
Subject: THE NATURE AND INFLUENCE OF THE TESTIMONIES

Posted by [Mel_SDR](#) on Sat, 28 Mar 2020 11:51:11 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

THE NATURE AND INFLUENCE OF THE TESTIMONIES

As the end draws near and the work of giving the last warning to the world extends, it becomes more important for those who accept present truth to have a clear understanding of the nature and influence of the Testimonies, which God in His providence has linked with the work of the third angel's message from its very rise. In the following pages are given extracts from what I have written during the last forty years, relating to my own early experience in this special work, and also presenting what God has shown me concerning the nature and importance of the Testimonies, the manner in which they are given, and how they should be regarded.

"It was not long after the passing of the time in 1844 that my first vision was given me. I was visiting a dear sister in Christ, whose heart was knit with mine; five of us, all women, were kneeling quietly at the family altar. While we were praying, the power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before. I seemed to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher from the earth." At this time I had a view of the experience of the advent believers, the coming of Christ, and the reward to be given to the faithful.

"In a second vision, which soon followed the first, I was shown the trials through which I must pass, and that it was my duty to go and relate to others what God had revealed to me. It was shown me that my labors would meet with great opposition and that my heart would be rent with anguish, but that the grace of God would be sufficient to sustain me through all. The teaching of this vision troubled me exceedingly, for it pointed out my duty to go out among the people and present the truth."

"One great fear that oppressed me was that if I obeyed the call of duty and went out declaring myself to be one favored of the Most High with visions and revelations for the people, I might yield to sinful exaltation and be lifted above the station that was right for me to occupy, bring upon myself the displeasure of God, and lose my own soul. I had before me several cases such as I have here described, and my heart shrank from the trying ordeal.

"I now entreated that if I must go and relate what the Lord had shown me, I should be preserved from undue exaltation. Said the angel: 'Your prayers are heard and shall be answered. If this evil that you dread threatens you, the hand of God will be stretched out to save you; by affliction He will draw you to Himself and preserve your humility. Deliver the message faithfully. Endure unto the end, and you shall eat the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of life.'"

At this time there was fanaticism among some of those who had been believers in the first message. Serious errors in doctrine and practice were cherished, and some were ready to condemn all who would not accept their views. God revealed these errors to me in vision and sent me to His erring children to declare them; but in performing this duty I met with bitter opposition and reproach.

"It was a great cross for me to relate to the erring what had been shown me concerning them."

It caused me great distress to see others troubled or grieved. And when obliged to declare the messages I would often soften them down and make them appear as favorable for the individual as I could and then would go by myself and weep in agony of spirit. I looked upon those who had only their own souls to care for and thought if I were in their condition I would not murmur. It was hard to relate the plain, cutting testimonies given me of God. I anxiously watched the result, and if the persons reprov'd rose up against the reproof, and afterward opposed the truth, these queries would arise in my mind: Did I deliver the message just as I should? Could there not have been some way to save them? And then such distress pressed upon my soul that I often felt that death would be a welcome messenger, and the grave a sweet resting place.

"I did not realize the danger and sin of such a course until in vision I was taken into the presence of Jesus. He looked upon me with a frown and turned His face from me. It is not possible to describe the terror and agony I then felt. I fell upon my face before Him, but had no power to utter a word. Oh, how I longed to be covered and hid from that dreadful frown! Then could I realize, in some degree, what the feelings of the lost will be when they cry: 'Mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.'

"Presently an angel bade me rise, and the sight that met my eyes can hardly be described. Before me was a company whose hair and garments were torn, and whose countenances were the very picture of despair and horror. They came close to me and rubbed their garments upon mine. As I looked at my garments I saw that they were stained with blood. Again I fell like one dead at the feet of my accompanying angel. I could not plead one excuse and longed to be away from that holy place. The angel raised me to my feet and said: 'This is not your case now, but this scene has passed before you to let you know what your situation must be if you neglect to declare to others what the Lord has revealed to you.'" [VOL. 1, PP. 73, 74.] With this solemn warning before me I went out to speak to the people the words of reproof and instruction given me of God.

Personal Testimonies

The messages given me for different individuals I often wrote out for them, in many cases doing this at their urgent request. As my work extended, this became an important and taxing part of my labors. Before the publication of Testimony 15 many requests for written testimonies were sent me by those whom I had counseled or reprov'd; but I was in a state of great exhaustion from wearing labor, and I shrank from the task, especially since I knew that many of these persons were very unworthy, and there seemed little hope that the warnings given would work any decided change in them. At that time I was greatly encouraged by the following dream:

"A person brought to me a web of white cloth, and bade me cut it into garments for persons of all sizes and all descriptions of character and circumstances in life. I was told to cut them out and hang them up all ready to be made when called for. I had the impression that many for whom I was required to cut garments were unworthy. I inquired if that was the last piece of cloth I should have to cut and was told that it was not; that as soon as I had finished this one, there were others for me to take hold of. I felt discouraged at the amount of work before me and stated that I had been engaged in cutting garments for others for more than twenty years, and my labors had not been appreciated, neither did I see that my work had accomplished much good. I spoke to the person who brought the cloth to me, of one woman in particular, for whom he had told me to cut a

garment. I stated that she would not prize the garment and that it would be a loss of time and material to present it to her. She was very poor, of inferior intellect, and untidy in her habits, and would soon soil it.

"The person replied: 'Cut out the garments. That is your duty. The loss is not yours, but mine. God sees not as man sees. He lays out the work that He would have done, and you do not know which will prosper, this or that.' . . .

"I then held up my hands, calloused as they were with long use of the shears, and stated that I could but shrink at the thought of pursuing this kind of labor. The person again repeated:

"'Cut out the garments. Your release has not yet come.'

"With feelings of great weariness I arose to engage in the work. Before me lay new, polished shears, which I commenced using. At once my feelings of weariness and discouragement left me, the shears seemed to cut with hardly an effort on my part, and I cut out garment after garment with comparative ease." [VOL. 2, PP. 10-12 (FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1868).]

There are many dreams arising from the common things of life with which the Spirit of God has nothing to do. "There are also false dreams, as well as false visions, which are inspired by the spirit of Satan. But dreams from the Lord are classed in the word of God with visions and are as truly the fruits of the spirit of prophecy as visions. Such dreams, taking into the account the persons who have them, and the circumstances under which they are given, contain their own proofs of their genuineness." [VOL. 1, P. 569 (1867).]

Since the warning and instruction given in testimony for individual cases applied with equal force to many others who had not been specially pointed out in this manner, it seemed to be my duty to publish the personal testimonies for the benefit of the church. In Testimony 15, speaking of the necessity for doing this, I said: "I know of no better way to present my views of general dangers and errors, and the duty of all who love God and keep His commandments, than by giving these testimonies. Perhaps there is no more direct and forcible way of presenting what the Lord has shown me." [VOL. 2, P. 9 (1868).]

In a vision given me June 12, 1868, I was shown that which fully justified 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 so. If one is reproved for a special wrong, brethren and sisters should carefully examine themselves to see wherein they have failed and wherein they have been guilty of the same sin. 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. {5T 659.1}

"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 makes plain the wrongs of some that others

may thus be warned and fear and shun those errors. By self-examination they may find that they are doing the same things which God condemns in others. If they really desire to serve God, 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 the 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 sins that have been reprov'd in others, yet continue in the same unconsecrated course because they have not been specially named, they endanger their own souls, and will be led captive by Satan at his will." [VOL. 2, PP. 112, 113 (1868).]

"I was shown that in the wisdom of God the sins and errors of all would not be revealed. . . . All who are guilty are addressed in these individual testimonies, although their names may not be attached to the special testimony borne; and if individuals pass over and cover up their own sins because their names are not especially called, they will not be prospered of God. They cannot advance in the divine life, but will become darker and darker, until the light of heaven will be entirely withdrawn." [VOL. 2, P. 447 (1870).]

In a view given me about twenty years ago, "I was then directed to bring out general principles, in speaking and in writing, and at the same time specify the dangers, errors, and sins of some individuals, that all might be warned, reprov'd, and counseled. I saw that all should search their own hearts and lives closely to see if they had not made the same mistakes for which others were corrected and if the warnings given for others did not apply to their own cases. If so, they should feel that the counsel and reproofs were given especially for them and should make as practical an application of them as though they were especially addressed to themselves. . . . God designs to test the faith of all who claim to be followers of Christ. He will test the sincerity of the prayers of all those who claim to earnestly desire to know their duty. He will make duty plain. He will give all an ample opportunity to develop what is in their hearts." [VOL. 2, P. 687 (1871).]

Object of the "Testimonies"

"In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue." [VOL. 4, PP. 147, 148 (1876).]

"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. . . . Thus has the Spirit of God pronounced warnings and judgments, withholding not, however, the sweet promise of mercy. . . .

"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 to save them. They have only to follow His counsel and do His will, to inherit eternal life. God sets the sins of His erring people before them, that they may behold them in all their enormity under the light of divine truth. It is then their duty to renounce them forever." "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." [VOL. 4, PP. 14, 15 (1876).]

"Warnings and reproofs are not given to the erring among Seventh-day Adventists because their lives are more blameworthy than are the lives of professed Christians of the nominal churches, nor because their example of their acts are worse than those of the Adventists who will not yield obedience to the claims of God's law, but because they have great light, and have by their profession taken their position as God's special, chosen people, having the law of God written in their hearts. They signify their loyalty to the God of heaven by yielding obedience to the laws of His government. They are God's representatives upon the earth. Any sin in them separates them from God and, in a special manner, dishonors His name by giving the enemies of His holy law occasion to reproach His cause and His people, whom He has called 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people,' that they should show forth the praises of Him that hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. . . .

"The Lord reproveth and corrects the people who profess to keep His law. He points out their sins and lays open their iniquity because He wishes to separate all sin and wickedness from them, that they may perfect holiness in His fear. . . . God rebukes, reproveth, and corrects them, that they may be refined, sanctified, elevated, and finally exalted to His own throne." [VOL. 2, PP. 452, 453 (1870).]

"I have been looking over the Testimonies given for Sabbathkeepers and I am astonished at the mercy of God and His care for His people in giving them so many warnings, pointing out their dangers, and presenting before them the exalted position which He would have them occupy. If they would keep themselves in His love and separate from the world, He would cause His special blessings to rest upon them and His light to shine round about them. Their influence for good might be felt in every branch of the work and in every part of the gospel field. But if they fail to meet the mind of God, if they continue to have so little sense of the exalted character of the work as they have had in the past, their influence and example will prove a terrible curse. They will do harm and only harm. The blood of precious souls will be found upon their garments.

"Testimonies of warning have been repeated. I inquire: Who have heeded them? Who have been zealous in repenting of their sins and idolatry, and have been earnestly pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? . . . I have waited anxiously, hoping that God would put His Spirit upon some and use them as instruments of righteousness to awaken and set in order His church. I have almost despaired as I have seen, year after year, a greater departure from that simplicity which God has shown me should characterize the life of His followers. There has been less and less interest in, and devotion to, the cause of God. I ask: Wherein have those who profess confidence in the Testimonies sought to live according to the light given in them? Wherein have they regarded the warnings given? Wherein have they heeded the instructions they have received?" [VOL. 2, PP. 483, 484 (1870).]

Not to Take the Place of the Bible

That the Testimonies were not given to take the place of the Bible, the following extract from a testimony published in 1876 will show:

"Brother J would confuse the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the Testimonies is an addition to the word of God, but in this he presents the matter in a false light. God has seen fit in this manner to bring the minds of His people to His word, to give them a clearer understanding of it." [VOL. 4, P. 246 (1876).] The word of God is sufficient to

enlighten the most beclouded mind and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, bringing them back to the word that they have neglected to follow." [VOL. 2, P. 455 (1870).] The word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles." [VOL. 4, P. 323 (1879).]

April 30, 1871, this matter was presented to me in a dream. I seemed to be attending an important meeting, at which a large company were assembled. "Many were bowed before God in earnest prayer, and they seemed to be burdened. They were importuning the Lord for special light. A few seemed to be in agony of spirit; their feelings were intense; with tears they were crying aloud for help and light. Our most prominent brethren were engaged in this most impressive scene. Brother A was prostrated upon the floor, apparently in deep distress. His wife was sitting among a company of indifferent scorers. She looked as though she desired all to understand that she scorned those who were thus humiliating themselves.

"I dreamed that the Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and I arose amid cries and prayers, and said: The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. I feel urged to say to you that you must commence to work individually for yourselves. You are looking to God and desiring Him to do the work for you which He has left for you to do. If you will do the work for yourselves which you know that you ought to do, then God will help you when you need help. You have left undone the very things which God has left for you to do. You have been calling upon God to do your work. Had you followed the light which He has given you, then He would cause more light to shine upon you; but while you neglect the counsels, warnings, and reproofs that have been given, how can you expect God to give you more light and blessings to neglect and despise? God is not as man; He will not be trifled with.

"I took the precious Bible and surrounded it with the several Testimonies for the Church, given for the people of God. Here, said I, the cases of nearly all are met. The sins they are to shun are pointed out. The counsel that they desire can be found here, given for other cases situated similarly to themselves. God has been pleased to give you line upon line and precept upon precept. But there are not many of you that really know what is contained in the Testimonies. You are not familiar with the Scriptures. If you had made God's word your study, with a desire to reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the Testimonies. It is because you have neglected to acquaint yourselves with God's inspired Book that He has sought to reach you by simple, direct testimonies, calling your attention to the words of inspiration which you had neglected to obey, and urging you to fashion your lives in accordance with its pure and elevated teachings.

"The Lord designs to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the importance of the truth of His word. The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man's duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God's word, yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse.

"Pride, self-love, selfishness, hatred, envy, and jealousy have beclouded the perceptive powers, and the truth, which would make you wise unto salvation, has lost its power to charm and control the mind. The very essential principles of godliness are not understood because there is not a hungering and thirsting for Bible knowledge, purity of heart, and holiness of life. The Testimonies are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all.

"I said further: As the word of God is walled in with these books and pamphlets, so has God walled you in with reproofs, counsel, warnings, and encouragements. Here you are crying before God, in the anguish of your souls, for more light. I am authorized from God to tell you that not another ray of light through the Testimonies will shine upon your pathway until you make a practical use of the light already given. The Lord has walled you about with light; but you have not appreciated the light; you have trampled upon it. While some have despised the light, others have neglected it or followed it but indifferently. A few have set their hearts to obey the light which God has been pleased give them.

"Some that have received special warnings through testimony have forgotten in a few weeks the reproof given. The testimonies to some have been several times repeated, but they have not thought them of sufficient importance to be carefully heeded. They have been to them like idle tales. Had they regarded the light given they would have avoided losses and trials which they think are hard and severe. They have only themselves to censure. They have placed upon their own necks a yoke which they find grievous to be borne. It is not the yoke which Christ has bound upon them. God's care and love were exercised in their behalf; but their selfish, evil, unbelieving souls could not discern His goodness and mercy. They rush on in their own wisdom, until, overwhelmed with trials and confused with perplexity, they are ensnared by Satan. When you gather up the rays of light which God has given in the past, then will He give an increase of light.

"I referred them to ancient Israel. God gave them His law, but they would not obey it. He then gave the ceremonies and ordinances, that, in the performance of these, God might be kept in remembrance. They were so prone to forget Him and His claims upon them that it was necessary to keep their minds stirred up to realize their obligations to obey and honor their Creator. Had they been obedient and loved to keep God's commandments, the multitude of ceremonies and ordinances would not have been required.

"If the people who now profess to be God's peculiar treasure would obey His requirements, as specified in His word, special testimonies would not be given to awaken them to their duty and impress upon them their sinfulness and their fearful danger in neglecting to obey the word of God. Consciences have been blunted because light has been set aside, neglected, and despised. . . .

"One stood by my side and said: 'God has raised you up and has given you words to speak to the people and to reach hearts as He has given to no other one. He has shaped your testimonies to meet cases that are in need of help. You must be unmoved by scorn, derision, reproach, and censure. In order to be God's special instrument you should lean to no one, but hang upon Him alone and, like the clinging vine, let your tendrils entwine about Him. He will make you a means through which to communicate His light to the people. You must daily gather strength from God in order to be fortified, that your surroundings may not dim or eclipse the light that He has permitted to shine upon His people through you. It is Satan's special object to prevent this light from coming

to the people of God, who so greatly need it amid the perils of these last days.

"Your success is in your simplicity. As soon as you depart from this and fashion your testimony to meet the minds of any, your power is gone. Almost everything in this age is glossed and unreal. The world abounds in testimonies given to please and charm for the moment and to exalt self. Your testimony is of a different character. It is to come down to the minutiae of life, keeping the feeble faith from dying and pressing home upon believers the necessity of shining as lights in the world.

"God has given you your testimony, to set before the backslider and the sinner his true condition and the immense loss he is sustaining by continuing a life of sin. God has impressed this upon you by opening it before your vision as He has to no other one now living, and according to the light He has given you will He hold you responsible. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." "Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sin."" [VOL. 2, PP. 604-608 (1871).]

Wrong Use of the "Testimonies"

Some who believe the Testimonies have erred by urging them unduly upon others. In volume 1, number 8, is a testimony bearing upon this point. There were some in-----who were God's children, and yet doubted the visions. Others had no opposition, yet dared not take a decided stand in regard to them. Some were skeptical, and they had sufficient cause to make them so. The false visions and fanatical exercises, and the wretched fruits following, had an influence upon the cause in-----to make minds jealous of everything bearing the name of visions. All these things should have been taken into consideration and wisdom exercised. There should be no trial or labor with those who have never seen the individual having visions, and who have had no personal knowledge of the influence of the visions. Such should not be deprived of the benefits and privileges of the church if their Christian course is otherwise correct. . . .

"Some, I was shown, could receive the published visions, judging of the tree by its fruits. Others are like doubting Thomas; they cannot believe the published Testimonies, nor receive evidence through the testimony of others, but must see and have the evidence for themselves. Such must not be set aside, but long patience and brotherly love should be exercised toward them until they find their position and become established for or against. If they fight against the visions, of which they have no knowledge; if they carry their opposition so far as to oppose that in which they have had no experience, . . . the church may know that they are not right." [VOL. 1, P. 328 (1862).]

Some of our brethren had had long experience in the truth and for years had been acquainted with me and my work. They had proved the truthfulness of the Testimonies and had asserted their belief in them. They had felt the powerful influence of the Spirit of God resting upon them to witness to their truthfulness. I was shown that if such, when reproved through the Testimonies, should rise up against them and work secretly to lessen their influence, they should be faithfully dealt with; for their course would endanger those who were lacking in experience. [VOL. 1, 382.]

The first number of the Testimonies ever published contains a warning against the injudicious use of the light which is thus given to God's people. [VOL. 1, 119.] I stated that some had taken an unwise course; when they had talked their faith to unbelievers, and the proof had been asked

for, they had read from my writings instead of going to the Bible for proof. It was shown me that this course was inconsistent and would prejudice unbelievers against the truth. The Testimonies can have no weight with those who know nothing of their spirit. They should not be referred to in such cases.

Other warnings concerning the use of the Testimonies have been given from time to time, as follows:

"Some of the preachers are far behind. They profess to believe the testimony borne, and some do harm by making them an iron rule for those who have had no experience in reference to them, but they fail to carry them out themselves. They have had repeated testimonies which they have utterly disregarded. The course of such is not consistent." [VOL. 1, P. 369 (1863).]

"I saw that many have taken advantage of what God has shown in regard to the sins and wrongs of others. They have taken the extreme meaning of what has been shown in vision, and then have pressed it until it has a tendency to weaken the faith of many in what God has shown, and also to discourage and dishearten the church." [VOL. 1, P. 166 (1857).]

The enemy will seize upon everything which he can use to destroy souls. "Testimonies have been borne in favor of individuals occupying important positions. They commence well to lift the burdens and act their part in connection with the work of God. But Satan pursues them with his temptations, and they are finally overcome. As others look upon their wrong course, Satan suggests to their minds that there must be a mistake in the testimonies given for these persons, else these men would not have proved themselves unworthy to bear a part in the work of God."

Thus doubts arise in regard to the light that God has given. "That which can be said of men under certain circumstances cannot be said of them under other circumstances. Men are weak in moral power and so supremely selfish, so self-sufficient, and so easily puffed up with vain conceit, that God cannot work in connection with them, and they are left to move like blind men and to manifest so great weakness and folly that many are astonished that such individuals should ever have been accepted and acknowledged as worthy of having any connection with God's work. This is just what Satan designed. This was his object from the time he first specially tempted them to reproach the cause of God and to cast reflections upon the Testimonies. Had they remained where their influence would not have been specially felt upon the cause of God, Satan would not have beset them so fiercely, for he could not have accomplished his purpose by using them as his instruments to do a special work." [VOL. 3, PP. 469, 470 (1875).]

To be Judged by their Fruits

Let the Testimonies be judged by their fruits. What is the spirit of their teaching? What has been the result of their influence? "All who desire to do so can acquaint themselves with the fruits of these visions. For seventeen years God has seen fit to let them survive and strengthen against the opposition of Satan's forces and the influence of human agencies that have aided Satan in his work." [VOL. 1, P. 330 (1862).]

"God is either teaching His church, reproving their wrongs and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work . . . bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter. The

Testimonies are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil." [VOL. 4, P. 230.]

As the Lord has manifested Himself through the spirit of prophecy, past, present, and future have passed before me. I have been shown faces that I had never seen, and years afterward I knew them when I saw them. I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind; and I have written, at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent and, arriving at a crisis, have saved great disaster to the cause of God. This has been my work for many years. A power has impelled me to reprove and rebuke wrongs that I had not thought of. Is this work of the last thirty-six years from above or from beneath?" [VOL. 5, PP. 64, 65 (1882).]

Christ warned His disciples: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Here is a test, and all can apply it if they will. Those who really desire to know the truth will find sufficient evidence for belief.

Doubting the "Testimonies"

"It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the Testimonies." "Satan knows how to make his attacks. He works upon minds to excite jealousy and dissatisfaction toward those at the head of the work. The gifts are next questioned; then, of course, they have but little weight, and instruction given through vision is disregarded." "Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the Testimonies, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction." [VOL. 4, P. 211; VOL. 1, P. 236] "By giving place to doubts and unbelief in regard to the work of God, and by cherishing feelings of distrust and cruel jealousies, they are preparing themselves for complete deception. They rise up with bitter feelings against the ones who dare to speak of their errors and reprove their sins." [VOL. 3, P. 328.]

A testimony for certain young men, first published in 1880, speaks of this point as follows: "A prevailing skepticism is continually increasing in reference to the Testimonies of the Spirit of God; and these youth encourage questionings and doubts instead of removing them, because they are ignorant of the spirit and power and force of the Testimonies." [VOL. 4, P. 437.]

I was shown that many had so little spirituality that they did not understand the value of the Testimonies or their real object. They talked flippantly of the Testimonies given by God for the benefit of His people, and passed judgment upon them, giving their opinion and criticizing this and that, when they would better have placed their hands upon their lips, and prostrated themselves in the dust; for they could not appreciate the spirit of the Testimonies, because they knew so little of the Spirit of God. [VOL. 4, P. 443.]

"There are some in ----- who have never fully submitted to reproof. They have taken a course of their own choosing. They have ever, to a greater or less degree, exerted an influence against

those who have stood up to defend the right and reprove the wrong. The influence of these persons upon individuals who come here and who are brought in contact with them . . . is very bad. They fill the minds of these newcomers with questionings and doubts in regard to the Testimonies of the Spirit of God. They put false constructions upon the Testimonies; and instead of leading persons to become consecrated to God and to listen to the voice of the church, they teach them to be independent and not to mind the opinions and judgment of others. The influence of this class has been secretly at work. Some are unconscious of the harm they are doing; but, unconsecrated, proud, and rebellious themselves, they lead others in the wrong track. A poisonous atmosphere is inhaled from these unconsecrated ones. The blood of souls is in the garments of such, and Christ will say to them in the day of final settlement: 'Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.' Astonished they will be, but their professedly Christian lives were a deception, a fraud." [VOL. 4, PP. 513, 514 (1880).]

"Some express their views that the testimony of Sister White cannot be reliable. This is all that many unconsecrated ones want. The testimonies of reproof have checked their vanity and pride; but if they dared, they would go to almost any length in fashion and pride. God will give all such an opportunity to prove themselves and to develop their true characters." [VOL. 3, P. 313 (1873).]

"I saw that the reason why visions had not been more frequent of late is, they have not been appreciated by the church. The church have nearly lost their spirituality and faith, and the reproofs and warnings have had but little effect upon them. Many of those who have professed faith in them have not heeded them." [VOL. 1, P. 119 (1855).]

"If you lose confidence in the Testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth. I have been fearful that many would take a questioning, doubting position, and in my distress for your souls I would warn you. How many will heed the warning? As you now hold the Testimonies, should one be given crossing your track, correcting your errors, would you feel at perfect liberty to accept or reject any part or the whole? That which you will be least inclined to receive is the very part most needed." [VOL. 5, P. 98 (1882).]

"My brethren, beware of the evil heart of unbelief. The word of God is plain and close in its restrictions; it interferes with your selfish indulgence; therefore you do not obey it. The Testimonies of His Spirit call your attention to the Scriptures, point out your defects of character, and rebuke your sins; therefore you do not heed them. And to justify your carnal, ease-loving course you begin to doubt whether the Testimonies are from God. If you would obey their teachings you would be assured of their divine origin. Remember, your unbelief does not affect their truthfulness. If they are from God they will stand." [VOL. 5, P. 234.]

"I have been shown that unbelief in the testimonies of warning, encouragement, and reproof is shutting away the light from God's people. Unbelief is closing their eyes so that they are ignorant of their true condition." "They think the testimony of the Spirit of God in reproof is uncalled for or that it does not mean them. Such are in the greatest need of the grace of God and spiritual discernment, that they may discover their deficiency in spiritual knowledge." [VOL. 3, PP. 255, 253, 254 (1873).]

"Many who have backslidden from the truth assign as a reason for their course that they do not have faith in the Testimonies. . . . The question now 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 deny myself and receive as of God the Testimonies which reprove my sins, 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 harmony 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." [VOL. 4, P. 32 (1876).]

"Satan has ability to suggest doubts and to devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue, a mark of intelligence in them, to be unbelieving and to question and quibble. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit, and all should decide from the weight of evidence." [VOL. 3, P. 255 (1873).] "God gives sufficient evidence for the candid mind to believe; but he who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things which he cannot make plain to his finite understanding will be left in the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and questioning doubts, and will make shipwreck of faith." [VOL. 4, PP. 232, 233 (1876).]

Duty to Give Reproof

"If wrongs are apparent among His people, and if the servants of God pass on indifferent to them, they virtually sustain and justify the sinner, and are alike guilty and will just as surely receive the displeasure of God; for they will be made responsible for the sins of the guilty. In vision I have been pointed to many instances where the displeasure of God has been incurred by a neglect on the part of His servants to deal with the wrongs and sins existing among them. Those who have excused these wrongs have been thought by the people to be very amiable and lovely in disposition, simply because they shunned to discharge a plain, Scriptural duty. The task was not agreeable to their feelings; therefore they avoided it." [VOL. 3, P. 266 (1873).]

The searching testimony of the Spirit of God "will separate those from Israel who have ever been at war with the means that God has ordained to keep corruptions out of the church. Wrongs must be called wrongs. Grievous sins must be called by their right name. All of God's people should come nearer to Him. . . . Then will they see sin in the true light and will realize how offensive it is in the sight of God." [VOL. 3, P. 324 (1873).] "The plain, straight testimony must live in the church, or the curse of God will rest upon His people as surely as it did upon ancient Israel because of their sins." [VOL. 3, P. 269 (1873).]

"Never was there greater need of faithful warnings and reproofs . . . than at this very time. Satan has come down with great power, knowing that his time is short. He is flooding the world with pleasing fables, and the people of God love to have smooth things spoken to them. . . . I was shown that God's people must make more firm, determined efforts to press back the incoming darkness. The close work of the Spirit of God is needed now as never before." [VOL. 3, PP. 327, 328 (1873).]

When in my youth I accepted the work given me by God, I received with it a promise that I

should have special aid from the mighty Helper. There was given me also the solemn charge to deliver faithfully the Lord's message, making no difference for friends or foes. There is no respect of persons with God. Whether dealing with rich or poor, high or low, the cultured or the ignorant, there must be no betrayal of sacred trusts with the Lord's messenger.

"Let none entertain the thought that I regret or take back any plain testimony I have borne to individuals or to the people. If I have erred anywhere, it is in not rebuking sin more decidedly and firmly. Some of the brethren have taken the responsibility of criticizing my work and proposing an easier way to correct wrongs. To these persons I would say: I take God's way and not yours. What I have said or written in testimony or reproof has not been too plainly expressed. . . .

"Those who would in any way lessen the force of the sharp reproofs which God has given me to speak, must meet their work at the judgment. . . . To those who have taken the responsibility to reprove me and, in their finite judgment, to propose a way which appears wiser to them I repeat: I do not accept your efforts. Leave me with God, and let Him teach me. I will take the words from the Lord and speak them to the people. I do not expect that all will accept the reproof and reform their lives, but I must discharge my duty all the same. I will walk in humility before God, doing my work for time and for eternity.

"God has not given my brethren the work that He has given me. It has been urged that my manner of giving reproof in public has led others to be sharp and critical and severe. If so, they must settle that matter with the Lord. If others take a responsibility which God has not laid upon them; if they disregard the instructions He has given them again and again through the humble instrument of His choice, to be kind, patient, and forbearing, they alone must answer for the results. With a sorrow-burdened heart, I have performed my unpleasant duty to my dearest friends, not daring to please myself by withholding reproof, even from my husband; and I shall not be less faithful in warning others, whether they will hear or forbear. When I am speaking to the people I say much that I have not premeditated. The Spirit of the Lord frequently comes upon me. I seem to be carried out of, and away from, myself; the life and character of different persons are clearly presented before my mind. I see their errors and dangers, and feel compelled to speak of what is thus brought before me. I dare not resist the Spirit of God." [VOL. 5, PP. 19, 20 (1882).]

Rejection of Reproof

"Many now despise the faithful reproof given of God in testimony. I have been shown that some in these days have even gone so far as to burn the written words of rebuke and warning, as did the wicked king of Israel. But opposition to God's threatenings will not hinder their execution. To defy the words of the Lord, spoken through His chosen instruments, will only provoke His anger and eventually bring certain ruin upon the offender. Indignation often kindles in the heart of the sinner against the agent whom God chooses to deliver His reproofs. It has ever been thus, and the same spirit exists today that persecuted and imprisoned Jeremiah for obeying the word of the Lord." [VOL. 4, P. 180 (1876).]

From the beginning of my work, as I have been called to bear a plain, pointed testimony, to reprove wrongs, and to spare not, there have been those who have stood in opposition to my testimony and have followed after to speak smooth things, to daub with untempered mortar, and to destroy the influence of my labors. The Lord would move upon me to bear reproof, and then individuals would step in between me and the people to make my testimony of no effect.

"In almost every case where reproof is necessary, there will be some who entirely overlook the fact that the Spirit of the Lord has been grieved and His cause reproached. These will pity those who deserved reproof, because personal feelings have been hurt. All this unsanctified sympathy places the sympathizers where they are sharers in the guilt of the one reproved. In nine cases out of ten if the one reproved had been left under a sense of his wrongs, he might have been helped to see them and thereby have been reformed. But meddling, unsanctified sympathizers place altogether a wrong construction upon the motives of the reprover and the nature of the reproof given, and by sympathizing with the one reproved lead him to feel that he has been really abused; and his feelings rise up in rebellion against the one who has only done his duty. Those who faithfully discharge their unpleasant duties under a sense of their accountability to God will receive His blessing." [VOL. 3, P. 359 (1875).]

"There are some in these last days who will cry: 'Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.' But this is not my work. God has set me as a reprover of His people; and just so surely as He has laid upon me the heavy burden, He will make those to whom this message is given responsible for the manner in which they treat it. God will not be trifled with, and those who despise His work will receive according to their deeds. I have not chosen this unpleasant labor for myself. It is not a work which will bring to me the favor or praise of men. It is a work which but few will appreciate. But those who seek to make my labor doubly hard by their misrepresentations, jealous suspicions, and unbelief, thus creating prejudice in the minds of others against the Testimonies God has given me, and limiting my work, have the matter to settle with God, while I shall go forward as Providence and my brethren may open the way before me. In the name and strength of my Redeemer I shall do what I can. . . . My duty is not to please myself, but to do the will of my heavenly Father, who has given me my work." [VOL. 4, PP. 231, 232 (1876).]

If God has given me a message to bear to His people, those who would hinder me in the work and lessen the faith of the people in its truth are not fighting against the instrument, but against God. "It is not the instrument whom you slight and insult, but God, who has spoken to you in these warnings and reproofs." "It is hardly possible for men to offer a greater insult to God than to despise and reject the instrumentalities that He has appointed to lead them." [VOL. 5, P. 235; VOL. 3, P. 355.]

Neglect of the "Testimonies"

It is not alone those who openly reject the Testimonies, or who cherish doubt concerning them, that are on dangerous ground. To disregard light is to reject it.

"Some of you in words acknowledge reproof, but you do not in heart accept it. You go on the same as before, only being less susceptible to the influence of the Spirit of God, becoming more and more blinded, having less wisdom, less self-control, less moral power, and less zeal and relish for religious exercises; and, unless converted, you will finally yield your hold upon God entirely. You have not made decided changes in your life when reproof has come, because you have not seen and realized your defects of character and the great contrast between your life and the life of Christ." "What do your prayers amount to while you regard iniquity in your hearts? Unless you make a thorough change, you will, not far hence, become weary of reproof, as did the children of Israel; and, like them, you will apostatize from God." [VOL. 4, P. 332 (1879).]

"Many are going directly contrary to the light which God has given to His people, because they do not read the books which contain the light and knowledge in cautions, reproofs, and warnings. The cares of the world, the love of fashion, and the lack of religion have turned the attention from the light God has so graciously given, while books and periodicals containing error are traveling all over the country. Skepticism and infidelity are increasing everywhere. Light so precious, coming from the throne of God, is hid under a bushel. God will make His people responsible for this neglect. An account must be rendered to Him for every ray of light He has let shine upon our pathway, whether it has been improved to our advancement in divine things or rejected because it was more agreeable to follow inclination." [VOL. 4, P. 391 (1880).]

"The volumes of Spirit of Prophecy, [THE GREAT CONTROVERSY] and also the Testimonies, should be introduced into every Sabbathkeeping family, and the brethren should know their value and be urged to read them. It was not the wisest plan to place these books at a low figure and have only one set in a church. They should be in the library of every family and be read again and again. Let them be kept where they can be read by many." [VOL. 4, P. 390 (1880).]

Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth hardens when it does not save. The rejection of light leaves men captives, bound about by chains of darkness and unbelief. "The soul that refuses to listen to the invitations of mercy from day to day can soon listen to the most urgent appeals without an emotion stirring his soul. As laborers with God we need more fervent piety and less self-exaltation. The more self is exalted, the more will faith in the Testimonies of the Spirit of God be lessened. . . . Those who trust wholly in themselves will see less and less of God in the Testimonies of His Spirit." [VOL. 5, P. 134 (1882).]

How to Receive Reproof

"Those who are reprov'd by the Spirit of God should not rise up against the humble instrument. It is God, and not an erring mortal, who has spoken to save them from ruin." [VOL. 3, P. 257 (1873).] It is not pleasing to human nature to receive reproof, nor is it possible for the heart of man, unenlightened by the Spirit of God, to realize the necessity of reproof or the blessing it is designed to bring. As man yields to temptation, and indulges in sin, his mind becomes darkened. The moral sense is perverted. The warnings of conscience are disregarded, and its voice is less clearly heard. He gradually loses the power to distinguish between right and wrong, until he has no true sense or his standing before God. He may observe the forms of religion and zealously maintain its doctrines, while destitute of its spirit. His condition is that described by the True Witness: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." When the Spirit of God, by message of reproof, declares this to be his condition, he cannot see that the message is true. Is he therefore to reject the warning? No. God has given sufficient evidence, so that all who desire to do so may satisfy themselves as to the character of the Testimonies; and, having acknowledged them to be from God, it is their duty to accept reproof, even though they do not themselves see the sinfulness of their course. If they fully realized their condition, what would be the need of reproof? Because they know it not, God mercifully sets it before them, so that they may repent and reform before it shall be too late. "Those who despise the warning will be left in blindness to become self-deceived; but those who heed it, and zealously go about the work of separating their sins from them in order to have the needed graces, will be opening the door of their hearts that the dear Saviour may come in and dwell with them." [VOL. 3, P. 257 (1873).] Those who are most closely connected with God are the ones who know His voice when He

speaks to them. Those who are spiritual discern spiritual things. Such will feel grateful that the Lord has pointed out their errors." [VOL. 5, P. 134.]

"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.'" [VOL. 4, PP. 14, 15 (1876).]

"If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye . . . not sons." Our Lord has said: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Though bitter the discipline, it is appointed by a Father's tender love, "that we might be partakers of His holiness."

An Unwarranted Distinction

Some have taken the position that the warnings, cautions, and reproofs given by the Lord through His servant, unless they come through special vision for each individual case, should have no more weight than counsels and warnings from other sources. In some cases it has been represented that in giving a testimony for churches or individuals I have been influenced to write as I did by letters received from members of the church. There have been those who claimed that testimonies purporting to be given by the Spirit of God were merely the expression of my own judgment, based upon information gathered from human sources. This statement is utterly false. If, however, in response to some question, statement, or appeal from churches or individuals, a testimony is written presenting the light which God has given concerning them, the fact that it has been called forth in this manner in nowise detracts from its validity or importance. I quote from Testimony 31 a few paragraphs bearing directly upon this point:

"How was it with the apostle Paul? The news he received through the household of Chloe concerning the condition of the church at Corinth was what caused him to write his first epistle to that church. Private letters had come to him stating the facts as they existed, and in his answer he laid down general principles which if heeded would correct the existing evils. With great tenderness and wisdom he exhorts them to all speak the same things, that there be no divisions among them.

"Paul was an inspired apostle, yet the Lord did not reveal to him at all times just the condition of His people. Those who were interested in the prosperity of the church, and saw evils creeping in, presented the matter before him, and from the light which he had previously received he was prepared to judge of the true character of these developments. Because the Lord had not given him a new revelation for that special time, those who were really seeking light did not cast his message aside as only a common letter. No, indeed. The Lord had shown him the difficulties and dangers which would arise in the churches, that when they should develop, he might know just how to treat them.

"He was set for the defense of the church. He was to watch for souls as one that must render account to God, and should he not take notice of the reports concerning their state of anarchy and division? Most assuredly; and the reproof he sent them was written just as much under the

inspiration of the Spirit of God as were any of his epistles. But when these reproofs came, some would not be corrected. They took the position that God had not spoken to them through Paul, that he had merely given them his opinion as a man, and they regarded their own judgment as good as that of Paul. So it is with many among our people who have drifted away from the old landmarks and who have followed their own understanding." [VOL. 5, PP. 65, 66 (1882).]

When this position is taken by our people, then the special warnings and counsels of God through the Spirit of prophecy can have no influence with them to work a reformation in life and character. The Lord does not give a vision to meet each emergency which may arise in the different attitudes of His people in the development of His work. But He has shown me that it has been His way of dealing with His church in past ages, to impress the minds of His chosen servants with the needs and dangers of His cause and of individuals, and to lay upon them the burden of counsel and warning.

So in many cases God has given me light in regard to peculiar defects of character in members of the church and the dangers to the individual and the cause if these defects are not removed. Under certain circumstances wrong tendencies are liable to become strongly developed and confirmed, and to work injury to the cause of God and ruin to the individual. Sometimes, when special dangers threaten the cause of God or particular individuals, a communication comes to me from the Lord, either in a dream or a vision of the night, and these cases are brought vividly to my mind. I hear a voice saying to me: "Arise and write; these souls are in peril." I obey the movings of the Spirit of God, and my pen traces their true condition. As I travel, and stand before the people in different places, the Spirit of the Lord brings before me clearly the cases I have been shown, reviving the matter previously given me.

For the last forty-five years the Lord has been revealing to me the needs of His cause and the cases of individuals in every phase of experience, showing where and how they have failed to perfect Christian character. The history of hundreds of cases has been presented to me, and that which God approves, and that which He condemns, has been plainly set before me. God has shown me that a certain course, if followed, or certain traits of character, if indulged, would produce certain results. He has thus been training and disciplining me in order that I might see the dangers which threaten souls, and instruct and warn His people, line upon line, precept upon precept, that they might not be ignorant of Satan's devices, and might escape his snares.

The work which the Lord has laid out before me especially is to urge young and old, learned and unlearned, to search the Scriptures for themselves; to impress upon all that the study of God's word will expand the mind and strengthen every faculty, fitting the intellect to wrestle with problems of truth, deep and far-reaching; to assure all that the clear knowledge of the Bible outdoes all other knowledge in making man what God designed he should be. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." With the light communicated through the study of His word, with the special knowledge given of individual cases among His people under all circumstances and in every phase of experience, can I now be in the same ignorance, the same mental uncertainty and spiritual blindness, as at the beginning of this experience? Will my brethren say that Sister White has been so dull a scholar that her judgment in this direction is no better than before she entered Christ's school, to be trained and disciplined for a special work? Am I no more intelligent in regard to the duties and perils of God's people than are those before whom these things have never been presented? I would not dishonor my Maker by admitting that all this light, all the display of His mighty power in my work and experience, has

been valueless, that it has not educated my judgment or better fitted me for His work.

When I see men and women taking the very course, or cherishing the very traits, which have imperiled other souls and wounded the cause of God, and which the Lord has reproved again and again, how can I but be alarmed? When I see timid souls, burdened with a sense of their imperfections, yet conscientiously striving to do what God has said is right, and know that the Lord looks down and smiles on their faithful efforts, shall I not speak a word of encouragement to these poor trembling hearts? Shall I hold my peace because each individual case has not been pointed out to me in direct vision?

"But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

In a recent dream I was brought before an assembly of people, some of whom were making efforts to remove the impression of a most solemn testimony of warning that I had given them. They said: "We believe Sister White's testimonies; but when she tells us things that she has not directly seen in vision in the particular case under consideration, her words are of no more account to us than the words of any other person." The Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and I arose and rebuked them in the name of the Lord. I repeated in substance that which I have presented above in regard to the watchman. This, I said, is appropriate to your case and to mine.

Now if those to whom these solemn warnings are addressed say, "It is only Sister White's individual opinion, I shall still follow my own judgment," and if they continue to do the very things they were warned not to do, they show that they despise the counsel of God, and the result is just what the Spirit of God has shown me it would be--injury to the cause of God and ruin to themselves. Some who wish to strengthen their own position will bring forward from the Testimonies statements which they think will support their views, and will put the strongest possible construction upon them; but that which questions their course of action, or which does not coincide with their views, they pronounce Sister White's opinion, denying its heavenly origin and placing it on a level with their own judgment.

If you, my brethren, who have been acquainted with me and my work for many years, take the position that my counsel is of no more value than the counsel of those who have not been specially educated for this work, then do not ask me to unite with you in labor; for while you occupy this position, you will inevitably counteract the influence of my work. If you feel just as safe in following your own impulses as in following the light given by God's delegated servant, the peril is your own; you will be condemned because you rejected the light which heaven had sent you.

While at -----, the Lord came to me in the night season and spoke precious words of encouragement concerning my work, repeating the same message that had been given me several times before. With regard to those who have turned from the light sent them, He said: "In

slighting and rejecting the testimony that I have given you to bear, it is not you, but Me, your Lord, that they have slighted."

If those who are headstrong and full of self-esteem go on unchecked in their course, what will be the condition of things in the church? How are the wrongs to be corrected which exist in these strong-willed, ambitious ones? By what means will God reach them? How will He set His church in order? Differences of opinion are constantly arising, and apostasies often afflict the church. When controversy or division comes in, all parties claim to be right and to have a conscience void of offense; and they will not be instructed by those who have long borne the burden of the work and who, they have reason to know, have been guided by the Lord. Light has been sent to dispel their darkness, but they are too proud of heart to accept it, and they choose the darkness. They despise the counsel of God because it does not coincide with their views and plans, and favor their wrong traits of character. The work of the Spirit of God, which would bring them into the right position if they would accept it, has not come in a way to please them, and to flatter their self-righteousness. The light which God has given is no light to them, and they wander in darkness. They claim that no more confidence is to be placed in the judgment of one who has had such a long experience, and whom the Lord has taught and used to do a special work, than in that of any other person. Is it God's plan that they should do thus, or is it the special working of the enemy of all righteousness to hold souls in error, to bind them in strong delusions that cannot be broken, because they have placed themselves beyond the reach of means that God has ordained to deal with His church?

The reproofs, the cautions, the corrections of the Lord, have been given to His church in all ages of the world. These warnings were despised and rejected in Christ's day by the self-righteous Pharisees, who claimed that they needed no such reproof and were unjustly dealt with. They would not receive the word of the Lord through His servants because it did not please their inclinations. Should the Lord give a vision right before this class of people in our day, pointing out their mistakes, rebuking their self-righteousness and condemning their sins, they would rise up in rebellion, like the inhabitants of Nazareth when Christ showed them their true condition.

If these persons do not humble their hearts before God, if they harbor the suggestions of Satan, doubt and infidelity will take possession of the soul, and they will see everything in a false light. Let the seeds of doubt once be sown in their hearts and they will have an abundant harvest to reap. They will come to mistrust and disbelieve truths which are plain and full of beauty to others who have not educated themselves in unbelief. Those who train the mind to seize upon everything which they can use as a peg to hang a doubt upon, and suggest these thoughts to other minds, will always find occasion to doubt. They will question and criticize everything that arises in the unfolding of truth, criticize the work and position of others, criticize every branch of the work in which they have not themselves a part. They will feed upon the errors and mistakes and faults of others, "until," said the angel, the Lord Jesus shall rise up from His mediatorial work in the heavenly sanctuary and shall clothe Himself with the garments of vengeance and surprise them at their unholy feast, and they will find themselves unprepared for the marriage supper of the Lamb." Their taste has been so perverted that they would be inclined to criticize even the table of the Lord in His kingdom.

Has God ever revealed to these self-deceived ones that no reproofs or corrections from Him are to have any weight with them unless they come through direct vision? I dwell upon this point because the position that many are now taking upon it is a delusion of Satan to ruin souls. When

he has ensnared and weakened them through his sophistry, so that when they are reproved they persist in making of none effect the workings of God's Spirit, his triumph over them will be complete. Some who profess righteousness will, like Judas, betray their Lord into the hands of His bitterest enemies. These self-confident ones, determined to have their own way and to advocate their own ideas, will go on from bad to worse, until they will pursue any course rather than to give up their own will. They will go on blindly in the way of evil, but, like the deluded Pharisees, so self-deceived that they think they are doing God's service. Christ portrayed the course which a certain class will take when they have a chance to develop their true character: "And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death."

God has given me a marked, solemn experience in connection with His work; and you may be assured that so long as my life is spared, I shall not cease to lift a warning voice as I am impressed by the Spirit of God, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. I have no special wisdom in myself; I am only an instrument in the Lord's hands to do the work He has set for me to do. The instructions that I have given by pen or voice have been an expression of the light that God has given me. I have tried to place before you the principles that the Spirit of God has for years been impressing upon my mind and writing on my heart.

And now, brethren, I entreat you not to interpose between me and the people, and turn away the light which God would have come to them. Do not by your criticisms take out all the force, all the point and power, from the Testimonies. Do not feel that you can dissect them to suit your own ideas, claiming that God has given you ability to discern what is light from heaven and what is the expression of mere human wisdom. If the Testimonies speak not according to the word of God, reject them. Christ and Belial cannot be united. For Christ's sake do not confuse the minds of the people with human sophistry and skepticism, and make of none effect the work that the Lord would do. Do not, by your lack of spiritual discernment, make of this agency of God a rock of offense whereby many shall be caused to stumble and fall, "and be snared, and be taken."

Ellen White Calls Her Writings a Lesser Light

The Lord has sent his people much instruction, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little. Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light. O, how much good would be accomplished if the books containing this light were read with a determination to carry out the principles they contain! There would be a thousandfold greater vigilance, a thousandfold more self-denial and resolute effort. And many more would now be rejoicing in the light of present truth. --The Review and Herald, Jan. 20, 1903.

The Lord has sent his people much instruction, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light, to lead men and women to the greater light. O, how much good might be accomplished if the books containing this light were read with a determination to carry out the principles they contain. There would be a thousandfold greater vigilance, a thousandfold more self-denial and resolute effort, and many more would now be rejoicing in the light of present truth. "The Southern Watchman, February 2, 1904.

The Lord has sent His people much instruction, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. Little heed is given to the Bible, but the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light. O, how much good might be accomplished if the books containing this light were read with a determination to carry out the principles they contain. There would be a thousandfold greater vigilance, a thousandfold more self-denial and resolute effort, and many more would now be rejoicing in present truth. “The (Australasian) Union Conference Record, March 15, 1905.

SOURCE:

TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH. - NO. 33 “ 1889
BY MRS. E. G. WHITE

5T “ TESTIMONIES FOR THE CHURCH VOLUME FIVE “ 1882-1889
BY ELLEN G. WHITE
