Lt 33, 1882

Hanford, Tulare Co., California

May 9, 1882

Dear Bro. [J. O.] Corliss,

I received your letter this morning and was glad to hear from you. I am pressed with much writing yet feel inclined to drop you a word. We are in the midst of our camp meeting. The Lord has strengthened me to bear a straightforward powerful testimony which has impressed the people. This people have had but few religious privileges and they have had but little preaching. It was a feast to hear their testimonies this morning. They had something to say. Intelligent words of experience came from many that showed the Lord was working upon their hearts.

Our work is to talk much upon practical godliness. The great danger with our people who have had great light is to not prize their privileges and opportunities as blessings from God of the highest value. The disciples did not appreciate their high privilege of having Jesus in their midst until His blessing was removed from them. Then Jesus was missed. They did not know what He was to them until too late. Just so with us all. We do not know or appreciate the sacred gift of God in the light, the opportunities, He grants us.

If the testimonies of His Spirit were prized as the voice of God to men in warnings, in counsels, in reproof, our people would not be as cold and lukewarm as they are today. It is the growing unbelief in the testimonies of the Spirit of God which leaves the people in darkness. Let us consider this matter. Is this the voice of God? Has He signified His will? Has He warned of dangers? Has He presented before His people what they must do and what they must be in order to be saved? But the people pay no heed.

Some who profess to be leaders explaining the Scriptures to [others] are indifferent to the word of God through clay. What if they treat [the testimonies] with disrespect? How much easier will this unbelief and this disrespect be accepted than expressed faith? And why? Because the natural heart is in accordance with this unbelief. It pleases the carnal heart to be undisturbed in their errors and sins, and if they can find the least excuse to demerit the value of these testimonies they feel easier in their selfish indulgence. O, how easy for a little leaven of unbelief to leaven the lump!

But supposing these testimonies are indeed the voice of God to the people. Then how can we regard the work and influence of those who will not acknowledge the voice of God in the testimonies borne, but who have braced their hearts against them, whose voice is never heard among the people urging them to give attention to the light from the throne of God? How will their work stand in the judgment? How many have these ministers drawn with them to pay no heed to the voice of God? Why, their work is of that character that it would have been better for the people of God in the end if their voice had never been heard as a watchman on the walls of Zion. They placed greater confidence in their own finite judgment than in the words that God sends.

The time will come that the people will see this in its true bearing, but it will be too late to undo the past. They charge upon the ministers the loss of their souls and these ministers are among us today. These men are exalting their own ideas and plans above the light God has given them. These men allow self to come in between them and the people and to shut out heaven’s rays of light given to the people. “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” [Proverbs 29:18].

How easy for the people to look to their ministers rather than to go to God for themselves and serve Him conscientiously, knowing what is of God for themselves. One hint of disrespect in regard to the light given in the testimonies will go further with minds unenlightened by the special grace of God than fifty sermons to prove their validity. Those who sow unbelief will reap the harvest they have sown. The seed will spring up and bear fruit, a harvest of unbelief. He may have his faith confirmed and then wish to gather up the seeds he has sown of unbelief and infidelity, but can he gather it up? No indeed. He might work with all his might from day to day but he cannot gather up the seeds of doubt, of questioning, he has sown.

Some of our ministers choose to disbelieve because they have most earnest work to do to correct the faults in their characters and to purify their lives. It is a big job. If they can only quiet their consciences that the testimonies are not from God they feel at ease to go on in their wrongs. I tell you there is licentiousness in our ranks that is fearful. There is want of virtue and honesty. Just destroy the confidence of the people in the testimonies of the Spirit of God and we shall see a demoralized state of things that we do not dream could exist. [Possibly incomplete. Letter ends here without signature.]

Copied as grammatically edited

 From handwritten original

February 21, 2019

TLP

(Original letter is in the PUC Library Vault, in the flat files, Drawer 1,

shared with the White Estate on January 28, 2019.)