

Lesson 13

“Let Brotherly Love Continue”

Sabbath Afternoon, March 19

Christ was to identify Himself with the interests and needs of humanity. He who was one with God has linked Himself with the children of men by ties that are never to be broken. Jesus is “not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11); He is our Sacrifice, our Advocate, our Brother, bearing our human form before the Father’s throne, and through eternal ages one with the race He has redeemed—the Son of man. And all this that man might be uplifted from the ruin and degradation of sin that he might reflect the love of God and share the joy of holiness. ...

Such love is without a parallel. Children of the heavenly King! Precious promise! Theme for the most profound meditation! The matchless love of God for a world that did not love Him! The thought has a subduing power upon the soul and brings the mind into captivity to the will of God. The more we study the divine character in the light of the cross, the more we see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice, and the more clearly we discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite and a tender pity surpassing a mother’s yearning sympathy for her wayward child.

—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 14, 15.

We call God our Father; we claim to be children of one family, and when there is a disposition to lessen the respect and influence of another to build up ourselves, we please the enemy and grieve Him whom we profess to follow. The tenderness and mercy that Jesus has revealed in His own precious life should be an example to us of the manner in which we should treat our fellow beings and especially those who are our brethren in Christ.

God is continually benefiting us, but we are too indifferent to His favors. We have been loved with an infinite tenderness, and yet many of us have little love for one another. We are too severe upon those we suppose to be in error, and are very sensitive to the least blame or question in regard to our own course. ...

... We are daily recipients of the bounties of heaven and should have loving gratitude springing up in our hearts to God, which should cause us to sympathize with our neighbors and make their interests our own. Thoughts and meditations upon the goodness of God to us would close the avenues of the soul to Satan’s suggestions.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 222.

The union between Christ and His people is to be living, true, and unending, resembling the union that exists between the Father and the Son. This union is the fruit of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. All true children of God will reveal to the world their union with Christ and with their brethren. Those in whose hearts Christ abides will bear the fruit of brotherly love. They will realize that as members of God’s family they are pledged to cultivate, cherish, and perpetuate Christian love and fellowship, in spirit, words, and action.

—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 293.

Sunday, March 20: Caring for God's People

God conferred great honor upon Abraham. Angels of heaven walked and talked with him as friend with friend. When judgments were about to be visited upon Sodom, the fact was not hidden from him, and he became an intercessor with God for sinners. His interview with the angels presents also a beautiful example of hospitality.

In the hot summer noontide the patriarch was sitting in his tent door, looking out over the quiet landscape, when he saw in the distance three travelers approaching. ... He hastened after them, and with the utmost courtesy urged them to honor him by tarrying for refreshment. With his own hands he brought water that they might wash the dust of travel from their feet. He himself selected their food, and while they were at rest under the cooling shade, an entertainment was made ready, and he stood respectfully beside them while they partook of his hospitality. This act of courtesy God regarded of sufficient importance to record in His word; and a thousand years later it was referred to by an inspired apostle: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Hebrews 13:2.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 138.

There are many others to whom we might make our homes a blessing. Our social entertainments should not be governed by the dictates of worldly custom, but by the Spirit of Christ and the teaching of His word. The Israelites, in all their festivities, included the poor, the stranger, and the Levite, who was both the assistant of the priest in the sanctuary, and a religious teacher and missionary. These were regarded as the guests of the people, to share their hospitality on all occasions of social and religious rejoicing, and to be tenderly cared for in sickness or in need. It is such as these whom we should make welcome to our homes. How much such a welcome might do to cheer and encourage the missionary nurse or the teacher, the care-burdened, hard-working mother, or the feeble and aged, so often without a home, and struggling with poverty and many discouragements.

—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 352, 353.

Think it not lowering to your dignity to minister to suffering humanity. Look not with indifference and contempt upon those who have laid the temple of the soul in ruins. These are objects of divine compassion. He who created all, cares for all. Even those who have fallen the lowest are not beyond the reach of His love and pity. If we are truly His disciples, we shall manifest the same spirit. The love that is inspired by our love for Jesus will see in every soul, rich or poor, a value that cannot be measured by human estimate. Let your life reveal a love that is higher than you can possibly express in words.

Often the hearts of men will harden under rebuke, but they cannot withstand the love expressed toward them in Christ. ... Let your message be: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 279.

Monday, March 21: Covetousness and Sexual Immorality

Although made in the image of God, man has, through intemperance, violated principle and God's law in his physical nature. Intemperance of any kind benumbs the perceptive organs and so weakens the brain-nerve power that eternal things are not appreciated, but placed upon a level with the common. The higher powers of the mind, designed for elevated purposes, are brought into slavery to the baser passions. If our physical habits are not right, our mental and moral powers cannot be strong; for great sympathy exists between the physical and the moral. The apostle Peter understood this and raised his voice of warning to his brethren: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

There is but little moral power in the professed Christian world. Wrong habits have been indulged, and physical and moral laws have been disregarded, until the general standard of virtue and piety is exceedingly low. Habits which lower the standard of physical health enfeeble mental and moral strength. The indulgence of unnatural appetites and passions has a controlling influence upon the nerves of the brain. The animal organs are strengthened, while the moral are depressed. It is impossible for an intemperate man to be a Christian, for his higher powers are brought into slavery to the passions.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 50, 51.

Those who have the Lord's talents of means are placed under a heavy responsibility. They are not to invest money merely for the gratification of selfish desires, for whatever is spent in this way is just that much kept from the Lord's treasury. Through the sovereign goodness of God, the Holy Spirit works through the human agent, and causes him to make smaller or larger investments in the cause of God, to make them redound to the glory of God.

Whenever you think of using the Lord's money for your own selfish gratification, remember that there are many who are in deep poverty who cannot purchase either food or clothing, and [that] they are God's heritage. We are to do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. If those who have abundant means are God's agents in dealing in truth, they will use their treasures wisely, so that none of the household of faith need to go hungry or naked.

—*The Upward Look*, p. 29.

The deepest and truest philosophy of life and faith is to bring ourselves into the most intimate relation with God. ...

Keep fast hold on Jesus. ... Keep your soul in the love of God whatever may betide, and you will grow spiritually strong. Jesus is your loving friend, He will take your hand and help you over every hard and trying place. A grateful, trustful, habitual recognition of God lies at the very foundation of all right conduct, all true character. You must never lose confidence in God.

—Letter 22, September 19, 1886.

Tuesday, March 22: Remember Your Leaders

The higher the position a man occupies, the greater the responsibility that he has to bear, the wider will be the influence that he exerts and the greater his need of dependence on God. Ever should he remember that with the call to work comes the call to walk circumspectly before his fellow men. He is to stand before God in the attitude of a learner. Position does not give holiness of character. It is by honoring God and obeying His commands that a man is made truly great. ...

The path of men who are placed as leaders is not an easy one. But they are to see in every difficulty a call to prayer. Never are they to fail of consulting the great Source of all wisdom. Strengthened and enlightened by the Master Worker, they will be enabled to stand firm against unholy influences and to discern right from wrong, good from evil. They will approve that which God approves, and will strive earnestly against the introduction of wrong principles into His cause.

—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 30, 31.

Peter had been restored to his apostleship, but the honor and authority he received from Christ had not given him supremacy over his brethren. ... Peter was not honored as the head of the church. The favor which Christ had shown him in forgiving his apostasy, and entrusting him with the feeding of the flock, and Peter's own faithfulness in following Christ, won for him the confidence of his brethren. He had much influence in the church. But the lesson which Christ had taught him by the Sea of Galilee Peter carried with him throughout his life.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 817.

God wants us to do much more praying and much less talking. The threshold of heaven is flooded with the light of His glory, and He will let this light shine into the heart of everyone who will stand in right relation to Him.

...

Do not criticize those who carry the burdens of responsibility. Let not the conversation in your homes be poisoned with criticism of the Lord's workers. Parents who indulge this criticizing spirit are not bringing before their children that which will make them wise unto salvation. Their words tend to unsettle the faith and confidence not only of the children, but of those older in years. All have little enough of respect and reverence for sacred things. Satan will unite most zealously with the criticizer in fostering unbelief, envy, jealousy, and disrespect. Satan is always at work to imbue men with his spirit, to quench the love which should be sacredly cherished between brethren, to discourage confidence, to excite envy, evil surmisings, and the strife of tongues. Let us not be found acting as his co-workers.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, pp. 183, 184.

Wednesday, March 23: Beware of Diverse and Strange Teachings

Penances, mortifications of the flesh, constant confession of sin, without sincere repentance; fasts, festivals, and outward observances, unaccompanied by true devotion—all these are of no value whatever. The sacrifice of Christ is sufficient; He made a whole, efficacious offering to God; and human effort without the merit of Christ, is worthless. We not only dishonor God by taking this course but we destroy our present and future usefulness. A failure to appreciate the value of the offering of Christ, has a debasing influence; it blights our expectations, and makes us fall short of our privileges; it leads us to receive unsound and perilous theories concerning the salvation that has been purchased for us at infinite cost. The plan of salvation is not understood to be that through which divine power is brought to man in order that his human effort may be wholly successful.

—Selected Messages, book 3, p. 190.

“A new heart also will I give you.” Christ must dwell in your hearts, as the blood is in the body, and circulate there as a vitalizing power. On this subject we cannot be too urgent. While truth must be our panoply, our convictions need to be strengthened by the living sympathies that characterized the life of Christ. If the truth, living truth, is not exemplified in the character, no man can stand. There is only one power that can either make us steadfast or keep us so—the grace of God, in truth. He who confides in aught else is already tottering, ready to fall.

The Lord desires you to rely on Him. Make the most of every opportunity to come to the light. If you remain apart from the holy influences that come from God, how can you discern spiritual things?

—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 189.

Come to Jesus, and receive rest and peace. You may have the blessing even now. Satan suggests that you are helpless, and cannot bless yourself. It is true; you are helpless. But lift up Jesus before him: “I have a risen Saviour. In Him I trust, and He will never suffer me to be confounded. In His name I triumph. He is my righteousness, and my crown of rejoicing.” Let no one here feel that his case is hopeless; for it is not. You may see that you are sinful and undone; but it is just on this account that you need a Saviour. If you have sins to confess, lose no time. These moments are golden. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled; for Jesus has promised it. Precious Saviour! His arms are open to receive us, and His great heart of love is waiting to bless us.

—Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 352, 353.

Thursday, March 24: Go to Jesus Outside the Camp

The light that shines forth from the life of the true Christian testifies to his union with Christ. Self is hidden from view, and Christ is revealed. ... “Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). Then those whose lives have been hidden with Christ, those who on this earth have fought the good fight of faith, will shine forth with the Redeemer’s glory in the kingdom of God.

... God’s purpose for you is that you shall live a life that will make others better—a life which will show that Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. It is His purpose that you shall be able to say with the apostle Paul, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20).

—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 107.

As I looked in the faces of the tried ones who are precious in the sight of the Lord, and saw that some of them seemed almost ready to lay off their armor, ... the question arose in my mind: Who are coming up to take the places of these aged, worn soldiers of the cross? Who will consecrate themselves to the work of God? ... Where are those who have the knowledge of the truth, and who love Jesus and the souls for whom He died well enough to deny self, to choose the suffering part of religion, and to go without the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ? ...

... Brethren and sisters, let the earnest prayer of faith ascend to God that He will raise up laborers, and send them into the harvest field; for the harvest is great, and the laborers are few.

—*Life Sketches*, pp. 276, 277.

“The Lord is coming,” should be the testimony borne, not only by the lips, but by the life and character; but many to whom God has given light and knowledge, talents of influence and means, are men who do not love the truth and do not practice it. They have drunk so deeply from the intoxicating cup of selfishness and worldliness that they have become drunken with the cares of this life. Brethren, if you continue to be as idle, as worldly, as selfish as you have been, God will surely pass you by, and take those who are less self-caring, less ambitious for worldly honor, and who will not hesitate to go, as did their Master, without the camp, bearing the reproach. The work will be given to those who will take it, those who prize it, who weave its principles into their everyday experience. God will choose humble men who are seeking to glorify His name and advance His cause rather than to honor and advance themselves. He will raise up men who have not so much worldly wisdom, but who are connected with Him, and who will seek strength and counsel from above.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 461.

Friday, March 25: For Further Reading

Sons and Daughters of God, “All Nations Are Gathered in Judgment,” p. 361;

Lift Him Up, “Surrender to Christ,” p. 245.