

Christians need the love of the brethren. None so strong, so brave, as to face the enemies of his soul alone. The strongest are made the stronger by the fact there clusters around them the love of the brethren. If this be so for the strong, if the dauntless ones whose lion like hearts would lead them on, though none stood by them, what for the many trembling ones, the fearful ones, the weak ones? What will not this brotherly love do for the tempted and tried one? Many a one remembering the fact that he stands not alone, that he lives in the affections of his brethren, that while he loves them he is loved by them, even in his weakest moments can use the apostle Paul's language: "When I am weak then am I strong." The knowledge of this love is a shield to the tempted, an inspiration to the weak and discouraged. There is also in brotherly love a grand restraining power. Its golden chains are keeping many near the cross to day. Its heavenly influences are leading men upward. Its pure atmosphere makes the church more and more like Heaven. We shall not fully know here what the love of brethren has done for us; nor shall we know how much real injury has been done the cause of God in the failures to obey the command, "love one another."

Christians are to regard in the whole human family a universal brotherhood, and are to have love for the whole world. They are not supposed to ask who is my brother, for man needing human sympathy, needing as well an interest in the atoning blood, wherever found, under whatever conditions or circumstances, as also those with whom united by a living faith to Christ are their brothers. As such they are to do for all, all the good they can. But there is a sense in which members of the "household of faith" are most intimately connected with each other; ties invisible and tender, even ties of the most sacred blood. A special relationship, indeed "ye are brethren." The word of God emphasizes the fact of this relationship and on this ground enjoins the performance of sacred duties. There are, and long will continue to be, worldly distinctions, such as those resulting from birth, the position given by wealth and education, but in the church these distinctions in a great measure are lost sight of, in the church all stand on an equality, "One in Christ." This oneness,—too often too sadly forgotten—the closeness of the relationship when we are "severally members one of another," demands and must have love one for the other. Love so unselfish that there is seen in ever present exhibition "in honor preferring one another."

Brethren for this Unity, this oneness among the members

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