submit to be led by him. Says the True Witness, "I know thy works." Angels of God, who minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation, are acquainted with the condition of all, and understand just the measure of faith possessed by each individual. The unbelief, pride, covetousness, and love of the world, which have existed in the hearts of God's professed people, have grieved the sinless angels. The grievous and presumptuous sins, which exist in the hearts of many, have caused angels to weep, as they have seen that God has been dishonored because of the inconsistent, crooked course of pro-

fessed followers of Christ. And yet those the most at fault, those who cause the greatest feebleness in the church, and bring upon their holy profession a stain, do not seem to be alarmed, or convicted, but seem to feel that they are flourishing in the Lord.

Many believe themselves to be on the right foundation, that they have the truth, and rejoice in the clearness of truth, and boast of the powerful arguments in proof of the correctness of our position, and reckon themselves among the chosen, peculiar people of God, yet they experience not his presence and power to save them from yielding to temptation and folly. These profess to know God, yet in works deny him. How great is their darkness! The love of the world with many, the deceitfulness of riches with others, has choked the word, and they have become unfruitful.

I was shown that the church at ——— have partaken of the spirit of the world, and become lukewarm to an alarming extent. When efforts are there made to set things in order, and bring the people up to the position God would have them occupy, a class will be affected by the labor, and will make earnest efforts to press through the darkness to the light. But many do not persevere in their efforts long enough to realize the sanctifying influence of the truth upon their hearts and lives. The cares of the world engross the mind to that degree that self-examination and secret prayer are neglected. The armor is laid off, and Satan has free access to them, benumbing their sensibilities, and causing them to be unsuspecting of his wiles.

Some do not manifest a desire to know their