

Ms 2, 1871

Youth in Battle Creek

1871

I was shown last December the dangers of the youth. I saw that Brother Kilgore's children needed much done for them before they could be accepted of God. They were not making advancement in the divine life. They are in danger of overlooking present duty, neglecting the education essential for practical life, and expecting that book knowledge was the all-important matter to be attended to to make life a success.

They have duties at home which they overlook. They do not feel the importance of being faithful in the littles, feeling the obligation due their parents and being true and thorough and faithful in the humble, homely duties of life which lie directly in their pathway. These young men are in danger of soaring above the common, essential branches of education so very necessary to make home happy and cheerful. They have the lesson to learn of bringing sunshine instead of casting a shadow. Brother Kilgore's sons have but little true sense of their dangers and of the duties relating to practical life. They have not learned to bear burdens and take responsibilities. They think that almost everything can be attained if they have education.

The education of these children should not be neglected, but an education is dearly gained if it is at the expense of the soul. If in gaining an education they cease to learn in the school of Christ, they will not become intelligent Christians and they will finally realize that they have made a terrible mistake. These young men have characters to form for heaven. If they give themselves up to obtain a knowledge of books, become absorbed in their school studies, and neglect prayer and religious duties, they are meeting with a great loss. In attending school they are exposed to a variety of temptations that they escape at home in their father's family under the watchful care of God-fearing, judicious parents.

Children, in attending school, too frequently make their studies the principal matter of interest, their religious duties secondary. If, while at home, they prayed twice a day in faith to their heavenly Father for grace to keep them from temptation and the contaminating influence which prevails among the youth of this degenerate age, when they place themselves where they are exposed to ten temptations to one at their homes, they need to pray as much more earnestly and constantly, as their surroundings are more unfavorable to the formation of Christian character. These young men have not strength of character to resist temptation. They are not settled, rooted, and grounded in the truth, but are in danger of losing their interest in heavenly things and preparation necessary to meet the approval of God. God is weighing moral worth. Angels are closely watching the development of character and bearing the record to heaven.

The lack of Christian principle with youth keeps them weak and wavering. They are unstable. They have brilliant ideas of success in life. Their imagination presents a flattering prospect before them, and these brilliant anticipations exalt them above the simple duties at home and in the church which would give them a practical experience; and after they have followed their own varying course, chasing after

happiness, experience, stern experience, has taught them that they have made a sad mistake. They are then in danger of losing confidence in themselves, and have lost the time that they should have improved in gaining a valuable experience in the Christian life, following on to know the Lord, gaining a rich experience, blessing others by a life of spotless purity, of high, noble, stern integrity, and of thoroughness in the performance of duty.

These young men, I saw, were in danger of losing their souls. They have duties to do at home. They have responsibilities to bear which they have neglected to lift. That which they sow they shall also reap. These young men are now sowing the seed. Every act of their life, every word spoken, is a seed for good or evil. As is the seed, so will be the crop. If they indulge lustful passions and give up to perversity of temper, to the gratification of appetite, or the inclinations of an unsanctified heart, if they foster wrong principles and cherish habits of unfaithfulness, of dissipation, of neglect of duty, they will reap a plentiful crop of remorse, shame, and despair. The angel records every word, every act, every thought, and they will have to stand the test of the judgment.

These young men need to stop and reflect. Beverly Hare, what has been your course with your associates? Have you let your light so shine before those with whom you associate that they are impressed by your deportment and your sobriety, that you really are a follower of Christ? If this is the case, your conscious and unconscious influence is gathering with Christ. Can you do any work more exalted and ennobling than this? It is Christ in you, a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, refreshing those around, and its influence is widening and deepening even in the immortal life. This has not been the case with you, my Brother Beverly. You have been drawn away by the irreligious, to unite with them, to follow their example, to do as they do, and you have pursued a course which has dishonored your Redeemer and grieved the Spirit of God. Can you expect that you will feel anything but darkness and discouragement and coldness and indifference?

Your course has been contrary to the instruction given you by your dear parents who love you, contrary to the light of truth. You knew that you were going in forbidden paths. God is displeased with you, and yet His mercy invites you still to make peace with Him by thorough repentance and humiliation before Him. Your school, I saw, would only prove to you a curse, for you had not stability and firmness of purpose to resist temptation.

You have a perverse, unhappy disposition. You do not consider that the happiness and the misery of life are made up of little acts, little words, little deeds of thoughtful attention. These you neglect. If you do not reform you will carry these deficiencies into your life and not only be wretched, morose and gloomy yourself, but a body of darkness to others.

I beg of you, yes, I warn you in the name of my Master, do not enter the marriage relation and take upon yourself the responsibilities and obligation of the marriage vows until you are changed in heart and life. When you can make your own home happy, be a blessing to your father and mother, your brothers and sister, then can you understand the duties involved in the marriage relation.

You should begin your work just where you have failed to perform it. You have no special interest to contribute to the happiness of your father's family. You are boastful, proud, disobedient, unthankful,

and unholy. This, you may say, is a sad, severe picture. But I assure you in the fear of God, it is not exaggerated a particle. You are affected when you get in a meeting where the Spirit of God prevails; but you do not give the more earnest heed to the things you hear lest at any time you should let them slip, and the impression wears away in a short time, and you are left every time harder and darker and more unhappy than before. You are not happy. You are dissatisfied with yourself and are inclined to find fault with those around you or with your surroundings as the cause of your unhappiness. But the secret of the whole matter lies in yourself. Your heart has been touched by the Spirit of God, and you have at times tried very hard to do right, but you soon fall back into the same state. You do not brace against temptation, and you are unhappy because you bear a violated conscience. Your school will do you no good but only harm, harm that cannot be estimated. You make your unhappiness. You do not cultivate a cheerful, happy, temper. You indulge in finding fault, in fretting, and you manufacture trials.

You have a work to do to redeem the time, and put away your defects of character. God has given you many privileges. Had you improved them you would have made advancement in the divine life. You should cultivate a love for faithfulness in the little things. Perform the little duties well and you will receive commendation of your heavenly Father. You have no time to lose. You need to be transformed. You need to be alarmed. Arouse yourself and take hold of the work as you never yet have done. Make thorough work. Rest not until you have made a radical change in your life.

The sons of Brother Kilgore need a great work done for them. They were very ambitious for an education, which is right if conducted on right principles. But when studies are taken hold of from inclination, without study and prayerful consideration of what are our duties to our parents, then the door is open for temptation. God has given you life and duties in your sphere to perform which you should in no case neglect.

I saw that coldness, indifference, and carelessness will prove the ruin of these dear boys. If they do not see the importance of firmly adopting and rigidly practicing right principles at home they will surely not do this at school. They need to bear responsibilities and home burdens. They need carefully to shun selfishness and the desire to follow inclination rather than duty. You, my dear young friends, should seek the Lord and should begin to be faithful and to show faithfulness and unselfish interest at home. "Honor thy father and thy mother" is the first commandment with promise. [Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2.] The careless, reckless inattention of children in the performance of their duties at home is an abomination in the sight of the Lord. Education gained at the expense of filial duties, to the neglect of the soul's interest, is at infinite loss. You cannot afford, young men, to barter away heaven so cheaply. It would be imitating Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage.

Brother Kilgore's sons have good qualities of mind; if rightly directed they may do good and be a blessing to all within the sphere of their influence. The danger of attending school where there is not a steady influence to cultivate the moral powers is very great. The youth of aspiring minds become enthusiastic, ardent, and all absorbed in their studies. They are ambitious to compete with their schoolmates, and a spirit of emulation is encouraged in them to exert themselves to the utmost to win the applause of their teachers. The soul's interest is made secondary. Moral and religious culture is

excluded from the schools. Teachers themselves are generally of that class given to pride and indulging the follies of this age and they lead their pupils in this direction.

Beverly Hare, my dear brother, God has given you power and opportunity to improve the privileges within your reach and be happy, or abuse these privileges and be wretched. Which will you do? Your course of conduct will determine your choice. You may pursue a course of integrity and self-culture to make others happy, or you may follow the course of your own choosing and your life be like the passage of a ship upon mid-ocean—after it has passed, no trace left behind. It is for your interest to pursue a course of cheerful labor and be a son of persevering industry. There are bewitching influences in the school life, a freedom from restraint, and a love of idleness and sloth. The failures of self-conquest in your past life have left a discouraging influence upon your mind. But these failures were not a necessity; they were the result of your not seeking the aid of the Spirit of God. The strength God will impart will prove sufficient for your utmost needs.

My brother, if there is a big job on hand that you know must be done, you will resolutely take hold of it and accomplish the task. But religious discipline will teach you that industry is a duty essential for the Christian in temporal and religious life. If you draw strength from God, following duty rather than inclination, a precious light will penetrate the chambers of your soul which are now darkened, shedding a cheerful light upon your daily toils, that you can—and you should—feel that you are as much engaged in serving God in doing the duties at home with interest as though you were praying and talking in meeting. When you can take hold with cheerful interest, laboring with a spirit of contentment, putting your heart into the work with submission and hope, you will experience a joy and happiness in life to which you are now a stranger. You will feel courage to war the Christian warfare. You will have hope that through Christ you may come off conqueror.

You feel, my dear brother, that you have not the sympathy of friends or even of your parents. What has led you to feel thus alone? Your own course. You have given yourself up to the influence of self which has had a depressing influence upon your physical strength. You have never felt the natural obligation devolving upon a son. You have not felt it a solemn duty you owe your parents, your younger brothers and your sister, to show an interest in their happiness. You have not been wide awake to lift the burdens from your father and mother, to cherish, for their sakes if not for your own, a cheerful, sunny temper that shall be as sunlight in a cloudy day. You have overlooked the little courtesies of life, given up to gloom and distrust and jealousy and suspicion of all around you. You have not taken pleasure in associating with the family, in being interested in that which interested them. But you have built up a barrier between yourself and your father's family, and then you feel a spirit to blame them for your unhappiness. Blame only yourself. When you fulfill the obligations due your parents, you will find them too ready to fulfill on their part the obligations due to their children.

You misinterpret the feelings of your parents and brothers and sister. They would all help you if they could, but you surround yourself with such a chilly atmosphere of morose and stolid gloom that they could not penetrate this armor if they desired ever so much so to do. You throw off this stolid gloom,

make strong efforts to add to the happiness of the family by deeds of kindness and attention to the little everyday duties of life, manifesting an interest in your duties, laboring for your father to help him where he needs to be helped, and you will meet with a decided, happy change.

You are not submissive. You want to plan and dictate too much. You must give this up. Your father is at the head of the family and you should respect his judgment and teach your brothers and sisters to respect the judgment of your father without proposing a plan contrary to his proposed plans. Your influence tells on the family circle. You have responsibilities upon you. You do not realize that your influence and example are aiding your brothers and sister in the formation of their characters. You will have to render an account for the example given these younger than yourself. You are accountable to God for talents that He has given you. Give an account of thy stewardship, will be heard by you from the Master. What can you render back to God? What improvements have you made of your abilities?

You think the little duties and courtesies of life are not so important and are, in short, unnecessary. Oh, my brother, they act an important part in making up the sum of life's happiness or misery. See from day to day that every word you utter shall be cheerful and happy. Let not a gloomy, disconsolate impression remain upon your countenance or be seen in your acts. Help your brothers. You are more ready to dictate to them and to leave the burdens that somebody must bear upon them rather than, as a faithful son and brother, bearing your share cheerfully, in union with them. Diligence in the use of your time, industry in useful labor, would be a blessing to you in calling your mind from contemplating unpleasant subjects and indulging in despondency and gloom. If you cannot be happy in your father's family, neither will you be happy if you have a home of your own.

You carry happiness with you, or unhappiness. You must encourage a disposition to be willing to follow advice and not think that you know what is best. You need the mature experience of your parents. They have anxiety and the deepest interest for you, but they are becoming disheartened. The love of your parents will certainly become chilled unless you give this love something to feed upon. If you are constantly an annoyance and trouble, bringing sadness and unhappiness to their hearts and home, how can that love be kept alive? You will surely wear it out. You have a work to do to redeem the past. Manifest love and affection for your parents and brothers and sister and your efforts in this direction will be repaid. Show a lively interest to take burdens upon yourself and relieve your parents. In doing this you will realize a contentment and happiness you have never felt before.

You may feel at times that your efforts may not have been appreciated when you have tried hard to please and do your duty, but don't be discouraged. The most successful laborers in God's great vineyard are those who endure toil patiently, without reference to whether their efforts are appreciated or not, but who work for their Master without apparent or applauded success, simply because they believed they were in the performance of duty, and they believed that every right purpose and well-meant effort would be regarded of their Master. Do these things, not for praise, Beverly, but because you want to do all with faithful integrity, let the result be what it may. The judgment will give every work all the credit it deserves.

Religion will prove you an anchor. Communion with God will impart to every holy impulse a vigor that will make the duties of life a pleasure.

I was shown that industry is a blessing to youth. A life of idleness is to be shunned by a young man as a vice. However humble the occupation may be, if only honorable, if the humble duties are done faithfully, he will not lose his reward. Industry is essential to health. If habits of industry were encouraged, a door would be closed against a thousand temptations. Those who lounge away their days, having no aim or object in life, are troubled with dejection and tempted to seek amusement in forbidden indulgences which enervate the system and tax the physical powers tenfold more than the most taxing labor. Indolence destroys more than hard labor. Many die because they have not the ability or inclination to set themselves to work. "Nothing-to-do" has killed its thousands.

If youth will preserve habits of virtue and strict purity, and observe the laws God has established in the being, they may preserve their lives, although required to perform severe labor during their lifetime. Long life is the heritage of diligence.

Some young men think if they could spend a life in doing nothing they would be supremely happy. They cultivate a hatred for useful labor. They envy the sons of pleasure who devote their lives to amusement and gaiety, who laugh and carouse and are free from every burden of life. Those who think thus soon become sour and repulsive. Their deportment becomes vexatious, their incessant complainings annoy and distress their parents, and unhappiness and heartaches are the result of such thoughts and conduct. "Nothing-to-do" has sunk many a young man in perdition. Well-regulated labor is essential for the success of every youth. God could not have inflicted a greater curse upon men and women than to doom them to live a life of inaction. Idleness will destroy soul and body. The heart, the moral character and physical energies are enfeebled. The intellect suffers, and the heart is open to temptation as an open avenue to sink into every vice. The indolent man tempts the devil to tempt him.

Ms 3, 1871

Elder White's Labors, and Errors of His Brethren Toward Him

1871

[October 10, 1871.]

[From a vision at Bordoville, Vermont]

[First part missing.] ... God as great a sin as that of neglect and unfaithfulness of His servants in reproving wrongs. Those who praised the unfaithful and flattered the unconsecrated were sharers of their sin of neglect and unfaithfulness.

God has given my husband especial qualifications, natural ability, and He selected him and gave him an experience to lead out His people in the advance work. There have been murmurers among Sabbathkeeping Adventists, as [there] were among ancient Israel, and these jealous, suspicious ones have given occasion to the enemies of our faith, by their suggestions and insinuations, to distrust my

husband's honesty. These jealous ones have both placed matters before their members in a false light. These impressions stand in the way of many embracing the truth. They regard my husband as a schemer, a selfish, avaricious man, and they are afraid of him and the truth we as a people hold.

Ancient Israel, when their appetite was restricted or when any close requirement was brought to bear upon them, reflected upon Moses. That he was arbitrary, that he wished to rule them, and be altogether a prince over them, when Moses was only an instrument in God's hands to bring His people into a position of submission and obedience to God's voice.

Modern Israel has murmured and become jealous of my husband because he has pleaded for the cause of God. He has encouraged liberality, he has rebuked those who loved this world, and has censured selfishness. He has pleaded for donations to the cause of God and he has led off by liberal donations himself to encourage liberality with his brethren. But by many murmuring and jealous ones even this has been interpreted that he wished to be personally benefited with the means of his brethren, and that he had enriched himself at the expense of the cause of God, when the facts in the case are that God has entrusted means in his hands to raise him above want so that he need not be dependent upon the mercies of a changeable, murmuring and jealous people. Because we have not selfishly studied our own interest but have cared for the widow and the fatherless, God has in His providence worked in our behalf and blessed us with prosperity and an abundance.

Moses had sacrificed a prospective kingdom, a life of worldly honor and luxury in kingly courts, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season, for he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Had we chosen a life of ease and freedom from labor and care, we might have done so. But this was not our choice. We chose active labor in the cause of God, an itinerant life with all its hardships, privations and exposure to a life of indolence.

We have not lived for ourselves, to please ourselves, but we have tried to live for God to please and glorify Him. We have not made it an object to labor for property, but God has fulfilled His promise in giving us an hundredfold in this life. He may prove us by removing it away from us. If so, we pray for submission to humbly bear the test.

While He has committed to our trust talents of money and influence we will try to invest it in His cause, that should the fires consume, and adversity diminish, we can have the pleasure of knowing that all our treasure is not where fires can consume or adversity sweep away. The investment of our time, our interest and our means in the cause of God is a sure bank that can never fail, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.

I was shown that my husband has had threefold the care he should have had. He has felt tried that brethren Andrews and Waggoner did not help him bear his responsibilities, and has felt grieved because they did not help him in the variety of business matters in connection with the Institute and Association. There has been a continual advance of the work of publication since the unfaithful have been separated from it. As the work increased there should have been men to have shared the responsibilities, but some who could do this had no desire to because it would not increase their possessions as much as

some more lucrative business. 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. And it is only by a miracle of God's mercy that he has stood under the burden so long.

But there are now many things to be considered. He has by his devotion to the work, and persevering care, shown what may be done in the publishing department. Men with unselfish interests combined with sanctified judgment may make the sacred work at the office a success. My husband has so long borne the burden alone that it has told fearfully upon his strength and there is a positive necessity for a change. He must be relieved from care to a great degree and yet he can work in the cause of God in speaking and writing.

When we returned from Kansas in the autumn of 1870 we both should have had a period of rest. Weeks of freedom from care were necessary to bring up our exhausted energies. But when we found the important post at Battle Creek nearly deserted we felt compelled to take hold of the work with double energy and to labor beyond our strength. I was shown that my husband should stand there no longer unless there are men who will feel the wants of the cause and bear the burdens of the work while he shall simply act as counselor. He must lay the burden down, for God has an important work for him to do in writing and speaking the truth. Our influence in laboring in the wide field will tell more for the upbuilding of the cause of God.

There is a great amount of prejudice in many minds. False statements have placed us in a wrong position before the people and this is in the way of many embracing the truth. If they are made to believe that those who occupy responsible positions in the work at Battle Creek are designing and fanatical, they conclude that the entire work is wrong and that our views of Bible truth must be incorrect, and they fear to investigate and receive the truth. But we are not to go forth to call the people to look to us; we are not to generally speak of ourselves and vindicate our character, but to speak the truth, exalt the truth, speak of Jesus, exalt Jesus, and this, attended by the power of God, will remove prejudice and disarm opposition.

Brethren Andrews and Smith love to write; so does my husband, and God has let His light shine upon His Word and led him into a field of rich thought that would be a blessing to the people of God at large. While he has borne a triple burden, some of his ministering brethren have let the responsibility drop heavily upon him, consoling themselves with the thought that God had placed Brother White at the head of the work and qualified him for it, and he had not fitted them for the position; therefore, they have not taken the responsibility and borne the burdens they might have borne. There should be men to feel the same interest my husband has felt.

There never has been a more important period in the history of Seventh-day Adventists than at the present time. Instead of the publishing work diminishing, the demand for our publications is greatly increasing. There will be more to do instead of less. My husband has been murmured against so much and has contended with jealousy and falsehood so long, and he has seen so little faithfulness in men that he has become suspicious of almost everyone, even of his own brethren in the ministry. The

ministering brethren have felt this, and for fear that they should not move wisely, in many instances have not moved at all. But the time has come when these men must unitedly labor and lift the burdens. These men lack faith and confidence in God. They believe the truth and in the fear of God they should unite their efforts and bear the burden of this work which God has laid upon them.

After one has done the best he can in his judgment, and the other things he can see where he could have improved the matter, he should kindly and patiently give the brother the benefit of his judgment, but should not censure or question his integrity of purpose any sooner than he would wish to be suspected or unjustly censured himself. If the brother who feels the cause of God at heart sees that in his earnest efforts to do, that he has made a failure, he will feel deeply over the matter, for he will be inclined to distrust himself and lose confidence in his own judgment. Nothing will weaken his courage and Godlike manhood like a sense of his mistakes and errors that he has made in the work God has appointed him to do, which work he loves better than his life.

How unjust then for his brethren who discover his errors to keep pressing the thorn deeper and deeper into his heart to make him feel more intensely, when with every thrust he is weakening faith, courage, and confidence in himself to do, and to work successfully in the upbuilding of the cause of God. Frequently the truth and facts are to be plainly spoken to the erring to make them see and feel their error that they may reform. But this should ever be with pitying tenderness, not with harshness or severity, but consider their own weakness lest they also be tempted. When the fault is seen and acknowledged, then comfort should be given instead of grieving and seeking to make him feel more deeply.

In the sermon of Christ upon the mount, He said, "Judge not that ye be not judged for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." Our Saviour reproveth for rash judgment. "Why beholdest thou the mote in thy brother's eye; and, behold a beam is in thine own eye." [Matthew 7:1-3.] It is frequently the case that while one is quick to discern the errors of his brethren he may be in greater faults himself and is blind to his own errors.

We should all, who are followers of Christ, deal with one another exactly as we wish the Lord to deal with us in our errors and weaknesses, for we are all erring and need pity and forgiveness of God. Jesus consented to take human nature that He might know how to pity and that He might know how to plead with His Father in behalf of sinful, erring mortals. He volunteered to become man's advocate, and He humiliated Himself to become acquainted with the temptations wherewith man was beset that He might succor those who should be tempted, and be a tender and faithful high priest.

In the prayer Christ taught His disciples was the request, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." [Matthew 6:12.] We cannot repeat this prayer from the heart and dare to be unforgiving, for we ask the Lord to forgive our trespasses against Him in the same manner we forgive those who trespass against us. But few realize the true import of this prayer. If they did, would [they] dare to repeat it and ask God to deal with them as they deal with their fellow mortals? And yet this spirit

of hardness and lack of forgiveness exists even among brethren to a fearful extent. Brother is exacting with brother.

Ms 4, 1871

Testimony Concerning Brother Shepley and Sister Rickford

Battle Creek, Michigan

c. 1871

While on my recent visit to Greenville I recollected the countenances of Brother Shepley and Sister Rickford. They were presented before me among that class who were deceived by the enemy. They profess the truth, but unless they are converted to the truth and sanctified through the truth they will bring a reproach upon the cause of God. The testimony I bore to the people was upon general principles. I hoped that this would be enough for them, and that they would see and feel the wrong course pursued by them without my being more definite.

The young woman who lives with them is not right. Right motives do not actuate her in living as she does in that family. She is careless of her deportment and pursues a course toward that man, the husband of another, that no modest, virtuous female would be guilty of. There is an unholy attachment, a bond of union, that leads to evil and only evil. The attention that Sister Rickford gives Brother Shepley is wrong. Such attention should come only from the wife to her lawful husband.

These two profess to believe in the commandments of God, yet they are violating them and are law breakers.

The conduct of Shepley toward Sister Rickford is censurable. Her conduct toward him is wrong. She knows this. She knows she is guilty before God. Shepley is not faithful, affectionate and kind to his true, lawful wife. The case of these two is grievous in the sight of God. They are constantly inviting the temptations of Satan. Such lightness, trifling, joking, sporting and nonsense is sinful. If this was all—but it is not all. Deep and grievous sins are written against them. Not only the church should be aroused, but the neighborhood feel over this matter and should denounce these things which are a disgrace to the community.