

TESTIMONY

For the Church.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE Testimonies to the Church, now twenty-six in number, cover a period of twenty years. These have ranged, in point of size, from a sixteen-page tract to a pamphlet of two hundred and eight pages. In these, a voice has been appealing to the people of God, in one straight-forward line for a score of years. This voice has in a uniform manner given warning of the deceitfulness of riches, and the dangers of the love and spirit of this world. It has also cried out against the prevailing sins of our evil time.

On the other hand, we recognize the voice of the dear Shepherd comforting the little flock, and encouraging them to faithfulness in their Christian lives and sacrifices in his cause, in view of immortal rewards to be given at the second coming of Christ.

The character of God, of his law, his Son, the Sacred Scriptures, and the way of holiness have been represented in a uniform manner for this period of twenty years. This also may be said of Satan, sin, and the path of death.

Twenty years since, the idea of Testimonies from God to the church, through a frail, hum-

ble instrument, was regarded very questionable; a few believed fully by reason of attending evidences. Many, however, balancing the matter in their minds like Gamaliel, said, "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." Here is a work that has been subjected to the most rigid criticisms, and the most violent persecutions for the long period of twenty years, and yet remains unchanged. Had this work originated in the mind of an unsophisticated woman, it would have been forced out of its course long since and brought to confusion and to naught.

Let the following pages be read in the fear of God. Those who cannot feel the force of the great truths stated, and the importance of the admonitions given, at the first reading, should re-read this book upon their knees. Many who will read these pages of reproof, have read others of a similar character without taking heed to them. Their minds are consequently blinded, and their hearts are well nigh as cold and unfeeling as a stone. Those who can read these pages unmoved, should read them again and again with fervent prayer until they do feel deeply these admonitions from the Lord to his waiting people.

J. W.

*Oakland, Cal., Jan., 1876.*

## TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH.

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### Bible Biographies.

THE lives recorded in the Bible are authentic histories of actual individuals. From Adam down through successive generations, to the times of the apostles, we have the plain, unvarnished account of what actually occurred, and the genuine experience of real characters. It is a subject of wonder to many, that inspired history should narrate facts in the lives of good men that tarnish their moral characters. Infidels seize upon these sins with great satisfaction, and hold their perpetrators up to ridicule.

The inspired writers did not testify to falsehoods, fearing that the pages of Sacred History would be clouded by the record of human frailties and faults. The scribes of God wrote as they were dictated by the Holy Spirit, having no control of the work themselves. They penned the literal truth, and stern, forbidding facts are revealed for reasons that our finite minds cannot fully comprehend.

It is one of the best evidences of the authenticity of the Scriptures, that the truth is not glossed over, nor the sins of its chief

characters suppressed. Many will urge that it is an easy matter to give a relation of what has occurred in an ordinary life. But it is a proven fact that it is a human impossibility to give an impartial history of a contemporary; and it is almost as difficult to narrate, without deviating from the exact truth, the story of any person or people with whose career we have become acquainted. The human mind is so subject to prejudice that it is almost impossible for it to treat the subject impartially. Either the faults of the person under review stand out in glaring relief, or the virtues shine with undimmed luster, just as the writer is prejudiced for or against him. However impartial the historian may design to be, all critics will agree that it is a very difficult matter to be truly so.

But divine unction, lifted above the weaknesses of humanity, tells the simple, naked truth. How many biographies have been written of faultless Christians, who, in their ordinary home life and church relations, shone as examples of immaculate piety. No blemish marred the beauty of their holiness, no fault is recorded to remind us they were of the common clay, and subject to the ordinary temptations of humanity.

Yet, had the pen of inspiration written their histories, how different would they have appeared. There would have been revealed human weaknesses, struggles with selfishness, bigotry and pride, hidden sins perhaps, and the continual warfare between the spirit and

the flesh. Even private journals do not reveal on their pages the writer's sinful deeds. Sometimes the conflicts with evil are recorded, but usually only when the right has gained the victory. But they may contain a faithful account of praiseworthy acts and noble endeavors, this, too, when the writer honestly intends to keep a faithful journal of his life. It is next to a human impossibility to lay open our faults for the possible inspection of our friends.

Had our good Bible been written by uninspired persons it would have presented quite a different appearance and would have been a discouraging study to erring mortals contending with natural frailties and the temptations of a wily foe. But, as it is, we have a correct record of the religious experiences of marked characters in Bible history. Men whom God favored, and intrusted with great responsibilities, were sometimes overcome by temptation and committed sins, even as we of the present day strive, waver, and frequently fall into error. But it is encouraging to our desponding hearts to know that through God's grace they could gain fresh vigor to rise again above their evil natures, and remembering this we are ready to renew the conflict ourselves.

The murmurings of ancient Israel and their rebellious discontent, are recorded for our benefit as well as the mighty miracles wrought in their favor, and the punishment of their idolatry and ingratitude. The ex-

ample of ancient Israel is given as a warning to the people of God that they may avoid unbelief and escape his wrath. If the iniquities of the Hebrews had been omitted from the Sacred Record, and only their virtues recounted, their history would fail to teach us the lesson that it does.

Infidels, and the lovers of sin excuse their crimes by citing the wickedness of men to whom God gave authority in olden times. They argue that if these holy men yielded to temptation and committed sins, it is not to be wondered at that they too should be guilty of wrong-doing; and intimate that they are not so bad after all, since they have such illustrious examples of iniquity before them.

The principles of justice required a faithful narration of facts for the benefit of all who should ever read the Sacred Record. Here we discern the evidences of divine wisdom. We are required to obey the law of God, and we are not only instructed as to the penalty of disobedience, but we have, narrated for our benefit and warning, the history of Adam and Eve in Paradise, and the sad results of their disobedience of God's commands. The account is full and explicit. The law given to man in Eden is recorded together with the penalty accruing in case of its disobedience. Then follows the story of the temptation and fall, and the punishment inflicted upon our erring parents.

Their example is given us as a warning against disobedience, that we may be sure

the wages of sin is death, that God's retributive justice never fails, and that he exacts from his creatures a strict regard for his commandments. When the law of Sinai was proclaimed, how definite was the penalty annexed, how sure was punishment to follow the transgression of that law, and how plain are the cases recorded in evidence of that fact.

The pen of inspiration, true to its task, tells us of the sins that overcame Noah, Lot, Moses, Abraham, David and Solomon, while even Elijah's strong spirit sank under temptation during his fearful trial. Jonah's disobedience and Israel's idolatry are faithfully recorded. Peter's denial of Christ, the sharp contention of Paul and Barnabas, the failings and infirmities of the prophets and apostles, are all laid bare by the Holy Ghost, who lifts the veil from the human heart. There lay before us the lives of the believers, with all their faults and follies, and they are intended as a lesson to all the generations following them. If they had been without foible they would have been more than human, and our sinful natures would despair of ever reaching such a point of excellence. But, seeing where they struggled and fell, took heart again and conquered through the grace of God, we are led to be encouraged, and press on over the obstacles that degenerate nature places in our way.

God has been ever faithful to punish crime. He sent his prophets to warn the



guilty, denounce their sins, and pronounce judgment upon them. Those who question why the word of God brings out the sins of his people in so plain a manner for scoffers to deride and saints to deplore, should consider that it was all written for their instruction, that they might avoid the evils recorded, but imitate the righteousness of those who served the Lord.

We need just such lessons as the Bible gives us, for with the revelation of sin is recorded the retribution following. The sorrow and penitence of the guilty and the wailing of the sin-sick soul, come to us from the past telling us that man was then, as now, in need of the pardoning mercy of God. It teaches us that while he is a punisher of crime, he pities and forgives the repenting sinner. In his providence the Lord has seen fit to teach and warn his people in various ways. By direct command, by the Sacred Writings, by the spirit of prophecy has he made known unto them his will.

My work has been to speak plainly of the faults and errors of God's people. Because the sins of certain individuals have been brought to light, it is no evidence that they are worse in the sight of the Lord than many whose failings are unrecorded. But I have been shown that it was not mine to choose my work, but humbly to obey the will of God. The errors and wrong-doings in the lives of professed Christians are recorded for the instruction of those who are liable to fall

into the same temptations. The experience of one serves as a beacon light to warn others off the rocks of danger.

Thus the snares and devices of Satan are revealed, the importance of perfecting Christian character, and the means by which this result may be obtained. Thus God indicates what is necessary to secure his blessing. There is a disposition on the part of many to let rebellious feelings arise if their peculiar sins are reproved. The spirit of this generation is, Speak unto us smooth things. But the Spirit of Prophecy speaks only truth.

Iniquity abounds, and the love of many who profess to follow Christ waxes cold. They are blind to the wickedness of their own hearts, and do not feel their weak and helpless condition. God in his mercy lifts the veil and shows them there is an eye behind the scenes that discerns their hidden guilt and the motives of their actions.

The sins of the popular churches are white-washed over. Many of the members indulge in the grossest vices and are steeped in iniquity. Babylon is fallen and has become the cage of every foul and hateful bird! The most revolting sins of the age find a shelter beneath the cloak of Christianity. Many proclaim the law of God abolished, and surely their lives are in keeping with their faith. If there is no law then there is no transgression, and therefore no sin, for sin is the transgression of the law.

The carnal mind is at enmity with God

and rebels against his will. Let it once throw off the yoke of obedience and it slips unconsciously into the lawlessness of crime. Iniquity abounds among those who talk grandly of a pure and perfect religious liberty. Their conduct is abhorrent to the Lord, and they are co-workers with the adversary of souls. The light of revealed truth is turned from their sight, and the beauties of holiness are but as shadows to them.

It is astounding what flimsy foundations very many build their hopes of Heaven upon. They rail at the law of the Infinite One as if they would defy him and make his word null. Satan even, with his knowledge of the divine law, would not dare to make the speeches which some law-hating ministers do from the pulpit, yet he exults in their blasphemy.

I have been shown what man is without a knowledge of the will of God. Crimes and iniquity fill up the measure of his life. But when the Spirit of God reveals to man the full meaning of the law, what a change takes place in his heart. Like Belshazzar he reads intelligently the hand-writing of the Almighty and conviction takes possession of his soul. The thunders of God's word startle him from his lethargy and he calls for mercy in the name of Jesus. And to that humble plea God always listens with a willing ear. He never turns the penitent away comfortless.

The Lord has seen fit to give me a view of the needs and errors of his people. Painful

though it has been to me, I have faithfully set before the offenders their faults and the means of remedying them, according to the dictates of the Spirit of God. This has, in many instances, excited the tongue of slander, and embittered against me those for whom I have labored and suffered. But I have not been turned from my course because of this. God gave me my work, and, upheld by his sustaining strength, I have performed the painful duties he has set before me. Thus has the Spirit of God pronounced warnings and judgments, withholding not however the sweet promise of mercy.

If God's people would recognize his dealings with them, and accept his teachings, they would find a straight path for their feet, and a light to guide them through darkness and discouragement. David learned wisdom from God's dealings with him, and bowed in humility beneath the chastisement of the Most High. The faithful portrayal of his true state by the prophet Nathan, made David acquainted with his own sins and aided him to put them away. He accepted counsel meekly, and humiliated himself before God. "The law of the Lord," he exclaims, "is perfect, converting the soul."

Repentant sinners have no cause to despair because they are reminded of their transgressions and warned of their danger. These very efforts in their behalf show how much God loves them and desires that they shall be saved. They have only to follow his counsel

and do his will to inherit eternal life. God sets before his erring people their sins that they may behold them in all their enormity, under the light of divine truth. It is then their duty to renounce them forever.

God is as powerful to save from sin to-day as he was in the times of the Patriarchs, of David, and the prophets and apostles of Bible times. The multitude of cases recorded in Sacred History, where God has delivered his people from their own iniquities, should make the Christian of this time eager to receive divine instruction, and zealous to perfect a character that will bear the close inspection of the Judgment.

Bible history stays the fainting heart with the hope of God's mercy. We need not despair when we see that others have struggled through discouragements like unto our own, fallen into temptations, even as we have done, yet recovered their ground and been blessed of God. The words of inspiration comfort and cheer the erring soul. Although the patriarchs and apostles were subject to human frailties, yet through faith they obtained a good report, fought their battles in the strength of the Lord, and conquered gloriously. Thus may we trust in the virtue of the atoning sacrifice and be overcomers in the name of Jesus. Humanity is humanity the world over, from the time of Adam down to the present generation, and the love of God through all the ages is without a parallel.

## Unity of the Church.

DEAR BRETHREN:—As all the different members of the human system unite to form the entire body, and each performs its office in obedience to the intelligence that governs the whole, so the members of the church of Christ should be united in one symmetrical body, subject to the sanctified intelligence of the whole.

The advancement of our church is retarded by the wrong course of its members. Unit-ing with the church, although an important and necessary act, does not make one a Christian or ensure salvation. We can not secure a title to Heaven by having our names enrolled upon the church books, while our hearts are alienated from Christ. We should be his faithful representatives on earth, working in unison with him. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” We should keep in mind this holy relationship and do nothing to bring dishonor upon our Father’s cause.

Our profession is an exalted one. As Sabbath-keeping Adventists, we profess to obey all God’s commandments, and are looking for the coming of our Redeemer. A most solemn message of warning has been intrusted to God’s faithful few. We should show by our words and works that we recognize the great responsibility laid upon us. Our light should shine so clearly that others can see that we glorify the Father in our daily lives; that we are connected with

Heaven and are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; that when he shall appear in power and great glory, we shall be like him.

We should every one feel our individual responsibility as members of the visible church and workers in the vineyard of the Lord. We should not wait for our brethren, who are frail as ourselves, to help us along, for our precious Saviour has invited us to join ourselves to him, and unite our weakness with his strength, our ignorance to his wisdom, our unworthiness to his merits.

None of us can occupy a neutral position, our influence will tell for or against. We are active agents for Christ or for the enemy. We either gather with Jesus or scatter abroad. True conversion is a radical change. The very drift of the mind and bent of the heart should be turned, and life become new again in Christ.

God is leading out a people to stand in perfect unity upon the platform of eternal truth. Christ gave himself to the world "that he might purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This refining process is designed to purge the church from all unrighteousness and the spirit of discord and contention; that they may build up instead of tear down, and concentrate their energies on the great work before them. God designs that his people should all come into the unity of faith. The prayer of Christ to his Father, just prior to his crucifixion, was that his disciples might be one, even as

he was one with the Father, that the world might believe that he had sent him. This most touching and wonderful prayer reaches down the ages, even to our day, for his words were, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."

How earnestly should the professed followers of Christ seek to answer this prayer in their lives. Many do not realize the sacredness of their church relations, and are loth to submit to restraint and discipline. Their course of action shows that they exalt their own judgment above that of the united church; and they are not careful to guard themselves lest they encourage a spirit of opposition to its voice.

Those who hold responsible positions in the church may have their faults in common with other people, and may err in their decisions; but notwithstanding this, the church of Christ on earth has given to them an authority that cannot be lightly esteemed. Christ, after his resurrection, delegated power unto his church, saying, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

A relation to the church is not to be easily canceled; yet some professed followers of Christ will threaten to leave the church when their path is crossed, or their voice has not the controlling influence which they think it deserves. True, in leaving the church, they would be the greatest sufferers themselves,



for in withdrawing beyond the pale of its influence, they subject themselves to the full temptations of the world.

Every believer should be whole-hearted in his attachment to the church. Its prosperity should be his first interest, and unless he feels under sacred obligations to make his connection with the church a benefit to it, in preference to himself, it can do far better without him. It is in the power of all to do something for the cause of God. There are those who spend a large amount for needless luxuries, and to gratify their appetites, but feel it a great tax to contribute means to sustain the church. They are willing to receive all the benefits of its privileges, but prefer to leave others to pay the bills. Those who really feel a deep interest in the advancement of the cause, will not hesitate to invest money in the enterprise whenever and wherever it is needed.

They should also feel it a solemn duty to illustrate in their characters the teachings of Christ, being at peace one with another and moving in perfect harmony as an undivided whole. They should defer their individual judgment to the judgment of the body of the church. Many are living for themselves alone. They look upon their lives with great complacency, flattering themselves that they are blameless, when in fact they are doing nothing for God, and are living in direct opposition to his expressed word. The observance of external forms will never meet the

great want of the human soul. A profession of Christ is not enough to stand the test of the day of Judgment. There should be a perfect trust in God, a childlike dependence upon his promises, and an utter consecration of self to his will.

God has always tried his people in the furnace of affliction, in order to prove them firm and true, and purge them from all unrighteousness. After Abraham and his son had borne the severest test that could be imposed upon them, God spoke through his angel unto Abraham, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." This great act of faith causes the character of Abraham to shine forth with remarkable luster. It forcibly illustrates his perfect confidence in the Lord, from whom he withheld nothing, not even his son of promise.

There is nothing too precious for us to give to Jesus. If we return to him the talents of means he has intrusted to our keeping, he will give more into our hands. Every effort we make for Christ will be rewarded by him; and every duty we perform in his name will minister to our own happiness. God surrendered his dearly-beloved Son to the agonies of the crucifixion, that all who believe on him should become one through the name of Jesus. When Christ made so great a sacrifice to save men and bring them into unity one with another, even as he was united with the

Father, what sacrifice is too great for his followers to make, in order to preserve that unity?

If the world sees a perfect harmony existing in the church of God, it will be a powerful evidence to them in favor of the Christian religion. Dissensions, unhappy differences, and petty church-trials dishonor our Redeemer. All these may be avoided if self is surrendered to God, and the followers of Jesus obey the voice of the church. Unbelief suggests that individual independence increases our importance, that it is weak to yield our own ideas of what is right and proper, to the verdict of the church. But to yield to such feelings and views is unsafe, and will bring us to anarchy and confusion. Christ saw that unity and Christian fellowship were necessary to the cause of God, therefore he enjoins it upon his disciples. And the history of Christianity from that time until now proves conclusively that in union only there is strength. Let individual judgment submit to the authority of the church.

The apostles felt the necessity of strict unity, and they labored earnestly to this end. Paul exhorted his brethren in these words:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

He also writes to his Philippian brethren, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

To the Romans he writes, "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."

Peter wrote to the churches scattered abroad, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

And Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians says: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be per-

fect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

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### Go Forward.

THE vast armies of Israel marched in glad triumph from Egypt, the scene of their long and cruel servitude. The Egyptians would not consent to release them until they had been signally warned by the judgments of God. The avenging angel had visited every house among the Egyptians, and stricken with death the first-born of every family. None had escaped, from the heir of King Pharaoh, to the eldest-born of the captive in his dungeon. And the first-born of the cattle were also slain according to the mandate of the Lord.

But the Angel of Death passed over the homes of the children of Israel and did not enter there. Pharaoh, horror-stricken at the plagues that had fallen upon his people, called Moses and Aaron before him in the night, and bade them depart from Egypt. He was anxious that they should go without delay, for he and his people feared that the land would become a vast burial-ground, unless the curse of God was removed from them.

Israel was joyful to receive the tidings of their freedom, and made haste to leave the scene of their bondage. But the way was toilsome, and at length their courage failed.

Their journey led them over barren hills and desolate plains. The third night they found themselves walled in on each side by mountain ranges, and the Red Sea lay before them. They were perplexed and greatly deplored their condition. They blamed Moses for conducting them to this place, for they believed they had taken the wrong course. "This, surely," said they, "is not the way to the wilderness of Sinai, nor the land of Canaan promised to the fathers. We can go no farther, but must now advance into the waters of the Red Sea, or turn back toward Egypt."

Then, as if to complete their misery, behold, the Egyptian host is on their track! The imposing army is led by King Pharaoh himself, who has repented that he freed the Hebrews, and fears that he has sent them out to become a great nation hostile to himself. What a night of perplexity and distress was this for Israel! What a contrast to that glorious morning when they left the bondage of Egypt, and with glad rejoicings took up the line of march into the wilderness! How powerless they felt before that mighty foe! The wailing of the terror-stricken women and children, mingled with the lowing of the frightened cattle, and the bleating of the sheep, added to the dismal confusion of the situation.

But had God lost all care for his people that he should leave them to destruction? Would he not warn them of their danger and deliver them from their enemies? God

had no delight in the discomfiture of his people. It was he, himself, who had directed Moses to encamp by the Red Sea, and he had farther informed him that, "Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord."

Jesus stood at the head of that vast army. The cloudy column by day, and the pillar of fire by night represented their Divine Leader. But the Hebrews did not patiently bear the test of the Lord. Their voices were lifted up in reproaches and denunciations of Moses, who was their visible leader, for bringing them into this great peril. They did not trust in the protecting power of God, nor recognize his hand staying the evils that surrounded them. In their frantic terror they had forgotten the rod with which Moses had changed the water of the Nile to blood, and the calamities which God had visited upon the Egyptians for their persecution of his chosen people. They had forgotten all the miraculous interpositions of God in their behalf.

"Ah!" they cried, "How much better for us had we remained in bondage! It is better to live as slaves than to die of hunger and fatigue in the desert, or be slain in war with our enemies!" They turned upon Moses

with bitter censure that he had not left them where they were instead of leading them out to perish in the wilderness.

Moses was greatly troubled because his people were so wanting in faith, especially as they had repeatedly witnessed the manifestations of the power of God in their favor. He felt grieved that they should charge upon him the dangers and difficulties of their position, when he had simply followed the express commands of God. He met and quieted the reproaches and fears of his people, even before he could himself discern the plan of their deliverance; but he was strong in his faith that the Lord would bring them into safety.

True, they were in a place from which there was no possibility of release unless God himself interposed to save them; but they were brought into this strait by obeying the divine commands, and Moses felt no fear of the consequences. He "said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace."

It was not an easy thing to hold the hosts of Israel in waiting before the Lord. They were excited and full of terror. They lacked discipline and self control. Impressed by the horrors of their situation, they became violent and unreasonable. They expected



speedily to fall into the hands of their oppressors, and their wailings and recriminations were loud and deep.

The wonderful pillar of cloud had accompanied them in their wanderings and served to protect them from the fervid rays of the sun. All day it had moved grandly before them, subject neither to sunshine nor storm. But at night it had become a pillar of fire to light them on their way. They had followed it as the signal of God to go forward; but now they questioned among themselves if it might not be the shadow of some terrible calamity that was about to befall them, for had it not led them on the wrong side of the mountain into an impassible way? Thus the angel of God appeared to their deluded minds as the harbinger of disaster.

But now, as the Egyptian host approaches them, expecting to make them an easy prey, the cloudy column rises majestically into the heavens, passes over the Israelites, and descends between them and the armies of Egypt. A wall of darkness interposes between the pursued and their pursuers. The Egyptians can no longer discern the camp of the Hebrews, and are forced to halt. But as the darkness of night deepens, the wall of cloud becomes a great light to the Hebrews, illuminating the whole camp with the radiance of day.

Then hope came to the hearts of Israel that they might be delivered. And Moses lifted up his voice unto the Lord. "And the

Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea."

Then Moses, obeying the divine command, stretched out his rod, and the waters parted, rolling up in a wall on either side, and leaving a broad pathway across the bed of the sea for the children of Israel. The light from God's pillar of fire shone upon the foam-capped billows and lit the road that was cut like a mighty furrow through the waters of the Red Sea and was lost in the obscurity of the farther shore.

All night long sounded the tramping of the hosts of Israel, crossing the Red Sea. But the cloud hid them from the sight of their enemies. The Egyptians, weary with their hasty march, had encamped upon the shore for the night. They saw the Hebrews only a short distance before them, and there seemed no possibility of escape, so they decided to take a night's rest, and make an easy capture in the morning. The night was intensely dark, the clouds seemed to encompass them like some tangible substance. Deep sleep fell upon the camp, even the sentinels slumbered at their posts.

At last a ringing blast arouses the army! The cloud is passing on! The Hebrews are moving! Voices and the sound of marching

come from toward the sea. It is still so dark they cannot discern the escaping people, but the command is given to make ready for the pursuit. The clattering of arms, and the roll of chariots is heard, the marshalling of the captains and the neighing of the steeds. At length the line of march is formed and they press on through the obscurity, in the direction of the escaping multitude.

In the darkness and confusion, they rush on in their pursuit, not knowing that they have entered upon the bed of the sea, and are hemmed in on either hand by beetling walls of water. They long for the mist and darkness to pass away, and reveal to them the Hebrews and their own whereabouts. The wheels of the chariots sink deep into the soft sand, and the horses become entangled and unruly. Confusion prevails, yet they press on feeling sure of victory.

At last the mysterious cloud changes to a pillar of fire before their astonished eyes. The thunders roll and the lightnings flash, the waves roll about them, and fear takes possession of their hearts. Amid the terror and confusion the lurid light reveals to the amazed Egyptians the terrible waters massed up on the right hand and on the left. They see the broad path that the Lord has made for his people across the shining sands of the sea, and behold triumphant Israel safe on the farther shore.

Confusion and dismay seizes them. Amid the wrath of the elements, in which they

hear the voice of an angry God, they endeavor to retrace their steps and fly to the shore they have quitted. But Moses stretches out his rod, and the piled up waters, hissing, roaring, and eager for their prey, tumble down upon the armies of Egypt. Proud Pharaoh and his legions, gilded chariot and flashing armor, horses and riders are engulfed beneath a stormy sea.

The mighty God of Israel had delivered his people, and their songs of thanksgiving went up to Heaven, that God had wrought so wonderfully in their behalf. The history of the children of Israel should be for the instruction and admonition of all Christians. When the Israelites were overtaken by dangers and difficulties and their way seemed hedged up, their faith forsook them and they murmured against the leader God had appointed for them. They blamed him with bringing them into peril, when he had only obeyed the voice of God.

The divine command was, "Go Forward!" Not to wait until the way was made plain, and they could comprehend the entire plan of their deliverance. God's cause is onward, and he will open the path before his people. To hesitate and murmur is to manifest distrust in the Holy One of Israel. God in his providence brought the Hebrews into the mountain fastnesses, with the Red Sea before them, that he might work out their deliverance and forever rid them of their enemies. He might have saved them in any other way,

but he chose this method in order to test their faith and strengthen their trust in him.

We cannot charge Moses with being at fault because his people murmured against his course. It was their own rebellious, unsubdued hearts that led them to censure the man whom God had delegated to lead his people. While Moses moved in the fear of the Lord, and according to his direction, having full faith in his promises, those who should have upheld him became discouraged and could see nothing before them but disaster, defeat, and death.

The Lord is now dealing with his people who believe in present truth. He designs to bring about momentous results, and while in his providence he is working towards this end, he says to his people, "Go Forward!" True, the path is not yet opened, but when they move on in the strength of faith and courage, God will make the way plain before their eyes. There are ever those who will complain, as did ancient Israel, and charge the difficulties of their position upon those whom God has raised up for the special purpose of advancing his cause. They fail to see that God is testing them by bringing them into straight places, from which there is no deliverance except by his hand.

There are times when the Christian life seems beset by dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage or death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly

above all discouragements, "Go Forward!" We should obey this command, let the result be what it may, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness and we feel the cold waves about our feet.

The Hebrews were weary and terrified, yet if they had held back when Moses bade them advance, if they had refused to move nearer to the Red Sea, God would never have opened the path for them. In marching down to the very water, they showed that they had faith in the word of God, as spoken by the man Moses. They did all that was in their power to do, and then the Mighty One of Israel performed his part and divided the waters to make a path for their feet.

The clouds that gather about our way will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Unbelief says, We can never surmount these obstructions, let us wait until they are removed, and we can see our way clearly. But faith courageously urges an advance, hoping all things, believing all things. Obedience towards God is sure to bring the victory. Through faith only can we reach Heaven.

There is a great similarity between our history and that of the children of Israel. God led his people from Egypt into the wilderness, where they could keep his law and obey his voice. The Egyptians, who had no regard for the Lord, were encamped close by them; yet, what was to them a great flood of light, illuminating the whole camp, and shedding

brightness upon the path before them, was to the hosts of Pharaoh a wall of clouds, making blacker the darkness of night.

So, at this time, there is a people whom God has made the repository of his law. To those who obey them, the commandments of God are as a pillar of fire, lighting and leading the way to eternal salvation. But unto those who disregard them, they are as the clouds of night. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Better than all other knowledge is an understanding of the word of God. In keeping his commandments there is great reward, and no earthly inducements should cause the Christian to waver for a moment in his allegiance. Riches, honor, and worldly pomp are but as dross that shall perish before the fire of God's wrath.

The voice of the Lord bidding his faithful ones "Go Forward," frequently tries their faith to the uttermost. But if they should defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty was removed from their understanding, and there remained no risk of failure or defeat, they would never move on at all. Those who think it impossible for them to yield to the will of God and have faith in his promises until all is made clear and plain before them, will never yield at all. Faith is not certainty of knowledge, it is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. To obey the commandments of God is the only way to obtain his favor. "Go Forward," should be the Christian's watchword.

## Epistle Number One.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS:—I have been shown some things in reference to the church in P—G—. Individual cases were shown me, which in many respects represent the cases of many others. Among them was that of sister P. and her husband. The Lord convicted him of the truth. He was charmed with the harmony and spirit of the truth, and was blessed in confessing it. But Satan came to him with his temptations upon the point of appetite.

Bro. P. had long indulged his appetite for stimulants, which had an influence to becloud the mind, weaken the intellect, and lessen the moral powers. Reason and judgment were brought in bondage to depraved, unnatural appetite, and his birthright, his God-given manhood, was sacrificed to intemperate habits. If Bro. P. had made the word of God his study, and his guide, had he trusted in God, and prayed for grace to overcome, he would have had strength in the name of Jesus to baffle the tempter.

But Bro. P. had never felt the high claims that God had upon him. His moral faculties had been enfeebled by his habits of eating and drinking, and his dissipation. He had, when he embraced the truth, a character to form for Heaven. God would test and prove him. He had a work to do for himself that no one could do for him. He had, by his course of life, lost many years of precious, proba-



tionary time, when he might have been gaining an experience in matters of religion, and a knowledge of the life of Christ, and the infinite sacrifice he made in man's behalf that he might free him from the fetters Satan had bound upon him, and enable him to glorify his name.

Christ paid a dear price for man's redemption. In the wilderness of temptation he suffered the keenest pangs of hunger; and while emaciated with fasting Satan was at hand with his manifold temptations to assail the Son of God, to take advantage of his weakness and overcome him, and thus thwart the plan of salvation. But Christ was steadfast. He overcame in behalf of the race, that he might rescue them from the degradation of the fall. Christ's experience is for our benefit. His example in overcoming appetite points out the way for those who would be his followers and finally sit with him on his throne.

Christ suffered hunger in the fullest sense. Mankind generally have all that is needful to sustain life. And yet, like our first parents, they will desire that which God would withhold because it is not best for them. Christ suffered hunger for necessary food, and resisted the temptation of Satan upon the point of appetite. Indulgence of intemperate appetite, creates in fallen man unnatural desires for the things which will eventually prove his ruin.

Man came from the hand of God perfect

in every faculty of mind and body, in perfect soundness, therefore in perfect health. It took more than two thousand years of indulgence of appetite and lustful passions to create such a state of things in the human organism as would lessen vital force. Through successive generations the tendency was more swiftly downward. Indulgence of appetite and passion combined, led to excess and violence; debauchery and abominations of every kind weakened the energies, and brought upon the race diseases of every type until the vigor and glory of the first generations passed away, and man began to show signs of decay in the third generation from Adam. Successive generations after the flood degenerated more rapidly.

All this weight of woe and accumulated suffering can be traced to the indulgence of appetite and passion. Luxurious living and the use of wine corrupt the blood, inflame the passions, and produce diseases of every kind. Parents leave maladies as a legacy to their children. As a rule, every intemperate man, who rears children, transmits his inclinations and evil tendencies to his offspring, and the evil does not end here; he gives to them disease from his own inflamed and corrupted blood. Licentiousness, disease and imbecility is transmitted as an inheritance of woe from father to son and from generation to generation, bringing anguish and suffering into the world, which is no less than a repetition of the fall of man.

The continual transgression of Nature's laws is a continual transgression of the law of God. The present weight of suffering and anguish which we see everywhere, the present deformity, decrepitude, disease and imbecility now flooding the world, make it, in comparison to what it might be, and what God designed it should be, a lazar-house, and the present generation are feeble in mental, moral and physical power.

All this accumulated misery from generation to generation is because fallen man will break the law of God. Sins of the greatest magnitude are committed through the indulgence of perverted appetite.

The effort made to create a taste for the disgusting, filthy poison, tobacco, leads to the desire for stronger stimulants, as liquor, which is taken, on one plea or another, for some imaginary infirmity, or to prevent some possible disease. Thus an unnatural appetite is created for these hurtful and exciting stimulants, which strengthens until the increase of intemperance in this generation is alarming! Beverage-loving, liquor-drinking men may be seen everywhere. Their intellect is enfeebled, the moral powers are weakened, the sensibilities are benumbed, and the claims of God and heaven are not realized, and eternal things are not appreciated. The Bible declares that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Tobacco and liquor stupefy and defile the user. But the evil does not stop here. He

transmits irritable temper, polluted blood, enfeebled intellect, and weak morals to his children; and renders himself accountable for all the evil results that his wrong and dissipated course of life has brought upon his family and the community.

The race is groaning under a weight of accumulated woe, because of the sins of former generations. And yet with scarcely a thought or care, men and women of the present generation indulge intemperance by surfeiting and drunkenness, and thereby leave as a legacy for the next generation disease, enfeebled intellects, and polluted morals.

Intemperance of any kind is the worst sort of selfishness. Those who truly fear God and keep his commandments look upon these things in the light of reason and religion. How can any man or any woman keep the law of God, which requires man to love his neighbor as himself, and indulge intemperate appetite, which benumbs the brain, weakens the intellect, and fills the body with disease? Intemperance inflames the passions, and gives loose rein to lust. Reason and conscience are blinded by the lower passions.

We inquire, what will the husband of sister P. do? Will he, like Esau, sell his birth-right for a mess of pottage? Will he sell his godlike manhood to indulge a perverted taste which only brings unhappiness and degradation? "The wages of sin is death." Has not this brother the moral courage to deny appetite? His habits have not been in

harmony with the truth, and with the testimonies of reproof which God has seen fit to give his people. His conscience was not altogether dead. He knew that he could not serve God and indulge his appetite, therefore yielded to the temptation of Satan which was too strong for him, in his own strength, to resist. He was overcome. He has assigned his want of interest in the truth to other causes than the true one, in order to cover his own weak purpose, and the real cause of his backsliding from God, which was uncontrolled appetite. This is where many stumble; they waver between denial of appetite and its indulgence, and finally are overcome by the enemy and yield the truth. Many who have backslidden from the truth assign as a reason for their course, that they do not have faith in the testimonies.

Investigation reveals the fact that they had some sinful habit that God through the testimonies condemned. The question with them is, will they yield their idol which God condemns, or will they continue in their wrong course of indulgence, and reject the light God has given them, reproving the very things in which they delight? The question to be settled with them is, shall I receive, as of God, the testimonies which reprove my sins, and deny myself, or shall I reject the testimonies *because* they reprove my sins?

In many cases the testimonies are fully received, the sin and indulgence broken off, and reformation at once commences in har-

mony with the light God has given. In other instances sinful indulgences are cherished, the testimonies are rejected, and many excuses which are untrue are offered to others as the reason for refusing to receive them. The *true* reason is not given. It is a lack of moral courage—a will, strengthened and controlled by the Spirit of God, to renounce hurtful habits.

It is not an easy matter to overcome established habits of taste and appetite for narcotics and stimulants. In the name of Christ alone can this great victory be gained. He overcame in behalf of man in the wilderness of temptation, in the long fast of nearly six weeks. He sympathizes with the weakness of man. His love for fallen man was so great that he made infinite sacrifice that he might reach him in his degradation, and through his divine power elevate him finally to his throne. But it rests with man whether Christ shall accomplish for him that which he is fully able to do.

Will man take hold of divine power, and with determination and perseverance resist Satan as Christ has given him example in his conflict with the foe in the wilderness of temptation? God cannot save man, against his will, from the power of Satan's artifices. Man must work with his human power, aided by the divine power of Christ, to resist and to conquer at any cost to himself. In short, man must overcome as Christ overcame. And then, through the victory it is his privi-