

Those who occupy positions of trust in the work of God should ever bear in mind that these positions involve great responsibility. The right performance of the solemn work for this time and the salvation of the souls connected with us in any way depend in a great degree upon our own spiritual condition. All should cultivate a vivid sense of their responsibility; for their own present well-being and their eternal destiny will be decided by the spirit they cherish. If self is woven into the work, it is as the offering of strange fire in the place of the sacred. Such workers incur the displeasure of the Lord. Brethren, remove your hands from the work, **unless you can distinguish the sacred fire from the common.** TM 260.1

Note: Antioch's as the daily be common fire, The church as the bride, You can't keep the commandments, etc.

Those who have stood as representative men are not all Christian gentlemen. There is prevalent a spirit that seeks the mastery over others. Men regard themselves as authority, they express their opinions and pass resolutions about matters of which they have no experimental knowledge. Some who are connected with the publishing house at ----- pass through the office, speaking with different ones, giving directions which they suppose it proper for them to give, when they do not understand what they are talking about. TM 260.2

Neither is it the object of preaching to amuse. Some ministers have adopted a style of preaching that has not the best influence. It has become a habit with them to weave anecdotes into their discourses. The impression thus made upon the hearers is not a savor of life unto life. Ministers should not bring amusing stories into their preaching. The people need pure provender, thoroughly winnowed from the chaff. "Preach the word," was the charge that Paul gave to Timothy, and this is our commission also. **The minister who mixes story-telling with his discourses is using strange fire. God is offended, and the cause of truth is dishonored, when His representatives descend to the use of cheap, trifling words.**—The Review and Herald, December 22, 1904. TM 318.1

### Strange Fire

When the speaker shall, in a haphazard way, **strike in anywhere**, as the fancy takes him, **when he talks politics to the people**, he is mingling the common fire with the sacred. **He dishonors God. He has not real evidence from God that he is speaking the truth.** He does his hearers a grievous wrong. He may plant seeds which may strike their fibrous roots deep, and they spring up and bear poisonous fruit. **How dare men do this? How dare they advance ideas when they do not know certainly whence they came, or that they are the truth?** TM 337.1

*O what sadness fills my heart when I see a man recklessly stating falsehood for*

*truth, while Satan stands by, exulting over the victory that he has gained over the man's soul. The man knew better, but so long had he yielded to Satan, saying the things that Satan prompted him to say, that he had become confused. How will he conduct himself in the future?* Unless he places himself in God's control, he will be a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. 18LtMs, Lt 162, 1903, par. 18

He comes to the feast provided by the Lord, but he does not put on the wedding garment. He comes clothed in his common citizen dress, disdaining to wear the garment provided for him at great cost. And when the Lord asks, "How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" he can answer nothing. [Matthew 22:12.] He is self-condemned. And the Lord says, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness." [Verse 13.] 18LtMs, Lt 162, 1903, par. 19

During this life he was unwilling to stand forth as one of God's denominated people, and at the last great day the Lord refuses to acknowledge him. 18LtMs, Lt 162, 1903, par. 20

The converting power of God must come upon men who handle sacred things, yet who are unable, through some cause best known to God, *to distinguish* between the sacred fire of God's own kindling and the strange fire which they offer. That strange fire is as dishonoring to God as was that presented by Nadab and Abihu. The sacred fire of God's love would make men tender and kind and sympathetic toward those in peril. Those who indulge in sharp, overbearing words, are really saying: I am holier than thou. Do you not see my exalted position? TM 356.2

### The Sacred and the Strange Fire

He will represent the sacredness of the work, *he will magnify the truth, and will ever present before men and angels the holy perfume of the character of Christ.* This is the sacred fire of God's own kindling. Anything aside from this is strange fire, abhorrent to God, and the more offensive as one's position in the work involves larger responsibilities. TM 357.2

I have a message from God to the sinners in Zion, the ones whom Christ addressed: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God." You need to offer always the sacred fire; for then Christ's works, His love, His mercy, His righteousness, will ascend before God, as a cloud of holy, fragrant incense, wholly acceptable. TM 357.3

But strange fire has been offered in the use of harsh words, in self-importance, in self-exaltation, in self-righteousness, in arbitrary authority, in domineering, in

oppression, in restricting the liberty of God's people, binding them about by your plans and rules, which God has not framed, neither have they come into His mind. All these things are strange fire, unacknowledged by God, and are a continual misrepresentation of His character. TM 357.4

I have a message for you: “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” TM 358.1

“Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment. And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him. For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head; and He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.... So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.” TM 358.2

The holy principles that God has given are represented as the sacred fire, but common fire has been used in place of the sacred. **Plans contrary to truth and righteousness** are introduced in a subtle manner on the plea that this must be done, and that must be done, “because it is for the advancement of the cause of God.” ***But it is the devising of men that leads to oppression, injustice, and wickedness.*** The cause of God is free from every taint of injustice. **It can gain no advantage by robbing the members of the family of God of their individuality or their rights.** All such practices are abhorrent to God. He inspires no such practices as have been entered into by your councils in regard to the publication of books. TM 359.3

Especially to every man who accepts responsibilities as a counselor, everyone who is dealing with human souls, is this grand, beautiful truth to be a bright and shining light. It is no credit to one who has the word of God in his possession, to say: "I have no experience; I do not understand these things." He will never be wiser until he becomes of much less consequence in his own estimation. He must learn his lesson as a little child. He must make it his first duty to understand the work of God in the regeneration of the soul. This change should take place in every man before he accepts a position as a leader or ruler in connection with the sacred work of God. ***If one has not a vital connection with God, his own spirit and sentiments will prevail.*** These may be well represented as strange fire offered in the place of the sacred. Man has woven into the work of God his own defects of character, ***devices that are human and earthly, delusions ensnaring to himself and to all who accept them.*** TM 370.2

Just how soon this refining process will begin I cannot say, but it will not be long deferred. He whose fan is in His hand will cleanse His temple of its ***moral defilement.*** He will thoroughly purge His floor. ***God has a controversy with all who practice the least injustice; for in so doing they reject the authority of God and imperil their interest in the atonement,*** the redemption which Christ has undertaken for every son and daughter of Adam. Will it pay to take a course abhorrent to God? Will it pay to put upon your censers strange fire to offer before God, and say it makes no difference? TM 373.1

The minister who ***anecdotes*** with his discourses is using strange fire. God is offended, and the cause of truth is dishonored, when His representatives descend to the use of cheap, trifling words. VSS 273.1

Years ago, in speaking to ministers, I dwelt upon this subject in your presence. The minister is using strange fire when he mixes storytelling with his discourses. This habit should not be perpetuated. My brother, you believe the truth, you love the truth, and you are not too old to improve. You are required by our Saviour to take heed how you witness for Him. You need to go deeper, and deeper, and still deeper in the study of the Word. You have men of all classes of minds to meet, and as you deal with the sacred Word, you should manifest earnestness, respect, reverence. Let not the impression be made upon any mind that you are a cheap, surface speaker. Weed out storytelling from your discourses. Preach the Word. You would have had more sheaves to bring to the Master if you had constantly preached the Word. 11LtMs, Lt 61, 1896, par. 5

We are never to forget that we are representatives of Christ. We are to use no carnal weapons when unbelieving and deluded souls come among us. We are not even to insinuate anything against those who shall come into our assemblies. Not

an unkind or discourteous word, defensive or offensive, should escape our lips or be traced by our pen. When reviled, we are not to revile again. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Your words are not always wise. When you allow your own spirit to have sway, you lose the Spirit of God, and then it is that the strange fire is offered. Your imagination is deceptive, you arrive at false conclusions, and things appear to you in a perverted light. Your imagination is wrought upon by satanic agencies. Be careful not to trace a word of your suppositions, to be immortalized. EA 230.4

Many who know not what spirit they are of are ready to reach out their hands to grasp and gather in that which they have not earned. Many are under condemnation because of the grave sin of selfishness which is leavening the institution. One confederates with another. “You stand by me, and I will stand by you,” they say to each other. Thus they lead others into false paths, bringing in the strange fire that God has positively forbidden to be used in His work. With some, serving the Lord has but little place. They think they have no time to pray. 7LtMs, Ms 23, 1891, par. 6

This is the supreme delusion of these last days. Satan has done this work in no halfway manner. That Sabbath which God declares is the sign and seal of the loyalty of His people, by which they are to know Him as the only true God, the maker of heaven and earth, the day He has sanctified and blessed, is made the busiest day of the week. This cunning device of Satan has been brought in to ensnare the commandment-keeping people of God. Through successive steps he has led men to regard Sunday, first as a holiday which all must observe, and then as God’s holy day. But God no more accepts this false sabbath than He accepted the strange fire offered by Nadab and Abihu. 10LtMs, Lt 100, 1895, par. 30

I see and sense more than I ever have, the parable of the ten virgins. “And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.” [[Matthew 25:2.](#)] Yes, foolish indeed. Their God-given capabilities—the rich treasures of character which should be gaining influence and power on the side of truth and righteousness—are mingled with the scent of selfishness and self-indulgence. The strange fire is mixed with the sacred fire, and its purity, holiness, and divine origin eclipsed. There is plenty of animal machinery at work; Christ in truth is advocated, but is not represented; for this reason the truth is dishonored by the very ones who advocate it. Many of those who have their Bibles to which they can turn at any time, and distinguish the true from the false influence, are carried away with the corrupting, deceiving, false characters, who present a very nice appearance, as if wise in Bible lore, but do not the words of Christ. 11LtMs, Lt 121, 1896, par. 10