

## The Fullness of Christ

### "Christian Love," or, "Joseph's Exhortation to Unity"

By [Octavius Winslow](#)

So he sent his brothers off, and as they left, he called after them, "Don't quarrel along the way!" Genesis 45:24

Such was the appropriate charge with which Joseph dismissed his brethren on their return to their father, bearing with them the evidences of his greatness, and the expressions of his love. He well knew the necessity for such an exhortation to unity as this. He remembered that the elements of evil which led to his own abduction from his father's family, with all its dire, yet strangely overruled results, still dwelt in their nature; and that although time and adversity may have subdued and softened that evil, yet, nevertheless, its root still was there, and that without a caution on his part, and strict vigilance on theirs, in all probability before they reached their home, the smouldering embers would break forth again in envy, strife, and division, and sad and disastrous might be the consequences.

Holy and important is the spiritual instruction here conveyed! That the children of God are not exempt from the necessity of a similar charge, is clear from the many and constant exhortations to brotherly love and Christian union with which the Word of God abounds. Perhaps there is no precept of which we need to be more perpetually reminded, and to whose violation and neglect we are more constantly exposed than this one- the precept of Christian love. A striking confirmation of the tendency of the Lord's brethren to "quarrel along the way," occurs as early as the history of the apostles. It took place between Paul and Barnabas, and arose from a difference of opinion as to the expediency of being accompanied in their apostolic visitation of the churches by Mark. Barnabas, influenced, perhaps, by his relationship to Mark, who was his nephew, proposed it, but "Paul thought it not good to take him with them." This dissonance of judgment led to a separation of these apostles the one from the other, and is thus narrated- "And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other." And so they quarreled along the way!

Another instance, so gently chided and skillfully improved by our Lord, implicated the whole college of apostles. Thus Mark records it: "And he came to Capernaum, and, being in the house, he asked them, What was it that you disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest." And thus they

quarreled along the way! We learn that our nature, even in its renewed state, is still carnal, and exhibits the same marks of innate corruption, and needs the same holy exhortations of God's word that the Church of God ever did. Dismissing the original application of this exhortation to brotherly unity, we propose to ground upon it a few observations enforcing the holy and much-needed precept of Christian love among the brethren of Christ. For who that is spiritually and intelligently acquainted with the Church of God is not solemnly convinced of the necessity of a higher and holier standard of Christian union and love among the members of the body of Christ, the children of the one family of God, than at present exists?

Beloved, "God is love." And Jesus Christ was the incarnation of love to our world. He was love living, speaking, acting, toiling among men. His birth was the nativity of love; His sermons, the words of love; His miracles, the wonders of love; His tears, the meltings of love; His crucifixion, the agonies of love; His resurrection, the triumph of love. All that He did, and said, and commanded, was the embodiment and the expression of Divine love. In the further prosecution of this delightful subject, we shall consider the nature of Christian love- its features- and the exhortation to its culture.

Now with regard to the NATURE of Christian love- in what does it consist? It differs essentially from all other feelings embraced under the general term love. The natural affection of families, the friendship which has its foundation in assimilation of mind and taste, the feeling of benevolence which prompts us to acts of kindness to our fellows, and that denominational or party feeling cherished by those who profess the same ecclesiastical polity and adopt the same mode of worship, all differ essentially from the love which unites the one Church of Jesus Christ. All these modifications of love may exist, real, intense, warm, and yet true Christian love may have no place in the soul. There may be the warmest natural affection, the profoundest feelings of benevolence, the most zealous party attachment, and yet the individual may be utterly destitute of the divine and sacred affection of which we speak. In what, then, consists this Christian love, thus standing apart so distinctly from every other form and modification of love?

Surely there must be something unique, peculiar, and lofty to invest it with this marked and lovely character! For a few moments look at the origin, and this will illustrate the nature, of that Christian love, which finds its home in every regenerate, Christ-loving heart. In the first place, I would remark that it has its origin in our new nature. When we are born again of the Spirit, divine love is born in us. There is with the advent of the divine nature, the advent of divine love. The nature of God is love; and if we become partakers of the divine nature, we necessarily become partakers of the love that dwells in God. The heavenly birth and divine love are coexistent properties in our spiritual regeneration. I emphatically repeat that, a partaker of the divine nature, I am necessarily a partaker of divine love.

Then, again, it has its origin in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Every child of God is a temple of the Holy Spirit, consequently there is in him the very inspiration of divine, spiritual love. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." If you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, making you His temple, there dwells in you the principle of love- a love that emanates from God, that entwines itself with all who are God's, and that ascends again in holy affections to God. The indwelling of the Spirit is the indwelling of love in your heart; and this it is that should make us prompt to recognize a saint wherever we find him, be his nation, his complexion, his dialect, or the section of the Church to which he belongs, what it may. If I see in him unmistakable marks of the Spirit of God; if I see, clustering in his life and conversation, the fruits of the Spirit, and yet I refuse to recognize him as a Christian brother, to receive him as a child of God, to have fellowship with him as one of the sacred brotherhood, I deny and grieve and wound the self-same Spirit dwelling in me.

Again, we may understand the nature, and trace the origin of this divine principle of love, if we remember that it is the grand moral feature that assimilates the whole family of God. It is, if I may so express myself, the family likeness. Nothing more strikingly brings out the unity of the divine nature in all God's people, the indwelling of the same Spirit thus establishing their membership with the family of God, than the feature of love. Let me see in a Christian man real love, true spiritual affection, affection flowing towards me because I am a brother in Christ- love recognizing my discipleship, my saintship, my sonship- I see in that brother the family likeness, the image of the Father, and the image of all the brethren. Yes, beloved, in a few words, the love of which we speak is a divine, unearthly, spiritual principle. It is not of the flesh fleshly, it is not born with us; it proves its origin and nature by the divine and spiritual fruits which it brings forth. It is from God, it ascends to God, and all its operations are godlike and divine. He who discovers in his heart no other evidence of his filial relation to God, of his discipleship to Christ, of his membership with the one brotherhood, than the existence of this divine, holy principle of love, has sufficient warrant to put in a humble claim to be a disciple of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of glory. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, by the love you have one towards another." "By this we know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

The day may come when you may thank God for this one and simple evidence of your salvation. All other evidence of your membership with Christ, and of your adoption into the family of God, may be, not extinguished, but beclouded; and one remains, and one only, to shed its luster, like the lone star of evening, upon your dying pillow- love to the brethren, love to the holy ones because they are holy, love to the saints because they are saints. Beloved, with that one evidence you may tread the valley of the shadow of death, fearing no evil, and you shall have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Having thus briefly explained its nature, let us for a few moments specify some of the GROUNDS on which Christian love should be exhibited. There occur analogies in the narrative which will be our guide. On what grounds may we suppose Joseph exhorts his brethren not to quarrel along the way, on their return home to their father? Would he not naturally remind them, in the first place, that they were the children, the sons of one father, and being so, there existed a strong bond of union between them? Most assuredly he would. Beloved, the Church of God acknowledges one God and Father: "One God and Father of all." One Father loves all- has predestinated all to the adoption of children- has given all alike His beloved Son- embraced all alike in His one heart- and lends His ear alike to all clustering around His mercy-seat and addressing Him as, "Our Father who are in heaven."

Find the sons of God where you may, belonging to what religious section of the Church they may, kneel with them in prayer, bend with them before the one mercy-seat, and you will be at no loss to ascertain who is their Father. Oh, there is nothing so convincing of the essential unity of God's family, or which constitutes so beautiful and touching a manifestation of that unity, as the clustering together of the Lord's people from their various communions around God's throne of grace. It is the most true, sacred, and sublime visible exhibition of the unity of the Church of God found on this side of glory- the unity of worship- the unity of prayer.

Listen to the language of each- of all: "Our Father who is in heaven." In this sublime utterance who can fail to see the three essential elements of union- the PARENTAGE of God- the BROTHERHOOD of the saints- the HOME of the Church: FATHER- OUR Father- in HEAVEN! Oh, see how the renewed nature of man travels back to the Fatherhood of God! See how man travels in fraternal affection towards the Brotherhood of man! See how the child of God seeks the Home from which he has wandered- the point of his departure- the place of his return. And when they assemble at their Father's feet, confessing like sins, deploring like infirmities, breathing like sorrows, unveiling like needs, and supplicating like mercy, oh, how true, beautiful, and holy appears the essential unity of the family of God!

"The saints in prayer appear as one,  
In word, and deed, and mind,  
White with the Father and the Son  
Sweet fellowship they find."

Would not Joseph also remind those who, thus belonging to one father, they were brethren? What are all the saints of God but brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ? "You are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." "One is your Master, and all you are brethren." The Church of God is one holy brotherhood. Every child of God, be the depth of his experience, or the strength of his faith, or

the measure of his attainments what it may, stands in fraternal relation to the one brotherhood of which Jesus is the First-born. Beloved, wherever you thus meet with a child of God, a believer in Christ, one who acknowledges his relation to Jesus, you meet a brother in Christ, and in giving to him a fraternal recognition, you but recognize and exhibit your own personal union with the sacred brotherhood.

This is the only real fraternity. Sin has broken up the human family. By detaching our nature from its Center, it has detached it from itself. The human race has nothing of its original brotherhood remaining but the name, and even this finds often an unwilling recognition. The hate of races and the caste of society are proverbial. As if our common Father had not "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth," race disowns race, and class denounces class, and caste scorns caste. "The Celt swears vengeance against the Saxon; the Slavonic cannot fraternize with the German stock. The dim repositories of the past are ransacked for missiles and watchwords, that may serve as firebrands to rekindle the old hereditary feuds of alien and rival lineages. The Italian thinks himself scarce a creature of the same blood and of the same God with the Austrian. Now the gospel goes forth as the great, the peaceful, but unappeasable revolutionist; but its watchword is a fraternity broad as humanity. And when men learn to feel these ties and claims of brotherhood, the needy and the lowly are soothed and elevated; the savage puts on dignity, and the bondsman hope; and the woman glides from the prison where barbarism had immured her. So, on the other hand, the mighty, and the intelligent, and the rich, thus instructed, forget their transient and skin-deep distinctions of caste and culture; and feel, in the view of a common sin, and salvation, and judgment-seat, the sense of stewardship casting out the odious spirit of self-gratification. Literal equality, no change in man's power can bring about. There would remain, on the day after an equal distribution of all goods and lands to all earth's inhabitants, the eternal and irremovable distinctions of sex and age, and mental talent and bodily endowment. You might as well propose to equalize the whole body of the man into an eye, clear but defenseless, or into a cheek, earless and eyeless and browless, as to make the body politic, in all its members and all its circumstances, one. But give the feeling of true Christian fraternity; and, while each member retains its individuality and its distinct offices, and its fitting peculiarities, the good of one member would become the good of all. The hand would toil in the light of the guiding eye; and the eye travel in the strength of the adventurous and patient foot." (W.R. Williams)

But the religion of Jesus wins back our divided and hating race to its original brotherhood. It has been remarked that "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." But one touch of grace does more. It unites the kin into Christian brotherhood, it introduces it into the family of God. This is the only true, sacred, and permanent fraternity; the republican and the democrat, the peer and the peasant, the sovereign and the subject, the bond and the free, are in Christ Jesus one sacred brotherhood, bound in filial relation to God, and, in virtue of this

union, in fraternal relation to each other.

Another uniting element is our union with, and the reception of all our blessings from, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is a strong basis of union, a holy bond of love and sympathy. These brethren of Joseph were returning to Canaan, all richly laden with wealth through the kindness of Joseph. They were all alike furnished with provision, with clothing, and every comfort necessary for the journey. Thus they had a common bond of sympathy and union in the blessings all richly and freely received alike from Joseph. What gospel teaching is here!

Are we not all of us, as saints of God, dependent upon Jesus? are not all of us hanging upon Jesus? do we not all receive from Jesus? The blood that cleanses us, the righteousness that justifies us, the grace that sanctifies us, the sympathy that comforts us, the hope that cheers us- is it not all derived from the fulness that is in Christ? Are not all clinging to that one dear Savior, depending on His finished work, and all drawing from His infinite resources? Oh, yes! Where do the saints of God the most frequently meet? Is it not at the feet of Jesus? Modes of worship may sunder us outwardly. A Liturgy may divide in form those who in heart draw near to the same God and Father. But here we all in spirit meet. The fountain from where we draw our stores of strength and grace, comfort, joy, and peace, attracts and unites us at the Savior's feet.

This ought to draw closer together in affection and sympathy the scattered, divided members of Christ's body, since they are all living on Jesus, drawing from Jesus, and alike indebted to Jesus. Thus, if through prejudice or preference, ecclesiastical polity or modes of religious worship sunder the saints of God from each other, here is that which attracts them to one spot, and binds them in one holy fellowship- a full Christ to whom all repair, and from whom all alike receive supplies, and who loves and blesses all alike. Journeying to one heavenly home, wearing the same robe of righteousness, clad in the same garments of salvation, sustained and nourished by the same spiritual supplies, should not these considerations raise us superior to sectarianism, prejudice, and harsh judgment? What have we that we have not received? Why should one brother boast against or judge another? "Of his fulness have all we received;" and all alike living upon Christ's fulness, nourished by His grace, kept by His power, soothed by His love, fed by His hand, guided by His counsel, and bound together in the same heart of God, supplies us with one of the strongest and most persuasive motives why we should love one another, and see that we do not "quarrel along the way."

I thus anticipate another ground of Christian love- our individual membership with the one body of Christ. It is a beautiful illustration of the Church, the human body. Perfect in itself, it yet has different members; one organization, yet several parts. How masterly does the apostle work out this illustration, bringing us to the conclusion that one part cannot dispense with another; that no member can say to another member, "I have no need of you;" -all are useful and sympathetic in the body. So in the Church of Christ: it is essentially one spiritual corporate Body.

Every believer in Christ is a member of that Body, and the Church of God is not perfect without that member. And thus members of Christ's body are members one of another. "For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

And here let me remark, what a bond of union is found in the existence of the same trials and temptations! Infirmities and necessities are common to all the children of God. This is a touching, tender argument for Christian love and sympathy in the one Church of Christ. Are not our trials oftentimes the same? our temptations and infirmities, our adversities and sorrows? Have we not, too, the same spiritual exercises, the same mental operations? are we not perpetually exhibiting the same stumblings, falls, and backslidings? Oh, how ought this to knit and unite more closely together the saints of God! In view of this truth, how should ecclesiastical distinctions vanish and disappear!

What! has my brother of the Establishment, has my Nonconformist brother the same temptations and corruptions to combat with as I? Is he conscious of the same frailties, infirmities, and suffering? Does he walk in the same spiritual darkness, despondency, and distress? Then do I not see that which should draw my heart to him, which should make me forget external distinctions and separations, and which should rouse my sympathy, prayer, and love, and prompt me to go to him and endeavor to distill comfort into his sorrowful spirit; to speak a word of consolation to his grieved heart, a divine promise to his distressed mind? What are the things that sunder me, externally, compared with this touching, tender bond of union, that ought to unite in closer sympathy the living, spiritual members of the Church of God?

Would not Joseph, too, in exhorting his brethren not quarrel along the way, remind them that they were journeying towards one home and to one father? What a sweet thought is this, that the Church of God is on its way to one blessed, glorious inheritance! The family of God are all traveling to one loving Father. In a little while, these dear saints of God, who now, through infirmity, and often under the temptation of the wicked one, contend and wrangle for their external differences, minor and petty in comparison with the great and momentous one in which they substantially agree, will meet together in a better land, in a better home, in their Father's house. Oh, if shame could crimson the cheek, if tears could gush from the eye in heaven, it would be in the recollection that on earth we allowed these non-essential things to create heart-burnings, rivalries, jealousies, divisions, hard thoughts, speeches, and actions, before the world; thus wounding our blessed Savior, impeding His cause, injuring His truth, and crucifying Him afresh!

Beloved, the saints of God are journeying towards one promised land, going home to one eternal inheritance, traveling to one heavenly Father; and this alone,

did no other argument or bond of union exist, should knit and blend in love, sympathy, kindness, and prayer, the different members of the ONE body of Christ, the ONE family of God. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." With the prospect of a termination of the journey so glorious, and with the assurance that then every parti-colored standard will be lost in the blaze of light, and every jarring note, in the song of heaven, let us cultivate the union that will then exist, and by love, service, and worship on earth, antedate and anticipate the bliss of glory.

"Lord, may our union form a part  
Of that thrice-happy whole,  
Derive its pulse from You the Heart,  
Its life from You the Soul."

We propose, in the further prosecution of this subject, to present a few FEATURES characteristic of Christian love. And the first we adduce is, its unsectarian character. Christian love is essentially so. It may indeed cherish a warmer glow, and exhibit greater confidence and freeness of expression in that Christian communion where its fellowship, from a more perfect harmony of sentiment, is recognized; nevertheless, it is essentially unsectarian, since it embraces all who love Christ and walk in His commandments, and is as expansive as the length and breadth of the Church universal. If I only love a Christian brother because he belongs to my branch of the Christian Church, or holds my distinctive principles, my love in this case is sectarian, and not Christian. If I love him merely because he is a Conformist, or because he is a Nonconformist, because he holds believers' baptism, or because he holds infant baptism, this is not a genuine, spiritual, divine love, but a love of party, a love of denomination, a love of self.

I must love my brother because he is a brother in the Lord. I must love him because he is a saint of God. I must love him because I see in him the image of my Father, the Spirit of my Savior; and if I thus see in him the Divine image, hear him speak in the language of Canaan, and trace in him the likeness of a loving, lowly, unearthly Christ; my affection leaps over the walls of ecclesiastical separation, and embraces him as a brother in Christ. Beloved, the only love that truly authenticates your discipleship to Christ, and your adoption into the family of God, is undenominational and unsectarian.

It is not called upon to give up what God's Word enjoins, or conscience feels to be right. It does not say to a brother, "I will believe what you believe, because I love you;" but it says, "I cannot be all that you are; but, because I see in you the image of my Father and the Spirit of my Savior, I love you. Though I cannot see eye to eye with you in all things, though my judgment differs from yours in some; yet, tracing in you the indwelling of the divine nature, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the likeness of Christ, I love and recognize you as a brother beloved of

God."

It was a noble remark of Wesley- "Is your heart right with God? If it is, give me your hand. I do not mean, 'Be of my opinion;' you need not. Neither do I mean, 'I will be of your opinion;' I cannot. Let all opinions alone; only give me your hand." Oh! it is a tragic thing to stand aloof from a holy man of God because he is not in all things of our own opinion! Such a violation of the first law of Christianity does despite to the Spirit of grace, the Spirit of love, the Spirit of God, and either proves our own utter destitution of the Spirit, or must result in the withdrawal of His sensible presence, and a consequent spiritual leanness, darkness, and desertion of soul.

Another feature of Christian love is its studied avoidance of all cause of offence. True brotherly love will not needlessly offend a brother; it will endeavor to steer a course that will prevent those occasions of painful, unhappy collision, that so much stir up the natural corruption of the human heart. One of the sweet characteristics of real spiritual love is, that it endeavors so to deport itself as not needlessly to wound and grieve a brother; it will not go out of its way to speak unkindly of or to misjudge a Christian. It will endeavor to refrain from injuring and giving offence, avoiding those things which tend to stir up what is carnal in a Christian brother's heart.

We are reminded in God's Word that offences, through misunderstanding and infirmity, will come; there will be those collisions of judgment or of action in the Church of God which frequently call forth hasty expressions, injured and angered feelings; a spirit is shown, and words are spoken, that may leave a long and fretting wound. But true love will ever stand ready to forgive the offence, when the offence is repented and deplored. It will not cherish malice, hatred, and revenge in the heart, but, God-like, it is ever ready to forgive, even to the "seventy times seven." Our Lord's injunction respecting giving offence is explicit and clear- "Whoever shall offend one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." "Woe to that man by whom the offence comes."

Oh, if this divine precept had a deeper lodgment in the hearts of Christ's brethren, how much charity, gentleness and forbearance would be exhibited- how tender would they be of each other's feelings- how jealous of each other's reputation- how kind in word and action- how careful lest even a momentary wound might be inflicted, regarding the least disciple of Christ as dear to Him as the apple of the eye!

Another and most lovely essential feature of Christian love is that of forgiveness. Flowing from the forgiving love of God, it partakes of the nature where it springs. Christian love approaches the nearest of all the graces of the Spirit in the regenerate soul to the divine nature. God is love, and love is of God, and he that

loves the holy because they are holy, and who forgives the wrong done by friend or foe, approaches the nearest in imitation of God. Nothing seems more to becloud or even to invalidate our Christian character, to annihilate all evidence of our being a child of God, as cherishing a malicious, unrelenting, unforgiving spirit. How can we go to God and say, "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," while we are cherishing in our hearts an unforgiving feeling towards a brother who has grieved, wounded, or offended us?

What if God took you at your word when bending at His throne offering this prayer? Terrible thought! Condemnation, just and eternal wrath, unmitigated and endless- the banishment of the outer darkness until the last mite were paid, would be your most fearful and righteous doom! But go and forgive your brother; tell him that, yourself forgiven of God the ten thousand offences, you forgive him the one; that love only is in your heart toward him; and that forgiving all, you forget all. Then go and offer your prayer to your Heavenly Father for His forgiveness!

One of the loveliest, most precious unfoldings of God's love towards us is that He has pardoned all our sins, has forgiven us all our transgressions, and having blotted them all out, will remember them no more forever. "Be imitators of God as dear children," and ever keep in view the divine precept teaching the forgiving of offences- "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you." Instead of sitting down and brooding over an injustice and a wronged, wounded sensibility, or slighted affection, until the imagination has augmented the injury from a molehill into a mountain, the little rivulet that one step of love might have crossed into an impassable gulf, see if there has been any real cause of offence, any intended injury; and if there dwells in the offender the spirit of Christ, and in you, the offended one, the love of God, both will be prepared, on a mutual understanding, the one to confess the fault and the other as ready to forgive it. Oh, let the dying prayer of Jesus ever linger in our ear amid the assaults of enemies and the woundings of friends- "Father, FORGIVE them!"

Forbearance is another feature of true Christian love. "Forbearing one another in love." This feeling is frequently called into exercise. How constantly we are under the necessity of bearing with one another's failings, frailties, and actions! All do not think and feel and act alike. If we really loved, as we ought, in the spirit of kind, Christian forbearance, we should make all allowance for each other's different modes of thought and peculiar frailties, constitutional infirmities and tendencies. It may demand peculiar and no little degree of grace to bear with our brother's constitutional temperament and weaknesses, his uncouthness of manner, his disposition to look at the dark side of the picture, his crotchets and fault-finding spirit, and other infirmities which inspire our dislike if not disgust; nevertheless, if I love as my Lord and Master loves me and loves my brother, I ought to forbear in love; not to censure or condemn, but casting over him the

mantle of charity, cherish that "love which is patient and is kind."

It is another operation of brotherly love that it avoids rash judgements and harsh interpretations. True love is not judicial, it is fraternal. It avoids the judgment-seat. How tempted we often are to sit in judgment on a brother's actions, motives, and opinions; just as if we possessed the divine attribute of reading his heart, and fathoming the secret principles and motives that influence him. If we love that brother as we ought, we should avoid those judgments, which almost invariably bring us to rash and wrong conclusions, censuring and condemning when, had we a perfect knowledge of his heart, we would probably admire and approve. Rather let us ever aim to put a kind and charitable construction upon actions, the circumstances and motives of which, we are profoundly ignorant.

Nor must I forget to remind you that sympathy is a striking characteristic and feature of Christian and brotherly love. It will prompt us to compassion and kindness towards brethren and sisters who are in distress, trial, and suffering; it will make us willing to bear one another's burdens, to weep with those who weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice; it will constrain us to do all we can to soothe, soften, and ameliorate, and shed the sunshine of gladness on the gloomy path of some tried, lonely child of God.

Faithfulness is another of its essential characteristics. It does not shrink from tender, loving, yet wise and holy admonition. It is faithful to conscience, to God's Word, to Christ's honor, and to the brethren. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." To be thus faithful--to show our love by our fidelity--to rebuke, reprove, and exhort; not allowing sin or error in a Christian brother, but, in the meek, lowly, gentle, yet firm, faithful spirit of the Master, to warn and rebuke-- oh, this is love indeed! In nothing do we require more tenderness, lowliness, and love; and in the discharge of no duty is Jesus more prepared to give us all the wisdom, grace, and love demanded. Never let us rebuke or reprove a loving brother until we first repair to Jesus, and get our hearts replenished with His love.

In conclusion, how needed and forcible the exhortation, "See that don't quarrel along the way." How like the words of our Lord Jesus to the disciples, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another." Let us aim to walk in this divine, Christ-like precept. Let our conduct, our communion, our whole spirit and carriage, be influenced and governed by love. Let us show how superior is Christian unity and love to denominational distinctions, ecclesiastical polity, and outward forms. Let us not fall out with other Christians by the way because we differ in judgment on some minor points, or worship God in different ways. Let us not renounce or denounce a Christian brother, who loves the same Savior, is of the same Father, is engaged in the same holy fight, because he wears a different uniform, belongs to a different battalion, or lays his offering of love upon another altar than our own. This would be grieving to the Spirit and dishonoring to the Captain of our salvation.

"Shall I ask the brave soldier, that fights at my side  
The cause of mankind, if our creeds do agree?  
Shall I give up the friend I have valued and tried,  
If he kneels not before the same altar with me?"

No! if his creed is essentially correct, if his life is divinely holy, if his altar is sprinkled with the blood of Christ's atonement, and if, in the spirit of adoption, that altar is inscribed to the One Father in heaven, and he bends, and loves, and worships there as a humble believer in the Savior, as a loving child of God, as a true soldier of the Cross, then I must ignore my own Christianity and deny my Lord if I refuse to hail him as a beloved brother, or to join him in the holy strife of reducing the kingdoms of this world to the reign and supremacy of Christ.

Cultivating Christian and brotherly love, we shall antedate and anticipate the happiness and employment of heaven, where love reigns in every breast. There, in those pure and blissful regions, where the God of love dwells, and the Savior of love is enthroned, and the Spirit of love breathes, there are no strifes or dissensions, no jarrings or discords. The music is of love, the songs are of love, and all hearts beat in unison with love; the tree of life that bends over the river of joy, and the bowers of bliss, fanned by spicy breezes, all are vocal with the melody and embalmed in the fragrance of LOVE.

"Love is the golden chain that binds the happy souls above, And he's an heir of heaven who finds his bosom glow with love."

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers." 1 John 3:16

"Don't quarrel along the way!"

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