

calls *the love of the brethren*. The people of God,—those who are united to Jesus, and have his spirit dwelling in them,—those who, having received Christ, have “had power given them to become the sons of God, being born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,”—constitute a family distinct from the world; and “brotherly love” is the affection subsisting between members of the family.

This sentiment is often set forth in Scripture as a critical mark of genuine godliness. If the people of the Lord Jesus are regarded by me, not merely with that benevolence which I ought to feel towards all men, but with a peculiar complacency, founded upon the circumstance that they are the people of the Lord Jesus; if I love them, not for any thing which they may chance to have in common with unconverted persons,—not simply because they are my relations, or because I may have received temporal benefits from them, or because they possess those manners which, even when divorced from genuine godliness, are fitted to conciliate esteem and to win the heart,—but because they are Christians, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and carrying the mark of the Lamb in their foreheads;—I am warranted to regard this as evidencing the reality of my own connection with the Saviour. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God,”—that is, love to the brethren is produced by divine influence,—“and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.” “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.”

On the important subject of brotherly love, I purpose now to offer a few remarks, and I shall arrange what I have