

A Call for Individual Responsibility in the Church

"It has ever been the design of Satan to draw the merits of the people from Jesus to man, and **to destroy individual accountability.**" *Early Writings, 213*

"Let those who would follow Christ fully, come up to the work, **even if it be over the heads of the ministers and presidents.**" *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, 369*

"With Divine help, we are to form our opinions for ourselves, as we are to answer for ourselves before God." *The Great Controversy, 598*

"The opinions of learned men...the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils...the voice of the majority...not one or all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith...Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. Then, by controlling the minds of these leaders, he can influence the multitudes according to his will...The Roman Church reserves to the clergy the right to interpret the Scriptures...yet the self-same principle...prevents multitudes in Protestant Churches from searching the Bible for themselves...these deluded souls dare not think differently from the minister; and their individual judgment, their eternal interests, are sacrificed to the unbelief, the pride and prejudice, of another.

If light and truth are within our reach, and we neglect to improve the privilege of hearing and seeing it, we virtually reject it; we are choosing darkness rather than light." *The Great Controversy, 595-598*

"We must study the truth for ourselves. No man should be relied upon to think for us. No matter who he is, or in what position he may be placed, we are not to look upon any man as a criterion for us...Each of us must look to God for Divine enlightenment." *Testimonies to Ministers, 105-110*

"Every soul must look to God with contrition and humility, that He may guide and bless. We must not trust to others to search the Scriptures for us. **Some of the leading brethren have frequently taken their position on the wrong side; and if God would send a message and wait for these older brethren to open up the way for its advancement, it would never reach the people.**" *Gospel Workers, 303*

"In the past God has raised up men, and He still has men of opportunity waiting, prepared to do His bidding — **men who will go through restrictions which are only as walls daubed with untempered mortar.** When God puts His Spirit upon men, they will work. They will proclaim the word of the Lord." *Testimonies to Ministers, 411*

"Laborers who are striving to work in harmony with this instruction, are under the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit, **and need not always, before they make an advance move, first ask permission of someone else. No precise lines are to be laid down. Let the Holy Spirit direct the workers.**" *Testimonies to Ministers, 492*

"One member working in right lines will lead other members." *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8, 251*

"The Lord often works where we least expect Him; He surprises us by revealing His power through instruments of His own choice, **while He passes by the men to whom we have looked as those through whom light should come.**" *Testimonies to Ministers, 107*

"If you know that God would have you engage in any work, go forward. **Those who have light and consciousness that God is leading, need not depend upon any human agent to define their work.**" *Testimonies to Ministers, 502*

"But we see that **the God of heaven sometimes commissions men to teach that which is regarded as contrary to the established doctrines...**The Holy Spirit will from time to time, reveal the truth through its own chosen agencies; and **no man, not even a priest or ruler has a right to say, You shall not give publicity to your opinions, because I do not believe them.**" *Testimonies to Ministers, 70*

"**In the church, man power is gaining the ascendancy.** Those who have been chosen to occupy positions of trust think it their prerogative to rule." *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, 270*

"**When brethren manifest the spirit of the dragon,** to make war upon those who believe that God has communicated light and comfort to them through the Testimonies, **it is time for the brethren and sisters to assert their liberty and perfect freedom of conscience.**" *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, 245, 246*

"A great work is to be done, and God sees that our leading men have need of greater light, that they may unite harmoniously, with the messengers whom He shall send to accomplish the work that He designs they should...**Let no one run the risk of interposing himself between the people and the message of heaven.**" *Counsels to Writers and Editors, 38*

"The great danger with our people has been that of depending upon men, and making flesh their arm. Those who have not been in the habit of searching the Bible for themselves, or weighing evidence, have confidence in the leading men, and accept the decisions they make; **and thus many will reject the very messages God sends His people, if these leading brethren do not accept them...The Lord will raise up men who will give the people the message for this time.**" *Testimonies to Ministers, 106, 107*

"He will use men for the accomplishment of His purpose whom some of the brethren would reject as unfit to engage in the work." *Review and Herald, February 9, 1895*

"Can not other men...give just as much evidence that they are led and taught of God...If you have appointed committees to do the work...dismiss them...Stand out of the way, and let God work His own instrumentalities." *Testimonies to Ministers, 295*

"Unsanctified ministers are arraying themselves against God...Many will stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan." *Testimonies to Ministers, 409, 410*

"That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be — that is past." *General Conference Bulletin 1901, p. 25*

"Unless these [by this leader] are aroused to a sense of their duty, they will not recognize the work of God when the loud cry of the third angel shall be heard. When light goes forth to lighten the earth, instead of coming up to the help of the Lord, they will want to bind about His work to me their narrow ideas. **Let me tell you that the Lord will work in this last work in a manner very much out of the common order of things, and in a way that will be contrary to any human planning.**" *Testimonies to Ministers, 300*

"I have often been instructed by the Lord that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any other man. **Never should the mind of one man or the minds of a few men be regarded as sufficient in wisdom and power to control the work, and to say what plans shall be followed...At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general**

management of the work have, the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans and to restrict God's work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God...The error that some are in danger of committing, is in giving to the mind and judgment of one man, or of a small group of men, the full measure of authority and influence that God has vested in His church." *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, 260, 261*

"No matter by whom light is sent, we should open our hearts to receive it with the meekness of Christ." *Gospel Workers, 300-303*

"Let us beware that we do not refuse the light God sends, because it does not come in a way to please us...If there are any who do not see and accept the light themselves, let them not stand in the way of others." *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, 728*

"The Lord sends light to us to prove what manner of spirit we are of." *Gospel Workers, 297-304*

"Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it." *Testimonies to Ministers, 507*

"If a brother is teaching...truth...take [your] stand at his side...We are all under obligation to God to understand what He sends us." *Testimonies to Ministers, 110*

"Even if all our leading men should refuse light and truth, that door will still remain open." *Testimonies to Ministers, 107*

"He [Satan] uses the same power that he used in heaven — the influence of mind on mind. Men become tempters of their fellow men...and they exert a masterly, compelling power...In a milder form the same evil and the same spirit has been introduced into our institutions. The Lord opened the matter to me, showing me that the wrong was of the same character as that introduced into heaven. It was Satan who was working to bring certain influences to bind different interests under one control. **This was not in harmony with God's will, and He declared that He would not sanction anything of the kind.** This work was first started in the Review and Herald office. It was the enemy of our work who prompted the call for the consolidation of the publishing work under one controlling power in Battle Creek. Then the idea gained favor that the medical work would be greatly advanced if all our medical institutions and other medical interests were bound up under the control of the medical association at Battle Creek. I was told that I must lift up my voice in warning against this. **We were not to be under the control of men. We were not to be guided by men who want their word to be the controlling power.**" *Manuscript Release 114, October 5, 1903*

"Shall we, uninspired men, take the responsibility of placing our stakes, and saying, 'This shall not appear in print'...Can not other men...give just as much evidence that they are led and taught of God...Will we ever realize that the consciences of men are not given into our command? If you have appointed committees to do the work...dismiss them...Stand out of the way, and let God work His own instrumentalities." *Testimonies to Ministers, 295*

"As there are woes for those who preach the truth while they are unsanctified in heart and life, **so there are woes for those who receive and maintain the unsanctified in the position which they cannot fill.**" *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, 552; Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, 261, 262*

"The Lord abhors indifference and disloyalty in a time of crisis...His special blessing accompanies the labors of men of action; men who will not be swerved from the straight line of duty." *Prophets and Kings, 148*

"If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime, and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God." *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, 281*

"If all in the church would come to the help of the Lord, we would see such a revival of His work as we have not hitherto witnessed...Unless you are favored with the blessing of God, you have His curse...A bitter curse is pronounced on those who come not to the help of the Lord. 'Curse ye, Meroz,' said the angel of the Lord, 'curse ye bitterly, the inhabitants thereof, because ye came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.' Satan and his angels are in the field to oppose every advance step that God's people take, therefore the help of every one is required." *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, 166*

"What had Meroz done? Nothing. **And this was their sin.** They came not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty" *Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, 247; and in numerous places throughout the Spirit of Prophecy*

The curse of God came upon the inhabitants of Meroz because they did nothing when the battle raged at Megiddo (See Judges 5:19-23). In the Index to the writings of E.G. White, under Judges 5:23, we observe how frequently the Lord's servant quotes this reference to the first battle of Israel fought at Megiddo in connection with some of God's people today who are like the inhabitants of Meroz in that they are doing nothing to help the Lord in the great conflict between the forces of good and evil, which is typified in that conflict of Israel with the sun-worshipping Canaanites at Megiddo.