

Controlling Brethren

"Sunnyside," Cooranbong, N. W. W., Mar. 12, 1897.

Dear Brethren Daniells, Palmer, and Colcord:-- I have been deeply moved. In the night season, as we were in a meeting where several were assembled, we were setting forth the present situation, and how few there were to do the work so important and essential to be done. One of commanding appearance, who had been listening to the description of the condition of things, arose, and said, "Will you please to look carefully, and see if you are accepting the men that are waiting to do service for the Master? Have you not mistaken your callings, and what it comprehends, in the positions you occupy toward one who has moved to another field of labor? What if this move was not according to your ideas of order, or according to your human wisdom? Have you, in your experience, been faultless? Have you not made mismoves and blunders? He has his strong traits of character, and you have yours. All these imperfections God sees. He sees that some have made independent moves, even without the counsel of God.

"All ye are brethren." To no one has the Lord given permission to rule over a brother. All need their hearts refined, and cleansed from weakness, from natural and hereditary traits of character. All are amenable to God. If a brother errs in his ministerial work, remember that you have all erred, and shown great want of faith in the Lord. Yet, God has not discarded you, and given you no place to work. Had he done this, his action would have been just as sensible as your action in this case.

Be careful what power you take into your finite hands. Be careful how you denounce those whom you should only pity, and comfort, and help. The Lord does not see the works of men with the same vision that men see them. He has many kinds of men to deal with, and he knows just how to deal with all. But let every man, whatever his position, remember that he is not to rule any man's conscience, or sit on the judgment seat against any man. The Lord does not pronounce as just the judgment you have formed.

Satan is a masterly worker, and he will lose no opportunity to make the most of his chances to work for those who are left in a very disagreeable situation. There are those who make grave mistakes, but they seldom see the aggravated character of their own faults, or their more disagreeable results. But if another passes over the ground, and does no worse, and perhaps not nearly as bad, how easy for the brother who first sinned to tear down his brother with an unsparing hand. There are men who are severely tempted and tried who meet their temptations, at times feeling desperately, because they know not what to do in an emergency. Jesus pities them. He sees them meeting their temptations with a noble purpose, and wrestling with the devil foot to foot, breast to breast, and he says to them, as he said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan. Let me come close to my tempted one. Satan hath desired thee, that he might sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not."

Speak gently to ministers who are seeking, fully as earnestly as your own self, to do their duty under difficulties. They are but men, with all the clamoring of Satan to discourage them. "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees." Be careful to make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but rather let it be healed. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."

The Lord has accepted men, and borne with them, when their brethren have treated them indifferently. They have allowed their masterly spirit to come in, to rule, and in thus doing, they have counterworked

the work of God. You have managed this case, from first to last, in evidently a faithless manner. He is in God's service. He is God's property. You have no right to handicap him, as you have done. You should deal with him just as you would choose to be dealt with under like circumstances. By going to another field to work, without consulting his brethren do not understand just how God will bring about the accomplishment of the work he would have done. This very moving to another part of the field may be wholly in the Lord's order. Let men be delicate, and exercise their caution when it will tell for God's glory in the end.

But this brother was not so much to be censured in his action; for your own course of action revealed movements that did not encourage confidence in your faith or in your judgment. He was willing to submit to the judgment of others, altogether too much so. The Lord is not pleased when men go to men, and yield up their own will and judgment to follow their counsel. When the one giving it has not more wisdom and faith than themselves, it is all a mistake. Erratic movements will be made, according to present appearance, and not according to the mind and will of God. All must stand in God. If there was not another person on the globe but ourselves, we should be Christians, for our own individual present and eternal good. Life can be pure only when it is under God's control. No man is to rule his fellow men.

The brethren in the portion of the field to which this brother has gone should not have looked to Elder Daniells to know their duty, but to God. They should have set him at work, because he is in service, under bonds to God. He is not to be a canvasser, only as it shall be connected with his ministerial work. He is to present the Word. He has many things to learn, as well as have all who have given themselves to the ministry. Many rush into matters in a hurry, and make mistakes. Some forget that they are only human, with the deficiencies of humanity upon them and they give expression to principles that are not Christian. Thus they set an example that leads others astray.

Ignoble, egotistic, weak criticizing has become a false science, which must be cut out of the life experience. It is no marvel that many, having sensitive natures, who thought Christian work the noblest, and longing for some word of direction, or some counsel of encouragement, have been driven aside by wrong management, and turned church foes.

The Lord's workers need the melting love of Jesus in their hearts. Let every minister live a man among men. Let him in well-regulated methods go from house to house, bearing ever the censer of heaven's fragrant atmosphere of love. Anticipate the sorrows, the difficulties, the troubles of others. Enter into the joys and cares of both high and low, rich and poor.

Let not the shepherds of God's pasture treat coolly their fellow-laborers. "All ye are brethren." The Lord Jesus died to save sinners, and he longs to see men with hearts tender and full of compassion, not full of self-dignity. This must be laid in the dust. Ministers must touch lovingly and tenderly their brother minister who is battling with difficulties that appear stubborn and unyielding. But in your decision in regard to this case, you have shown much more of self and earthliness than of kindness, meekness, gentleness, or love.

All are to gather the precious treasures of love, not merely for but for every soul who has his hand and heart in the work of the ministry; for all who do this work are the Lord's. Through them he works. Learn lessons of love from the life of Jesus. Let men be careful how they speak to their fellow-men. There is to be no egotism no lording it over God's heritage. A bitter answer should not rise in any mind or heart. No tinge of scorn be heard in the voice. Speak a word of your own, take an indifferent attitude, show suspicion, prejudice, jealousy -- and by mismanagement the work may be done for a soul.

Ministers are but men; and God has said that one man's mind and judgment is not to control another man's mind. Let the graces of our Elder Brother be copied. With heart and spirit, and all the power that piety and art can bestow, do true, faithful work. Show thyself an example by working earnestly for the

Master, drawing all men to Christ. Thy work is but to proclaim; God's work is to convert the barren hearts of men.

When the work seems to go hard, dip the words and spirit into the oil of God's love; and then, under the working of the Holy Spirit, thou canst pray with all earnestness, and preach with all power. And God giveth the increase.

Allow not your hearts to grow cool and unimpressible. Your religious life may be praiseworthy as is represented by the church at Ephesus, but deficient in love to God and to your neighbors. Suffer not a Pharisaical harshness to come in and hurt your brother. "Unto the angel of the church at Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, I know thy works, and thy labor, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove the candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

"And unto the angel of the church of Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come on thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."

Cry unto God the Lord, Pardon our infirmities, and their infirmities: but give not up one hour of service. Keep all at work in their own line, and handicap none of God's servants because they did not come to you for counsel, and do according to your bidding. You have bidden and directed too much. God's ministers should look to him for their directions. Your plans were not God's plans. Had your brother come to you for instruction, you would have discouraged or misdirected him. No man whom God has chosen to do his work is to be under the control of any other man's mind. Men may converse as equal men, but when it comes to laying down the rules and commands, leave that for the Lord to do. This is not the line in which you are called to work.

The Lord has been working to bring certain things around for his own name's glory. Had your brother done just as you think he should have done, he would have become discouraged by the way you would have handled his care. God would have you work with your fellow men with this idea in view, that they are human like yourself, subject to temptations; and you are to meet them on equal ground. Treat them respectfully as men who are chosen of God. They may not always have been wise or perfect in their judgment; but humanity must meet humanity just where it is, remembering that all are of value with God. Your brethren are as precious in God's sight as your individual selves. Under stress of circumstances, because you did not exercise faith, and reveal trust in God, you have made grave blunders. If men err in the same lines in which you have erred, if they move hastily by looking at appearances, do not do with them as you have done in the case of the one who has been laboring for the Master. You can not bind him to your heart or influence for good by the course of action you have pursued. Come into union and agreement without delay. Act your part nobly; for you have erred. You have dealt with him as no minister should deal with a fellow-laborer. The Lord will not sanction any such example for your fellow workers to follow.

A man who could have been at work in New Zealand; has not been permitted to work. His fellow-laborers in New Zealand have echoed your sentiments, which they thought they must carry out. They have made themselves, in connection with you, answerable to God for all that man could have done and did not do. The Lord could have used him to speak and to pray, to help souls that are in suffering need of help.

Men have become feeble by looking to men; and trusting in men. They go when men say go. They ought to look to God, and trust to him for wisdom. . . .

I ask you, my brethren in Melbourne, who have allowed your impressions and circumstances to quench your love for your brother, to consider the circumstances connected with his labor. He has shifted from place to place, and was sent into the canvassing field because there did not seem to be any place for him, or money to sustain him. If he felt urged by duty to go to New Zealand, the right way would have been for him to go to you, my brethren, tell his difficulties and ask for counsel. But he was in debt, mortified and strengthless. His heart-courage was gone.

When he went to New Zealand, because Brother Daniells expressed the opinion that his course had been wrong, he was left with nothing to do. But ought men's opinions to be regarded as infallible? Must men follow the expressed opinion of a fellow-laborer who has shown devotions to the work? Did his brethren kneel down and seek the Lord in his behalf, making his case their own? There are souls to be saved everywhere, but he did not have courage to work, because he had fallen into debt. He needed a brother, with the Elder Brother's heart of sympathy and humanity, to touch his heart of humanity. Were you afraid, Brother Crowthers, Brother Farnsworth, and Brother Steed, to take this brother by the hand, and say "We all have our trials, Brother Hickox, and we will help you all we can by our sympathy and prayers. If you have made a mistake, it is what we all do. Brace up like a man, and go to work. Do not feel that you are outside the ring. Be true to principle, and we will help you. The Lord needs one hundred laborers where there is one now. It may be that the Lord has sent you here, to engage with us in the work."

Never say it is time to make an example of this brother, even though he may have erred. Wait till you can say, "It is time to make an example of me by the withdrawal of your confidence and favor, because I have not moved wisely." But there are so many who, though willing to make out a recipe, that others may take the bitter medicine, would not be pleased to take it themselves. With many it makes every difference whether it is I or my brother. Well did the apostle say, "You have many teachers, but few fathers." It is spiritual fathers that we need in our gospel work.

I have not received a line from Brother Hickox or from his wife. All that I have heard is from these whom I know are not moving in the counsel of God. I think that it would be best for us to humble our hearts before God, and obtain bowels of mercy, and the incense of sanctified love, and see if this will not change the recipe given to Brother Hickox. I do not speak of him as a perfect man; for he is the same as his brethren. He has the same liability to err, and the same need of a teachable spirit. But if you think that the course pursued toward him will enable you to obtain his confidence, and lead him to rely on his brethren, believing that if he makes a mistake, they will have wisdom to help him, you have made a wrong calculation.

We all need to sow a crop of patience, compassion, and love. We shall reap the harvest we are sowing, Our characters are now being formed for eternity. Here on earth we are being trained for heaven. We owe everything to grace., free grace, sovereign grace. Grace in the covenant ordained our adoption as sons of God. Grace in the Saviour effected our redemption, our regeneration, and our adoption to heirship with Jesus Christ. Let this grace be revealed to others.

From the light which has been given me in the past and at the present, I do not see the spirit which Christ possessed in his life, revealed in your dealings with Brother Hickox. If I were where I could see him, I should urge him to respect all in positions of trust and not to make flesh his arm, but always in everything to make Christ his strength and efficiency. I would converse with him as one who, if he had sinned, had not sinned willfully. If he has sinned, there is a God of pity, who is forbearing and tender and longsuffering, ready to pardon and forgive.

I am so wearied and tired out with the heartless manner in which human, erring man treats his brother, who may be just as much beloved of God as he himself is. Little love is expressed in attitudes and words when one is supposed to have moved not in accordance with the will of men. How do you know but that the Lord has brought this about in order to set Brother Hickox and his wife where they could be laborers together with God where he could stand in earnest labor, presenting the truth to those in darkness? Who is responsible for all the good that might have been done by these two workers in opening the Scriptures to others, in union with their brethren? There is no excuse for this manner of dealing, and in the name of the Lord I protest against it.

I wish that occasionally the curtain could be rolled back and all could see the manner of the Lord's working, and the wonderful activity in the courts above. The Lord often works in a manner which is not in accordance with the ideas of the men who are in responsible positions. The speculations and calculations of human minds are not always in wisdom of God. Some move altogether too slowly, and their caution is a defective spoke in the wheel, keeping it from rolling. Again, others may devise and plan how this one and that one shall work, when the Lord has other work for these men to do, other places where he wants them to till in as his agents. His plans are not built on any foundation that is laid by man, but as the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, he lays the foundation, and erects the structure, in lofty independence through those who will be worked by him. The Lord Jesus takes those that he finds will be molded and uses them for his own name's glory, to meet his own spiritual conception. He sees material that others would pass by, and works all who will be worked. Through very simple means a door is opened in heaven, and the simplicity of the human agent is used by God to reveal God to man.

The Lord Jesus never attempts to prove his teachings or vindicate himself. He speaks as one having authority, as the Source from which all wisdom flows. His word is spoken out, and the Holy Spirit's work is to find a place for that word. He is the light of the world. His own ideas are light. He simply shines, and men are to be enlightened. His work upon human hearts is not to be interfered with by men. All men must keep their place, and let God work upon hearts and minds, and enlighten the understanding. He does not want men to walk in darkness. He has given ability and talents to men, in order that they may use them and improve them.

Men are not left in absolute darkness. As the light of the world, Christ addresses the world. His light is not at all mingled with darkness. It is clearer, brighter, and far more penetrating than any other light. His light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believeth on his name." He is waiting and watching, taking the imperfect ideas of men, not extinguishing them but correcting their errors, supplying their defective ideas with correct ideas, and putting his own truth in the place of their erroneous principles.

Christ is the light of the world. O how condescendingly he takes out of the mind the traditions, the false theories, and the maxims, authority, and commandments of men, which are working counter to the commandments of God. But the enemy strives to hinder God's working in human minds.

I am pained to see the little value placed upon men whom the Lord has used, and whom he will use. God forbid that men's minds shall follow in the channel of another man's mind. One man's mind may be by some, exalted as being in every degree superior but every mind has its own peculiar weakness, and its peculiar strength. One man's mind will supply another man's deficiency. But if all work in the one harness, and are given encouragement to look, not to men to know their duty, but to God, they will develop under the Holy Spirit's guidance, and will work in unity with their brethren. One will supply another's lack.

We need young, strong workers, such as Brother Hickox and his wife. The Lord will use both of them if they will walk humbly with God. The time they have spent doing little has not been so spent because the Lord refused to use them, but because of the Pharisaism manifested by the men who need the converting power of Christ, the light of the world, to shine into their confused human minds, teaching them that they are not gods, and that they must leave God to deal with his workmen. There is only one true method by which any man can work. He must learn of Him who is meek and lowly in heart. We must go more earnestly and humbly, with more contrition of soul, and ask of God wisdom, as he has appointed. For the same reasons that Brother Hickox is not received and supported by his brethren in his work, other ministers might be regarded as unfit for labor. I want to put this matter before you in the light in which it has been placed before me. The Lord has high claims upon Brother and Sister Hickox. They have much to learn, as have all who are connected with the great work of the Master; but I entreat the men who should be helpers of those who in an emergency need help, not to prove hindrances and stumbling blocks in their way.

It is a desirable thing to do God service; but it is not always an easy thing. The world is against us. At times, the way seems to be hedged up, and Satan seems to get hold of the mind. And, too often, when the brethren of the tempted one should be wise, the human side of their characters is manifested instead of the godly side, it is lamentable. If these tempted ones had not, by a course of teaching, been educated to look to men, they would turn their face toward God, and trust in God. They need greater strength than human power, greater strength than their own.

When men have to swim against the stream, there is a weight of waves driving them back. Let a hand then be held out, as was the Elder Brother's hand to a sinking Peter and let hopeful advice be given that will establish confidence and awaken love. You can not tell how such a work is registered in the heavenly books. Let the one who is supposed to have moved wrong be given no occasion by his brother to become discouraged, but let him feel the strong clasp of a sympathizing hand; let him hear the whisper, "Let us pray." The Holy Spirit will give a rich experience to both. It is prayer that unites hearts. It is prayer to the Great Physician to heal the soul that will bring the blessing of God. Prayer unites us with one another and with God. Prayer brings Jesus to our side, and gives new strength and fresh grace to the fainting, perplexed soul to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan.

O remember that we are his offspring, children of one family, "All ye are brethren." His tender mercies are over all his works. Ever bear in mind that money is of little value compared with souls. Many, if left to impulse, represent God as stern, watching to denounce and condemn, who would not receive the soul in error as long as he had a legal excuse of not helping him. This is not God who is thus represented; for he is full of goodness and mercy and truth. Christ came to remove all such feelings, and thoughts of God. He wants every erring soul to "look and live." He would have them feel that God's yearning, fatherly love is toward them. He has revealed that which is not apprehended. If men would eat of Christ's flesh and drink his blood, which means to be doers of his word, they would manifest the attributes of Christ. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was wounded for our

transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. Wherein is our self-denial, and self-sacrifice, and patience, and mercy, and long-suffering, and love exercised to bring back the erring to repentance and to fellowship with God? If this were done, what a reformation would be wrought in individual souls, and in families, and in the church, under the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit! Why do we not act as Christians, as shown in the lessons Christ has given?

God is the one who orders all things. Have you not had any idea that this movement made by Brother Hickox was under the ordering of God? Did not the Lord see that you might not deal with his servant wisely? Did he not see that he needed to do service in some other part of his vineyard, just where he is? He who is the orderer of all things, he who numbers the hairs of our head, worked through his Spirit to transfer him to a field where he could do greater good, just as the careful, tender, earthly father would do in the interests of his children; only our God is infinitely more watchful over the interests of his sons and his daughters. He is too wise to err, and too good to do them harm. He has a wise love, a great and unbounded love. "Are ye not of more value than many sparrows? and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them."

The Lord will by his own methods, break up this indifference of man toward his fellow-man. He will educate and train and discipline his children, O how kindly and lovingly, for their greater consecration and usefulness is his work, and fit them for a higher life. It is by his Word that he instructs, and by experience that he develops virtues and powers, making those in his service meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. If they will surrender to God, and not look to man, or depend on the finite in the place of the Infinite, he will work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Darkness and mysteries compass the path of some who have (not) permitted the Lord to carry forward his work in their hearts, who have not brought their thoughts into captivity to him. If these poor souls who now rise before my mind, had only learned of Jesus, and had not taken counsel of their own unconverted, unsubdued souls, they would now be in the path of obedience, co-workers with Jesus Christ. But they put themselves in their own hands, and did not trust the Lord; and they are not enjoying his blessing, or the faith that works by love and purifies the soul.

O that everyone would realize the great love, the self-sacrifice, the benevolence, and the kindness of our heavenly Father, in giving his Son to die for us that we might, if we believe and do his commandments, have a sweet peace, the Father's joy, the Father's love, and unite with him, heart, soul, mind, and strength, to maintain righteousness and to draw in even lines with Christ. It is not the sacrifice of Christ only; it is the Father's sacrifice also. The Father, in union and loving sympathy, with his Son, subjected himself to suffer with his Son. He spared not his only begotten Son but freely delivered him up for us all. This gift of Christ is the crowning truth of God's love, and this Fatherhood, through all time and through eternity. Here is the love of God in his Fatherhood. Let us drink in this love, that we may know by experience what a real, tender, joyful, experience there is in a realization of the Fatherhood of God. Let brotherly love continue. By bearing one another's burdens, we are fulfilling the law of Christ. "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his testimonies." "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those who remember his commandments to do them." (Signed) E. G. White.