

## Censure

Frequently there is necessity for plainly rebuking sin and reproofing wrong. But ministers who are working for the salvation of their fellow men should not be pitiless toward the errors of one another, nor make prominent the defects in their organizations. They should not expose or reprove their weaknesses. They should inquire if such a course, pursued by another toward themselves, would bring about the desired effect; would it increase their love for, and confidence in, the one who thus made prominent their mistakes? Especially should the mistakes of ministers who are engaged in the work of God be kept within as small a circle as possible, for there are many weak ones who will take advantage if they are aware that those who minister in word and doctrine have weaknesses like other men. And it is a most cruel thing for the faults of a minister to be exposed to unbelievers, if that minister is counted worthy to labor in the future for the salvation of souls. No good can come of this exposure, but only harm. The Lord frowns upon this course, for it is undermining the confidence of the people in those whom He accepts to carry forward His work. The character of every fellow laborer should be jealously guarded by brother ministers. saith God: "Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm." Love and confidence should be cherished. A lack of this love and confidence in one minister for another does not increase the happiness of the one thus deficient, but as he makes his brother unhappy he is unhappy himself. There is greater power in love than was ever found in censure. Love will melt its way through barriers, while censure will close up every avenue of the soul. {3T 93.3}

You will often meet with souls that are under the stress of temptation. You know not how severely Satan may be wrestling with them. Beware lest you discourage such souls and thus give the tempter an advantage. {7T 265.1}

Whenever you see or hear something that needs to be corrected, seek the Lord for wisdom and grace, that in trying to be faithful you may not be severe. {7T 265.2}

It is always humiliating to have one's errors pointed out. Do not make the experience more bitter by needless censure. Unkind criticism brings discouragement, making life sunless and unhappy. {7T 265.3}

My brethren, prevail by love rather than by severity. When one at fault becomes conscious of his error, be careful not to destroy his self-respect. Do not seek to bruise and wound, but rather to bind up and heal.

No human being possesses sensibilities so acute or a nature so refined as does our Saviour. And what patience He manifests toward us. Year after year He bears with our weakness and ignorance, with our ingratitude and waywardness. Notwithstanding all our wanderings, our hardness of heart, our neglect of His holy words, His hand is stretched out still. And He bids us: "Love one another; as I have loved you." John 13:34. {7T265.5}

In His act of pardoning this woman and encouraging her to live a better life, the character of Jesus shines forth in the beauty of perfect righteousness. While He does not palliate sin, nor lessen the sense of guilt, He seeks not to condemn, but to save. The world had for this erring woman only contempt and scorn; but Jesus speaks words of comfort and hope. The Sinless One pities the weakness of the sinner, and reaches to her a helping hand. While the hypocritical Pharisees denounce, Jesus bids her, "Go, and sin no more." {DA 462.3}

It is not Christ's follower that, with averted eyes, turns from the erring, leaving them unhindered to pursue their downward course. Those who are forward in accusing others, and zealous in bringing them to justice, are often in their own lives more guilty than they. Men hate the sinner, while they love the sin. Christ hates the sin, but loves the sinner. This will be the spirit of all who follow Him. Christian love is slow to censure, quick to discern penitence, ready to forgive, to encourage, to set the wanderer in the path of holiness, and to stay his feet therein. {DA 462.4}

In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage. But many who profess to be His followers have an anxious, troubled heart, because they are afraid to trust themselves with God. They do not make a complete surrender to Him; for they shrink from the consequences that such a surrender may involve. Unless they do make this surrender, they cannot find peace. {DA 330.3}

The more man views his Saviour and becomes acquainted with Him, the more he will become assimilated to His image and work the works of Christ. The age in which we live calls for reformatory action. The light of truth which shines upon us calls for men of determined action and sterling moral worth to labor diligently and perseveringly to save the souls of all who will hear the invitation of the Spirit of God. {4T 488.3}

The love which should exist between church members frequently gives place to criticism and censure; and these appear, even in the religious exercises, in reflections and severe personal thrusts. Such things should not be countenanced by ministers, elders, or people. The services of the church should be carried forward with an eye single to the glory of God. When men with their peculiar organizations are brought together in church capacity, unless the truth of God softens and subdues the sharp points in the character, the church will be affected and its peace and harmony sacrificed to indulge these selfish, unsanctified traits. Many, in their close watch to discover the faults of their brethren, neglect the investigation of their own hearts and the purification of their own lives. This brings the displeasure of God. The individual members of the church should be jealous for their own souls, critically watching their own actions, lest they should move from selfish motives and be a cause of stumbling to their weak brethren. {4T 488.4}

We must live for Christ minute by minute, hour by hour, and day by day; then Christ will dwell in us, and when we meet together, His love will be in our hearts, welling up like a spring in the desert, refreshing all, and making those who are ready to perish, eager to drink of the waters of life. {5T 609.1}

There must be an intense, living interest to inquire of God: "What wilt Thou have me to do?" How shall I do my work for time and for eternity?" We must individually bend all our powers to search for the truth, employing every means within our reach that will aid us in a diligent, prayerful investigation of the Scriptures; and then we must be sanctified through the truth, that we may save souls. {5T 609.2}

An earnest effort should be made in every church to put away evilspeaking and a censorious spirit as among the sins productive of the greatest evils in the church. Severity and faultfinding must be rebuked as the workings of Satan. Mutual love and confidence must be

encouraged and strengthened in the members of the church. Let all, in the fear of God and with love to their brethren, close their ears to gossip and censure. Direct the talebearer to the teachings of God's word. {5T 609}

Let commendation take the place of censure. {4T 129.3}

... Seek to develop goodness, patience, love, and all the graces which will have a transforming influence in your home and will brighten the lives of your family and your friends. Confess that you have done wrong, and then turn squarely about and strive to be just and right. {4T 129}

Instead of criticism and censure, let our brethren and sisters have words of encouragement and confidence to speak in regard to the Lord's instrumentality. God calls upon them to encourage the hearts of those who carry the heavy burdens, for He is working with them. He calls upon His people to recognize the sustaining power in His instrumentality. Honor the Lord by endeavoring to the utmost of your ability to give it the influence that it should have. {7T 185.1}

My husband has been murmured against so much, he has contended with jealousy and falsehood so long, and 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 labor unitedly to lift the burdens. The ministering brethren lack faith and confidence in God. They believe the truth, and in the fear of God they should unite their efforts, and bear the burdens of this work which God has laid upon them. {3T 92.1}

If, after one has done the best he can in his judgment, another thinks 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 him nor question his integrity of purpose any sooner than he himself would wish to be suspected or unjustly censured. If the brother who feels the cause of God at heart sees that, in his earnest efforts to do, he has made a failure, he will feel deeply over the matter; for he will be inclined to distrust himself and to lose confidence in his own judgment. Nothing will so weaken his courage and godlike manhood as to realize his mistakes in the work that God has appointed him to do, a work which 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 they are weakening his faith and courage, and his confidence in himself to work successfully in the upbuilding of the cause of God. {3T 92.2}

No one has ever been reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach; but many have thus been driven from Christ and led to seal their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word--a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God. {MB 128.3}

Brother P, you should have had feelings of brotherly sympathy and love for Brother R, for he deserved this from you rather than one word of censure. You should severely censure your own course because you were found fighting against God {2T 708}

It is always humiliating to have one's errors pointed out. None should make the experience more bitter by needless censure. No one was ever reclaimed by reproach; but many have thus been repelled and have been led to steel their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. {MH 166.3}

It is just as natural for some to find fault with what another does as it is for them to breathe. They have formed the habit of criticizing others, when they themselves are the ones who should be brought severely to task and their wicked speeches and hard feelings be burned out of their souls by the purifying fire of God's love. . . . {CH 297.2}

A person who will allow any degree of suspicion or censure to rest upon his fellow workers, while he neither rebukes the complainers nor faithfully presents the matter before the one condemned, is doing the work of the enemy. He is watering the seeds of discord and of strife, the fruit of which he will have to meet in the day of God. . . . {CH 297.3}

All the worth and greatness of this life is derived from its connection with heaven and the future, immortal life. God's everlasting arm encircles the soul that turns to Him for aid, however feeble that soul may be. The precious things of the hills shall perish; but the soul that lives for God, unmoved by censure, unperverted by applause, shall abide forever with Him. The city of God will open its golden gates to receive him who learned while on earth to lean on God for guidance and wisdom, for comfort and hope amid loss and affliction. The songs of angels will welcome him there, and for him the tree of life will yield its fruits. {4T 328.1}

Criticism of Fellow Workers Depresses.--It is our privilege to speak words that will encourage our associates and fellow laborers; it is not our privilege to speak words that will depress. It is not wise for us to compare ourselves with other workers, speaking of their failings, and raising objections to their methods of labor. It would be no surprise if those who are laboring under grave responsibilities, and who have many trials to meet, should sometimes make mistakes. . . . {Ev 633.2}

Let us become familiar with the good that is being done by our brethren, and talk of that.--Letter 204, 1907. {Ev 633.3}