

At the camp meeting in Vermont, in 1870, I felt urged by the Spirit of God to bear a plain testimony relative to the duty of aged and wealthy parents in the disposition of their property. I had been shown that some men who are shrewd, prudent, and sharp in regard to the transaction of business generally, men who are distinguished for promptness and thoroughness, manifest a want of foresight and promptness in regard to a proper disposal of their property while they are living. They know not how soon their probation may close; yet they pass on from year to year with their business unsettled, and frequently their lives finally close without their having the use of their reason. Or they may die suddenly, without a moment's warning, and their property be disposed of in a manner that they would not have approved. These are guilty of negligence; they are unfaithful stewards. {3T 116.2}

Christians who believe the present truth should manifest wisdom and foresight. They should not neglect the disposition of their means, expecting a favorable opportunity to adjust their business during a long illness. They should have their business in such a shape that, were they called at any hour to leave it, and should they have no voice in its arrangement, it might be settled as they would have had it were they alive. Many families have been dishonestly robbed of all their property and have been subjected to poverty because the work that might have been well done in an hour had been neglected. Those who make their wills should not spare pains or expense to obtain legal advice and to have them drawn up in a manner to stand the test. {3T 117.1}

I saw that those who profess to believe the truth should show their faith by their works. They should, with the unrighteous mammon, make friends, that they may finally be received into everlasting habitations. God has made men stewards of means. He has placed in their hands the money with which to carry forward the great work for the salvation of souls for whom Christ left His home, His riches, His glory, and became poor that He might, by His own humiliation and sacrifice, bring many sons and daughters of Adam to God. In His providence the Lord has ordained that the work in His vineyard should be sustained by the means entrusted to the hands of His stewards. A neglect on their part to answer the calls of the cause of God in carrying forward His work shows them to be unfaithful and slothful servants. {3T 117.2}

I had been shown some things in reference to the cause in Vermont, but more especially at Bordoville and vicinity. The following is from Testimony for the church, vol.2, No. 20, page 651: {3T 118.1}

“There is a work to be accomplished for many who live at Bordoville. I saw that the enemy was busily at work to carry his points. Men to whom God has entrusted talents of means have shifted upon their children the responsibility which Heaven has appointed them of being stewards for God. Instead of rendering to God the things that are His, they claim that all they have is their own, as though by their own might and power and wisdom they had obtained their possessions.” {3T 118.2}

“Some place their means beyond their control by putting it into the hands of their children. Their secret motive is to place themselves in a position where they will not feel responsible to give of their property to spread the truth. These love in word, but not in deed and in truth. They do not realize that it is the Lord’s money they are handling, not their own.” {3T 118.3}

“Parents should have great fear in entrusting children with the talents of means that God has placed in their hands, unless they have the surest evidence that their children have greater interest in, love for, and devotion to, the cause of God than they themselves possess, and that these children will be more earnest and zealous in forwarding the work of God, and more benevolent in carrying forward the various enterprises connected with it which call for means. But many place their means in the hands of their children, thus throwing upon them the responsibility of their own stewardship, because Satan prompts them to do it. In so doing they effectually place that means in the enemy’s ranks. Satan works the matter to suit his own purpose and keeps from the cause of God the means which it needs, that it may be abundantly sustained.” {3T 118.4}

“Many who have made a high profession of faith are deficient in good works. If they should show their faith by their works they could exert a powerful influence on the side of truth. But they do not improve upon the talents of means lent them of God. Those who think to ease their consciences by willing their property to their children, or by withholding from God’s cause and suffering it to pass into the hands of unbelieving, reckless children for them to squander or hoard up and worship, will have to render an account to God; they are unfaithful stewards of their Lord’s money. They allow Satan to outgeneral them through these children, whose minds are under his control. Satan’s purposes are accomplished in many ways, while the stewards of God seem stupefied and paralyzed;

they do not realize their great responsibility and the reckoning which must shortly come.” {3T 118.5}

I was shown that the probation of some in the vicinity of ----- was soon to close, and that it was important that their work be finished to God’s acceptance, that in the final settlement they might hear the “Well done” from the Master. I was also shown the inconsistency of those who profess to believe the truth withholding their means from the cause of God, that they may leave it for their children. Many fathers and mothers are poor in the midst of abundance. They abridge, in a degree, their own personal comforts and frequently deny themselves of those things that are necessary for the enjoyment of life and health, while they have ample means at their command. They feel forbidden, as it were, to appropriate their means for their own comfort or for charitable purposes. They have one object before them, and that is to save property to leave for their children. This idea is so prominent, so interwoven with all their actions, that their children learn to look forward to the time when this property will be theirs. They depend upon it, and this prospect has an important but not a favorable influence upon their characters. Some become spendthrifts, others become selfish and avaricious, and still others grow indolent and reckless. Many do not cultivate habits of economy; they do not seek to become self-reliant. They are aimless, and have but little stability of character. The impressions received in childhood and youth are wrought in the texture of character and become the principle of action in mature life. {3T 119.1}

Those who have become acquainted with the principles of the truth should closely follow the word of God as their guide. They should render to God the things that are God’s. I was shown that several in Vermont were making a great mistake in regard to appropriating the means that God had entrusted to their keeping. They were overlooking the claims of God upon all that they have. Their eyes were blinded by the enemy of righteousness, and they were taking a course which would result disastrously for themselves and their dear children. {3T 120.1}

Children were influencing their parents to leave their property in their hands for them to appropriate according to their judgment. With the light of God’s word, so plain and clear in reference to the money lent to stewards, and with the warnings and reproofs which God has given through the *Testimonies* in regard to the disposition of means—if, with all this light before them, children either directly or indirectly influence their parents to divide their property while living, or to will it mainly to the children to come into their hands after the

death of their parents, they take upon themselves fearful responsibilities. Children of aged parents who profess to believe the truth should, in the fear of God, advise and entreat their parents to be true to their profession of faith, and take a course in regard to their means which God can approve. Parents should lay up for themselves treasures in heaven by appropriating their means themselves to the advancement of the cause of God. They should not rob themselves of heavenly treasure by leaving a surplus of means to those who have enough; for by so doing they not only deprive themselves of the precious privilege of laying up a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, but they rob the treasury of God. {3T 120.2}

I stated at the camp meeting that when property is willed principally to children, while none is appropriated to the cause of God, or, if any, a meager pittance unworthy to be mentioned, this property would frequently prove a curse to the children who inherit it. It would be a source of temptation and would open a door through which they would be in danger of falling into many dangerous and hurtful lusts. {3T 120.3}

Parents should exercise the right that God has given them. He entrusted to them the talents He would have them use to His glory. The children were not to become responsible for the talents of the father. While they have sound minds and good judgment, parents should, with prayerful consideration, and with the help of proper counselors who have experience in the truth and a knowledge of the divine will, make disposition of their property. If they have children who are afflicted or are struggling in poverty, and who will make a judicious use of means, they should be considered. But if they have unbelieving children who have abundance of this world, and who are serving the world, they commit a sin against the Master, who has made them His stewards, by placing means in their hands merely because they are their children. God's claims are not to be lightly regarded. {3T 121.1}

And it should be distinctly understood that because parents have made their will, this will not prevent them from giving means to the cause of God while they live. This they should do. They should have the satisfaction here, and the reward hereafter, of disposing of their surplus means while they live. They should do their part to advance the cause of God. They should use the means lent them by the Master to carry on the work which needs to be done in His vineyard. {3T 121.2}

The love of money lies at the root of nearly all the crimes committed in the world. Fathers who selfishly retain their means to enrich their children, and who do not see the

wants of the cause of God and relieve them, make a terrible mistake. The children whom they think to bless with their means are cursed with it. {3T 121.3}

Money left to children frequently becomes a root of bitterness. They often quarrel over the property left them and in case of a will, are seldom all satisfied with the disposition made by the father. And instead of the means left exciting gratitude and reverence for his memory, it creates dissatisfaction, murmuring, envy, and disrespect. Brothers and sisters who were at peace with one another are sometimes made at variance, and family dissensions are often the result of inherited means. Riches are desirable only as a means of supplying present wants and of doing good to others. But inherited riches oftener become a snare to the possessor than a blessing. Parents should not seek to have their children encounter the temptations to which they expose them in leaving them means which they themselves have made no effort to earn. {3T 121.4}

I was shown that some children professing to believe the truth would, in an indirect manner, influence the father to keep his means for his children instead of appropriating it to the cause of God while he lives. Those who have influenced their father to shift his stewardship upon them little know what they are doing. They are gathering upon themselves double responsibility, that of balancing the father's mind so that he did not fulfill the purpose of God in the disposition of the means lent him of God to be used to His glory, and the additional responsibility of becoming stewards of means that should have been put out to the exchangers by the father, that the Master could have received His own with usury. {3T 122.1}

Many parents make a great mistake in placing their property out of their hands into the hands of their children while they are themselves responsible for the use or abuse of the talent lent them of God. Neither parents nor children are made happier by this transfer of property. And the parents, if they live a few years even, generally regret this action on their part. Parental love in their children is not increased by this course. The children do not feel increased gratitude and obligation to their parents for their liberality. A curse seems to lay at the root of the matter, which only crops out in selfishness on the part of the children and unhappiness and miserable feelings of cramped dependence on the part of the parents. {3T 122.2}

If parents, while they live, would assist their children to help themselves, it would be better than to leave them a large amount at death. Children who are left to rely principally upon their own exertions make better men and women, and are better fitted

for practical life than those children who have depended upon their father's estate. The children left to depend upon their own resources generally prize their abilities, improve their privileges, and cultivate and direct their faculties to accomplish a purpose in life. They frequently develop characters of industry, frugality, and moral worth, which lie at the foundation of success in the Christian life. Those children for whom parents do the most, frequently feel under the least obligation toward them. The errors of which we have spoken have existed in ----- . Parents have shifted their stewardship upon their children. {3T 122.3}

At the camp meeting at -----, 1870, I appealed to those who had means to use that means in the cause of God as His faithful stewards, and not leave this work for their children. It is a work which God has left them to do, and when the Master calls them to account, they can, as faithful stewards, render to Him that which He has lent them, both principal and interest. {3T 123.1}

Brethren X, Y, Z were presented before me. These men were making a mistake in regard to the appropriation of their means. Some of their children were influencing them in this work, and were gathering upon their souls responsibilities that they were ill-prepared to bear. They were opening a door and inviting the enemy to come in with his temptations to harass and destroy them. The two younger sons of Brother X were in great danger. They were associating with individuals of a stamp of character which would not elevate, but would debase them. The subtle influence of these associations was gaining an imperceptible influence over these young men. The conversation and deportment of evil companions were of that character to separate them from the influence of their sisters and their sisters' husbands. While speaking upon this subject at the camp meeting I felt deeply. I knew the persons were before me whom I had seen in vision. I urged upon those who heard me the necessity of thorough consecration to God. I called no names, for I was not permitted to do this. I was to dwell upon principles, appeal to the hearts and consciences, and give those who professed to love God and keep His commandments an opportunity to develop character. God would send them warnings and admonitions, and if they really desired to do His will they had an opportunity. Light was given, and then we were to wait and see if they would come to the light. {3T 123.2}

I left the camp meeting with a burden of anxiety upon my mind in reference to the persons whose danger I had been shown. In a few months news reached us of Brother Y's death. His property was left to his children. Last December we had an appointment to

hold meetings in Vermont. My husband was indisposed and could not go. In order to save too great a disappointment, I consented to go to Vermont in company with Sister Hall. I spoke to the people with some freedom, but our conference meetings were not free. I knew that the Spirit of the Lord could not have a free course until confessions were made and there was a breaking of heart before God. I could not keep silent. The Spirit of the Lord was upon me, and I related briefly the substance of what I have written. I called the names of some present who were standing in the way of the work of God. {3T 124.1}

The result of leaving property to children by will, and also of parents' shifting the responsibility of their stewardship upon their children while the parents were living, had been verified before them. Covetousness had led Brother Y's sons to pursue a wrong course. This was especially true of one of his sons. I labored faithfully, relating the things which I had seen in reference to the church, especially to the sons of Brother Y. One of these brothers, himself a father, was corrupt in heart and life, a reproach to the precious cause of present truth; his low standard of morals was corrupting to the youth. {3T 124.2}

The Spirit of the Lord came into the meetings, and humble confessions were made by some, accompanied by tears. After the meeting I had an interview with the younger sons of Brother X. I pleaded with them, and entreated them for their souls' sake to turn square about, break away from the company of those who were leading them on to ruin, and seek for the things which make for their peace. While pleading for these young men, my heart was drawn out after them, and I longed to see them submit to God. I prayed for them, and urged them to pray for themselves. We were gaining the victory; they were yielding. The voice of each was heard in humble, penitential prayer, and I felt that indeed the peace of God rested upon us. Angels seemed to be all around us, and I was shut up in a vision of God's glory. The state of the cause at ---- was again shown me. I saw that some had backslidden far from God. The youth were in a state of backsliding. {3T 124.3}

I was shown that the two younger sons of Brother X were naturally goodhearted, conscientious young men, but that Satan had blinded their perception. Their companions were not all of that class which would strengthen and improve their morals or increase their understanding and love for the truth and heavenly things. "One sinner destroyeth much good." The ridicule and corrupt conversation of these companions had had its effect to dispel serious and religious impressions. {3T 125.1}

It is wrong for Christians to associate with those whose morals are loose. An intimate, daily intercourse which occupies time without contributing in any degree to the strength

of the intellect or morals is dangerous. If the moral atmosphere surrounding persons is not pure and sanctified, but is tainted with corruption, those who breathe this atmosphere will find that it operates almost insensibly upon the intellect and heart to poison and to ruin. It is dangerous to be conversant with those whose minds naturally take a low level. Gradually and imperceptibly those who are naturally conscientious and love purity will come to the same level and partake of and sympathize with the imbecility and moral barrenness with which they are so constantly brought in contact. {3T 125.2}

It was important that the associations of these young men should change. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Satan has worked through agents to ruin these young men. Nothing can more effectually prevent or banish serious impressions and good desires than association with vain, careless, and corrupt-minded persons. Whatever attractions such persons may possess by their wit, sarcasm, and fun, the fact that they treat religion with levity and indifference is sufficient reason why they should not be associated with. The more engaging they are in other respects, the more should their influence be dreaded as companions, because they throw around an irreligious life so many dangerous attractions. {3T 125.3}

These young men should choose for their associates those who love the purity of truth, whose morals are untainted, and whose habits are pure. They must comply with the conditions laid down in the word of God, if they would indeed become sons of God, members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." God loves these young men, and if they will follow the leadings of His Spirit, and walk in His counsel, He will be their strength. {3T 126.1}

God has given Brother A Y good abilities, quick perceptions, and a good understanding of His word. If his heart were sanctified, he could have an influence for good with his brothers, as well as his neighbors and those with whom he associates. But the love of money has taken so firm a hold of his soul, and has been so interwoven with all the transactions of life, that he has become conformed to the world instead of being transformed by the renewing of the mind. His powers have been perverted and debased by sordid love of gain, which has made him selfish, penurious, and overbearing. Had his qualities been put into active use in his Master's service, rather than used to serve his own selfish interests, had his object and aim been to do good and glorify God, the qualities of mind that God had given him would impart to his character an energy, humility, and



efficiency which could not fail to command respect and would give him an influence over all with whom he associated. {3T 126.2}

I was shown that the property left by the father had indeed been a root of bitterness to his children. Their peace and happiness, and their confidence in one another, had been greatly disturbed by it. Brother A Y did not need his father's property. He had enough talents to handle that God had entrusted to his management. If he made a right disposition of that which he had, he would at least be among that number who were faithful in that which is least. The addition of the stewardship of his father's property, which he had covetously desired, was a heavier responsibility than he could well manage. {3T 127.1}

For several years the love of money has been rooting out the love of humanity and the love of God. And as the means of his father were within his reach, he desired to retain all that was possible in his own hands. He pursued a selfish course toward his brothers because he had the advantage and could do so. His brothers have not had right feelings. They have felt bitter toward him. He has in deal advantaged himself to the disadvantage of others until his course has reproached the cause of God. He has lost command of himself. His greatest object has been gain, selfish gain. The love of money in the heart was the root of all this evil. I was shown that had he turned his powers to labor in the vineyard of the Lord he would have done much good, but these qualifications perverted can do a great deal of harm. {3T 127.2}

The brothers B have not had the help they ought to have had. A B has labored to great disadvantage. He has taken too many burdens upon him, which has crippled his labors so that he has not increased in spiritual strength and courage as he should. The church, who have the light of truth, and should be strong in God to will and do, and to sacrifice, if need be, for the truth's sake, have been like weak children. They have required the time and labor of Brother A B to settle difficulties which should never have existed. And when these difficulties have arisen because of selfishness and unsanctified hearts, they could have been put away in an hour, had there been humility and a spirit of confession. {3T 127.3}

The brothers B make a mistake in remaining at ----- . They should change their location and not see this place oftener than a few times in the year. They would have greater freedom in bearing their testimony. These brethren have not felt freedom in speaking out truth and facts as they have existed. If they had lived elsewhere, they would have been more free from burdens, and their testimony would have had tenfold more weight when

they did visit this church. While Brother A B has been weighed down with petty church trials and kept at -----, he should have been laboring abroad. He has served tables until his mind has become clouded, and he does not comprehend the force and power of the truth. He has not been awake to the real wants of the cause of God. He has been losing spirituality and courage. The work of keeping up systematic benevolence has been neglected. Some of the brethren, whose whole interest was once in the advancement of the cause of God, have been growing selfish and penurious instead of becoming more self-sacrificing and their love for the truth and devotion to it increasing. They have been growing less devotional and more like the world. Father C is one of this number. He needs a new conversion. Brother C has been favored with superior privileges, and if these are not improved, condemnation and darkness will follow equal to the light he has had, for the nonimprovement of the talents lent of God for him to improve. {3T 127.4}

The brethren in Vermont have grieved the Spirit of God in allowing their love for the truth and their interest in the work of God to decline. {3T 128.1}

Brother D B overtaxed his strength last season while laboring in new fields with the tent without suitable help. God does not require this brother, or any of His servants, to injure their health by exposure and taxing labor. The brethren at ----- should have felt an interest that would have been shown by their works. They could have secured help if they had been awake to the interest of the cause of God and felt the worth of souls. While Brother D B felt a deep sense of the work of God and the value of souls, which called for continual effort, a large church at ----- by their petty difficulties held Brother A B from helping his brother. These brothers should come up with renewed courage, shake themselves from the trials and discouragements which have held them at ----- and crippled their testimony, and should claim strength from the Mighty One. They should have borne a plain, free testimony to Brother X and Y, and urged the truth home, and done what they could to have these men make a proper distribution of their property. Brother A B, in taking so many burdens, is lessening his mental and physical strength. {3T 128.2}

If Brother C had been walking in the light for a few years past, he would have felt the value of souls. Had he been cultivating a love for the truth he might have been qualified to teach the truth to others. He might have helped Brother D B in his work with the tent. He might at least have taken the burdens of the church at home. If he had had love for his brethren, and been sanctified through the truth, he could have been a peacemaker

instead of a stirrer-up of strife, which, united with other difficulties, called Brother A B from his brother's side at a most important time and resulted in Brother D B's laboring far beyond his strength. And yet, after Brother D B had done all that he could, the work was not accomplished that might have been had there been the interest there should have been in ----- to supply help when it was so much needed. A fearful responsibility rests upon that church for their neglect of duty. {3T 129.1}

I was shown that Brother X's course in dividing his property among his children was shifting the responsibility upon them which he should not have laid off. He now sees that the result of this course has brought to him no increase of affection from his children. They have not felt under obligation to their parents for what they have done for them. These children were young and inexperienced. They were not qualified to bear the responsibility laid upon them. Their hearts were unconsecrated, and true friends were looked upon by them as designing enemies, while those who would separate very friends were accepted. These agents of Satan were continually suggesting false ideas to the minds of these young men, and the hearts of brothers and sisters, father and mother, were at variance. {3T 129.2}

Father X made a mistake. Had he confided more in his daughters' husbands, who loved the truth in sincerity, and had he been more willing to be helped by the advice of these men of experience, great mistakes might have been prevented. But this is the way the enemy generally succeeds in managing matters in regard to the appropriation of means. {3T 130.1}

These cases mentioned were designed of God to be developed that all might see the effect of the deceitfulness of riches upon the heart. The result in these cases, which is apparent to all, should prove a warning to fathers and mothers and to ambitious children. The word of God defines covetousness as idolatry. It is impossible for men and women to keep the law of God and love money. The heart's affections should be placed upon heavenly things. Our treasure should be laid up in heaven, for where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. {3T 130.2}