

Those who are self-righteous, who claim that they are saved, are not always patterns of piety. We have found that those who say most concerning their sanctification, are most opposed to the principles of God's law. Satan often deludes the mind, and men are led to erect false standards of their own, whereby they measure character. They exalt their own ideas, boast of their attainments, of their assurance, and place all their confidence in their feelings. They do not find a foundation for their faith in the word of God. Many have a fanciful religion. They talk of God's love, claiming that he is not severe and exacting, but long-suffering and lenient; at the same time, they echo the suggestion of Satan, "Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? . . . Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. "It was though he had declared that God's threatening was all a pretense, and man need not be alarmed, for God would not be so severe and exacting. The very same reasoning is employed today in the Christian world. When the claims of the law are presented, men begin to frame excuses for continuing in disobedience, stating that God will not punish them for the breaking of his precepts. But let us think of it soberly. Will God change his holy law to suit my convenience? Will he sanction sin, and countenance disobedience? If God had a character of this kind, we could not reverence him. His authority could not be respected. Every transgression of God's law will be visited with its penalty upon the transgressor. The wages of sin is death. God is jealous for the honor of his law; it is the foundation of his government in heaven and earth, and it will stand throughout eternal ages. The prophet declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Sin is the transgression of the law. But, again, it is written for the comfort and salvation of the penitent: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." {RH, November 18, 1890 par. 5}

Luther had no desire to encounter the fanatics whose course had been productive of so great evil. He knew them to be men of unsound judgment and undisciplined passions, who, while claiming to be specially illuminated from heaven, would not endure the slightest contradiction or even the kindest reproof or counsel. ***Arrogating to themselves supreme authority, they required everyone, without a question, to acknowledge their claims.*** But, as they demanded an interview with him, he consented to meet them; and so successfully did he expose their pretensions that the impostors at once departed from Wittenberg. {GC190.3}

The fanaticism was checked for a time; but several years later it broke out with greater violence and more terrible results. Said Luther, concerning the leaders in this movement:--"To them the Holy Scriptures were but a dead letter, and they all began to cry, 'The Spirit! the Spirit!' But most assuredly I will not follow where their spirit leads them. ***May God of His mercy preserve me from a church in which there are none but saints. I desire to dwell with the humble, the feeble, the sick, who know and feel their sins, and who groan and cry continually to God from the bottom of their hearts to obtain His consolation and support.***"-- Ibid., b. 10, ch. 10. {GC 190.4}

We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Many of the prophecies are about to be fulfilled in quick succession. Every element of power is about to be set to work. Past history will be repeated; old controversies will arouse to new life, and peril will beset God's people on every side. Intensity is taking possession of the human family. It is permeating everything upon the earth. And for what?--Games, plays, amusements; men are rushing and

crowding, and contending for the mastery. That which is common and perishable is absorbing their attention, so that things of eternal interest are scarcely thought of. Human beings, possessed with energy, zeal, and perseverance, will place all their God-given powers in co-operation with Satan's despotism to make void the law of God. ***Impostors of every caste and grade will claim to be worthy and true***, and there will be a magnifying of the common and impure against the true and the holy. Thus the spurious is accepted, and the true standard of holiness is discarded, as the word of God was discarded by Adam and Eve for the lie of Satan. {RH, August 31, 1897 par. 7}

Satan has come down in these last days to work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. His satanic majesty works miracles in the sight of false prophets, in the sight of men, claiming that he is indeed Christ Himself. Satan gives his power to those who are aiding him in his deceptions; ***therefore those who claim to have the great power of God can only be discerned by the great detector, the law of Jehovah***. The Lord tells us if it were possible they would deceive the very elect. The sheep's clothing seems so real, so genuine, that the wolf can be discerned only as we go to God's great moral standard and there find that they are transgressors of the law of Jehovah. {FW 45.1}

Many know so little about their Bibles that they are unsettled in the faith. They remove the old landmarks, and fallacies and winds of doctrine blow them hither and thither. Science, falsely so called, is wearing away the foundation of Christian principle; and those who were once in the faith drift away from the Bible landmarks, and divorce themselves from God, ***while still claiming to be His children***.--*Review and Herald, Dec. 29, 1896*. {CSW 35.1}

Those who excuse 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. {3T 266.0}

This sin of these noble leaders was great. Their lives might have been illustrious to the close. They had been greatly exalted and honored; yet God does not excuse sin in those in exalted positions any sooner than He does in those in more humble positions. ***Many professed Christians look upon men who do not reprove and condemn wrong, as men of piety and Christians indeed, while they think that those who stand boldly in defense of the right, and will not yield their integrity to unconsecrated influences, lack piety and a Christian spirit***. {3T 302.1}

Those who stand in defense of the honor of God and maintain the purity of truth at any cost will have manifold trials, as did our Saviour in the wilderness of temptation. While those who have yielding temperaments, who have not courage to condemn wrong, but keep silent when their influence is needed to stand in defense of the right against any pressure, may avoid many heartaches and escape many perplexities, they will also lose a very rich reward, if not their own souls. Those who are in harmony with God, and who through faith in Him receive strength to resist wrong and stand in defense of the right, will always have severe conflicts and will frequently have to stand almost alone. But precious victories will be theirs while they make God their dependence. His grace will be their strength. Their moral sensibility will be keen and clear, and their moral powers will be able to withstand wrong influences. Their integrity, like that of

Moses, will be of the purest character. {3T 302.2}

Through his evil angels, Satan contrives to form an alliance with professedly pious men, and thus he leavens the church of God. He knows that if he can induce men, as he induced the angels, to join in rebellion, *under the guise of servants of God*, he will have in them his most successful allies in his enterprise against heaven. 7BC1142:2

Luke. 20:19 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

20:20 And they watched [him], and sent forth spies, which should *feign themselves just men*, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

Satan has been multiplying his snares in Battle Creek; and professed Christians who are superficial in character and religious experience are used by the tempter as his decoys. This class are always ready for the gatherings for pleasure or sport, and their influence attracts others. Young men and young women who have tried to be Bible Christians are persuaded to join the party, and they are drawn into the ring. They did not prayerfully consult the divine standard, to learn what Christ had said in regard to the fruit to be borne on the Christian tree. They do not discern that these entertainments are really Satan's banquet, prepared to keep souls from accepting the call to the marriage supper of the Lamb; they prevent them from receiving the white robe of character, which is the righteousness of Christ. They become confused as to what it is right for them as Christians to do. They do not want to be thought singular, and naturally incline to follow the example of others. Thus they come under the influence of those who have never had the divine touch on heart or mind. {TM 85.1}

Preaching Contrary to Established Doctrines

"The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." ***We see here that the men in authority are not always to be obeyed***, even though they may profess to be teachers of Bible doctrine. There are many today who feel indignant and aggrieved that any voice should be raised presenting ideas that differ from their own in regard to points of religious belief. Have they not long advocated their ideas as truth? So the priests and rabbis reasoned in apostolic days: What mean these men who are unlearned, some of them mere fishermen, who are presenting ideas contrary to the doctrines which the learned priests and rulers are teaching the people? They have no right to meddle with the fundamental principles of our faith. {TM 69.1}

But we see that the God of heaven sometimes commissions men to teach that which is regarded as contrary to the established doctrines. Because those who were once the depositaries of truth became unfaithful to their sacred trust, the Lord chose others who would receive the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and would advocate truths that were not in accordance with the ideas of the religious leaders. And then these leaders, in the blindness of their minds, give full sway to what is supposed to be righteous indignation against the ones who have set

aside cherished fables. They act like men who have lost their reason. They do not consider the possibility that they themselves have not rightly understood the word. They will not open their eyes to discern the fact that they have misinterpreted and misapplied the Scriptures, and have built up false theories, calling them fundamental doctrines of the faith. {TM 69.2}

But the Holy Spirit will, from time to time, reveal the truth through its own chosen agencies; and no man, not even a priest or ruler, has a right to say, You shall not give publicity to your opinions, because I do not believe them. That wonderful "I" may attempt to put down the Holy Spirit's teaching. Men may for a time attempt to smother it and kill it; but that will not make error truth, or truth error. The inventive minds of men have advanced speculative opinions in various lines, and when the Holy Spirit lets light shine into human minds, it does not respect every point of man's application of the word. God impressed His servants to speak the truth *irrespective of what men had taken for granted as truth*. {TM 70.1}

But beware of rejecting that which is truth. The great danger with our people has been that of depending upon men and making flesh their arm. Those who have not been in the habit of searching the Bible for themselves, or weighing evidence, have confidence in the leading men and accept the decisions they make; and thus many will reject the very messages God sends to His people, if these leading brethren do not accept them. {TM 106.4}

The conflict is to wax fiercer and fiercer. Satan will take the field and personate Christ. He will misrepresent, misapply, and pervert everything he possibly can, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Even in our day there have been and will continue to be *entire families* who have once rejoiced in the truth, but who will lose faith because of *calumnies* and *falsehoods* brought to them in regard to those whom they have loved and with *whom* they have had sweet *counsel*. *They opened their hearts to the sowing of tares; the tares sprang up among the wheat; they strengthened; the crop of wheat became less and less; and the precious truth lost its power to them. For a time a false zeal accompanied their new theories, which hardened their hearts against the advocates of truth* as did the Jews against Christ. {TM 411.2}

Christ presented before the assembly at Nazareth *a fearful truth when he declared that with backsliding Israel there was no safety for the faithful messenger of God*. They would not know his worth, or appreciate his labors. While they professed to have great zeal for the honor of God and the good of Israel, *they were the worst enemies of both*. They were by precept and example *leading the people farther and farther from obedience to God and purity and simplicity of faith*,--leading them where he could not reveal himself as their defense in the day of trouble. God sent Elijah to the widow of Sarepta, because he could not trust him with Israel. {LP 230.1}

We look with horror upon the treachery of Judas; but his case represents *a large class* who file in under the banner of Christ, yet are really his worst enemies. They worship only self and money, and use the name of Christian as a cloak to hide their evil deeds. They sell their integrity for money, and their Saviour for a little worldly advantage. {3SP 82.3}

The worst enemies we have are those who are trying to destroy the influence of the watchmen upon the walls of Zion. Satan works through agents. He is making an earnest effort here. He works according to a definite plan, and his agents act in concert. A line of unbelief

stretches across the continent and is in communication with the church of God. Its influence has been exerted to undermine confidence in the work of the Spirit of God. This element is here and is silently working. Be careful lest you be found aiding the enemy of God and man by spreading false reports and by criticisms and decided opposition. {5T 294.3}