

**THE ULTIMATE END OF THE COMMANDMENT IS LOVE  
FROM A PURE HEART AND A GOOD CONSCIENCE.**

*"Now the end [ultimate object] of the commandment is love from a pure heart and a good conscience, and an undissembled faith – which some, having failed [to discern] have turned aside to foolish talking." – 1 Tim. 1:5,6.*

NOT ONLY in the Apostle's day did many fail to get the true idea of religion – the Lord's commandments to his people, etc. – but many, probably an increasing number, have since similarly failed. We may suppose that the method of the great Adversary is to confuse the minds of those who are feeling after God and righteousness. It is thus, as the Scriptures declare, that he deceives the whole world – putting forms, ceremonies, theories and confessions instead of heart religion.

Those who teach the monstrous false doctrine that the present life decides the fate of every human being, either for eternal misery or for eternal joy, consider this doctrine the very bulwark of pure Christianity and of holiness; consequently many who really do not believe it tacitly give it their consent and approval, believing that in so doing they are forwarding the cause of holiness. But this is a great mistake; this is one of the great Adversary's delusions, by which he would make the piety of God's people serve his cause, (1) because this doctrine dims the divine glory as respects love and justice, and (2) because the doctrine, instead of cultivating or promoting holiness, cultivates and promotes the reverse of this, as we shall show.

The theory that the present life is merely to decide who are worthy of eternal joy, and who are worthy of eternal torments, resolves itself finally in the general thought as signifying that all fiendish characters may perhaps be worthy of some kind of ill-treatment to all eternity, provided they shall not breathe a prayer of penitence at some time before they expire; but that all half-way decent people are too

respectable or too good to justly merit an eternity of torture, and hence must be of the kind who will receive an eternity of bliss. Thus this hell-fire doctrine, instead of promoting holiness, purity of heart, promotes the reverse, – carelessness as respects anything except out and out murder and general devilishness.

On the contrary, the Scriptural doctrine makes no threat of eternal torment, and promises a full opportunity for every human creature to come to a knowledge of the truth, either in the present life or in the next life, and thus, under the terms of the New Covenant, to avail themselves of the opportunity for eternal life through the great atonement sacrifice finished at Calvary. This Scriptural doctrine is replete with the highest incentives to holiness, purity of heart and of life; because, instead of holding forth a general penalty of torture, it holds forth "a *just* recompense of reward," a reward of blessing or of stripes which will be proportionate to the individual efforts of each to come into harmony with God and his holiness.

First we have the call of the Gospel Church to become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, [R2734 : page 359] in the Millennial Kingdom, upon *the condition of holiness of heart*, and subsequently will come the offer of restitution and everlasting life in human perfection, to those of the world who similarly return to heart-harmony with the Lord. The Scriptures hold out no suggestion anywhere that eternal life will ever be given to any creature on any plane of existence, except upon this condition of full, complete heart-harmony with the Lord. Anything contrary to, or even short of, this perfect harmony with the Lord, will, from the Scriptural standpoint, mean the Second Death. Here, then, in the divine offer, we have the highest inducement to strive for our closest possible attainment to perfection; and we are assured that such striving will ultimately, according to divine favor, be rewarded with perfect conditions (in which absolute perfection will be possible) – in the resurrection.

Many there are who have very erroneous views of what is signified by the expression, "pure in heart;" one class considers this impossible of attainment in the present life; another class, no less mistakenly, considers this to mean absolute perfection in every thought, word and deed; and in believing that they fulfil these conditions, and in teaching others similarly, they are making a grave mistake.

Answering the last error first, we remark that it is possible for one to deceive himself respecting his own heart and his own condition, as for instance, apparently, the Pharisees of our Lord's day: claiming that they were perfect, and that they kept the whole law, they were merely deceiving themselves, but not the Lord; by their self-deception, a form of hypocrisy, which blinding them to their own need of the robe of Christ's righteousness, left them in the filthy rags of their own righteousness, unfit for the Kingdom. And so with some today, who claim perfection of thought, word and deed. They have blinded themselves to their own weaknesses, imperfections and errors, and are in a far worse condition than he who, tho outwardly less moral, is at heart better in the Lord's sight, because honest in confessing his unworthiness, because for such the Lord has provided forgiveness of sins, – covering with the robe of Christ's righteousness.

Nevertheless, those who think that purity of heart is an impossibility in the present life are likewise mistaken. Their mistake arises from not seeing a wide distinction between a purity of heart and a perfection or righteousness of all the words and deeds of life. The heart, as used in this text, refers to the mind, the will, the actuating intentions or motives of the man. With this thought before the mind, it is easy to see that one might be pure of heart, that is of pure intentions, and yet confess himself unable to do and to be all that his good intentions desire and endeavor. He whose heart is pure toward the Lord in Christ is the same one whose eye is single, the same one who is not double-minded but single-minded, whose mind, will, heart,

seeks first, last and always the will of God. Hence the exhortation of the Apostle, "Purify your hearts, ye double-minded." – Jas. 4:8.

But how can this condition of purity of heart be attained? Is this to be our message to sinners – "purify your hearts"? No, the Gospel does not call sinners to purify their hearts: on the contrary it declares it to be an impossible thing for the sinner to purify his heart; a fuller's soap, which the sinner does not possess, is needed to cleanse the heart and bring it into that attitude of relationship with God and his will which will be pure and acceptable in his sight. On the contrary, sinners are called to repentance – called upon to confess that not only their outward lives are imperfect, short of the glory of God, but that their hearts also are rebellious, impure and in sympathy with impurity. After the sinner is repentant for sin, desiring to come into harmony with the Lord and his righteousness, he is pointed to the great atonement for sin, and is drawn to the great Redeemer, through a desire to be made free from sin and to come into harmony with God. When this step has been taken – when the sinner having repented of his sins, and having made restitution so far as possible, accepts Christ and the pardon he offers, and seeks to walk in the way of righteousness, then he is *justified*, – justified freely from all things, from which the Law could not justify him – "justified by faith through the blood of Christ" – brought nigh to God, into relationship with him, and caused to know the joy and peace of his forgiving love.

When this is accomplished, when justification by faith has been established, when the sinner is reckoned and treated as no longer a sinner, but as reconciled to the Father, then his heart may be said to be pure, cleansed from "the sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." But now arises a new question with the reformed one: while past sins are graciously covered, weaknesses of the flesh are present, and temptations of the adversary are on every hand. He starts to walk forward, but finds himself beset by the world, the flesh and the devil: what shall he do? A heart searching probably begins there: finding himself incapable of guiding himself, or of keeping himself, his proper

course is to accept another offer of divine grace, namely, the second step in our great salvation. He hears the voice of the Lord, through the Apostle, saying, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God [manifested in the covering of your sins], that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." [R2734 : page 360]

The reformed one, if rightly instructed, realizes his inability to stand in his own strength, realizes that his *only hope of maintaining justification* granted to him lies in getting the Lord to take charge of him. At first he may think to go into partnership with the Lord, and to say, "Some of self and some of thee," some of my own will and some of the Lord's will; but rightly instructed he finds that this will not be satisfactory to the Lord; that the Lord will accept him, and become responsible for him, and guarantee him glorious victory and eternal reward, only upon this one condition, namely, a full self-surrender, a full consecration of heart.

It is after the sinner has come through all this process and has made a full consecration of his heart to the Lord, that he is of the class described in our text, one of the pure in heart, under the law of love, the law of the New Covenant. But notwithstanding the purity of his heart, his motives, his intentions, his will, to fulfil the Lord's great commandment, which is briefly comprehended in one word, Love, – he will find that he has a battle to wage, that the law of his members, depraved through heredity in sin, is a strong law of selfishness, in opposition to the new law, to which he has pledged himself, the law of his pure heart or new heart or will, – the law of Love.

Hence, as the Apostle suggests in our text, we must learn that the ultimate end or object of the divine commandment or law, means LOVE, – even tho we do not find ourselves thoroughly able to live up to every minute particular and requirement of that law. Yet our inability to live up to the requirements of that law must be through no lack of the will, or intentions of the loyal and pure heart toward the

law, and toward the Lord whose law it is: whatever failure we make, however short we may come of the grand ultimate object before us, it must be solely because of weaknesses of the flesh, and besetments of the adversary, which our pure hearts, or wills failed to resist.

And here the Lord's promises are helpful, assuring us that he knows our weaknesses and frailties, and the wiles of our great adversary, the devil, and the influence of the spirit of the world, which is contrary to the spirit of love: he tells us that we may go freely to the throne of the heavenly grace, and obtain mercy in respect to our failures to live up to the grand standards which our hearts acknowledge, and seek to conform to; and that we may also find grace to help us in every time of need. And, availing ourselves of these mercies and privileges provided through our great High Priest, we are enabled to fight a good fight against sin, to repulse its attacks upon our hearts, and to drive it off if it shall succeed in invading our flesh. Thus, and thus only, may the Christian *keep himself pure* in heart, preserving his stand as one of the fighters of the good fight, one of the overcomers of the world and its spirit.

There will be a tendency on the part of the flesh, and the mind of the flesh, to deceive us in respect to this commandment of Love. The mind of the flesh will seek to go into partnership with the new mind, and will be very ready to recognize love as the rule and law of life, *under certain conditions*. The mind of the flesh would recognize love in words, in profession, in manners – a form of godliness, without its power. Gentle manners, such as love would demand, may be exercised by a selfish heart deceiving itself, and seeking to deceive others; on the lip may be the smile, the word of praise, of kindness, of gentleness, while in the heart may be feelings of selfishness, of grudge, [R2735 : page 360] of bitterness, of animosity, which, under favorable conditions, may manifest themselves in more or less carefully worded slander, or backbiting, or reproaches. Or these, continuing in the heart and rankling, may, under favorable conditions, bring forth anger, hatred, malice, strife and other wicked works of the

flesh and of the devil, wholly contrary to the proper course of a pure heart, and at utter variance with the commandment of the law of the New Covenant – Love.

We are, therefore, to have clearly before our minds the fact that the *ultimate object* of all the divine dealings for us and with us, and the ultimate significance of all the divine promises made to us, is the development of love, which is god-likeness, for God is love. And to have this love developed in us, in the sense and to the degree intended by the Lord, it is necessary that it shall come from a *pure* heart, in full accord with the Lord, and his law of love, and wholly antagonistic to the Adversary and his law of selfishness. To have this kind of love in its proper development requires also a good conscience: for be it remembered that there are bad consciences, – our consciences require regulating, as do all the other features of our fallen nature. If our consciences are to be regulated we must have some standard by which to set and regulate them. The conscience is like a watch whose dial is properly marked with the hours, but whose correctness as a time-keeper depends upon the proper regulating of its mainspring, so that it may point out the hours truthfully: so our consciences are ready to indicate right and wrong to us, but they can only be relied upon to tell us truly what is right and what is wrong after being regulated in connection with the new mainspring, the new heart, the pure will, brought into full harmony with the law of love, as presented to us in the Word of God.

Our text also points out the necessity for an undissembled faith. And here, we believe, is one of the **[R2735 : page 361]** important difficulties besetting many who are in the nominal churches: they are not honest; they are not conscientious in respect to their faith. If they believe differently from the denomination they have been connected with, they are willing to dissemble their faith, to misrepresent it, because they fear a disturbance in the church; they fear to be thought peculiar; they fear to lose the esteem of fellow-Christians ("wheat") who might understand them, and of fellow-associates ("tares") who

would be sure to misunderstand them, and speak evil of them. They love the praise of men more than they love the praise of God, else they would not risk the disfavor of God through a violation of conscience, and a dissembling of their faith, in order to maintain the friendship of the world and of the nominal church.

We urge that all our readers consider carefully, studiously, the words of our text, remembering it is those who miss this true thought who are not only missing the opportunity of the present time to be overcomers of the world, and the opportunity of the future, to be "joint-heirs with Christ" in his Kingdom, but who, additionally, are lending influence now in the wrong direction, and are likely to be turned aside to foolish talking, preaching and teaching and discussing matters which are illogical, irrational, nonsensical; because their hearts have become darkened through neglect of the *principles* which the Lord has set forth for the government of those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus. And sometimes the matter goes beyond foolish talking, and the heart becomes embittered and corrupted: love is cast out of the heart, and selfishness takes its place, and from it flows words of bitterness, anger and evil, instead of words of love, kindness, gentleness, mercy and goodness.

"Keep thy *heart* with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" – life or death. "Blessed are the *pure* in heart, for they shall see God."

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