

October 5

Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. *Hebrews 12:3*

ALAS, how many of God's true children become weary and faint in their minds, and are in danger of losing the chief prize

(Gal 6:9 KJV) "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

(Heb 6:10 KJV) "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

(1Pet 2:19-21 KJV) "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. {20} For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. {21} For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:"

R5095 "CAST NOT AWAY YOUR CONFIDENCE" *"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."*—*Hebrews 10:35*

With very many of God's people, as well as with the world's people, the ideal Christian life is one of constant peace and tranquility. They have never learned that "the peace of God which passeth all [worldly] understanding," promised to the Christian, is to rule in and keep his *heart* (Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15), but does not apply to his outward life. They forget, or perhaps never learned, that our Master's words were, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me ye shall have peace" [in your hearts]. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household?" "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus [in this present world, or dispensation], shall suffer persecution." It is of a wicked class, and not of the saints, that the Prophet declared, "They are *not in trouble as other men.*"—John 16:33; 15:18; Matt. 10:25; 2 Tim. 3:12; Psa. 73:5.

Only to those who have some knowledge of God's great Plan is His dealing with His people understandable and readable. The world marvels that those whom God receives into His family, as sons by redemption and adoption, should be required or even permitted to suffer afflictions. But to the well-instructed saint the Apostle says, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." (1 Pet. 4:12.) And this saint may now clearly discern the object and utility of present trials, afflictions and persecutions. He sees that these are in fullest accord with his high calling, his heavenly calling—to be an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ our Lord, "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."—Rom. 8:17.

But why should a share in the coming glory be made dependent upon present suf-

ferings? We answer, For two reasons: POSITIVE CHARACTER NECESSARY

(1) Severe trials and testings of our love for God and for His Truth, and of our faith in Him and in His promises, are only a wise provision on God's part, in view of the very high honor and responsibility of the great office to which He has called us. If it was proper that our Lord and Redeemer should be tested in all points as to faith and obedience before His exaltation to the excellent glory and power of the divine nature, much more so it is fitting that we, who were once aliens and strangers, far from God, and children of wrath even as others, should be thoroughly tested.

We are not tested as to the perfection of our earthen vessels, for God and we well know that in our fallen flesh dwelleth no perfection; but tested as to our new minds, our *consecrated wills*, whether or not these are fully consecrated to the Lord, firmly established in the love of truth, purity and righteousness in general. We are also tested to see whether we will *compromise* any of the principles of righteousness for worldly favor, selfish ambition, or for any of "the pleasures of sin for a season." Those who *love* righteousness and *hate* iniquity, who develop *positive characters*, these are the "overcomers" who shall, as members of Christ, inherit all things. The undecided, the lukewarm—neither cold nor hot—are far from having the spirit of the Kingdom class, and will surely be rejected—"spewed out."—Rev. 3:16.

LOVE, NOT SELFISHNESS, THE RULING PRINCIPLE

(2) A share in the coming glory is dependent upon present sufferings, for the reason that the coming glories are to be bestowed only upon those who have the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of holiness. And whoever has received this Holy Spirit, or disposition, and has been transformed by the renewing of his mind, or will, so that no longer *selfishness* but *love* shall rule over his thoughts and words and deeds, that person, if in the world at all, could not avoid present suffering. His love for God, his zeal for God's service and people, his faith in God's Word and his uncompromising attitude respecting everything relating to these, would be so greatly in contrast with the prevalent spirit of doubt, selfishness and compromise that he would be thought peculiar, called an extremist and a fanatic, if not a hypocrite.

Evil surmisings, out of hearts not fully consecrated, will attribute every good deed to some selfish or evil motive, and, therefore, "Ye shall be hated of all men for My [Christ's] name's sake"; for "the world knoweth [understandeth] us not, because it knew Him not." (Luke 21:17; 1 John 3:1.) The reason for all this is evident: it is because "the god of this world hath blinded the eyes" of the vast majority of men; because the faithful, who appreciate the Truth,

ciated either. As they would *consider* how the Lord suffered in every sense unjustly and for righteousness' sake, and then would reflect that their own conduct, even though well meant, is imperfect, it would strengthen them to endure hardness as good soldiers, and not to be weary in well doing, and not to faint under opposition. R3313:5

who have new hearts (wills) and the right spirit on these subjects, are but a "little flock."

PRESENT CONDITIONS MOST FAVORABLE FOR OVERCOMING

These conditions will not be changed until the testing of the "little flock" is finished. God will permit evil to be in the ascendancy until that testing, sifting, refining and polishing of the Bride of Christ is fully accomplished. Then Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, and not be permitted to blind and deceive the nations during the Millennial Age of blessing...

Therefore, dear brethren and sisters, let us give heed to the Apostle's words, and not cast away our confidence—confidence in God, in the outworking of His great Plan, and in all who trust in the precious blood and are bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit in their daily lives—meekness, patience, brotherly kindness, love.

CONFIDENCE THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN EFFORT

With some of the Lord's people, however, there is a tendency to become discouraged, to think that they may have been unfaithful and thus to lose their peace of mind. In some instances, this feeling of discouragement leads to such fear and distress that the Second Death is apprehended. The Apostle seems to have in mind this condition. We are surrounded with imperfection of both judgment and conduct; and those who have a proper estimate of themselves must know that they come far short of the Divine standard and of their own vow of consecration. This knowledge should tend to make all very humble, and very generous in considering others, but not to discourage us.

St. Paul exhorts all such, saying, "Cast not away your confidence." Let such remember that the fact that they have received this Divine favor is an indication that their offering has had Divine acceptance. Faith, or confidence, in God and in the "great and precious promises" is the very basis of all Christian endeavor. Without this faith one cannot fight a good fight. In proportion as the promises are before our minds, in that proportion we have strength and courage to run the narrow way.

If a follower of the Lord has been thus discouraged or has felt that his expectations have not been realized, he should not be weary in well doing. He should go to the Lord in prayer and renew his vow of consecration. He should rise from the ashes of discouragement and lift the cross with renewed zeal. He should endeavor to walk on a higher plane than ever. If he lose confidence, lose faith, he will easily be overcome by the Adversary.

The very ones whom God will approve are those who walk by faith. The rewards are for those who hold the faith even unto death. We must beware of everything that tends to weaken or destroy our faith. The Lord deals graciously and generously with

us. He will do for us whatever is right. Knowing this we can have confidence in God, even though the decision of Divine Justice should bar us out of Divine favor. Those whose hearts are right are submissive to the Divine will. The Lord wants us to have a faith that will continue in sorrow and in sunshine; that will trust where it cannot see, that will continue under all the leadings of Divine providence.

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST IN SUFFERING

In Hebrews 10:32-39 the Apostle clearly shows that there are two ways of enduring the afflictions of Christ: (1) to be made a gazing-stock both by afflictions and reproaches, and (2) by avowing our sympathy for the reproached ones and thus sharing their reproaches and afflictions. For if one member suffer, *all the members* of the Body of Christ suffer with it.

"Call to remembrance the former days," and note that your afflictions and trials came principally after you had been illuminated with the light of the knowledge

of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord; and that they have increased as the light of Present Truth has increased with you. It is not difficult to discern the reason for this. The great Adversary is not interested in disturbing those who are "*asleep* in Zion"; but he is ever on the alert to mislead and entangle those who are *awake*. And the more active we become in the service of the Lord and the Truth, and, consequently, the more actively opposed to Satan and error, the more he will fight against us. And the more faithfully and vigorously we fight the good fight, as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the more we shall have of the Master's approval now, and the greater will be our reward in the Kingdom.

INCREASING SEVERITY OF TRIALS

No doubt there are many and more severe trials just before us. From God's standpoint, having been blest with greater light, we should be able to endure greater trials and afflictions. From Satan's standpoint we, as a Gideon's band, armed with the Truth,

are more injurious to his cause than all others combined. The only wonder to us is that he has not assailed us still more fiercely in the *past*. Perhaps he was hindered; perhaps he will be granted yet more liberty to buffet us, as the night draws on. Such is our expectation, based upon the direct statements and the types of Scripture.

But such reflections should bring us no sadness, no fear; for He that is on our part is more than all that be against us. (I John 4:4; Rom. 8:31.) His promises, as well as His providences, are walls of salvation and protection on every hand. What shall separate us from the love of God in Christ? Shall tribulation? No! it shall but cause us to draw closer to Him; and under His protecting care we shall rest. His grace is sufficient for us. His strength is made manifest in our weakness. When we feel weak in ourselves, then we are strong in Him. He will never leave us nor forsake us.

"Watchman, what of the night?" "The morning cometh, and also the night."—Isa. 21:11,12."

R3312 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)

"MY PEOPLE DO NOT CONSIDER"

"Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding."--2 Tim. 2:7.

CONSIDER--reflect, think, study, ponder. Whatever may be said of the heathen religions and of churchianity in respect to their requiring little thought, little study, this is not the case with the religion of the Bible. It is not a religion of credulity-- "shut your eyes and open your mouth," and swallow what is put therein. True, it is a religion of faith;-- but a faith based upon reasonable evidences--a knowledge of God, whose plan and character it reveals. Hence it is that the Scriptures invite the faithful to *consider*, to search, to prove, saying, "Come, let us reason together." And it is worthy of note that all the false systems of religion and churchianity, misnamed Christianity, to a large extent reverse this scriptural order, endeavoring to obtain harmony, union, on a basis of comparative ignorance, rather than on a basis of growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Truth.

As we see this to be true today in nominal spiritual Israel, so we find it was true in olden times in fleshly Israel, to whom the Lord declares,--"The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people *do not consider*." (Isa. 1:3.) We are not to understand the Lord to mean that the Jews had no knowledge of him whose sacrifices and ceremonial law and worship had their daily attention: neither should we be understood to imply that nominal Christians, who in various ways manifest some respect and reverence for the Lord, are wholly ignorant of him. The thought is rather that God's professed people today, as in olden times, while knowing something about their Creator and Redeemer, do not *know him* in the sense of being really acquainted with his character. In many respects they worship a strange God, because they have failed to get rightly, thoroughly, acquainted with him. Such an acquaintance can only be obtained along the line suggested in our text: by giving heed, by *considering*, reflecting, studying the revelation which God has made respecting himself. Not that the Scriptures give us a detailed description of our Creator; but, rather, by revealing to us his plans, they permit us through an understanding of the divine plans to have an understanding of the divine character which those plans exemplify and illustrate. As a man is known by his works, so God is known by his works. Whoever, therefore, would know God-- appreciate the divine character-- must come to such a knowledge through an acquaintance with the divine plan which God is outworking.

Satan, the great adversary, seems to understand this matter thoroughly, and employs his arts of deception to hinder men from appreciating the divine plan, and thus to hinder an appreciation of the divine character --to prevent a real knowledge of God. He has been successful, marvelously so, as the Apostle declares, along these lines. The God of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not,--lest the glorious light of the goodness of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, should shine into their hearts. (2 Cor. 4:4,6.) It is impossible for him to hinder all knowledge and all

appreciation of the Creator, because the quality of reverence is deeply engraven in the natural man who, though fallen and deranged, nevertheless instinctively looks for a God to worship. Satan's work, therefore, is and has been the blinding and deceiving men,-- many of whom, as the Apostle declares, are feeling after God, if haply they might find him.--Acts 17:27.

The adversary's success in blinding mankind would not be so easily accomplished were it not that he persuades men not to reason upon religious subjects;--that upon every other subject than religion, thought, consideration, reasoning, are advisable, but that on religious subjects, credulity, mistaken for faith, is the safe, the wise, the acceptable course. So great has been his success that we find not only the heathen world in ignorance, and superstitious upon religious matters, but that the same principles, in a lighter form, prevail in Christendom --not only amongst Catholics but also amongst Protestants. The remedy for this general evil must be sought and found by all who would be saints, overcomers, --every one of whom must know the Lord not merely theoretically but actually, through a knowledge of his character by a knowledge of his plan.

Let us note how the Scriptures urge God's people to *consider*. They are to consider the natural things of the Lord's provision, as they touch with these in the course of human life, and are to read in them certain great lessons respecting the Creator. For instance, notice our Lord's statements, "*Consider* the lilies of the field." (Matt. 6:28.) "*Consider* the ravens." (Luke 12:24.) ⁽¹⁾Our Lord calls attention to how such simple things in nature should be studied, be *considered*. The lessons to be learned in connection with all the affairs of life will be helpful to such as approach the study from the right standpoint, of faith in the Creator, and a realization that he is necessarily the embodiment and representative of the very highest and very noblest qualities of which the human mind could conceive;-- that he is perfect in Justice, perfect in Wisdom, perfect in Power, perfect in Love. From this standpoint of faith we can learn a great lesson from *considering* the lilies. Their beauty teaches us that the Lord has a keen appreciation of the beautiful, and the fact that it comes to them without their toiling or spinning, teaches us that God is abundantly able to produce the beautiful without our aid, and that if necessary he could likewise clothe us miraculously. It teaches, further, that since he has not thus made provision for our necessities, it must be because he has seen (as the Word declares) that the experiences of life in the development of the resources of nature, in providing for our own needs, will be helpful to us.

As we *consider* the ravens and sparrows, and note how the Lord has made provision for their necessities without barns for the winter time, it teaches us that his power and wisdom could similarly, if necessary, provide for the necessities of his people, miraculously

⁽¹⁾ 1/2 Oct. 12 Manna, Mat. 6:28

or otherwise; and that in leaving humanity more subject to the vicissitudes of life than the little birds, the Lord doubtless intends thus to instruct mankind and to develop its reasoning faculties in respect to life's interests and necessary provisions, and in a manner that will be more helpful to him, better calculated for his development than would such a provision as is made for the dumb brutes. Faith can learn in all the affairs of life lessons of divine wisdom, and may assure itself reasonably, in harmony with the Lord's suggestion, that human beings are much more valuable than many sparrows, many ravens, many lilies, in God's sight; and that we may therefore more reasonably trust to his goodness and his interest in human affairs.

Thus *considering*, and looking through the little affairs of life, and noting the divine character as revealed in them, the mind is prepared for the still greater revelation of God's goodness set forth in his Word, which assures of his sympathy for humanity in its fallen condition, and of his willingness to assist in man's recovery from sin and death along lines in harmony with justice and love. *Considering*, from this standpoint, the love of God revealed through his Son Jesus commends itself at once to our hearts as being in full accord with what we find to be his general character--justice, wisdom, love.^[2] The heart that thus *considers* makes progress, grows in grace, in knowledge, in love. The heart that fails to *consider* the little things fails to be able to appreciate the larger things, and thus is hindered from a proper consideration of God and from a proper appreciation of his plan, and thus from a proper appreciation of his character.

It is David, the prophet, who exclaims, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers!" (Psalm 8:3.) To the Prophet, whose mind was rightly directed and who *considered* these things, "day unto day uttered speech and night unto night showed forth knowledge;" and as a result King David--before the Gospel dispensation, before the giving of the holy Spirit of adoption, before the coming of the inestimable blessings which are ours today--gained a large appreciation of his Creator, which became to him an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. The large conception of the divine character gained from the consideration of the divine work, even as seen in nature, brought the prophet-king near to God, in humility, in veneration, in love.

But if such a consideration of the heavens and the things of nature are profitable and helpful, how much more profitable is the consideration of the still higher things revealed to the Gospel Church through the holy Spirit since Pentecost. The Apostle Paul calls our attention in this direction saying, "*Consider* the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Heb. 3:1.) But how few of those who read the Scriptures have ever followed the Apostle's suggestion? how few have ever *considered* Jesus from the standpoint suggested, --as the Church's Apostle or special teacher sent of God to specially guide and instruct the Church, and as the church's High Priest to whom the faithful occupy the relationship of under priests? Had more *consideration* been given by the Lord's people to these matters, a larger number would undoubtedly be much farther advanced than they are today, in the knowledge and love of God. They would have seen that if Christ is a special teacher, a special High Priest of the Church, and the Church his special pupils, brethren and under priests, then there must be, according to the Scriptures, at some future time, a still greater blessing in which both High Priests and under priests will be the agents of God in blessing all the families of the earth.

[2] 1/2 Oct. 12 Manna

R4802 "CONSIDER HIM LEST YE BE WEARIED" "*Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*"

TO "CONSIDER HIM" seems to be to take note of, to have in mind, to reflect upon and not to easily forget how our Lord endured various trials and oppositions of sinners against himself. In our own experiences we have, as the Lord's followers, endured some opposition of sin and sinners against ourselves; but we have not yet resisted unto blood. We have not yet passed through the trying experiences through which he passed. When we remember that while we are poor, imperfect creatures like our neighbors, he was "holy, harmless, undefiled," then it is good to reflect that he endured patiently the

opposition of sinners. When trying experiences came to him, he did not consider them as being merely from the individual with whom they originated, but as being, on the other hand, under the supervision of the Father. If, therefore, the Father permitted such experiences to come to him, he was bound to prove his loyalty by patient endurance. As he said, "*The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*"--John 18:11.

So it is with us, Spiritual Israel, "*The Lord your God proveth you.*" (Deut. 13:3.) In proportion as we are able to take our Lord's viewpoint in our experiences in life, we may be calm. If the Father permits trying experiences for our testing, or for the testing or proving of others, in ways we may not understand, it is for us to rejoice to have his

Again the Apostle speaks of the high spiritual things which we are to *consider*, after we have taken our first lessons in considering the natural things, the lilies, ravens, heavens, etc., saying, "*Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*" (Heb. 12:3.)^[3] Alas, how many of God's true children become weary and faint in their minds, and are in danger of losing the chief prize because they have failed to think upon, to study out, to comprehend, to *consider* the Lord and what he faithfully endured of opposition. As they would *consider* his perfection and how, as represented in him, the light shined in darkness and was not appreciated, so they would expect that the light shining from them would not be appreciated either.--(John 1:5.) As they would *consider* how the Lord suffered in every sense unjustly and for righteousness' sake, and then would reflect that their own conduct, even though well meant, is imperfect, it would strengthen them to endure hardness as good soldiers, and not to be weary in well doing, and not to faint under opposition. It would enable them to realize what the Scriptures plainly declare, namely, that experiences and testings are necessary to the Lord's people and if rightly received these all work out everlasting blessings.

Such consideration of the Lord and what he endured and the reflection and realization of their own imperfections while seeking to walk in his footsteps, would tend to bring them not only to appreciation of the Lord's sympathy for his people and his grace toward them in covering from his sight their unwilling imperfections, but additionally, this consideration would lead to sympathy for their fellows in the narrow way. The Apostle intimates the propriety of such reflections, saying, "Consider one another to provoke [incite, inspire] unto love and good works."--(Heb. 10:24.) Oh, how much the Lord's people need to remember this injunction, if they would have proper forbearance and love one toward another,--to consider one another's sacrifice, to think of each other's imperfections, peculiarities or good qualities, as the case may be. With the Christian brother consideration always means to think kindly, charitably, even of the blemishes which love cannot hide. These blemishes are not to be considered lest they sour our hearts and arouse in our minds an opposition to one another; nor are they to be considered as an excuse for gossip or slander. The Apostle explains that we are to consider one another with a view to ascertaining how we can be most helpful to each other in the narrow way, most edifying, most strengthening, most inspiring.

But now another matter: Looking back to our text we find that the Apostle has united in it two thoughts: first, the necessity of considering; second, the necessity of having divine assistance in order to the reaching of a right understanding. "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding."

The natural man may assent to a great deal of what we have here written; yet in some particulars it will be beyond his grasp. It is only for those who approach the study of the divine will from the right direction-- only for those who *consider* from the standpoint of the school of Christ, learning of him--only such have the divine assistance which the Apostle mentions, the understanding which comes from the Lord. It requires faith in God and his Word in order to be able to rightly appreciate either the natural or the spiritual things which are ours, and to feed thereon in our hearts and to grow strong thereby in our characters.

[3] Oct. 5 Manna, Heb. 12:3

will done. The poet has beautifully expressed this thought when he says:--

"My times are in thy hands,
My God, I wish them there."

If we faithfully endure to the end, the reward will be ours. If we prove our loyalty and *keep our faith that God is supervising our affairs*, and that no good thing will be withheld from those who are walking uprightly, we shall some day hear his "Well done, good and faithful servant."

We know that our Lord endured *physical* opposition. But our English word "*contradiction*" properly translates the original, implying *verbal contradiction of his words*. As we consider our Lord's case, we see that the people opposed him, not physically, but *in his words, his teachings*. It was left for the high priest and Sanhedrin and soldiers to

do him *physical* violence and put him to death; and he could have resisted them if he had so chosen.

"WHEN HE WAS REVILED, HE REVILED NOT AGAIN"

The Apostle, therefore, seems to refer to the contradiction of his words. This is implied by St. Peter, who says, "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." (I Pet. 2:23.) So when we consider the three and a half years of Christ's ministry, we find that his doctrines were disputed, and that he was slandered. The Jews said that he had a demon; that he performed his miracles by the Prince of demons; that he was a blasphemer. These contradictions and oppositions on their part might have called out from him some very just, truthful statements, respecting them. He might have given them as good as he got, and better. He might have told them that the *Devil* was working with *them*, etc. His perfect power of language would have given him ability to more than cope with them. When they thought to entrap him in his *words*, he entrapped them in *their words*. But he reviled not. He did not render evil for evil, nor railing for railing. This, the Apostle shows, is the proper course.

But in the daily affairs of life, when people say all manner of evil against us, when they revile us, it is natural to the fallen flesh to think of something evil to say in return. Thus these things become tests upon us. If we yield to such a spirit, we are following the course of the enemy and not that of the Lord. "*Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds*" when attacked by the Adversary--whoever may be his agents and whatever may be their missiles. He cannot harm but will only increase our reputation in the Lords' sight, if we *endure faithfully*; and he can do no outward harm that God cannot overrule for the *good* of his cause--though that *good* may mean "siftings" of "chaff" and "tares" from the "wheat."

Evil speaking, backbiting and slandering are *strictly forbidden* to God's people as *wholly contrary* to his spirit of *love*, even if *the evil thing be true*. As a preventive of anything in the nature of slander, the Scriptures very carefully mark out *only one way of redress of grievances*. --Matt. 18:15-17.

PROFESSED CHRISTIANS OFTEN WORST SCANDALMONGERS

Many, among even advanced Christians, seem to be *utterly in ignorance of this Divine ruling*, and hence professed Christians are often the most pronounced scandalmongers. Yet this is one of the few *special, specific commandments* given by our Lord; and considered in connection with the statement, "Ye are my *friends*, if ye do whatsoever I command you," the constant violation of this, our Lord's command, proves that many are not far advanced in friendship--discipleship.

Let us look carefully at this rule, which if followed would prevent gossip, "evil speaking," "backbiting." See, as above cited, Matt. 18:15-17. Its first provision, for a conference between the principals *alone*, implies candor on the part of the accuser, who thinks that he has suffered. It also implies his thinking no evil of the accused. They meet as "brethren," each thinking *his own course* the *right one*, to discuss the

matter; to see whether they can come to the same view. If they agree, all is well; the matter is settled; peace prevails; the threatened break has been averted, and no one is the wiser. In the great majority of cases, a frank, open discussion between the principals will bring about harmony. But both must be equally candid and governed by the Spirit of the Lord.

Thus did our Lord guard his true disciples from the insidious sin of slander, which leads onward to other and grosser works of the flesh and the Devil, and stops growth in the Truth and its spirit of love. Let us also note that those who *hear* slanders and thus encourage slanderers in their course of wrongdoing, are *partakers of their evil deeds*; guilty partners in the violation of the Master's commands. God's true people should refuse to listen to slanders and should point the offender to the Lord's Word and the only method therein authorized. Are we wiser than God? Experience teaches that we cannot trust to our own judgments and are on safe ground only when following the voice of the Shepherd implicitly...

Be pure: maintain a conscience void of offense toward God and men. Begin with the heart; harbor no thoughts that in any sense of the word would be evil. To make sure of this, have Christ Jesus as your pattern, well and much before your mind. When evil is obtruded upon you, either from without or from within, lift up your heart in prayer to him for the grace promised in every time of need. Keep constantly before you the prayer, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer."--Psa. 19:14.

LET US CULTIVATE APPRECIATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF DIVINE LAW

While seeking to follow the various specific commands of Scripture, let us seek more and more to understand and come in sympathy with the *principles which underlie* the Divine Law. These will enable us to judge of the right and the wrong of such of our words, thoughts and acts as may not be particularly specified in the Lord's Word. Indeed, as we come to understand and sympathize with the principles of Divine Law, to that extent we are getting the spirit of the Divine Word. Note the testimony of the Psalmist on this point, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou, *through thy commandments*, hast made me wiser than mine enemies, *for they are ever with me*. I have more understanding than all my teachers, *for thy testimonies are my meditation*. I understand more than the ancients, *because I keep thy precepts*. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, *that I might keep thy Word*..."--Psa. 119:97-105.

Shun a contentious and fault-finding disposition as contrary to the spirit, or disposition of Christ--contrary to *love*. A certain amount of combative courage is demanded in overcoming the world, the flesh and the Devil and their various snares. This fighting disposition may become a valuable aid to ourselves and to the Master's cause if rightly and wisely directed against sin, *first in ourselves and secondly* in others; if used for the Lord and his people and against Satan and all his powers of darkness and superstition. This, in the Scriptures, is called fighting the *good fight*, and we all should be

gallant soldiers in this battle for Right and Truth, lovingly defending our Captain's honor and his people's liberties.

THE POWERS OF EVIL WOULD MAKE COMBATIVENESS A CHIEF VIRTUE

But such a good use of combativeness is not pleasing to the Prince of this world, who will seek to *pervert* what he cannot directly *use*. Consequently, he attempts with some to make combativeness a chief virtue. He encourages them to fight everything and everybody; the brethren, more than the powers of darkness; nominal churchmen, more than the errors and ignorance which blind them and make them such. Indeed, his desire is to get us to "fight against God."...

Greater is "He that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32.) Let us guard ourselves that our defense of the Truth be, not from motives of self-glorification, but from love for the Truth, love for the Lord, for his people, the brethren. If *love* be the impelling spirit, or motive, it will show itself accordingly in a loving, gentle, patient, humble course toward all the fellow-servants. Let us be "gentle toward all." Let "the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God," which is quick and powerful, do all the *cutting*.

Beware of all thoughts, feelings and conditions of heart directly or remotely connected with malice, envy, hatred, strife. Give these no place in your heart even for a moment; for they will surely do *you* great injury...

DO NOT TRUST TO CONSCIENCE ALONE

If conscience were a *sufficient* guide you would have no need of the Scriptures. The majority of people have as good as no conscience; for they are blind to the principles and laws of God given to *guide* conscience; and still worse off than these are those mentioned in I Tim. 4:2. Hence the imperative necessity for carefully heeding the Lord's Word, and *walking circumspectly* according to its light.

We are not to faint in our minds nor become discouraged, feeling that so much has been said against us that we must give up the race. On the contrary, we are to feel assured like our Lord, that nothing can befall us except with the knowledge of the Father, who is working all things for our good. It was thus our Lord was prepared for his exaltation. So we, if we are rightly exercised by our various experiences and follow as closely as possible the commands laid down for our guidance, will find that even revilings, slanders, oppositions to righteousness, will work out blessings for us, as they did for our Lord.

But how many become weary and are in danger of losing the prize because they fail to consider what *the Lord* faithfully endured of opposition! If such would consider that the Lord, who was *perfect*, suffered in every sense *unjustly* for righteousness' sake, and that their own conduct is *imperfect*, they would not be weary in well doing, but would learn to fight and to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ"; they would continue to "fight the good fight of faith." "*We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we [the Church] are, yet without sin.*"--Heb. 4:15."