

## January 5

*The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me, Romans 15:3*

LET us see to it that we bear the reproaches of Christ as He bore them,—with pity and prayer for the erring and depraved, if perchance God may grant them repent-

### ROMANS 15:3

Rom 15:3 KJV "For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."

#### "CHRIST PLEASED NOT HIMSELF"

R4785 "God was pleased to have the Ninevites turn from their sins to hearty repentance. He was pleased to grant them an extension of earthly life. But Jonah was displeased. His argument was, There, God did make a fool of me. He told me that this great city would be destroyed within forty days and I preached it. But all the while he must have known that it would not be destroyed within forty days. God has brought discredit upon me and I am now to be regarded as a false prophet.

Jonah was more interested in himself and his own reputation than in the Ninevites and their interests. The Lord's servants must not be so! Self should be lost sight of; as the great Apostle Paul advises, "Love seeketh not her own"; and again, "Christ pleased not himself."—1Cor. 13:5; Rom. 15:3."

R371 "This mind or spirit of Christ is the same as the spirit of God, for Christ sacrificed his own spirit, and was filled with the spirit of God. "For even Christ pleased not himself." (Rom. 15:3.) Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." That is, they express the mind of God, in giving heed to which, is life. It is for this cause that Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures." ... We must search them diligently, to the intent that we may know the spirit or mind of God. If we would be filled with the spirit of God we must drink deep of the fountain of truth—his Word. Our earthen vessels are very imperfect and leaky, and it is easy to let the spiritual things slip, (Heb. 2:1.) and very soon the spirit of the world, which is all around us, rushes in to fill the vacuum. Therefore, it behooves us to live very close to the fountain, lest the spirit of God be quenched, and we be filled with the spirit of the world."

#### "THE REPROACHES OF THEM THAT REPROACHED THEE FELL ON ME"

(Heb 13:13-14 KJV) "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. (14) For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

(1Pe 4:14 KJV) "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."

ance; and with humble fortitude esteeming it a privilege to prove our devotion to the Lord by enduring hardness in His service as good soldiers. He was not surprised by the exhibitions of human depravity: He knew that He was in an unfriendly world bound by sin and largely under the dominion of the

E489-490 "The great High Priest who proclaimed "the Word of reconciliation" most clearly, was despised and rejected and crucified by those who professed to love and follow righteousness. The apostles were similarly evil treated because of their faithfulness—their refusal to compromise the message, "the word of reconciliation."

"Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake," "they shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." Marvel not if the world hate you: ye know that it hated me before it hated you. These words by the great teacher were to be true "even unto the end of this age": and they are as true today as ever. Whoever will faithfully *exercise* his ambassadorship, and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, will speedily know something of the sufferings of Christ and can say truly—"The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." Matt. 5:10-12; 10:22; Psa. 69:9; Rom. 15:3

And here again we behold the wonderful wisdom of the divine plan; for it is while performing his priestly ministry of "the word of reconciliation" to which the spirit of anointing impels, that each priest finds the necessity for offering up himself, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, and his reasonable service. Rom. 12:1

Hence the measure of self-sacrifice and sufferings for Christ, endured by each of the consecrated, becomes a *measure* (from God's standpoint -- for man cannot always discern it) of the faithfulness of each as ambassadors. Every priest who fails to suffer for Christ's sake, for the Truth's sake, must therefore have been an unfaithful ambassador... Only to those now faithful as good soldiers of the cross will be granted the inestimable privilege of being participants with the great High Priest in the glorious at-one-ment work under the favorable conditions of the Millennial age. If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he will also [then] deny us. Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12,13; Titus 1:16...

"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2:10"

R1905 "THY SHIELD AND THY REWARD "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward."—Gen. 15:1.

These words were addressed to the "father of the faithful," and as a heritage they descend to his children—to all those who are of the faith of Abraham (Gal. 3:7; Rom. 4:16), whether of the fleshly or the spiritual seed...

"I am [also] thy exceeding great reward." Notice, the promise is not put in the future tense, having reference to the prom-

prince of darkness, and therefore He expected reproaches, taunts and persecutions, all of which He endured patiently while His great loving heart, almost unmindful of its own sufferings, was full of pity and loving concern for others. Z. '96-83R1964:5

ised glory of his people in the ages to come; but it is present, "I am," etc. Yes, the abiding presence of God, manifested to the hearts of his people now, even to-day, in the midst of its cares, its vexations, its labors, its trials of faith, patience and endurance, this is the blessed present privilege of all his saints. And not only the presence of God, but also of his dear Son, our Lord and Savior, is also vouchsafed to us so long as we faithfully maintain our covenant relations with him.

Should the child of God, the heir of glory, the inheritor of all the exceeding great and precious promises, and the present companion of Divinity itself which condescends to our low estate, ever feel desolate or forsaken or alone? or fear that his love will ever forsake or leave him to be tossed helplessly upon the billows of misfortune at the mercy of the prince of this world who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience? Ah, no! Greater is he that is for us than all they that can be against us. We are not alone in the world; for we have the blessed promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5.) Nor is the smallest interest of ours overlooked.—Matt. 10:29-31.

How truly "*exceeding great*" is this present "reward" of the faithful saints who are daily and hourly walking with God—going about the Father's business, spreading abroad the honor of his name, meekly bearing the reproaches of Christ, enduring hardness as good soldiers in his service and taking up their cross daily and following in the Master's footprints. Truly we can say to the world, as did our Lord, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." The world cannot comprehend our joy, nor know the sweets of this fellowship with God and with his dear Son; for "The secret of the Lord is [only] with them that fear him."—Psa. 25:14.

This joy in the Lord is, however, also compatible with much suffering; for the saints are all to be made perfect through suffering, which was true also of those who shall constitute the earthly phase of the Kingdom. And, like their Lord, Christ Jesus, they will all be considered of the world as "smitten of God and afflicted." This is because the world cannot comprehend either the plan or methods of God for the refining and perfecting of the gold that shall by and by shine in the glorious Temple of God. Consequently, like faithful Abraham, we must be content to walk with God by faith and not by sight, like him hoping to the end for the promise, not expecting here to realize aught but the earnest of our inheritance, which we have in the present reward of the divine presence and approval."

R1963 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

## THE CONTRAST OF HUMAN PERFECTION AND HUMAN DEPRAVITY

*"And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, 'They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.' And sitting down they watched him there."—Matt. 27:35,36.*

HERE, in marked contrast, are seen the glory of moral perfection and the depth of human depravity. Here was the most sublime

heroism, the most perfect self-abnegation, the most exalted benevolence, and the most devoted loyalty, in contrast with the vilest hy-

pocrisy, the most cold-blooded hate, and the most abject cowardice. The meanest, vilest selfishness, pride and conceit delivered to ignominy and death the fairest flower of virtue that ever bloomed on earth, and wicked hands and fiendish hearts executed the dark designs of envy and hate, taking a morbid pleasure in the dying agonies of the Son of God, while he, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, opened not his mouth in self-defence, but meekly submitted to the terrible ordeal of suffering and death for the world of sinners, none of whom could then appreciate and understand his motives or his work. Truly, the contrast of such virtue, in comparison with such depravity, encircles the Cross of Christ with a halo of ineffable glory, the broken rays of which, falling upon us, express to us all there is of moral excellence and worth.

In the apprehension, arraignment and crucifixion of Christ three classes of criminals come to view. First, there were those who, *for envy*, delivered him to death. They were the proud, boastful, self-righteous hypocrites, who, realizing their own inferiority, and aware of their own unfitness to be the leaders and saviors of the people, yet so anxiously craved the honors and praises of men and the emoluments of office that they could not brook the appearance of a rival of superior talents and ability. These hated the Lord without a cause, save that which originated in their own depravity. These, the mighty men of the Jewish nation, the rulers and religious teachers, the educated men of the nation, the expounders of the law of God, and the interpreters of the prophets,--these wickedly took counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed; and in their counsels among themselves they acknowledged the superiority of the victim of their hate and expressed the real animus of it--their envy of his rising fame and influence among the people, which tended to their own speedy displacement.

Second, there were those cringing, hireling menials, too basely selfish to spurn a bribe, or to appreciate a principle, and who are ever willing to sacrifice principle for a trifle of present advantage or gratification. Of this class was Judas, who sold the Lord for thirty pieces of silver, and also all of that infuriated mob which, incited by the priests, cried "Away with him! Crucify him! We have no king but Caesar! His blood be upon us and upon our children!" Judas loved the money, and these loved the approval of the priests and rulers, and wanted to be on the popular side. How mean the bribe, how base the crime!

Third, there were those cold-blooded, cruel servants of the Roman state who, presuming to have no responsibility in the matter, cared nothing for the honor of justice or the vindication of right. It was their business to execute the mandates of their superiors, and they must do so at their own peril. Looking to their own interests, therefore, it was their *business* to drive the nails through the quivering flesh and to plant the thorny crown upon the victim's head. It was an awful business, but they were schooled to it, so that the groans of anguish failed to reach their hearts. So, regarding the horrid transaction in the light of *business*, they thought only of their booty, and, with frigid indifference, sat down and watched the agony of the Lord, while they cast lots upon his vesture. And some even endeavored to add to the sufferings by cruel taunts and fiendish exultation.

How strange it seems that humanity, originally in the likeness of God, can sink so low! and yet it is all too true. The depth of depravity to which an intelligent being can sink can be measured only by the height of the original perfection and glory. Satan fell from a great height to a corresponding depth, and so likewise man falls to the very depths of iniquity, unless he repent and be converted from the error of his way, and voluntarily submit to the healing influences of divine grace. Sin, with accelerating speed, ever tends downward to more and more vile conditions, until it ends in the shipwreck of everything that is noble and pure; and "sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."

As we look at the various manifestations of wickedness on the part of those who crucified the Lord, it is a sad comment upon human depravity to notice that the very same elements have been in the world ever since; and alas! are present still. And the special victims of their hate have been, and still are, the meek of the earth, who have taken up their cross to follow in the footprints of the crucified One--the body of Christ which fills up the measure of his sufferings. (Col. 1:24.) All through the age there have been those anxious to deliver them to death, who, for envy, hypocritically assumed to be the representatives of God to condemn them, and to seek them out, and hunt them down, and kill their influence, and deliver them over to be crucified. This is the *Pharisaical class*--the class represented

by the chief priests, the scribes and Pharisees. There has also always been the hireling class, ready to sell their services to such leaders for the paltry bribes they have to offer--for the favor of their leaders, for the convenience of being on the popular side, or for a trifle of financial or social advantage. This is the *Judas class*--a class which, like Judas and like the priests and scribes and Pharisees, know, and secretly recognize, the truth and righteousness exemplified in the body of Christ, yet who nevertheless dislike them, hate them, and are ever willing to make merchandise of them,--to deliver them over to scorn and contempt, if not, as in former times, to prison and to death, for the mean advantage of popular favor.

Then there are still the cruel *cold-blooded menials* who, with complacency and indifference, and yet with curiosity, sit down and watch the sufferings of the body, and wonder what will happen next. They are surprised and puzzled by the fortitude which daily takes up the cross and follows after Christ; they cannot understand the motives that inspire it; they have no faith in the rewards to which the consecrated look, and they curiously watch them to see if, perchance, their God will interpose and deliver them. And when they see no miraculous interposition in their behalf, but that instead they bear the cross to the bitter end of sacrifice, they regard them, like their Head, as "smitten of God and afflicted," and to the sufferings are added their reproaches. And so every member of the anointed body can say with the Head, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me."

The important concern to all who are thus suffering with Christ in any measure is that they bear it with the same humility, benevolence and fortitude that characterized him under the most crucial tests of endurance. <sup>(2)</sup>He was not surprised by the exhibitions of human depravity: he knew that he was in an unfriendly world bound by sin and largely under the dominion of the prince of darkness, and therefore he expected reproaches, taunts and persecutions, all of which he endured patiently while his great loving heart, almost unmindful of its own sufferings, was full of pity and of loving concern for others. Have we indeed so much of the Master's spirit that we can thus suffer with Christ, meekly bearing reproach and trusting to heaven's vindication of us in due time? "If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Therefore let us "consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds." (1 Pet. 2:20-23; Heb. 12:3.) And <sup>(1)</sup>let us also see to it that we bear the reproaches of Christ as he bore them,--with pity and prayer for the erring and depraved, if perchance God may grant unto them repentance; and with humble fortitude esteeming it a privilege to prove our devotion to the Lord by enduring hardness in his service as good soldiers.

But what shall we say of those who hate the Lord's body without a cause, who for envy deliver them to persecution and death, or of those who for bribes betray the innocent, or of those who, with frigid indifference, but curious interest, calmly watch the sufferings of the body, as the Roman soldiers did of the Head, saying, "Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him?" "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united." Their way is the way of death. When the noble spectacle of loyalty to God, to truth and righteousness, and of Christian fortitude in enduring hardness and persecution meekly and patiently, fails to move and win the hearts of men, what more remains to be done for them? The goodness of God exemplified in his children as well as in other ways should lead to repentance; but if it only hardens the heart and steels it against the further influences of divine grace, sad indeed is the condition of such a soul. It is not ours, however, to judge such to condemnation: but it is our part to shun the company and counsels of all such. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful: but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night....For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish."--Psa. 1:1,2,6.

<sup>(2)</sup> ½ Jan. 5 Manna

<sup>(1)</sup> ½ Jan. 5 Manna, Rom. 15:3

## ROMANS 15:3 CONTEXT

(Rom 15:1-3 KJV) "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (2) Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. (3) For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."

R4927 "OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ONE ANOTHER" *"We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."*—Romans 15:1

THE GREAT PRINCIPLE set forth in our text is the principle of Love, the essence of the Divine Spirit. God is love; and the Spirit of love is the Spirit of God. This spirit, operating amongst God's people, necessarily makes them considerate of one another. It is the opposite of a selfish spirit. It seeks the welfare of others as well as of itself, especially the welfare of the household of faith.

In every case it should be our disposition, as far as possible, to help the weak and those who need assistance. The general disposition of the world, on the contrary, is to speak slightingly of those who are weak and to say, "They have my sympathy." But *really*, the weak do not get much sympathy. The world applauds those who are the most successful, the mighty, the rich. But as God has sympathy for the weak and lowly, so we should show sympathy more for those who are in need of sympathy than for those who are not. In the Church there are some who are *intellectually* strong, some who are *intellectually* weak, some who are *physically* strong, others who are *physically* weak; some who are *spiritually* strong and others who are *spiritually* weak...

We should ever be on the alert to see and to overcome our own weaknesses, and to be glad to spend and be spent in the interest of the brethren, considering matters from their standpoint and lending them our assistance.

The Elders in the Church should be really elder brethren. In the family the elder brother is supposed to be next to the father, helping and assisting, and spending himself for the interests of the other members. And so in the Church. Those who are older in the Truth, who are more developed in the Truth, should encourage, assist, lift up and defend the younger. This we observe in the affairs of earthly life in every family. The elders are helpful in the family to give assistance to the younger, and at the loss of their own convenience, their own preferences; their own pleasures are to be yielded up in the interests of the younger of the family. The thought of the Apostle is that both strong and weak should be growing in grace, in knowledge and in love by exercising themselves in spiritual things.

### "WE ARE NOT TO PLEASE OURSELVES"

The latter part of the text, "And not to please ourselves," carries with it the thought that, although we have made a consecration to the Lord, although we have turned our backs upon sin, nevertheless we have a tendency, a disposition to sin. The disposition of the New Creature, however, is not to sin, but to do that which is right and to build himself up in the "most holy faith." Yet in seeking to build himself up in that "most holy faith" he might allow something of

self-interest to stand first in his mind. But while he should have self-interest prominent in his mind—his own upbuilding—he should remember that, having responsibility in being a member of Christ, he should not wish merely to please himself, but should be willing to forego some of the right and proper things that he might serve others... The spirit of the Apostle's exhortation seems to be that they should look beyond their own preferences, seeking to arrange their own affairs so as to be most helpful to the brethren...

Amongst the different classes of the Lord's people, the classes of Bible students, there is a disposition among those who are more advanced to segregate themselves, to hold themselves aloof from the others. We have endeavored to throw our influence against this disposition. If there are some who have less knowledge let them have the opportunity to learn. If they should bring in good, hard questions, so much the better. We are not merely to please ourselves in respect to time and places of meetings. We might see that some would be desirous of having the meetings in places more difficult of access, but we are not to be selfish or self-seeking, but seek to please the majority of those whose interests are concerned. If this spirit were observed in classes, more progress would be made; and the Lord's people in general are learning this lesson."

R5413 "We are to please our neighbors so far as it would be for their good, and according to right principles. But to upbuild one in injustice would not be right. We should not think it right to let our neighbor's chickens run all over our garden; and we think that he would thus be more edified by our firm stand for right. But we must not tell him how to manage his chickens."

R4928 "*Principles* may never be abandoned for any consideration; but *liberties* and *personal rights* may be ignored in the interest of others frequently and to Divine pleasing. The Apostle Paul was ready to go to any length in defense of principle (Gal. 2:5-11), but in the sacrifice of earthly rights and privileges and liberties for the sake of Christ and the Church, the Apostle evidently came next to our Lord Jesus, and is a noble example to all the Church."

R4478 "SELF-RESTRAINT IN LIBERTY —1 COR. 10:23-33... *Golden Text*:—"Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification."—Rom. 15:2...

### THE PRACTICAL CONCLUSION

Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh forevermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble.—1 Cor. 8:13.

Even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.—1 Cor. 10:33...

The Apostle is not discussing a worldly question, but one applicable to the Church only. However, the same principle may not improperly be applied still more broadly to the world... We have a...responsibility towards those who are not so strong or not so clearly informed as ourselves—a responsibility that we will not wish to pass by if our hearts are in tune with the spirit of Divine love. The Apostle gives us a lesson, saying that we should "do good to all men, especially to them that are of the household of

faith." This thought can be well applied to the last *verse* of our lesson (33), "I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

If every Christian could apply these words of the Apostle truthfully to himself, the effect upon the world would be magical—suddenly energizing. They would see in Christians a renouncement of their own tastes and preferences in the interests of others, a principle which the world could very thoroughly enjoy and very quickly grasp. Should all those now enjoying Present Truth resolve to live henceforth, even in the spiritual affairs of life, up to the standard of the Lord, what an influence it would bring, what an influence would extend from their words, their thoughts, their deeds! Then the Church would become, indeed, a shining light in the world! It is for us to take our stand with the Lord and wait patiently for him to bring to us more than compensating blessings in his own good time and way. The Vow is assisting many to do this. He who does not learn to sacrifice his own will, his own preferences, in the interests of others, will never, we fear, have that preparation of character which the Lord demands of those who shall be joint-heirs with himself in the Kingdom."

R5555 "THE ROYAL LAW OF LOVE" *"We 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 CHILDREN of God each one of us should use care that others are not injured by our liberty in Christ; for this would be condemned by the Law of Love. The Apostle clearly emphasizes this thought in this Epistle to the Church at Rome. He points out that all the Lord's children are not alike "strong in the faith." Some, weak in the faith, can see that Jesus is our Redeemer, but cannot realize as yet the *liberty* which we as sons have in Christ. One realizes that he is at liberty to eat whatever agrees with him; while another, who is weak, eats vegetables only, lest he violate some law under which he thinks himself. Some Christians condemn their brethren who eat meat, seeming to forget that our Lord ate flesh. We should learn to grant each other full liberty of conscience; the stronger should not despise the weaker, nor should the weaker judge others by himself. It should be sufficient for each of us to know that God accepts the others as well as ourselves, and manifests His acceptance by blessing them in His service.

It is the same with reference to observance of days. One esteems one day above another, as the Apostle says; while another esteems every day alike. Let each carry out fully the conviction of his own mind—whatever he believes to be the will of God for himself... He urges growth into the full liberty of Christ, counseling patience and consideration on the part of the stronger for the weaker. He approves the stronger, and plainly states that the brother who thinks himself under bondage regarding the eating of meat, the observance of Sabbath, etc., is the *weak* brother.

### LOVE AND CONSIDERATION FOR THE WEAKER

...Those strong ones who enter fully into

the spirit of the Apostle's statement, "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak," and deny themselves what their consciences permit, have the greater blessing. They can realize in an additional degree that they are following in the Master's steps; "for even Christ pleased not Himself." But if the stronger brethren by sarcasm and influence should try to force the weaker ones to use a liberty which they do not realize, it would be forcing them into sin. Therefore the weaker brethren should be left to the liberty of *their own consciences*. The influences of love and truth alone should be brought to bear upon them, in the hope of gradually educating them to an appreciation of their full privileges as free men in Christ.

Thus the Body of Christ may be full of charity and unity, each member carrying out the convictions of his own mind as to the Lord's will, and each seeking to grow in grace and in knowledge, out of childhood's weakness into manhood's strength, as rapidly as possible, being developed as he feeds upon God's Word.

The Apostle refers especially to the observance of *days* as a lack of development, saying (Galatians 4:10,11), "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am anxious on your behalf, lest my labor for you has been in vain." He here addresses those who had once known the liberty of sons of God, but who were now going again into bondage through false teaching. He recognized in them an evidence that they were not growing into the liberty of sons of God, but going backward toward the servant condition; and he was fearful that this weakness and failure to maintain the liberty of sonship might lead them even to reject the Gospel—that Christ gave Himself for our sins—and accept as a gospel a hopeless substitute—that Christ would save them if they *kept the Law*.

But glorious is the liberty of the sons of God! Let us stand fast in it, as the Lord enables us to grasp it in its fulness, yet at the same time extending sympathy and love to those who have not yet reached the high vantage-ground where they can get a broad, comprehensive view of our blessed standing in Christ. Thus we bear the infirmities of the weak brethren, our companions in the Way, and thus we are in harmony with the Law of Love.

#### THE BEAUTY OF SELF-ABNEGATION

The Apostle appears to be drawing to our attention the thought that *selfishness* is the predominating principle of the world. People are seeking generally to please themselves—often unjustly, sometimes justly, but simply ignoring others. He is pointing out that the Christian is to take a different course. We are enlisted under the banner of Christ, which is the banner of Love. We are to look well to the rules which belong to this new order of things of which we have become members. The followers of Christ, instead of seeking their own selfish interests, are to consider the interests of others. Instead of seeking their own pleasure, they are to seek the pleasure of others, where this will not conflict with their vow of consecration.

This does not mean that the disciples of Christ are to seek their own misery. But they are to give their thought and time to pleasing others rather than themselves. The Apostle tells us that this is the example set

before us by our Leader, our Pattern—"For even Christ pleased not Himself." He was not in the world to seek to do the things pleasing to His own flesh. Quite to the contrary, He renounced His own fleshly interests and gratification for the benefit of mankind. So we covenant to do when we essay to walk in His steps. The denial of self, the taking up of the cross, means the renouncing of self-will and the leading of an unselfish life, in accord with the Divine Pattern and the Divine Plan.

#### OUR BRETHREN OUR NEIGHBORS IN CLOSEST SENSE

With this light upon the Apostle's words, our thought is that the primary meaning of the word *neighbors* as used by St. Paul is, those closest to us. That is to say, in the Church of Christ, our brethren are our neighbors; they are the ones nearest, closest to our hearts. All the children of God are our brethren; they are particularly our neighbors because they are on our own plane. We should especially seek to please these to their edification. This does not mean that we should necessarily please them according to the flesh; for this would, in many cases be quite the reverse of their edification. If we please the brethren rightly, we shall rather "stir up their pure minds," their spiritual minds, to love and faith and zeal, to good works. This implies that the word *please* is used here in a limited sense.

It is not possible for us to please all people. The direction of our energies should be for their good as we have opportunity. Even though they be not saints, we should "provoke" them—rouse them—"to love and good works" as far as possible, and not to *anger or malice or sin* or anything unworthy. We may not always be successful in pleasing people to their edification. There may be times when even the brethren will feel aggrieved rather than pleased at our efforts to serve them. We think, however, that if we *seek* to please them to edification, striving to exercise the spirit of a sound mind, our course will have the Lord's approval and blessing, whether it has the approval of others—even the brethren—or not.

So let every one of us endeavor to "please his neighbor for his good to edification." This matter of neighborhood, the condition of nearness, extends, next to the Church, to our own families. Of course, as relates to earthly obligations and temporal needs our family would have the *first* claim, and would be our neighbors, very near, according to the flesh. We should seek to please them for *their* edification—should seek to do them good, as here suggested. The same principle would extend, as we can readily see, to the butcher, the baker, the ice-man, etc. We are not to please any of these to their injury, or in any way that would not be for their edification. We are not to descend to the world's methods. If they wish to tell stories that are not good, not pure, we are not to join in with them. If we cannot please them by that which is good, we are to avoid unnecessary contact. We are to do good and to edify only.

#### THE WORLD RECOGNIZES THE GOOD

We should endeavor to be as pleasing as possible to all of our neighbors. If we rebuke in a rude way, it would not be pleasing to them, nor would it be likely to edify them. There is a way in which we can give proper reproof even to very worldly peo-

ple. The world has a higher standard morally and religiously than they would be willing to acknowledge. Even if they sneer outwardly, in their hearts they recognize that which is good. We often find people who are impure in their own lives who like the society of the pure. They have some appreciation of the good, even though, being defiled themselves, they are likely to defile whatever they touch.

It would not be proper for us to expect that we can do a great deal of good to worldly people—at least that much fruitage will generally be manifested—at present. Our aim should always be to please as far as possible, as far as loyalty to God and the Truth will permit. We should not be of that "grouchy" sort, always going through the world with a quarrel. Rather we should let our light shine, that they may see our good works, and thus "glorify God in the Day of their visitation." A sweet, kindly spirit is the very best recommendation we can give the world now of the power of the Truth. The Lord's people should be kindly disposed toward all men—in the Church especially, but also toward all with whom we come in contact.

#### SACRIFICE OUR SPECIAL MISSION

...In the Body of Christ the different members have their various inherited weaknesses against which they must wage a life-long warfare; and these weaknesses are sometimes of such a nature as to interfere to some extent with the rights and comforts of others as well as of themselves. And just here the Apostle offers the word of counsel, "We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." This does not imply that we should not expostulate with such a one and endeavor to help him to get rid of his infirmity. This we should do, in the spirit of meekness and kindness, while we humbly endure the trial of our patience. It is his good that we are to seek, not chiefly our own greater enjoyment of physical or mental comfort. We are to please him for *his edification*, not by simply ignoring his fault, as though we considered it right, but, if there be suitable opportunity, by kindly urging him to strive against it, still humbly and patiently submitting to the discomfort it brings to us...

#### LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE!

For such self-sacrificing love how necessary is the spirit of humility, gentleness, patience and faith! The Master's words along this line are very forceful—"Except ye be converted [from the spirit of the world to the Spirit of Christ] and become as little children [in meekness and teachableness], ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." This blessed Law of Christ, the Law of Love, should rule in all who have taken by consecration the name of Christ. Its hallowed influence should radiate from us, not only among the brethren, but also out upon the world, as a powerful witness to the effect of the grace of God in the heart. Thus we shall demonstrate to them that the love of God received into a life brings peace and harmony and happiness; that it makes noble, devoted, faithful husbands; more kind, loyal and tender wives; more obedient, loving children; more kind, good neighbors; and that it pours "oil on the troubled waters" of all our experiences, bringing blessing wherever it reaches."