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## II.

### THE LOVE OF THE BRETHREN.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."—1 JOHN iii. 14.

THE duty of a Christian is, in one sense, to love all mankind,—those who are yet unconverted and the enemies of the cross, as well as those with whom he has fellowship in the Gospel. The command is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and our neighbour, as the parable of the good Samaritan shows, is any one to whom we have it in our power to do a kindness, though he may be an utter stranger to us, may belong to a different nation, and may profess a faith diametrically at variance with our own. So wide is the law of love that it includes even those who cherish and display the bitterest hostility towards ourselves. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." But along with a wide affection, embracing many objects within its extensive circle, there may co-exist an affection of narrower range, and proportionally greater intensity. Accordingly, while it is the duty of a Christian to desire the welfare of all his fellow-men, he is required to cherish a special affection towards his fellow-Christians; and this is what Scripture