

A

Pamphlets

SOLEMN APPEAL

TO THE

MINISTRY AND THE PEOPLE.

BY ELDER JAMES WHITE.

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THE APPEAL.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS: I take up my pen to appeal to you with feelings such as I never had before. I have been closely examining my life, and my errors and sins have come before me in a light in which I have never before seen them.

For some time past the Lord has been leading me to the very position I now occupy. I was first led into the subject of 1 John, chap. 1, to see the wonderful privilege of the children of God holding fellowship with the Father and the Son and walking in the light as God is in the light. This I have written out for the *Review*.

I then began to feel and see that I was far from being in such a position. And in the same chapter I saw that my duty was clearly pointed out, namely, confession. I was led to Isaiah, chapters 58 and 59. I first decided that they may be safely applied to this time, and to those who are engaged in the Sabbath reform. The time has come to "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins. Chap. 58:1. Please read both chapters. I viewed myself in the position of those in verses 2 and 3. I have offered many fervent prayers for light and direction, and, as described in these verses, I have almost murmured that I did not obtain clearer light.

and more strength to work in the cause. But I finally felt the force of the words of chap. 59: 1, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear."

In these words I saw my just condemnation, and they also gave me hope that I might come very nigh to God when I had put my sins away from between me and God by confessing and forsaking them; that his ear was not heavy, nor was his hand short; and that it was my privilege to walk in the light as God is in the light. He can hear, and his hand can bring salvation.

I then began to search for my sins, errors, and mistakes, and the Spirit of God has been helping me. And I find that my wrongs have grown out of not being suitably affected by what God has shown my wife, especially what she has been shown of my dangers and wrongs.

To not be affected by the common means of grace is just what will sink common sinners in perdition. But when Christians err from the right way, and God in infinite love and mercy condescends to make their individual necessities his opportunity to speak from Heaven to them, to correct their errors, and point out the right way, if they neglect this special means of grace, they commit one of the highest sins, if not the very highest sin, that can be committed against God. They insult the Holy Spirit, and place themselves where God can do no more for them. Having neglected the very greatest means of grace,

and treated with indifference the highest honor Christ can bestow upon an erring child of grace, there is nothing more in all the plan and means of grace that can reach them. Their sin is proportionate to the especial condescension of the Infinite in stooping to bestow on an erring child, a worm of the dust, the especial means of grace, so uncommon in the ages past, of speaking directly from Heaven in reproof, warning, and instruction.

I have never doubted the visions of Mrs. W. If a trial or temptation had for a moment come over my mind, as I did not, and could not, understand all, I at once fell back upon the vast amount of clear evidence in their favor, and there rested until all was made clear. But this statement applies more particularly to the first ten years of my experience relative to the visions, when many things were shown of the future history of the cause which time alone could explain. For the past ten years the visions have especially pointed out present duty, and all has appeared plain.

I have clearly seen the position and importance of the Testimonies in the work of the third message, and have prized them highly, and have designed ever to conform to their teachings. But I have not given them that reflection and attention I should. I have not read them over and over in order to keep their teachings fresh in my mind, as I should. I have seen so much to do, and so many responsibilities have been put upon me by my brethren, that I have hurried along without giving the Testimonies proper attention, and have excused myself on the ground of

want of time. This I see has been wrong. I repent before God of this neglect.

But that which has constituted the bitterness of my cup of repentance has been the consciousness that I have not always been suitably affected by reproofs of my wrongs, and warnings given to save me from future errors, that I might be preserved to accomplish the greatest possible amount of good. As I look back over the past I see that God has been dealing very kindly with me, and would have led me in a way to have saved me from many bitter things in my life, if I had been suitably affected by his reproofs and warnings through the visions. The things which have borne particularly upon my mind are as follows:—

1. From the time of my first acquaintance with the one whom God has chosen to speak through to his erring people up to the time of the last vision, I have been cautioned from time to time of my danger of speaking, while under the pressure of a sense of the wrongs of others, in an unguarded manner, and using words that would not have the best effect on those I reproved. The Lord, knowing the trials through which I was to pass, would prepare my mind to guard against the dangers to which I would be exposed. And had I been suitably impressed with his warnings my usefulness would not have been marred from time to time by Satan's taking advantage of words that were not the best selected.

Mine has been a peculiar work. It was my duty to stand by the side of Mrs. W. in her work of delivering the reproofs of the Lord. Neither of us could swerve a hair's breadth from the plain facts in

the case. And because I have sustained her in her reproving work and could not be warped from the truth, unsanctified and rebellious ones, made still more persistent by the power of the devil, have seized upon some of my strong, and not the best selected, expressions, and have raised the cry of "harshness," "unchristian spirit," and the like. This cry, raised by females under the fervor of false sympathy, has had a strong influence over the minds of some of my fellow-laborers, with whom I have been most closely connected, and its results, both upon them and myself, have been deplorable.

With these exceptions, which I here confess, I have ever cherished a tender love and regard for my brethren and sisters. Whatever else the Testimonies have reproved me for they have not found me guilty in my ministerial labors of treating the members of the church of God in an unchristian, tyrannical manner, discouraging and scattering the precious flock of Jesus Christ. Mine has ever been the work of encouraging, uniting, and building up, and often that, too, which had been scattered, and discouraged, and cast down, by the rash labors and decisions of other ministers.

As I look over my past life and labors I have much to comfort me, while, at the same time, I deeply regret, and have mourned and repented deeply from December 20–26, that the reproofs and warnings from the Lord through vision, designed to keep me on my guard all through the terrible struggles I have passed with the powers of darkness during the past twenty-five years, were not so realized and heeded by me as to govern all my words.

2. I have been warned to trust in God, and let him fight my battles and vindicate my cause, and not suffer my mind to dwell upon the course of those who had injured me. But in my "peculiar trials" I have lost sight of such blessed admonitions, and have dwelt upon the wrongs of others greatly to my injury. My courage, faith, and health, have suffered on the account. And as I have looked upon the faults of some of the older brethren in the cause, and have seen that they, by yielding to wrong influences, had become disqualified to fill the places they should in the cause, at times I have been in danger of feeling that the cause had great need of my labors. Of this I have been terribly ashamed. God could take Saul in all his blindness and madness and in a short time make him a polished instrument in his cause. During the period, December 20-26, I plead with God to forgive, and raise me up, and let me yet have some part in his work.

3. During the past eighteen years, the Lord has from time to time given me cautions, through the visions of Mrs. W., to preserve my health and strength as far as possible for future labor; for we had an especial work to do, and it was the will of God that we should have a reserve of strength for important future labor. Had I heeded these warnings as I should, I would have been able to stand against the temptations to overwork, pressed upon me by my brethren, and a love to labor while seeing so much to do. And now, as the consequence, just as the field is opening as never before, and there is so much very important work to be done, I have found my-

self for a few weeks past unable to do anything. And my cry has been, from December, 20-26, and still is, that God will raise me up once more, and put his word within me, that I may have part in the closing triumphs of the last message.

Dear brethren and sisters, I have prayed much during the past summer and autumn for guidance and health, and sometimes grieved that I did not realize more light and strength to work in the precious cause. I now see why my prayers were not answered, and why I was left to feebleness, and to a vacillating state of mind. The Lord's hand was as long as in the days of Elijah, and his ear as quick of hearing. My sins, like a vail, hid the Lord from me, and as a bulwark kept me from him.

I have been led to search closely for my sins. Sometimes, when searching closely in prayer, terrible darkness and discouragement have come over me. Still I pressed my petitions, and continued my self-examination. In the night of the 26th, I went to the barn, and as I felt that all that I could do more was to submit myself to God, to fall into the hands of Christ, it was then that I had a view of how terrible was the sin of those who profess to believe that God speaks to them through vision, yet from heedlessness receive no lasting impression when reproved, but go on as before, making no changes in those things wherein they are reproved. I felt that such a course was a fearful insult to the Holy Ghost, and that I was in a degree guilty of this sin. My convictions grew into an agony that for a time wrung my whole being. And as I confessed my sins, and, in the language of Daniel, "the sins of my people," I had an

agonizing view of how the long-suffering of the Father had been abused, the intercessions of Christ had been slighted, and the Holy Ghost had been insulted, by those who had been warned from Heaven through vision, and had not changed their course. There came up before me the cases of those preaching brethren who had been reprov'd, and had simply admitted that the Lord's decision in their cases was right, but went on without true repentance and confession, consequently had not power to make that change the case required. I could then see, and deeply feel, the reason why God did not answer their prayers, and why some of my brethren in the ministry had been left in a degree of darkness, to accomplish so little in the cause. And oh! how my whole being yearned over the cases of those dear brethren, who, as I had before felt had done me such injustice, in letting fall upon me insupportable burdens. I then wished to see them, and confess my faults to them, and exhort them to break the snare of Satan by confession and draw nigh to God by faith, that he would and did pardon and restore them fully.

I thought also of our brethren who had lost their first love, and simplicity, and spirit of consecration and sacrifice, and love for the truth, and care for the cause. The cases of many personal friends came to my mind, such as brethren G. T. Lay, S. Rummary, J. S. Day, McPherson, Weeks and Buck, Olmstead, King, Fargo, and Carman. If these men, and hundreds of others in like circumstances, had listened attentively to the warnings, and instructions,

and entreaties that have been given from Heaven through vision, in view of all the terrors of perdition, and all the rewards of the finally redeemed, they would long before this have surrendered themselves and what they have to God, to be used in his cause as its wants demanded, and many of them would now be able ministers of Christ in the last message, and all would be active helpers in the cause with their means and their influence.

I have been able to make the full surrender of all to God, and as I have confessed my sins to God and those with me, and united with them in prayer for pardon, and restoration to peace of mind, faith, hope, and physical strength and health, the Spirit of God has come upon us in a wonderful degree. At one time, while we were knelt in prayer, and Mrs. W. took me by the arm and bade me rise and go free, as I arose, the Holy Ghost came upon us in such measure that we both fell to the floor.

I now feel sure that God has forgiven my sins, so far as I have seen them, and confessed them in the spirit of true repentance. My sins do not longer separate me from God. And as I have made a determined effort to draw nigh to God, he has come very nigh to me. That terrible weight of discouragement and gloom that has been upon me much of the time for the past two years is gone from me, and hope, courage, peace, and joy, have taken its place.

Our seasons of prayer in Bro. Loughborough's family, but especially when Mrs. W. and I pray by ourselves, are very precious. Sometimes the Holy

Spirit fills the place, and we are made to feel the presence of God as we have not witnessed for a long time. My health is improving. Our prayers embrace the fullness of the blessing, and the Spirit comes upon us when asking for great things at the hand of God.

We see a great work to be done, and we believe that God will raise us up to bear some part in it. But what exercises our minds most at the present time is the low and weak condition of our brethren. There is a great work to be done among the people of God. And that work must commence with confession, and be carried on by doing the very work that God has pointed out as he has spoken from Heaven to his commandment-keeping people.

This work must commence in the ministry. Much depends upon the example they set, and their being free, that they may be able to help the people out to the light. Because God blesses their labors in some degree is no evidence that they are right in the sight of God. God, in infinite mercy, gave me some especial token of his love last summer; but what a terrible delusion it would have been for me to have concluded, therefore, that I was right. Be not deceived, brethren. You know in your very souls that you come very far short of realizing in yourselves what is comprehended in these precious words of John, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7. Do you ask me how this can be obtained? I reply that the way is pointed out in verse 9 of this chapter: "If we confess our sins,

he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

I know of no other way to the light but by confession. Some of you have committed grave mistakes that have affected seriously the progress of the cause. And when God has pointed them out to you, it has been regarded by you an act of great humility for you simply to admit that the vision was true in your case. And, strange to tell, this you have called a confession! It was God, not yourself, that confessed or exposed your sin, and when you admitted that the Lord was right in the matter, you called that act a confession.

But, dear brethren, God did not specify all your sins. And when he pointed out some of them, this should have led you to greatly humble yourself, and search out and confess all. This would have been a confession. But neglecting to do this, you soon fell back, and pursued the same or a worse course than before. I must be plain, brethren, with those who have taken such a course. Their condition of blindness is fearful, and I tremble for several, that they will not be faithful with themselves, and suitably repent and confess their way out.

And what I say of some of our ministers is true of many of our people. But for these, my feelings of pity are excited beyond degree, when I bear in mind the confidence our people have had in the ministers, and especially those who first taught them the truth. That confidence in many has been terribly shaken. It is a fearful thing for ministers to take a course to put out their own eyes, so that Satan can lead them to

destroy the confidence of a willing, confiding people.

A fearful deception is on the minds of both ministers and people. And we are fast approaching a crisis in our history for which we are not prepared. "The Shaking" is upon us, and many will be shaken from the ranks unless they get a firmer hold. Please read *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. i., pp. 183-188. Steps must be taken to free the cause that will astonish many, and offend some, and a testimony will ripen in the church that will result in shaking some from the ranks. And that work is commencing in Battle Creek.

We still recommend that General Conference be held without delay. When Bro. Butler wrote to me to appoint it when we could attend he made a mistake. I was troubled. The responsibility wore upon my strength, and I was led to commit two errors; first, to decide to take the journey in December from this warm climate over the mountains where we should be exposed to extreme cold; and second, afterwards to consent to have the Conference put off till we should return in the spring.

The Conference should have been held the first of January, 1873. It should now be held at the proper time without reference to us. And if the Lord wants us to be present, he can send us. We have certain writing to do which must be done before we leave California, if it takes us a year. There is therefore no certainty when we shall return. I do not see that it is my duty to hold any responsible office. Ours is a special work. The cause is growing. New branches of the great work demand attention. We

have borne a double portion of the common burdens in the cause too long. Let these be divided among those best qualified to bear them. Then if they are humble enough to ask our counsel in matters where we have had experience, instead of despising it as some did in 1866-9, we hope to be able to help them some.

When I have, in years past, consented to accept of important offices in connection with others, the entire labor has fallen on me, and crushed me. I refuse all such positions. And yet I feel pledged under the highest sense of duty to God, my brethren, and a world of sinners, to do all I can to assist my brethren to bear the burdens connected with the great cause of truth for this time.

We have writing to do which we never can accomplish with the care of so many things upon us relating to the cause. In my feebleness the past summer and autumn I have written more than two hundred business letters to Battle Creek. In the same time, and with less labor and wear, I could have prepared two hundred pages of tracts ready to translate into other languages. I here drop these common burdens. Sanctified talent is needed in the employ of the S. D. A. Publishing Association. For want of consecration to the work, some who have been connected with it longest have dwindled to inefficiency. I now look upon my efforts, at such arms-length, to direct in the work, by letters, in my feebleness, a thing next to insanity.

I close this appeal with words of heavenly wisdom found in Testimony No. 21, p. 136:—

"There is not that talent in our Office that there should be. The work demands the most choice and select persons to engage in it. With the present state of things in the Office, my husband will still feel the pressure that he has felt, but which he should no longer bear."

Santa Rosa, Cal., Jan. 1, 1873.



I close this appeal with words of heavenly wisdom found in Testimony No. 31, p. 150:—

When I have, in years past, consented to accept of important offices in connection with others, the onerous labor has fallen on me and crushed me. I have filled all such positions. And yet I feel pledged under the highest sense of duty to God, my brethren, and a world of sinners to do all I can to assist my brethren to bear the burdens connected with the great cause of truth for this time.

We have written to do with the matter as we please with the care of our own souls upon us relating to the cause. In my testimony the past summer and autumn I have written more than two hundred business letters to British Creek. In the same time and with less labor and wear, I could have prepared two hundred pages of tracts ready to translate into other languages. I have dropped these common duties. Essential talent is needed in the carrying of the S. D. A. Publishing Association. For want of consecration to the work, some who have been connected with it longest have dwindled to insignificance. I now look upon my short, but such strength to direct in the work by letters in my testimony as a thing next to nothing.