

"KEEP THY HEART."

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." – Prov. 4:23.

THE heart, which is the center and mainspring of physical life, is here used as a symbol of the affections – which are the center and mainspring of the moral nature. Keep the center of the affections right, true and pure, and the words and deeds and looks and plans emanating therefrom will be good, true and pure, even though not always perfect. On the contrary, unless the heart is thus fixed, all attempts to otherwise regulate the life will be measurably fruitless and, at best, only spasmodic. How necessary, then, if we would live consistent Christian lives, moving steadily on in the way of righteousness, that our affections should be centered in God, that our hearts should be as true to him as the mariner's needle to the pole.

The apostle wrote, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." A man whose affections are not centered in God, but which are divided with others, or centered on self and its varied whims, cannot be otherwise than vacillating in his course through life, just as a ship's course would be irregular had it two rudders, one before and the other behind, and operated by two masters whose ideas as to course were generally different. They never could accomplish results satisfactory to either.

If we attempt to steer our course acceptably both to the world and to God, we will fail to please either. And, further, the Lord will be a party to no such contract; and, when he steps out, the influence of the other master, the world, will increase, and the result will be slavery to the world. This is the mistake which so many make after coming to recognize the Lord's goodness. Being justified by faith in Christ's redemptive work and realizing

peace with God through the merit of the precious blood, they do not make a *covenant* with the Lord, giving up to him their little all of both the present and the future. Feeling their freedom from the slavery of sin, the temptation is to stand free from God as well as free from Satan, and to do their own pleasure – serving either [R1562 : page 234] God or self, or, to some extent, both God and self.

Such generally agree that obedience to God, even to the extent of sacrifice, would be a reasonable [R1563 : page 234] service in view of his favor in their redemption; yet somehow they feel a disinclination to so fully surrender all to God, lest this should imply too great a sacrifice of self-convenience and self-will. But let no one so minded conclude that he has given his heart to God. To give the heart to God is to surrender the whole being to his will at any cost, even of self-sacrifice, if his will and his work should require it. To give the heart to God is, therefore, to meet and measurably overcome all the coming temptations at once, by a complete surrender of the affections, and consequently of the will, to God. It will settle every question of right and privilege, and make no attempt to distinguish between God's positive commands and his intimated wishes, finding its meat and drink to be the doing of his will, whether pleasant or unpleasant to the flesh, and whether the outcome can be fully seen or not.

This giving of the heart to God, this full complete consecration of every interest, hope and aim, present and future, is sanctification. And those thus fully sanctified may implicitly trust divine wisdom, love and power, and hold fast the exceeding great and precious promises. God will never leave them nor forsake them, nor suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear and withstand. All things shall work together for good to such. Only those thus consecrated can and do have the

deep peace and joy of heart which the passing storms and difficulties and tribulations of the present time cannot disturb.

Though but few take this step of entire consecration to God's will, still fewer live it out practically, *keeping their hearts* constantly submissive to the Lord's will only; hence few *keep their hearts* fully in the love of God (Jude 21); and hence it is that so few enjoy the full measure of the joy and peace and communion with God, which is the privilege of all the fully consecrated and faithful. To maintain our hold upon our new relationship as consecrated sons, to maintain the *spirit* of adoption now, and to realize in due time our promised joint-heirship with our Lord Jesus in the divine glory, we must let, permit, and not oppose the Lord's plan and leading – let our wills remain dead to self and subservient to God's will, and let God's will direct and rule all our course of action according to his plan. It is thus that we are to fulfil the apostolic instructions – "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts;" "Let this mind [this disposition of heart and consecration of will] be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus our Lord." – Col. 3:15; Phil. 2:5.

And it is in anticipation of our joint-heirship with Christ in glory, that the fully consecrated rejoice to partake of his affliction, as the Apostle exhorts, saying, "Rejoice, inasmuch as [or to the extent that] ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with *exceeding* joy." – 1 Pet. 4:13.

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LEAD ME.

I do not ask, dear Lord, that life may be
A pleasant road;
I do not ask that thou wouldst take from me
Aught of its load;

I do not ask that flowers should always spring
Beneath my feet;
I know too well the poison and the sting
Of things too sweet.
For one thing only, Lord, dear Lord, I plead:
Lead me aright,
Tho' strength should falter, and tho' heart should bleed,
Through peace to light.

I do not ask, dear Lord, that thou shouldst shed
Full radiance here;
Give but a ray of peace, that I may tread
Without a fear;
I do not ask my cross to understand,
My way to see;
Better, in darkness, just to feel thy hand,
And follow thee.
Joy is like restless day, but peace divine
Like quiet night;
Lead me, O Lord, till perfect day shall shine,
Through peace to light.
