

THE SIN OF LICENTIOUSNESS

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by

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Clean Hands and Pure Hearts

There is much preaching the truth, but few are sanctified through the truth. Piety and righteousness are not brought into the practical life, and the Lord is dishonored; and, having no vital connection with God, poor, weak human nature has no strength to resist temptation, and never will have till the converting power of God takes hold upon the soul.

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

Recent painful developments of evil are one of the greatest evidences we have that the end is near. Satan, like a roaring lion, is going about, seeking whom he may devour; and if men and women, under the blazing light that now shines in this perilous time, will be found fornicators, I am afraid that God will separate them from the work forever.

Decided Action Called For

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

No sooner are they placed in temptation than they reveal their moral defects--that they are not partakers of the divine nature, neither have they escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; but that they are earthly, sensual, devilish. Satan finds in them something that he can work up into marked iniquity, and he improves his opportunity, and the result is, those who claim to be shepherds of the flock are carnally minded, leading the sheep of their care, whose purity, modesty, and virtue they should strictly guard, into licentiousness and lewdness. Angels of heaven are looking on with shame and grief and disgust. How can the pure angels of heaven minister unto this class? How can they bring heavenly light into the assemblies where such ministers are advocating the law of God, but breaking that law whenever a favorable opportunity presents itself; living a lie, pursuing an underhanded course, working in secret, nursing their polluted thoughts and inflaming their passions, and then taking advantage of women or men who are tempted, like themselves, to break down all barriers and debase their bodies and pollute their souls? How can they do this thing? How can they have any fear of God before them? How can they have any love for God in their souls? Of what value is their faith in the truth?

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Cleanse the camp of this moral corruption, if it takes the highest men in the highest positions. God will not be trifled with. Fornication is in our ranks; I know it, for it has been shown me to be strengthening and extending its pollutions. There is much we will never know; but that which is revealed makes the church responsible and guilty unless they show a determined effort to eradicate the evil. Cleanse the camp, for there is an accursed thing in it.

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

False Shepherds

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

He that is to come says, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Every good deed done by the people of God as the fruit of their faith, will have its corresponding reward. As one star differeth from another star in glory, so will believers have their different spheres assigned them in the future life. Will the man who did not walk with God as did Enoch, but who walked by the side of Satan, listening to his suggestions, obeying his promptings, imperiling his own soul and souls for whom Christ died, to gratify the carnal mind, giving lenity to sin in his example--will such a man be found among the overcomers?

When a man dies, his influence does not die with him; but it lives on, reproducing itself. The influence of the man who was good and pure and holy lives on after his death, like the glow of the descending sun, casting its glories athwart the heavens, lighting up the mountain peaks long after the sun has sunk behind the hill. So will the works of the pure and the holy and the good reflect their light when they no longer live to speak and act themselves. Their works, their words, their example will forever live. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

But what a contrast to this is the life of those who are earthly, sensual, devilish! The sensual pleasure was indulged. In the light of the judgment, the man appears as he is, stripped of the livery of heaven. He stands before others as he is in the sight of a holy God. Let every one of us think seriously whether the works following us will be the mellow light of heaven or the shadows of darkness, and whether the legacies we bequeath are those of blessings or curses.

Every passing hour of the present is shaping our future life. These moments spent in carelessness, in self-pleasing, as if of no value, are deciding our everlasting destinies. The words we utter today will go on echoing when time shall be no more. The deeds done today are transferred to the books of heaven, just as the features are transferred by the artist onto the polished plate. They will determine our destiny for eternity, for bliss or eternal loss and agonizing remorse. Character cannot be changed when Christ comes, nor just as a man is about to die. Character building must be done in this life. We fear that repentance will come to the self-indulgent, tainted soul all too late. A few resolves, a few tears, will never reverse a guilty past life nor blot out of the books of heaven the transgressions, the willful,

knowing sins of those who have had the precious light of truth, and can explain the Scriptures to others, while sin and iniquity are drunk up like stolen waters. As though written with an iron pen, they may be found lead in the rock forever.

Need of Alarm

I would make my brethren alarmed if I could. I would urge upon them with pen and voice, Live in the Lord, walk with God, if you would die in the Lord, and enter by and by where the Lord abideth forever. Be not disobedient to the heavenly warnings; grasp the neglected appeals, the entreaties, the warnings, the rebukes, the threatenings of God, and let them correct your wayward, sinful heart. Let the transforming grace of Christ make you pure, true, holy, and lovely as the pure white lily which opens its blossom on the bosom of the lake. Transfer your love and affections to Him who died for you on Calvary's cross. Train your lips to speak forth His praises, and to offer up your prayers as holy incense.

I ask again, How can any who have the precious, solemn message for this time indulge in impure thoughts and unholy deeds, when they know that He that never slumbers and never sleeps sees every action and reads every thought of the mind? Oh, it is because iniquity is found in God's professed people that He can do so little for them.

Truth in the Heart Sanctifies

The truth, when received into the heart, sanctifies the receiver; kept apart from the life and practice, it is dead and useless to the receiver. How can you, oh, how can you grieve your Redeemer? How can you dishonor Him before His angels and before men? How can you grieve the Holy Spirit of God? How can you crucify the Lord of glory afresh, and put Him to open shame? How can you give occasion for Satan and his angels to exult and triumph over those who claim to be loyal subjects of Jesus Christ? .

All fornicators will be outside the City of God. Already God's angels are at work in judgment, and the Spirit of God is gradually leaving the world. The triumph of the church is very near, the reward to be bestowed is almost within our reach, and yet iniquity is found among those who claim to have the full blaze of heaven's light.

He who presides over His church and the destinies of nations is carrying forward the last work to be accomplished for this world. To His angels He gives the commission to execute His judgments. Let the ministers awake, let them take in the situation. The work of judgment begins at the sanctuary. "And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar." Read Ezekiel 9:2-7. The command is, "Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house." Saith God, "I will recompense their way upon their head." .

The words will soon be spoken, "Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth." One of the ministers of vengeance declares. "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus." These heavenly beings, in executing the mandate of God, ask no questions, but do as they are bid. Jehovah of hosts, the Lord God Almighty, the just, the true, and the holy, has given them their work to do. With unswerving fidelity they go forth panoplied in pure white linen, having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And when their task is done, when the last vial of God's wrath is poured out, they return and lay their emptied vials at the feet of the Lord.

And the next scene is recorded, "After these things . . . I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." They sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

Keep Close to the Leader

We must keep close to our great Leader, or we shall become bewildered, and lose sight of the Providence which presides over the church and the world, and over each individual. There will be profound mysteries in the divine dealings. We may lose the footsteps of God and follow our own bewilderment, and say, Thy judgments are not known; but if the heart is loyal to God everything will be made plain.

There is a day just about to burst upon us when God's mysteries will be seen, and all His ways vindicated; when justice, mercy, and love will be the attributes of His throne. When the earthly warfare is accomplished, and the saints are all gathered home, our first theme will be the song of Moses, the servant of God. The second theme will be the song of the Lamb, the song of grace and redemption. This song will be louder, loftier, and in sublimer strains, echoing and re-echoing through the heavenly courts. Thus the song of God's providence is sung, connecting the varying dispensations; for all is now seen without a veil between the legal, the prophetic, and the gospel. The church history upon the earth and the church redeemed in heaven all center around the cross of Calvary. This is the theme, this is the song,--Christ all and in all,--in anthems of praise resounding through heaven from thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand and an innumerable company of the redeemed host. All unite in this song of Moses and of the Lamb. It is a new song, for it was never before sung in heaven.

Again I ask, In view of the revelation made to John on the Isle of Patmos, which from the opening of the first chapter to the close of the last chapter is light, great light, revealed to us by Jesus Christ, who chose John to be the channel through whom this light was to shine forth to the world--with such wonderful, solemn truths revealed, with such grand truths unfolded before us in the events to transpire just prior to the second appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, how can those who claim to see wondrous things out of the law of God, be found in the list of the impure, of the fornicators and adulterers, constantly evading the truth, and secretly working out iniquity? Do you think that they can hide their ways from the Lord? that God seeth not? that God taketh no knowledge?

Uninvited Guests

Belshazzar, while engaged in his sacrilegious feast, was not aware that he had guests he had not invited. The God of heaven heard the praises bestowed upon vessels of gold and silver. He saw the desecration of that which had been dedicated to Him by holy consecration applied to profane and licentious purposes. It is a truth which should make every one of us weep, that those living in these last days, upon whom the ends of the world are come, are far more guilty than was Belshazzar. This is possible in many ways. When men have taken upon themselves the vows of consecration, to devote all their powers to the sacred service of God; when they occupy the position of expositors of Bible truth, and have received the solemn charge; when God and angels are summoned as witnesses to the solemn dedication of soul, body, and spirit to God's service--then shall these men who minister in a most holy office desecrate their God-given powers to unholy purposes? Shall the sacred vessel, whom God is to use for a high and holy work, be dragged from its lofty, controlling sphere to administer to debasing lust? Is not this idol worship of the most degrading kind?-- the lips uttering praises and adoring a sinful human being, pouring forth expressions of ravishing tenderness and adulation which belong alone to God--the powers given to God in solemn consecration administering to a harlot; for any woman who will

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allow the addresses of another man than her husband, who will listen to his advances, and whose ears will be pleased with the outpouring of lavish words of affection, of adoration, of endearment, is an adulteress and a harlot.

No misfortune is so great as to become the worshiper of a false god. No man is in such miserable darkness as he who has lost his way to heaven. It seems that an infatuation is upon him, for he has a false god. To turn this worship of the human, fallen, corrupt beings of earth to the only true object of worship seems a hopeless task. There are in our time continual repetitions of Belshazzar's feast and Belshazzar's worship; and Belshazzar's sin is repeated when the heart, which God requires to be given to Him in pure and holy devotion, is turned away from Him to worship a human being, and the lips are made to utter words of praise and adoration which belong alone to the Lord God of heaven. When the affections God claims to cluster about Him are made to center upon earthly objects,--a woman, a man, or any earthly things,--God is superseded by the object which enchains the senses and affections, and the powers which were solemnly dedicated to God are bestowed upon a human being who is defiled with sin. Men and women who once bore the image of God, but are lost by disobedience and sin, He means to restore again through their becoming partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust. And when men and women devote their God-given powers to unholy purposes, to minister to lust, God is dishonored, and the actors are ruined.

When engaged in man-and-woman worship, remember that there is the same witness present as at the feast of Belshazzar. On that occasion, when in the very midst of their revelry, when God was forgotten, when the carnal senses were inflamed, a thrill of terror rushed through every soul. The cup that was being praised and idolized by the king fell from his nerveless hand, and in the language of the Spirit of God, his "countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." A mysterious, bloodless hand was seen tracing characters on the wall. These mysterious fingers belonging to and guided by an unseen power wrote the fully as mysterious characters, which were unintelligible to the awe-stricken revelers. A light like the lightning followed the forming of every letter, and lingered there, making them living characters of awful and terrible significance to all who looked upon them. "Mene, mene, tekem, upharsin." Their very ignorance of those letters traced upon the wall, standing there flashing with light, sent terror to their sinful hearts. Their aroused consciences interpreted these letters to be a denunciation against them. Suspicion, fear, and alarm took hold upon king and princes.

Belshazzar, awed by this representation of God's power, showing that they had a witness, though they knew it not, had had great opportunities of knowing the works of the living God, and His power, and of doing His will. He had been privileged with much light. His grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, had been warned of his danger in forgetting God and glorifying himself. Belshazzar had a knowledge of his banishment from the society of men, and his association with the beasts of the field; and these facts, which ought to have been a lesson to him, he disregarded, as if they had never occurred; and he went on repeating the sins of his grandfather. He dared to commit the crimes which brought God's judgments upon Nebuchadnezzar. He was condemned, not alone that he himself was doing wickedly, but that he had not availed himself of opportunities and capabilities, if cultivated, of being right.

Why Condemned

God will not condemn any at the judgment because they honestly believed a lie, or conscientiously cherished error; but it will be because they neglected the opportunities of making themselves acquainted with truth. The infidel will be condemned, not because he was an infidel, but because he did not take advantage of the means God has placed within his reach to enable him to become a Christian.

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So it will be found in the judgment. God's reproof has been plainly uttered against men and women who have sinned by corrupting their bodies and defiling their souls by licentiousness. They have the warnings to others placed in similar circumstances, who have been overcome by the tempter, and they know that the displeasure of God rested upon them. They have the example of Joseph and Daniel, who feared God. Joseph, when tempted, looked up to heaven, and realized that God's eye was upon him, and he exclaimed, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" He also urged his duty to his master, who trusted him so fully, as a reason against it.

God has flashed light upon the pathway of all. Reproofs and warnings and cautions are given to individuals in similar circumstances, and God has expressed condemnation of sin in all its forms. The sin of licentiousness is plainly rebuked and condemned. Men and women will be judged according to the light given them of God. Lessons that have been neglected, become awful judgments. The warnings of God, neglected, from which men turn to a course of their own choosing, will afford no practical lessons of instruction. These warnings will prove their condemnation in the judgment. The only safety for anyone is to turn to a practical account for himself every lesson that is given to another. When the message is given, then his individual duty begins.

Show Forth God's Power

God calls upon those who claim to be delegated to bear the truth to the world, to show in all places, both high and low, in public life and in the bypaths of private life, that they are in connection with God, that Christianity has done a noble work for them, that they are holier, happier than those who do not acknowledge their allegiance to God's commandments. God demands nothing less of every one of His followers than that they reveal Christ's character to the world in their individual life, and that they bear testimony by precept and example that it is not in vain that Christ has suffered and died, that the image of God might be restored in them through His redeeming grace.

God is represented as weighing all men, their words, their deeds, their motives, that which determines character. "The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed." "Men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity." "Thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just." "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits." Important lessons are suggested to us in these scriptures. There is not a thought or motive in the heart that God is not acquainted with. He sees all as clearly as if it stood out registered in living characters, and He weighs individual motives and actions.

God Must have All the Heart

Let our ministers and workers realize that it is not increased light that they need from the pulpit, so much as it is to live out the light they already have. Preaching the solemn truth to the people today, and then falling into the most abominable practices on the morrow, or pursuing a crooked course next week, will not answer. The Searcher of hearts, the One who weighs character, will denounce every unrighteous action at His great tribunal. "Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou . . . art acquainted with all my ways." "Thou understandest my thought afar off." Now consider this. There is a witness to all your most secret actions, which you would never do in the presence of men; but because God is unseen by human eyes, you do before Him things which are an abomination in His sight, as though He had no knowledge. Now read the claims of God upon every man and woman: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." He will not release one atom of His claim; He will not accept half worship while half the heart

is given to some idol. All the heart, God requires, all the mind. You are not allowed to have the mind diverted from God and centered upon any other object.

Weighing of Character

God's claim is placed in one scale, and man's character in the other; and by the balances of the heavenly sanctuary every man's doom is fixed for eternity. Look at this, you that have lived carelessly and have regarded sin lightly. For years you have continued without a sense of your responsibility to God--years of selfish indulgence in a forbidden course. Consider the perfect, unchanging character of the law whose claims you have verbally vindicated. The law demands perfect, unswerving obedience. In the latter scale is also placed the sin, the folly, the deception, the unclean thoughts, the unholy actions; and the preponderance or the lightness of the weight determines the weal or woe of individuals; and the inscription is written upon the scale of many, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."

Will those before whom this letter shall come, consider their own individual cases, pass judgment upon no one else, but consider their own character in the light of God's law?

Has your character been transformed? Has darkness been exchanged for light, the love of sin for the love of purity and holiness? Have you been converted, who are engaged in teaching the truth to others? Has there been in you a thorough, radical change? Have you woven Christ into your character? You need not be in uncertainty in this matter. Has the Sun of Righteousness risen and been shining in your soul? If so, you know it; and if you do not know whether you are converted or not, never preach another discourse from the pulpit until you do. How can you lead souls to the fountain of life of which you have not drunk yourself? Are you a sham, or are you really a son of God? Are you serving God, or are you serving idols? Are you transformed by the Spirit of God, or are you yet dead in your trespasses and sins? To be sons of God means more than many dream of, because they have not been converted. Men are weighed in the balance and found wanting when they are living in the practice of any known sin. It is the privilege of every son of God to be a true Christian moment by moment; then he has all heaven enlisted on his side. He has Christ abiding in his heart by faith.

A soul united with Christ, eating His flesh and drinking His blood, in accepting and living by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God will war against all transgression and every approach of sin. He becomes every day more like a bright and shining light, and more victorious. He goes on from strength to strength, not from weakness to weakness.

Let no one deceive his own soul in this matter. If you harbor pride, self-esteem, a love for the supremacy, vainglory, unholy ambition, murmuring, discontent, bitterness, evil speaking, lying, deception, slandering, you have not Christ abiding in your heart, and the evidence shows that you have the mind and character of Satan, not of Jesus Christ, who was meek and lowly of heart. You must have a Christian character that will stand. You may have good intentions, good impulses, can speak the truth understandingly, but you are not fit for the kingdom of heaven. Your character has in it base material, which destroys the value of the gold. You have not reached the standard. The impress of the divine is not upon you. The furnace fires would consume you, because you are worthless, counterfeit gold.

There must be thorough conversions among those who claim to believe the truth, or they will fall in the day of trial. God's people must reach a high standard. They must be a holy nation, a peculiar people, a chosen generation--zealous of good works.

Set the Heart Zionward

Christ has not died for you that you may possess the passions, tastes, and habits of men of the world. It is difficult to distinguish between those who serve God and those who serve Him not, because there is so little difference in character between believers and unbelievers. Ye cannot serve God and Belial. The sons of God belong to a different nation--the empire of purity and holiness. They are the nobility of heaven. The stamp of God is upon them. So evident and perceptible is this that the enmity of the world is aroused against them by the contrast. I call upon everyone who claims to be a son of God never to forget this great truth, that we need the Spirit of God within us in order to reach heaven, and the work of Christ without us in order to give us a title to the immortal inheritance.

Those who can have such an overpowering, gushing love for human objects, men or women, have an idol which they worship, devoting their heart's affection to it. One of the convincing characteristics of the sons of God is, their conversation, their sympathies, their outflowing love and affection are all in heaven. What is the predominating tone of your feelings, your tastes, your inclinations? Where is the main current of your sympathies, your affections, your conversation, your desires?

No man enters the portals of glory but he who sets his heart thitherward. Then let the questions come home, Do you mind earthly things? Are your thoughts pure? Are you breathing the atmosphere of heaven? Do you carry with you the miasma of pollution? Is your heart loving and worshipping a woman whom you have no right to love? Where is your heart? Where is your treasure? Where is your god? Have you been washing your robes of character, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb; or are you defiling your robes of character with moral pollution? Let the ministers of the gospel apply this to themselves. You are blessed with an understanding of the Scriptures, but is your eye single to the glory of God? Are you earnest and devoted, serving God with purity and in the beauty of holiness? Ask sincerely, Am I a child of God, or am I not?

"Ye are the light of the world." What an impression was produced upon Darius by the conduct of Daniel! Daniel lived a pure and holy life. God was first with him. Whenever real Christianity reigns in the heart, it will be revealed in the character. All will take knowledge of such, that they have been with Jesus. The undivided affections must be given to God.

A Thorough Reformation Needed

We need a thorough reformation in all our churches. The converting power of God must come into the church. Seek the Lord most earnestly, put away your sins, and tarry in Jerusalem till ye be endowed with power from on high. Let God set you apart to the work. Purify your souls by obeying the truth. Faith without works is dead. Put not off the day of preparation. Slumber not in a state of unpreparedness, having no oil in your vessels with your lamps. Let none leave their safety for eternity to hang upon a peradventure. Let not the question remain in perilous uncertainty. Ask yourselves earnestly, Am I among the saved, or the unsaved? Shall I stand, or shall I not stand? He only that hath clean hands and a pure heart shall stand in that day.

"Be Ye Clean"

I call upon ministers who have been handling the word of God, "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." I ask the people who have listened to the truths from the pulpit, What are your feelings in anticipation of that great day? In that day you have each an individual, personal interest. Be assured, God will not be mocked with pretensions. Have you the wedding garment on?

We hear now of earthquakes in divers places, of fires, of tempests, of disasters by sea and land, of pestilence, of famine. What weight do these signs have upon you? This is only the beginning of what shall be. The description of the day of God is given through John by the Revelator. The cry of the terror-stricken myriads has fallen upon the ear of John. "The great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" The apostle himself was awed and overwhelmed.

What is Your Refuge in that Day?

If such scenes as this are to come, such tremendous judgments on a guilty world, where will be the refuge for God's people? How will they be sheltered until the indignation be overpast? John sees the elements of nature--earthquake, tempest, and political strife-- represented as being held by four angels. These winds are under control until God gives the word to let them go. There is the safety of God's church. The angels of God do His bidding, holding back the winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree, until the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads. The mighty angel is seen ascending from the east (or sunrising). This mightiest of angels has in his hand the seal of the living God, or of Him who alone can give life, who can inscribe upon the foreheads the mark or inscription, to whom shall be granted immortality, eternal life. It is the voice of this highest angel that had authority to command the four angels to keep in check the four winds until this work was performed, and until he should give the summons to let them loose.

Those that overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, will be the favored ones who shall receive the seal of the living God. Those whose hands are not clean, whose hearts are not pure, will not have the seal of the living God. Those who are planning sin and acting it will be passed by. Only those who, in their attitude before God, are filling the position of those who are repenting and confessing their sins in the great anti-typical day of atonement, will be recognized and marked as worthy of God's protection. The names of those who are steadfastly looking and waiting and watching for the appearing of their Saviour--more earnestly and wishfully than they who wait for the morning--will be numbered with those who are sealed. Those who, while having all the light of truth flashing upon their souls, should have works corresponding to their avowed faith, but are allured by sin, setting up idols in their hearts, corrupting their souls before God, and polluting those who unite with them in sin, will have their names blotted out of the book of life, and be left in midnight darkness, having no oil in their vessels with their lamps. "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings."

This sealing of the servants of God is the same that was shown to Ezekiel in vision. John also had been a witness of this most startling revelation. He saw the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing them for fear. He beheld the earth moved, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea (which is literally taking place), the water thereof roaring and troubled, and the mountains shaking with the swelling thereof. He was shown plagues, pestilence, famine, and death performing their terrible mission.

"Escape for Thy Life"

The same angel who visited Sodom is sounding the note of warning, "Escape for thy life." The bottles of God's wrath cannot be poured out to destroy the wicked and their works until all the people of God have been judged, and the cases of the living as well as the dead are decided. And even after the saints are sealed with the seal of the living God, His elect will have trials individually. Personal afflictions will come; but the furnace is closely watched by an eye that will not suffer the gold to be consumed. The indelible mark of God is upon them. God can plead that His own name is written there. The Lord has

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shut them in. Their destination is inscribed--"God, New Jerusalem." They are God's property, His possession.

Will this seal be put upon the impure in mind, the fornicator, the adulterer, the man who covets his neighbor's wife? Let your souls answer the question, Does my character correspond to the qualifications essential that I may receive a passport to the mansions Christ has prepared for those who are fitted for them? Holiness must be inwrought in our character.

God has shown me that at the very time that the signs of the times are being fulfilled around us, when we hear, as it were, the tread of the hosts of heaven fulfilling their mission, men of intelligence, men in responsible positions, will be putting rotten timbers in their character building--material which is consumable in the day of God, and which will decide them to be unfit to enter the mansions above. They have refused to let go the filthy garments; they have clung to them as if they were of precious value. They will lose heaven and an eternity of bliss on account of them.

Be Converted Men

I call upon you who minister in sacred things to be converted men before you go forth to act any part in the cause of my Master. Now is your time to seek a preparation and readiness for the fearful test which is before us--that holiness without which no man shall see God. Let none say, My way is hid from the Lord; God taketh no knowledge of my ways. Now it may be it is not too late. Now it may be you can repent. But even if pardon is written against your names, you will sustain terrible loss; for the scars you have made upon your souls will remain.

Oh, how can any who have the light of truth, the great light given them of God, defy the wrath and judgments of God by sinning against Him and doing the very things God has told them in His word not to do? How can they be so blinded by Satan as to dishonor God to His face, and defile their souls by sinning knowingly? Says the apostle, "We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." Will these sinners--shall I call them hypocrites?--in Zion inquire, In what manner am I a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men? Answer for yourselves, By my abuse of the light and privileges and mercies God has given me, by unseemly actions which corrupt and defile the soul. Professing to know God, do I put Him out of my thoughts, and substitute an idol? Do I lead other minds to regard sin lightly by my example? Am I a spectacle to the world of moral looseness? Am I a spectacle to angels in indecent actions and moral defilement of the body? The apostle exhorts us: "I beseech you, . . . brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

God's Standard

God has a law, and it is the great standard of righteousness. Everyone who has presumed upon the mercy of God, and practiced iniquity, will be judged according to his works. God has warned you to depart from all iniquity. He has commanded you individually to resist the devil, not to entertain him as an honored guest. The time has come when Jerusalem is being searched as with lighted candles. God is at work investigating character, weighing moral worth, and pronouncing decisions on individual cases. It may not be too late for those who have sinned to be zealous and repent; "for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." This sorrow is a deceptive kind. It has no real virtue in it. There is no sense of the aggravated character of sin; but

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there is a sorrow and regret that the sin has come to the knowledge of others; and so no confessions are made, except in acknowledgment of the things thus revealed which cannot be denied.

This is the sorrow of the world, which worketh death, and pacifies the conscience, while the sin is still cherished, and would be carried on just the same if there were an opportunity, and they could not be discovered. "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." Here we can see the duty that rests upon the church to deal with those whose course of action is entirely contrary to the light which they have received. Will the people of God take their stand upon the Bible, or will they be worse than infidels, and give arguments to this class to reproach Christ and the truth, because they do not obey the claims of the gospel in faith and obedience by a circumspect life and a holy character?

Those who claim to have the light of truth have not met the conditions on which the fulfillment of the promises is suspended, neither have they been worthy of the grace of Christ. The character and service of the church are required to be according to the talents received. Her faith and obedience should be equal to the amount which a faithful improvement of her light and opportunities would have gained for her in moral and spiritual elevation.

But many--not a few, but many--have been losing their spiritual zeal and consecration, and turning away from the light that has been constantly growing brighter and brighter, and have refused to walk in the truth because its sanctifying power upon the soul was not what they desired. They might have been renewed in holiness and have reached the elevated standard that God's word demands; but condemnation is upon them. Many ministers and many people are in darkness. They have lost sight of the Leader, the Light of the world; and their guilt is proportionate to the grace and truth opened to their understanding, which has been abundant and powerful.

Lift Up the Standard

God calls His people to elevate the standard. The church must show their zeal for God in dealing with those who have, while professing great faith, been putting Christ to open shame. They have imperiled the truth. They have been unfaithful sentinels. They have brought reproach and dishonor upon the cause of God. The time has come for earnest and powerful efforts to rid the church of the slime and filth which is tarnishing her purity. The church of Christ is called to be a holy, powerful people, a name and praise in all the earth. There has been opened a fountain for Judah and Jerusalem, to wash from all uncleanness and sin. There is an astonishing backsliding with God's people, to whom has been entrusted sacred, holy truth. Her faith, her service, her works, must be compared to what they would have been if her course had been continually onward and upward, according to grace and holy truth given her. .

In this balance of the sanctuary, the individual members of the Christian church will be weighed; and if her moral character and spiritual state do not correspond to the benefits and blessings conferred upon her, she will be found wanting. If the fruit does not appear, then God is not glorified.

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

A knowledge of the state of the backslider from God seems to be hidden from him. Has the candlestick been removed out of its place? I call upon all who are resting unconcerned in their present state of spiritual deadness, to arouse and arise from the dead, and Christ will give them light. Many rest as content as though the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night were sheltering and guiding them.

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Many profess to know God, and yet deny Him in their works. They reckon themselves among God's peculiar, chosen people, who have a special, solemn message entrusted to their keeping to sanctify their lives and to give to the world, and yet the power of the truth is scarcely felt or manifested in our midst in zealous work for God. How great is our darkness, and we know it not! The light has not diminished, but we walk not in its rays.

A Fearful Delusion

What greater delusion can deceive the human mind than that in which individuals flatter themselves that they have the truth, that they are on the only sure foundation, and that God accepts their works because they are actively engaged in some work in the cause of God, when they are sinning against Him by walking contrary to the expressed will of God? They work mechanically, like machinery; but preparation of heart, the sanctification of the character, is wanting. Sacred and holy things are brought down to the level of common things, and a commonness, a cheapness, is working itself into our churches. The service is degenerating into little else than form. .

The standard must be elevated. The work must have a higher mold. There must be a coming out from the customs and practices of the world and being separate. There must be a coming up upon a higher platform by both ministers and people. There must be much more of Jesus and His meekness, His lowliness, His humility, His self-denial, His purity, His true goodness and nobility of character, brought into the experience and characters of all who claim to be acting any part in the sacred work of God. .2

Let God's word be the guide and the rule of life. Let that word, expressing His revealed commands, be obeyed. God summons everyone to put forth all his powers as a responsible being, to do His plainly specified will. If you do this, you will show it. Grappling with your own inherent defects of character, which are at war with spiritual advancement, is proof that you are doing your part of the work. 2.

Let none say a state of feeling is upon them in undue attachments, unlawful love, that they cannot break away from. It is a deception. You cherish the evil; you strengthen it. You love it better than you love truth, purity, righteousness. You do not take hold of divine help, wrenching yourselves from hurtful and dangerous associations. You tamely give yourselves to the working of an evil way, as though you had no free moral agency. Study God's word prayerfully, meet its demands firmly, resolutely, as did Joseph and Daniel. Lay hold upon the help God has promised you.

You Must Choose

Will God compel your obedience, will He compel your will? Never. The Lord has furnished you with capacities, with intelligence, with reason. He has sent from heaven His only-begotten Son to open the way for you, and to place within your reach immortality. What account can you render to God for your weakness, your disobedience, your impurity, your evil thoughts and evil works?

God has appointed means, if we will use them diligently and prayerfully, that no vessel shall be shipwrecked, but outride the tempest and storm, and anchor in the haven of bliss at last. But if we despise and neglect these appointments and privileges, God will not work a miracle to save any of us, and we will be lost as were Judas and Satan.

Do not think that God will work a miracle to save those weak souls who cherish evil, who practice sin; or that some supernatural element will be brought into their lives, lifting them out of self into a higher sphere, where it will be comparatively easy work, without any special effort, any special fighting, without any crucifixion of self; because all who dally on Satan's ground for this to be done will perish with the evildoers. They will be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.

Holiness Now

If God has made provision for man to have eternal life, He has means to meet the requirement that man shall practice holiness in this life. All who would evidence that they have a hold on the future life will give practical demonstrations in their life, their character, that they are living in newness of life, in purity and holiness here, following that which is revealed. .

The way to heaven has been laid open at infinite cost to the Father and the Son. Are we individually walking in that way, complying with the conditions? Are you in the way? Are you following the Leader, the Light of life?

Chosen for What?

There is an election of individuals and a people, the only election found in the word of God, where man is elected to be saved. Many have looked at the end, thinking they were surely elected to have heavenly bliss; but this is not the election the Bible reveals. Man is elected to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He is elected to put on the armor, to fight the good fight of faith. He is elected to use the means God has placed within his reach to war against every unholy lust, while Satan is playing the game of life for his soul. He is elected to watch unto prayer, to search the Scriptures, and to avoid entering into temptation. He is elected to have faith continually. He is elected to be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, and that he may be, not a hearer only, but a doer of the word. This is Bible election.

Because great light has been given, because men have, as did the princes of Israel, ascended to the mount and been privileged to have communion with God, and been allowed to dwell in the light of His glory--for these thus favored to think that they can afterward sin, and corrupt their ways before God, and still keep on as though doing God's will, as though God would not mark sin against them because they have been thus honored of God, is a fatal deception. The great light and privileges bestowed require returns of virtue and holiness corresponding with the light given them. Anything short of this, God will not accept.

But these great manifestations by God should never lull to security or carelessness. They should never give license to licentiousness, or cause the recipients to feel that God will not be critical with them, because they think He is dependent on their ability and knowledge to act a part in the great work. All these advantages given by God are His means to throw ardor into the spirit, zeal into effort, and rigor into the carrying out of His holy will.

You, my brethren, fold your hands, and drift into evil practices, and then wait for God to work a miracle to change your characters and compel you to be pure and holy men. Will you expose yourselves wantonly to temptation, expecting God to force your mind and inclinations that you may not be corrupted? Will you take the viper to your bosom, expecting God to put a spell upon it so it will not poison you with its venomous sting? Will you drink poison, expecting God to provide an antidote?

Be God's Men

While, under God, we are to use means in the saving of our own souls, we are not to depend on what we can do alone, thinking that will be able to save us. While we must work with heart and soul and might, we must do it all in and through Jesus. But truth as it is in Jesus must be brought into the heart and into the life, into the home and into the church. God will use the channels He has provided for the flowing through of His grace. .

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Oh, that my brethren would be men according to God's estimate of men, and take their places in the great web of humanity, realizing that they are a part of God's great whole in creation, in redemption! Only be men, and then you make a decided advance in being Christians.

The means is provided, and no one will have any excuse for sin. If you fail of overcoming, there are reasons for this. Ye will not obey God's revealed will; ye will not pray; ye will not strive; ye will not fight evil habits and unholy thoughts. Are ye stronger than God? Can ye, dare ye, contend with the Eternal? If you are not proof against God's judgments, proof against His vengeance, then go on no longer in your own evil ways. Arise and make a stand against Satan. Be doing something, and do it now. Repent now, confess, forsake. A day of fire and storm is about to burst on our world. Conform your life to the simple prescriptions of the word of God. Seek the aid of God's Spirit by prayer, by watching thereunto, and ye will come off more than conquerors through Him who hath loved us. Read 1 John 4:10.

All the Lord's

The very flesh in which the soul tabernacles and through which it works is the Lord's. We have no right to neglect any part of the living machinery. Every portion of the living organism is the Lord's. The knowledge of our own physical organism should teach us that every member is to do God's service, as an instrument of righteousness.

None but God can subdue the pride of man's heart. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot regenerate ourselves. In the heavenly courts there will be no song sung, To me that loved myself, and washed myself, redeemed myself, unto me be glory and honor, blessing and praise. But this is the keynote of the song that is sung by many here in this world. They do not know what it means to be meek and lowly in heart; and they do not mean to know this, if they can avoid it. The whole gospel is comprised in learning of Christ, His meekness and lowliness.

What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself.-- Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers (Series A, No. 9, 1897), pages 61, 62.