

"UNTO THE PURE ALL THINGS ARE PURE."

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unfaithful nothing is pure; but both their mind and conscience are defiled: they profess to have known God, but by their works they renounce him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work worthless." – Tit. 1:15,16.

NOT SINNERS, not the worldly, are thus spoken of by the Apostle, but those who have enjoyed the truth, and who have enjoyed at least the first step in heart-purification, namely, justification; and whose hearts have become defiled through a failure to maintain in them the law of love as the ruling principle. Instead of being filled with love, selfishness, with its defilement, has been received back as the ruling principle of the heart. Such have the spirit of the world, and sometimes exercise it with a much greater degree of animosity than the world exhibits. They are specially ready, as the Apostle intimates, to impugn the conduct and motives of others: being selfish themselves, they attribute selfishness to everyone else: being impure themselves, they attribute impurity to others: having lost the spirit of love which thinketh no evil, their hearts rapidly fill up with selfish, envious, uncharitable, ungodly, unkind sentiments, toward those who are true, sincere and noble.

We have known such to go even to the extreme of impugning the motives of the great Jehovah and our Lord Jesus Christ. Unable to think of love and benevolence as motives for conduct, and accustomed in their own hearts to think merely of selfishness and personal aggrandizement as motives, they view the divine course from this standpoint, and esteem that God was moved by pride to recover man from sin and death, or by vanity, to show what he could do. They claim that our Lord Jesus was moved by selfish motives, of self-gratification, honor, increase of power, in becoming our Redeemer. They think of the loyalty of the angels from a selfish standpoint, as in hope of

advancement, or in fear of punishment. Who can bring a clean thought out of an unclean heart? Who can expect benevolence, generous feelings, sentiments or words, except hypocritically, from a heart in which selfishness has the control? Who would expect generous considerations in a mind full of envy and self-seeking?

The Apostle suggests of such that not only their minds become corrupted, but also their conscience; so that they will do evil, speak evil, think evil, and yet their consciences do not reprove them; because their consciences and minds work in harmony, and, as the Scriptures declare, they become blinded, self-deceived. What a terrible condition this is, and how careful all of the Lord's people should be, not only to have pure hearts, pure minds, but also to keep their consciences very tender, in close accord with the word of the Lord. This condition can only be maintained by judging ourselves, and that strictly and frequently, by the standard which God has given us, his law of Love. **[R2517 : page 214]**

"I want the first approach to feel
Of pride or fond desire;
To catch the wandering of my will,
And quench the kindling fire."

As the Apostle points out, those whose minds become impure, poisoned by ambition or pride or selfishness, the spirit of evil, profess to have known God they are apt to profess as loudly as ever, sometimes, indeed, becoming boastful of how much they know of God, and of his Word, and of how wise they are as respects its interpretation. Not by boasting or professions, therefore, can we always judge who are of the pure minds and of good consciences, and in full harmony with the Lord. Rather by their fruits we shall know them, as the Master said – by their works, as the Apostle here points out. If any profess to know God, and yet by their works renounce him, we are fully justified in questioning whether or not they may not be

self-deceived, whether or not their consciences, [R2517 : page 215] as well as their minds, may not have become defiled.

To renounce the Lord in our works, does not necessarily mean a resort to murder, robbery, licentiousness, etc. It means rather, in the beginning at least, that from the hitherto good fountain of a cleansed or renewed heart or will, from which issued purity, truth, sweetness, kindness, encouragement and refreshment for all who drank of its waters, in the home and family and neighborhood and amongst the Lord's people, would issue instead bitter waters, producing bitter feelings, watering and nourishing roots of bitterness, stirring up malice, envy, hatred, strife, etc. No wonder the Apostle says of such that they are abominable! All who have the spirit of the Lord must abominate the spirit of evil, however surprised and grieved they may be to find it issuing from one who previously gave forth sweetness, love, kindness, good works.

As the Master declared, if the professedly sweet fountain sends forth bitter waters, we may know that there is something wrong, something defiling, in the fountain, and are not to deceive ourselves respecting its waters, and to partake of its bitterness.

Commenting along the same line the Apostle James declares, "If any man among you *seemeth* to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain." Because the tongue is the index of the heart, because "out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh," therefore the unbridled tongue speaking selfishly, enviously, bitterly, boastfully, slanderously, proves that the heart from whose fullness these overflow is unsanctified, unholy, grievously lacking of the spirit of Christ, – hence, whatever religion it may have attained is thus far vain, as that heart is not saved nor in a salvable condition. No wonder the Apostle comments in our text, that such are "disobedient:" only by disobedience to the law of the New Covenant, Love, could anyone reach such a condition of heart and conscience defilement, after he had

been purified through faith in the precious blood, and consecrated to the Lord.

The final statement of our text is that such an one, having lost the *spirit* of the truth, and having obtained instead a spirit of bitterness, rancor, evil, having a poisoned or defiled mind and conscience, is "to every good work *worthless*." No matter what work such an one might undertake to do, it would surely be spoiled, because the spirit of evil, the spirit of pride, the spirit of selfishness, the spirit of malice and envy, are so violently in opposition to every feature of righteousness and goodness and truth and love, that there can be no peace, no cooperation between them. And this reminds us of our Lord's words, to the effect that those who are his people and who have his spirit, are "the salt of the earth," – preservative, so long as they have this spirit; but, as he suggests, if the salt lose its saltiness – if the Christian lose those peculiar features of the spirit of Christ which constitute him different from the world, separate from the world, and a salting or preservative quality in the world – if he should lose these, what? – he would be worthless as bad salt, "to every good work worthless." – Tit. 1:16.

What course should be pursued by those who find themselves possessed of impure minds, – minds inclined to surmise evil rather than good, envious minds, selfish, resentful, bitter, unforgiving, minds which love only those that love and flatter them? Is there any hope for these? Would God not utterly reject such?

God is very pitiful; and it was while all were thus "in the very gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity" that he provided for our redemption. There is hope for all such who see their defilement and who desire to be cleansed.

"His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood avails for me."

But true repentance means both contrition and reformation: and for help in the latter we must go to the Great Physician who alone can cure such moral sickness; and of whom it is written, "Who healeth all thy diseases." All of his sanctified ones, it is safe to say, were at one time more or less diseased thus, and proportionately "*worthless*" for his service. True, it is worse for those who were once cleansed, if they "like the sow return to the wallowing in the mire" of sin, – but still there is hope, if the Good Physician's medicine be taken persistently the same as at first. The *danger* is that the *conscience*, becoming defiled, will so pervert the judgment that bitterness is esteemed to be sweetness, and envy and malice to be justice and duty, and the "mire" of sin to be beauty of holiness. Then only is the case practically a hopeless one.

SOME OF THE GOOD PHYSICIAN'S ANTIDOTES FOR HEART IMPURITY.

The Good Physician has pointed out antidotes for soul-poisoning, – medicines which if properly taken according to directions will sweeten the bitter heart. Instead of envy it will produce love; instead of malice and hatred and strife, love and concord; instead of evil-speaking and backbiting and scandal-mongering it will produce the love which thinketh no evil and which worketh no ill to his neighbor; which suffereth long and is kind, which vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, which never faileth and which is the spirit of the Lord and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Let us all take these medicines, for they are good not only for the violently sick, but for the convalescing and the well. The following are some of the prescriptions: – **[R2517 : page 216]**

(1) "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.

(2) "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and *purify* unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." – Titus 2:14.

We might theorize much and very correctly upon how and when and by whom we were redeemed; but this all would avail little if we forgot *why* we were redeemed. The redemption was not merely a redemption from the power of the grave; – it was chiefly "*from all iniquity*." And the Lord is not merely seeking a peculiar people, but specially a people peculiarly cleansed, purified. This medicine will surely serve to purge us from iniquity if we are anxious to make our calling and election sure.

(3) "Pursue righteousness, fidelity, love, peace, with all who call upon the Lord with a pure heart." – 2 Tim. 2:22.

We not only need to start right, but also to *pursue* a right course. We may not follow unrighteousness even for a moment; whatever it may cost, justice and righteousness must be followed. But here a difficulty arises with some: they do not know how to judge righteous judgment. They are too apt to judge according to rumor or appearances, or to accept the judgment of scribes and Pharisees, as did the multitude which cried, "Crucify him! His blood be upon us and upon our children." Had they followed righteousness they would have seen the Lord's character in his good works as well as in his wonderful words of life: they would have seen that so far from being a blasphemer he was "holy, harmless, separate from sinners:" they would have seen that his accusers were moved by envy and hatred.

And it is just as necessary as ever to follow the Lord's injunction, "Judge righteous judgment," and whoever neglects it brings down "blood" upon his [R2518 : page 216] own head and becomes a sharer in the penalty due to false accusers. For as the Lord was treated so will his "brethren" be treated. And the more pure our hearts the less will they be affected by slanders and backbitings and evil-speakings, and the more will we realize that those who have bitter hearts from which arise bitter words are impure fountains in which is the gall of bitterness and not the sweetness of love.

Next comes fidelity, that is, faithfulness. The Lord declares his own fidelity or faithfulness and declares himself a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. And even the worldly recognize fidelity as a grace: and by such it is often given first place; for many would commit theft or perjury through fidelity to a friend. But notice that God's Word puts righteousness *first*. Fidelity, love and peace can only be exercised in harmony with righteousness; but unrighteousness not being proven against a brother, our fidelity and love and peace toward him must continue, and indeed must increase in proportion as envy and slander and all the fiery darts of the Wicked One assail him "without a cause." This valuable prescription will help to keep our hearts free from the

poison and bitterness of roots of bitterness which the Adversary keeps busily planting.

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

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

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

(4) "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.

This medicine is for those who have used the other prescriptions and gotten clean. It points out that the purity came not merely through *hearing* the truth, nor through *believing* the truth, but through *obeying* it. And not merely a *formal* obedience in outward ceremony and custom and polished manner, but through obedience to the *spirit* of the truth – its real import. All this brought you to the point where the love of the "brethren" of Christ was *unfeigned*, genuine. At first you treated all with courtesy, or at least without impoliteness; [R2518 : page 217] but many of them you did not *like*, much less did you love them: they were poor, or shabby, or ignorant, or peculiar. But obeying the *spirit* of the truth you recognized that all who trust in the precious blood and are consecrated to the dear Redeemer and seeking to follow his leadings are "brethren," regardless of race or color or education or poverty or homeliness. You reached the point where your heart is so free from envy and pride and selfishness, and so full of the spirit of the Master, that you can honestly say, I love all the "brethren" with a love that is sincere and not at all feigned.

Now having gotten thus far along in the good way, the Lord through the Apostle tells us what next – that we may preserve our

hearts pure, – "See that ye love one another with a pure heart *fervently* [intensely]." Ah, yes, the pure heart must not be forgotten, else it might be but a step from pure love into a snare of the Adversary, carnal love. But the pure love is not to be cold and indifferent: it is to be so warm and so strong that we would be willing to "lay down our lives for the brethren." – 1 John 3:16.

With such a love as this burning as incense to God upon the altar of our hearts there will be no room there for any selfish, envious thoughts or words or deeds. Oh how blessed would all the gatherings of the "brethren" be, if such a spirit pervaded all of them! Can we doubt that, if it held sway in one-half or one-third or even one-fourth, it would speedily exercise a gracious influence upon all – for righteousness and fidelity and love and peace, and against envy, strife, malice, slanders and backbitings?

Let all the "brethren" more and more take these medicines which tend to sanctify and prepare us for the Master's service, here and hereafter.
