



Advent Answers Academy
Scripture Memorization Class 1 Cor. 13
SM 1Cor13 Syllabus
Fall Semester 2013

1. Basic Information

Time:	Tuesday 6:30-7:30 p.m. ¹	Semester:	Fall (October 8-December 17)
Location:		Instructor:	
Credit:	1 Semester Hours	Phone:	
Website:	www.adventbeliefs.com	Email:	webmaster@adventbeliefs.com

Required Materials:

Holy Bible. Literal² or public domain³ version encouraged.

SMART Pack.⁴

2. Objectives

- A. Memorize 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.
- B. Comprehend 1 Corinthians 13.
- C. Obey 1 Corinthians 13.
- D. Share 1 Corinthians 13.

3. Measures

- A. *Classroom Instruction:* Classroom instruction will include both objective assessment and practical instruction towards reaching the objectives.
- B. *Assessment Quizzes:* A written quiz will be given every class meeting to measure objective accomplishment in knowledge and application of the weekly material.
- C. *Assessment Tests:* A written test will be given midway through the semester to measure objective accomplishment of all verses to date. A final, cumulative, written examination will be given at the

¹ Children may meet 6:15-6:30 p.m. before choir.

² E.g. KJV, NKJV, NASB, RV

³ E.g. KJV, RV

⁴ Scripture Memorization and Retention Training Pack – See instructor

end of the semester to measure objective accomplishment in knowledge and application of all verses and lecture material.

D. *Grades*: Grades will be entered on Engrade (www.engage.com). For help viewing grades, check email or contact the instructor.

E. *Late Work*: Missing quizzes will be entered as “m” and calculated as “0,” but may be submitted until one week before the next examination. Those who are behind should first complete the next class objectives before doing late work.

3. Schedule

Class Date	Topic(s)
T Oct. 8	Quiz: 1 Corinthians 13:1, Lecture
T Oct. 15	Quiz: 1 Corinthians 13:2, Lecture
T Oct. 22	Quiz: 1 Corinthians 13:3, Lecture
T Oct. 29	Quiz: 1 Corinthians 13:4, Lecture
T Nov. 5	Quiz: 1 Corinthians 13:5, Lecture
T Nov. 12	Quiz: 1 Corinthians 13:6; Lecture; Late Work Due
T Nov. 19	Midterm Test (20%): 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 and Lectures; Lecture
T Nov. 26	Quiz: 1 Corinthians 13:8, 9; Lecture
T Dec. 3	Quiz: 1 Corinthians 13:10, 11; Lecture
T Dec. 10	Quiz: 1 Corinthians 13:12, 13; Lecture
T Dec. 17	Final Test (40%)
S Dec. 21	Recitation in Church

The above schedule is subject to modification.

“Many who know the truth, still do not understand it in such a way that they could hold their own in its presentation. They are not prepared to present it in such a way that its sacred, majestic character will be clear to the people. Instead of less discipline, they need more thorough training” (Christian Education 138.1).

“The mind must be restrained, and not allowed to wander. It should be trained to dwell upon the Scriptures; even whole chapters may be committed to memory, to be repeated when Satan comes in with his temptations. The fifty-eighth of Isaiah is a profitable chapter for this purpose” (Gospel Workers 418).



1 Cor. 13:1

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:1.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

Please check all true statements. (5 points)

1. I carried my verse packet or verse with me wherever I went this week.
2. I said my verse in prayer.
3. I practiced my verse daily.
4. I quoted my verse to someone.
5. I am recommitted to become mighty in God's Word.

Please write one lesson or blessing gained from this verse. (2 points)



1 Cor. 13:1

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:1.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

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1 Cor. 13:2

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:2.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

Please check all true statements. (5 points)

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1 Cor. 13:2

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:2.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

Please check all true statements. (5 points)

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1 Cor. 13:3

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:3.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

Please check all true statements. (5 points)

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Please write one lesson or blessing gained from this verse. (2 points)



1 Cor. 13:3

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

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Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

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1 Cor. 13:4

Name: _____

Date: _____

Classmate: _____

Score: _____ / _____

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:4.

Version: _____
Words: _____
Correct: _____

Please check all true statements. (5 points)

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Please write one lesson or blessing gained from this verse. (2 points)



1 Cor. 13:4

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Date: _____

Classmate: _____

Score: _____ / _____

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Version: _____
Words: _____
Correct: _____

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1 Cor. 13:5

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:5.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

Please check all true statements. (5 points)

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Please write one lesson or blessing gained from this verse. (2 points)



1 Cor. 13:5

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:5.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

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1 Cor. 13:6

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:6.

Version: _____
Words: _____
Correct: _____

Please check all true statements. (5 points)

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Please write one lesson or blessing gained from this verse. (2 points)



1 Cor. 13:6

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:6.

Version: _____
Words: _____
Correct: _____

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1 Cor. 13:8-9

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:8.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:9.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |



1 Cor. 13:8-9

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:8.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:9.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

Please check all true statements. (5 points)

1. I carried my verse packet or verses with me wherever I went this week.
2. I said my verses in prayer.
3. I practiced 1 Corinthians 13:1-9 daily.
4. I quoted my verses to someone.
5. I am recommitted to become mighty in God's Word.

Please write two lessons or blessings gained from these verses.
(4 points)

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3. I practiced 1 Corinthians 13:1-9 daily.
4. I quoted my verses to someone.
5. I am recommitted to become mighty in God's Word.

Please write two lessons or blessings gained from these verses.
(4 points)



1 Cor. 13:10-11

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:10.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:11.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |



1 Cor. 13:10-11

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:10.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:11.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |



1 Cor. 13:12-13

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:12.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:13.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |



1 Cor. 13:12-13

Name:

Date:

Classmate:

Score: /

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:12.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

Please write 1 Corinthians 13:13.

Version: |
Words: |
Correct: |

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Please write two lessons or blessings gained from these verses.
(4 points)

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Please write two lessons or blessings gained from these verses.
(4 points)



Brotherly Love

"By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." The more closely we resemble our Saviour in character, the greater will be our love toward those for whom He died. Christians who manifest a spirit of unselfish love for one another are bearing a testimony for Christ which unbelievers can neither gainsay nor resist. It is impossible to estimate the power of such an example. Nothing will so successfully defeat the devices of Satan and his emissaries, nothing will so build up the Redeemer's kingdom, as will the love of Christ manifested by the members of the church. Peace and prosperity can be enjoyed only as meekness and love are in active exercise.

In his First Epistle to the Corinthians the apostle Paul sets forth the importance of that love which should be cherished by the followers of Christ: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

No matter how high his profession, he whose heart is not imbued with love for God and for his fellow men is not a disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith, and even have power to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless. He might display great liberality, but should he from some other motive than genuine love bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favor of God. In his zeal he might even meet a martyr's death, yet if destitute of the gold of love he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite.

The apostle proceeds to specify the fruits of love: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not." The divine love ruling in the heart exterminates pride and selfishness. "Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." The purest joy springs from the deepest humiliation. The strongest and noblest characters rest upon the foundation of patience and love, and trusting submission to the will of God.

Charity "doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil." The heart in which love rules will not be filled with passion or revenge, by injuries which pride and self-love would deem unbearable. Love is unsuspecting, ever placing the most favorable construction upon the motives and acts of others. Love will never needlessly expose the faults of others. It does not listen eagerly to unfavorable reports, but rather seeks to bring to mind some good qualities of the one defamed.

Love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." He whose heart is imbued with love is filled with sorrow at the errors and weaknesses of others; but when truth triumphs, when the cloud that darkened the fair fame of another is removed, or when sins are confessed and wrongs corrected, he rejoices.

"Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Love not only bears with others' faults, but cheerfully submits to whatever suffering or inconvenience such forbearance makes necessary. This love "never faileth." It can never lose its value; it is the attribute of heaven. As a precious treasure it will be carried by its possessor through the portals of the city of God.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace. Discord and strife are the work of Satan and the fruit of sin. If we would as a people enjoy peace and love, we must put away our sins; we must come into harmony with God, and we shall be in harmony with one another. Let each ask himself: Do I possess the grace of love? Have I learned to suffer long and to be kind? Talents, learning, and eloquence, without this heavenly attribute, will be as meaningless as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Alas that this precious treasure is so lightly valued and so little sought by many who profess the faith!

Paul writes to the Colossians: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your

hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

The fact that we are under so great obligation to Christ places us under the most sacred obligation to those whom He died to redeem. We are to manifest toward them the same sympathy, the same tender compassion and unselfish love, which Christ has manifested toward us. Selfish ambition, desire for supremacy, will die when Christ takes possession of the affections.

Our Saviour taught His disciples to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." A great blessing is here asked upon conditions. We ourselves state these conditions. We ask that the mercy of God toward us may be measured by the mercy which we extend to others. Christ declares that this is the rule by which the Lord will deal with us. "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Wonderful terms! but how little are they understood or heeded. One of the most common sins, and one that is attended with most pernicious results, is the indulgence of an unforgiving spirit. How many will cherish animosity or revenge and then bow before God and ask to be forgiven as they forgive. Surely they can have no true sense of the import of this prayer or they would not dare to take it upon their lips. We are dependent upon the pardoning mercy of God every day and every hour; how then can we cherish bitterness and malice toward our fellow sinners! If, in all their daily intercourse, Christians would carry out the principles of this prayer, what a blessed change would be wrought in the church and in the world! This would be the most convincing testimony that could be given to the reality of Bible religion.

God requires more of His followers than many realize. If we would not build our hopes of heaven upon a false foundation we must accept the Bible as it reads and believe that the Lord means what He says. He requires nothing of us that He will not give us grace to perform. We shall have no excuse to offer in the day of God if we fail to reach the standard set before us in His word.

We are admonished by the apostle: "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." Paul would have us distinguish between the pure, unselfish love which is prompted by the spirit of Christ, and the unmeaning, deceitful pretense with which the world abounds. This base counterfeit has misled many souls. It would blot out the distinction between right and wrong, by agreeing with the transgressor instead of faithfully showing him his errors. Such a course never springs from real friendship. The spirit by which it is prompted dwells only in the carnal heart. While the Christian will be ever kind, compassionate, and forgiving, he can feel no harmony with sin. He will abhor evil and cling to that which is good, at the sacrifice of association or friendship with the ungodly. The spirit of Christ will lead us to hate sin, while we are willing to make any sacrifice to save the sinner.

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." The apostle admonishes his brethren, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, that after having professed the gospel they should not conduct themselves as did the Gentiles, but should show by their daily deportment that they had been truly converted.

"Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Once they were corrupt, degraded, enslaved by lustful passions; they were drugged by worldly opiates, blinded, bewildered, and betrayed by Satan's devices. Now that they had been taught the truth as it is in Jesus, there must be a decided change in their life and character.

The accession of members who have not been renewed in heart and reformed in life is a source of weakness to the church. This fact is often ignored. Some ministers and churches are so desirous of securing an increase of numbers that they do not bear faithful testimony against unchristian habits and practices. Those who accept the truth are not taught that they cannot safely be worldlings in conduct while they are Christians in name. Heretofore they were Satan's subjects; henceforth they are to be subjects of Christ. The life must testify to the change of leaders. Public opinion favors a profession of Christianity. Little self-denial or self-sacrifice is required in order to put on a form of godliness and to have one's name enrolled upon the church book. Hence many join the church without first becoming united to Christ. In this Satan triumphs. Such converts are his most efficient agents. They serve as decoys to other souls. They are

false lights, luring the unwary to perdition. It is in vain that men seek to make the Christian's path broad and pleasant for worldlings. God has not smoothed or widened the rugged, narrow way. If we would enter into life, we must follow the same path which Jesus and His disciples trod--the path of humility, self-denial, and sacrifice.

Ministers should see that their own hearts are sanctified through the truth, and then labor to secure these results for their converts. It is pure religion that ministers and people need. Those who put away iniquity from their hearts and stretch out their hands in earnest supplication unto God will have that help which God alone can give them. A ransom has been paid for the souls of men, that they may have an opportunity to escape from the thralldom of sin and obtain pardon, purity, and heaven.

God hears the cry of the lowly and contrite. Those who frequent the throne of grace, offering up sincere, earnest petitions for divine wisdom and power, will not fail to become active, useful servants of Christ. They may not possess great talents, but with humility of heart and firm reliance upon Jesus they may do a good work in bringing souls to Christ. They can reach men through God.

Ministers of Christ should ever feel that a sacred work engages all their souls; their efforts should be for the edification of the body of Christ, and not to exalt themselves before the people. And while Christians should esteem the faithful minister as Christ's ambassador, they should avoid all praise of the man.

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." Man by wicked works alienated himself from God, but Christ gave His life that all who would, might be freed from sin and reinstated in the favor of the Creator. It was the anticipation of a redeemed, holy universe that prompted Christ to make this great sacrifice. Have we accepted the privileges so dearly purchased? Are we followers of God as dear children, or are we servants of the prince of darkness? Are we worshippers of Jehovah, or of Baal? of the living God, or of idols?

No outward shrines may be visible, there may be no image for the eye to rest upon, yet we may be practicing idolatry. It is as easy to make an idol of cherished ideas or objects as to fashion gods of wood or stone. Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshipping the true God as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshipping the true God.

If we are following Christ, His merits, imputed to us, come up before the Father as sweet odor. And the graces of our Saviour's character, implanted in our hearts, will shed around us a precious fragrance. The spirit of love, meekness, and forbearance pervading our life will have power to soften and subdue hard hearts and win to Christ bitter opposers of the faith.

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

Vainglory, selfish ambition, is the rock upon which many souls have been wrecked and many churches rendered powerless. Those who know least of devotion, who are least connected with God, are the ones who will most eagerly seek the highest place. They have no sense of their weakness and their deficiencies of character. Unless many of our young ministers shall feel the converting power of God, their labors will be a hindrance rather than a help to the church. They may have learned the doctrines of Christ, but they have not learned Christ. The soul that is constantly looking unto Jesus will see His self-denying love and deep humility, and will copy His example. Pride, ambition, deceit, hatred, selfishness, must be cleansed from the heart. With many these evil traits are partially subdued, but not thoroughly uprooted from the heart. Under favorable circumstances they spring up anew and ripen into rebellion against God. Here lies a terrible danger. To spare any sin is to cherish a foe that only awaits an unguarded moment to cause our ruin.

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." My brethren and sisters, how are you employing the gift of speech? Have you learned so to control the tongue that it shall ever obey the dictates of an enlightened conscience

and holy affections? Is your conversation free from levity, pride and malice, deceit and impurity? Are you without guile before God? Words exert a telling power. Satan will, if possible, keep the tongue active in his service. Of ourselves we cannot control the unruly member. Divine grace is our only hope.

Those who are eagerly studying how they may secure the pre-eminence should study rather how they may gain that wisdom which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." I have been shown that many ministers need to have these words imprinted on the tablets of the soul. He who has Christ formed within, the hope of glory, will "show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."

Peter exhorts the believers: "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

When the right way is so plainly marked out, why do not the professed people of God walk in it? Why do they not study and pray and labor earnestly to be of one mind? Why do they not seek to cherish compassion for one another, to love as brethren, instead of rendering evil for evil and railing for railing? Who does not love life and desire good days? yet how few comply with the conditions, to refrain the tongue from evil and the lips from speaking guile. Few are willing to follow the Saviour's example of meekness and humility. Many ask the Lord to humble them, but are unwilling to submit to the needful discipline. When the test comes, when trials or even annoyances occur, the heart rebels, and the tongue utters words that are like poisoned arrows or blasting hail.

Evilspeaking is a twofold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer. He who scatters the seeds of dissension and strife reaps in his own soul the deadly fruits. How miserable is the talebearer, the surmiser of evil! He is a stranger to true happiness.

"Blessed are the peacemakers." Grace and peace rest upon those who refuse to join in the strife of tongues. When vendors of scandal are passing from family to family, those who fear God will be chaste keepers at home. The time that is so often worse than wasted in idle, frivolous, and malicious gossip should be given to higher and nobler objects. If our brethren and sisters would become missionaries for God, visiting the sick and afflicted, and laboring patiently and kindly for the erring,--in short, if they would copy the Pattern,--the church would have prosperity in all her borders.

The sin of evilspeaking begins with the cherishing of evil thoughts. Guile includes impurity in all its forms. An impure thought tolerated, an unholy desire cherished, and the soul is contaminated, its integrity compromised. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." If we would not commit sin, we must shun its very beginnings. Every emotion and desire must be held in subjection to reason and conscience. Every unholy thought must be instantly repelled. To your closet, followers of Christ. Pray in faith and with all the heart. Satan is watching to ensnare your feet. You must have help from above if you would escape his devices.

By faith and prayer all may meet the requirements of the gospel. No man can be forced to transgress. His own consent must be first gained; the soul must purpose the sinful act before passion can dominate over reason or iniquity triumph over conscience. Temptation, however strong, is never an excuse for sin. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers." Cry unto the Lord, tempted soul. Cast yourself, helpless, unworthy, upon Jesus, and claim His very promise. The Lord will hear. He knows how strong are the inclinations of the natural heart, and He will help in every time of temptation.

Have you fallen into sin? Then without delay seek God for mercy and pardon. When David was convicted of his sin, he poured out his soul in penitence and humiliation before God. He felt that he could endure the loss of his crown, but he could not be deprived of the favor of God. Mercy is still extended to the sinner. The Lord is calling to us in all our wanderings: "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." The blessing of God may be ours if we will heed the pleading voice of His Spirit. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." (Testimonies Vol. 5, pp. 167.3-177.3).



The Love of Christ

Oh, was there ever suffering and sorrow like that endured by the dying Saviour! It was the sense of his Father's displeasure which made his cup so bitter. It was not bodily suffering which so quickly ended the life of Christ upon the cross. It was the crushing weight of the sins of the world, and a sense of his Father's wrath that broke his heart. The Father's glory and sustaining presence had left him, and despair pressed its crushing weight of darkness upon him, and forced from his pale and quivering lips the anguished cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Jesus had united with the Father in making the world. Amid the agonizing sufferings of the Son of God, blind and deluded men alone remain unfeeling. The chief priests and elders revile God's dear Son while in his expiring agonies. Yet inanimate nature groans in sympathy with her bleeding, dying Author. The earth trembles. The sun refuses to behold the scene. The heavens gather blackness. Angels have witnessed the scene of suffering until they can look on no longer, and hide their faces from the horrid sight. Christ is in despair! He is dying! His Father's approving smile is removed, and angels are not permitted to lighten the gloom of the terrible hour. They could only behold in amazement their loved Commander suffering the penalty of man's transgression of the Father's law.

Even doubts assailed the dying Son of God. He could not see through the portals of the tomb. Bright hope did not present to him his coming forth from the tomb a conqueror, and his Father's acceptance of his sacrifice. The sin of the world with all its terribleness was felt to the utmost by the Son of God. The displeasure of the Father for sin, and its penalty, which was death, were all that he could realize through this amazing darkness. He was tempted to fear that sin was so offensive in the sight of his Father that he could not be reconciled to his Son. The fierce temptation that his own Father had forever left him, caused that piercing cry from the cross "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Christ felt much as sinners will feel when the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon them. Black despair like the pall of death will gather about their guilty souls, and then they will realize to the fullest extent the sinfulness of sin. Salvation has been purchased for them by the suffering and death of the Son of God. It might be theirs if they would accept of it willingly, gladly; but none are compelled to yield obedience to the law of God. If they refuse the heavenly benefit, if they choose the pleasures and deceitfulness of sin, they can have their choice, and at the end receive their wages, which is the wrath of God and eternal death. They will be forever separated from the presence of Jesus, whose sacrifice they had despised. They will have lost a life of happiness, and sacrificed eternal glory for the pleasures of sin for a season.

Faith and hope trembled in the expiring agonies of Christ, because God had removed the assurance he had heretofore given his beloved Son of his approbation and acceptance. The Redeemer of the world then relied upon the evidences which had hitherto strengthened him, that his Father accepted his labors and was pleased with his work. In his dying agony, as he yields up his precious life, he has by faith alone to trust in Him whom it has ever been his joy to obey. He is not cheered with clear, bright rays of hope on the right hand nor on the left. All is enshrouded in oppressive gloom. Amid the awful darkness which is felt even by sympathizing nature, the Redeemer drains the mysterious cup even to its dregs. Denied even bright hope and confidence in the triumph which will be his in the near future, he cries with a loud voice, "Lord into thy hands I commit my spirit." He is acquainted with the character of his Father, his justice, his mercy, and great love. In submission he drops into the hands of his Father. Amid the convulsions of nature are heard by the amazed spectators the dying words of the Man of Calvary, "It is finished."

Nature sympathized with the sufferings of its Author. The heaving earth, the rent rocks, and the terrific darkness, proclaimed that it was the Son of God that died. There was a mighty earthquake. The veil of the temple was rent in twain. Terror seized the executioners and spectators as they beheld the sun veiled in darkness, and felt the earth shake beneath them, and saw and heard the rending of the rocks. The mocking and jeering of the chief priests and elders was hushed as Christ commended his spirit into the hands of his Father. The astonished throng began to withdraw, and grope their way in the darkness to the city. They smote upon their breasts as they went, and in terror, speaking scarcely above a whisper, said among themselves, "It is an innocent person that has been murdered. What if, indeed, he is, as he asserted, the Son of God?"

Jesus did not yield up his life till he had accomplished the work which he came to do, and exclaimed with his departing breath, "It is finished!" Satan was then defeated. He knew that his kingdom was lost. Angels rejoiced as the words were uttered, "It is finished." The great plan of redemption, which was dependent on the death of Christ, had been thus far carried out. And there was joy in Heaven that the sons of Adam could, through a life of obedience, be finally exalted to the throne of God. Oh, what love! what amazing love! that brought the Son of God to earth to be made sin for us, that we might be reconciled to God, and elevated to a life with him in his mansions in glory. And oh! what is man that such a price should be paid for his redemption?

When men and women can more fully comprehend the magnitude of the great sacrifice which was made by the Majesty of Heaven in dying in man's stead, then will the plan of salvation be magnified, and reflections of Calvary will awaken sacred and living emotions in the Christian's heart. Praises to God and the Lamb will be in their hearts and upon their lips. Pride and self-worship cannot flourish in the hearts that keep fresh in memory the scenes of Calvary. This world will appear of but little value to those who appreciate the great price of man's redemption.

All the riches of the world are not of sufficient value to redeem one perishing soul. Who can measure the love Christ felt for a lost world, as he hung upon the cross, suffering for the sins of guilty men? This love was immeasurable, infinite.

Christ has shown that his love was stronger than death. Even when suffering the most fearful conflicts with the powers of darkness his love for perishing sinners increased. He endured the hidings of his Father's countenance, until he was led to exclaim in the bitterness of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" His arm brought salvation. The price was paid to purchase the redemption of man, when, in the last soul struggle, the blessed words were uttered, which seemed to resound through creation, "It is finished."

Many who profess to be Christians become excited over worldly enterprises, and their interest is awakened for new and exciting amusements, while they are cold-hearted, and appear as if frozen in the cause of God. But here is a theme, poor formalist, which is of sufficient importance to excite you. Eternal interests are here involved. The scenes of Calvary call for the deepest emotions. Upon this subject you will be excusable if you manifest enthusiasm. That Christ, so excellent, so innocent, should suffer such a painful death, bearing the weight of the sins of the world, our thoughts and imagination can never fully reach, so that we can comprehend the length, the breadth, the height, and the depth, of such amazing love. The contemplation of the matchless love of the Saviour, should fill and absorb the mind, touch and melt the soul, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole character. The language of the apostle is, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And we may look toward Calvary, and also exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Considering at what an immense cost our salvation has been purchased, what will be the portion of those who neglect so great salvation? What will be the punishment of those who profess to be followers of Christ yet fail to bow in humble obedience to the claims of their Redeemer, and who do not take the cross, as humble disciples of Christ?

Some have limited views of the atonement. They think that Christ suffered only a small portion of the penalty of the law of God, and that while the wrath of God was felt by his dear Son, they suppose that he had, through all his painful sufferings, the evidence of his Father's love and acceptance, and that the portals of the tomb before him were illuminated with bright hope. Here is a great mistake. Christ's keenest

anguish was a sense of his Father's displeasure. His mental agony because of this was of such intensity that man can have but faint conception of it.

With many the history of the humiliation and sacrifice of our divine Lord does not stir the soul and affect the life any more, nor awaken deeper interest than to read of the death of the martyrs of Jesus. Many have suffered death by slow tortures. Others have suffered death by crucifixion. In what does the death of God's dear Son differ from these? It is true he died upon the cross a most cruel death; yet others for his dear sake have suffered equally, as far as bodily torture is concerned. Why, then, was the suffering of Christ more dreadful than that of other persons who have yielded their lives for his sake? If the sufferings of Christ consisted in physical pain alone, then his death was no more painful than that of some of the martyrs.

But bodily pain was only a small part of the agony of God's dear Son. The sins of the world were upon him, and also the sense of his Father's wrath as he suffered the penalty of the law. It was these that crushed his divine soul. It was the hiding of his Father's face, a sense that his own dear Father had forsaken him, which brought despair. The separation that sin makes between God and man was fully realized and keenly felt by the innocent, suffering Man of Calvary. He was oppressed by the powers of darkness. He had not one ray of light to brighten the future. And he was struggling with the power of Satan, who was declaring that Christ was in his hands, and that he was superior in strength to the Son of God, that God had disowned his Son, and that he was no longer in the favor of God any more than himself. If he was indeed still in favor with God, why need he die? God could save him from death.

Christ yielded not in the least degree to the torturing foe, even in his bitterest anguish. Legions of evil angels were all about the Son of God, yet the holy angels were bidden not to break their ranks and engage in conflict with the taunting, reviling foe. Heavenly angels were not permitted to minister unto the anguished spirit of the Son of God. It was in this terrible hour of darkness, the face of his Father hidden, legions of evil angels enshrouding him, the sins of the world upon him, that the words were wrenched from his lips, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

We should take larger, broader, and deeper views of the life, sufferings, and death of God's dear Son. When the atonement is viewed correctly, the salvation of souls will be felt to be of infinite value. In comparison with the enterprise of everlasting life every other sinks into insignificance. But how have the counsels of this loving Saviour been despised by many. The heart's devotions have been to the world, and selfish interests have closed the door against the Son of God. Hollow hypocrisy and pride, selfishness and gain, envy, malice, and passion, have so filled the hearts of many that Christ can have no room.

He was eternally rich, "yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." He was clothed with light and glory, surrounded with hosts of heavenly angels awaiting to execute his commands. Yet he put on our nature, and came to sojourn among sinful men "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Here is love that no language can express. Our souls should be enlivened, elevated, and enraptured with the theme of the love of the Father and the Son. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The followers of Christ should learn here to reflect back in some degree that mysterious love preparatory to joining all the redeemed in ascribing "Blessings, and honor, and glory, and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." (Signs of the Times, February 15, 1883 "The Love of Christ").



True Benevolence – Part I

Dear Brother and Sister F: I will now try to write what has been presented before me in regard to you; for I feel that it is time for this church to get their hearts in order and make diligent work for eternity. Both of you love the truth and want to obey it; but you are inexperienced. I was shown that you would be placed in circumstances where you would be tried and tested, and that traits of character would be revealed which you were not aware that you possessed. [1]

Many who have never been placed in positions of trial appear to be excellent Christians, their lives seem faultless; but God sees that they have traits of character that must be revealed to them before they can perceive and correct them. Simeon prophesied under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and said unto Mary in reference to Jesus: "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." In the providence of God we are placed in different positions to call into exercise qualities of mind calculated to develop character under a variety of circumstances. Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Professed Christians may live unexceptionable lives so far as outward appearance is concerned; but when a change of circumstances throws them into entirely different positions, strong traits of character are discovered, which would have remained hidden had their surroundings continued the same. [2]

I was shown that you have selfish traits which you have need to strictly guard against. You will be in danger of regarding your prosperity and your convenience irrespective of the prosperity of others. You do not possess a spirit of self-denial that resembles the great Exemplar. You should cultivate benevolence, which will bring you more into harmony with the spirit of Christ in His disinterested benevolence. You need more human sympathy. This is a quality of our natures which God has given us to render us charitable and kind to those with whom we are brought in contact. We find it in men and women whose hearts are not in unison with Christ, and it is a sad sight indeed when His professed followers lack this great essential of Christianity. They do not copy the Pattern, and it is impossible for them to reflect the image of Jesus in their lives and deportment. [3]

When human sympathy is blended with love and benevolence, and sanctified by the Spirit of Jesus, it is an element which can be productive of great good. Those who cultivate benevolence are not only doing a good work for others, and blessing those who receive the good action, but they are benefiting themselves by opening their hearts to the benign influence of true benevolence. Every ray of light shed upon others will be reflected upon our own hearts. Every kind and sympathizing word spoken to the sorrowful, every act to relieve the oppressed, and every gift to supply the necessities of our fellow beings, given or done with an eye to God's glory, will result in blessings to the giver. Those who are thus working are obeying a law of heaven and will receive the approval of God. The pleasure of doing good to others imparts a glow to the feelings which flashes through the nerves, quickens the circulation of the blood, and induces mental and physical health. [4]

Jesus knew the influence of benevolence upon the heart and life of the benefactor, and He sought to impress upon the minds of His disciples the benefits to be derived from the exercise of this virtue. He says: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." He illustrates the spirit of cheerful benevolence, which should be exercised toward friends, neighbors, and strangers, by the parable of the man who journeyed from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, "which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." Notwithstanding the exalted profession of piety made by the priest and the Levite, their hearts were not stirred with pitying tenderness for the sufferer. A Samaritan who made no such lofty pretensions to righteousness passed that way, and when he saw the stranger's need he did not regard him with mere idle curiosity, but he saw a human being in distress, and his compassion was excited. He immediately "went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." And on the morrow he left him in charge of the host, with the assurance that he would pay all charges on his return. Christ asks: "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise." [5]

Here Jesus wished to teach His disciples the moral obligations which are binding upon man to his fellow man. Whoever neglects to carry out the principles illustrated by this lesson is not a commandment keeper, but, like the Levite, he breaks the law of God which he pretends to revere. There are some, who, like the Samaritan, make no pretensions to exalted piety, yet who have a high sense of their obligations to their fellow men and have far more charity and kindness than some who profess great love to God, but fail in good works toward His creatures. [6]

Those truly love their neighbor as themselves who realize their responsibilities and the claims that suffering humanity has upon them, and carry out the principles of God's law in their daily lives. "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, 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; and thy neighbor as thyself. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." Christ here shows the lawyer that to love God with all the heart and our neighbor as ourselves is the true fruit of piety. "This do," said He, not merely believe but do, "and thou shalt live." It is not alone the professed belief in the binding claims of God's law that makes the Christian, but also the carrying out of that law. [7]

In the parable, Christ exalts the Samaritan above the priest and the Levite, who were great sticklers for the letter of the law of Ten Commandments. The one obeyed the spirit of these commandments, while the others were content to profess an exalted faith in them; but what is faith without works? When the advocates of the law of God plant their feet firmly upon its principles, showing that they are not merely loyal in name but loyal at heart, carrying out in their daily lives the spirit of God's commandments, and exercising true benevolence to man, then will they have moral power to move the world. It is impossible for those who profess allegiance to the law of God to correctly represent the principles of that sacred Decalogue while slighting its holy injunctions to love their neighbor as themselves. [8]

The most eloquent sermon that can be preached upon the law of Ten Commandments is to do them. Obedience should be made a personal duty. Negligence of this duty is flagrant sin. God lays us under obligations not only to secure heaven ourselves, but to feel it a binding duty to show others the way and, through our care and disinterested love, to lead toward Christ those who come within the sphere of our influence. The singular absence of principle that characterizes the lives of many professed Christians is alarming. Their disregard of God's law disheartens those who recognize its sacred claims and tends to turn those from the truth who would otherwise accept it. [9]

In order to gain a proper knowledge of ourselves, it is necessary to look into the mirror, and there discovering our own defects, avail ourselves of the blood of Christ, the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, in which we may wash our robes of character and remove the stains of sin. But many refuse to see their errors and correct them; they do not want a true knowledge of themselves. [10]

If we would reach high attainments in moral and spiritual excellence we must live for it. We are under personal obligation to society to do this, in order continually to exert an influence in favor of God's law. We should let our light so shine that all may see that the sacred gospel is having an influence upon our hearts and lives, that we walk in obedience to its commandments and violate none of its principles. We are in a great degree accountable to the world for the souls of those around us. Our words and deeds are constantly telling for or against Christ and that law which He came to earth to vindicate. Let the world see that we are not selfishly narrowed up to our own exclusive interests and religious joys, but that we are liberal and desire them to share our blessings and privileges through the sanctification of the truth. Let them see that the religion which we profess does not close up nor freeze over the avenues to the soul, making us unsympathizing and exacting. Let all who profess to have found Christ, minister as He did to the benefit of man, cherishing a spirit of wise benevolence. We shall then see many souls following the light that shines from our precept and example. [11]

We should all cultivate an amiable disposition and subject ourselves to the control of conscience. The spirit of the truth makes better men and women of those who receive it in their hearts. It works like leaven till the entire being is brought into conformity to its principles. It opens the heart that has been frozen by avarice; it opens the hand that has ever been closed to human suffering; and charity and kindness are seen as its fruits. [12]

God requires that all of us should be self-sacrificing workers. Every part of the truth has a practical application to our daily lives. Blessed are they that hear the word of the Lord and keep it. Hearing is not enough; we must act, we must do. It is in the doing of the Commandments that there is great reward. Those who give practical demonstrations of their benevolence by their sympathy and compassionate acts toward the poor, the suffering, and the unfortunate, not only relieve the sufferers, but contribute largely to their own happiness and are in the way of securing health of soul and body. Isaiah has thus plainly described the work that God will accept and bless His people in doing: [13]

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." [14] (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, "True Benevolence," 55-60).



True Benevolence - Part II

The sympathy which exists between the mind and the body is very great. When one is affected, the other responds. The condition of the mind has much to do with the health of the physical system. If the mind is free and happy, under a consciousness of rightdoing and a sense of satisfaction in causing happiness to others, it will create a cheerfulness that will react upon the whole system, causing a freer circulation of the blood and a toning up of the entire body. The blessing of God is a healer, and those who are abundant in benefiting others will realize that wondrous blessing in their hearts and lives. [1]

If your thoughts, dear brother and sister, were directed more in the channel of caring for others, your own souls would receive greater blessings. You both have too little human sympathy. You do not bring your feelings to the necessities of others. You hold yourselves too rigid and unsympathizing. You have become stern, exacting, and overbearing. You are in danger of making yourselves conscience for others. You have your own ideas of Christian duties and propriety, and you would gauge others by those ideas; this is overreaching the bounds of right. [2]

Other people have opinions and marked traits of character which cannot be assimilated to your peculiar views. You have defects and faults as well as your brethren and sisters, and it is well to remember this when a difference arises. Your wrong doing is just as grievous to them as theirs is to you, and you should be as lenient to them as you desire that they should be to you. Both of you need greater love and sympathy for others, a love and sympathy like the tenderness of Jesus. In your own house you should exercise kindness, speaking gently to your child, treating him affectionately, and refraining from reproving him for every little error, lest he become hardened by continual faultfinding. [3]

You should cultivate the charity and long-suffering of Christ. By a watchful, suspicious spirit in regard to the motives and conduct of others, you frequently counteract the good you have done. You are cherishing a feeling that is chilling in its influence, that repulses, but does not attract and win. You must be willing to become as yielding and forbearing in your disposition as you desire others to be. Selfish love of your own opinions and ways will, in a great measure, destroy your power to do the good you are desirous of doing. [4]

Sister F, you have too great a desire to rule. You are very sensitive; if your will is crossed, you feel very much injured; self rises in arms, for you have not a meek and teachable spirit. You need to watch closely upon this point; in short, you need a thorough conversion before your influence can be what it should be. The spirit you manifest will make you miserable if you continue to cherish it. You will see the mistakes of others, and be so eager to correct them that you will overlook your own faults, and you will have hard work to remove the mote from your brother's eye while there is a beam obstructing your own vision. God does not wish you to make your conscience a criterion for others. You have a duty to perform, which is to make yourself cheerful, and to cultivate unselfishness in your feelings until it will be your greatest pleasure to make all around you happy. [5]

Both of you need to soften your hearts and be imbued with the Spirit of Christ, that you may, while living in an atmosphere of cheerfulness and benevolence, help those about you to be healthy and happy also. You have imagined that cheerfulness was not in accordance with the religion of Christ. This is a mistake. We may have true Christian dignity and at the same time be cheerful and pleasant in our deportment. Cheerfulness without levity is one of the Christian graces. You should guard against taking narrow views of religion, or you will limit your influence and become an unfaithful steward of God. [6]

Forbear reprimanding and censuring. You are not adapted to reprove. Your words only wound and sadden; they do not cure and reform. You should overcome the habit of picking at little things that you think amiss. Be broad, be generous and charitable in your judgment of people and things. Open your hearts to the light. Remember that Duty has a twin sister, Love; these united can accomplish almost everything, but separated, neither is capable of good. [7]

It is right that you should both cherish integrity and be true to your sense of right. The straight path of duty should be yours from choice. The love of property, the love of pleasure and friendship, should never influence you to sacrifice one principle of right. You should be firm in following the dictates of an enlightened conscience, and your convictions of duty; but you should guard against bigotry and prejudice. Do not run into a pharisaical spirit. [8]

You are now sowing seed in the great field of life, and that which you now sow you will one day reap. Every thought of your mind, every emotion of your soul, every word of your tongue, every act you perform, is seed that will bear fruit for good or evil. The reaping time is not far distant. All our works are passing in review before God. All our actions and the motives which prompted them are to be open for the inspection of angels and of God. [9]

As far as possible, you should come into harmony with your brethren and sisters. You should surrender yourselves to God and cease to manifest sternness and a disposition to find fault. You should yield your own spirit and take in its place the spirit of the dear Saviour. Reach up and grasp His hand, that the touch may electrify you and charge you with the sweet properties of His own matchless character. You may open your hearts to His love, and let His power transform you and His grace be your strength. Then will you have a powerful influence for good. Your moral strength will be equal to the closest test of character. Your integrity will be pure and sanctified. Then will your light break forth as the morning. [10]

You both need to come more into sympathy with other minds. Christ is our example; He identified Himself with suffering humanity; He made the necessities of others a consideration of His own. When His brethren suffered, He suffered with them. Any slight

or neglect of His disciples is the same as if done to Christ Himself. Thus He says: "I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink." [11]

Dear brother and sister, you should seek for more harmonious characters. The absence of one essential qualification may render the rest almost inefficient. The principles you profess should be carried into every thought, word, and act. Self should be crucified and the entire being made subordinate to the Lord. [12]

The church is greatly deficient in love and humanity. Some preserve a cold, chilling reserve, an iron dignity, that repels those who are brought within their influence. This spirit is contagious; it creates an atmosphere that is withering to good impulses and good resolves; it chokes the natural current of human sympathy, cordiality, and love; and under its influence people become constrained, and their social and generous attributes are destroyed for want of exercise. Not only is the spiritual health affected, but the physical health suffers by this unnatural depression. The gloom and chill of this unsocial atmosphere is reflected upon the countenance. The faces of those who are benevolent and sympathetic will shine with the luster of true goodness, while those who do not cherish kindly thoughts and unselfish motives express in their faces the sentiments cherished in their hearts. [13]

Sister F, your feelings toward your sister are not exactly as God would have them. She needed sisterly affection from you, and less dictating and faultfinding. Your course with her has caused a depression of spirit and an anxiety of mind injurious to her health. Be careful lest you oppress and discourage your own sister. You cannot bear anything from her; you resent anything she says that has the appearance of crossing your track. [14]

Your sister has a positive temperament. She has a work to do for herself in this respect. She should be more yielding, but you must not expect to exert a beneficial influence over her while you are so exacting and so lacking in love and sympathy toward one who bears to you the close relationship of a sister and is also united with you in the faith. You have both erred. You have both given room to the enemy, and self has had much to do with your feelings and actions in regard to each other. [15]

Sister F, you have an inclination to dictate to your husband, your sister, and to all around you. Your sister has suffered very much in her mind. This she could have borne had she surrendered herself to God and trusted in Him, but God is displeased with your course toward her. It is unnatural and all wrong. She is no more unyielding in her disposition than you are in yours. When two such positive temperaments come in contact with each other, it is very bad for both. You should each be converted anew and transformed into the divine likeness. You would better err, if you err at all, on the side of mercy and forbearance than that of intolerance. [16]

Mild measures, soft answers, and pleasant words are much better fitted to reform and save, than severity and harshness. A little too much unkindness may place persons beyond your reach, while a conciliatory spirit would be the means of binding them to you, and you might then establish them in the right way. You should be actuated by a forgiving spirit also, and give due credit to every good purpose and action of those around you. Speak words of commendation to your husband, your child, your sister, and to all with whom you are associated. Continual censure blights and darkens the life of anyone. [17]

Do not reproach the Christian religion by jealousy and intolerance toward others. This will but poorly recommend your belief to them. No one has ever been reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach, but many have thus been driven from the truth and have steeled their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle and winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. God requires us to have that charity that "suffereth long, and is kind." [18]

The religion of Christ does not require us to lose our identity of character, but merely to adapt ourselves, in some measure, to the feelings and ways of others. Many people may be brought together in a unity of religious faith whose opinions, habits, and tastes in temporal matters are not in harmony; but if they have the love of Christ glowing in their bosoms, and are looking forward to the same heaven as their eternal home, they may have the sweetest and most intelligent communion together, and a unity the most wonderful. There are scarcely two whose experience is alike in every particular. The trials of one may not be the trials of another, and our hearts should ever be open to kindly sympathy and all aglow with the love that Jesus had for all His brethren. [19]

Conquer your disposition to be exacting with your son, lest too frequent reproof make your presence disagreeable to him and your counsels hateful. Bind him to your heart, not by foolish indulgence, but by the silken cords of love. You can be firm yet kind. Christ must be your helper. Love will be the means of drawing other hearts to yours, and your influence may establish them in the good and right way. [20]

I have warned you against a spirit of censure, and I would again caution you in regard to that fault. Christ sometimes reproveth with severity, and in some cases it may be necessary for us to do so; but we should consider that while Christ knew the exact condition of the ones He rebuked, and just the amount of reproof they could bear, and what was necessary to correct their course of wrong, He also knew just how to pity the erring, comfort the unfortunate, and encourage the weak. He knew just how to keep souls from despondency and to inspire them with hope, because He was acquainted with the exact motives and peculiar trials of every mind. He could not make a mistake. [21]

But we may misjudge motives; we may be deceived by appearances; we may think we are doing right to reprove wrong, and go too far, censure too severely, and wound where we wished to heal; or we may exercise sympathy unwisely, and counteract, in our ignorance, reproof that is merited and timely. Our judgment may be wrong, but Jesus was too wise to err. He reproveth with pity and loved with a divine love those whom He rebuked. [22]

The Lord requires us to be submissive to His will, subdued by His Spirit, and sanctified to His service. Selfishness must be put away, and we must overcome every defect in our characters as Christ overcame. In order to accomplish this work, we must die daily to self. Said Paul: "I die daily." He had a new conversion every day, took an advance step toward heaven. To gain daily victories in the divine life is the only course that God approves. The Lord is gracious, of tender pity, and plenteous in mercy. He knows our needs and weaknesses, and He will help our infirmities if we only trust in Him and believe that He will bless us and do great things for us. [23] (Testimonies Vol. 4, pp. 60.2-66.4).



Selfishness in the Church and in the Family

Dear Brother M: I have been shown in vision that you have defects in your character which must be remedied. You are not right in your views and feelings in regard to your wife. You do not appreciate her. She has not received the words of sympathy and love from you that you should have given her. It would not lessen the dignity of your manhood to praise her for the care she takes and the burdens she bears in the family. [1]

You are selfish and exacting. You mark little things and talk of small errors in your wife and children. In short, you seek to gauge their consciences by your own; you try to be conscience for them. Your wife has an identity of her own, which can never be merged in that of her husband. She has an individuality which she should preserve, for she is accountable before God for herself. You cannot, Brother M, be responsible before God for the character your wife forms. She alone will bear this responsibility. God is just as willing to impress the conscience of your God-fearing wife as He is to impress your conscience for her. [2]

You expect too much of your wife and children. You censure too much. If you would encourage a cheerful, happy temper yourself, and speak kindly and tenderly to them, you would bring sunlight into your dwelling instead of clouds, sorrow, and unhappiness. You think too much of your opinion; you have taken extreme positions and have not been willing that your wife's judgment should have the weight it should in your family. You have not encouraged respect for your wife yourself nor educated your children to respect her judgment. You have not made her your equal, but have rather taken the reins of government and control into your own hands and held them with a firm grasp. You have not an affectionate, sympathetic disposition. These traits of character you need to cultivate if you want to be an overcomer and if you want the blessing of God in your family. [3]

You are very set and unyielding in your opinion, which makes it very hard for your family. You need to have your heart softened by the grace of God. You need such love in your heart as characterized the works of Christ. Love proceeds from God. It is a plant of heavenly growth, and it cannot live and flourish in the natural heart. Where it exists, there is truth and life and power. But it cannot live without action, and whenever it is exercised it increases and extends. It will not observe little mistakes and be quick to mark little errors. It will prevail when argument, when any amount of words, will prove vain and useless. The very best way to reform the character and regulate the conduct of your family is through the principle of love. It is indeed a power and will accomplish that which neither money nor might ever can. [4]

My brother, your words that are harsh and unsympathizing cut and wound. It is very easy for you to censure and find fault, but this is only productive of unhappiness. You would quickly resent the words you address to others, were they spoken to you. You have looked upon it as a weakness to be kind, tender, and sympathetic, and have thought it beneath your dignity to speak tenderly, gently, and lovingly to your wife. Here you mistake in what true manliness and dignity consist. The disposition to leave deeds of kindness undone is a manifest weakness and defect in your character. That which you would look upon as weakness, God regards as true Christian courtesy, that should be exercised by every Christian; for this was the spirit which Christ manifested. [5]

You have a very selfish disposition and think more highly of yourself than you ought to think. You frequently take extremely singular and fanciful views of the Scriptures, and often cling to these as zealously as did the Jews to their traditions. Not possessing a teachable spirit, you will be in constant danger of making trouble in the church unless you set yourself at the work of correcting these wrongs in the strength of the mighty Conqueror. That which makes your case alarming is that you think you know these things better than your brethren, and you are very difficult to be approached. You have a self-righteous, pharisaical spirit, which would say: "Stand off, come not near me; for I am holier than thou." [6]

You have not seen the corruptions of your own heart and that you have made life almost a failure. Your opinions cannot and must not rule in the church of God. You need to be cultivating all the Christian graces, but especially charity, which suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, "doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." "Put on therefore, as the elect

of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity [love], which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." [7]

You mark little deviations from what you think is right, and you sternly seek to correct them. While you are thus overbearing and dictatorial, quick to observe a brother's faults, you do not closely search your own heart to see the evils existing in your life. You show great moral weakness in the indulgence of your appetite and passions. The slavery of appetite for tobacco has such control over you that although you resolve and re-resolve to overcome the habit, you do not accomplish it. This wrong habit has perverted your senses. My brother, where is your self-denial? Where is your moral power to overcome? Christ overcame the power of appetite in the wilderness of temptation on your account, making it possible for you to overcome on your own account. Now the battle is yours. In the name of the Conqueror you have an opportunity to deny your appetite and gain a victory for yourself. You require much of others; what are you willing to do to get the victory over a disgusting, health-destroying, soul-polluting indulgence? The battle is yours. No one can fight it for you. Others can pray for you, but the work must be wholly your own. [8]

God calls upon you to no longer dally with the tempter, but to cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in His fear. You need to work fast to remove the defects from your character. You are in God's workshop. If you will submit to the process of hewing and squaring and planing, that the rough edges may be removed, the knots and uneven surface smoothed and fitted by the planing knife of God, you will be fitted by His grace for the heavenly building. But if you cling to self, and are not willing to endure the trying process of fitting for the heavenly building, you will have no place in that structure which will come together without the sound of ax or hammer. If your nature is not transformed, if you are not refined and elevated by the sanctifying truth for these last days, you will be found unworthy of a place among the pure and holy angels. [9]

Can you afford to cling to your defiling habits and at last be found among the unbelieving and the unsanctified? Can you afford to run any risk in this matter? There is too much at stake for you to venture to pursue the course of self-indulgence that you have followed. You have been forward to talk the truth to unbelievers in a very positive, objectionable manner, which has had a very bad influence upon their minds. When there is one inconsistent advocate of the truth, Satan uses him to special advantage to disgust those who, under a proper influence, would have been favorably impressed. You should soften your manners, and when you advocate the truth, let it be with a spirit of meekness. [10]

"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." The fear here spoken of does not mean distrust or indecision, but with due caution, guarding every point, lest an unwise word be spoken, or excitement of feeling get the advantage, and thus leave unfavorable impressions upon minds, and balance them in the wrong direction. Godly fear, humility, and meekness are greatly needed by all in order to correctly represent the truth of God. [11]

One of your greatest dangers is a spirit of self-confidence and pride. The great unhappiness which exists with you and in your family results immediately from the operation of pride. The usefulness of a man who has this pride must be greatly limited, for his pride and self-love keep him in a narrow sphere. His spirit is not generous. His efforts are not extended, but contracted. By his conversation and deportment this pride will be discovered if it exists. [12]

Dear brother, the influence under which your character has been formed has given you a haughty, overbearing spirit. This spirit you act out in your family and among your neighbors and all with whom you associate. In order to overcome these wrong habits, you must watch unto prayer. You should now be thoroughly in earnest, for you have little time in which to work. Do not feel that you are sufficient in your own strength. Only in the name of the mighty Conqueror can you gain the victory. In conversation with others dwell upon the mercy, goodness, and love of God instead of upon His strict judgment and justice. Cling fast to His promises. You can do nothing in your own strength, but in the strength of Jesus you can do all things. If you are in Christ, and Christ is in you, you will be transformed, renewed, and sanctified. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Be sure that Christ is in you, that your heart is broken and submissive and humble. God will accept only the humble and contrite. Heaven is worth a lifelong, persevering effort; yes, it is worth everything. God will help you in your efforts if you strive only in Him. There is a work to be done in your family which God will help you to perform if you take hold of it aright. I entreat of you to set your own heart in order and then seek patiently to work for the salvation of your family, that the angels of God may come into your house and abide with you" (4T 255.1-259.2). [13]

