

September 2

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

KNOWLEDGE is to be highly esteemed in the church, and to be regarded as

KNOWLEDGE

R5686 "We must grow in love. The Apostle tells us that we might have all knowledge and yet be as nothing. Knowledge alone will not suffice. However, knowledge is the basis of faith and obedience. Without knowledge we could accomplish nothing. Knowledge shows us the will of God on the one hand and the selfishness that appertains to the fallen human nature on the other. It shows us the love and generosity that belong to the new nature. It shows us the Lord's character--the character that we are to imitate. We are to be "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us"--created us as New Creatures."

OBEYING THE TRUTH

R4766 "*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.

THE word "souls" in this text stands, as usual, for the *being*, and not merely for the *physical* being, which is included. The purifying, therefore, refers to a thorough cleansing of the heart (the mind, the will, the actuating intentions, or motives), as the effect of such purification will be manifest in the outward life and conduct."

R2517 "*He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he [the Lord] is pure.*"--1 John 3:3.

The hope mentioned is that we have been adopted as sons of God, with the promise that if faithful we shall be like him and see him as he is and share his glory. As our minds and hearts expand with this hope and we begin to measure its lengths and breadths, its heights and depths, it surely does set before us the Heavenly Father's love and the Redeemer's love in rainbow colors and we more and more love the Father and the Son because they first loved us. The divine form of love becomes more and more our ideal; and as we seek to reciprocate it and to copy it, the cleansing and purifying of our hearts follows: for looking into the perfect law of liberty -- Love -- we become more and more ashamed of all the meanness and selfishness which the fall brought to us. And, once seen in their true light as works of the flesh and of the devil, all anger, malice, wrath, envy, strife, evil-speaking, evil-surmising, backbiting and slander become more and more repulsive to us. And finally when we see that such as to any degree sympathize with these evil qualities are unfit for the Kingdom and to every good work worthless, we flee from these evils of the soul as from deadly contagion. Our hearts (wills, intentions) become pure at once and we set a guard not only upon our lips but also upon our thoughts -- that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts may be acceptable to the Lord...

Justice is *purity* of heart,--freedom from injustice.

Righteousness is *purity* of heart,--freedom from unrighteousness.

an evidence of progress, of growth; for none can grow strong in the Lord and in the power of His might--in grace--unless he grows also in knowledge. We properly esteem most highly those whose love for the Lord and for His Truth are evidenced by zeal in the study of His Word, and whose favor with God is evidenced by their being guided

Love is *purity* of heart,--freedom from selfishness...

"Seeing ye have *purified* your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit [the spirit of the truth] unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart, fervently."-- 1 Pet. 1:22...

Purity came not merely through *hearing* the truth, nor through *believing* the truth, but through *obeying* it."

R2807 "Peter contrasts the two loves in one verse, saying, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto [the extent of] unfeigned love [*phileo*] of the brethren, see that ye [go on to] *love* [*agapee*] one another with a pure heart, fervently."-- 1 Pet. 1:22...

It is *agapee* that is misrendered "charity" in the Apostle's great discourse on love in 1 Cor 13:1,2,3,4,8,13;14:1. Here he styles *agapee* love the principal thing of Christian character, the crown of all Christian graces, telling us that without it all sacrifices and self-denials would be valueless in God's esteem, while with it as the inspiring motive our feeblest efforts are acceptable through Christ."

R4766 "Now, having gotten along thus far in the good way, the Apostle shows us that there is yet an advance step of love, and states what next we must do in order to keep our hearts pure: "See that ye love one another with a pure heart *fervently*." We must not only regard them as brethren and give them "unfeigned love," but should recognize the principle underlying *our* relationship to the Lord and *their* relationship to the Lord; how they, like ourselves, are New Creatures in Christ; and this should give us great sympathy and a desire to do everything we can to encourage them, to help them.

DISINTERESTED LOVE -- STRONG AND INTENSE

This love is different from the other love -- brotherly love. It is disinterested love; so warm, so intense, that we should be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. This love is the kind exemplified in our Heavenly Father. While we were yet sinners he loved us. So the love of Jesus is unselfish, pure, benevolent; a love which undertakes to do good for us for our own sakes, not from a hope of getting anything from us.

The Apostle proceeds to say that we should not only have this love, but that we should have it with fervency, warmth, ardor; not with a semi-indifference, but with a real interest in each other's welfare -- the rich as well as the poor; the educated as well as the ignorant. Our love should go out to these as we see any lack in them that we could supply -- rendering assistance of any kind; using always, of course, discretion, for love learns to be wise, and to take into consideration our motives while we endeavor to do them good.

The Apostle suggests that we see to it that this is our own experience; not merely that it is a principle which we recognize, but

more and more into the deep things of God. Nevertheless, as in the earthly family we love and care for the babes and immature, so also in the household of faith the little ones and the dwarfs are to be cared for and loved and helped that they may grow strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Z.'03-207R3219:6

that we should give heed to ourselves that this should be accomplished in us, in our own lives. It would not be natural to have that benevolence of mind which would practice forgiveness of those who trespass against us. But when we think of the fact that the whole race is fallen and degraded through heredity, it should make us sympathetic; if some are more depraved, we should have the more sympathy for them. As we think sympathetically along those lines, our sympathetic love will increase; as we practice sympathetic love the New Creature develops.

Our Lord Jesus says, "Love one another, as I have loved you." Set this standard before you. Our love for the brethren might, at first, be merely obedience in following this command; but as we follow on, obeying the Divine command, our love increases, our sympathy expands. The Apostle says we must see to it that we do not neglect this. If we fail to heed this admonition we are not of the kind that the Father is choosing...

STRENGTH IN THE LORD PROPORTIONATE TO KNOWLEDGE OF HIM

No one can grow strong in the Lord unless he grows also in knowledge. We properly esteem most highly those whose love for the Lord and for his Truth are evidenced by their zeal in the study of his Word, and whose favor with God is manifested by their being guided more into the deep things of God.

Nevertheless, the weaker ones of the household of faith are to be cared for and loved and helped that they may grow strong in the Lord. And just here the Apostle offers another word of counsel, saying, "We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." (Rom. 15:1.) This does not imply that we should not expostulate with such a one and endeavor to help him get rid of his infirmity. This we should do, in the spirit of meekness and kindness, while we endure with gentleness the trial of our patience, not seeking to please ourselves, but rather to help a weaker brother or sister. "Let every one of us," as the Apostle enjoins, "please his neighbor [brother] *for his good, to edification*"--i.e., not by simply ignoring his fault as though we considered it all right, but, while kindly urging him to strive against it, still humbly and patiently submitting to the discomfort it brings to us.

If this spirit prevails among the members of the Lord's Body, the members will all have a mutual love and a mutual care one for another--a care which seeks to encourage and strengthen all that is good and to discourage all that is unbecoming, and a love which throws its mantle over a deformity and endeavors to conceal a fault, rather than to expose the weaker brother to the reproach of others.

For such self-sacrificing love how necessary is the spirit of humility and gentleness and patience and faith! How forceful are the Master's words, "Except ye be converted [from the spirit of the world to the

Spirit of Christ] and become as little children [in meekness and teachableness], ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven."--Matt. 18:1-6."

(Prov 27:9 KJV) "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel."

SM697 "THE BROTHERHOOD OF CHRIST *"Love as brethren; be tender-hearted, be humble-minded, not rendering evil for evil, reviling for reviling, but contrariwise blessing. For hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing."*--1 Peter 3:8,9. R.V....

The Apostle Peter in our text points out that the Lord's followers should love as brethren -- as proper brethren -- as true brethren ought to love. He points out to them that this will mean tender-heartedness, humble-mindedness and forbearance to resent injuries and revilings. That the proper brotherly love would not only submit to all this without retaliation, but on the contrary would return a blessing...

"He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Crucial words these for the brethren! Let us not lose their import, their value, let us test our hearts, our standing with the Lord, by our love or our lack of love for the brethren, as the Apostle here by inspiration directs...

"WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS!"...

"What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy living and godliness--looking for and hasting unto the day of Christ!" (2 Peter 3:11,12.) How true! When we remember our own imperfections and blemishes and how much the Lord must overlook and forgive in us, how generous it should make us in our sentiments toward the brethren who are with us seeking to walk contrary to the course of this world, a self-sacrificing, self-denying life! How their weaknesses should appeal to us! How their struggle should call forth our sympathy and words of encouragement! How we should realize that they, like ourselves, have the opposition of the world, the flesh and the Adversary! And how we should resolve that by the Lord's grace they should have amongst the brethren everything to console and uplift and

encourage the new nature and nothing to discourage it! How kind our words and deeds, how thoughtful for their welfare this should make us!

Let us more and more approximate this glorious standard set before us in the Gospel. And let us remember furthermore that while this love of the brethren is specially emphasized and specially to be considered a criterion for the Lord's Household, yet there is another step just beyond; namely, to love our enemies, to do good to them that despitefully use us and persecute us. Indeed, some of the strongest of our difficulties sometimes come from brethren--more or less blinded and deluded by the Adversary, who sometimes take such a position as Saul of Tarsus before his eyes opened to the facts of the case.

We must have such a love of the brethren that if they say all manner of evil against us falsely we will still not render evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, as our text directs."

R2446 (1Cor. 13:1-8) "Remember that valuable tho they be, neither *oratory* nor *knowledge* are to be considered amongst the "brethren" as sure proofs of their being in the right way, nor that their influence might not be injurious instead of helpful. The *leading* characteristic to be looked for in everyone accepted as a servant of the Church, to minister in holy things, should be first of all the spirit of love...

The wisdom that is from above is first pure" -- (truthful, honest, sincere, not put on, not used as a garment of light to deceive and to cover up selfishness, malice, hatred, strife; it makes no compromises with sin, impurity, in any shape or form.) It is "peaceable." (So far from being a quarrelsome, bickering disposition, the "new mind" desires peace--it will contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints, but it will not contend simply from a love of contention, a love of strife; on the contrary, the new mind is peaceably inclined, would prefer, so far as possible, to yield a non-essential point in a controversy; it loves its opponents and sympathizes with their difficulties.) It is "gentle" (not rude nor coarse, not rough, in action or word or tone; and if the earthen vessel through which it speaks have these rudenesses by nature ingrained,

the "new nature" regrets them, strives against them, and seeks to conquer them; and where they do injury to others is ready, willing, glad to apologize, and to remove the smart). It is "easy to be entreated" (easy of approach, not haughty, not disdainful, not hard or cruel; yet it is firm on matters of principle -- principles cannot be bended or modified; they belong to God. But while affirming the principles, this spirit of wisdom points out its own willingness to moderation, by acknowledging any good features in its opponent, and by pointing out the reason why no modification is possible in relation to divine laws and principles). It is "full of mercy and good fruits." (It delights in all things prompted by love and kindness; it takes pleasure in doing for others; it takes pleasure, not only in showing mercy to dumb animals under its care, but it especially delights in mercy in dealing with brethren in respect to their faults. It is merciful also in the family, -- not over-exacting, but generous, kind, benevolent. It is generous also with opponents, and those who are contentious, -- not wishing to push a victory, even for the truth, to such a point as would be injurious, hurtful, unmerciful to the antagonist.) It is "without partiality." (It loves the good, the true, where these are found; and opposes the untrue, the impure and the unholy, whether found amongst friends or enemies. Its justice is of the strictest kind, tempered with mercy; it will not approve a fault in a brother, because he is a brother, but would reprove the same with gentleness and meekness, remembering the liability of all to the assaults of the world, the flesh and the devil. It will not fail to see a virtue in an enemy, nor hesitate to acknowledge it. Truth is its standard, not prejudice, not partyism, not sectarianism.) It is "without hypocrisy." (It is thoroughly candid; it needs not to feign love, because it is love; it needs not to put on a kindly exterior and to smother feelings of wrath and envy and strife, for it is without envy, without strife. Such works of the flesh and of the devil have, by the grace of God, been seen to be earthly, sensual, devilish, and have been repudiated, and the heart has been justified, cleansed, sanctified to God, renewed in thought, intention, will, and is now full of the treasure of the holy spirit.)"

R3219 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

INTERESTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED GOD'S PROVIDENCE OVER THE WORLD

Question.--I have recently lost a friend by death, and notice that your teaching seems to be that the Lord's providential care is over the consecrated ones. Am I to get the thought that God had no providential care over the interests of my friend?

Answer.--"His tender mercies are over all his works." (Psa. 145:9.) Hence, in a certain sense, God's providential care attaches to every creature.

"The whole creation is his charge,
But saints are his peculiar care."

When thinking of your friend, consider him as one of the many children of Adam whom God so loved as to give for them his only begotten Son. The redemption price has been paid by our Lord, and the time of deliverance draws near. When it shall have arrived, all the families of the earth will receive a blessing at the hands of him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood. Viewing the matter from this standpoint, there is no human creature that is not a subject of divine providence and care. In speaking of God's providences being over only the consecrated, we referred to his *special* providences of this Gospel age in respect to the calling and election of the Church, the body of Christ. Divine providence deals with this class alone in this Gospel age, favoring them by the call and by the

adversities which will polish and fit them as jewels for the Kingdom. For these, all things shall work together for good, because they love God in an especial sense-- better than they love self or family or houses or lands --yea, better than their own lives.

WHO ARE OUR BRETHERN?

Question.--What should be our attitude toward professing Christians of the various denominations who give evidence of but slight knowledge of the truth, and but slight appreciation of the ransom? Should we consider them brethren in Christ? and should we fellowship them as such? or should we treat them as heathen men and publicans?

Answer.--All who profess love to the Lord Jesus Christ and have faith in him as their Savior--even though their knowledge of his redemptive work be but limited and vague--and whose general conduct is noted as indicating their desire to walk after the spirit and not after the flesh, should be considered and treated as brethren. But when we use the word "brother" we are to remember that amongst believers there are two classes of brethren: (1) Those who have merely pledged themselves to the Lord for a reformation of life, and who are to some extent trusting in the Savior; and (2) those who have gone on and who have consecrated their lives even unto death,

and have been begotten as new creatures by the holy spirit. These are brethren of a different order; the first were typified in the Levites, the last in the priests. Both are our brethren, and both should be treated courteously, kindly, helpfully; but it would be impossible to fellowship the first class in the same manner or degree that we would fellowship the second class. In considering the Church, only the latter should be counted, because the Church is the body of Christ, the Royal Priesthood. Only the latter, therefore, should be expected to participate in the Memorials of the Lord's death, and the pledge of consecration to be dead with him. It is to the first of these classes of brethren (typified by the Levites) that the Apostle addressed the exhortation, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices," etc. (Rom. 12:1.) Those who follow this exhortation and make the sacrificial consecration, thereby become brethren on the highest plane of the spirit, and thus become members of the highest degree of fellowship as

members of the body of the Anointed One.

⁽¹⁾ Knowledge is to be highly esteemed in the Church, and to be regarded as an evidence of progress, of growth; for none can grow strong in the Lord and in the power of his might--in grace--unless he grows also in knowledge. We properly esteem most highly those whose love for the Lord and for his truth are evidenced by zeal in the study of his Word, and whose favor with God is evidenced by their being guided more and more into the deep things of God. Nevertheless, as in the earthly family we love and care for the babes and immature, so also in the household of faith the little ones and the dwarfs are to be cared for and loved and helped that they may grow strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

⁽¹⁾ Sep. 2 Manna, 1Pet. 1:22

R5946 "KEEPING THE LORD'S COMMANDMENTS... The Apostle tells us, "the righteousness of the Law [its real requirement, the spirit of its requirement] is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." (Romans 8:4.) Thus, although not under the Law Covenant, the will of God, which was the spirit of the Jewish Law, is binding upon every Christian in proportion to his knowledge of it.

THE CHRISTIAN'S FIRST AND SECOND COMMANDS

Speaking of the spirit of the Law, applicable to angels, to the world of mankind and to Christians, Jesus declared it to be briefly comprehended in two commandments. The first of these is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, being and strength." The second is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Every Christian and every angel recognizes that Law and feels a responsibility to it to the extent of his ability; but neither angels nor Christians are under the Law Covenant--that covenant was made only with the nation of Israel.

Every follower of Jesus should realize that if he has enlisted under the banner of Divine righteousness and truth he has pledged his very life in this service as a soldier of the Cross. How then could he do less than his very best in loving and serving his Heavenly Father with all his mind, being and strength? How could he decline the Divine requirement to love his neighbor as himself-- to be kind, generous, not selfish? True, the New Creature may find difficulty in devoting all of his mind and strength to the Lord and in dealing in perfect fairness with all his fellow-creatures. But this is the New Creature's desire and intention, and to accomplish which he must strive daily, and war a good warfare against the natural inherited weaknesses of his old nature--his flesh. In proportion to his love for the Lord will be his zeal in this warfare; and proportionate also will be the reward that will be given him in the end by the Heavenly Father.

But what an unseen warfare is being waged amongst the followers of the Lord wherever they are! The world sees not and knows not of this conflict; but it is very real, and the Lord takes note of the loyalty and faithfulness of these covenantors--these who have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice--consecrating their little all of time, talent, influence, prospects. Having consecrated, they are to maintain this attitude of consecration daily, hourly--presenting their bodies "living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, and their reasonable service."--Rom. 12:1.

If weak or fallen according to the flesh, these are to remember that they are no longer fleshly or human beings, and that the weaknesses are not theirs; for they are now New Creatures in Christ Jesus, to whom old things have passed away and all things have become new. They have new ambitions, new ideals, and new relationship with God. They do not love sin, but love righteousness. They hate sin. They have enlisted to death to war a warfare against sin, especially in their own flesh. They have the satisfaction of knowing that while fellowmen might not see their batlings, might not know of the courageous effort they put forth in opposition to sin, yet the Lord looketh not at the outward man, but at the heart, and His judgment is not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit--the mind, the intention, the endeavor. Thus there are some great, valiant soldiers of the Cross, whom the world knows not; but all of these will eventually be crowned and have a share with Jesus in His Kingdom.

THE CHRISTIAN'S THIRD COMMANDMENT

At first it would appear that these two commandments itemized by Jesus would include everything that could be required by justice; and so they do. Justice requires nothing more than what these two commands include. Why then did Jesus give another command--a third one-- a new one, over and above anything that the Divine Law required? We reply that this third commandment is not applicable to any except those who become the disciples of Jesus. This third commandment the Father did not put upon Jesus; He voluntarily put this regulation upon Himself, and laid down His life sacrificially--a thing which no law could justly demand. The Father did not require that Jesus should do this in the sense of commanding Him to do it; but He did require it in the sense that He promised glory, honor, immortality, the Divine nature and the Messianic Kingdom to the saintly One who would enter the Covenant of Sacrifice.

Jesus, therefore, in entering this Covenant of Sacrifice, did *more* than what the Law given to Israel required. Therefore, when pointing out to His disciples the conditions upon which He would be their Advocate, and the conditions upon which He would guarantee to them a share with Himself in the Heavenly things, He specified the importance of this third commandment. "A new commandment I give unto you--that ye love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12.) St. Paul points out that Christ loved us to the extent of dying for us, and that all of the true followers of Jesus, possessed of His Spirit, should likewise count it a joy to

be permitted to lay down their lives in the service of the brethren. "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Gradually the eyes of our understanding have been opening wider and wider to see the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the love of God; and as a result we have been striving more and more to love and to serve our God with all our heart, mind, being, strength. More and more, also, we have learned to appreciate the necessity for dealing justly and kindly with the members of our families, with our neighbors, with all mankind-- loving our neighbors as ourselves. We may have congratulated ourselves on the progress we have been making, and surely we all need some encouragements while battling with the old nature!

THE SOURCE OF OUR SEVEREST TRIALS

But now, behold the New Commandment, requiring a *still greater* devotion to the will of our Father and to the leadership of our Savior! The rule of righteousness is to be observed toward our Heavenly Father and toward all our neighbors; but toward the brethren of the Household of Faith we are to do *more* than the right--we are to *suffer*, we are to *sacrifice* on their behalf, in their interests. "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." Oh, what a searching proposition this Covenant of Sacrifice is! How strange that it should be on behalf of the *brethren* that we should be expected to sacrifice, to lay down our lives!

At first some one might say, "To sacrifice will be a very easy matter when it is done in the interests of the brethren, more so than if done for the world." However, experience shows that many of God's dear people, striving to keep the first two commandments, find it more easy to sacrifice time, influence and strength in the service of the *world* than in the service of the *brethren*. Somehow we are inclined to expect more from the brethren than from others, and inclined to make less allowance for weaknesses in the brethren than in others. There seems to be no condition in which God's people are more tried as respects their spiritual graces than by one another, with one another. It is not merely *theory*; it *proves itself out*.

All over the world there are Class troubles. Truly we read, "the Lord will judge His people," and again, "the Lord your God proveth you"! Testings and siftings are coming on and many of the dear saints of the Lord who have made a Covenant of Sacrifice with Him do not seem to realize that these Class troubles amongst the brethren are means which the Lord permits to test and to demonstrate the characters of His people--their love for Him, His Word, His

will, their justice to all men, doing unto others as they would that they should do to them, and, finally, their spirit of self-sacrifice in respect to what they will do for or bear from the brethren in laying down their lives for them.

EXHORTATIONS TO BROTHERLY LOVE

We fear greatly that some of the Lord's saints, failing to appreciate the situation, are failing to be overcomers in these matters; and that their place in the Royal Priesthood may thus be endangered. We are not rebuking any; we are not finding fault with any. But we encourage all to remember the Covenant of Sacrifice into which we have entered as represented in the Third Commandment -- that we love one another as the Master loved us--even to the extent of dying for us.

If this matter could be rightly appreciated, if more loving sympathy could be felt one for the other, we would not be inclined to impute evil motives to each other's words and conduct. Rather we would be glad to assume that they were sincere, whether we

could agree fully with all their doings and proposals or not. And being full of love for the brethren, our refusal to join with them in what we consider unwise or unscriptural arrangements would be presented in such kind and considerate, sympathetic and gentle terms as would be helpful to them.

Therefore, let us each strive to judge himself, and not to condemn one another. Let us each scrutinize our motives in respect to every *action*, every *word* of life, and especially in all of our *dealings* with the brethren. Let us each assume that the others of the class are as loving and as loyal to the Lord as ourself. Let us each remember that it is a privilege to sacrifice our own preferences and conveniences in favor of the preferences and conveniences of others of the brethren, wherever positive principles would not thereby be infringed; and we may even sacrifice positive principles of justice as respects *our own* interests, if thereby the peace, fellowship and prosperity of the brethren will be conserved.

And even if, despite our every endeavor to the contrary, it should finally seem

necessary for a class to divide, nevertheless *love for the brethren* ought to be the blessed tie that binds, no matter how much the conveniences of the class or other reasons might make it necessary for us to subdivide. "Love as brethren" ought to love. "Be kind, considerate, gentle, one toward another, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."...

As the Apostle has said, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:18) This is a *personal matter*. Each one of us is under this testing. If not yet, sooner or later, *undoubtedly*, this willingness to sacrifice in the interests of the brethren will *prove each one of us* either *loyal, faithful* to our covenant, or *contrariwise*--unfaithful. Let us make this matter of love for the brethren and laying down of our lives for the brethren a matter of personal study and of practical application to our own hearts, minds, thoughts, words, actions. And let us pray for one another, as well as exhort one another along these lines, striving to be filled with our Master's Spirit."

R5501 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY BASED ON PRINCIPLE

WE MUST never forget that our authorization to meet as brethren is the Master's Word: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20.) As this is our charter-right for meeting as the Lord's people, we must concede an equal right under it to all of God's people who may choose to meet in His name at any place and at any time. We should remember the Bible illustration of this principle: On one occasion the twelve disciples had returned from a preaching tour, and St. John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us." (Luke 9:49,50.) This one forbidden by John would correspond well with some now holding meetings other than those which we attend. What did Jesus say? "Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name that can lightly speak evil of Me."--Mark 9:38-40.

Here is a general principle which will serve to guide, to instruct God's people of today respecting His will in similar matters. We, of course, think our arrangements most pleasing to the Lord, or we would not have them so. If others think differently, the responsibility is with them and with the Lord. It is not for us to forbid them, but it is for the Lord to bless them or not to bless them, according to His wisdom in the management of His work.

Some one may suggest, Would not this thought, acted upon, break up the meetings of the Lord's people into very small classes? We reply that this must depend upon the brethren themselves. They have the right to meet in twos and threes or in larger numbers. If they can find it to their advantage to meet in larger groups, no doubt they will be glad to do so. This means a great deal of liberty in the Church within the lines of the word and spirit of Jesus' teaching, directly and through His Apostles.

Brethren meeting as a class should understand that in so doing they properly waive, or make void, some of their personal liberties and privileges. Individual preferences are to be more or less subjected to class preferences. Even the majority of the class should be considerate of the wishes of the minority, and if possible, should

moderate the arrangements, so that all can be accommodated and pleased in respect to speakers, and in respect to place and character of meetings. No one should selfishly consider merely his own preferences and welfare. The spirit of co-operation, the Golden Rule, the spirit of love, should prevail. And as this is true, all those filled with the Spirit of the Master and living close to Him will find fellowship one with another in yielding personal preferences in the interest of the whole number.

CONSCIENCE TO BE RESPECTED

The only things that may not be yielded to the will of the majority are matters of *conscience*. No one is to do what he believes to be sin, injustice, wrong, even though all the remainder of the brethren think it right. And no one is to leave undone what his conscience dictates, even though so directed by all the remainder of the brethren of the class.

Conscience is always to be respected--never to be throttled or violated. Nor is any one who stands faithful to his conscience to be disesteemed therefor by his brethren, even if their consciences view the matter differently. On the contrary, his courage in standing by his convictions is to be considered estimable.

On these principles liberty may be maintained in the Body of Christ; and we shall find blessing in proportion as those of one mind can fellowship with each other. Where fellowship is not maintained, the assembling is neither desirable nor in harmony with the Divine arrangement. But where the brethren find it advantageous to meet in different classes, it will usually be found, we believe, that originally too great restraint of personal liberty was exercised, and that the majority were too careless of the sentiments of the brethren constituting the minority.

But even where it may be found necessary or desirable to have more than one gathering of the Lord's people in one city, it certainly still is true that they should have one heart and one mind, and be of one brotherhood under the Anointed Head. They should consider each other's interests, and do all in their power "to provoke one another to love and to good works."--Hebrews 10:24.

great Creator for guidance."

R5755 "A truly good conscience is one which is well balanced. One may have a scale, for instance, that is perverted either one way or the other. A scale which is rightly adjusted will stand level. It is reliable. And so with a good conscience--it is one which can determine the slightest deviation from God's Law."

R3777 "TRIFLING WITH CONSCIENCE
...Guided in judgment by God's revelation, the Bible, the voice of conscience becomes really the voice of God... The heeding of

R3020 "The voice of conscience must be obeyed: it is at our peril that it is violated... Let conscience be educated; but let its ignorance never be violated. Every violation of conscience is so much of character destruction. All need to remember this in respect to their own consciences as well as in dealing with others..."

R3240 "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death."--Prov. 14:12...

The wise, proper course for all, therefore, is to realize and acknowledge our own insufficiency, unwisdom, and to look to our

the voice of conscience may mean either eternal life or eternal death--the Second Death. And even amongst those who will attain the eternal life the Scriptures show us two classes--the..."little flock" who shall be heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, and the "great company"...

To...the "Great Company" of Revelation 7, conscience will also be the guide... Why will conscience lead them to a lower plane?... Because they have followed the voice of conscience less carefully, with less zeal, with less perseverance, with less appreciation of how much importance depended upon their following it."