

The Beloved Disciple

MEMORY VERSE: “For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us” (1 John 1:2).

“Above all his companions, John the beloved disciple yielded himself to the power of [Christ’s] wondrous life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 250.

Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 236–248. (At the bottom of this page)

1. JOHN’S CHARACTER

Sun, Nov 30

a. What serious defects of character were evident in John? Mark 3:17.

Mark 3:17

And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

“John did not naturally possess the loveliness of character that his later experience revealed. By nature he had serious defects. He was not only proud, self-assertive, and ambitious for honor, but impetuous, and resentful under injury. He and his brother were called ‘sons of thunder.’ Evil temper, the desire for revenge, the spirit of criticism, were all in the beloved disciple.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 540.

b. What experience clearly revealed the vindictive nature of John and his brother James? Luke 9:51–56.

Luke 9:51–56

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, **52** And sent messengers before his face:

and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. **53** And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. **54** And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? **55** But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. **56** For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

“It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, who seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederated with evil angels sometimes bring suffering upon their fellow men in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love.”—*Ibid.*, p. 541.

2. THE THIRST FOR SUPREMACY

Mon, Dec 1

a. What do we need to learn from the petition involving John that almost caused serious division among the apostles? Mark 10:35–37; 9:35.

Mark 10:35–37

And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. **36** And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? **37** They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

Mark 9:35

And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

“At one time John engaged in a dispute with several of his brethren as to which of their number should be accounted greatest. They did not intend their words to reach the ear of the Master; but Jesus read their hearts, and embraced the opportunity to give His disciples a lesson of humility. It was not only for the

little group who listened to His words, but was to be recorded for the benefit of all His followers to the close of time. [Mark 9:35 quoted.]

“Those who possess the spirit of Christ will have no ambition to occupy a position above their brethren. It is those who are small in their own eyes who will be accounted great in the sight of God.” —*The Sanctified Life*, pp. 55, 56.

b. What mistaken hope had inspired that petition? Acts 1:6.

Acts 1:6

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

“Notwithstanding Christ’s repeated instruction concerning the nature of His kingdom, these young disciples still cherished the hope for a Messiah who would take His throne and kingly power in accordance with the desires of men.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 541, 542.

c. How did Jesus correct John and the other disciples? Mark 9:38–41.

Mark 9:38–41

And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. **39** But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. **40** For he that is not against us is on our part. **41** ¶ For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

“James and John met one who, while not an acknowledged follower of Christ, was casting out devils in His name. The disciples forbade the man to work and thought they were right in doing this. But when they laid the matter before Christ, He reproved them. . . . None who showed themselves in any way friendly to Christ were to be repulsed. The disciples must not indulge a narrow, exclusive spirit, but must manifest the same far-reaching sympathy which they had seen in their Master. James and John had thought that in checking this man they had in view the Lord’s honor; but they began to see that they were jealous for their own. They acknowledged their error and accepted the reproof.” —*Ibid.*, pp. 543, 544.

a. What happened to John as he beheld the character of Christ—and what should we learn from this? 1 John 1:2, 3.

1 John 1:2, 3

(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) **3** That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

“Day by day, in contrast with his own violent spirit, [John] beheld the tenderness and forbearance of Jesus, and heard His lessons of humility and patience. He opened his heart to the divine influence, and became not only a hearer but a doer of the Saviour’s words. Self was hid in Christ. He learned to wear the yoke of Christ and to bear His burden.

“Jesus reproved His disciples, He warned and cautioned them; but John and his brethren did not leave Him; they chose Jesus, notwithstanding the reproofs. The Saviour did not withdraw from them because of their weakness and errors. They continued to the end to share His trials and to learn the lessons of His life. By beholding Christ, they became transformed in character.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 295, 296.

“There may be marked defects in the character of an individual, yet when he becomes a true disciple of Jesus, the power of divine grace makes him a new creature. Christ’s love transforms, sanctifies him. But when persons profess to be Christians, and their religion does not make them better men and better women in all the relations of life—living representatives of Christ in disposition and character—they are none of His.”—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 55.

b. Having been transformed by the love of Jesus, what message does John have for all believers? 1 John 2:3–5; 3:18; 4:7, 16.

1 John 2:3–5

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. **4** He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. **5** But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

1 John 3:18

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

1 John 4:7

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

1 John 4:16

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

“John strove to lead the believers to understand the exalted privileges that would come to them through the exercise of the spirit of love. This redeeming power, filling the heart, would control every other motive and raise its possessors above the corrupting influences of the world. And as this love was allowed full sway and became the motive power in the life, their trust and confidence in God and His dealing with them would be complete. They could then come to Him in full confidence of faith, knowing that they would receive from Him everything needful for their present and eternal good.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 551, 552.

4. WHAT ABOUT US?

Wed, Dec 3

a. Just as in the case of John, what perilous evil prevailed in the church in Corinth—and can likewise easily dominate us today? 1 Corinthians 3:1–3.

1 Corinthians 3:1–3

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. **2** I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. **3** For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

“The Lord has bestowed great blessings upon His church. Justice demands that she return these talents with usury. As the treasures of truth committed to her keeping have increased, her obligations have increased. But instead of improving upon these gifts and going forward unto perfection, she has fallen

away from that which she had attained in her earlier experience. The change in her spiritual state has come gradually and almost imperceptibly. As she began to seek the praise and friendship of the world, her faith diminished, her zeal grew languid, her fervent devotion gave place to dead formality. Every advance step toward the world was a step away from God. As pride and worldly ambition have been cherished, the spirit of Christ has departed, and emulation, dissension, and strife have come in to distract and weaken the church.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 240, 241.

“It is impossible for minds distracted by envy and strife to comprehend the deep spiritual truths of God’s word.”—*Ibid.*, p. 241.

b. How are we bidden to a higher calling than this? Galatians 5:13–16.

Galatians 5:13–16

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. **14** For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. **15** But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. **16** This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

“In God’s plan there is no place for selfish rivalry.”—*Education*, p. 225.

“Christians should regard it as a religious duty to repress a spirit of envy or emulation. They should rejoice in the superior reputation or prosperity of their brethren, even when their own character or achievements seem to be cast in the shade. It was the pride and ambition cherished in the heart of Satan that banished him from heaven. These evils are deeply rooted in our fallen nature, and if not removed they will overshadow every good and noble quality and bring forth envy and strife as their baleful fruits.

“We should seek for true goodness rather than greatness. Those who possess the mind of Christ will have humble views of themselves. They will labor for the purity and prosperity of the church, and be ready to sacrifice their own interests and desires rather than to cause dissension among their brethren.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 242.

a. How can our education help or hinder us from temptation to indulge in a spirit of rivalry? 2 Corinthians 10:12; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 2:8.

2 Corinthians 10:12

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

Philippians 2:3

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Colossians 2:8

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

“In our institutions of learning there was to be exerted an influence that would counteract the influence of the world, and give no encouragement to indulgence in appetite, in selfish gratification of the senses, in pride, ambition, love of dress and display, love of praise and flattery, and strife for high rewards and honors as a recompense for good scholarship. All this was to be discouraged in our schools. It would be impossible to avoid these things, and yet send them to the public schools, where they would daily be brought in contact with that which would contaminate their morals. All through the world there was so great a neglect of proper home training that the children found at the public schools, for the most part, were profligate, and steeped in vice.

“The work that we as a people were to do in this matter, was to establish a school, and do the work that Jesus Christ, from the pillar of cloud, had directed as the work of His people—to train and educate our children and youth to regard the commandments of God. The manifest disregard of the world for the law of God was contaminating the morals of those who professed to be keeping the law of God. But we are called upon to follow the example of Abraham. Of him the Lord has said, ‘I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.’

“Abraham had to leave his country and his father’s house, and sojourn in a strange land, in order to introduce successfully the new order of things in his household.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 286.

1. What negative character traits is Christ longing to transform in me?
2. How should I respond when others do not seem to appreciate me?
3. What can I learn from the main focus of the transformed John?
4. Why is the spirit of rivalry such a big problem today?
5. How can the way a child is educated make a big difference in life?

Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 236–248.

“I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Corinthians 1:10. **(5T 236.1)**

Union is strength; division is weakness. When those who believe present truth are united, they exert a telling influence. Satan well understands this. Never was he more determined than now to make of none effect the truth of God by causing bitterness and dissension among the Lord’s people. **(5T 236.2)**

The world is against us, the popular churches are against us, the laws of the land will soon be against us. If there was ever a time when the people of God should press together, it is now. God has committed to us the special truths for this time to make known to the world. The last message of mercy is now going forth. We are dealing with men and women who are judgment bound. How careful should we be in every word and act to follow closely the Pattern, that our example may lead men to Christ. With what care should we seek so to present the truth that others by beholding its beauty and simplicity may be led to receive it. If our characters testify of its sanctifying power, we shall be a continual light to others—living epistles, known and read of all men. We cannot afford now to give place to Satan by cherishing disunion, discord, and strife. **(5T 236.3)**

That union and love might exist among His disciples was the burden of our Saviour’s last prayer for them prior to His crucifixion. With the agony of the cross before Him, His solicitude was not for Himself, but for those whom He should leave to carry forward His work in the earth. The severest trials awaited them, but Jesus saw that their greatest danger would be from a spirit of bitterness and division. Hence He prayed: **(5T 236.4)**

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” John 17:17-21. **(5T 237.1)**

That prayer of Christ embraces all His followers to the close of time. Our Saviour foresaw the trials and dangers of His people; He is not unmindful of the dissensions and divisions that distract and weaken His church. He is looking upon us with deeper interest and more tender compassion than moves an earthly parent’s heart toward a wayward, afflicted child. He bids us learn of Him. He invites our confidence. He bids us open our hearts to receive His love. He has pledged Himself to be our helper. **(5T 237.2)**

When Christ ascended to heaven, He left the work on earth in the hands of His servants, the undershepherds. “And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-13. **(5T 237.3)**

In sending forth His ministers our Saviour gave gifts unto men, for through them He communicates to the world the words of eternal life. This is the means which God has ordained for the perfecting of the saints in knowledge and true holiness. The work of Christ’s servants is not merely to preach the truth; they are to watch for souls as they that must render account to God. They are to reprove, rebuke, exhort with long-suffering and doctrine. **(5T 237.4)**

All who have been benefited by the labors of God’s servant should, according to their ability, unite with him in working for the salvation of souls. This is the work of all true believers, ministers and people. They should keep the grand object ever in view, each seeking to fill his proper position in the church, and all working together in order, harmony, and love. **(5T 238.1)**

There is nothing selfish or narrow in the religion of Christ. Its principles are diffusive and aggressive. It is represented by Christ as the bright light, as the saving salt, as the transforming leaven. With zeal, earnestness, and devotion the servants of God will seek to spread far and near the knowledge of the truth; yet they will not neglect to labor for the strength and unity of the church. They will watch carefully lest opportunity be given for diversity and division to creep in. **(5T 238.2)**

There have of late arisen among us men who profess to be the servants of Christ, but whose work is opposed to that unity which our Lord established in the church. They have

original plans and methods of labor. They desire to introduce changes into the church to suit their ideas of progress and imagine that grand results are thus to be secured. These men need to be learners rather than teachers in the school of Christ. They are ever restless, aspiring to accomplish some great work, to do something that will bring honor to themselves. They need to learn that most profitable of all lessons, humility and faith in Jesus. Some are watching their fellow laborers and anxiously endeavoring to point out their errors, when they should rather be earnestly seeking to prepare their own souls for the great conflict before them. The Saviour bids them: "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:29. **(5T 238.3)**

Teachers of the truth, missionaries, officers in the church, can do a good work for the Master if they will but purify their own souls by obeying the truth. Every living Christian will be a disinterested worker for God. The Lord has given us a knowledge of His will that we may become channels of light to others. If Christ is abiding in us, we cannot help working for Him. It is impossible to retain the favor of God and enjoy the blessing of a Saviour's love, and yet be indifferent to the danger of those who are perishing in their sins. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." John 15:8. **(5T 238.4)**

Paul urges the Ephesians to preserve unity and love: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Ephesians 4:1-6. **(5T 239.1)**

The apostle exhorts his brethren to manifest in their lives the power of the truth which he had presented to them. By meekness and gentleness, forbearance and love, they were to exemplify the character of Christ and the blessings of His salvation. There is but one body, and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith. As members of the body of Christ all believers are animated by the same spirit and the same hope. Divisions in the church dishonor the religion of Christ before the world and give occasion to the enemies of truth to justify their course. Paul's instructions were not written alone for the church in his day. God designed that they should be sent down to us. What are we doing to preserve unity in the bonds of peace? **(5T 239.2)**

When the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the early church, the brethren loved one another. "They ... did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people: and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:46, 47. Those primitive Christians were few in numbers, without wealth or honor, yet they exerted a mighty influence. The light of the world shone out from them. They were a terror to evildoers wherever their character and their

doctrines were known. For this cause they were hated by the wicked and persecuted even unto death. **(5T 239.3)**

The standard of holiness is the same today as in the days of the apostles. Neither the promises nor the requirements of God have lost aught of their force. But what is the state of the Lord's professed people as compared with the early church? Where is the Spirit and power of God which then attended the preaching of the gospel? Alas, "how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!" Lamentations 4:1. **(5T 240.1)**

The Lord planted His church as a vine in a fruitful field. With tenderest care He nourished and cherished it, that it might bring forth the fruits of righteousness. His language is: "What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" Isaiah 5:4. But this vine of God's planting has inclined to the earth and entwined its tendrils about human supports. Its branches are extended far and wide, but it bears the fruit of a degenerate vine. The Master of the vineyard declares: "When I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Isaiah 5:4. **(5T 240.2)**

The Lord has bestowed great blessings upon His church. Justice demands that she return these talents with usury. As the treasures of truth committed to her keeping have increased, her obligations have increased. But instead of improving upon these gifts and going forward unto perfection, she has fallen away from that which she had attained in her earlier experience. The change in her spiritual state has come gradually and almost imperceptibly. As she began to seek the praise and friendship of the world, her faith diminished, her zeal grew languid, her fervent devotion gave place to dead formality. Every advance step toward the world was a step away from God. As pride and worldly ambition have been cherished, the spirit of Christ has departed, and emulation, dissension, and strife have come in to distract and weaken the church. **(5T 240.3)**

Paul writes to his Corinthian brethren: "Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are yet not carnal, and walk as men?" 1 Corinthians 3:3. It is impossible for minds distracted by envy and strife to comprehend the deep spiritual truths of God's word. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Corinthians 2:14. We cannot rightly understand or appreciate divine revelation without the aid of that Spirit by whom the word was given. **(5T 241.1)**

Those who are appointed to guard the spiritual interests of the church should be careful to set a right example, giving no occasion for envy, jealousy, or suspicion, ever manifesting that same spirit of love, respect, and courtesy which they desire to encourage in their brethren. Diligent heed should be given to the instructions of God's word. Let every manifestation of animosity or unkindness be checked; let every root of bitterness be removed. When trouble arises between brethren, the Saviour's rule should be strictly followed. All possible effort should be made to effect a reconciliation; but if the parties

stubbornly persist in remaining at variance, they should be suspended till they can harmonize. **(5T 241.2)**

Upon the occurrence of trials in the church let every member examine his own heart to see if the cause of trouble does not exist within. By spiritual pride, a desire to dictate, an ambitious longing for honor or position, a lack of self-control, by the indulgence of passion or prejudice, by instability or lack of judgment, the church may be disturbed and her peace sacrificed. **(5T 241.3)**

Difficulties are often caused by the vendors of gossip, whose whispered hints and suggestions poison unsuspecting minds and separate the closest friends. Mischief-makers are seconded in their evil work by the many who stand with open ears and evil heart, saying: "Report, ... and we will report it." This sin should not be tolerated among the followers of Christ. No Christian parent should permit gossip to be repeated in the family circle or remarks to be made disparaging the members of the church. **(5T 241.4)**

Christians should regard it as a religious duty to repress a spirit of envy or emulation. They should rejoice in the superior reputation or prosperity of their brethren, even when their own character or achievements seem to be cast in the shade. It was the pride and ambition cherished in the heart of Satan that banished him from heaven. These evils are deeply rooted in our fallen nature, and if not removed they will overshadow every good and noble quality and bring forth envy and strife as their baleful fruits. **(5T 242.1)**

We should seek for true goodness rather than greatness. Those who possess the mind of Christ will have humble views of themselves. They will labor for the purity and prosperity of the church, and be ready to sacrifice their own interests and desires rather than to cause dissension among their brethren. **(5T 242.2)**

Satan is constantly seeking to cause distrust, alienation, and malice among God's people. We shall be often tempted to feel that our rights are invaded, when there is no real cause for such feelings. Those whose love for self is stronger than their love for Christ and His cause will place their own interests first and resort to almost any expedient to guard and maintain them. When they consider themselves injured by their brethren, some will even go to law instead of following the Saviour's rule. Even many who appear to be conscientious Christians are hindered by pride and self-esteem from going privately to those they think in error, that they may talk the matter over in the spirit of Christ and pray for one another. Contentions, strife, and lawsuits between brethren are a disgrace to the cause of truth. Those who take such a course expose the church to the ridicule of her enemies and cause the powers of darkness to triumph. They are piercing the wounds of Christ afresh and putting Him to an open shame. By ignoring the authority of the church they show contempt for God, who gave to the church its authority. **(5T 242.3)**

Paul writes to the Galatians: “I would they were even cut off which trouble you. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” Galatians 5:12-16. **(5T 243.1)**

False teachers had brought to the Galatians doctrines that were opposed to the gospel of Christ. Paul sought to expose and correct these errors. He greatly desired that the false teachers might be separated from the church, but their influence had affected so many of the believers that it seemed hazardous to take action against them. There was danger of causing strife and division which would be ruinous to the spiritual interests of the church. He therefore sought to impress upon his brethren the importance of trying to help one another in love. He declared that all the requirements of the law setting forth our duty to our fellow men are fulfilled in love to one another. He warned them that if they indulged hatred and strife, dividing into parties, and like the brutes biting and devouring one another, they would bring upon themselves present unhappiness and future ruin. There was but one way to prevent these terrible evils and that was, as the apostle enjoined upon them, to “walk in the Spirit.” They must by constant prayer seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which would lead them to love and unity. **(5T 243.2)**

“A house divided against itself cannot stand.” When Christians contend, Satan comes in to take control. How often has he succeeded in destroying the peace and harmony of churches. What fierce controversies, what bitterness, what hatred, has a very little matter started! What hopes have been blasted, how many families have been rent asunder by discord and contention! **(5T 244.1)**

Paul charged his brethren to beware lest in trying to correct the faults of others they should commit sins equally great themselves. He warns them that hatred, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, and envyings are as truly the works of the flesh as are lasciviousness, adultery, drunkenness, and murder, and will as surely close the gate of heaven against the guilty. **(5T 244.2)**

Christ declares: “Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in Me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.” Mark 9:42. Whoever by willful deception or by a wrong example misleads a disciple of Christ is guilty of a great sin. Whoever would make him an object of slander or ridicule is insulting Jesus. Our Saviour marks every wrong done to His followers. **(5T 244.3)**

How were those punished who in olden time made light of what God had chosen as sacred to Himself? Belshazzar and his thousand lords profaned the golden vessels of Jehovah and praised the idols of Babylon. But the God whom they defied was a witness

of the unholy scene. In the midst of their sacrilegious mirth a bloodless hand was seen tracing mysterious characters upon the palace wall. Filled with terror, king and courtiers heard their doom pronounced by the servant of the Most High. **(5T 244.4)**

Let those who delight to trace words of calumny and falsehood against the servants of Christ remember that God is a witness of their deeds. Their slanderous touch is not profaning soulless vessels but the characters of those whom Christ has purchased by His blood. The hand which traced the characters upon the walls of Belshazzar's palace keeps faithful record of every act of injustice or oppression committed against God's people. **(5T 244.5)**

Sacred history presents striking examples of the Lord's jealous care for the weakest of His children. During the journeying of Israel in the wilderness the weary and feeble ones who had fallen behind the body of the people were attacked and slain by the cowardly and cruel Amalekites. Afterward Israel made war with the Amalekites and defeated them. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." Exodus 17:14. Again the charge was repeated by Moses just before his death, that it might not be forgotten by his posterity: "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God.... Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it." Deuteronomy 25:17-19. **(5T 245.1)**

If God thus punished the cruelty of a heathen nation, how must He regard those who, professing to be His people, will make war upon their own brethren who are worn and wearied laborers in His cause? Satan has great power over those who yield to his control. It was the chief priests and elders—the religious teachers of the people—that urged on the murderous throng from the judgment hall to Calvary. There are hearts today among the professed followers of Christ inspired by the same spirit that clamored for the crucifixion of our Saviour. Let the workers of evil remember that to all their acts there is one witness, a holy, sin-hating God. He will bring all their works into judgment, with every secret thing. **(5T 245.2)**

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself." Romans 15:1-3. As Christ has pitied and helped us in our weakness and sinfulness, so should we pity and help others. Many are perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ's stead, can be as a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon God. Oh, this is a blessed work! Let not pride and selfishness prevent us from doing the good which we may do if we will work in Christ's name and with a loving, tender spirit. **(5T 245.3)**

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:1, 2. Here, again, our duty is plainly set before us. How can the professed followers of Christ so lightly regard these inspired injunctions? Not long since I received a letter describing a circumstance in which a brother had manifested indiscretion. Although it occurred years ago, and was a very small matter, hardly worthy of a second thought, the writer stated that it had forever destroyed her confidence in that brother. If that sister’s life should show upon review no greater errors, it would be indeed a marvel, for human nature is very weak. I have been and am still fellowshiping as brethren and sisters those who have been guilty of grave sins and who even now do not see their sins as God sees them. But the Lord bears with these persons, and why should not I? He will yet cause His Spirit so to impress their hearts that sin will appear to them as it appeared to Paul, exceedingly sinful. **(5T 246.1)**

We know but little of our own hearts and have but little sense of our own need of the mercy of God. This is why we cherish so little of that sweet compassion which Jesus manifests toward us and which we should manifest toward one another. We should remember that our brethren are weak, erring mortals like ourselves. Suppose that a brother has through unwatchfulness been overborne by temptation and contrary to his general conduct has committed some error, what course shall be pursued toward him? We learn from the Bible that men whom God had used to do a great and good work committed grave sins. The Lord did not pass these by unrebuked, neither did He cast off His servants. When they repented, He graciously forgave them and revealed to them His presence and wrought through them. Let poor, weak mortals consider how great is their own need of pity and forbearance from God and from their brethren. Let them beware how they judge and condemn others. We should give heed to the instruction of the apostle: “Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Galatians 6:1. We may fall under temptation and need all the forbearance which we are called to exercise toward the offender. “With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Matthew 7:2. **(5T 246.2)**

The apostle adds a caution to the independent and self-confident: “If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.... Every man shall bear his own burden.” Galatians 6:3-5. He who considers himself superior in judgment and experience to his brethren and despises their counsel and admonition, evinces that he is in a dangerous delusion. The heart is deceitful. He should test his character and life by the Bible standard. God’s word sheds an unerring light upon the pathway of man’s life. Notwithstanding the many influences which arise to divert and distract the mind, those who honestly seek God for wisdom will be guided into the right course. Every man must at last stand or fall for himself, not according to the opinion of the party that sustains or opposes him, not according to the judgment of any man, but according to his real

character in the sight of God. The church may warn, counsel, and admonish, but it cannot compel any to take a right course. Whoever persists in disregarding the word of God must bear his own burden, answer to God for himself, and suffer the consequences of his own course. **(5T 247.1)**

The Lord has given us in His word definite, unmistakable instructions, by obedience to which we may preserve union and harmony in the church. Brethren and sisters, are you giving heed to these inspired injunctions? Are you Bible readers and doers of the word? Are you striving to fulfill the prayer of Christ that His followers might be one? “The God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God.”(Romans 15:5, 6) “Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” 2 Corinthians 13:11. **(5T 248.1)**