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MEEKNESS, GENTLENESS, PATIENCE, CHARACTER

NEVER was there a more important moment for the Church than now, as respects the above listed elements of the Lord's spirit. When the great Enemy has special power because it is "the hour of temptation which shall try all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth," every soldier of the Cross must be more alert than ever. But let us put character and principle first, then patience, gentleness, meekness. As St. Paul wrote to Timothy, "In meekness, correcting those who oppose themselves."

Our *love* for the brethren, coupled with our *knowledge* of the testing strain they are under, will supply the needed incentive for the exercise and cultivation of the graces named. And let us remember, that this is our [R4391 : page 141] testing hour no less than theirs. The test to some may be false teachings; the test to others may be their positiveness and character in dealing with the error, or their love for the brethren and the gentleness with which they will seek to do all in their power to rescue them, *even though* they feel the task a hopeless one. – Heb. 6:3.

If we fail of love we are failing on the most important point of all. Hence it is important to each of us to take our stand *for* the right and *against* the wrong, but lovingly, gently, firmly. For instance, in the matter of the Vow: it is quite proper to explain its Scripturalness, to show that its every provision is in fullest accord with the teachings of the Bible, and to point out its advantages and its blessings to your own heart; but it would not be just or loving to do more than this. Leave the matter for the Lord to deal with by his spirit and providences. If the act be not a *voluntary* one it loses its value in God's sight. Do not allow the Vow or any other *voluntary* matter to cause a division amongst the members. Should the division come along other lines it would

be different. We must do all in our power to maintain "the unity of the spirit in bonds of peace."

