

Mark them
Volume 6 Chronicle 2017123101

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Jesus called James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, that they might be with Him, and He might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons. He surnamed them Boanerges, which is, Sons of thunder (Mark 3: 13-17 ASV portioned). Not inappropriate to one disposed to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritan who would not receive the Lord Jesus (Luke 9:54) or to one who, when he saw another casting out devils in the name of Jesus, took upon himself the authority to forbid him (Mark 9:38). Truth is, there was a remarkable mixture of gentleness and severity in the character of John; and though the former was the most prominent, and may be supposed to have increased as he grew old, the other manifested itself. There was in the character of John, and under other teaching than that of the Lord Jesus, exclusiveness and sternness in the form of open persecution. Under the teaching of the Savior, and through His example, his milder and better nature prevailed, and so decidedly acquired the ascendancy, that we almost never think of the harsher traits of his character. The public character of John was so amiable, he was so uniformly spoken of as the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7 & 21: 20); gentleness and kindness seemed to be such pervading traits in his nature, no one would have thought of sentiments which seemed to be at variance with these traits, even though, on a close analysis, it could be made out that they were not contrary to his natural character. Whosoever abides not in the teaching of Christ, has not God: he that abides in the teaching, the same has both the Father and the Son. If any one comes to you, and brings not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting (II John 9-10 ASV portioned).

Text: Romans 16: 17-18 ASV

I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ,

but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.

One great object of the epistle to the church of God at Rome had been to promote peace between the Jewish and Gentile converts. So much did this subject press upon the mind of the apostle Paul, that he seems unwilling to leave it. Returning to it again and again; and even after the epistle is apparently concluded, he returns to it, to give a new charge on the subject.

Observe attentively, cautiously, and faithfully brethren. Be imitators of me. You have example. Many walk, I told you often, that are enemies of the cross of Christ. Whose end is perdition. Whose god is the belly. Whose glory is in their shame. Who mind earthly things (Philippians 3:17-19 ASV portioned). Be on guard against them. Ascertain who are the real causes of the divisions that spring up, and avoid them. Paul probably refers to Jewish teachers, who insisted on the observance of the rites of Moses, and who setup a claim for greater purity and orthodoxy than those who received Gentile converts as Christian brethren. Jews were perpetually calling Christian converts to the law of Moses; insisting on the observance of those rites; troubling the churches, and producing dissensions and strifes (Galatians 3:1, 5:1-8, & Acts 15:1,24).

They who attempt to form divisions, dissensions, parties, and factions, in church are commonly actuated by some evil or ambitious design. Where there is among you jealousy and strife, are you not carnal, and do you not walk after the manner of men (I Corinthians 3:3 ASV portioned)? Works of the flesh are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such. I forewarn you, they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5: 19-21). The very attempt to form such parties was evil, no matter what the pretence.

Offences and scandals give occasion for others to fall into sin. The Jew would form parties, on the pretence of superior holiness. The Gentiles or some convert, might deride the scrupulous feelings of the Jew, and might thus lead him into sin in regard to what his conscience really forbade. If because of meat your brother is grieved, you walk no longer in love. Destroy not with your meat him for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that serves Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things where we edify one another (Romans 14:15-19 ASV). Persons on both sides are to be avoided. Refuse to follow them, and to cultivate the spirit of unity and peace.

Teachers should unite in one family. They are to disregard all that they could say tending to produce alienation and strife; and resolve to cultivate the spirit of peace and union. An admirable rule if always followed. Let men make peace their prime object. Resolve to love all who are Christians. It will be an infallible gauge by which to measure arguments of those who seek to promote alienations and contentions. I wrote you not to keep company if any brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat (I Corinthians 5:11 ASV). Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition they received of us. For you know how to imitate us. We behaved not ourselves disorderly among you. Neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand, but in labor and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you. If any man obeys not our word by this epistle, note that man. Have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed (II Thessalonians 3:6,14 ASV portioned). Avoid them as teachers, does not mean that they were to be treated harshly; but that they were to be avoided in their instructions. If your brother sin against you, show him his fault between you and him

alone. If he hears you, you gained your brother. If he hears not, take with you one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. If he refuse to hear, tell the church: if he refuse to hear the church, let him be to you as the Gentile and the publican (Matthew 18:15-17 ASV portioned).

Not disposed to do wrong; having no plan, and yielding to none of the allurements of evil, show wisdom in obeying the gospel. I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you (Romans 16: 19-20 ASV). Shall bruise, references the prediction in (Genesis 3:15). It means to subdue, gain victory. It denotes Paul's confidence they would overcome those endeavoring to sow discord and contention among them. The word Satan is Hebrew, meaning an accuser, and the enemy. It is given to the prince of evil spirits from his enmity to God and men. Regarded as the author of all attempts to promote discord in the church. They who attempt to produce divisions are called his ministers. Satan fashions himself an angel of light. It is no great thing his ministers fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness (II Corinthians 11: 14-15 ASV). God disappoints their malignant purposes, promoting peace.

I beseech you, that we love one another. And this is love, we should walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, you heard from the beginning. Walk in it (II John 5-6 ASV portioned)!