

“Let Love Of The Brethren Continue ...”

“... Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are ill-treated as being yourselves also in the body. Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee ...” (Heb. 13:1-5).

These five admonitions preface the beginning of this final chapter of Hebrews. The writer, as a lawyer might do, has eloquently argued from many vantage points the superior nature of the New Covenant of Christ above the covenant through Moses. Now, he has “rested his case,” but before he takes his seat, he offers final exhortations to his readers, some of which relate to arguments earlier made in the letter, but none of which the first five appeals relate to. The whole of this chapter sounds very much as concluding chapters of some of Paul’s letters, lending support (although not conclusive) to the supposition that Hebrews is his work as well.

“Let love of the brethren continue.” How often does Paul, in his letters, command brotherly love! This is, however, not a unique appeal with him for other writers offer similar admonition. Peter wrote, *“Love the brotherhood”* (1 Pet. 2:17); *“Loving as brethren”* (1 Pet. 3:8); *“Add brotherly kindness”* (2 Pet. 1:7). John, the “apostle of love” wrote extensively of brotherly love. The need for brotherly love is evident and very much as shown from the following quote: *“Love covereth a multitude of sins”* (1 Pet. 4:8). And just how is it possible for love to “cover a multitude of sins”? Our love cannot remove the guilt of sins, but in our dealing one with another, one’s love can help us to overlook many flaws and shortcoming in the person whom we love. Among God’s people, love for the brotherhood sadly is frequently lacking. Too often brethren are more prone to criticize and to crucify rather than to overlook the glaring faults seen in others. Quarreling journals, divided churches, and ruptured fellowship attest that this command is often badly neglected.

“Forget not to show love unto strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Early in the letter the role of angels was set forth: *“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do so service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation”* (Heb. 1:14)? Just how and when this is done the writer does not specify but when he stated that some have entertained angels unawares implies such to be a possibility now. Did Abraham immediately recognize he was entertaining angels when first they

came to him (Gen. 18:1-5)? Not necessarily. From their message to him, it was evident they were but he saw "*men.*" His hospitality (love) to them was spontaneous and genuine.

"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them." These brethren had in past times shown compassion to those in bonds, and were to continue such care and concern (Heb. 10:34). Good deeds of yesterday do not suffice to cover negligence of good deeds today.

"Let marriage be had in honor among all." The scorning of marriage today is simply asking for the judgment of God. *"Fornicators and adulterers God will judge,"* the writer added. Shameless living together in open sin is practiced by many. Our world thinks nothing of it but God does and He has prepared a lake of fire for those who "thumb their nose" at His law (Rev. 21:8).

"Be ye free from the love of money." The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10). Those who seek such often pierce themselves through with many sorrows. The rich fool scarcely enjoyed his riches: his life was cut short when he made plans which did not include his Creator. Learning contentment is a way of life all need to learn. Paul *"knew how to be abased and how to abound."* He learned in whatever state he was in, to be content (Phil. 4:12). He wrote, *"Godliness with contentment is great gain. We brought nothing into the world, neither shall we carry anything out."* God's promise to His own is, *"I will in no wise fail thee or forsake thee."* This is a sufficient foundation for contentment!

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