

# THE BULWARK

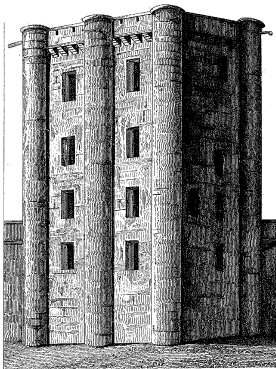
October 23, 2022

Winnetka Ave. Church  
Of Christ

7054 Winnetka Ave.  
Winnetka, CA 91306

818.795.5566

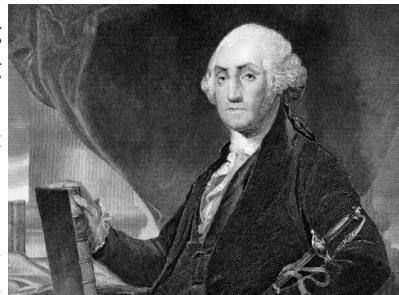
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*“Mark well her bulwarks,  
consider her palaces, that  
you may tell it to the  
generation following”  
Psalms 48:13*

## CIVILITY

It is said that everybody liked George Washington (well, except for the British), until he became President, then not so much. Now two-hundred and fifty plus years later any number of people are going back and re-visiting Washington and coming away with a decidedly different impression. It is not the intent in this article to engage in such, rather to consider what was found written by Washington in one of his school book sometime around 1744. Apparently what he had done was to copy some maxims that were first set forth in the 16th century in France on the proper behavior for one in the company of others. In total there were 110 rules that he wrote. It was published under the title of “Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation”. It is said to have shaped his life as it was something he strove to practice daily.



*you.” (Ephesians 4:32) “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.” (Colossians 4:6)*

Could civility be understood as embracing kindness? Comity: mutual courtesy. If only such would be employed across the breath of society. But that may be a bridge too far so to speak. But what if it were put into practice by those within the body of Christ? Long before Washington jotted down a check list for “Rules of Civility”, Paul pointed out the following. *“Love is patient, love is kind...” (1Corinthians 13:4 take note of verses five through eight as well) “...put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness...” (Colossians 3:12) “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23)*

Civility is the key word, and seems to be in short supply in the current culture. Miriam-Webster defines civility as “civilized conduct (especially: courtesy or politeness) or a polite act or expression. Training in humanities.” Humanities is defined as being, “compassionate, sympathetic, or generous behavior or disposition : the quality or state of being humane”. While the word civility doesn’t appear in the Scriptures, clearly the definition and practice thereof is seen. *“And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven*

What is so striking is that for the most part we know what is included in civility. Respect enough of self to extend respect to others. So why is it so difficult for us to put it into practice? Especially to those of the household of faith. Take a moment to look at Ephesians chapter four and verse twenty-nine. Then bring to bear what Solomon writes in Proverbs 25:11. *“Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances.” Civility. Kind. (wbe)*