

## TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH. NO. 18.

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### **Christian Temperance.\***

“KNOW ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Cor. vi, 19, 20.

We are not our own. We do not belong to ourselves. But we have been purchased with a dear price. We have cost an immense sum, even the sufferings and death of the Son of God. If we can understand this, and fully realize it, then shall we feel great responsibility resting upon us to keep ourselves in the very best condition of health, that we may render to God perfect service.

But when we take any course which decreases our strength, expends our vitality, beclouds the intellect, and destroys the powers of the mind, we sin against God. In pursuing this course we are not glorifying him in our bodies and spirits which are his; but are committing a great wrong in his sight.

Has Jesus given himself for us? Has thi

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\* Delivered in Battle Creek, March 6, 1869, and reported by U. Smith.

dear price been paid to redeem us? And is it so, that we are not our own? Is it true that all the powers of our being, our bodies, our spirits, all that we have, and all we are, belong to God? Is this so? It certainly is. And when we realize this, what obligation does it lay us under to God to preserve ourselves in that condition that we may honor him upon the earth in our bodies and in our spirits which are the Lord's.

We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. This is not a fable to us. It is a reality. We have no doubt, neither have we had a doubt for years, that the doctrines we hold to-day are present truth, and that we are preparing for the Judgment. We are preparing to meet Him who is to appear in the clouds of heaven with the holy retinue of angels, to escort Him on his way, to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality. When he comes he is not to cleanse us of our sins. He is not then to remove from us the defects in our characters. He will not then cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. He will not do this work then. Before that time this work will all be accomplished, if wrought for us at all. Then those who are holy will be holy still. They are not to be made holy when the Lord comes. Those who have preserved their bodies, and their spirits, in holiness, and in sanctification, and honor, will

then receive the finishing touch of immortality. And when he comes, those who are unjust, and unsanctified, and filthy, will remain so forever. There is then no work to be done for them which shall remove their defects, and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue his refining process, and remove their sins, and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is *now* that this work is to be accomplished for us.

We embrace the truth of God with our different organizations, and as we come under the influence of truth, it will accomplish the work for us which is necessary to be accomplished, and give us a moral fitness for the kingdom of glory, and for the society of the heavenly angels. We are now in God's workshop. We are, many of us, rough stone from the quarry. As we lay hold upon the truth of God, its influence must affect us. It must elevate us. It must remove from us every imperfection. It must remove from us sins of whatever nature. And it must fit us, that we may be prepared to see the King in his beauty, and finally to unite with the pure and heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory. This work is to be accomplished for us here. Here we are, with these bodies and spirits, which are to be fitted for immortality.

We are in a world that is in opposition to righteousness, holiness, a growth in grace,

and to purity of character. Everywhere we look we see deformity and sin. We see corruption. We see defilement on every hand. And what is the work that we are to undertake here just previous to immortality? It is to preserve our bodies holy, our spirits pure, that we may stand forth unstained amid the corruptions teeming around us in these last days. And if this work is to be performed for us, we need to engage in it heartily, and engage in it at once. We want to take hold of the work now. We want to understand it just as it is. Selfishness should not come in here to control us. We want the Spirit of God to have perfect control of us. It should influence us in all our actions. And if we have a right hold on Heaven, a right hold of the power that is from above, we shall feel the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God upon our hearts.

When we have tried to present to our brethren and sisters the health reform, and have spoken to them of the importance of their eating, and drinking, and in all that they do, to do it to the glory of God, many, by their actions, have said, "It is nobody's business whether I eat this or that. Whatever we do, we are to bear the consequences ourselves." Dear friends, you are greatly mistaken. You are not the only sufferers from a wrong course. The society you are in bears the consequences of your wrongs, in a great

degree, as well as yourselves. If you are suffering from your intemperance in eating or in drinking, we that are around you, or associated with you, are affected by your infirmities. We have to suffer on account of the course you pursue, which is wrong. If it has an influence to lessen your powers of mind or body, we are affected by it. We have to feel it. When in your society, instead of your having a buoyancy of spirit, you are gloomy, and cast a shadow upon the spirits of all around you. If we are sad, and depressed, and in trouble, you could, if in right conditions of health, have a clear brain to show us the way out, and speak a comforting word to us. If your brain is so benumbed by your wrong course of living that you cannot give us the right counsel, do we not meet with a loss? Does not your influence seriously affect us? We may have a good degree of confidence in our own judgment, yet we want to have counsellors; for in many counsellors there is safety. We desire that our course should look consistent and proper to those we love, and we wish to seek their counsel, and have them able to give it with a clear brain. But what care we for your judgment, if your brain nerve-power has been taxed to the utmost to take care of improper food, or an enormous quantity of even healthful food, placed in your stomachs, and the vitality withdrawn from the brain?

What care we for the judgment of such persons? They see through a mass of undigested food. Therefore your course of living affects us. It is impossible for you to pursue any wrong course without others suffering beside yourself.

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” In running the race, in order to obtain that laurel which was considered a special honor, those who engaged in running were temperate in all things. They were temperate, that their muscles, and their brains, and every part of them, should be in the very best condition to run. If they were not temperate, they would not have that elasticity that they would have if they were temperate in all things. If temperate, they could run that race successfully. They were more sure of receiving the crown. But notwithstanding all their efforts in the direction of temperance, and to subject themselves to a careful diet, in order to be in the best condition, yet they

only ran at a venture. They might do the very best they could, and yet after all not receive the token of honor; for another might be a little in advance of them, and take the prize. One only received the prize. But we can all run in the heavenly race, and all receive the prize. It is not an uncertainty. It is not to run at a risk. We must put on the heavenly graces, with the eye directed upward to the crown of immortality, keeping the Pattern ever before us. He was a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. The self-denying life of our divine Lord we are to keep constantly in view. His life of poverty, humbleness, and self-denying, we must not forget. And then as we seek to imitate him, keeping our eye upon the mark of the prize, we can run this race with certainty, knowing that if we do the very best we can we shall certainly secure the prize. Men ran to obtain a corruptible crown, one that would perish in a day. All this self-denial practised by those who ran these races was to obtain a corruptible crown, which was only a token of honor from mortals here.

But we are to run the race, at the end of which is a crown of immortality and everlasting life. Yes, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory will be awarded to us as the prize when the race is run. "We," says the apostle, "an incorruptible." And if they could be temperate in all things,

who engaged in this race here upon earth for a temporal crown, cannot we be temperate in all things, who have in view an incorruptible crown, an eternal weight of glory, and a life which measures with the life of God? When we have this great inducement before us, cannot we run, with patience, this race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith? He has pointed out the way for us. He has marked it for us by his own footsteps all the way along. It is the path that he traveled. You may, with Christ, experience the self-denial, and the suffering, and walk in this pathway imprinted by his own blood.

“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.” There is work to do here, for every man, woman, and child. Satan is constantly at work, that he may have control of your bodies and spirits. But Christ has bought you, and you are his property. And now it is for you to work in union with Christ, in union with the holy angels that minister unto you. It is for you to keep the body under, and bring it into subjection. Unless you do this, you will certainly lose everlasting life, and the crown of immortality.

And yet some will say, “What business

is it to anybody what I eat? or what I drink?" I have shown you what relation your course had to others. You have seen that it has much to do with the influence you exert in your families. It has to do with your manner of acting. It has much to do with moulding the characters of your children.

As I said before, It is a corrupted age in which we live. It is a time when Satan seems to have almost perfect control of minds that are not fully consecrated to God. Therefore there is a very great responsibility resting upon parents and guardians who have children to bring up. Parents have taken the responsibility of bringing these children into existence. And what now is their duty? Is it to let them come up just as they may? and just as they will? Let me tell you, a weight of responsibility rests upon these parents. Whether you eat, or whether you drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Do you do this when you are preparing food for the table, and when you place it upon your tables, and call your family to partake of it? Are you placing only the food before these children that you know will make the very best blood? Is it that food that will preserve their systems in the least feverish condition? Is it that which will place them in the very best relation to life and health? Is this the food that you are study-

ing to place before your children? Or are you careless and reckless of their future good? and provide for them unhealthful, stimulating, irritating food? Let me tell you that the children from their very birth are born to evil. Satan seems to have control of them. He seems to take possession of their young minds, and they are corrupted. Why do fathers and mothers act as though a lethargy was upon them? They do not mistrust that Satan is sowing evil seed in their families. They are as blind, and careless, and reckless, in regard to these things as it is possible for them to be. Why do they not awake, and study these things? Why are they not reading up? Says the apostle, "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience," &c. Here is work resting upon every one who professes to follow Jesus Christ, to live upon the plan of addition.

Chapter after chapter has been opened to me. I can select family after family of children in this house that are, every child of them, as corrupt as hell. And some of them profess to be followers of Jesus Christ. And you, the parents, are as indifferent as though you had had a shock of paralysis.

I have said that some of you are selfish. You have not understood what I have meant. You have studied what food would taste best.

Taste and pleasure, instead of the glory of God, and to advance in the divine life, and perfect holiness in the fear of God, have ruled. It is to consult your own pleasure, your own appetites; and while you have been doing this, Satan has been gaining a march upon you, and, as it generally happens, has frustrated your efforts every time. Some of you fathers have taken your children to the physicians to see what was the matter with them. I could have told you in two minutes what was the matter. Your children are corrupt. Satan has obtained control of them. He has come right in past you, while you, who are as God to them, to guard them, were at ease, stupefied, and asleep. God has commanded you to bring them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord. But Satan has passed right in before you, and has woven strong bands around them. And yet you sleep on. May Heaven pity these parents, and these children, for they, every one of them, need his pity.

Had you taken your position upon the health reform; had you added to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, things might have been different. But you have only partially aroused, opened your eyes a little, and then composed yourself to sleep again, over the iniquity and corruption that is in your very houses. Do you think angels can come into your dwellings?

Do you think your children are susceptible of holy influences with these things in your midst? Yet I can count family after family that are almost entirely under the control of Satan. I know these things are true, and I want the people to arouse before it shall be eternally too late, and the blood of souls, even the blood of the souls of their own children, be found upon their garments.

The minds of some of these children are so weakened that they have but one-half, or one-third, of the brilliancy of intellect that they might have had had they been virtuous and pure. They have thrown it away in self-abuse. Right here in this church, corruption is teeming on every hand. Now and then there is a sing, or some gathering of pleasure. Every time I hear of these, I feel like clothing myself in sackcloth. "Oh! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears." "Spare thy people, O Lord." I feel distressed. I have an agony of soul that is beyond anything that I can describe to you. You are asleep. Would the lightning and thunder of Sinai arouse this church? Would they arouse you, fathers and mothers, to commence the work of reformation in your own houses? You should be teaching your children. You should be instructing them how to shun the vices and corruptions of this age. Instead of this, many are studying how to get some-

thing good to eat. You place upon your tables the meat, the butter, and the eggs. The children partake of these things. The parents are feeding them with the very things that will excite their animal passions, and then they come to the meeting and pray, and ask God to bless their children, and save them. How high do your prayers go? You have a work to do first. When you have done all for your children which God has left for you to do, then you can with confidence claim the special help God has promised to give you.

You should study temperance in all things. You must study it in what you eat, and in what you drink. And yet you say it is nobody's business what I eat, or what I drink, or what I place upon my table. It is somebody's business, unless you take your children and shut them up, or go into the wilderness where you will not be a burden upon others—where your unruly, vicious children will not corrupt the society in which they mingle.

Those who have adopted the health reform, many of them, have left off every hurtful thing; but does it follow that because they have left off these things, they can eat just as much as they please? They sit down to the table, and instead of considering how much they should eat, they give themselves up to appetite, and eat to great excess. And

it is all they can do, and all they should do, the rest of that day, to let the stomach worry away with its burden imposed upon it. All the food that is put into the stomach that the system cannot derive benefit from, is a burden to nature in her work. It hinders the living machine. The system is clogged. It cannot successfully carry on the work of life. The vital organs are unnecessarily taxed. The brain nerve-power is called to the stomach to help the digestive organs carry on their work of disposing of an amount of food which does the system no good. So you see you have lessened the power of the brain by drawing so heavily upon it to help the stomach get along with its heavy burden. And after it has accomplished the task, what are the sensations you have experienced as the result of this unnecessary expenditure of vital force? A feeling of goneness, a faintness, as though you must eat more. Perhaps this feeling comes just before meal time. What is the cause of this? Nature has worried along with her work, and is so thoroughly exhausted in her efforts in consequence, that you have this sensation of goneness. And you think that the stomach says, More food, when, in its faintness, it is distinctly saying, Give me rest. The stomach needs rest to gather up its exhausted energies for another work. But instead of your allowing it any period

of rest, you think the stomach needs more food, and so you heap another load upon nature, and refuse it all the rest it needs. It is like a man laboring in the field all through the former part of the day until he is weary. He comes in at noon. He says that he is weary and exhausted; but you tell him to go to work again and he will obtain relief. This is the way you treat the stomach. It is thoroughly exhausted. And you call the vitality from other parts of the system to the stomach in the effort of digestion.

You have felt a numbness around the brain. You have felt disinclined to take hold of any special labor, which required exertion. You have felt as though you did not want to engage in labor, mental or physical, to any extent, until you have rested from the sense of this burden imposed upon your system. Then, again, there is this sense of goneness. But you say it is more food that is wanted. You place a double load of food for the stomach to take care of. Even if you are most strict in the quality of your food, do you glorify God in your bodies and spirits, which are his, by partaking of such a quantity of food? Those who place so much food upon the stomach, and thus load down nature, could not appreciate the truth, should they hear it dwelt upon. They could not arouse the benumbed sensibilities of the brain to realize the value of the atonement, and the

great sacrifice that has been made for fallen man. It is impossible for such to appreciate the great, precious, and exceedingly rich reward that is in reserve for the faithful overcomers. The animal part of our nature should never be left to govern the moral and intellectual.

And what influence does overeating have upon the stomach? The stomach is debilitated, the digestive organs weakened, and disease, with all its train of evils, is brought on as the result. If they were diseased before, they are now increasing the difficulties upon them, and lessening their vitality every day they live. They call their vital powers into unnecessary action to take care of the food that they place in their stomachs. What a terrible condition is this to be in! We know something of dyspepsia by experience. We have had it in our family. And we feel that it is a much-to-be-dreaded disease. And when a person becomes a thorough dyspeptic, he is a great sufferer, mentally and physically, and his friends must also suffer, unless they are as unfeeling as brutes. And yet will you say, It is none of your business what I eat, or what course I pursue? Does anybody around the dyspeptic suffer? Just take a course that shall irritate them in any way. How natural to be fretful! They feel bad. Their little children appear to them to be very bad. They cannot speak calmly to their

children. They cannot, without especial grace, act calmly in their families. All around them are affected by the disease upon them. All around them have to suffer the consequences of their infirmity. They cast a dark shadow. Then, does not your eating and drinking affect others? It certainly does. And you should be very careful to preserve yourself in the best condition of health, that you may render to God perfect service, and do your duty in society and to your family. Then, even health reformers can eat immoderately of a healthy quality of food. They can err in the quantity. Some in this house err in the quality. They have never taken their position upon health reform. They have chosen to eat and drink what they pleased, and when they pleased. They are injuring their systems in this way. They are tearing down their systems, and injuring their families, by placing upon their tables a feverish diet, which will increase the animal passions of their children, and lead them to care but little for heavenly things. The parents are thus strengthening the animal, and lessening the spiritual, powers of their children. And what a heavy penalty will they have to pay in the end! And then they wonder that the children are so morally weak!

Parents have not given their children the right education. They have frequently manifested the same imperfections which are upon

the children. They have eaten improperly, which has called the nervous energies of the being to the stomach, therefore they could not have vitality to expend in other directions. They could not properly control their children, because of their own impatience. Neither could they teach them the right way. Perhaps they would take hold of them roughly, and give them an impatient blow. I have said that to shake a child would shake two evil spirits in, while it would shake one out. If a child is wrong, to shake it only makes it worse. It will not subdue it. When the system is not in a right condition, the circulation broken up, and the nervous power has all that it can do to take care of the bad quality of food, or too great quantity even of that which is good, parents have not self-command. They cannot reason from cause to effect. Here is the reason that, in every move they make in their families, they create more trouble than they cure. They do not seem to understand and reason from cause to effect, and they go to work just like blind men. They seem to act as though it would especially glorify God for them to move like wild men, and if anything wrong should occur in their families, to put it down with roughness and violence. Who are our children? They are only our younger brothers and sisters of the family that God acknowledges as his. We are dealing with the members of

the Lord's family. And while the care of them is committed to us, how careful should we be that we bring them up for the Lord, so that when the Master comes we can say, "Here, Lord, are we, and the children that thou has given us." Shall we then be able to say, We have tried to do our work, and we have tried to do it well?

I have seen mothers of large families, who in the family could not see the work that lay right in their pathway, just before them. They wanted to be missionaries, and do some great work. They were looking out for themselves some high position, but neglecting to take care of the very work at home which the Lord had left them to do. How important that the brain be clear! How important that the body be as free as possible from disease, in order that we may do the work which Heaven has left for us to do, and to perform it in such a manner that the Master can say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." My sisters, do not despise the few things which the Lord has left you to do. Let each day's actions be such that you will not be ashamed to meet the record made by the recording angel, in the day of the final settlement of accounts.

But what about an impoverished diet? I