Love as Brethren

As touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. 1 Thessalonians 4:9.

Truth, precious truth, is to sanctify, subdue, refine, elevate, and finally to exalt us to a seat at the right hand of the Majesty of heaven. Shall we grow feeble in spiritual power for want of exercise? Shall we go day after day without a marked and clear experience in the religious life because we permit our minds to be absorbed in worldly business?

Here, my dear son [Edson], is your danger. Here are the wiles of Satan entangling you. The very powers or organs that you cultivate become strong, and you are imperceptibly placing yourself where you will be in a position unfitted to engage in the work of God. The time that you should be giving yourself earnestly to the work, you are really unfitting yourself for the work God would honor you to do in His cause. One pretext after another has arisen to your mind to excuse you from taking hold of the work which you could do at once while you are waiting till this object is gained or that project is accomplished. It is not the great work you are fitted to do now. But it is the little duties connected with the work of God, the small responsibilities borne with humbleness and fidelity, that will qualify you for higher responsibilities, more important trusts. Purity of motives, unselfish interest, you must cultivate.

Press close to your younger brother, Willie. Let no emulation or strife separate your heart and affections from him. Let no selfish feelings or jealousy find a place in your heart. Empty it of all these things. Cultivate love, confidence, and trust. Live up to the Bible standard. Carry out the light
God has given you. Show in kindly acts and words and unselfish acts your true interest and affection for Willie. All the advances you make will be reflected back on you. I shall never be satisfied until I see you both, firmly and strongly, lovingly, united in the closest bonds of brotherly love. God help you to work to this end. You are older than Willie and you should seek in every way to help him and bind him to your heart. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.

Religion, my son, is not as some take it, head work, theory. It must be practically carried out in all the byways and broadways of life. It must regulate the life as well as to convince the mind. It alone must purify the heart. God requires everyone who professes His name to be good citizens and that the life of strict integrity and pure devotion should leave a bright light to the world.—Letter 35, July 30, 1876, to "Dear Children." Edson had just turned 27; Willie was 21.

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