

Topic: "What to do about tithing when there are problems in the ministry."

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THE WORK IN MICHIGAN

Summary Outline

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Part I

Condition of ministry:

- Little accomplished
- Do not feed the members
- Not sanctified themselves

My heart has been sad as I have seen so little accomplished by the workers in Michigan. The members of our churches are not incorrigible; the fault is not so much to be charged upon them as upon their teachers. Their ministers do not feed them. All heaven is actively engaged in the work for man's salvation; the rich gifts of the Holy Spirit are waiting to be given to God's human agents; but the hearts and minds of men are so fully occupied with earthly, sensual things, that there is no room to receive the treasures of grace, and that which they do not receive, they cannot impart to others. Those who are trying to teach others the Bible truth, and are not themselves sanctified through obedience to the truth, are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

Those who are one with Christ have the mind of Christ, and work the works of Christ. They are ever improving, ever drawing near to God, ever uplifting the soul to Jesus. By beholding the world's Redeemer, they become changed into His image. A new spiritual life is created, a new motive power supplied. When one is fully emptied of self, when every false god is cast out of the soul, the vacuum is supplied by the inflowing of the Spirit of Christ. Such a one has faith that works by love and purifies the soul from every moral and spiritual defilement. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, can work upon the heart, influencing, directing, so that he enjoys spiritual things. He [The Christian] is "after the Spirit," and he minds the things of the Spirit. He has no confidence in self. Christ is all and in all.

Truth is being constantly unfolded by the Holy Spirit. [The Christian] receives with meekness the engrafted Word, and he gives the Lord all the

glory, saying, "God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit." "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God" [1Cor. 2:12]. The Spirit that reveals, also works in him the fruits of righteousness. Christ is in him "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." He is a branch of the True Vine, and bears rich clusters of fruit to the glory of God.

What is the character of the fruit? "The fruit of the Spirit is love." Mark the word, -love, not hatred. It is joy, not discontent and mourning; peace, not irritation, anxiety, and manufactured trials. It is "long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Those who have this spirit will be earnest laborers with God; the heavenly intelligences cooperate with them, and they go weighted with the Spirit of the message of truth which they bear. They are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. They are ennobled, refined, through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. They have not brought into the treasury of the soul wood, hay, and stubble, but gold, silver, and precious stones. They speak words of solid sense, and from the treasure of the heart bring forth pure and sacred things according to the example of Christ.

◆ Ministers should be cheerful but not given to jesting, trifling, and idle talk

The true ambassador for Christ is not given to jesting, trifling, idle talk, but he is cheerful, showing forth the praises of Him who hath called him out of darkness into His marvelous light. Every minister who after his discourse will engage in frivolous conversation, counteracts the influence of his words in the sacred desk. He does no honor to God or to the truth, but brings the most sacred things down upon a level with the common things, and makes of no effect the truth of heavenly origin.

◆ Unfaithful ministers should be deprived of their license or credentials, or conference will share their guilt

Those who do not walk by the rule laid down in the Word of God, should be faithfully admonished, and if they fail to reform, should be deprived of their license or credentials. Otherwise the conference that has sanctioned

the labors of these men will share their guilt. It is a mercy to the unfaithful laborer himself to remove him from his position, for the rebuke of God is upon him. It is a duty enjoined by Heaven that souls may not be contaminated by the unholy spiritual atmosphere that surrounds him.

You should not cast him off as a reprobate, but let your dealings with him show that he has mistaken his calling. The Lord has laid no such burden upon him, or if He has, the man has never taken it. He is not united to Christ. He knows not the influence of the Holy Spirit of God upon his soul. He has not fixed his eyes upon Jesus and by beholding Him become changed into His image.

The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Solomon testified: "The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth" (Prov. 10:20). Those who are one with Christ cannot enjoy listening to trifling conversation, much less will they engage in it themselves. If the heart is spiritual, there will be spiritual conversation, for "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34). In our words and actions our thoughts will be revealed just as they are. The life is a true unfurling of the banner, testifying what is in the heart.

What I have just written opens to you the reason why there is not more vitality in our churches. The standard of the gospel minister is lowered into the dust.

The elders of our churches and the ministers have not been as branches of the Living Vine, drawing nourishment from Christ. They are not rich in spiritual knowledge and heavenly wisdom, but are dry and Christless. Man's words they speak in the desk may be good in themselves, but they are powerless because the heart of the speaker has not been transformed by grace.

The churches would be far better without such elders and ministers.

Money is drawn from the Lord's treasury to support those who are

- ◆ The reason for dead churches is a lowered standard in the ministry
- ◆ Ministers are low in spiritual knowledge and heavenly wisdom and are dry and Christless
- ◆ Powerless words because speaker isn't transformed
- ◆ Money drawn from the Lord's treasury to support them

Deplorable condition of the ministry had existed for 15 years!

Ministers:

- Dishonest
- Licentious
- Bring the work down
- Doing little proper labor
- No burden for souls
- Unsanctified

unconverted and need that one teach them the first principle of the gospel, which is Christ formed within, the hope of glory. When the laborers who are so lacking in spirituality believe in Christ, it will be manifest that they possess the faith that works by love, and purifies the soul. The words of Paul to the Corinthians should be heeded by all who labor for the Master: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity" (1 Cor. 16:13,14).

For the last fifteen years the deplorable condition of the Michigan Conference has from time to time been presented before me. I have felt anguish of soul as I have seen the true state of things. There are dishonest men in our churches, there are licentious men. In this large conference there is declension in the place of constant advancement to a higher, holier standard. And there is little of the proper labor done by ministers in the churches, because many do not carry the burden of the souls for whom they labor. The truth has not sanctified their own hearts.

Oh, there is need of most earnest, devoted, self-sacrificing labor, —the preaching of the truth, preaching Christ and living Christ. Oh, that all our workers would be laborers together with God, not trifling with time, not trifling with sacred responsibilities, with solemn sacred truth, the presentation of which is deciding the destiny of souls, but representing Christ in all things, watching for souls as they that must give an account, day by day, hour by hour, living in the channel of light. This is the only course that you can pursue with safety in the churches, and among the people in the cities and villages, diffusing the light received from the Sun of Righteousness.

In order to do this, you must devote much time to prayer. Brethren, be instant in prayer. When in society, when compelled to be among the frivolous, the careless and inconsiderate, you are not to descend to their level and engage in cheap and frivolous talk but dart up your petitions to heaven that the God of all grace will keep your souls in the love of Christ. When the

When the ministers are right with God the finances will prosper!

- ◆ Some members stopped their tithes and offerings, and robbery was recorded by their names in heaven
- ◆ Long-time members discouraged but should not be

PART II

Counsel under these circumstances:

Disregard God's word and terrible consequences will follow

The people need:

- The Spirit of Christ
- Humiliation of soul
- Confession of sins
- Restitution
- Belief in God's word
- Be honest with Him

Don't:

workers are thus connected with God, there will be continual growth in every church blessed with this labor in Michigan.

Then the finances will be in a prosperous condition. Now the books of heaven bear the record of robbery toward God in a large degree in tithes and offerings. Men who have been pioneers in the work are becoming disheartened, but they ought not to be. Jesus is their example, of whom it is written, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." For all who are disheartened, there is but one remedy, faith, prayer, and work. Cease to think gloomy thoughts. Let every soul fall on the Rock, Christ Jesus, and be broken. Then Jesus will fashion the character after His own likeness. Discord and strife will die a natural death because they have nothing to feed upon.

Those who are joined to Christ, the Living Vine, will bear the very same kind of fruit as does the parent stock. Christ was the pattern minister. He was the greatest teacher the world ever saw. He gave to His followers, for them to repeat to us, lessons of the utmost importance concerning the salvation of the soul. It is by believing and receiving Him that we secure our own salvation. And when we believe on Him, we cannot keep it to ourselves; we shall tell others what Christ has done for us.

There can be no careless disregard of His Word without the terrible consequence that always follows backsliding and neglect. Many have not the spirit of Christ, and thus give evidence that they are none of His. And yet this very class are seeking to tell others how to be saved. There is need of humiliation of soul before God, need of confession of sins and restitution. There has been unbelief, there has been dishonesty. A spirit of murmuring has been communicated from one to another in the ranks of Sabbath-keepers. They do not discern spiritual things. Discouraging words have been spoken. Do not indulge this spirit, dear brethren and sisters. **You please the enemy in so doing.** You cannot afford to reap the harvest that will thus be produced.

You who have been withholding your means from the cause of God,

- Murmur
- Communicate with others about problems
- Speak discouraging words

It is not best under any circumstances to withhold tithe and offerings

- ◆ God's property
- ◆ Even if unworthy ministers receive tithe, don't withhold
- ◆ Withholding will bring poverty to your soul
- ◆ You're not responsible if the Conference mismanages its business
- ◆ Withholding is sin
- ◆ Don't sympathize with sinners who are withholding
- ◆ Don't aid Satan
- ◆ Try to help correct the problems, and talk them over with only those who are at fault

Don't increase the financial difficulties by unfaithfulness

read the book of Malachi, and see what is spoken there in regard to tithes and offerings. Cannot you see that **it is not best under any circumstances to withhold your tithes and offerings** because you are not in harmony with everything that your brethren do? The tithes and offerings are not the property of any man, but are to be used in doing a certain work for God. Unworthy ministers may receive some of the means thus raised, but dare any one, because of this, withhold from the treasury and brave the curse of God?

I dare not. I pay my tithe gladly and freely, saying, as did David, "Of thine own have we given Thee." A selfish withholding from God will tend to poverty in our own souls. Act your part, my brethren and sisters. God loves you, and He stands at the helm. If the Conference business is not managed according to the order of the Lord, that is the sin of the erring one; the Lord will not hold you responsible for it, if you do what you can to correct the evil. But do not commit sin yourselves by withholding from the Lord His own property. "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully," or negligently.

When persons declare that they will not pay their tithes because the means is not used as they think it ought to be, will the elder of the church or the minister sympathize with the sinners? Will he aid the enemy in his work? Or will he, as a wise man endued with knowledge, go to work to correct the evil and remove the stumblingblocks? Let those who are dissatisfied state plainly their grievances to the ones who they think have erred, instead of talking the matter over with others, and thus fanning the flame of discontent.

But, brethren, do not be unfaithful in your lot. Stand in your place. Do not by your neglect of duty increase our financial difficulties and thus add to the heavy burden that rests on the president of our General Conference. The conferences, through their delegates, have appointed the one who occupies this difficult and important place, and they are under obligation to sustain him by bearing their part of the burden. Elder Olsen is far from

coveting the position. He has said again and again, "Do not lay the burden on me; I am not for such a position." But where are the men who are fitted? They are few indeed. Elder Olsen is a man who loves and fears God. The church needs his labors. He must not be left alone to bear heavy burdens that others will let fall upon him because of their backslidings.

◆ Most have no concept of the burdens borne by church leaders

Many important interests demand attention from the president of the General Conference. He must have a care for the needs of the various branches of the work. Those who have never occupied such a position have faint conceptions of the perplexities upon his mind. Not only our institutions and the churches throughout the United States, but the missions in foreign lands require his thoughtful consideration and decision. If there are not men who will hold up his hands, as Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses, he will faint while pressed under the load as a cart beneath sheaves. Neither the mental nor the physical powers can long endure the strain brought to bear upon him.

All the council and committee meetings should be so planned and conducted that these wearing, taxing seasons may be lessened both in number and duration. Those who engage in them should give much thought to the matters to be considered before bringing them before the committee, and [they] should come quickly to the points of interest. Make them plain, and let every one try to dispatch the business as speedily as possible, and not hold and tax the minds and bodies of men for long hours to do the business that might and should be dispatched promptly. There should be a constant effort for brevity in business meetings.

Be very careful how you criticize leaders

Harmony and simplicity in the work, an avoidance of all unnecessary machinery, will do much to preserve the courage and the physical and mental energies of those who have to consider so many points. Those who have none, or but little, of this kind of labor should be very careful how they criticize or censure the ones who do have these burdens to bear. Let all so

As you conduct the conference business help by:

- Lifting burdens
- Praying more
- Talking less
- Meditating more
- Getting rid of jealousy
- Helping God defeat the devil
- Praying for the church leaders in private and family worship

◆ Do **not** criticize

◆ Cooperate with leaders

Guard the interests of your church

conduct themselves that they will not throw any extra burdens upon our president. They should not depend upon him to do their thinking. If they keep their own souls in the love of God, growing in spirituality, dissensions will be shut out. The oil of grace will cause the machinery to run smoothly.

I ask you who shall meet in conference, Will you individually act your part, through the grace given you of God, to lift just as much of the burden as you can lift? Bear your own burdens. **Pray much, talk less, meditate more.** **Rid yourselves of every jealous thought and feeling. Your hearts need weeding before you enter upon conference business.** Divest yourselves of selfishness, but stand firmly for right principles, cost what it may. The right alone will prevail. Will you yourselves abide in Christ? Will you be true to the laborers who bear the heavy responsibilities? Will you come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty Satanic agencies that are working unseen to bring defeat and ruin? Will you have the love and fear of God in your own hearts? From your closets, from your family altars, will you send up, not cold, heartless prayers, but earnest supplications that the Lord will work with Elder Olsen, that the power of Jesus will heal him of infirmities, and give him physical and mental strength to bear the responsibilities that devolve upon him?

Do not get together and give expression to criticism and questioning in regard to matters you have learned by hearsay. Do not draw within yourselves, and work in secrecy and darkness with a select few, giving no words of encouragement, offering no prayer for the blessing of the Lord to rest upon your president. Come right up to help him, talk with him, encourage him. Keep distrust out of your own hearts. Give the man who carries the heavy responsibility your hearty cooperation. Do not manufacture burdens to perplex his tired brain and wearied nerves.

God calls upon you to act your part with fidelity and guard the interests of the church with which you are connected. Work with an eye

- ◆ Seek for harmony single to the glory of God. Keep pressing your way to the light and you will have light. Talk faith, and you will have faith. **Seek for harmony. Seek to be of one mind, of one judgment, thus answering the prayer of Christ.** Leave not all the agonizing prayer to be poured forth day and night by your soul-burdened president, and a few faithful standard-bearers.
- ◆ Show confidence in God Brother Olsen is constantly seeking to know the way of the Lord, listening to hear the first words of command from the Master. Will you do the same? Will you close your ears to murmurings and disputings, to words of distrust and jealousy? Will you look up? Will you show that you have confidence in the Captain of our salvation, or will you, when things go hard, distrust God, and prophesy defeat and disaster and ruin, as did the unfaithful spies?
- ◆ Reform takes patience In the various branches of the work there are many things that Elder Olsen and some others feel deeply over, that they know ought to be different. **But it takes time to work reforms**, and unless God shall soften hearts that have been growing hard and unchristlike, unless the hearts of those in our churches are open to Jesus, Elder Olsen and other faithful workers will carry the heavy burden of disappointed hopes.
- ◆ Don't sympathize with faultfinders But this need not be. Brethren in every department of the work, will you, to a man, help him? I feel deeply over this matter. We do not want men who will pity and sympathize with themselves, and with every faultfinder, murmurer, and complainer, and neglect the important duties devolving upon them. Make diligent effort to keep your own souls in the love of God, and help the very ones who need your help.
- ◆ Don't be like the unfaithful spies If you open your minds and hearts to the insinuations and suggestions
- ◆ Don't be a skeptic of Satan, you will be led to act a part similar to that of the unfaithful spies.
- ◆ Be like faithful Caleb Instead of trusting in God to bring victory, instead of inspiring hearts with firm faith in the leadings of His Spirit, you will talk and act as did the spies. Can you afford to do this? No, no.

Let your voice be heard echoing the words of faithful Caleb concerning the land of promise; "Let us go up at once and possess it." Caleb and Joshua "spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land that floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not" [Num. 14:7-9]. This is the spirit that dwelt in Caleb and Joshua.

When doubt and murmuring are expressed because of the trials in the way to the heavenly Canaan, let not the elders, the ministers and presidents, by their words of unsanctified sympathy, water the seed of disaffection, and then present the matter in an exaggerated light, as if a terrible rebellion were about to take place, and suppose they are helping the cause of God in so doing. They strengthen the suggestions and temptations of the prince of darkness, and open a wide door for the enemy to enter and take possession of the souls of the people, as he did under the false report of the unfaithful spies.

The false and cruel words of discouragement spoken by the unfaithful spies were received by the people and excited them to desperation. They felt that they were greatly abused, and they mourned and lamented over themselves, and manifested distrust in God, forgetting His mighty works in delivering them for Egyptian bondage, opening the Red Sea before them, and destroying their pursuing foes. Let not one in our ranks be so ungrateful, so forgetful of God, as to repeat the sin of murmuring, rebellious Israel.

God's people are tempted and tried because they cannot see the spirit of self-sacrifice and consecration to God in all who manage important interests, and many act as though Jesus were buried in Joseph's new tomb, and a great stone were rolled before the door. I wish to proclaim with voice and pen, **Jesus has risen; He has risen; He is a living Saviour, the Head of the**

◆ Don't rebel against the Lord

◆ Don't sympathize with doubt and murmuring
 ◆ Don't exaggerate problems and think you are helping God
 ◆ This just helps Satan

◆ Don't repeat the sin of murmuring

◆ We can't always see the self-sacrifice of others

Jesus is not in the grave. Jesus is alive! He knows what is going on.

church. He is the Good Shepherd. "The sheep follow Him: for they know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow" [John 10:4].

- ◆ Discouragement is a deadly malady

When things become entangled, and cannot be easily adjusted, we are not to lose heart and courage and faith, and talk doubts and unbelief. Discouragement will spread, and become as a deadly malady. Again and again during the last forty years of our experience we have been brought into strait places, but the Lord's own power, not human philosophy or wisdom, set things straight. The Lord made His voice to be heard, guarding against rebellion, the seeds of which are sown in hearts that are not right with God.

- ◆ We can't fall when we trust God

It is the Lord that has saved us from rebellion and apostasy. We cannot fall as long as we hope and trust in God.

- ◆ Encourage faith, confidence, assurance

Let every soul of us, ministers and people, say as did Paul, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air," but with a holy faith and hope, in expectation of winning the prize. Say to your soul, **"Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."**

- ◆ Show your trust in God

By precept and example encourage faith, confidence, assurance. This is the work of the Comforter, and it is your work to cooperate with God's agencies. A discouraged man can do nothing to uplift others. A discouraged church can only sow doubts, complaints, and disaffection. Let all this be cleansed from us. Cease to look to the darkness; look to the light, rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

When others point out problems tell them Jesus knows all about it

- ◆ Through Christ we will win!

Show that you trust in God to work with His mighty agencies for the upbuilding of His cause, the spread of the truth. Let every ear be sanctified to hear aright, let the tongue be sanctified to speak aright, and the heart have the treasure of goodness and love, for out of the heart are the issues of life.

Look up, and if one tells you that things are all wrong, tell him the Lord Jesus knows all about it, and just close the heart against doubt and

unbelief. Look up, and say, My treasure is laid up on high. Through Christ we shall reach the end of our journey if we hold the profession of our faith firm unto the end.

- Be diligent and faithful!

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, you might receive the promise" [Heb. 11:35, 36]. **Do the work of God diligently and in faith.** "Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" [Phil. 3:14].