

The Need of a Book Committee

Danger of Independent Work.--It is necessary that something should be done to guard the interests of those who believe the truth for this time. Christ has given many warnings to the effect that false doctrines, false prophets, and false christs would arise and deceive many. From the light that God has been pleased to give me, His humble servant, I know that these prophecies have been fulfilling, and testimonies have not been few that have been given to meet these things as they have come up all along through our religious experience. Great delusions will arise, and even "of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Even Satan will disguise himself, and appear as Christ. {CW 152.1}

I can see plainly that should everyone who thinks he is qualified to write books, follow his imagination and have his productions published, insisting that they be recommended by our publishing houses, there would be plenty of tares sown broadcast in our world. {CW 152.2}

Indiscriminate Use of the Testimonies.-- Many from among our own people are writing to me, asking with earnest determination the privilege of using my writings to give force to certain subjects that they wish to present to the people in such a way as to leave a deep impression upon them. It is true that there is a reason why some of their matters should be presented: but I would not venture to give my approval in using the testimonies in this way, or to sanction the placing of matter which is good in itself in the way which they propose. The persons who make these proportions, for aught I know, may be able to conduct the enterprise of which they write, in a wise manner; but nevertheless I dare not give the least license for using my writings in the manner which they propose. In taking account of such an enterprise, there are many things that must come into consideration; for in using the testimonies to bolster up some subject which may impress the mind of the author, the extracts may give a different impression than that which they would were they read in their original connection. {CW 152.3}

I am also receiving printed matter, tracts and leaflets, from one and another, which present a large array of Scriptures, put together in a way that would seem to prove certain theories; but they only prove the theories in the estimation of their authors; for truth set in a framework of error, diverts the mind from the real subject which should take the attention, and aids error in calling the minds of men away from the present truth which is essential for this time. These persons bring certain Scriptures together, and interpret passages of the Bible, so as to give coloring to their views; but they are wresting the Scriptures to make them appear to say that which they do not say. False theories will thus be propagated in the world to the very end, and as long as there are printing presses and publishing houses, erroneous matter will be presented for publication, and books will be prepared for public circulation. {CW 153.1}

Guard Our Publishing Houses.--Should there be no guard against the publication of erroneous theories, our own publishing houses would become the agents for disseminating false theories. Writers make a world of one or two items of theory, which others cannot regard as important, and then the writer thinks his ideas are greatly belittled. {CW 154.1}

The Need of a Book Committee.--We found it necessary to take steps in the **formation of a book committee**, whose duty it should be to look into the matter offered for publication, and to decide as to whether or not the matter was worthy of publication. If the men on the book committee are in touch with Christ, if their eyes are anointed with the eyesalve which Jesus recommends them to buy of Him, then, and only then, can they be proper judges as to what will be profitable matter for publication. {CW 155.2}

It is highly proper that **manuscripts shall be carefully examined** before receiving the endorsement of the Review and Herald, and having the benefits of the influence of the office. {CW 156.1}

Your writings, I presume, are just as they should be; yet it may be necessary that they should go through the process of being **examined carefully and critically**. If no fault can be found with them, they should receive the notice and the commendation that is due to such class of work. You are dealing strong blows against tradition and errors that lie at the foundation of a heresy that will destroy the souls of those who receive it. A wide door to destruction is open to all those who believe in the immortality of the soul, and do not believe that Christ alone brings life and immortality to light. I believe the book you have written will do good in enlightening many who are in darkness; but for all this, my brother, you surely can see that barriers have to be erected in our publishing houses concerning this bookmaking business. You can see that if no measures were taken to bind about this line of work, very singular productions would be poured upon the world under the endorsement of our offices of publication. . . . {CW 156.2}

Close Criticism of All Writings.--The Lord did not lead in the production of some of the statements that are made in this book [Living Temple]. He has given us His word, and this word is to be the man of our counsel. It seemed to me passing strange that men who have been long in the work cannot discern the character of this book. A great deal of scripture is used, but it is woven in and brought together in such a way that to many minds error is made to appear as truth. Erroneous theories are so presented that those who receive them will certainly be misled, and led on step by step by the enemy. {CW 157.2}

If ever there was a time when the **writings of every one connected with our work should be closely criticized, it is now**. The Lord has made known to me that His word is to be studied, and as no such representations as those made in Living Temple are made in the word, we are to reject them. We are to take the word as God has given it to us. If Christ had thought it essential for such theories to be presented to human minds, He would have included them in His teachings. As our Owner and Redeemer, He has put in His word all the instruction that is necessary for our salvation.--Manuscript 127, 1905. {CW 158.1}

Chap. 22 - The Book Committee

Selection of the Book Committee.--**Great care should be exercised in selecting the members of the book committee**. The men who are to pass judgment on the books offered for publication should be few and well chosen. Only such as have an experimental knowledge of authorship are qualified to act in this capacity. Only those should be chosen whose hearts are under the control of the Spirit of God. They should be men of prayer, men who do not exalt self, but who love and fear God, and respect their brethren. Only such as, in distrust of self, are led by divine wisdom, are competent to fill this important position.--Testimonies, Vol. 7, p. 160. {CW 159.1}

Men of Experience to Serve.--Manuscripts have been placed in the hands of men for criticism when the eyes of their understanding were so blinded that they could not discern the spiritual import of the subject with which they were dealing. More than this, they had no real knowledge of bookmaking. They had had neither study nor practice in the line of literary productions. Men have sat in judgment upon books and manuscripts, unwisely placed in their hands, when they should have declined to serve in any such capacity. It would have been only honest for them to say, "I have had no experience in this line of work, and should certainly do injustice to myself and to others in giving my opinion. Excuse me, brethren; instead of instructing others, I need that someone should teach me." But this was far from their thoughts. They expressed themselves freely in regard to subjects of which they knew nothing. Conclusions have been accepted as the opinions of wise men, when they were simply the opinions of novices.--Manuscript 14, 1896. {CW 159.2}

Counsel to the Book Committee.--I have some things to say in reference to the making of books. There are dangers which our book committee needs to guard against. Men who have any part to act in the service of God should be careful, lest they use the common fire in the place of the sacred. They should watch and pray, and be careful that their own hearts are under the control of the Spirit of God. If, like Daniel, they are men of earnest prayer, they will be careful of their words and deportment. They will not exalt self, but they will love and fear God, and respect their brethren. They will pray for grace to keep themselves faithful and true and untainted with selfishness in their connection with the work of God. No neglect will be seen, no complaints will be heard, no unjust course will be taken toward any man whom God has used in His work. . . . {CW 160.1}

The men who are placed in the position to judge if books are worthy of publication should be few and well chosen. Men who have never written a book themselves, or had any experience in this line, cannot be expected to have clear perceptions in these matters, and they should never be placed on a committee to pass their judgment or estimate the value of a book. They may speak of these matters as though they were competent to judge, but they are ignorant of the subject brought before them. . . . {CW 160.2}

Many books have been issued, not for the glory of God, but simply because the authors desired to make a book. Men have considered it their right to put books into circulation which were not at all needed, that they might make a little money for themselves. Other persons feel that their productions are needed, and are greatly offended when they are not recognized as authors. . . . {CW 161.1}

The Lord would have men of solid judgment in connection with His work, else the world will be flooded with a class of literature that it might better be without. And His people are to learn to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God.--Letter 208, 1899. {CW 161.2}