

CGL08 Chain Reference

Persecution Unselfish Love (PUL)

2 Peter 1:7

Matthew 5:12

Jeremiah 4:31

Psalms 9:12 (Take care to read multiple translations)

Hebrews 12:1-4

Proverbs 3:1-7

Psalms 94:1, 2

Luke 9:51-56

2 Kings 1:9-15

Psalms 99:8

Exodus 17:3, 4

Numbers 14:6, 10

1 Samuel 30:4, 6

Daniel 3:16-18

Mark 6:16-20

Isaiah 53:7-11

Isaiah 59:14, 15

1 Corinthians 4:5

Deuteronomy 32:35, 39-41, 43

Matthew 10:21-28

Proverbs 25:21, 22

Matthew 5:43-45

2 Timothy 3:12, 13

1 Peter 4:12, 13

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God has ordained that in order to grow in grace and in a knowledge of Christ, men must follow His example and work as He worked. It will often require a struggle to control our own feelings and to refrain from speaking in a manner to discourage those who are laboring under temptation. A life of daily prayer and praise, a life which will shed light upon the path of others, cannot be maintained without earnest effort. But such effort will yield precious fruit, blessing not only the receiver, but the giver. The spirit of unselfish labor for others gives depth, stability, and Christlike loveliness to the character and brings peace and happiness to its possessor. The aspirations are elevated. There is no room for sloth or selfishness. Those who exercise the Christian graces will grow. They will have spiritual sinew and muscle, and will be strong to work for God. They will have clear spiritual perceptions, a steady, increasing faith, and prevailing power in prayer. Those who are watching for souls, who devote themselves most fully to the salvation of the erring, are most surely working out their own salvation. Vol. 5, Testimonies for the Church, 606.

Jesus did not contend for His rights. Often His work was made unnecessarily severe because He was willing and uncomplaining. Yet He did not fail nor become discouraged. He lived above these difficulties, as if in the light of God's countenance. He did not retaliate when roughly used, but bore insult patiently. Desire of Ages, 89.

Christ is the example for all Christians. When they are tempted, or their rights are disputed, they should bear it patiently. They should not feel that they have a right to call upon the Lord to display His power that they may obtain a victory over their enemies, unless God can be directly honored and glorified thereby. Early Writings, 156.

The mysterious providence which permits the righteous to suffer persecution at the hand of the wicked has been a cause of great perplexity to many who are weak in faith. Some are even ready to cast away their confidence in God because He suffers the basest of men to prosper, while the

best and purest are afflicted and tormented by their cruel power. How, it is asked, can One who is just and merciful, and who is also infinite in power, tolerate such injustice and oppression? This is a question with which we have nothing to do. God has given us sufficient evidence of His love, and we are not to doubt His goodness because we cannot understand the workings of His providence. Said the Saviour to His disciples, foreseeing the doubts that would press upon their souls in days of trial and darkness: “Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” John 15:20. Jesus suffered for us more than any of His followers can be made to suffer through the cruelty of wicked men. Those who are called to endure torture and martyrdom are but following in the steps of God’s dear Son. Great Controversy, 47.

The Lord Jesus demands our acknowledgment of the rights of every man. Men’s social rights, and their rights as Christians, are to be taken into consideration. All are to be treated with refinement and delicacy, as the sons and daughters of God.

Christianity will make a man a gentleman. Christ was courteous, even to His persecutors; and His true followers will manifest the same spirit. Look at Paul when brought before rulers. His speech before Agrippa is an illustration of true courtesy as well as persuasive eloquence. The gospel does not encourage the formal politeness current with the world, but the courtesy that springs from real kindness of heart.

The most careful attention to the outward proprieties of life is not sufficient to shut out all fretfulness, harsh judgment, and unbecoming speech. True refinement will never be revealed so long as self is considered as the supreme object. Love must dwell in the heart. A thoroughgoing Christian draws his motives of action from his deep heart-love for his Master. Up through the roots of his affection for Christ springs an unselfish interest in his brethren. Love imparts to its possessor grace, propriety, and comeliness of deportment. It illuminates the countenance and subdues the voice; it refines and elevates the entire being. Gospel Workers, 123.

There is still, as with ancient Israel, a constant tendency among the professed people of God to depart from the Lord’s instructions, and to imitate the customs and practices of worldlings. The people of the world have given themselves to the service of Satan; and their hearts are opposed to the religion of Jesus Christ. They may profess to acknowledge him as their Redeemer, but they have the same hostility as did the heathen of old, to that religion which calls for self-denial and self-sacrifice. The spirit of the world today is the same that prompted the rejection and crucifixion of the Prince of Life; the same that has consigned his followers to imprisonment, exile, and death. The Christianity which will yield to the influence of the world, and conform itself to their principles and customs, is looked upon with favor by men who are the enemies of God. But when the necessity for holiness of heart and life is presented, then the world feels that its rights are endangered. When the church rebukes fashionable follies, demoralizing amusements, extravagance, and self-indulgence; when Christianity is spiritual, positive, earnest, and aggressive,—then the opposition of the world will be excited. Signs of the Times, September 15, 1881.

As the work of God's people moves forward with sanctified resistless energy, planting the standard of Christ's righteousness in the church, moved by a power from the throne of God, the great controversy will wax stronger and stronger, and will become more and more determined. Mind will be arrayed against mind, plans against plans, principles of heavenly origin against the principles of Satan. Truth in its varied phases will be in conflict with error in its ever-varying, increasing forms, and which will, if possible deceive the very elect.

Our work must be an earnest one. We are not to fight as those who beat the air. The ministry, the pulpit, and the press demand men like Caleb, who will do and dare, men whose eyes are single to detect the truth from error, whose ears are consecrated to catch the words from the faithful Watcher. And the Spirit from the throne of God will make itself felt upon a degenerate Christianity, a corrupt world, ready to be consumed by the long-deferred judgments of an offended God.

There is danger now of men losing sight of the important truths applicable for this period of time, and seeking for those things that are new, strange, and entrancing. Many, if reproved by the Spirit of God through His appointed agencies, refuse to receive correction, and a root of bitterness is planted in their own hearts against the Lord's servants who carry heavy, disagreeable burdens. There are men who teach the truth, but who are not perfecting their ways before God, who are trying to conceal their defections, and encourage an estrangement from God. They have not the moral courage to do the things that it is for their special benefit to do. They see no necessity for reform, and so they reject the words of the Lord, and hate Him who reproveth at the gate.

This very refusal to heed the admonitions which the Lord sends gives Satan every advantage to make of them the bitterest enemies of those who have told them the truth. They become falsifiers of those who have borne to them the message of the Lord.

The man who rejects the Word of the Lord, who endeavors to establish his own way and will, tears to pieces the messenger and message which God sends in order to discover to him his sin in him. His own inclinations have influenced his conduct, and he has built himself up in a wrong way. The divine rule is, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." [1 Corinthians 10:31.] But he would not do this. As a man thinketh so is he. From within, out of the heart proceed evil thoughts inspired by Satan. He begins to quibble at technicalities and manners. The spirit of Satan links him up with the enemy to bear a word of criticism on less important themes. The truth becomes of less and still less value to him. He becomes an accuser of his brethren, and changes leaders. The outside world has greater weight with him than has the flood of light that God has poured in upon the world in the messages he has given, and which he once rejoiced in. Vol. 12, Letters and Manuscripts, Ms 92, 1897.

So long as the people of God are in this world they will have to meet conflict and trouble and deception, because men choose the attributes of Satan instead of the attributes of God. There is a conscience that is not good. There are those whose words are "yea" and "nay" in regard to the

same thing. [See 2 Corinthians 1:18, 19.] How are we to deal with those who make these false statements? We should not try to deal with them. The Lord God of Israel will deal with minds according to His knowledge, for He reads the heart. The less we have to do with untruthful elements, the better it will be for the church.

Bear in mind always that the human brotherhood are not sin-bearers. Jesus alone can bear the sins of the transgressor. We are to leave them with Him. The conscience needs to be converted. The heart that is not true needs to be renewed, but we cannot do this work. We must leave the sinner with God. He has borne long with the false tongue. He does not force men to forsake evil, and we must let men falsify if they will. The Lord is our only trust. We are to rest in Him, and be still. We may feel that the Lord's work is in jeopardy through the deceptions of those who deal falsely, but we should not feel thus. We are not to think that the issue of the conflict is in our hands. There will be a glorious victory. Our duty is to walk by faith. In His own time God will deal with the deceiver, and He will reward every man according to his work. Vol. 11, Letters and Manuscripts, Ms 32a, 1896.

If there have been difficulties brethren and sisters,—if envy, malice, bitterness, evil surmisings, have existed, confess these sins, not in a general way, but go to your brethren and sisters personally. Be definite. If you have committed one wrong and they twenty, confess that one as though you were the chief offender. Take them by the hand, let your heart soften under the influence of the Spirit of God, and say, “Will you forgive me? I have not felt right toward you. I want to make right every wrong, that naught may stand registered against me in the books of heaven. I must have a clean record.” Who, think you, would withstand such a movement as this? There is too much coldness and indifference—too much of the “I don't care” spirit—exercised among the professed followers of Christ. All should feel a care for one another, jealously guarding each other's interests. “Love one another.” Then we should stand a strong wall against Satan's devices. Amid opposition and persecution we would not join the vindictive ones, not unite with the followers of the great rebel, whose special work is to accuse the brethren, to defame and cast stain upon their characters.

Let the remnant of this year be improved in destroying every fiber of the root of bitterness, burying them in the grave with the old year. Begin the new year with more tender regard, with deeper love, for every member of the Lord's family. Press together. “United, we stand; divided, we fall.” Take a higher, nobler stand than you ever have before.

Many appear to be steadfast in the truth, firm, decided on every point of our faith; yet there is a great lack in them,—the tenderness and love which marked the character of the great Pattern. If a brother errs from the truth, if he falls into temptation, they make no effort to restore him in meekness, considering themselves lest they also be tempted. They seem to regard it as their special work to climb upon the judgment seat and condemn and disfellowship. They do not obey God's word, which says, “Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.” The spirit of this passage is altogether too rare in our churches. It is the lack of it that shuts out the Spirit of God from the heart, from the home, from the church. Shall we not henceforth

practice the Bible plan of restoring erring ones in the spirit of meekness? Shall we not have the spirit of Jesus, and work as he worked?

Keep back that disposition to crowd out a brother, even if you think him unworthy, even if he has hindered your work by manifesting a spirit of independence and willfulness. Remember that he is God's property. Err always on the side of mercy and tenderness. Treat with respect and deference even your most bitter enemies, who would injure you if they could. Let not a word escape your lips that would give them opportunity to justify their course in the least degree. Give no occasion to any man to blaspheme the name of God or speak disrespectfully of our faith for anything you have done. We need to be wise as the serpent, and harmless as the dove. Review and Herald, December 16, 1884.