

# Christlike In All Circumstances

MEMORY VERSE: “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” (Philippians 2:3, 4)

“The cultivation of a uniform courtesy, a willingness to do to others as we would wish them to do to us, would annihilate half the ills of life. The spirit of self-aggrandizement is the spirit of Satan; but the heart in which the love of Christ is cherished, will possess that charity which seeketh not her own.”—[Patriarchs and Prophets](#), p. 133.

**Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 167-177, 477-490. (At the bottom of this page)**

## 1. A NECESSARY QUALITY

Sun, Oct 4

**a. Why should we appreciate Paul’s expression of the value of true Christian harmony? Philippians 2:1, 2; Romans 15:5, 6.**

### **Philippians 2:1, 2**

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, **2** Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

### **Romans 15:5, 6**

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: **6** That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Christ is leading out a people, and bringing them into the unity of the faith, that they may be one, as He is one with the Father. Differences of opinion must be yielded, that all may come into union with the body, that

they may have one mind and one judgment.”—[Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 324.](#)

**b. Describe the joy to be reaped by such unity and how only it can be achieved. 1 Corinthians 1:10; Psalm 133:1-3.**

**1 Corinthians 1:10**

Now 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.

**Psalm 133:1-3**

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! 2It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; 3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

“The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties—though there will be much of this to do—but union with Christ.”  
—[The Adventist Home, p. 179.](#)

**2. A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE**

Mon, Oct 5

**a. What appeal comes to all Christian believers—and why? Philipians 2:3.**

**Philipians 2:3**

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

“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.”—[Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 174.](#)

“Men of various temperaments and defective characters can see the faults of others, but do not seem to have a knowledge of their own errors. . . . With ordinary humanity there is a selfishness, an ambition, that mars the work of God. Self-interest must be lost sight of.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 418, 419.

“A heart where the peace of Christ is not, is unhappy, full of discontent; the person sees defects in everything, and he would bring discord into the most heavenly music. A life of selfishness is a life of evil. Those whose hearts are filled with love of self will store away evil thoughts of their brethren and will talk against God’s instrumentalities. Passions kept warm and fierce by Satan’s promptings are a bitter fountain, ever sending forth bitter streams to poison the life of others. . . .

“Let each one who claims to follow Christ esteem himself less and others more. Press together, press together! In union there is strength and victory; in discord and division there is weakness and defeat.”—*Ibid.*, p. 488.

### **b. Explain the secret of genuine prosperity. Philippians 2:4.**

#### **Philippians 2:4**

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

“If our lives are filled with holy fragrance, if we honor God by having good thoughts toward others, and doing good deeds to bless others, it matters not whether we live in a cottage or a palace. Circumstances have but little to do with the experiences of the soul. It is the spirit cherished which gives coloring to all our actions. A man at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmising will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart in harmony with God is lifted above the annoyances and trials of this life.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 488.

“Success will increase in proportion as [our institutions] exercise disinterested liberality, sharing their abundance with institutions that are struggling for a foothold. Our prosperous institutions should help those institutions that God has said should live and prosper, but which are still struggling for an existence. There is among us a very limited amount of real, unselfish love.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 137.

**a. At this stage in history, what should characterize our thinking and actions? 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Philippians 2:5.**

## **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: **4** (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) **5** Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

## **Philippians 2:5**

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

“To adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour, we must have the same mind which was in Christ. Our likes and dislikes, our desire to favor self to the disadvantage of others must be overcome. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. Christ must be in us a living, working power.”—[The SDA Bible Commentary \[E. G. White Comments\], vol. 7, p. 921.](#)

“We are to enter the school of Christ, to learn from Him meekness and lowliness. Redemption is that process by which the soul is trained for heaven. This training means a knowledge of Christ. It means emancipation from ideas, habits, and practices that have been gained in the school of the prince of darkness. The soul must be delivered from all that is opposed to loyalty to God.”—[The Desire of Ages, p. 330.](#)

## **b. How and why are we to reflect the attitude of Christ? Philippians 2:6-8.**

### **Philippians 2:6-8**

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: **7** But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: **8** And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

“Jesus took upon Himself our nature, laid aside His glory, majesty, and riches to perform his mission, to save that which was lost. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister unto others. Jesus, when reviled, abused, and insulted, did not retaliate. ‘Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again.’ When the cruelty of man caused Him to suffer painful stripes and wounds, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously. The apostle Paul exhorted his Philippian brethren: ‘Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.’ Is the servant greater than his master? Christ has given us

His life as a pattern, and we dishonor Him when we become jealous of every slight, and are ready to resent every injury, supposed or real. It is not an evidence of a noble mind to be prepared to defend self, to preserve our own dignity. We would better suffer wrongfully a hundred times than wound the soul by a spirit of retaliation, or by giving vent to wrath. There is strength to be obtained of God. He can help. He can give grace and heavenly wisdom. If you ask in faith, you will receive; but you must watch unto prayer. Watch, pray, work, should be your watchword.”—[Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, pp. 426, 427.](#)

#### 4. PROACTIVE APPRECIATION

Wed, Oct 7

**a. How does God the Father view the infinite sacrifice made by Christ—and how should we? Philippians 2:9-11.**

##### **Philippians 2:9-11**

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: **10** That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; **11** And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

“On whose side are we? The world cast Christ out, the heavens received Him. Man, finite man, rejected the Prince of life; God, our sovereign Ruler, received Him into the heavens. God has exalted Him. Man crowned Him with a crown of thorns, God has crowned Him with a crown of royal majesty. We must all think candidly. Will you have this man Christ Jesus to rule over you, or will you have Barabbas? . . . The death of Christ is hope and eternal life to all who receive Him and believe in Him.”—[The SDA Bible Commentary \[E. G. White Comments\], vol. 5, p. 1107.](#)

**b. Weak as we are in moral strength and willpower, why must we proactively surrender to the Saviour? Philippians 2:12, 13.**

##### **Philippians 2:12, 13**

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. **13** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

“If you have truly begun the life of faith you have given yourself to the Lord to be wholly His, and He has taken you to mold and fashion according

to His purpose, that you may be a vessel unto honor. You should have an earnest desire to be pliable in His hands and to follow whithersoever He may lead you. You are then trusting Him to work out His designs, while at the same time you are cooperating with Him by working out your own salvation with fear and trembling. . . .

“Pure religion has to do with the will. The will is the governing power in the nature of man, bringing all the other faculties under its sway. The will is not the taste or the inclination, but it is the deciding power which works in the children of men unto obedience to God or unto disobedience.”—[Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 512, 513.](#)

“You will be in constant peril until you understand the true force of the will. You may believe and promise all things, but your promises or your faith are of no value until you put your will on the side of faith and action. If you fight the fight of faith with all your will power, you will conquer. Your feelings, your impressions, your emotions, are not to be trusted, for they are not reliable. . . .

“But you need not despair. . . . It is for you to yield up your will to the will of Jesus Christ; and as you do this, God will immediately take possession and work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Your whole nature will then be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ, and even your thoughts will be subject to Him.”—[Ibid., pp. 513, 514.](#)

**a. Name some common problems we must overcome. Philippians 2:14, 15.**

**Philippians 2:14, 15**

Do all things without murmurings and disputings: **15** 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;

“The love of God must pervade the soul, or the fruits of righteousness will not appear. It is not safe to indulge in vanity and pride, or love of power or gain. It is the worst phase of selfishness to fret and censure and complain because you have the power to do this and those whom you abuse in this way cannot prevent you. It is selfishness that causes variance in the family circle and in the church. Unchristian hearts will think they can discern great wrongs in others where none exist and will dwell upon little matters until they appear greatly magnified. The work of adjusting these little matters, which seem so large to some, God has left for His followers themselves to do. Let not those unhappy differences remain till they become a root of bitterness in the church, whereby many will be defiled.

When Christ is in the heart it will be so softened and subdued by love for God and man that fretting, faultfinding, and contention will not exist there. The religion of Christ in the heart will gain for its possessor a complete victory over those passions that are seeking for the mastery.”—[Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 610](#).

**b. Of what vital reality should Paul’s commendation of Epaphroditus remind us? Philippians 2:21, 25-27, 30.**

**Philippians 2:21**

For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.

**Philippians 2:25-27**

Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. **26** For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. **27** For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

**Philippians 2:30**

Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

“Christ did not send His angels to this fallen world, while He remained in heaven; but He Himself went without the camp, bearing the reproach. He became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; Himself took our infirmities, and bore our weaknesses. And the absence of self-denial in His professed followers, God regards as a denial of the Christian name. Those who profess to be one with Christ, and indulge their selfish desires for rich and expensive clothing, furniture, and food, are Christians only in name. To be a Christian is to be Christlike.”—[Counsels on Stewardship, p. 54](#).

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Oct 9

1. Why is Christian unity important, and how only is it achieved?
2. What is the secret of success, both for individuals and for institutions?
3. How might we summarize what Christ has done in behalf of humanity?
4. Despite our blemished record, what is Jesus willing to do for us—and how?

5. Why do I tend to complain—and what can help me overcome this vice?

**Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 167–177**

“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 worshipers 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 worshiping 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 worshiping 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 for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 477-490.**

Dear Brethren and Sisters in Healdsburg,

Do not forget that the most dangerous snares which Satan has prepared for the church will come through its own members who do not love God supremely or their neighbor as themselves. Satan is continually striving to wedge himself in between brethren. He seeks to gain control of those who claim to believe the truth, but who are unconverted; and when he can influence these, through their own carnal nature, to unite with him in trying to thwart the purposes of God, then he is exultant.

The Health Institute, the college, the ministry, and the missionary societies, are all instrumentalities which God employs for the accomplishment of His work. If Satan can in any way invent something which will divert talent and means from these instrumentalities into another channel, he will do it. There are some who are deceived in themselves. While flattering themselves that they are doing God's work, they are playing into the hands of the great deceiver and rendering him effectual service. Beware of these deceptions. Ever remember what is due to our Christian profession as God's peculiar people; and beware lest, in the exercise of personal independence, your influence may work against the purposes of God, and you, through Satan's devices, become a stumbling block, directly in the way of those who are weak and halting. There is danger of giving our enemies occasion to blaspheme God and heap scorn upon believers in the truth.

Be especially guarded against becoming a tool in the hands of the enemy to divert the minds of any—men and women, or children—from an entire surrender of themselves to God and to the great work for this time. Beware of flattering the young by holding out to them the prospect of financial gain, wonderful educational advantages, or great personal achievements. Flattering words are sweet to the unconsecrated heart, and some who think they are standing firm, are dazed, allured, and intoxicated with hopes that will never be realized. A great wrong has been done in this way. All should think and speak modestly of their own capabilities, and should be careful not to encourage pride and self-esteem in others. Men and women, unless consecrated to God, are weak in moral power and may be entirely mistaken in their estimate of human ability and of what constitutes Christian fidelity. Present no inducements which will lessen the interest of any in building up an institution which God has said should be built up.

Brother A does not manifest good judgment upon all occasions and in all matters. He is not well-balanced, and unless he walks in humility before God, he will make dangerous mistakes. He lacks discernment, and therefore misjudges character, using such extravagant words of flattery to some as will hurt their souls. He will lead them to think that they can do some great thing, and thus they will neglect the little duties lying directly in their path.

I do not plead for inactivity, but I plead for this selfish, worldly spirit to be overcome. Any enterprise which will unite the interests of church members, and will bring harmony and unity of effort into the work of God, may be safely entered into. But never, never forget that you are either servants of Jesus Christ, working strenuously for that unity of believers which Christ prayed might exist, or you are working against this unity and against Christ.

Those who seek to lessen the interest of any in the school at Healdsburg, or in the missionary work in any of its branches, are not working together with God, but are working under another captain, whose aim is to weaken and destroy. Your usefulness, brethren and sisters of the Healdsburg church, requires that you be straightforward in all your dealings; that you be humble, holy, and undefiled. There should be less proud self-seeking, less self-importance. When the members of the church are clothed with humility, when they put from them self-esteem and self-seeking, when they seek constantly to do God's will—then they will work together in harmony. God's Spirit is one....

The crisis is just before us when each will need much strength from God in order to stand against the wiles of Satan, for his deceptions will come in every conceivable form. Those who have allowed themselves to be the sport of Satan's temptations will be unprepared then to take the right side. Their ideas will be confused so that they cannot discern between the divine and the satanic.

There will come a crisis in every one of our institutions. Influences will be at work against them from both believers and unbelievers. There must be no betraying of confidence or holy trust now to benefit or exalt self. We should constantly watch our life with jealous care lest we leave wrong impressions upon the world. Say it, act it: "I am a Christian. I can not act upon the world's maxims. I must love God supremely and my neighbor as myself. I cannot enter into or connive at any arrangement which will interfere in the slightest manner with my usefulness or weaken my influence or destroy the confidence of anyone in God's instrumentalities." ...

Remember that God's people are but a little flock compared with the professedly Christian world and the myriads of world-adoring men and women. They are to be Bible Christians, examples to our youth of righteousness and exactness in all things. Every influence surrounding the young should be of a holy character, and this influence should begin in our own families. The sacred and the common should not be commingled.

By his baptismal vows every member of the church has solemnly pledged himself to guard the interests of his brethren. All will be tempted to cling to their own cherished plans and ideas, which appear sound to them; but they should

watch and pray, and endeavor, to the utmost of their ability, to build up the kingdom of Jesus in the world. Every Christian is required by God, as far as it is in his power, to ward off from his brethren and sisters every influence which will have the least tendency to divide them or to separate their interests from the work for this present time. He should not only have a regard for his own spiritual interests, but should manifest a burden for the souls of those to whom he stands related; and he should, through Christ, have a constraining power over other members of the church. His words and deportment should have an influence to lead them to follow Christ's example in self-denial, self-sacrifice, and love for others.

If there are any in the church who exert an influence contrary to the love and disinterested benevolence which Jesus manifested for us, if they draw apart from their brethren, faithful men should deal with these cases in wisdom, laboring for their souls, yet being careful that their influence shall not leaven others, and that the church shall not be led astray by their disaffection and false reports. Some are filled with self-sufficiency. There are a few who they think are right, but they question and find fault with every act of others. These persons must not be allowed to imperil the interests of the church. In order to raise the moral tone of the church, each should feel it his duty to seek personal spiritual culture, through the practice of strict Bible principles, as in the sight of a holy God.

Let each church member feel that he himself must be right with God, that he must be sanctified through the truth. Then he can represent Christian character to others and can set an example of unselfishness. If each will do this, the church will increase in spirituality and in favor with God.

Every church member should feel under obligation to consecrate his tithe to God. None are to follow the sight of their eyes or the inclination of their selfish hearts and thus rob God. They should not use their means to gratify vanity or for any other selfish indulgence, for in so doing they entangle themselves in Satan's snares. God is the giver of tact, of ability to accumulate wealth, and therefore all is to be laid upon His altar. The requirement is: "Honor the Lord with thy substance." The tendency to covetousness must be constantly restrained, else it will eat into the hearts of men and women, and they will run greedily after gain.

In the wilderness of temptation, Satan, the adversary of souls, presented before Christ the glories of this world and said: "If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine." The Saviour repulsed Satan; but how easily is man seduced by the representations of the great enemy! Many are charmed with the attractions of the world; they serve mammon rather than God, and so lose their souls.

In a little while we are to meet our Lord; and what account shall we have to give Him of the use we have made of our time, our talents of influence, and our possessions? Our joy should be in the work of saving souls. I solemnly inquire of the Healdsburg church: Is God among you of a truth? Says the True Witness: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy." Are you of this number? Have you held fast your integrity? As drowning men, have you clung to Jesus, who is

your refuge? Are you obeying Him, living for Him, loving Him? Is each member pure and holy and undefiled, one in whose mouth there is no guile? If so, you are most happy; for you are, in the sight of God, "more precious than fine gold; even ... than the golden wedge of Ophir." While multitudes are devoted to mammon, and serve not the Holy One of Israel, there are a few who have not defiled their garments, but have kept them unspotted from the world; and these few will be a power. This class will have that faith which works by love and purifies the soul. They will exemplify lofty Christian principles. They will seek for personal connection with the Source of light and will endeavor to make constant improvement, cultivating every faculty to its fullest extent. God would have you bring into your life the most unbending uprightness and integrity; this will distinguish you before the world as children of the most high God. Jesus was calm and gentle, not losing His self-command, even when in stormy conflict, amid fiercest elements of opposition.

God says to you who have had great light: "Come up higher." Draw nearer to God and heaven. Go forward. You need faith, an unfeigned love for your brethren, and a deeper interest in them. God has entrusted you with sacred responsibilities. There is a mission field for every member of the church, where he may exert an influence for good.

Our college is not what it should be nor what it will be if our brethren and sisters will feel that it is a sacred trust committed to them. If they will elevate the standard of spirituality in the church, if they will set an example of integrity in all their dealings, if all will cultivate godliness and Christian dignity, then the influence of the college will be widespread, and a light will go forth from it with rich blessings. I have seen that if the college is properly conducted, many youth will go forth from it to be active laborers in the cause of God. But let all take heed lest in word or action they cast an influence against it or against the truth by an unconsecrated life, by evil surmising, or by evil report; for God will surely mark it against them. The college will always be obliged to struggle against difficulties because some men lack faith and are not controlled by the mind of Christ. If Satan can find persons among us who will watch for evil and speak disparagingly of our institutions, picking up every little unpleasant thing that happens, he is well pleased. He will not cease his efforts to lead persons to depreciate the college because it does not in every particular meet their ideas. If he sees that youth can be benefited he will press every influence into the church to discourage rather than to strengthen and build up.

That these elements are in Healdsburg as well as in other places none will deny; and if Satan did not use them, he would use some other influence to the same end. But "woe to that man by whom the offense cometh;" for it were "better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." God has His means of working. Men cannot always discern them, and by attaching so much importance to their own efforts they not only give the Lord no room to work, but are found working against Him. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

We are nearing the end of time. Trials will be abundant from without, but let them not come from within the church. Let God's professed people deny self for the truth's sake, for Christ's sake. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Everyone who truly loves God will have the spirit of Christ and a fervent love for his brethren. The more a person's heart is in communion with God, and the more his affections are centered in Christ, the less will he be disturbed by the roughness and hardships he meets in this life. Those who are growing up to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, will become more and more like Christ in character, rising above the disposition to murmur and be discontented. They will despise to be faultfinders.

The church at this time should have the faith once delivered to the saints, which will enable them to say boldly: "God is mine helper;" "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." The Lord bids us arise and go forward. Whenever the church at any period have forsaken their sins, and believed and walked in the truth, they have been honored of God. There is in faith and humble obedience a power that the world cannot withstand. The order of God's providence in relation to His people is progression—continual advancement in the perfection of Christian character, in the way of holiness, rising higher and higher in the clear light and knowledge and love of God, to the very close of time. Oh! why are we ever learning only the first principles of the doctrine of Christ?

The Lord has rich blessings for the church if its members will seek earnestly to arouse from this perilous lukewarmness. A religion of vanity, words devoid of vitality, a character destitute of moral strength,—these are pointed out in the solemn message addressed by the True Witness to the churches, warning them against pride, worldliness, formalism, and self-sufficiency. To him that says, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," the Lord of heaven declares, Thou "knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." But to the lowly, the suffering, the faithful, the patient, who are alive to their weakness and insufficiency, are given words of encouragement: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." The True Witness says to all: "I know thy works." This close scrutiny is over the churches in California. Nothing escapes His searching gaze; their faults and errors, their neglects and failures, their sinful departure from the truth, their declensions and shortcomings—all are "opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

I hope and pray that you may walk in all lowliness of mind, that you may be a blessing to one another. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." The bridal lamps must be kept trimmed and burning. Our Lord delays because of His long-suffering to usward, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." But when we, with all the redeemed, shall stand upon the sea of glass, with harps of gold and crowns of glory, and before us the immensity of eternity, then we shall see how short was the waiting period of probation. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching."

We are living in an age when all should especially give heed to the injunction of the Saviour: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Let everyone bear in mind that he should be true and loyal to God, believing the truth, growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Saviour's invitation is: "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." The Lord is willing to help us, to strengthen and bless us; but we must pass through the refining process until all the impurities in our character are burned away. Every member of the church will be subjected to the furnace, not to consume, but to purify.

The Lord has wrought among you, but Satan has also intruded himself, to bring in fanaticism. There are other evils also to be avoided. Some are in danger of being satisfied with the glimpses they have had of the light and love of God, and so ceasing to advance. Watchfulness and prayer have not been maintained. At the very time when the acclamation is made, "The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these," temptations come in, and darkness gathers about the soul—earthliness, selfishness, and self-glorification. There is a necessity for the Lord Himself to communicate His own ideas to the soul. What a thought!—that instead of our poor, earthly, contracted ideas and plans the Lord will communicate to us His own ideas, His own thought, noble, broad, far-reaching, always leading heavenward!

Here is your danger, in failing to press forward "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Has the Lord given you light? Then you are responsible for that light; not merely while its rays are shining upon you, but for all which it has revealed to you in the past. You are to surrender your will to God daily; you are to walk in the light, and to expect more; for the light from the dear Saviour is to shine forth in clearer, more distinct rays amid the moral darkness, increasing in brightness more and more unto the perfect day.

Are all the members of your church seeking to gather fresh manna every morning and evening? Are you seeking divine enlightenment? or are you devising means whereby you can glorify yourselves? Are you, with your whole soul, might, mind, and strength, loving and serving God in blessing others around you by leading them to the Light of the world? Are you satisfied with past blessings? or are you walking as Christ walked, working as He worked, revealing Him to the world in your words and actions? Are you, as obedient children, living a pure and holy life? Christ must be brought into your life. He alone can cure you of envy, of evil surmising against your brethren; He alone can take away from you the self-sufficient spirit that some of you cherish to your own spiritual detriment. Jesus alone can make you feel your weakness, your ignorance, your corrupt nature. He alone can make you pure, refine you, fit you for the mansions of the blessed.

"Through God we shall do valiantly." What an amount of good you can do by being loyal to God and to your brethren, by repressing every unkind thought, every feeling of envy or self-importance! Let your life be filled with the ministry of kindness to others. How soon you may be called to lay off the armor, you know not. Death may claim you suddenly, giving you no time to prepare for your last change, no physical strength or mental power to fix your thoughts on God and make your peace with Him. Some, ere long, will know by experience how vain is

the help of man, how worthless is the self-important, self-sufficient righteousness which has satisfied them.

I feel urged by the Spirit of the Lord to tell you that now is your day of privilege, of trust, of blessing. Will you improve it? Are you working for the glory of God, or for selfish interests? Are you keeping before your mind's eye brilliant prospects of worldly success, whereby you may obtain self-gratification and financial gain? If so, you will be most bitterly disappointed. But if you seek to live a pure and holy life, to learn daily in the school of Christ the lessons that He has invited you to learn, to be meek and lowly in heart, then you have a peace which no worldly circumstances can change.

A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. Uneasiness, dissatisfaction, and restlessness reveal the absence of the Saviour. If Jesus is brought into the life, that life will be filled with good and noble works for the Master. You will forget to be self-serving, and will live closer and still closer to the dear Saviour; your character will become Christlike, and all around you will take knowledge that you have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Each one possesses in himself the source of his own happiness or wretchedness. If he will, he may rise above the low, sentimental feeling which makes up the experience of many; but so long as he is self-inflated, the Lord can do nothing for him. Satan will present ambitious projects to daze the senses, but we must ever keep before us "the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Crowd all the good works you possibly can into this life. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

If our lives are filled with holy fragrance, if we honor God by having good thoughts toward others, and doing good deeds to bless others, it matters not whether we live in a cottage or a palace. Circumstances have but little to do with the experiences of the soul. It is the spirit cherished which gives coloring to all our actions. A man at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmising will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart in harmony with God is lifted above the annoyances and trials of this life. But a heart where the peace of Christ is not, is unhappy, full of discontent; the person sees defects in everything, and he would bring discord into the most heavenly music. A life of selfishness is a life of evil. Those whose hearts are filled with love of self will store away evil thoughts of their brethren and will talk against God's instrumentalities. Passions kept warm and fierce by Satan's promptings are a bitter fountain, ever sending forth bitter streams to poison the life of others....

Let each one who claims to follow Christ esteem himself less and others more. Press together, press together! In union there is strength and victory; in discord and division there is weakness and defeat. These words have been spoken to me from heaven. As God's ambassador I speak them to you.

Let everyone seek to answer the prayer of Christ: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." Oh, what unity is this! and says Christ: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

When death claims one of our number, what are our memories of the treatment he has received? Are the pictures upon memory's walls pleasant to reflect upon? Are they memories of kind words spoken, of sympathy given at the right time? Have his brethren turned away the evil surmisings of indiscreet meddlers? Have they vindicated his cause? Have they been faithful to the inspired injunction: "Comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak"? "Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands." "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not."

When he with whom we have associated in the church is dead, when we know that his account in the books of heaven is fixed, and that he must meet that record in the judgment, what are the reflections of his brethren as to the course they have pursued toward him? What has been their influence upon him? How clearly now every harsh word, every unadvised act, is called to mind! How differently they would conduct themselves if they had another trial!

The apostle Paul thanked God for the comfort given him in sorrow, saying: "Blessed be ... the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." As Paul felt the comfort and warmth of God's love breaking into his soul, he reflected the blessing upon others. Let us so order our conduct that the pictures hung upon the walls of our memory may not be of such a character that we cannot endure to reflect upon them.

After those with whom we associate are dead, there will never be an opportunity to recall any word spoken to them, or to wipe from the memory any painful impression. Then let us take heed to our ways, that we do not offend God with our lips. Let all coldness and variance be put away. Let the heart melt into tenderness before God, as we recall His merciful dealings with us. Let the Spirit of God, like a holy flame, burn away the rubbish that is piled up at the door of the heart, and let Jesus in; then His love will flow out to others through us, in tender words and thoughts and acts. Then if death parts us from our friends, to meet no more till we stand at the bar of God, we shall not be ashamed to have the record of our words appear.

When death closes the eyes, when the hands are folded upon the silent breast, how quickly feelings of variance change! There is no grudging, no bitterness; slights and wrongs are forgiven, forgotten. How many loving words are spoken of the dead! How many good things in their life are brought to mind! Praise and commendation are now freely expressed; but they fall upon ears that hear not, hearts that feel not. Had these words been spoken when the weary spirit needed them so much, when the ear could hear and the heart could feel, what a pleasant picture would have been left in the memory! How many, as they stand awed and silent beside the dead, recall with shame and sorrow the words and acts that brought sadness to the heart now forever still! Let us now bring all the beauty, love, and kindness we can into our life. Let us be thoughtful, grateful, patient, and forbearing in our intercourse with one another. Let the thoughts and feelings

which find expression around the dying and the dead be brought into the daily association with our brethren and sisters in life.