

DF 25-2

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Danger of Debt

Some canvassers have conducted their business in such a slack, loose way as to be constantly sapping the funds needed for carrying on the work. They have sold books, and given the impression that they were working for the cause; but instead of bringing in the means so much needed to advance the work, they have taken many dollars from the treasury. The means which came into their hands, which was not their own, they appropriated to defray their own expenses, the expenses of their families, or to favor their family connections.

By appropriating to their own use that which belongs to the cause of God, canvassers involve themselves in difficulties, separate their souls from God, and create a feeling of uncertainty, a want of confidence, in those who are laboring with them in the field. At the same time they do injustice to their fellow laborers. Men who do their very best are liable to be regarded with suspicion, and thus are made to suffer because of the course of untrustworthy persons.

The result is that the cause of God is involved in perplexity and brought into embarrassment, and a heavy burden is cast upon those who were appointed to bear weighty responsibilities. If this loose way of doing business is permitted to continue, it will not only drain the treasury of means, but will cut off the supplies that flow from the people. It will destroy their confidence in those at the head of the work who have the management of funds, and will lead many to discontinue their gifts and offerings.

The course of these careless workmen had brought upon men in leading positions a burden that grieves them to the heart. They are perplexed to know how they can guard the cause of God from every species of robbery, and yet save the souls of those who have such perverted ideas as to what is true honesty.

The practise of borrowing money to relieve some pressing necessity, and making no calculation for canceling the indebtedness, however common, is

demoralizing. The Lord would have all who believe the truth converted from these self-deceiving practises. They should choose rather to suffer want than to commit a dishonest act. No soul can resort to prevarication or dishonesty in handling the Lord's goods, and stand guiltless before God. All who do this deny Christ in action, while they profess to keep and teach the commandments of God. They do not maintain the principles of God's law. If those who see the truth do not change in character corresponding to the sanctifying influence of the truth, they will be a savor of death unto death. They will misrepresent the truth, bring a reproach upon it, and dishonor Christ, who is truth.

The question to be considered is, By what means the work can be carried forward, and canvassers be prevented from embarrassing the cause, and casting a burden upon the publishing houses by a careless, selfish way of doing business. This question is of consequence. How can order be brought out of confusion, and how can the work be carried on according to principles which God can approve? —E. G. White Ms. 168, 1898.