

## Chapter Thirteen

### CHARITY, LOVE, INTERCESSION

*In a drawer in my roll-top desk I have a bundle of checks written to me from a man owing a substantial debt to me. The checks are dated one month apart, and go on for more than two years. Each one was for hundreds of dollars. They were given to me to settle a debt. The account on which they were written has been closed for years. None of them, including the first, ever cleared the bank.*

*I have represented people in law suits for over two decades. I have seen people under tremendous stress as a result of their litigation problems. People respond to this in a variety of ways, few of them really noble. One client, however, repaid an unjust debt when my counsel, and the counsel of my partner, was to avoid paying, by filing for protection through the bankruptcy court. Rather than file for bankruptcy, he paid the debt in full, despite tremendous personal sacrifices. He refused to use the legal system to avoid the payment of this unjust obligation. He rejected all counsel to do otherwise. He was a singular example of personal integrity.*

*In addition to the worthless checks, there are many others who owe me money, from whom I have no hope of being repaid. In hindsight, it has been bad for business, but good for the soul.*

*I believe the man who wrote the worthless checks thought he was going to repay me when he wrote them. It would have been good for him had he done so. But he had a wife and young children, and I think he got into financial troubles from a lack of foresight and wisdom. Perhaps it was something more malevolent. But I think it benign. He couldn't afford to pay me, and at the time, I couldn't afford to absorb the loss. I've since recovered financially, and no longer need to have payment to make my circumstances tolerable.*

*Neither this man, nor any other, is my concern. I am my concern. I have a short season here to live, and then will pass, as have all others before, into the grave. At that point, my record is complete, and nothing further can be done to change my eternal state. Only in the few moments in this life am I able to develop the capacity to forgive and wish others well. In one way of looking at it, I should thank these men for giving me these experiences. I do thank my client for his example of integrity in a time of great personal stress. Some people have integrity that falls apart under stress. This client weathered personal financial crises and still kept his integrity.*

*It is a wonder to me Joseph Smith could say he died with a conscience void of*

*offense toward his fellow man. I am certain I have offended others. I have some hate-mail kept in my journal to prove it. I have attempted to forgive my offenders. Perhaps there is some hope for me in that. But then again, I have kept the old worthless checks in the roll-top desk, haven't I? So why do I still have them? I expect my client who repaid his unjust debt would have thrown them away by now.*<sup>220</sup>

As we know from both the New Testament<sup>221</sup> and the Doctrine & Covenants, Christ visited the Spirit World during His time in the grave. Although Peter alludes to it in his first epistle, written two millennia ago, it was not until 1918 that any significant knowledge about this part of Christ's ministry was restored.

In the Vision of the Redemption of the Dead, President Joseph F. Smith saw the nature of Christ's mission to the world of departed spirits.<sup>222</sup> President Smith wrote:

... the eyes of my understanding were opened, and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and I saw the hosts of the dead, both small and great. And there were gathered together in one place an innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality; And who had offered sacrifice in the similitude of the great sacrifice of the Son of God, and had suffered tribulation in their Redeemer's name. All these had departed the mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection, through the grace of God the Father and his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. (D&C 138: 11–14.)

Here we have a description of those spirits whom Christ visited while He was in the grave. They had been 1) faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived. They had 2) offered sacrifice in the similitude of the great sacrifice of Christ's. And as a consequence, they 3) departed this life firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection.

Being faithful in the testimony of Jesus was required for those who saw Him during this part of His ministry. It is not enough to have a testimony. You must be faithful to that testimony. Those who are not faithful to their testimony cannot inherit the Celestial Kingdom, as the revelation on the afterlife has confirmed. Doctrine and Covenants 76:79 says, with respect to those who inherit the Terrestrial Kingdom: "These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God." A testimony alone is not enough.<sup>223</sup> Nor is "confessing Jesus" enough as some evangelical sects falsely contend.<sup>224</sup> It is through doing the things commanded of a disciple, people become Saints and members of the household of God.

The statement that these spirits had been faithful to the testimony of Jesus while they lived is, therefore, a significant acknowledgment of personal character. They were not just observing hollow religious forms while alive. They penetrated to the underlying meaning. They lived their religion.

What does it mean that these people had offered sacrifice in the similitude of the great sacrifice of Christ? We have earlier discussed the need for sacrifice. Here we need to develop it further. The "great sacrifice of Christ's" was the Atonement itself. He offered Himself as a ransom for mankind. He paid a price and healed mankind from the effects of the Fall. He further made reconciliation between God and mankind possible.

That reconciliation was an accomplishment almost beyond description. Think of the gulf it repaired: On the one hand God has said: “For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.” (D&C 1: 31.) And on the other hand: “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” (Rom. 3: 23.) This statement of opposites makes it impossible for us to return to God’s presence. We have all sinned and God cannot tolerate sin. Therefore God cannot tolerate us in our sinful state. We all merit outer darkness without Christ’s intervention. Christ’s Atonement repairs that and makes our return to a sinless state possible. So when we read this account, we are left asking how we can do something which would result in us offering sacrifice in similitude to this great act?

Christ’s Atonement was an act of intercession by Him on our behalf. We are barred from God the Father’s presence. Christ made it possible for us to overcome that barrier and return to Him. He made mercy possible by satisfying the demands of justice. Alma 34: 14–16:

And behold, this is the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal. And thus he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance. And **thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice**, and encircles them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption. (Emphasis added.)

In one sense, it is not possible for us to satisfy justice by providing mercy for ourselves. But in another sense, we certainly can do so for others. We cannot atone for other’s offenses. But, we can forgive other’s trespasses against us. Christ provided the way for us all to be forgiven. But He also taught we should forgive others. He said, “...forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” (JST Matt. 6: 13; taken from *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible, Original Manuscripts*. Edited by Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson and Robert J. Matthews. Provo: Religious Studies Center Brigham Young University, 2004; p. 247.) Forgiving others is our duty. Our own forgiveness is dependent upon it. Within our limited capacities, we must also provide mercy to others just as Christ provided mercy to us all. We, in our sphere, must act just as Christ did in His much greater sphere.

Remember we must become “types” of Him whom we follow. To do so we must mimic Him to acquire His attributes. When we have acquired His attributes, He has claim upon us as one of His own.

We all suffer offenses caused by others. From childhood we are all hurt, ignored, offended and belittled at one time or another. There are those who have offended you without trying. And worse still, there are others who have intentionally offended you,

even those who enjoyed being cruel. No one grows to adulthood without experiencing the cruelty of others.

Against this common experience for all mortals, Christ taught us to forgive our attackers. In the Sermon at Bountiful, He commanded us:

And behold, it is written, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; But I say unto you, that ye shall not resist evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away. And behold it is written also, that thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; But behold I say unto you, **love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you;** That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good. (3 Ne. 12: 38–45, emphasis added.)

These are extraordinary standards for us to follow. Not resisting those who are determined to do evil to us presents such a formidable barrier to living that all of us recoil at its implications. Giving the unjust litigant all that he demands, and more, seems impossibly hard. Loving our enemies, blessing those who curse you, and doing good to those who hate you are astonishing hurdles to contemplate. Yet, there it is! Christ asking us to overcome and leave behind our pride, our tendency to defend ourselves and our need for approval.

Christ meant these things. Not only that, He led the way in actually doing them. As proof of His commitment to these standards of self-conduct Christ forgave the men who crucified Him. He said, as they were in the act of killing Him: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.” (Luke 23: 34.) He did not resist those who were not only despitefully using Him, but who were determined to kill Him. He did not resist the one who would sue Him for his cloak. He permitted them to part His entire wardrobe among them without complaint. These teachings may have been rejected by most of the audience He taught, but they were not rejected by Him. He did what He asks us to do. If you accept Him as the guide and example to follow then you must accept this part of His example as well.

Remember Nephi’s assurance: “I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.” (1 Ne. 3: 7.) That promise has no limit on it. If we are asked to do these things, and we are determined to follow God in doing them, then the Lord will provide a way for you to be able to accomplish it. However difficult this proposition may seem to be, it is something within your reach. Trust in that, and have the faith to reach out trying to follow Him. His yoke, you will find, is easy after all.

Ask yourself: Why is it necessary for this standard to be adopted by you? What exactly does it have to do with offering an acceptable sacrifice? The answer to those

questions puts a different light on the entire matter:

Joseph Smith taught in *DHC* 4: 445: “If you do not accuse each other, God will not accuse you. If you have no accuser you will enter heaven, and if you will follow the revelations and instructions which God gives you through me, I will take you into heaven as my back load. If you will not accuse me, I will not accuse you. If you will throw a cloak of charity over my sins, I will over yours—for charity covereth a multitude of sins.” This notion of accusing one another is an important principle. Joseph is explaining something directly relating to obtaining salvation.

Accusing someone is Satanic. One of the titles for Satan is “the accuser of the brethren.”<sup>225</sup> Satan’s accusations are not said to be unwarranted or unsupported. He is not necessarily accusing his victims unjustly. It is probable some if not all of the accusations were, or are, just. If any of us were measured by an absolute standard of obedience, faithfulness, or virtue, we would all necessarily fail. Satan does not need to use an unfair standard to accuse and condemn us. We are assured that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3: 23.) So if you want to condemn any of us, you need only look at our actual deeds and you will find sufficient reason to accuse us. Yet the negative and condemned role of accusing belongs to Satan. Those who take it upon themselves to do the condemning are acting the part of Satan. What Christ has asked us to do is forgive each other. Or, as Joseph put it, we are asked not to accuse each other.

The Lord is serious about our forgiving each other. Christ meant it when He taught “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” (3 Ne. 14: 1–2.) This teaching is an integral part of the salvation of yourself and mankind. If you are not accused by your fellow man, Satan’s accusations alone will not be sufficient to condemn you.

The incident in John 8: 10–11 illustrates the Lord’s approach to judgment and mercy: “When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”<sup>226</sup> Here the woman had violated the law prohibiting adultery. She was brought to Christ to find out His reaction to this breach of the law. In spite of clear guilt, Christ found a way to avoid accusing her. This incident shows the lengths to which the Lord will go to avoid becoming the accuser. His title: “Our Advocate with the Father”<sup>227</sup> is the antithesis of the role of the “accuser.” The Advocate helps defend us against accusations. Even accusations properly brought, as was the one against the woman taken in adultery. He will seek whatever reason or even excuse as may exist to warrant forgiveness for our mistakes and failings. This role of Advocate He has adopted for Himself, is the role of Mercy itself.

The Lord also revealed, “I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.” (D&C 64: 10.) Here we are admonished to forgive all. Without regard to the justice of your claims against others, you are to forgive. Certainly

there are others who have offended you. Certainly you have just complaints about others. You are justified in finding fault with your fellow man, because your fellow man is weak, sinful, error prone and ignorant. Christ is saying to forgive them anyway. No matter how right your complaint is against them, forgive them anyway. No matter how little they deserve your forgiveness, forgive them anyway. It is required of you to forgive all men.

Society does not do this. Society exacts vengeance and retaliates. Socially, if retaliation was not expected, we would not have a legal industry, a prosecutor for every city, county, state or district in America and for similar political subdivisions throughout the world. The world wants vengeance. But Christ tells us that *you* should not. We are discussing you, and not society, in this chapter.

In the great Day of Judgment, men will have to face their accusers. The standard by which mankind will be judged in that great day will be perfection. For us to pass that test, we must not accuse our offenders. It does not matter who will accuse you. What matters is whether or not you will accuse another. If you do not accuse anyone, then the accusations against you will fail. But if you accuse anyone, then you set a standard for judgment against which you will fail.

Satan is not mortal, and has no body. All of the actions in the second estate involve the actions of fellow physical beings toward or with each other. Satan can whisper to us, but he cannot control us, here. He does not reside here. He is a shadow without substance or standing. He has no position to bring an accusation, since he has no part in the physical world. We, on the other hand, suffer physically by the actions or inactions of each other. We do have standing to accuse each other because we have caused each other's sufferings. And we immeasurably complicate the Lord's work when we insist upon judging each other, and accusing each other. We create a barrier to forgiveness for each other when we accuse each other.

If we show mercy to our fellow man, we merit mercy from Our Lord. If we show love to our fellow man, we merit love from Our Lord. With what measure we measure, it will be measured again to us; pressed down and overflowing.<sup>228</sup>

This is serious business. We are living in a brief, temporary and probationary state. It is going to pass by as if a dream, and end sooner than any of us imagine. When it does, if we have left a record of forgiving our fellow man, loving them, and refraining from returning evil for evil, we will have filled the measure of what God has asked of us. He will be able to excuse our sins, because we have adopted a standard by which we can be forgiven. Our mercy shown to others is really mercy being shown to ourselves. We set the standard for our own judgment. Christ's counsel pleads for us to set that standard mercifully low for others, so we can meet that standard ourselves. His perspective takes a larger view into account. If you will follow Him and accept His teachings, when you arrive at life's end, you will proclaim the wisdom and mercy of the Lord. He will have prepared you for that day by helping you set the standard for your own forgiveness.

If you forgive greater offenses by others than you have committed against others,

you will surely pass the test. If the standard of tolerance and kindness shown by you to your fellow man is broader than the one which you have demanded that they show you, you will be forgiven.

It is in this sense that Joseph taught, “A man is **his own tormentor and his own condemner.**” Hence the saying, ‘They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.’ The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man.” (*DHC* 6: 314, emphasis added.) This self-condemnation may come about in a different way than you might first imagine. Don’t think of this explanation by Joseph as you damning yourself out of guilt for your misdeeds. Rather, think of it in terms of having set a standard by judging others which you cannot meet when that standard is used against you.<sup>229</sup> The accusation you bring against yourself will be the criteria you have set for others. It is “just” to use that standard against you. It is “merciful” to judge you by a tolerant standard which showed greater leniency to others beyond what you asked for yourself. All of these things interrelate and are the substance of what Christ is trying to teach us. He is trying to make of us something much better than we are now. To accomplish this, you will have to adopt His standards for dealing with the unjust, the unmerciful and the cruel. The bread cast upon the water returns to you.<sup>230</sup>

Help others face God without the guilt of offenses they have caused you. Let them go free. Let the prison open and all who have ever caused you injury walk in the light of freedom free from any accusation you could bring against them. Forgive them for this because when they did so, they knew not what they did. Forgiving them will not just liberate them, but it will liberate you, as well. Letting go of the just accusation will not only let them out of their prison, but it will let you out of yours. Take down the bars on your own home’s windows, and open the windows to the air outside. Remove the locks and bars you have erected on your own home, and change it from the prison you have made it. Locking the world out has ultimately locked you in. When you set your own tormentors free, you will set yourself free.

Most of the offenses we harbor have been inflicted on us long ago. The perpetrators are long since gone out of our lives. It is our own choice keeping their offense with us, still. Forgiving lets you drop the burden of carrying that offense alive. Without your effort, it will die. So let it go and move on with life.

This matter does not end there, however. Christ tells us to pray for those who abuse and misuse us. Odd as this may sound, it is what He did. It is one of the things that allows us most to emulate Him. Though it may seem out of character, you should try doing it. You can’t sincerely pray for another person without losing your anger toward them. This act of intercession with God for those who have committed offenses is directly related to making sacrifice in the similitude of the great sacrifice of Christ. Lehi did this, as recorded in 1 Ne. 1: 5: “Wherefore it came to pass that my father, Lehi, as he went forth prayed unto the Lord, yea, even with all his heart, in behalf of his people.” These people had the judgments of God about to fall upon them. Rather than join in condemning them, Lehi prayed to God about them. He showed mercy to them.<sup>231</sup>

Nephi similarly showed mercy and made intercession for his elder brothers. In 1 Ne. 2: 18 it is recorded: "But, behold, Laman and Lemuel would not hearken unto my words; and being grieved because of the hardness of their hearts I cried unto the Lord for them." Nephi's act of showing mercy, refraining from judging, and praying in intercession for brothers who rejected him, made Nephi a "type" of Christ. Meaning that Nephi's example conformed with the later message and ministry of the One who made intercession for all mankind. Christ did it for real. Nephi did it in imitation of Him. We can do it as an imitation as well. That imitation of Him is required to qualify us for the Second Comforter. If we are unwilling to accept these standards and imitate these acts, we are not qualified to receive the Second Comforter. Without resonating at the same frequency as He, we are not going to be moving where we can see Him.

Charity is one subject that has been given a great deal of treatment by the Saints. Numerous books exist. One of the best is *Bonds that Make us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves*. (Warner, C. Terry The Arvinger Institute, Inc., Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain Press, 2001.) In it Professor Warner not only discusses charity, but does so in a remarkably readable way. It is a book worth studying. In it he reaches into the nature of sin itself and demonstrates how charity can cure it.

Many Church authorities have spoken on charity, as well. The subject is amply treated elsewhere, and does not need to be discussed at length here. But there is an aspect of charity we need to discuss. We do not think of it as a lack of charity. It is a defect only charity can cure, though it is not often thought of in that context.

Criticism of fellow Saints has almost become a cottage industry. There is a widely held attitude the Saints should be better than they are, and that attitude has led to open criticism of the Saints by the Saints. Semi-apostate writings pass as good social commentary. Mildly adopting the role of accuser is considered by some to be sophisticated and intelligent. Some think that being a little critical of the Saints, and the Church and the presiding authorities, shows that you have "independence of thought."

This is wrong. The Saints are just as they should be. They are human, frail, weak and vulnerable. They need your example and your encouragement. They do not need your criticism and judgment piled on top of the other discouragements facing them as Latter-day Saints living in the latter-days. These times are tough. No one has it easy. Saints struggle. That is as it should be. You are here to help them, not to condemn them. Christ said He came into the world to save the world, not to condemn it. Imitate Him. Do something to avoid condemning His Saints. He doesn't condemn them, so why should you? The Saints deserve your mercy.

The rhetorical criticism seems to raise a notch when some pseudointellectual Saints speak about the presiding authorities of the Church. The Brethren who preside over the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints deserve your support, prayers and confidence, not your judgment and criticism. If they fail or err, forgive them and sustain them with your prayers. You fail. You err. If you want to be forgiven of that in your life, then forgive them for their failings and errors.

You may think you could do a better job than your bishop or stake president. You



might be right. But they were called, not you. When they were called you were asked to sustain them. If they fail in their calling, that is their stewardship to report on and be held accountable for. You will not have to answer for any of their shortcomings.

But you will have to account for how you behaved toward the presiding authorities. You will have to justify how you “sustained” them when they presided over you. A good deal, if not all, of a presiding officer’s deficiencies can be covered by a faithful quorum, society, group, ward, or stake. You are accountable for you. If you can help them succeed, then you should do so. Support them the way you would want to be supported if you had the calling. This is what Christ taught.<sup>232</sup> If you want to receive an audience with Him, it will come only as you do as He has taught and shown you how to act.

The seriousness of this issue is reflected in the Temple covenants. Refraining from “evil speaking of the Lord’s anointed” should be given its broadest possible application. Included within the broadest of the definitions of the “Lord’s anointed” would be any Saint who had received their Temple anointings. If you have covenanted to refrain from speaking evil of them, then that covenant should be honored by keeping your tongue when speaking of your fellow Saint. And all the more so when speaking of the presiding authorities who have a double claim on your speaking about them. For they not only are anointed in the Temple as all Saints who receive those rites are, but they are further “anointed” by your sustaining vote and by ordination to office as a General Authority in the Church.<sup>233</sup>

It is a serious matter, therefore, to treat your fellow Saint and the presiding authorities with critical and judgmental disregard. They deserve better. More importantly, however, you covenanted to give them better. The failure to do that is more serious a failing than you may have realized. Treat them charitably and repent, if need be, of evil speaking about them.

It is within us all to live a charitable life. If you do, the rest of these things will take care of themselves. Be content with the challenges you already face in your life. Calling Church authorities into question is an unnecessary distraction from the issues you should be dealing with.

Work on the things in your life that need attention. Criticism of Church leaders or members from afar is just not one of the things you need to crowd into your life. Let them go in peace, and without your judgment and censure. Support them with your prayers. They will do better with your charity than they will with your complaints.

As Alma taught us, while wishing he could do more: “But behold, I am a man, and do sin in my wish; for I ought to be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto me.” (Alma 29: 3.) That’s it, you know. You “ought to be content.” Both content with your own life and with the lives of others who are trying to live the Gospel.

Christ wisely taught us: “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” (Matt. 10: 39.) “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (Matt. 16: 25.) Helping others without regard to their “worthiness” is liberating.<sup>234</sup> Supporting Church leaders without regard to their individual talents is liberating, as well. More importantly, it is one of the

necessary steps to receiving the Second Comforter.

The purpose of these teachings is not to start a debate over the “highest good” or the “meaning of life.” It is far more practical than that. Christ did not offer us theology, but a way of conduct. He offers a way of living.

Truth and light are not acquired by study alone.<sup>235</sup> If they were, the scholars would be the greatest among us. Scholars are often rebellious, proud, contrary and discontent. They question truth, but rarely find it. You can find scholars among the least content people in the Church. Apostates include many scholars among their ranks. Scholars in our own day include Dallin Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve on the one hand, and D. Michael Quinn on the other hand—the one a teacher of righteousness, the other excommunicated. If scholarship alone could confer truth and light, we would not see this gross dichotomy. So scholarship is no guarantee of greater enlightenment. Often it is the guarantee of the opposite.

Truth and light are acquired by living a life in tune with the things Christ has asked us to do. The commandments are themselves revelations of God and His nature. By obeying them, you begin to resonate at the same frequency as He resonates. You begin to find harmony in His teachings. You begin to “see” things as they really are.

It is an odd thing, but it really works. The process is marvelously democratic. Anyone can receive the same results. All they need do is follow the same steps. Light and truth come to even the most uneducated, if they will heed Christ’s commandments.

The view into heaven is as thin as the razor’s edge. You must be perfectly perpendicular to this world to see through that narrow opening. But when you are, eternity itself opens to your view. It is a veil, and not a wall, to make it possible to pass through. It is you that must change and align yourself to the opening if you want a view of what is to be seen there. You cannot readjust the opening. You can only realign yourself.

Charity is not an option. It is a requirement. When you meet that requirement, you will conform to another of the things which are required by Him to see His face and know that He lives.

Show charity to the Saints. Give it to the Church authorities. Rather than judge or dismiss them, pray for, sustain and support them. It will please God and relieve you of yet another difficult, self-imposed test that might prevent you from surviving the Day of Judgment.