

LOVE AS BRETHREN (1 Peter 3:8) (II)

Sermon to the saints at Westboro Baptist Church, November 12, 2017

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:8-9.

It is my privilege to offer additional words of exhortation concerning what it means to “love as brethren.” The first half of this sermon was delivered November 5, 2017.

Who does this rule, to “love as brethren,” apply to? Every member of the Westboro Baptist Church no matter how old or how young, how rich or how poor, how experienced or not, how skilled or unskilled, etc. See **2 Thessalonians 1:11-12**: “*Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*” And **Romans 12:6-8** “*Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*” “*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*” (James 1:22).

The example of Christ should strongly influence and engage us to “love as brethren.” See **John 13:34**: “*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*” **John 15:12**: “*This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*” **1 John 3:16**: “*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*”

It is our blessed privilege and duty to communicate to our brethren in spiritual things.

Matthew 4:4: “*But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*” Last week we covered communicating things our brethren need for the necessities of life. Where and what is written referenced in **Matthew 4:4**. Answer: **Deuteronomy 8:3**. However, think always context, context, context. “*All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.*” **Deuteronomy 8:1-3**.

Our Lord Jesus Christ promised at **John 16:13**: “*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*” You know that that Spirit will drop things into our minds from the word

of God when faced with this or that difficulty, trial, or testing. And certainly you also know that as fellow-members of this body we are given words to speak to our brethren, in such times, which have been dropped into our minds, for that purpose. **Proverbs 15:23:** “*A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!*” **Isaiah 50:4:** “*The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.*” If you have the tongue of the learned, and those called to salvation do, to one degree or another, for the love of the brethren speak that word in season to that brother that is weary.

Proverbs 25:11: “*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.*” Gill says: “‘a word spoken on its wheels’: that proceeds aright, keeps due order, is well circumstanced as to matter, method, time, place, and persons; a discourse well put together, properly pronounced, roundly, easily, and fluently delivered to proper persons, and adapted to their circumstances; and “seasonably” spoken, as the Targum and many versions render it.” This word picture is designed to communicate the most valuable and precious commodity. In summary, “every word that is with grace, and ministers grace to the hearer, and is for the use of edifying.” – Gill.

Friends we need grace to help in time of need (**Hebrews 4:16**), which by definition is all along our pilgrimage; and in many instances it comes by the hand of our fellow laborers by edifying words. By definition edifying words come from the Bible.

It is our duty to communicate in spiritual things (**1 Corinthians 2:13**), to mutual comfort and edification. “*Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.*” (**1 Thessalonians 5:11**). We are granted the privilege to speak often one to another about divine things. “*Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.*” (**Malachi 3:16**) We should declare to each other what God has done for our souls. “*Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.*” (**Psalm 66:16**). We are permitted to communicate spiritual light and knowledge in the mysteries of grace; and according to the gift we have received, to minister it to one another, and to build up one another in our most holy faith. **1 Corinthians 2:7:** “*But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.*” **1 John 1:7:** “*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*” **1 Peter 4:10:** “*As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*” **Jude 1:20-21:** “*But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*” **Colossians 2:2:** “*That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.*” **Colossians 3:16** “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*” **Ephesians 4:29:** “*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*”

It is our honor and duty to watch over one another.

The relation that members of this church stand in to each other constrain us to love as brethren; being fellow citizens of the same family, are brethren to each other, and make one "brotherhood," which we should "love." **1 Peter 2:17:** *"Love the brotherhood."* We are members one of another. **1 Corinthians 12:13, 25-27.** *"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...That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."*

One of the ways in which we manifest our love one toward another is to watch over one another that we *"put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,"* **Romans 13:14.** *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* **Galatians 3:27.** *"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."* **Ephesians 4:24.** *"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering."* **Colossians 3:10-12.** We are to warn them that are unruly, or err from the rule of the word, and recover them from any evil way they seem to be going into. (**1 Thessalonians 5:14:** *"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all.";* **2 Timothy 2:26:** *"And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."*)

We are to also watch over each other, lest any of us receive any least notion contrary to the gospel of Christ (**Galatians 1:8-9:** *"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."*)

We are to *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."* (**Hebrews 12:14-15**) We should not suffer sin to lie upon a brother or sister; but rebuke and admonish them for it, according to the gospel rule, first alone, and then, if such rebuke doesn't succeed, to do it with, and before others. **Leviticus 19:17:** *"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him."* **Psalm 141:5:** *"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities."* I'm happy to report that our brother Samuel will provide good words on this gospel rule when he stands before you with words of admonition in the near future. Our rebukes and admonitions should be in love, and with much tenderness, as well as faithfulness; such that are fallen, whether into immorality or error, should be endeavored to be restored by those who are spiritual, in the spirit of meekness, as **Galatians 6:1** says: *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."*

It is incumbent on members of churches to bear with one another.

Mutual love is an evidence of being disciples of Christ. **John 13:35**: *“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”*

“Charity beareth all things,” 1 Corinthians 13:7. John Gill says that this verse identifies: “[t]he burdens of fellow Christians, and so fulfils the law of Christ, which is the law of love; the infirmities of weak believers, and the reproaches and persecutions of the world: or “covers all things,” as it may be rendered, even a multitude of sins, as charity is said to do, #1Pe 4:8 not by conniving at them, or suffering them to be upon a brother; but having privately and faithfully reproved for them, and the offender being brought to a sense and acknowledgment of them, he freely forgives them as trespasses against him, covers them with the mantle of love, and industriously hides and conceals them from others.” As further explication of this I refer you to our brother Steve’s sermon on May 28, 2017.

The strong are to bear the infirmities of the weak (**Romans 15:1**); and we all to bear one another’s burdens (**Galatians 6:2**), and to forbear (to cover the faults of others) with each other, and not bear hard on one another, considering the patience, forbearance, and longsuffering of God to us. See, for example, **Matthew 18:12**: *“How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?”*

It becomes us to forgive one another, as Christ, and God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven us; and especially when repentance is declared and discovered, then forgiveness should be extended, not only to seven times, but to seventy times seven; for if we forgive not, neither will our heavenly Father forgive our trespasses. **Ephesians 4:32**: *“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”* **Mark 11:26**: *“But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”* **Matthew 18:21-22**: *“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”*

On March 15, 2015, I presented a sermon: Charity Beareth All Things, 1 Corinthians 13:7. I refer you to that for further explication on this subject.

It is the duty of members of churches to pray for one another.

1Th 5:25 *“Brethren, pray for us.”*

Colossians 1:9: *“For this cause we also, since the day we heard [of your faith in Jesus Christ], do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.”*

As we have all one common Father (**Malachi 2:10**), who is attentive to our supplications (**Psalm 18:6**; **Psalm 31:2**; **Daniel 9:18**), and is able and willing to help us in our times of need (**Psalm 37:40**; **Hebrews 4:16**), we are directed to address him in this manner, saying, *“Our Father, which art in heaven”* (**Matthew 6:9**); and are instructed in **Ephesians 6:18**: *“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”* and particularly when they are in any distress, inward or outward. **Psalm 120:1**: *“In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.”* **Isaiah 25:4**: *“For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.”*

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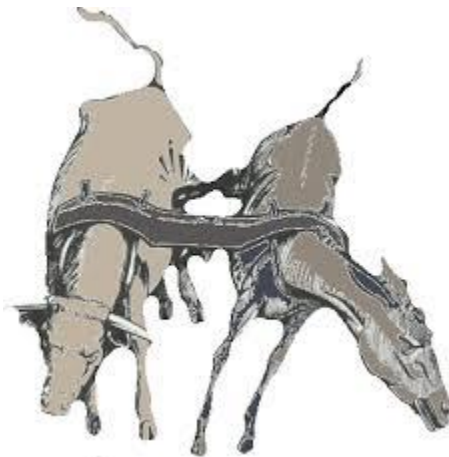
We should pray that we may be fitted for the work which the Lord has given us (**Colossians 1:12**), be assisted in it (**Psalms 86:17; Isaiah 41:10-20**), and it be made useful to our souls to be saved thereby (**1 Corinthians 1:21**). We should pray for each of the members of this church, that they may have their various wants supplied (**Philippians 4:19**); that they may grow in grace and spiritual knowledge (**2 Peter 3:18**); be kept faithful (**Ephesians 1:1**), and preserved blameless, to the coming of Christ. **1 Thessalonians 5:23**: *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* **Jude 1:24-25**: *“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”*

It is necessary for us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and in particular for the hill of Zion, to which we belong, that peace may be within our walls, and prosperity in our dwellings. **Psalms 122:6-8**: *“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.”*

“Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.” **Romans 15:30**.

It becomes church members to separate themselves from the men of the world, and not touch persons and things which are defiling.

We in this church state are as a *“garden inclosed”* (**Song of Solomon 4:12**); we are a separate people (**2 Corinthians 6:17**), and should dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations (we dwell in God, in Christ, in the house of God, and with one another, separately and distinctly from the world: **Numbers 23:9**) or the people of a vain and carnal world (unregenerate men; **1 Corinthians 3:4**); we are called out of the world (**Hebrews 11:8**), and therefore should not be unequally yoked with the men of it. **2 Corinthians 6:14-16**: *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*



In the illustration provided there is an ox yoked together with a donkey; the verse and picture is an allusion to **Deuteronomy 22:10**: **“Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.”** The point of the whole matter suggests a strong argument in general against having any fellowship with unbelievers in anything sinful and criminal, whether in worship or in manner of life.

No yoking together with men who are unrighteous, ignorant, lawless, disobedient, dead, and profane sinners, with whom we can have no profitable communion. And there is this: **2 Thessalonians 3:6**: **“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”**

In conversation (which often times, and here, means manner of life) we are to abstain from sinful men; not that they are to have no commerce nor correspondence with them in civil things, for then, as the apostle says, we **“must needs go out of the world”** (**1 Corinthians 5:10**). We are not to join with them in their sinful practices, but bear a testimony against them. **Isaiah 43:10**: **“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.”**

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” **Ephesians 4:17-19.**

We do not walk with them in the same paths of sin and folly; nor keep up any intimate contact and maintain a familiar association with them; knowing, that “evil communications corrupt good manners”. **“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.”** **1 Corinthians 15:33-34.**

And read these verses with me, friends:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” **Romans 16:17.**

We know the names of these persons; they’re the source of much grief. AVOID THEM! If you know they are on a certain street or at a certain location—GO THE OTHER WAY! GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO AVOID THEM.

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.” **1 Timothy 6:3-5.**

If you see them go the other way as fast as humanly possible. In this day with the vehicles we have; we should only smell rubber and hear the screeching sound of tires accelerating the opposite direction. Or, as John Trapp puts it: “Stand off, keep at a distance, as you would from one that hath a plague sore.”

“A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.” Titus 3:10-11

The Greek word means to turn or twist out, tear up, turn inside out, invert, to change for the worse, corrupt. (See Strong’s Concordance).

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” 2 John 1:10-11.

JFB say the Greek implies “when any comes, as they will.” They do come, they have come, and they will come again among us, brothers and sisters. We don’t keep company with them; we don’t bid them God’s speed.

Church members should be constant in assembling together for religious worship.

It is love as brethren which makes communion in the church delightful and comfortable, as well as honorable;

“A Song of degrees of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.” Psalm 133:1-3

On the contrary, nothing is more uncomfortable and dishonorable, as well as nothing is more pernicious and ruinous to a church state, than where there is not love of brethren.

“But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” Galatians 5:15.

The love of brethren in this respect, assembling together, it is remarked of the members of the first Christian church, to their honor, that ***“they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers,” Acts 2:42.*** That is, they constantly attended on hearing the doctrines of the apostles, which they gladly received and persevered in; and kept up their communion with them and one another, and were not missing at the Lord’s Supper, and at times of public prayer. But not much later, an evil manner, a bad custom prevailed among some of those Christian Hebrews, of which the apostle takes notice:

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Hebrews 10:24-25

Provoking to love and good works is impossible if you’re not here. This is a custom of bad consequence, both to communities and particular persons; for what one may do, every one may do, and in due course public worship ceases; and such a practice is very prejudicial and harmful to individuals.

Our brother Brent sent mass mailings with a clarion warning on behalf of our Church to those erstwhile brethren calling themselves “Primitive Baptists” about their AWOL status in the wars of the Lord for the cause of God and truth in the earth. We were attempting to provoke them to love and good works. It is with

great sadness that I report that their silence was deafening. Not a single response received from them. That letter is on our web page and you should read it: all 22 colorful pages chock-full of Bible verses. The Primitive Baptists have wickedly departed from the truth, including by departing from the assembling of themselves together on a universal scale. These modern Primitive Baptists are not your Gilbert Beebe Primitive Baptists. A large amount of the mailing – more than 1/3rd of the 400 sent -- were returned as undeliverable; marked as “moved and left no forwarding address” or “building no longer exists.”



In 1778, in Orange, Virginia, Primitive Baptist pastor John Leland met with the Primitive Baptists and John Madison; upon the occasion to elect a representative from Virginia to the Constitutional Convention for these United States. Leland had the votes; but he wanted to do the good work of a preacher of the gospel. Madison, in order to get elected, had to promise John Leland and the Primitive Baptists of Virginia that the Constitution of the United States would guarantee freedom of religion. Madison did promise and did get elected and the U.S. Constitution did contain the freedom of religion in the First Amendment. That First Amendment has been very helpful in our street ministry. God wrought that work. (See picture above of the Leland-Madison Memorial Park in Orange, Virginia).

Paulette and I were in Virginia a couple of years ago, and we looked for a Primitive Baptist church in one of the towns near the Shenandoah Mountains. We found one. What sadness I had in surveying the scene: prominently displayed on the front door was their meeting **time**. It went something like this: “We meet once every other year on the 30th day of February.” The place was deserted. I could imagine hearing Brent’s mailing drop through their front door mail slot with the sound reverberating off of the walls as it hit the ground in that completely empty space. I thought I could see Brent’s mailing as I peeked through their mail slot at the pile of lonely mail on the floor. The Primitive Baptists have forsaken the assembling of themselves en masse, in complete disregard for Hebrews 10:24-25 and other clear Bible admonition. The Primitive Baptist pride themselves on not assembling together. Great trouble and distress of soul follow upon that practice. They should re-name their whole group: “The church of stony ground hearers.” (See Mark Chapter 4). It is dangerous to indulge to an indifference to, and to any degree of neglect, the service of God in his house.

There should be no respect of persons among members of churches.

This love of members one to another ought to be "fervent," and it should be "unfeigned," and without dissimulation, “*And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*” 1 Peter 4:8. “*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit*

unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” 1 Peter 1:22. And it should be universal, love to all the saints, weaker as well as stronger, poor as well as rich, “Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints.” Ephesians 1:15.

“My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons[?] For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.” (James 2:1-9)

When we meet together on church affairs, with regard to rich or poor, greater or lesser gifts; there should be no domineering, dictatorial, haughty or rudely arrogant conduct or attitude, no bullying, nor any disdainful or contemptuous pride used; no pretense of superiority one over another, we being on an equal footing, in the same relation to one another, regardless if we are an “elder” or “deacon” or some other position in the church. *“But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” Matthew 20:26-27.*

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service ... Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; ... Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.” Romans 12:1, 10, and 16.

It behooves us to strive together for the faith of the gospel, and earnestly to contend for it.

We owe pursuant to this love for brethren to not part with any of the truths of Christ and doctrines of grace; and should be careful to keep the ordinances as they were delivered, and not suffer any “innovations” as to the matter and substance of them, nor as to the manner in which they are to be observed; and we should walk in them all with great unanimity and constancy, and should stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not be entangled with any yoke of bondage, nor suffer any human inventions and unwarranted practices to be imposed upon us.

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 1:3-4)

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.” (Hebrews 3:12-14)

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.” (1 Corinthians 11:23-24)

“Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” (Ecclesiastes 7:29)

“Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” (Philippians 3:16)

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” (Galatians 5:1)

It becomes us to be examples to each other in a holy walk and conversation, and in an observance of all the duties of religion.

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” 1 Peter 1:13-16

The above “wherefore” is that God has provided for his elect an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. (1 Peter 1:1-12).

Where is it written?

Leviticus 11:44: *“For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”*

Leviticus 19:2: *“Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.”*

Leviticus 20:7: *“Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God.”*

In the tabernacle in the wilderness and under the Mosaic Code the High Priest was to be crowned with “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” before he entered into the holy of holies on behalf of the people, his brethren. **Exodus 28:36:** *“And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.”*

During Christ's millennial reign, everything shall be devoted to the Lord. Check the context (the before and after) of **Zechariah 14:20** *"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD."*

Holiness becomes the house of God, and the members of it. **Psalm 93:5**: *"Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever."* Our light should shine both in the church and in the world, that others beholding our good works, may imitate them, and glorify God:

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16).

We that name the name of Christ, and profess to be his, should depart from all iniquity, doctrinal and practical:

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity...If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Timothy 2:19,21)

We should be concerned to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16. (See Charles' sermon on this verse.)

We must show out of a good conversation our works with meekness of wisdom:

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth." James 3:13-14.

We should strive to occupy fully in a becoming manner all stations and relations in life, civil or economical, in the world and family; as of magistrates and subjects, of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants; as well as in the church, as pastors/elders, deacons, and private members, and be careful to perform all duties relative to them; that so our fellow members may not be grieved nor stumbled; nor the good ways of God be evil spoken of; nor the name of God, and his doctrine, be blasphemed; nor any occasion given to the adversary to speak reproachfully. By a strict attention to these several duties of religion, we will show that we behave ourselves in the house of God as we ought to do.

Paul, in most of his writing carefully detailed these requirements of followers of Christ. Every member of this church fills at least one of those positions he addresses. Search it out to see that it is true and read the context of this verse in the searching: **Romans 14:21**: *"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."*

On each of these examples of what it means to love as brethren dozens of sermons could be written, and if the Lord tarries and the Lord willing they likely will in this house. I've touched briefly upon these matters, and hope the dozens of verses I have cited to will lead to your own study. The promise of our Lord Jesus

Christ is that the world will know that we are His disciples by the love we have for the brethren. Therefore, let us obtain doctorate degrees on this subject at Candlestick University (Revelation 1:20), with an eye towards the faithful promise that “*all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.*” (Isaiah 54:13).

I love you. Amen.