

THE PRESENT TRUTH

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An Appeal to a Self-Centered Wife to Repent and Reform

I hoped the change which seemed to take place in your wife at the meeting in Chicago would be lasting, and was so grateful to our heavenly Father when I heard her confession, for I thought that a most severe task was lifted from my shoulders; but the burden is still upon me. I know that she is not changed for the better. The dangers and difficulties which she will create if her whims are gratified are almost incredible to those who do not understand the spirit which actuates her. Her early education has been so neglected by her mother that she has no sense of the duties which devolve upon her as a wife. She feels under no obligation to love and obey her husband or to yield to the authority of God. She does not know what true love is. She has not been educated to self-control. Her life experience and education have been such as to disqualify her for the position of a wife.

She is a terrible burden to her husband, for she does not try to make herself useful or bear her share of life's responsibilities. If she would reason, she would see how unjust it is for her to expect him to labor for her support while she gives herself up to annoy, perplex, and harass him. She adds nothing to the family income, yet thinks it her privilege to spend as she pleases. At the same time she feels at liberty to give way to her feelings like a spoiled child, taking offense at nothing, and indulging in outbursts of passion until life is a burden to him. When away from her husband she is cheerful, and appears to be well, as long as she can have her own way.

When she wants to do a thing, she can endure what many women would think a heavy tax upon their physical powers. But when desired to do anything which is distasteful to her, she assumes the air of a martyr, and is incapable of any exertion. Much of her illness is feigned, in order to create a sensation. She is angry with her husband because she cannot make him submit to her control, because he has tried to preserve his identity, and not yield up his God-given manhood.

She thinks that everyone must do as her mother and others have done-- indulge her and consult her wishes; and she is determined to bring them to it. Should her husband yield to her, he would lose his manhood; and should those whom God has placed over the Chicago mission pet her and gratify her wishes, they would be unfaithful to their trust. Should her spirit be allowed to have the ascendancy in the mission, evil angels would become the ruling power.

However earnestly her husband may endeavor to pursue a straightforward course to serve God, she will be his evil angel, seeking to lead him away from righteousness. In her own estimation she is the idol he must worship; in fact, she is Satan's agent, seeking to occupy the place where God should be. She has followed the impulses of her own unconsecrated heart until Satan has almost complete control of her.

Sister Craig has never been trained to self-control. She has but very slight depth of mind, and little ability to discern sacred things. She does not enjoy the self-denying, self-sacrificing part that all must learn who enter heaven. But she is sharp enough in carrying out her own will and in making a false impression upon her husband's mind. She can indeed be very courteous and pleasing if everything goes to suit her, but there is no solidity to her character. She has well learned the secret of acting for effect, of creating a sensation to call attention to her small self. I have seen but few persons as successful in making self the center of attraction when there was so little sweet, noble, genuine attractiveness in the character.

But unless she changes her course, this acting for effect, this desperate maneuvering to force the attention of her husband and gain his sympathy, will finally be repeated once too many times, and God will give her fully into the hands of Satan. Unless there is a change, a time will come soon when this lower nature in the wife, controlled by a will as strong as steel, will bring down the strong will of the husband to her own low level. His will would then be merged in that of the impulsive, inconsistent, insane wife. He would no longer be a man, for the satanic mold upon the character of the wife would be upon him also. His sympathies would no longer be pure and uncorrupted, like fine gold, but they would be deteriorated. His energies would be enfeebled, his life distorted.

Brother Craig has felt that it was his duty to fight her battles, become as inconsistent in her behalf as she is herself, see through her eyes, and contend for her rights; for unless he does this, she will indulge in those awful outbursts of passion. Her oft-repeated assertions draw upon his sympathies, and a continual burden is cast upon him by her manufactured physical disabilities. In her mother's house her will was law. However inconsistent and perverse her course, it was regarded as resulting from a physical condition for which all allowance must be made. It was thought that her every demand must be met.

But the folly of the mother and other relatives must not become the folly of the husband. Should he follow in their footsteps, his life and hers also would be wrecked. Better would it be had they never been born. As it is, she is a fit subject for the insane asylum; for God has shown me that she throws herself wholly into the hands of Satan, soul, body and spirit, and his power through her is deadening the fine sensibilities of right and integrity in her husband.

If she were a child, she could be treated as such; these outbursts of temper could be punished as those of a self-willed, passionate child. But she is a woman, and her husband cannot force her perverse will to be reasonable. Never will this exacting temperament be improved by yielding to it. Her tragical performances are enacted to frighten her husband into complying with her demands, and he must yield or have a scene. As Satan sees how he can work through her when she thus casts soul and body into his hands--that he can use her as he pleases--he will throw her into these paroxysms more and more, whenever her will is crossed. In this case it is not the

woman whom Brother Craig is dealing with, but a desperate, satanic spirit. The Lord has a work for Brother Craig to do, but if he is overcome by these outbursts on the part of his wife, he is a lost man, and she is not saved by the sacrifice.

His best course with this child-wife, so overbearing, so unyielding, and so uncontrollable, is to take her home and leave her with the mother who has made her what she is. Though it must be painful, this is the only thing for him to do if he would not be ruined spiritually, sacrificed to the demon of hysterics and satanic imaginings. Satan takes entire control of her temper and will, and uses them like desolating hail to beat down every obstruction. Her husband can do her no good, but is doing himself incalculable harm, and robbing God of the talents and influence He has given.

God has placed the husband at the head of the family; and until Sister Craig shall learn her place and duties as a wife, it will be best for him not to be connected with her in any way. The wife is to respect and obey; but if she utterly refuses to keep the marriage vow, she will be more and more the sport of Satan's temptations; and if her husband consents to keep her by his side, to wear out his life, he will become discouraged and unfitted for the Lord's service. He is under no obligations to keep one by his side who will only torture his soul. I was shown that he has already been losing his manhood, and has been influenced and molded by his wife. Their marriage was a snare of Satan.

Sister Craig is determined to rule or ruin. I was shown that she has so thoroughly yielded herself into Satan's hands that her husband fears for her reason, but he will make one of the gravest mistakes of his life if he permits himself to be controlled by Satan through the device of his wife. I tell you plainly, she is controlled by demons, and if these evil spirits have their way, your liberty, Brother Craig, your manhood are gone; you are a slave to her caprices. If you yield to her sway, she will surely be an instrument in the hands of Satan to separate you from God. She will suggest evil surmisings and suspicions that will break up the harmony and confidence between you and those in the mission with whom you should be in perfect union. The fact that persons have been called of God to fill positions of trust in the mission awakens no respect for them in her heart if they interfere with her likes and dislikes.

Distrust, unjust criticism, and insubordination will be the fruit of the satanic spirit that dwells in this child (for she is nothing but a child)--indulged, petted, and determined to control everyone in the household. But this must not be allowed in the mission. The Lord would have Brother Craig be His faithful servant, a steward in the mission, a growing man, strengthening in intellect, becoming better and better qualified to do the work of the Master.

Sister Craig must have a thorough transformation of character or she will never enter heaven. She now studies herself, pleases herself. She will pursue any course to secure admiration of self. If her wishes are not gratified, she works herself up into a perfect fury. If she continues in this way, Satan will so work through her that even the life of her husband will be unsafe. She cares not for God, heaven, or hell. Jesus looks upon her with sorrow--that one for whom He has sacrificed His own life should value her soul so lightly as to give it into the hands of Satan. If, through the grace of Christ, Sister Craig would bend her determined will to the work of putting away the wicked spirit which controls her, and would use the knowledge she has to good purpose, then she might be a blessing rather than a curse to her husband. But if she will not heed the counsels of God, I have been shown that the only course for her husband to pursue is to leave her with her parents, that her mother may bear the affliction which her own mismanagement has caused. Had she in her youth been made to feel the rod of correction instead of receiving unwise sympathy and indulgence, her husband would not now be placed in so great peril as he is.

Whatever course Brother Craig takes now, he will be censured. If he continues to live with her, she will make their married life a reign of terror. Unless he permits her to pervert his senses, to poison his mind against his brethren, he will have to maintain constant warfare. Not only will his manhood be sacrificed, but he will lose his integrity, and all to please a woman who is so determined to rule her husband, both mind and body, that she will give to Satan her soul, body, and spirit, in order for him to accomplish the work she would see done. She is just as much possessed by a demon as was the man who tore and cut himself when Jesus cast out the devils.

Brother Craig is sorely afflicted by these exhibitions on the part of his wife; but never, never must the power of Satan exercised through her, or through him on her account, be allowed to control the mission. Better by far let her stay in her mother's home till her character is transformed and the demon is dispossessed; until she shall be willing to receive counsel and help, sitting meekly at the feet of Jesus, learning precious lessons in the school of Christ.

I was shown that we must do all that is in our power to open Sister Craig's eyes to her wrong course; and if this fails we must try to open the eyes of Brother Craig that he may not be betrayed into error through her perverted vision, and the wisdom of God be taken from him.

If Sister Craig continues her present course, the time is not far distant when it will be impossible for her to break this power at will. Already Satan holds almost complete control of her will, her mind, and her judgment. No one through whom he works in such a manifest manner should be connected with God's work. There are but few men strong enough to resist, day after day, week after week, such a will as that of Sister Craig, and she can create a scene whenever her will is crossed, or whenever the wicked one will play upon her, which is coming to be a common occurrence. But in this Brother Craig must let Satan rage, and not allow himself to be cut off from religious privileges because his wife desires it. If she runs away, let her go. Even if she threatens to take her own life, do not yield to her wicked demands. Even if she should carry out her threat, it would be better to look upon her silent in death than to allow her to murder not only her own soul but that of her husband, and be the means of destroying many others.

Brother Craig, you have been terrified by the violence of your wife, but the course for you to pursue is the straightforward path of truth, righteousness, and wisdom, having the fear of God always before you. Satan is already exulting over his success.

Sister Craig, I would not present this matter as I do were there not another life so closely bound up with yours, and [were not] that the life of one whom God has chosen to be His servant. This marriage ought not to have been, but the step has been taken, and for your husband the work of overcoming is now tenfold more severe than if he had never seen you. Will you think seriously over this question, whether his usefulness shall be destroyed and his life become a failure because of your course? I warn him that if he praises or pets you, it will only increase your self-satisfaction. You are seeking to bend his will and conscience to your pleasure; and the more you are indulged, the stronger and more determined your self-will becomes. What do you propose to do? What course will you pursue?

I was presented with a view of the errors of your past life, and was brought down to the present time. All along are seen the sure results of the injudicious training of your unwise mother who was not a practical doer of the Word. The discipline of children is a very nice work, one freighted with eternal responsibilities. Your mother's religious life has been marred by her worldly spirit and worldly associations. She has had a knowledge of the truth, but how little influence have Bible principles had upon her life and character! The mother's characteristics have been transmitted to you, who have less experience and less power to control them than she had.

With a will like granite, you are a bundle of false ideas--false views of life, false views of your husband, of yourself, of everyone whose will you cannot bend to your own. Instead of being a modest, God-fearing, humble woman, you are bold, exacting, tyrannical. Thank God, you have no children to reproduce your characteristics.

Your mother needs to repent before God of her disregard of His word in the education and training she has given you. Did she not know that the mold of character she was giving you, one of the younger members of the Lord's family, was disqualifying you to become a member of the Lord's family in heaven? Did she not know that by her indulgence she was encouraging a will that would attempt to rule or ruin all who came in contact with it? Did she not know that the character forming under her hands was preparing her daughter to disregard the wishes of others and to dishonor God, to follow the impulse of her own unsanctified will?

In the fear of God I would address a few words to the mother. Take to your own home the wayward child you have petted and indulged. I can never describe to you how offensive to God is your work in the formation in your child of a character that will ruin the life of a man whom God loves, whom God claims as His steward. You have made a great mistake in dealing with her, and you should be the one to carry the burden of her distorted character. All your neglected duty God has recorded in His book, and you must meet it again. Your daughter is an offense to God, for she is insulting Him by a course of action that, if continued, must ruin her own soul, and that tends to drag her husband down to her low level. Her influence tends to hinder the spiritual advancement of all with whom she comes in contact. Parents should be impressed with their solemn obligation to do God's will in the education and training of their children. How important that they lay aside their own will and inclination and take hold of their work in the fear of God!

Sister Craig, what did you expect of your husband when you married him? Did you expect to take the reins of government in your own hands, and bring his will into harmony with that perverse, stubborn will of yours? How much rest, contentment, peace, and joy has your husband realized in his married life? But very little. Married life is not all romance; it has its real difficulties and its homely details. The wife must not consider herself a doll, to be tended, but a woman, one to put her shoulder under the real, not imaginary, burdens, and live an understanding, thoughtful life, considering that there are other things to be thought of than herself.

Do you think it is no disappointment to your husband that he finds you what God has shown me you are? Did he marry you with the expectation that you would bear no burdens, share no perplexities, exercise no self-denial? Did he think that you would feel under no obligation to control self, to be cheerful, kind, and forbearing, and to exercise common sense?

Real life has its shadows and its sorrows. To every soul troubles must come. Satan is constantly working to unsettle the faith and destroy the courage and hope of everyone. Your husband has had a horrible awakening as he has seen what is the nature of her whom he has vowed to love and cherish till death do you part. He sees himself fastened to one who cares for no one but herself. Your imaginary trials, your manufactured physical disabilities, make the outlook most discouraging. You have scarcely any knowledge of practical life and duty. A life of principle is almost unknown to you. Self-pleasing bounds your world.

When the grace of Christ dwells in the heart it will make the manners gentle and subdued. There will be no deception, no pretense, no self-admiration, no reckless association with worldlings. There will be a far greater sense of pain at praise than at censure. The thought that Christ has died for sinners should be ever present, for it will have a tendency to subdue and expel every vestige of self-love, of self-seeking, of idolatry of self. On the part of every soul that loves God there will be earnest, continuous study of His Word, and earnest prayer. Instead of being earthly, and carnally minded, the trembling believer will turn to the Stronghold as a prisoner of hope.

I entreat you, my poor, weak, erring sister, to accept the strength that is waiting your demand upon it. Though you have felt the movings of the Spirit of God on your heart, you know nothing as yet of practical religion. The life of the soul, like that of the body, is affected to a great degree by the food which sustains it. The soul that finds in Christ and His matchless love the Bread of life will have a sound, solid experience; but he who is satisfied with this world, its customs, its sayings, and its doings, will be worthless in this life, and will fail of gaining the future life. Your mind is almost wholly absorbed in those things that are of no value, those things that amuse the mind but give it no spiritual strength. Before Christ who paid the redemption money for your soul, you show yourself unworthy to have your name retained in the book of life; for you set your heart upon earthly things and that earthly wisdom which is foolishness with God.

Will you, my sister, look well to your worthless life, and not think it sufficient when you do get a glance at it, to mourn over it and then forget all about it and go on doing worse than ever? Will you see the false gods at whose shrine you worship? "The prayer of the upright is His delight," but the unstable shall not receive anything from the Lord. Will you, dear child, separate yourself from the world, and cease to love its society? Bring Christ into all your associations; then the dark, sinful soul will have chapters of the love of Jesus open to its contemplation. When you partake of Christ, His goodness, His way, become yours, His will subdues your will. The words that come from your lips now you think to be smart, but oh, how painful they are to the heart that loves Jesus! If they were written out as you speak them, you would see a medley of nonsense, of foolishness, of bitterness, wrath, envy, malice. Festivals, lectures, concerts are the food you relish, with a little so-called religion mixed in as flavor. Whom has your life blessed? What kind of worker are you in your Master's vineyard? What fruit are you bearing to the glory of God?

There will necessarily be many who want to receive in the mission an education for the work of God. Your husband's position leads the new ones in the faith, and those who are connected with him in the mission, to suppose you to be a Christian, and not the frivolous-minded, irreligious person you are. Your influence is such as will lead souls away from Jesus. Therefore your example is a detriment to the mission. If there is not a decided change in you, the sooner you are separated from the mission the better, for the Lord is not pleased with you.

Your husband should not merge his identity in you. The marriage vow that binds the husband to the wife must remain unbroken, but he has vows to his Lord, to love Him with the whole heart, the undivided affection. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; . . . This do, and thou shalt live." It is his duty to place himself where he can honor God with mind, soul, body, and spirit, even if he never looks upon your face again. By your endless talk of cheap, earthly, carnal things, and your outbursts of passion, you are constantly creating a condition of things that tends to absorb his thoughts, to divert his mind from God, and to disqualify him for his work.

He has one duty before him--to preserve himself from being compelled to come to your level, by giving himself to some branch of the work of God. He belongs to the Creator in the highest sense; Jesus has bought him with His own blood, and requires him to be wholly united with Him in the work He has for him to do. If your influence interposes between him and the Lord, he could [should?] place you in a position where you will be as little hindrance to him as possible. He must not allow you to spoil his usefulness by mingling your carnal, earthly foolishness with all his experience.

You can, my sister, be made better by your husband's influence; but if you are not, he will most assuredly be hindered by the atmosphere that surrounds your life. How difficult for him to perfect a religious character while constantly breathing this atmosphere! How hard for him when in your company to elevate his soul to pure, spiritual thoughts! How difficult to keep in mind fruitful subjects of meditation! How often he is perplexed to know just what course he should pursue toward you! You are a stumbling block to him, whether he sees it or not.

God, who searches the heart, takes notice of its desires. He will forgive your past life of frivolity, your pretense, your deception, if you will now repent and seek His grace, that you may live unto Him and Him alone. "The Lord looketh upon the heart." "He remembereth that we are dust." "I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their own thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto My words, nor to My law, but rejected it." This need not be your case, but it will be unless you turn square about.

You cannot make this change yourself, but Jesus can, and will do this if you ask Him and submit yourself wholly to Him, not seeking your own will but God's will, no longer trying to please self but educating yourself to be useful. Your time is golden and should be spent in seeking to lay up a treasure in the heavens. You must forget your darling self. Live no longer to please yourself, but to please God.

But if you will not do this, then your husband must remember that he is God's property, the purchase of the blood of Christ. The Lord has a work for him to do, and if the enemy works through you to thwart His purpose, there is but one course for him to take--to go forth to his work independent of your influence, and give himself wholly to God. If he does this, he will, through the grace of Christ, save his own soul, and through this course may be the means of saving your soul. But he is not now doing the work which God requires him to do. He is not to indulge your unconsecrated desires by his means or consent, but should restrain them.

My sister, is eternal life of any value to you? If so, you should make this manifest. Where is the humility you should feel because of your deficiencies? The only real, unequivocal proof that we are true Christians, is that, being branches of the living Vine and deriving our nutriment from Jesus, we bear fruit, fragrant fruit, of which the Spirit is the source. Then we shall have a beautiful character, a good, unselfish heart. Our words, our actions, our very thoughts will bear a continual testimony that we are branches of the true and living Vine. There is not conjecture; the divine credentials are manifest, testifying that we are in Christ and Christ in us.

If your spirit, my sister, were in harmony with that of Christ, you would not suggest one word of envy or suspicion to your husband's mind. No thought of evil would germinate and spring up to bear fruit and result in separating you and him from the work. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Seek the Lord with all your heart before it shall be too late.--Letter 34, 1890. Ellen G. White Estate Washington, D.C. January, 1987. Entire Letter. {16MR 315.2}