

CONFESSIONS OF BROKEN HEARTS.

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."—Bible.

It is not strange that Satan has different tactics for different classes of people. Children have their temptations; new converts have theirs, while those older in the way are tempted along other lines.

But there is one strange and suitable snare laid for the feet of those who seem to be well-established in grace, and that is spiritual affinity, or an undue drawing of one heart toward another of the opposite sex. The danger of this is that at first there is nothing apparently carnal about it. It seems to draw souls together in the Spirit. It is God in the person that is admired, then, little by little, the human and carnal element enters.

The parties may be married or single, old or young. Indeed the middle-aged and old seem to be more affected on this line than others. The snare usually is laid in religious services or where the parties are thrown together for other lawful reasons. A woman confides in a good man. They pray together and are a great inspiration to each other, never dreaming of the snare Satan is setting for their feet. A good brother comes to a sister for religious counsel and Satan injects a thought of evil, particularly if those who are asking counsel are unfortunate enough to have unsaved companions, or those who are not the help to them that they should be. This may or may not lead to outward sin; but the spirit is contaminated.

Spiritual affinity often enters while the workers are engaged in successful revivals or camp meetings. It sometimes begins at an altar service. Just to be frank, it seems to us that there needs to be some reform regarding the conducting of these services. To the outside world it appears that a great crowd of men and women mingle freely and dump themselves in a heap around the seeker. Of course this is not true, but could there not be some rules which would make things look better from the outside?

The world likes to reflect upon Christian people by casting insinuations against them. For this and other reasons, it is wise for women to work with women, and men with men, at an altar service. If this rule cannot be kept to the letter, let there be no familiar glances or actions; and no touching of another's person.

A very prominent Methodist preacher of Los Angeles has a rule that he never rides in an auto alone with a woman. A good lady evangelist announced when she began a certain revival, "I am not here to ride around the country with preachers," and it had a good effect. The writer makes it a rule not to be the only woman on a platform of ministers. If there is no other lady evangelist, she gets the pastor's wife to accompany her, even if she has to bring the baby.

It is not so much a matter of conscience as of decorum, for perfect politeness blends beautifully with holiness; indeed, it is a part of it. Read 1 Cor. 13. The writer once made several holiness women angry because her spirit reproved them for their softness or familiarity of spirit toward a certain prominent holiness leader; and when occasion demanded that she herself have a rather long talk with the brother, she hunted up his wife and invited her to be present. Carnality does not like to be disturbed or exposed.

It is better to be too careful than to be careless; better to be safe than sorry. Those who feel strong and able to stand any subtle temptation are the ones who are likely to fall. You are weakest on your strongest point, and will likely not fall on your weakest point, for that is guarded.

Many a valuable minister is now preaching on past unction, and leading souls to Christ while he himself is below par spiritually because of carelessness along this line. Spiritual affinity has robbed thousands of heaven and is now causing thousands more to work on, backslidden in heart, deceived and going to hell.

Spiritual affinity is made possible and has as its foundation one or more of the following conditions:

1. When the parties have the same likes and dislikes.
2. When their callings are similar.
3. When they have the same leadings or convictions.
4. When they find in another what they would like to find in their own companion.
5. When home ties are not as pleasant as they might be.
6. When they are more or less in bondage to each other's opinion.
7. When the spirit is exhilarated in the other's presence. In such a case one may mistake this for the blessing of the Lord.
8. Spiritual affinity starts in the mind or the spirit. It is not a physical affinity. Indeed, at first the physical appearance may be repugnant. But if the affinity continues it may end in the flesh.

SAD CONFESSIONS.

The 'phone rang. I answered. A lady wanted to see me. We made a date and met. Her story was as follows: She was the organist of a certain mission, and a good altar worker, but her husband, though very devoted to her, was unsaved. The minister who had about six years previously led her to Christ, sometimes called at her home to read the Bible and pray with her. She thought a great deal of him, for he had been a great help to her, and since he was several years her senior thought nothing of his coming, though her husband was usually away at work. A 'divine love' sprang up between them (as they thought) never dreaming of the carnal element that had so insidiously entered. The Bible became more interesting as they together delved into its pages. He knew better, but she trusted him and he came once too often, and now it was too late. She was almost insane. What could she do?

"I dare not tell my husband for he will kill him," she explained.

The truth began to leak out. Terrible things followed, and now there are two unhappy homes.

Thousands of people are thus guilty before God of an affinity, but it has never been known to the public because they have not allowed it to lead them into crime! One evangelist confessed that he had some such affinity at every place he held a revival.

A lady once confessed to having ruined two prominent holiness preachers—not by actual, outward sin, but in spirit. She threw her power over them and compelled them to notice her and to be in her presence. She was seeking holiness when the confession was made and added the awful news, "That is why those two men died. God had to take them away to prevent my disgracing them."

Office girls are in great danger of wrong affinities. One dear girl told me that her boss was "just wonderful." "He often invites me into his private office, not to work, but just to talk," she said. The fact was, he truly admired her for her solid Christian character, and felt drawn to her; but not realizing her danger and being of a sociable disposition, she soon woke up to the fact that there was a strong attachment to that man though she would not for ten thousand worlds have yielded to crime. Neither would he have had the disposition to have intimated it.

Another case. She was a devoted wife and mother and had been a Christian; but she came to our altar as a chronic seeker. We were informed that she knelt at the altar of nearly every special revival effort and no one could help her. She had once been a flaming evangelist, and the contrast was so great that some thought her mentally deranged; others intimated demon possession, but now she confesses.

Her health broke down and she went to a good physician—well recommended. He gave her massage and chiropractic treatments which seemed to benefit her. But as time went on, he wove a web of infatuation around her, or at least so far got her under his spirit that he made her believe that certain small liberties were essential to her recovery. He took her a hairs' breadth from the path of right by telling her that it was in the line of his profession. Little by little she drifted until he had his mesmeric power completely over her and she had gone. When she awoke to her condition she almost lost her mind. Though her noble husband has freely forgiven her, yet she has never been able to find peace of soul and is now on the verge of insanity. Let all who read, take warning.

Another case came to us in a great metropolis. A dear young woman, tired out in mission work, was given money for chiropractic treatment and was told to go to Dr. ———, the very finest of that city. This gentleman had a wonderful office and his wife treated patients just across the hall. His kindness was unmeasured to the new patient as she was a Gospel worker, and he gave her several free treatments. She did not realize the strange power he had over her until she woke up to the fact that he was not honorable. But by that time, she found herself unable to break away. "I was partly to blame," said she, "for I knew better but did not know how to save myself."

She was another chronic seeker at our altar. Friends wondered why she was in such awful darkness when she had so recently been happy in the Lord. She had lost her health and youth worrying about this, and seemed utterly unable to find rest of soul. But what about that wicked doctor? He still holds forth in that beautiful office, like the spider, inviting flies to enter, then ruining their lives.

Not only are women in danger, but also men. One young preacher confided to my husband that he had been led astray in the office of a woman.

One of the saddest cases is that of a noted minister of the Gospel whose "sun went down at noonday." He was suffering from a nervous breakdown. Kind women waited on him, taking turns to relieve the pain. This led to an infatuation, and now all his good works are forgotten and his everlasting reproach shall never be wiped away.

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