

The background of the cover is a historical painting depicting a harbor scene. Several large sailing ships with multiple masts are visible in the water. In the foreground, a group of people, including men and women in period clothing, are gathered on a sandy or muddy shore. Some appear to be engaged in maritime activities, while others are standing and observing. The sky is filled with soft, diffused light, suggesting an overcast day. The overall style is characteristic of 17th or 18th-century European maritime art.

THE PURITANS ON
LOVING ONE
ANOTHER

EDITED BY DON KISTLER

Love is the chief evidence of reconciliation with both God and with our brothers and sisters in Christ. This collection of Puritan treatises explains the duty and delight of Christian love, how it is rooted in divine grace, and the way it serves as a healing bond of peace.

Works included in this volume:

- *The New Commandment Renewed* by Ralph Venning
- *Love One Another* by Thomas Manton
- *The Nature and Principles of Love* by Joseph Caryl
- *The Holy Exercise of Love* by John Ball



“Our times are ones of deep division, similar to the times that brought forth the Puritan texts in this book. Some of our battles are vital and necessary, but far too many are not. Hence, the inestimable value of these Puritan writings. May we heed these older saints of God as they call us to an imperishable love for the brethren.”

—Michael A. G. Haykin, chair and professor of church history,
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary



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LOVING ONE
ANOTHER

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THE PURITANS ON LOVING ONE ANOTHER

Essays by
John Ball
Joseph Caryl
Thomas Manton
Ralph Venning

Edited by Don Kistler



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The New Commandment Renewed

or

Love One Another,

Being an endeavor after the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, by several uniting principles, among which there are ten rules for a right understanding of Scripture, very useful for these divided times

by

Ralph Venning

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” Psalm 133:1

Letter to the Reader

*To all who profess love for the Lord Jesus, and yet
love not one another, according to His
example and command.*

Beloved,

I wish I could say of you, as Paul did say of the Thessalonians, “as touching brotherly love you need not that I write unto you, seeing you yourselves are taught of God to love one another” (1 Thessalonians 4:9). But alas! There is need, yea, never *more* need, that I should write unto you of brotherly love; for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are you not carnal and walk as men, as taught of men, and not of God? (1 Corinthians 3:3).

What am I to such an undertaking as this? Many (the unworthiest of whom I am unworthy to follow) have gone before me, calling you to your calling to love one another. But do they not all say, “Who has believed our report? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” Do they not all say, “We have labored in vain! We have cried indeed in the chief places of concourse, yea, in the concourse of the chiefest, even in the city and in the high places of the city we have uttered our words, and our lips drop sweetness. Our voice was love, love, live in love. But no man regarded; all our counsels were set at naught”?

Alas, beloved! What hope is there left for me to prevail? If Paul’s, if Apollos’s, if Christ’s words have not

taken with you, can mine expect to find acceptance? And yet I think I hope beyond hope because I know that God has all hearts in His own hand, and can turn them when and by whom He pleases. Therefore, though many out of their abundance have cast in much, I hope my mite will not be rejected. I must confess I have for a great while forborne lest I should be a reproach and derision daily, but I am now overcome, and that by importunity, not so much from without (which yet was much) as from within (which was more). For these words were within my heart like a burning fire shut up, and I was weary with forbearing. I could not contain myself. For while I held my peace from this good, my heart was hot within me; and while I was musing the fire burned, so that I could not but first speak with my tongue and now with my pen (most of these heads were preached at the Tower of London).

I said yea to myself and others. I often said I was few of days, and therefore I was afraid and dared not show forth my opinion. I said days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom; but the spirit within me constrained me, and I spoke and must speak that I may be refreshed. My belly! Should I hold my peace at such a time as this? If this wine should not have vent, it would be ready to burst like new bottles.

But let me not, I pray you, accept (nor except) any man's person; neither let me give flattering titles nor upbraiding language unto any man. Should I do so, my Maker would soon take me away. I know God would lay it to my charge.

Censures, perhaps, I may undergo, and I indeed expect them, but not from you. Let the world scoff. I

care not, having learned to pass through their good report and bad. I am not ignorant in what a narrow way I walk, how it concerns me to be cautious, both what I speak and how; for who would undertake to moderate the extreme immoderation of our days? And yet, for my own part, I am not solicitous (good intentions and innocence are careless, and seldom do I plan what to say). My conscience, yea, God Himself, bears me witness that I would not write a syllable which should give offense. "Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of those which observe me" (Psalm 27:11).

I would willingly blot out any expression which might be liable to suspicion; for truly, as Caesar said concerning his wife, it is not enough not to be at fault. But things relating to love, as Caesar's wife, should not be suspected to be at fault. I hope therefore if anything escapes me (seeing it is against my will that anything should escape) which may seem to deviate from the scope, that is, love, that your love will cover it with a charitable construction (for love of that which I write for and from, that is, love).

I have forborne to instance in anything touching any part or parties which might but occasion a prejudice against any of the principles. For, as Solomon says, he who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates very friends (Proverbs 17:9). And we find it confirmed by experience that such proceedings do but (as Paul said of profane and vain babblings) increase to more ungodliness, and their words (2 Timothy 2:16–17) will eat as a gangrene. I would therefore (and I wish all would) forget that which is behind, that which is past, miscarriages arising from

strife and envy (not looking so much how they came in, as how we may get them out, as one said of original sin), and press to that which is before and yet to come—love among brethren (the more excellent way). I have not in the least made it my study or endeavor to dress the matter in any habit, but plain; and I will give you my reason: I would not have words stay the readers from attending the things. That eloquence offers injury to things which draws us to observe it, seeing words are only for the matter's sake, and should be no other than would promote it.

Octavius Augustus had a special care to express his mind and meaning most plainly, and reprehended Marcus Antonius for writing such things that men rather wondered at than understood.

Zeno was wont to say that he had two sorts of disciples. The one he called "logophilas," who respected nothing more than language; these he liked not so well. The other he called "philologos," curious to learn such words as were fit to express things by; and these were his darlings.

I think the Apostle's discourse in 1 Corinthians 14 should silence all tinkling cymbals—such as affect such words and phrases as rather tickle the itching ears of men than affect their affections, or leave any impression on the heart and conscience.

For my own part, I acknowledge it my principle, and I would be loath that my practice should give it the lie, to speak to the lowest, and then I am sure the highest understand me; whereas should I, if at least I were able, speak to the highest, I should be to the lowest as a barbarian. In short, I rather choose to speak shortly, though but five words, which may be edifying

than to use ten thousand which, when men hear or read, they understand not.

I had thought to have collected the several heads, and have set them before you by themselves, but the whole book, being but little, will soon be run and read over, and therefore I shall spare you the labor of reading, myself of writing, and the printer of printing.

Thus, my beloved friends, having given you a foresight of what I have done, why and how, and hoping that these things which are cast in by the way are not cast away, I shall say no more, but pray that it may come unto you with a fullness of blessing, and be instrumental to unite your hearts in love, which will satisfy the desire and fulfill the joy of him who can rejoice in nothing but in being the servant of Christ,

Ralph Venning

The New Commandment Renewed

Part 1

God's one and only design is, by the words of His mouth and the works of His hands, to bring forth His own image (Genesis 1:27) in all times and dispensations; and that is oneness. When He created man, He made him in the likeness and image of Himself, one. Yea, though He created male and female (Genesis 2:24), yet were they not two, but one flesh.

When this image was defaced, and man continued not in his uprightness, that is, in his simplicity and oneness, that which God aimed at in the restoration of man was the reparation of His image: oneness, that God and man might be one again. Yea, that in Christ all things in heaven and earth, which were fallen out with and fallen away from man upon his falling away from God, might be gathered together into one (Ephesians 1:10).

Yea, all the dispensations and dispensators which God has left in the world are to disappear and be no more once the saints come in (or, more emphatically, *into*) the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:13).

That is (as I with submission conceive) when the Jews and Gentiles, the fullness of them shall be called in and come to the knowledge (or rather the acknowledgment) of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, or the man at age (He without us is not made perfect), and the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Christ, I mean mystically, is not yet a perfect man at age, is not yet in fullness, nor will be till all His members, both Jews and Gentiles, are brought forth. Now when these shall be brought into the unity of faith, which is the acknowledgment of the Son of God, then is God's design of oneness accomplished.

Now to the effecting hereof, God has promised to bestow on His people one heart (Ezekiel 11:19), which is not only in relation to their being newborn, and so being one with God, but as the Jews went with one heart to Jerusalem that they might build the Temple, so, in relation to this design of the unity of faith, God will knit together the hearts of His people that they shall fly together like doves to the windows (Isaiah 60:8). Yea, and before they are aware, I believe, they will find their souls made like the chariots of Amminadab, or a willing people (Song of Solomon 6:12). In a word, the top and consummation of all the happiness which Christ prays for His own is that they all may be one, "as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us" (John 17:21). Indeed, the glory of all our hereafter glory will be oneness of communion with the Father, Son, Spirit, and one another in God, who is one in all and all in one.

But seeing that as yet there seems to be a breach not only between the Jews and Gentiles, but between them who have attained to the knowledge and acknowledgment of the Son of God, I shall endeavor to bring the saints to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; for there is but one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:4–6).

Now that we may walk together in one way, it is requisite that we be of one true heart, and that which is most conducive thereunto is that we be of one mind. For the more unity there is in judgment, the more there is likely to be in affection (because likeness produces liking); and the more oneness there is in affection, the more there will be in practice and conversation. The more union there is, the more communion there will be, and the better. The less union there is in judgment and affection, the less and worse will our communion be.

And seeing we can hardly live together unless we love together, or, as the prophet said, "Seeing we cannot walk together unless we be agreed" (Amos 3:3), I shall, as God enables me, lay down some principles which if read as written—without prejudice and partiality—will not a little provoke and conduce to union and agreement.

PRINCIPLE 1. That we may meet to agree together, let us agree to meet together, and that is meet: for the prophet says, "How can two walk together unless they meet and come together?" (Meetings are "meet" things). Thus I would read "unless they agree together", for meetings are the porch or entry into agreements. And I think Christians should be greatly entreated to meet together; surely it is to be feared that they are loathe to agree who are loathe to meet about an agreement.

OBJECTION. But what makes the saints so backward to meet about an agreement?

ANSWER. These three things: self-conceit, pride of heart, and Satan's policy.

First is a self-conceit that each of them is in the

right. Every man has a good opinion of his own opinion. Every man puts it off from himself, and instead of saying, as did the disciples when Christ told them, "One of you shall betray Me," "Master, is it I?" most are ready to say, "Master, it is *not* I." Having exhorted to love in Romans 12:10, Paul adds in verse 16, "Be not wise in your own conceits." Most men, instead of confessing their blindness, ask, like the scornful Pharisee, "Are we blind?" So loath are men to suspect their own defects. It was just so in the time of the division between the Roman and Grecian churches that each justified themselves, and neither would acknowledge themselves to be in error. But, Christians, hear a little: if you think yourselves in the right, I hope you think so on good grounds, and not that you are in the right merely by thinking so. Now if the grounds are good upon which your conceits are built, you need not be afraid, nay, you may be encouraged to produce them with boldness. It is to be suspected that they who refuse to bring forth their strong arguments have no strong arguments to bring forth. Christ tells us that he who does truth, and he who holds truth, comes to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God (John 3:21).

If men's arguments are pure and good, they will not be the worse, but the *more* confirmed by being weighed. If they are found either base metal or counterfeit, the discovery will engage them to part with them and to take their part no longer lest they deceive their soul. In short, if they are good, they may do good; they may help others to see the light. If they are bad, it will be a mercy they were produced, for you are losers while you follow darkness and lying vanities.

The second hindrance to a meeting about agreement is pride of heart. Men are loath to be the first movers lest they should be thought timorous and willing to yield. But, beloved Christians, Christ Jesus did not do so. God and we would never have met nor been reconciled together had not God come to us first. Though God was offended by us, and had just reason to be forever offended with us, yet He sounded a truce and made the first tender of agreement. Shall we not walk as we have Him for an example?

It is very observable that, while any one party is low, he pleads for moderation and reconciliation; but when he has the staff in its hand he scarcely minds, much less practices, either. Ah, Christians, the very heathens will shame us! For Aristippus, a heathen, though older than Aeschines who began the strife, sued first for peace. "Shall we not be friends?" he said to Aeschines. Christians, I beseech you go to one another, and say as Aristippus, "Shall we not be friends?" And oh, that every one would answer as did Aeschines, "Yes, with all my heart."

A third hindrance to a meeting about an agreement is Satan's policy. We may take up Paul's words when he wrote to the Thessalonians: "We had come unto you once and again, but Satan hindered us" (1 Thessalonians 2:18). Christians, why do you not come one to another? Why are you not in your journey? It is to be feared that Satan stands in your way and stays you.

PRINCIPLE 2. Having met, labor for a right understanding of each other's mind. There is nothing that makes men stand at such a far distance as a misunder-

standing. It is with men now as with the men at Babel: the languages are confounded and they understand not one another. At your meetings, seek God about these three things for a right understanding.

First, seek that God would be pleased by His own Spirit to declare and make clear His truth unto you—that He would make known to you, and make you to know, what is His good, perfect, and acceptable will that you may walk before Him in all well-pleasing.

Second, entreat God that He would deliver you to the truth as well as deliver the truth to you. Not only that He would open His truth to your hearts, but also open your hearts to His truth, so that you may close with every truth, embracing and welcoming it as your joy, though it should open you to never so many reproaches in the world.

Third, entreat God to remove all obstacles and take that out of the way which stands in the way, and keeps you from understanding and owning truth. Some of those obstacles are as follows:

Beware of self-interest in holding any opinion. Nothing more hinders men from going to or going from an opinion than the interest they have by holding it. Men do not care so much for the opinions they hold as for what they hold by their opinions. I am confident that many a man thinks what Demetrius said, “This craft by which we have all our wealth is like to be set at naught, and then we are like to come to naught” (see Acts 19:27).

Hence they begin to fly in the face of truth, and oppose it with outrageous rage, so dearly sweet and sweetly dear is their darling gain. They see that they cannot have the honey unless they burn the bees, and

therefore they fire them forthwith. They cannot possess the vineyard unless Naboth is put to death, and therefore he must be dispatched. When once the estate of gain and honor is touched, men begin to look about them, and will never call godliness gain because gain is their godliness.

Beseech God therefore that you may be "un-selfed" and may lay down all your interest of gain and honor.

Let the truth of God be ten times dearer than tenths, or any income of gain and honor which comes in by any opinion. For, as some say, where gold grows no plant will prosper; so certainly no truth will be dear nor have heart-room where the love of money or honor has taken place.

Entreat God to keep you from passionate discourses and disputations, or from passion in discourses and disputations. For so much passion as there is, so much there is to no purpose, yea, to an ill purpose. The wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God.

Passion usually arises more from and for self than for Christ.

Passion hinders the efficacy of the argument, for the tingling of passion hinders the sound of truth.

Passion makes a man unfit for discourse and confounds both memory and understanding, so that, as Aristotle has observed, "They who are in passion cannot discern nor judge truth."

Christ loses more by the passion than He gains by the disputation. For while you seek to honor Him, He finds Himself to be dishonored. When two dispute, and the one begins to rage, the other not retorting is more sage.

Entreat God to remove prejudices, for they very much

prejudice the entertainment of truth. Ahab had such a prejudice against Micaiah that he would not call him “prophet,” but “Micaiah, the son of Imlah” (1 Kings 22:8). “There’s one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, but I hate him, for he never speaks good concerning me but evil.” But as Jehoshaphat said to Ahab, “Let not the king say so.” Even so would I say to you, Christians. Let not Christians say of one another, “This is a rigid man, I will not hear him,” or, “This is a sectarian, I will not hear him.” Beg God that prejudice may not hinder closing with truth.

PRINCIPLE 3. When God is sought, and you begin to discourse, deal faithfully as in the presence of God. Do not use policy and sophistry to veil the truth. Speak plainly and clearly; fit words are better than fine. Do not equivocate nor mince your meaning, hiding it under dubious terms, but propose all things clearly. Affect not novelty or nicety of language, but speak in known and familiar phrases.

Many times there is such ado made about terms so that, before the discourse is ended, men lose themselves and the question too. Therefore speak plainly and not in parables. It is no little vanity to speak such words as will constrain you to use twenty times more words to explain what you meant.

PRINCIPLE 4. Be as willing to hear as to speak. A man should hear twice as much as he should speak, as it seems to be intimated by his having two ears but one tongue. Were there in times of discourse more hearers and fewer speakers, there would probably be easier and speedier determinations. Much talk hinders ob-

servation, and keeps things from being weighed. A man shall meet with such talkative persons as are able to beat some men out of their wits, or at least their patience, like the beating of an unbraced drum. They are so confusedly busy, and so busily confused.

PRINCIPLE 5. Weigh not who speaks, nor how it is spoken, but *what* is spoken. You should not overvalue nor undervalue a truth because you like or dislike the party or his manner of speaking. Sometimes (according to the proverb) we handle the child for love of the nurse, and take up an opinion for the sake of the one who brings it; others refuse an opinion because such a one holds it. Maldonate stubbornly said of an interpretation of Philippians 4:15 that it was most agreeable to antiquity, but that, because Calvin had so interpreted it, he would choose a new one.

But, Christians, consider what you do. Would a man take poison though from a father, or refuse a cordial though from an enemy? It was better said, "Love Plato and love Aristotle, but above them love truth." And the Apostle rejoiced that Christ was preached, though they who preached Him did it out of envy and to add to Paul's bonds. Go from any man to go to truth, but go from no truth to go to any man. As Christ said that the pollution is not from without, neither indeed (in this sense) is the purity. What is the word the better for being in Paul's mouth or the worse for being in Apollos's? What is the heavenly treasure the worse for being brought in an earthen vessel or the better when handed to us by an angel? Is the word of wisdom the better for the wisdom of words, or is truth less beautiful because naked and not arrayed with satin

words and silken phrases? What if a man has neither silver nor gold to give you, is not Christ worth the receiving?

It is strange to see how men are led in and out of opinions merely by an opinion of a man. The philosopher (though he was the same man and of the same mind) in his squalid rags could not find admission when better robes procured both an open door and reverence. Boldness and readiness of speech with most (though not with the most judicious) bears away the bell. To go from Aristotle (though a man go to reason) is, or had wont to be, no small disgrace in the schools.

If Herod speaks, then it is the voice of God and not of man! But if Paul speaks, then it is, "What will this babbler say?" Some cannot hear unless a doctor preaches; others will not hear *if* a doctor preaches. Surely, Christians, these things ought not to be so. Truth should be welcome to us though the devil, the father of lies, brings it to us; and nothing but truth should be welcome to us, though an angel from heaven is the messenger.

PRINCIPLE 6. Let not custom bear sway for or against an opinion. Christ called Himself truth, not custom. Let not antiquity or novelty make you respect or disrespect a truth; honor truth for truth's sake, whether old or new. Though all truth is old, yet our sight of truth may be new. "Old truths may come newly to light. God is not tied to time for the gift of illumination," said Dr. [Joseph] Hall. Why then should new light be a trouble to some or tradition a burden to others? Why should divine or orthodox or orthodox divine grow out of date? Or why should not a gospel

preacher be in season? Some like words and practices because of custom; others have no other reason for their dislike. Never walk by what has *been* done or what *is* done unless it is what *ought* to be done. Reduce things to their primitive institution and then see what God says of them, as our Savior told the Pharisees, “Though Moses for the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives, yet from the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8).

Men do nowadays with opinions as many do with their clothes. Some will keep to their great-grandfather’s habit and fashion; others, as changeable as the moon, think they are never in fashion unless they are ever changing fashions. Some cannot like a truth because it is not of ancient standing; others like it because it is of yesterday. Some can reverence none but gray-haired opinions; others like none but youthful and smooth-faced ones. It is true that the multitude of years teaches wisdom, and so may the youth of days; it is truth, and nothing but the truth, and all the truth, which should have our esteem, whether it is old or young, whether it is the firstborn of time or the last.

PRINCIPLE 7. In all discourses and disputations, use proper media or arguments by which to prove your tenets. Bring not Scriptures to your reason, but your reason to Scripture, or judge reason by reason and Scripture by Scripture. Moral arguments are not fit and proper by which to prove natural principles, nor in many things are rational arguments fit by which to prove or disprove Scripture. Prove spiritual things by spiritual arguments, as the Apostle hints to us: “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s

wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Corinthians 2:13). The Apostle did not borrow words or arguments from without, but fitted spiritual arguments to prove spiritual things. Never draw ecclesiastical conclusions from political premises.

PRINCIPLE 8. Discourse not to cavil, but to convince or to be convinced. Many discourse and dispute more for faction than satisfaction, and hence come so many factions.

Many, yea too many, discourse and dispute to show themselves forth more than truth. They take more care to show what *may* be said than what *should* be said, ever carping and making objections when none need to be made.

PRINCIPLE 9. When truth is spoken, yield to it. Men think it a shame to submit and surrender themselves after they have so long and so stoutly stood in the defense of their opinion. And therefore, though they are convinced that their tenet is at least suspicious, like so many sophists in the schools they study to evade by distinctions rather than give glory to God in confessing their sin.

But, Christians, it is no small conquest and victory that you obtain when your error and darkness are overcome and taken captive by truth. It is an honor to be overcome by truth, but to overcome the truth is a shame. Plutarch makes it a great discovery of proficiency in virtue when a man does not take it ill that he is confuted.

PRINCIPLE 10. When you are convinced, and as far as you are convinced, practice what you are convinced of. Go together as far as you can. What need is there for you to part until you must? You can agree to preach, hear, and pray together though in other things you differ. I have seen such sweet success upon the prayers of Christians met together who have differed in several opinions that I cannot but beseech Christians that they would not forsake the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is.

“Let us therefore, brethren, as many as are perfect, be thus minded; and whereto we have already attained let us walk by the same rule. And if in any thing you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you” (Philippians 3:15–16).

Part 2

In the meantime, let us like Christians observe these ensuing principles. They are as salve, and you may guess at the nature of our wounds by them. I shall leave the application of them to the blessing of God.

PRINCIPLE 1. Let us bear with one another, and forbear one another in love. We are commanded to bear one another’s burdens that so we may fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). And we shall undoubtedly be commended, for it is according to the good will of Christ, if we bear one another’s burdens. I am confident it is a burden to many a soul that they are not in all things like-minded with their brethren. Yea, it is not without some fear and trembling that in anything they

disagree with so many worthy and gracious men who are otherwise minded. Oh, help to bear, or at least bear with, the burden.

You cannot keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace unless you forbear one another in love, as appears most plainly by their connection—forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:2–3). This endeavor for unity and peace will be lost unless God, who bears with us, teaches us also to bear one with another.

Take these reasons for forbearance.

First, you all pretend, yea (I hope) *intend*, the same end. You profess one and the same design, the advancement of the gospel of peace and the peace of the gospel. Should you not therefore, in relation to this end, rejoice that Christ is preached, though some should preach Him out of envy and on purpose to add to your bonds? It was Paul's joy (Philippians 1:15–18).

Why, my dearly beloved, are you Ephraim against Manasseh, and Manasseh against Ephraim, seeing both are for Judah? Oh, that Ephraim might not envy Manasseh, nor Manasseh vex Ephraim any more. See that remarkable passage in which John says, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us, and we forbade him, because he followed not us" (Mark 9:38). Christians, is this not a man's language? Forbid him, silence him, out with him, down with him. Why so? Why, "because he follows not us." But Jesus forbade John to forbid him. Jesus said, "Forbid him not" (Mark 9:39). And He gives two reasons for it. First, He said, "No man who shall do a miracle in My name can lightly speak evil of Me."

Second, “he that is not against us is on our side” (Mark 9:40). Christians, can he be against you who is for Christ? What if he follows you not? Notwithstanding, he carries on Christ’s end. Blessed God, forbid that we should forbid one another to do Thy work.

Second, you agree in the most and the best things. The fundamentals and essentials of religion (in which you to whom I write agree) are of far more worth, and therefore of far more concernment to engage you, than circumstantials and accidentals (the things in which you disagree) are to disengage you.

Third, consider that you also are men subject to the like passions, and have also your failings and aberrations. “In many things we offend all” (James 3:2). Who is there that sins not? Good Lord! If Thou should be so soon angry with us as we are with one another, who could stand? I beseech you to read this Scripture with all lowliness and meekness of mind. “Brethren, if a man (or, as the margin reads it, “although a man”) be overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness” (Galatians 6:1). Why so? “Considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.” If you are tempted, that which you find fault with may be your fault.

PRINCIPLE 2. Until you are agreed, have charitable thoughts, not hard and harsh censures, of each other’s walking. Judge it rather to be conscience than stubbornness which engages men to walk in different courses. You would have others think so of you; why will you not think so of others? Who would not think but that to have every man’s good will, to keep the love of relations, to enjoy their liberties, men would comply

with anything, were there not an blight upon their consciences? Whence it may arise, I will not question.

Love thinks no evil of others as well as towards others. Love banishes jealousies and suspicions, and so consequently censures.

PRINCIPLE 3. Draw not away your love when God draws not away His love. Dare any man deny his love to that man where God grants His love? "If any man loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha" (1 Corinthians 16:22). But is any man beloved and a lover of Christ? Oh, take heed; deny him not your love. Let that of the Spirit which appears in him draw your heart more towards him than you let that of flesh which appears take off your heart from him.

Many times we take notice of that which will divide and not of that which will unite. A small error was soon spied in certain pictures of Apelles when a thousand excellent touches were not at all observed. One hour of eclipse causes the sun to be more gazed upon than a thousand fair days. Those soldiers who followed Caesar's triumph published his vices, but concealed his virtues. But, dear Christians, let us rather say one to another, as Queen Elizabeth said to Lord Burleigh, "Sit down, my Lord; we make much of you, not for your bad leg, but for your good head." Let us make much of each other and sit down together, not because there is badness in the feet, but because there is goodness in the head and heart.

PRINCIPLE 4. Censure no man's intention until his practice, either by words or works, reveals his mean-

ing. Many times by their fears, jealousies, and suspicions men create that in their hearts which had never a place in the suspected parties' imagination. Jacob was needlessly troubled and causelessly afraid of his brother, Esau, when nothing gave him occasion to suspect his brother but his own guilty conscience which told him he deserved it. Jacob feared that he came to execute revenge when he really came to welcome his brother home and entertain him honorably.

Jealousy is as quick as martial law: it arraigns, condemns, and executes all in a moment.

Nothing more hurts and wrongs friends than jealousies. Some cry out about some, "These men intend nothing but anarchy and confusion, so that shortly there will be no difference of nor respect to persons." Others cry out about others, "These men intend nothing but lordship and tyranny, to encroach all power into their own hand, and so to be masters over our faith, and to lord it over the Lord's inheritance." But why have you become evil judges of thoughts? Are you the searchers of hearts? You would judge more righteous judgment in this to judge according to appearance.

PRINCIPLE 5. Do nothing to incense and exasperate one another. Provoke one another to love as much as you can, but to wrath as little as you may, nay, not at all. It is becoming of Christians to use soft words, and they turn away wrath. But many words stir up strife. Bitter words are like sharp swords: they pierce to the very soul (Proverbs 15:16). But let the passion of others provoke your compassion. It was sweetly said of Calvin concerning Luther, "Though he calls me devil, I will

call him saint." Oh, that Christians would learn that lesson of Christ: when you are reviled, revile not again!

Alas! Do not men speak bitterly against bitter speaking, and write bitterly against bitter writings, becoming inexcusable thereby? "For wherein they judge others, they condemn themselves, being doers of the same things" (Romans 2:1). Oh, that Christians would overcome evil with good, passion with meekness, and bitterness with sweetness, for a soft tongue breaks the bone (Proverbs 25:15)! Oh, how did Abigail's affection conquer David's passion, though heated sevenfold! And how did David's kindness to Saul make Saul confess his unkindness to David! However others carry themselves toward us unbecoming Christians, our carriage toward them should be no other than is becoming Christians. A publican will love where he finds love and salute when he is saluted. But you (ah, you Christians!) are to exceed and excel in love, to love when you are not loved (though the more you love, the less you are beloved), to speak fair when you are ill spoken of, not to render railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, knowing that you are thereunto called.

Christians should be as the angels who are greater in power and might, yet bring no railing accusations before the Lord. Michael the archangel, disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, dared not bring (hark you Christians) a railing accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9). Let us do for the future as John's disciples did by their master when Herod slew him. They took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus (Matthew 14:12). Let us bury in oblivion all railings and injuries. Only go and tell Jesus, and say, "Lord, rebuke them."

PRINCIPLE 6. Go not about to make one another odious by representing things as being worse than they are. Many times the picture of the lion is more dreadful than the lion himself. Good Lord! In what black, ugly and deformed shapes do men set forth one another, as if they were monsters and not men?

*I blush to tell it,
That I can speak it,
But cannot resell it.*

Tertullus never strained his oratory against Paul, nor Tobias and Sanballat theirs against Nehemiah, more than Christians (if at least they are as they are called) strain theirs to bring one another under disrespect and odium.

PRINCIPLE 7. Draw not conclusions from other men's principles and then say that they are their opinions. We may make the same complaint as David: "They wrest, torture and wrack my words." Alas! Men set everything on hooks, and stretch and twist every principle like a nose of wax.

Alas! What a pity it is to see men invert and pervert one another's words, and at length to draw such conclusions as would make one think they meant what they never meant! It is a good thing to interpret candidly, and, when a thing will bear a double construction, to take it in the best sense. But we see by sad experience that sophistry makes more syllogisms than does logic.

So some mistook and misreported Paul as if he had said that we might do evil so good might come thereof

(Romans 3:8). So the Jews depose that Christ said He would destroy the temple at Jerusalem in three days and raise it up again, when He spoke of His body (Matthew 26:61; John 2:21). What words thus wrested and perverted may not be called heresy and (as they said of Christ's words) blasphemy when, if taken as meant, and in their proper sense, they may be found very sound and consistent with truth? Take heed therefore of glossing or commenting upon another's text.

PRINCIPLE 8. Grant to others what you would have others grant to you. We are usually better at receiving than at giving. We care not how much we receive, nor how little we give, though it is more honorable to give than to receive! When we are inferior and others superior, we beg (as did the servant in Matthew 18:26), "Have patience a little." Have a little patience! But when we are superior and others inferior, we have no patience at all.

Jesus Christ sums up the Law and Prophets in this principle: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:12). This is all that the law requires: to love your neighbor as yourself; and the doing of it is the fulfilling of the law. It is indeed a golden rule, a royal law, the standard of equity, according to which we must converse with all men.

Ah, Christians! Did we make other men's cases our own, we should say the case is altered. Job pleads thus with his friends: "I could also speak as you; if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake my head at you. But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should

assuage your grief" (Job 16:14–15).

Many great commanders have upon this very consideration shown themselves to be exceedingly merciful and kind to their captives, considering that it might be their own case, and then they would be glad of mercy. And, indeed, victory to generous minds is only an inducement to moderation.

See how Adonibezek's conscience flew in his face for his cruelty, when he himself was served by others as he had served others, when he said, "Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table; as I have done, so God hath requited me" (Judges 1:7).

PRINCIPLE 9. Do nothing in prejudice or partiality. The one will make you an enemy of good; the other will make you a friend of evil. Prejudice will take in nothing; partiality will take in anything.

Alas! Such is our misery that men part religion, and love by parties. Men love not as God loves, without respect of persons, but men love such because they take part with them and their designs, and have prejudice against others because they are not their followers.

Till we love one another according as Christ has given us command and example, as He has loved us, that is, as His, we cannot expect so sweet a concord as then we may.

PRINCIPLE 10. Ascend or descend, go higher or lower, do anything (sin excepted) that you may agree. Become all things to all men, if at last by any means you may win some. There is no greater way to win one another's love as by denying ourselves to seek one an-

other's wealth.

Nature is so in love with unity that particular beings will forsake their own interests, their elements and centers which are their rest and happiness, rather than there should be a breach or vacuity in nature. And it is but reasonable that particulars should serve the universal (for they who so lose, shall save), seeing that unless the vessel be preserved their cabins cannot.

Alas, Christians, how will you thus seek every man his own and not the things of Jesus Christ? "My joy is now fulfilled," said John at Christ's increase, "though His increase be my decrease." And Paul would rather starve himself and never eat flesh while he lived, than do anything which should offend or sadden his weak brother.

Bodies ductile and tensile (metals that will be drawn into wires, wool and tow, which will be drawn into yarn or thread) have in them the appetite of not discontinuing so strong that they will force the wire which draws and pulls them out rather than discontinue or forsake their own bodies.

Cratisiclea, the mother of Cleomenes, when he was loath to send her for a pledge into Egypt, said unto him, "Come, come, put me into a ship, and send me whither thou wilt, that this body of mine may do some good to my country, before crooked age consumes my life without profit."

Oh, that there were such a heart in us to lay aside our own particular relations and interests, that there may not be so many a breach in public. Let us be weak with the weak as well as strong with the strong that we may make up breaches.

Part 3

For a further help to unity I shall lay down some other principles to unite our judgments, and submit them to the judgments of the saints whether they speak according to God or not.

PRINCIPLE 1. Seeing there is nothing to be practiced, believed, or taught which is not agreeable to the mind of God, let us make the Word of God our judge.

The Scriptures are the touchstone by which all religious principles and acts are to be tried. "To the Law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this rule, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). Let nothing pass for currency which has not this stamp upon it.

Certainly no Christian will refuse to make the truth of God contained in the Scriptures the judge of all he holds and practices, it being the basis of both if they are laid on their true foundation. It is the trial which tries all; therefore bring your opinions to the light to see whether they be of God or not.

If the Scriptures write "divine right" upon any opinion, then it is authentic; but all other authority is not sufficient to command either faith or practice. The Bereans were called more noble than they of Thessalonica because they did not take things upon trust, and believe implicitly, but searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so (Acts 17:11). "If any man or an angel from heaven bring you any other doctrine, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

Certainly the Scriptures are the undoubted, perfect, and infallible rule for all matters of faith and practice, or God could not judge the world by them at

the last day.

Let us do therefore as the wise men when they saw the star and went up to Jerusalem, that is, to the Law and to the testimony, and willingly acquiesce in the answer we receive from the oracles of God.

PRINCIPLE 2. Labor for a right understanding of Scripture, for the want of this makes all our differences. We err not knowing the Scriptures. Everyone indeed brings Scripture, but most bring their own, not the Scripture's own sense for their opinions.

For a right understanding of Scripture, take these three courses:

First, consult with the Spirit of God. None knows the mind of God but the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:11). The Philistines, by plowing with Samson's heifer, came to know his riddle. If anyone therefore lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives liberally and upbraids not; yea, He gives the Spirit to those who ask Him.

Second, consult with the saints, for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant," Psalm 25:14. Converse with those who converse with God. The saints have clearer apprehensions of the Scripture than other men, and can give a better account of the mystery (though not, perhaps, of the history) than many a learned man can do. The reason is apparent: the godly man, though illiterate, has the Law in his heart and the truth in his inward parts. The Bible is transcribed within him. But the most learned man in the world (if not a saint) has it not in the experience, though he has it in the expression.

Not, beloved, that I speak in dislike of learning and its use. No, I confess that, next to the Lord Jesus Christ and communion with God in Him, there is no portion (whether riches, honors, or pleasures) like unto it, in my esteem.

It is good, therefore, to consult with the saints. A conjunction of counselors will do well, for in the multitude of them there is likely to be safety (Proverbs 11:14). To depend only on other men's judgments would be to act as if the Spirit had not come to you. And to depend only on your own judgment would be to act as if the Spirit of God had not come to others.

Third, use such helps as God has made useful to others for the right understanding of Scripture. Such helps as God has made useful to me and many other Christians I shall set before you. I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say.

Rules for Understanding the Scriptures

RULE 1. *The Father, Son, and Spirit, as they are one, so they agree in one (1 John 5:7–8).* They have but one design. The Father, Son, and Spirit are not like the gods of the heathen (which, indeed, are not gods), always quarrelling one with another, clashing against and contradicting one another. Though they will many things, their will is but one.

Therefore, if you find in Scripture that the Son's design in redemption seems to be of larger extent than the Father's in election and the Spirit's by sanctification, reconcile it by this rule, for there is but one and the same object in the Father's election, the Son's redemption, and the Spirit's sanctification to eternal life.

RULE 2. *Every particular is to be interpreted by the scope of the whole, and that will free the Scriptures from all seeming contradictions.*

Paul said in Romans 3:28 that a man is justified by faith without, or apart from, the deeds of the law. But James 2:24 says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only" (or alone).

Now here seems to be a contradiction, but the scope of the Scriptures will untie this knot. By faith alone we are justified, but the faith by which we are justified is not alone. It is not, as I conceive, the work of faith, nor the works of faith, but a working faith whereby we are justified.

By faith the person is justified, and by works the faith is justified. And thus, beloved, you see clearly that there is not a disagreeing agreement, but an agreeing disagreement between these two Scriptures.

One said that to hang on to any word or phrase in a text and neglect the scope savors of a heretical disposition. And Luther had a sweet saying to this purpose, "In the grammar of theology, it is proper to proceed according to the meaning of the words, not the matter of the words themselves: we bring in the sense of them, the voice and letter of the Spirit." The sense in short is this: words must give place to the matter and sense. His reason is that the matter is not for the words, but the words are for the matter. And again, that way of understanding or interpreting Scriptures which gathers diverse things from diverse places is most deceitful. The whole Scripture therefore is to be had before our eyes, and contraries are to be compared with contraries.

Friends, I hope it will not be an offense to any to quote an author, for I believe it is as lawful to consult

with the experience of dead saints as of living saints.

RULE 3. *The place is not truly interpreted, nor consequence well inferred, the consequence whereof is an absurdity, and speaks anything to the disparagement of the God of grace, or the grace of God.* Said Luther, "All Scripture is to be interpreted for Christ, as 'keep the commandments' in Christ. For without Him you can do nothing."

Again, fully excellent and excellently full. If our adversaries urge Scripture against Christ, let us urge Christ against Scripture.

If the interpretation of any text draws such inferences after it as these: that God is unjust, that God is mutable, that God cannot do all things, that Christ is not able of and by Himself to save to the utmost, that the saints shall not be kept through faith by the power of God to salvation—if such inferences follow the interpretation of any Scripture, it is not truly interpreted; for they cannot speak against the truth, but for the truth.

RULE 4. *Take heed of distinctions.* Though there may be use of them, yet, for the most part, most distinctions arise from darkness and ignorance, or from willfulness. Therefore, take heed of them and admit none that are not well-grounded on the Scripture. If we spoke more punctually and distinctly to all points, there would be fewer distinctions.

It is common with many who cannot or will not (oh, that there were not such as will not) understand the truth to raise distinctions and evade that way. When men do not know what to say, like sophisters they cry "Distinguish, we must distinguish!" Then "material" and "formal," "strict" and "late" (poor threadbare terms) are tossed up and down like tennis balls.

RULE 5. *Parables and similitudes do not hold in the particulars, but in the whole; not in every sentence, but in the scope.*

They do not run on all fours, as we say; they are more used for illustration than demonstration. And I believe there is not a truth held out in a parable but it is held forth also in some other place of Scripture, which will be better to ground on, being usually more clear.

RULE 6. *Seeing God in Scripture speaks much in a little, interpret Scripture in the largest sense.* Scripture is like laws of favor which are to be extended as far as may be. We wrong many a text of Scripture by confining, bounding, and limiting it in a narrow compass.

The Evangelists look upon several texts as fulfilled in their days, which were fulfilled long before, such as Matthew 2:17: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah saying. . . ." Now this was fulfilled literally in Jeremiah 31:15, when Ephraim, who came from Rachel, was in captivity, and fulfilled here by allusion. It is as if he had said, "We may now take up the words of the prophet," as if that place was not fulfilled till now. And so you shall often find several texts upon several occasions applied to several uses, which shows that the sense should not be confined. For instance, that text in Habakkuk 2:4, "the just shall live by faith," is applied in several senses, as appears by comparing it with Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38, in all of which places it is quoted.

RULE 7. *No place must be interpreted so as to make the two commandments "love God" and "love your neighbor" prejudice each other.* As the proverb says, we must not rob

Peter to clothe Paul. We may not take from God to give to our neighbor, nor take from our neighbor to give to God.

Take “honor thy father and thy mother.” Now we must not, under pretense of honoring our parents, dishonor God. No, it is obedience to disobey them, wherein we cannot obey them unless we disobey God. Neither may we, under pretense of a gift, refuse to do something for our father and mother as God commanded (Mark 7:12–13), lest we make the Word of God of no effect.

RULE 8. *Distinguish between things spoken properly and things spoken figuratively, between things spoken literally and things meant spiritually.* The prophet Malachi said (4:5) that Elijah must first come, which was spoken of John the Baptist, as Christ clarified in Matthew 17:12. So the words in Matthew 16:6, “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees,” are not meant properly but figuratively.

If a man should take Matthew 5:29 literally (“if thine eye offend thee, pull it out”), he might be guilty of self-murder. Therefore it is to be understood spiritually of anything that is near, dear, and tender as our eye to us. Origen, who interpreted almost all other places of Scripture mystically, understood this place literally (he said that some make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of God) and therefore gelded himself. But surely Origen did not have that from the beginning; it was not instituted by God, therefore it must not be executed by man.

RULE 9. *All places which speak of administrations and administrators are best understood and interpreted, the nearer the sense comes to God’s design.* God’s design, Ephesians 4:11–13, by all administrators and administrations, is to

bring about the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the Body of Christ till we all come to fullness.

Now all administrations and administrators intending to help in this, the places of Scripture speaking of such things are undoubtedly best understood in the sense which promotes that work.

RULE 10. *If Scripture speaks it, believe it though reason cannot find the reason for it.* The Scripture says in Job 26:7 that the earth hangs on nothing. 1 John 5:7 says that one is three and three are one. How can reason think this true? Yet it is true, for God who is truth and speaks nothing but truth says it is so!

Yea, let me add that could God be comprehended by our reason, we might think it reason to think He is not God.

PRINCIPLE 3. If, after all these endeavors to attain and obtain the right understanding of Scripture, they yet seem in any particular to speak darkly, and, as to external dispensations, you do not know which interpretation to choose, make holiness your rule.

That way which conduces most to self-abasing and Christ's advancement is the safest. If Christians judged opinions and practices by this rule, they would better discern between things that differ.

You hear men say, "This is Christ," and "Here is Christ," and both may seem probable to you, but you do not know how to determine which really is. There are strong arguments on both hands. Now consider, and in good earnest weigh, and that without partiality, which makes for a most exact walking with God and building up one another in the faith and fear of Jesus

Christ, and accordingly engage.

PRINCIPLE 4. Do not make common to all what God has made peculiar to some, nor make that peculiar to some which God has made common to all. Do not enlarge when God has straitened, nor straiten when God has enlarged. Do not cast pearls before swine, nor give the children's bread to dogs. Do not refuse to give the children bread, and do not deny pearls to those whom God has made His jewels.

Give every one his due—tribute to whom tribute, love to whom love, honor to whom honor. Do not be shy of joining yourselves where God will join Himself, lest you call that common and unclean which God has sanctified. Be sure also to distinguish between the precious and the vile. Then God will make you unto this people a fenced, brazen wall, and though they fight against you they shall not prevail; for the Lord will be with you to save you.

PRINCIPLE 5. Do not confine God to any way, nor deny to God any way of working. Know that He works when, where, how, and by whom He pleases. Because the first gospel ministry was with miracles, can there be none now without miracles? Why will you limit the Holy One of Israel?

If He brings about His end by the gospel to bring in poor sinners to Himself, what does it matter if it is done by the work of His hand or by the word of His mouth?

And yet, who knows but God will again appear in working miracles, especially at the calling in of the Jews, as He did then at the calling of the Gentiles. But

whether He will or not, let us not limit the Holy One of Israel.

PRINCIPLE 6. Do not divorce what God has married, nor separate what God has joined together. The fulfilling of the righteousness of the Law without us does not hinder the fulfilling of it within us, nor does the fulfilling of the righteousness of the Law in us deny the fulfilling of the Law without us.

Why should some (like the Corinthians) cry up Paul and Apollos and Cephas and neglect Christ? And why should others cry up Christ and neglect Paul and Apollos? Surely Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ are very good friends. Christ is not included in Paul, nor excluded from Paul, but is within him and without him.

Some cry up Christ in the flesh, others in the spirit, but, beloved, is Christ divided? Surely Christ in the flesh and Christ in the spirit do not oppose one another. Why, then, should any oppose them one to another?

Some are altogether for the letter, others for the spirit and meaning of the word. Beloved, why should you not be for both in one, seeing they agree in one? Letter and spirit, word and meaning do not disagree nor cross one another. The lesson, when the scholar has learned it by heart, does not differ from that in the book. They are still one and the same lesson.

The word is the meaning expressed; the meaning is the word explained. Only let me add that, though the word includes the meaning fully, yet it does not fully express the meaning, as appears by Christ's exposition of Matthew 5.

Some look but little to the outward conversation, as if all religion consisted in an inward retirement and contemplation. Others look as little to the inward, as if all religion were in the outward man. But, beloved, the inward and outward man make but one man. The inward and outward conversation make but one conformity to the will of God. He does not enjoy much of God within who walks not much with God without, nor does he walk much with God without who enjoys not much of God within.

PRINCIPLE 7. Whatever was either rule or privilege under the law is still so under the gospel unless we can show its abrogation. What was once revealed to be the will of God continues to be so till He Himself annuls it. We see indeed that many things are revoked and, though they were once His will, are His will no longer. For God does not speak because the word is right, but the word is right because God speaks it.

Let us not, therefore, think that the Old Testament's authority is not sufficient proof. Surely, as far as I understand, His will is there; it is not abrogated in the New Testament, it abides still in full force.

PRINCIPLE 8. Use sweetness rather than violence, words rather than swords, to convince another. Use verbs rather than verbiage, rational arguments rather than club law to win over each other.

Certainly, if reason and Scripture will not prevail, imprisonment is not likely to do it. I am sure that love is a more suitable method for a man who cares not to be bound with cords. Cords may bind up his hands so that he cannot hurt, but love binds up his heart so that

he will not hurt.

I beseech you, beloved, let us rather pray *for* one another than make prey *of* one another. If Christ comes and finds us beating our fellow servants, how, how shall we look Him in the face? Oh, that everyone who reads would ask his heart concerning every rule and principle how far it concerns himself, and not put it off, as if others and not himself were being spoken to.

Consider what has been said and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

Part 4

I shall add some arguments to provoke us to mutual love.

ARGUMENT 1. It is the will and command of the Lord Jesus Christ that we love one another. And, oh, with what willingness should Christians embrace the will of Christ! Certainly, if His command is grievous to us the love of God is not in us (1 John 5:3).

Alas! How little is “love your enemies” observed when “love one another” is so little regarded! Surely you would have been loath to have dealt so unkindly with a dead friend as not to observe his last will and testament, and will you deal thus with Christ? Are these the effects of your affection? How can you prove what you profess, that you are His friends, when He says in John 15:14, “Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you”? Never talk of friendship unless you obey Him.

Read over that place in 1 John 4:20 (not superficially, but seriously): "If a man says 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar." Do you see this, Christians? Who speaks truth, you or God? You say you love God, but God says you lie for you do *not* love one another.

Do you mean to mock God when you call upon Him and pray, "Thy will be done"? Is not this His will, that you love one another? What, would you have God say, "Amen," and you will not say, "So be it"?

ARGUMENT 2. We have Christ as an example. He lived and loved as well as suffered and died, leaving us an example. This is all we have to do in the world, to show forth the virtues of Christ and walk as we have Him for an example. We do not write after our copy unless we live and love as Christ did.

See that remarkable inference in 1 John 4:10-11: "Herein is love, not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." He draws this inference: if God so loved us, what then? Must we love God again? No, that is not all. How ought we to love one another, since God has given us such an example!

Christ told the Jews that if they had made Abraham their example they would do as Abraham did. And surely, if we propose Christ for our example, we should walk as Christ did. If a painter tells me he is about to draw a picture of a man, and it proves to look like a beast, I hardly believe that he had the idea of a man as an example in his fancy.

Surely, while the products and results of our undertakings are so brutish and diabolical, how can any man

think that we have Christ as a pattern unless they judge Christ by us to be according to us, malicious and envious as we are?

Ah, my brethren! Tender the honor of Christ more. He has told the world that they may read Him in you, and your obedience to His commands will give all the world to understand that you are His disciples. Alas, what will men think of Christ when they see His disciples walk in strife and bitter envyings?

You are His epistle to be known and read by all men. And if the copy contains such bitter things, will they not think that the original contains the same? Ah, beloved! Why do you bring up an evil report upon the Lord Jesus?

When the streams are bitter, will any think the fountain sweet? The Academics, the Peripatetics, the Stoics and Epicureans, all the sects of the philosophers, were more careful to follow their leaders than Christians are to follow Christ.

But let us recall again what Alexander said to a cowardly soldier of his called Alexander: "Leave off your name or fight better." Never call yourselves "Christians," and pretend to walk as if you have Christ for an example, unless men may read that in you which was in Christ: love.

ARGUMENT 3. Love is a debt. You owe love and should owe nothing else to one another. Christians, will you not be honest men and pay your debt (Romans 13:8–10)? When you love one another, you fulfill the law and pay your debt.

Is it not strange that Christians should be such antinomians? This is Christ's law: "Love one another."

Now you are antinomians if you do not love one another. Certainly a man who is for love is no antinomian, for the law is fulfilled in this one word: love. Look to it, Christians. You will never be out of the danger of being arrested one by another till you pay your debt and love one another.

ARGUMENT 4. Your union and communion one with another, your loving of one another, will remove the scandals which your divisions bring upon the truth of God. There is no such stumbling block which causes the world to ignore the way of God as the division of saints.

How, says the world, can they teach us the truth when they cannot agree upon it themselves? Blessed God! What a reproach is this! Oh, that this should be published in Askalon and spoken in Gath!

Christians, would it not make you blush if you should hear poor souls (as I have heard, Lord knows, with a sorry heart) come and tell you that there is nothing that keeps them so much in doubt, nothing fills them so full of fears, as the division of saints?

“Alas,” says a poor soul, “my soul is in a strait between two, and what to do I know not. One tells me this is Scylla, another tells me that’s Charybdis. One tells me that in that way there is a lion, another tells me that if I lean on that wall a serpent will bite me. And this rends my heart to pieces.”

Ah, Christians! Let the sighing of these poor babes and infants’ souls prevail with you. Yea, let those who are as yet unborn (being not newborn) see your sweet and loving conversation, that they may be won by it.

ARGUMENT 5. Your living in love will midwife into the world that long-looked-for and longed-for man-child of reformation with which we travail in birth to this very day.

Alas! We are like Jacob and Esau, struggling in the womb for priority and eldership, and so prove ourselves foolish children by standing in the way of reformation breaking forth. Everybody cries out, "Where is the reformation? You promised us reformation!" Ah, will you not lay it to heart? Undoubtedly, had you not fallen out about the way, you would have come to your journey's end long since.

Nothing retards and hinders public motion so much as division, when one goes this way and another that. It is spoken to the everlasting praise of Israel in Judges 20 that they were gathered together as one man. Verse 8 says that "all the people arose as one man." So in Ezra 3:1: "The people gathered together as one man." And Nehemiah 8:1: "And all the people gathered together as one man."

Had they been divided, how would the work have gone on? Christians, shall Israel in the flesh be as one man, and shall not Israel in the spirit? Were they so zealous for the type, and shall we not be for the anti-type? Yea, they were for the shadow, and shall we not be for the body? As you love public settlement and safety, love one another.

ARGUMENT 6. Union and love will preserve you, but division and envy will be your ruin. Galatians 5:15: "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not consumed one of another."

What! Have Christians become like millstones

which, having nothing to grind, set themselves on fire? That the world should hate you and seek your ruin is no wonder, but that you should hate one another is monstrous! Was it ever known that any hates his own flesh? You are flesh of flesh and bone of bone, yea, of one spirit with Jesus Christ. Oh, if you were but sensible, how sensible Jesus Christ is hereof! Do you not think that it pains Him to have His members thus disjointed? Surely He cries out, "I am wounded, yea, My friends wound Me!"

What! Brethren sheathe their swords in each other's bowels! Will you bring that ruin upon yourselves which the devil and his agents have attempted in vain? Will you pull out one another's eyes to make the Philistines sport?

Ah, take heed, lest while you fall out among yourselves a common enemy falls in upon you and ends the controversy by both your ends. Surely the world hugs themselves in these hopes and the saints shrug for these fears.

When Agamemnon and Achilles were fallen out, Homer brought in Nestor, persuading them to reconciliation with these two arguments:

*Alas! Great sadness will the Greeks possess,
Priam's and Trojan's joy will be no less.*

The world wishes of you, as Tacitus did of the Germans, if this people cannot love us, then let them hate one another. And will you give them their heart's desire? Must it again be said, "Thy perdition is of thyself, O Israel, O England!"

It is said of the stone Scyrus that, while it is whole, it

swims on the water, but being broken it sinks. Christians, there is yet hope that, being whole and united in love, we may swim above all the waters that flow in upon us like mighty floods. But if we break and divide we are likely to sink, every one of us. Many other arguments may be used, but I hope a few words will be enough to the wise.

(1) The beasts of the field are not only at peace with us but at peace among themselves; especially those of the same kind agree together. The wild and savage bears agree among themselves.

What! Shall the lion lie down with the lamb and the leopard with the kid to teach saints the way? The ox and the ass have more knowledge than My people, said the God of Israel in Jeremiah; and may we not say of the elephants and stags that they have more love than Christians? They will help and support one another, but Christians . . . ?

(2) Wicked men, brethren in iniquity, agree together (Luke 23:12). Look to it, Christians! That very same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together who before were at enmity among themselves. Can you read this and not blush?

That very day that Christ was to be abased, enemies became friends, and at this day when Christ is to be advanced, friends become enemies. Christians, where are your hearts?

(3) The devils agree among themselves, and, as I may say, love one another, though it is but a devilish love, Mark 5:9, and from verse 22 to verse 27. Mark it, I beseech you, they will not cast out one another.

Do the devils love their kingdom so well that they will not divide it, and do you love ours so ill as to divide

and break it? Matthew 12:45: "They go and call one another, and take possession and dwell there." What! Can devils dwell together and not Christians? Oh, with what bleeding hearts should we think of this, that the children of hell should be wiser in their generations than the children of heaven!

I shall conclude with Philippians 2: "If therefore there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself; look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Christians, I wish I were able to express myself with more affection in beseeching you to love one another. I beseech you, yes, with beseechings, I beseech you to love one another. Could I but paint out before you the pantings of my heart, and set sighs before your sight, and draw a draft of the groans which these considerations draw from my heart . . . but all I will or can say is "love, love, love." The love of God and the God of love constrain you to love one another that it may at last be said of Christians as it was at first, "Behold how they love one another."

Love One Another

by
Thomas Manton

“For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” 1 John 3:11

In these words we have a reason for the last clause in the previous verse, why he that loves not his brother is not of God. This is his argument: He that keeps not God’s commandments is not of God; he that loves not his brother keeps not God’s commandments. The major premise is evident in itself; the minor is proven in the text: “For this is the message that ye have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”

In these words we have:

A duty: “that we should love one another.” The duty recommended to us is mutual love, that we should love one another; that is, that we should love all men, but chiefly that Christians should love Christians.

The authority by which it is recommended to us: “this is the message that ye have heard from the beginning.” It is a message or command: “this is the message.” It is an ancient doctrine or command: “which ye have heard from the beginning.”

It is the declaration and message, or the commandment. Everything we read in the Word of God, or

hear from the Word of God, is a special message sent from God. "To you is the word of this salvation sent" (Acts 13:26); not brought, but sent. I allude to Judges 3:20: "Elihu said, 'I have a message from God to thee.' And he [the king] arose out of his seat." Every message from God bespeaks its own respect and reverence.

"From the beginning." The same phrase is used in 1 John 2:7: "I write no new commandment unto you, but the old commandment which ye have heard from the beginning." This is to be understood as either:

From the beginning of their conversion, since they were called to the knowledge of God. Love is one of the first lessons of Christianity; for "Faith worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6), and "After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints" (Ephesians 1:15), expressing thereby their Christianity. Ever since they became Christians they were possessed with the necessity of this duty.

Or from the beginning of the gospel state, or ever since the faith of Christ was published and preached in the world. This is the doctrine so often and so earnestly inculcated by Christ when He was here upon the earth. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; that as I have loved you, so ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34–35). And, "This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). And this is often inculcated by our apostle as one who lay in Christ's bosom, who had a true sense of his Master's doctrine, and partook greatly of His Spirit.

Or from the beginning of the Mosaic administration, since even under the law this was a duty pressed. "Thou shalt

love thy neighbor as thyself; I am the Lord” (Leviticus 19:18). And the neighbor was not only the Jewish neighbor, or one who lived within the pale and line of the Jewish communion, as appears by the language of the commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house” (Exodus 20:16–17), which prohibitions imply the Gentile as well as the Jewish neighbor. All men, considered as men with respect to nature and creation, are our brethren. So an Edomite is reckoned a brother (Deuteronomy 23:7). So with respect to commerce and occasion of intercourse they are our neighbors; to them we must perform all acts of love and mercy, as their necessities do require.

Or from the beginning of the world, ever since Adam; for it was not only enforced by Christ’s and Moses’ law, but implanted and engrafted on man’s heart or the law of nature. It is a matter of natural equity to love our neighbor, to do or not to do to others as we would have done or not done to ourselves (Matthew 7:12). The Gentiles were bound to this by the law of nature. Well then, you see love for one another was always in great esteem with God; therefore everyone who is born of God should make great conscience of it. If the Gentiles by the law of nature were bound to love others as themselves, and the Jews by the law of Moses, much more are Christians under an obligation by the express command of Christ to love one another.

DOCTRINE. One great duty which God has recommended to our obedience is to love one another. Here I shall show you what is this love for one another, and how God has recommended it to our obedience.

What is this love for one another? There are two branches of it: "And to brotherly kindness, charity" (2 Peter 1:7).

First, there is contained in it brotherly kindness, a grace wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, inclining us to love all those without exception as brethren who are made partakers of like precious faith with us.

In this description note the author of this grace: the Holy Spirit renewing the heart. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren; see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). Naturally there is in us pride, self-love, wrath, and strife, all of which dispose us only to please ourselves and love ourselves without any regard for others. Besides, till our souls are purified and sanctified, we shall never love purity and holiness in others, but the upright will be an abomination to us. "He that is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked" (Proverbs 29:27). They are unsuitable to them, and they are objects reviving guilt. Whatever good nature men have yet in their natural condition, they are enemies to the godly. Naturally we hate God because He is a holy God, and we hate His law because it is a holy law, and we hate His children because they are a holy people. But when the soul is purified, its love and inclinations and aversions are altered both as to persons and things. We love God for His holiness (Psalm 103:1). We love His law because it is pure (Psalm 119:140). We love His people because they are holy: "In whose eyes a vile person is condemned, but He honors them that fear the Lord" (Psalm 15:4). The new creature loves what God loves and hates what God

hates.

There is a propensity or inclination in the new nature to this love, with all the acts and fruits of it, though no outward respects invite us thereunto. "Concerning brotherly love, ye need not that any should write unto you, for ye are taught of God to love one another" (1 Thessalonians 4:9). Instruction and persuasion do not put us upon it so much as inclination and the tendency of the new nature. "Everyone that loveth is born of God" (1 John 4:7). "He that loveth Him that begat, loveth also those that are begotten by Him" (1 John 5:1). Those who have the new nature in any degree of strength and prevalence are inclined and disposed by it to love others who are partakers of the same nature; so that it is a duty kindly and natural to the regenerate, flowing from an inward propensity and inclination, and needs not much outward excitement. All the saints have a new heart of one and the same making and nature, and propound unto themselves one and the same end and scope; and so their hearts are suited to one another and take pleasure in one another.

The acts and fruits of this love are these:

First, an esteem of them and complacency in them, as having more of God in them than other men. They are said to be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). We love God's natural image in all men. We love His spiritual image in the saints, and therefore the bond is stronger than the bond of common love. "My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight" (Psalm 16:3). "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor" (Proverbs 12:26); therefore he is a

greater object of love. Augustine said of himself and his friend Alypius that their friendship grew more entire when they both became acquainted with Christ, and were cemented together with the blood of Christ.

Second, there is an affectionate desire for their good and spiritual happiness. The philosopher tells us that to love any is to wish well for them, to desire for them all the good we can. And we cannot desire a greater good for others than spiritual good, than the best good; not to wish them health and strength of body and greatness and worldly accommodations, but grace, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and light, life, and eternal happiness. "We cease not to pray for you, and to desire that you may be filled with all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Colossians 1:9). "God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:8). God knows the secret motions and inclinations of our inward affections. Now, when we can appeal to God for the fervency, sincerity, and spirituality of our love, and have in some measure as hearty a good will toward them as Christ had toward souls when He died for them, then we have this Christ-like love which is called brotherly kindness.

Third, as occasion serves we must really promote their good to the uttermost of our power; for it is a cold love that will not be at any pains and charges, or hazard any interests, for the sake of those whom we love. That cold love contents itself with wishes, yea, though they are formed into prayers. No, we must not only say, "Be warmed, be clothed," but really do them good and seek their welfare as we would our own. In short, we must sympathize with them in every condi-

tion. "Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15). We should have the same care one for another (1 Corinthians 12:25). Want of feeling is a self-excommunication, a casting ourselves out of the body. Nay, there must be not only sympathy and compassion, but real succor. "Do good to all, but especially to the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). "Distributing to the necessity of the saints, given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13). "God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labor of love, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Hebrews 6:10). We must do them all possible service, as the exigencies of their circumstances and occasions require, assisting them with our favor, countenance, labor, and estates, yea, and, as we shall see afterwards, by hazarding and laying down life itself.

Fourth, conversing with them and delighting in their fellowship for our mutual comfort and edification. Love is a uniting thing; it draws to communion as the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David (1 Samuel 18:1). And the apostle bids Christians to be knit together in love (Colossians 2:2). Brotherly love is such an affection as knits the hearts of the professors of the same faith to one another, as if they had but one heart and one soul in common among them. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32). And therefore it is called the bond of perfection (Colossians 3:14). The saints are bound together in a holy society, and preserved by it; and without it, as a broom unbound, they fall all to pieces.

Fifth, in passing by failures and infirmities. "And above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves,

for charity shall cover a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). Love will prevent and pass by many mutual wrongs which otherwise would disturb the comfortable society of the Lord's people. Therefore, brotherly love is not come to its due height, growth, and fervency when it is easily interrupted by every offense. We cannot expect to converse with any in this life but some failures and wrongs likely will be often reiterated, both against God and one another. Therefore, unless we have learned to pardon failures, we have not learned the true art of loving one another. We must pardon the person for the wrong done to us, and we must intercede with God for the pardon of the wrong done to him. Love must cover these, not upbraiding the party with them and concealing it from the wicked as much as may be, lest religion be disgraced.

Sixth, the impartiality of this love. We must love those without exception who are godly, whether rich or poor, prosperous or afflicted.

We must love them whether rich or poor, for we must not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in respect of persons (James 2:1). No, if it is sincere, it must be love for all the saints (Ephesians 1:15), for the meanest as well as the greatest; otherwise we despise the church of God (1 Corinthians 11:22). Meanness does not take away Christian relations. There are many differences in worldly respects between one of God's children and another; and in spiritual gifts some are weak and some are strong, yet we must love all for all are brethren. All are children of one Father, all are owned by Christ, co-heirs not only with the richest and strongest Christians, but with Christ Himself. Therefore we should love them without respect of persons,

yea, love them when no respect of our own invites us thereunto, for love is not to be measured by our profit, but by a desire to profit others.

We should love them in adversity as well as in prosperity. Some seem to love good people when the times favor them and they suffer no loss by owning them. No, you must own them in their troubles also and persecutions. "Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used" (Hebrews 10:33). Some suffered as the parties persecuted, others as their companions, who were not at first in the original process. So Moses left all the pleasures of the court, and his friendships there, to join with God's despised people, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25). Alas! There are many painted butterflies and summer friends to the gospel who are gone when the sunshine of prosperity is gone. Brethren, then, almost forget that they are brethren, if not altogether, and stand aloof, and are loath to own the afflicted.

We should love them all whether we are obliged or disobliged, for in brotherly kindness we are not to mind our own things, but the image and glory of God, and the good and benefit of others. "Look not every one upon his own things, but every man also upon the things of others" (Philippians 2:4). Whether we are invited to this love by benefits or courtesies done to us, or discouraged by neglects, we are to consider our duty to people as they stand related to God; otherwise we know one another after the flesh, when we value men by personal respects to us rather than by what of God

we find in them. "If you love them that love you, do not even the publicans do the same?" (Matthew 5:46). What singular thing do we? We are monsters of ingratitude if we do otherwise.

The objects of this love are those who are partakers of like precious faith with us, or, in one word, the brethren, our fellow Christians. Our brethren in a natural sense are all mankind, as it is said, "He hath made all nations of one blood" (Acts 17:26). There is a communion of the same nature. But, in a Christian sense, all the faithful are brethren in Christ because of the communion of the same faith. Of these, some are only professors of the faith, who, in opposition to infidels, are called brethren. "If any man who is called a brother be a fornicator, or a drunkard, or a railer, or covetous, or an idolater, with such an one eat not" (1 Corinthians 5:11). Others are really regenerate or give hopeful evidences thereof; these are born of the same seed, adopted by the same Father, brought up in the same family, partakers of the same Spirit, established in the same inheritance, of the same brotherhood the Apostle mentions in 1 Peter 2:17. Now, though they should not be such as we take them to be by their profession, yet our love is acceptable to God because we love them upon the supposition that they are brethren.

Let us now look at the reduplication or qualification of this object. These brethren must be loved as brethren with such a love, and upon that account, as Christ distinguishes between giving to a disciple and giving to him in the name of a disciple (Matthew 10:42); as one who belongs to Christ, stamped with the image of God and sealed with His Spirit. If it is for some external respect, though the love is real in its

kind, yet we have our own ends in it, as many may show respect to the people of God to get advantage by them. Self-love is great in every one of us, and therefore to love the brethren in sincerity is a very difficult thing. Most have their own ends in it, and make a market of their religion. It is brotherly kindness when we love them out of a respect for their holiness or because of the image of God in them. A saint is to be loved as a saint and a disciple as a disciple, not because they are learned, potent, and opulent, but because they are a child of God; if so, then we will love all in whom we see anything of Christ. Love will cover something that is unlovely in them because they are partakers of the same grace and look for salvation by the same Christ. Surely we will love them whether they are of our party or not; but the more godly they are, the more we will love them. Many love godliness in a low degree while mingled with imperfections—the impurity is a part of the reason for the love—while a very strict man is hated. Well, then, this is brotherly love. By this brief view of it we see it is very rare to be found among Christians. Self-love and the love of the world have almost destroyed it; and where it is, it is not as fervent and effectual as it should be. In most persons, though professed Christians, we either find no love, or, if any, a very cold one, such as will run no hazards for and with those whom we love.

I come now to speak of the other branch, charity, or love for all men; for it must not confine itself to fellow Christians only, but be diffused to all men though they are not heirs of the same grace of life. In short:

This love is *amor justitae*, a love of justice, which

consists in justice and righteousness. We are not to wrong them or defraud them of their due, but so deal with them as we would be dealt with ourselves; for this is one sort and kind of love: to love my neighbor as myself, and do as I would be done by, are equivalent expressions. "Render to every one their due; owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Romans 13:7-8). Or this love is *amor compassionis*, a love of compassion. We must not hide ourselves from our own flesh (Isaiah 58:7); we must be affected with their misery, both by reason of sin and affliction, relieve their wants, seek their conversion, and promote it by all ways and means possible. This we owe to barbarians and wicked ones, of what nation soever. Though we hate their ways, we must pity their persons.

From this love enemies and persecutors are not excepted. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). For this is to be like God, who is kind to the unthankful and the evil. "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be the children of the highest; for He is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil" (Luke 6:35).

The fruits of this love are not only seen in bestowing temporal benefits upon others, but, to the uttermost of our power (because they are capable of eternal blessedness), making it our unfeigned desire and prayer to God that they may be saved. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved" (Romans 10:1). And our earnest endeavors should be to procure their spiritual good.

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converts a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:19–20).

The Reasons Why We Should Love All Men

Next, let me give the reasons why we should love all men. The reasons that may induce us are:

1. Equality, the actual equality of all men by nature, who were all made by the same God, and all made of one blood. Diversity of rank does not take away identity of nature. “Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?” (Malachi 2:10). “If I did despise the cause of my manservant, or of my maidservant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up, and when He visiteth, what shall I answer Him? Did not He that made me in the womb, make him? And did not one fashion us in the womb?” (Job 31:13–15). “Our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children” (Nehemiah 5:5). Why is more due to you than them? Consider also the possible equality of all men, as to their condition and state of life. “Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves in the body” (Hebrews 13:3). Before we go out of the body there may be strange changes in the world, and God may make us as low as others.

2. We are to imitate God as children do their father (Matthew 5:45). Now God loves all His creatures and hates none. The more we imitate God, the more we

know we are children of our Father who is in heaven.

3. God has so cast the world that sometimes we need the help of others as they need ours, that by mutual necessities and a combination of interests the world may be upheld. As in the natural body no member can say to any, "I have no need of thee," so also has God disposed it in the great frame of mankind that we may have a mutual care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25). As He requires from every man a respect for the world of mankind, so He has turned all the respects of the world of mankind upon one man. We would be glad to be loved of all the men in the world if we could bring it to pass; and surely we may the better expect it if we have this love for all the world.

Why should we love strangers? "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for hereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2). By "strangers" he means those who are far from home, in another place and country, where they have few friends and are not well known, especially when exiled for the gospel. We find this in the instances of Abraham and Lot, who were kind to the angels and had their recompense. Abraham's barren wife had a promise of bearing a son to him. Lot had benefit also, being saved from the flames that destroyed Sodom. Surely such a work of mercy shall not go unrewarded.

Why should we love enemies? Partly because there is more reason to love them than to hate them, because there are some relics of God's image in them. And God has forgiven us greater wrongs. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32). We commit a sin against God, or

else, upon the apprehension of the injury done us by man, we are deeper in danger than our enemy. We daily trespass against God more than they can trespass against us. God forgives talents; we cannot forgive pence. God forgives a hundred thousand; we cannot forgive one hundred (Matthew 18). We look that God should forgive us, and we will not forgive others. In short, though it is more comfortable to love a friend, it is more honorable to love an enemy. "It is the glory of a man to pass by a transgression" (Proverbs 19:11).

For our second point, let us see how God has recommended it to our obedience.

It is a precept and a commanded duty, and not bare counsel and advice only. There is a great deal of difference between allowing and commanding. Where a thing is allowed, it may be done; but where a thing is commanded, it must be done, a necessity is laid upon us. Therefore none must look upon love as an indifferent thing, which we may practice or forbear at our own pleasure. No, it is a debt or duty by virtue of Christ's express command, a duty to Christ, a debt that we owe to God more than to our neighbor. We owe them love as our fellow creatures, but chiefly upon the injunction of our Creator.

It is a special command which Christ has adopted into His new law. Christ calls it His new commandment: "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another" (John 13:34). How new, since it was as old as the moral law or the law of nature? Because it was so solemnly renewed by Him and commended to their care. Laws, when new, are more regarded and obeyed. Christ would ratify it afresh that the law of love

might never be out of date, but be looked upon as a statute in force and newly enacted and fresh in the remembrance of His people. Or it is a new commandment because it is pressed upon a new ground and pattern. Before it was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; now it is, "as I have loved you." The great love of Christ revealed in the gospel must leave a suitable impression on us. He came from heaven not only to represent the holy and amiable nature of God, but to propound to us a pattern of love and charity. Once more, the Scripture is impatient of being denied when it calls for love to the brethren; therefore it applies itself to our dispositions either way. Some prize old things, others new; therefore it tells us, "I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning" (1 John 2:7-8), and "A new commandment write I unto thee; not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which ye had from the beginning, that ye love one another" (2 John 5). It is old and not old, new and not new; thus it plies us on all hands, that we may look upon ourselves as deeply concerned. Some novelty is suspected, therefore he tells them of an old commandment; it is the same which was commanded in the law, yet solemnly reinforced in the gospel. There are some commands which are new and not old, such are the sacraments of the New Testament. Some are old and not new, as the ceremonies of the law now antiquated; some both old and new, as the precepts of the moral law, and in particular this command of love, which, though it was enjoined before, yet is revived by Christ and renewed and recommended by Him to His disciples as a chief and singular duty.

It is His dying charge. "This is My commandment, that ye love one another" (John 15:12). He appropriates it and challenges it as His commandment which, though given by God before, yet He would make His own by an express charge: "If My authority is of any force with you, do not entertain it with a careless indifference as a thing which you may neglect without any great inconvenience." The season is to be observed when those things were spoken by Christ, when He was departing from His disciples and preparing them for His departure. Speeches of dying men are received with much reverence, especially the charge of dying friends. The brethren of Joseph, fearing he should remember old injuries, came to him with this plea: "Thy father did command us before he died, saying . . ." (Genesis 50:16). Let us fulfill the will of the dead. Our Lord commanded us when He died saying, "Love one another." Christ foresaw how His disciples would quarrel in their Master's absence, how His work would thereby be interrupted and their own peace as well, how His religion would be exposed to reproach and obloquy by the contention of His followers. Therefore He left this charge, "See that ye love one another."

It is a comprehensive command. For to love one another implies all those things which concern our duty to our neighbor. "These things I command you, that ye love one another" (John 15:17). These things and yet but one thing pressed, and that is to love each other. But love contains many duties in the bosom of it. "All the law is fulfilled in one word, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'" (Galatians 5:14). How is that to be understood? There are other precepts besides this. There are respects of love due to God, and there

is justice due to our neighbor as well as love. Simply love God, and we love our neighbor for God's sake; and the acts of justice which we perform to them are the fruits and products of love and must flow from love. Yea, the acts of charity, how pompous and plausible soever they are, yet if love is not at the bottom they are not right. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). So all the law is fulfilled in this one word. Therefore love is called the fulfilling of the law (Romans 13:10).

It is a duty that fits us to partake of the blessing which God has commanded for His people when united. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon Aaron's head, that ran down upon the beard, that went down to the skirt of his garment; as the dew of Hermon, and the dew that descendeth upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psalm 133:1-3). This holy concord is a blessing both pleasant and profitable. God delights to pour out His grace on such a society. "I say unto you, if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:19). God will not hear one sort

of His children against another; the unity He seeks is like “the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard, that went down to the skirt of his garment.” There the pleasantness is described by the fragrance of the holy ointment wherewith Aaron and his sons were anointed; it is often called the oil of gladness, because it cheered the spirits of the chief priests and all who were present in the temple. The profit of it is “as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore” (verse 3). It is as the dew which moistens the earth, which was a great blessing in those hot countries, and caused the fields to laugh with fatness. He mentioned Mount Hermon and Mount Zion. Hermon was a fat and fruitful place; it is usually put among the fair and pleasant pastures. There is the blessing: they have most communion with God who have most communion with one another, and all this is in order to eternal life.

This is a duty that most reveals the temper of our religion, which is wholly made up of love. It is a God of love that we serve, and they have no acquaintance with Him who love not their brethren. “Let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God; for God is love” (1 John 4:7–8). Again, “God is love, and He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him” (1 John 4:16). Redemption by Christ, which is the great mystery of the Christian religion, was the most conspicuous demonstration of God’s love. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). So “Hereby perceive we the love of God, that He laid down His life for us”

(1 John 3:16). What is this mystery of redemption but a wonder of love? It was love which stepped in, and recovered us out of that destruction and ruin wherein we had involved ourselves. What was the Son of God but love incarnate, love coming down from heaven to earth, to die for a sinful world? Now why was all this made known unto us? Only to talk of or comfort ourselves with? No, that we might imitate it, that the true stamp and impression of our religion may be upon our hearts. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us" (Ephesians 5:2). "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:11). He who sees the true face of redemption, and understands the gospel and the grace of Christ, will easily be induced to see the reasonableness of such a duty. And what is the work of the Holy Ghost but to shed abroad this love in our hearts (Romans 5:5)? And what is the intent of the ordinances but to represent and seal up this love? So we express the true genius of our religion by love.

USE. The use is to show us the excellency, amiableness, and beauty of the Christian religion in both these regards, as it requires brotherly kindness and charity, brotherly kindness being part of the communion of saints. Some things are pleasant and not profitable, as vain delights; some things are profitable and not pleasant, as afflictions and the sorrows of repentance; some things are neither profitable nor pleasant, as hatred, variance, strife; some things are pleasant and profitable, as the concord of God's people. Man is a social creature, and religion mightily befriends human societies; for besides the brotherly kindness that it requires to be exercised among Christians themselves, it

requires also love for all men—not only forbidding injustice to the names and persons of others, but uncharitableness and those oppressions and injuries wherewith the world abounds. These things would be banished if men would be true to this religion and love their neighbor as themselves.

It commands universal love and kindness among men, a readiness to forgive our greatest enemies. How easily would men be induced to pardon wrongs! How patiently would they bear a modest dissent, where in this state of frailty all men cannot force their judgments to be of another mold and size! How far would men be from doing hurt to one another, hurt no man, speak evil of no man! Yea, how beneficial and helpful would men be to one another, seeking others' good as their own, affected with one another's welfare as their own, and rejoicing in it! Oh, that the world would consider how much of Christianity consists in love and doing good! Without that there is nothing so fierce, so bad, so cruel which you may not be drawn to think, say, or do against your brother. The world is prejudiced against religion as an ill-natured thing, but there is no ground for such a prejudice when we consider that the Christian religion requires nothing but what is most fit for God to command and most reasonable for man to obey.

**The Nature and
Principles of Love,
as the End of the
Commandment**

Declared in some of the last sermons of

Mr. Joseph Caryl

Sermon 1

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” 1 Timothy 1:5

The holy Apostle Paul, as appears in the beginning of the chapter and epistle, finds some at Ephesus who troubled the church with needless and fruitless doctrine. And therefore, if you consult the third and fourth verses of this chapter, you will find he besought Timothy to abide at Ephesus, when he went into Macedonia that he might charge some that they teach no other doctrine contrary to what he had taught, or doctrines contrary to the general tenor of the gospel. Such teachers he calls accursed in Galatians 1:8.

He would have him warn them as he does in the fourth verse: “Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith.” Timothy was besought by St. Paul to give this charge to and concerning the teachers at Ephesus.

And because those fabulists and genealogists were great pretenders to the law, therefore the Apostle tells them that the law leads to the embracing of one another in love, not to the embroiling of one another in needless questions or in the venting of them. And this he speaks in the verse now read, “The end of the commandment is charity out of a

pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." In which words we have two things:

First, an assertion laid down.

Second, we have a limitation to the assertion.

The assertion is laid down in the beginning of the verse, "The end of the commandment is charity."

The assertion is limited in the close of the verse. It is charity—not charity at large, but charity thus qualified, or thus circumstantiated—it is "charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

I shall first explicate the assertion, and then show its connection with the limitation and give at the present one general point of doctrine from the whole verse.

The end of the commandment is charity. For the explication of this assertion, I must show three things:

What is meant here by the commandment.

What is meant by the end of the commandment.

What that charity in particular is which is the end of the commandment.

And when I have briefly done these three things, we shall come to a final point.

1. The end of the commandment is charity, but what is this commandment?

The word which we here translate "commandment" is not the ordinary Greek word which signifies a commandment. The word properly signifies, as critics tell us, a charge given by judges or superiors concerning something to be done or forborne.

And thus it is used in Acts 5:28 where the high priests tell the apostles, "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name?" Did not we straitly "command" you? The Greek there is a Hebraism, in which Luke expresses the minds of the scribes and Pharisees, "Did not we straitly command you?" Did not we command you with a command? Which we very well render according to the sense of the idiom: "Did not we straitly command you?" Or, as Mr. Beza renders it, "Did not we command you again and again?" And in the very same sense the Apostle uses the word in 1 Timothy 1:18, "This charge I commit unto thee." Why now, if we should take the word "commandment" in this strict sense, it may have a special reference to the third and fourth verses going before the text where I touched before. Paul besought Timothy to charge some that they teach no other doctrine—to charge them, or to command them. It is the root of the word which we render "commandment." "I charge thee to lay this commandment upon them." So we may well render it: "I command they teach no other doctrine." It is as if he had said, "The end why I besought you to give that charge or command was to promote charity." In contrast, those other doctrines did but breed questions, and those questions bred contentions among the churches and the brethren. "The end of the commandment, the reason why I gave them that commandment, was to maintain love among brethren."

Yea, forasmuch as the Apostle at the seventh verse speaks of those who desire to be teachers of the law, and in the eighth and ninth verses proceeds

to speak of the nature and use of the law, I conceive the word "commandment" may be extended to the whole law of God, or to the whole revelation or the mind of God concerning things to be done or forborne by us. And so here is a figure; here is a change of number. The singular is put for the plural—"commandment" for "commandments." And indeed, as the doctrine of grace is nothing else but a collection of promises, so the law is nothing else but a collection of precepts; and in this sense Mr. Calvin said here that, by the word "commandment," we may take in all the commandments of God—not only those that are expressed in the Decalogue, but those which are scattered quite through the Holy Scriptures. The end of the commandment, or of the commandments, the whole revealed will of God concerning the agenda or things to be done, is charity, or it is love. And so much for the first thing, what we are to understand by the commandment.

2. What is the end of the commandment? The end of the commandment is charity. The word "end" may be taken in a threefold notion.

First, the end notes the conclusion and period of a thing, the conclusion of all things. So the Apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 4:7, "The end of all things is at hand," and it is well for us to remember that. If the end of all things were at hand in the apostles' time, how near is the end now! The end, the period of all this visible world, is at hand. Be therefore watchful and sober.

Second, "end" denotes as much as the aim, design, plot, scope of any action—what it is that we drive at; and in that sense it is well said that the de-

sire of the end is endless; that is, men will never end their desires until they have attained their desired end, namely, that which is the scope and aim which they have set up for themselves in any undertaking. The end of a thing is the aim or the scope of it.

Third, "end" is taken in this notion: it notes the accomplishment or the fulfilling and completing of a thing, and in that sense it is used in Romans 10:4: "Christ (said the Apostle) is the end of the law for righteousness." The end of the law—He has brought the law to its end. What end? Why, to its accomplishment, to its fulfilling, so that we are not to seek for righteousness by the law for our justification, for Christ has made an end of the law, or accomplished the law, as to that point, for righteousness. Christ has fulfilled the law both in doing the precepts of it, and He has fulfilled the law by enduring the penalty of it; and so He is the end of the law, the fulfilling end of the law. It has no more to require than that we obey the precept, or endure the penalty of it, and both these Christ has fully done. And so He has fulfilled the whole law. And indeed, Christ having done so in His own person, having been the end of the law in His obedience, both active and passive, I may say, He is the abolishing end of the law. He has taken it away as to that use, for justification by our own works; the law is quite out of doors, as to that point. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, and no more are we to seek for righteousness by the law.

Why, now, in the text, the word "end," when it is said that the end of the commandment is charity, is to be taken in the two latter senses.

First, charity is that which the law aims at. It is the scope of the law to bring us to love one another. That we may walk in love is the business of the commandments of God, the aim and scope of them.

Second, charity is the end of the law, that is, it is the fulfilling of the law; it is the accomplishing end of the law. The law is fulfilled in love. Consider these two Scriptures:

Romans 13:10: "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Love is the accomplishing end of the law, as in Galatians 5:14: "All the law is fulfilled in one word." That is a good word indeed. What is that one word by which the whole law is fulfilled? It is fulfilled in one word, "even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The word "end" here is to be taken in this sense: charity is the accomplishing, the fulfilling of the law.

Third, one step further, what is that charity which is the end of the commandment, both the final end and the fulfilling end of it? What is this charity?

Charity is taken two ways in Scripture. More strictly, as it consists in the relieving of those that are poor and in the comforting of those that are sorrowful. This is charity: to relieve the poor and to comfort the sorrowful.

Charity is taken in a larger sense. It is taken for love in general, and so some translate this text this way: "the end of the commandment is love. "For charity is a word of a narrower sense than love is. The end of the commandment is love, and the truth is, the word which we render in the text as "charity" indifferently signifies, and is indifferently translated

“love” or “charity” all over the New Testament. I do not need to quote places. This word signifies love for God and love for man.

QUESTION: Well, but what is indeed the charity or love here intended in the Scripture?

ANSWER. First, I conceive the love here intended is not love for God, though that is love above all things, and the most excellent end of the commandment. Yet I conceive in this place that it is charity, or love toward man, which is here meant. And my reason is this: I restrain it here to the love of man because the Apostle speaks of charity in opposition to those fables and questions which false teachers were likely to raise up in the church. The end of the commandment is charity, that all may be peaceable and quiet among the brethren. And he said in verse 6: “From which some having swerved” (from charity), they have shot quite beside it, said he. They are “turned aside into vain jangling,” so that if we consider either the antecedents of the text or the consequents, it seems he confines charity or love here spoken of to that love or charity which is among men, among brethren. That is one thing.

Second, charity here with respect to brethren is not that charity which consists in opening our hand to relieve the poor, though it is a most excellent piece of charity (and I pray remember it) to open your hand to relieving the poor. Yet I conceive that is not the charity here meant; but the charity here meant is charity in the uniting of our hearts and in the closing of our affections one with another.

Third, the charity or love here intended is not a lazy habit, for one to say, “I have a love for God,” and

there it lies and does nothing. I say, the charity here intended is not a lazy habit, but it is that which is put forth by vigorous and lively actings. And so some expound this text to say that charity is to be taken metonymically for all the offices and duties of charity which we owe one to another.

Last, as it is an acting and an active charity which is here spoken of, so it is not every kind of charity, however vigorously acted, which is the end of the commandment, but it is the charity that flows out from and is fed by those three springs spoken of in the close of the verse, namely, it is a charity flowing “out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.”

I cannot stay now to discover those springs to you, for that would take up too much of the time. Indeed, it may take up all the time to make a little discovery of those springs. All that I shall say at present is this: The charity which issues out of these springs is the charity in the text, and that is the charity which is the fulfilling of the commandment. So here we have the genealogy (as I may call it), the pedigree, the parentage of gospel charity. Or, to keep to the former metaphor, here we have the spring of that blessed river called charity, “the streams whereof (like the streams of the river spoken of in Psalm 46:4 which is the favor of God to His people) will make glad the city of God,” in all cities of men, wherever it has an open channel and a free course. By what has been said, beloved, you may perceive what my work (the Lord assisting) is like to be in handling this Scripture, namely, to discover to you that love or charity which is the end of the

commandment, and chiefly to discover to you those blessed springs—a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned—out of which that charity flows, and by which it must be fed day by day. And this will I do, if God permits.

But at the present I shall waive all these particulars and speak to one general point (as I hinted before) raised from the whole context, and of this verse, or from all the particulars of it laid together. And the point of the doctrine is as follows:

DOCTRINE. *Those works of love, of love toward man, much more of love toward God, which are the end of the commandment, must flow from a good spring, from a gracious principle, a principle of grace.*

This point is very plain in the text, plainly collected from it. For, said the Apostle, love must come out of a pure heart (and the like). Now, regarding that pure heart, I shall show clearly afterwards (if the Lord brings me to it) that the pure heart is a gracious heart. So that love must flow from a principle of grace.

There are three things especially in which the completion, the full constitution and making up of a good work, whether towards God or man, consists; and they must all three concur in the business. Evil arises out of any single defect in that which is required. But a good action must have a concurrence of all things requisite thereunto. I will name only these three.

First, that the work may be good, we must be sure that the matter of it is good. It must be good in itself, as being according to rule.

Also, it must be good in the mind and in the un-

derstanding of him who does it. For to do that which is good, we not knowing and understanding it to be good, or not being persuaded that it is good, that action is not good to us. Yea, the Apostle tells you that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). And there he speaks not of justifying faith, but of persuading faith. Whatever is not of faith is sin. And it is possible for one who is in a justified state, or one who has justifying faith, yet not to do a thing with a persuading faith and so it may be sin to him. That is one thing.

Second, the aim or end of the work must be good; and, among all ends that are good, the chief, and that which can never be left out, is the glory of God. Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works (your works of love) and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Do not glorify yourself; do not set up self. It was the setting up of self, or the making self the end, which corrupted and poisoned all those materially good, very good actions of the Pharisees; even their almsgiving, their praying, their fasting, as you may read at large in Matthew 6:1, 5, 16, and elsewhere. The end denominates the action. It must have a good end, or else though the matter is never so good, the work is not good.

Third (which is the matter at hand), the principle or spring of the work must be good. It is possible for one to do a work that is good as to the matter of it, and to have some good ends in it, and yet not to do it out of a right principle. And this is that which the text and doctrine speak: unless the principle is good, the work is not good. As the fountain is, such

are the streams that come from it. As the tree is, such is the fruit that grows upon it. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles" (Matthew 7:16)? Why, the thorn has no principle in nature to put forth a grape; the thistle has no principle in nature to put forth a fig.

And therefore, said Christ, "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit" (Matthew 7:18). These words of Christ, as they are primarily to be understood concerning false prophets and their doctrine, so they may be truly applied to all false professors and their ends. They being corrupt cannot bring forth good fruit. If you would draw out of a vessel which is unseasoned or ill-scented, the liquor will taste of the cask. Now we all by nature are unseasoned; yea, we are ill-scented vessels. Therefore the liquor that passes from us, considered so, must have an ill scent, an ill taste. And hence you have that cutting question of Christ to the Pharisees in Matthew 12:34: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?"

They might possibly speak good for the matter. Bad men will often tip their tongues with good words and appear to be Chrysostoms—golden-mouthed speakers—when their hearts are nothing but brass and dross. But usually evil men speak evil, that which is evil for the matter. "Their throat is an open sepulchre . . . the poison of asps is under their lips," as the Apostle speaks, quoting it from the Psalms in Romans 3:13.

And as they usually and naturally (for that is their natural language) speak evil, so they always mar the good they speak, either by their ill manner

of speaking it or by their ill meaning in speaking it.

When the devil made a confession of Christ and said He was the “Son of the most high God,” it was a confession like that of Peter, whom Christ called the rock upon which the Church is built. The devil spoke it out of a base intent, and therefore Christ threw it away and rebuked him for it. So evil men spoil good speaking with their ill manner *of* speaking, or their ill meaning *in* speaking. And therefore Solomon has that expression in Proverbs 26:7: “The legs of the lame are not equal; so is a parable in the mouth of fools.” “Parable” there means a divine saying, a ruling word, a commanding word. That is a parable—a word that should reign over us. So, said he, “A parable, a divine saying, in the mouth of a fool is like the legs of the lame.”

Good words (as it were) lisp in the mouth of a bad man, and his heart never keeps pace with his tongue. Thus, you see, Christ said that evil men cannot speak that which is good; they cannot speak to the purpose fully.

Now as they that are evil cannot speak, so neither can they do good things answerable to the rule or pleasing unto God. I do not say they cannot do good things, but they cannot do good things answerable to the rule or pleasing unto God. And that is the Apostle’s conclusion in Romans 8:8. After a further discourse, he comes with his “so then”—here is the conclusion: “So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Every action which comes up to the fulfilling of the commandment is pleasing to God, but, said he, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. “They that are in the flesh,” what is that? Surely

not that which two popes (as infallible as they judge themselves to be) thought to be the meaning. They thought that being in the flesh meant being in a married state. But, by “being in the flesh,” the Apostle means being in a natural, that is, being in an unregenerate state—they cannot please God, and such do not only not please God when they do that which is evil, but they do not please God when they do that which is good. For the very sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to Him (Proverbs 15:8), and therefore the Apostle says of all men that, in their natural capacity or state, “There is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Romans 3:12). Why do none do good? Because none of them have a principle; they have not a spring. Though the matter they do may be good, and though possibly they have some good end in doing it, yet not having a principle there is none of them that does good—that is, a complete good—no, not one. There are no exceptions.

I need not labor further in the proof of the point, but I would make a threefold use out of it.

USE 1. The first may be for our information. If those good works, both to God and man, which are the fulfilling of the commandment must flow from a gracious principle, then we are instructed by this truth how to judge of their best works who still abide in the state of nature, having neither a pure heart, nor a good conscience, nor faith unfeigned. Why, what judgment are we to make of their works? Why, surely they are not the end of the commandment, they are not the fulfilling of the commandment. The works of such—even their works of charity, of

love, of temperance, of patience, and of justice—were called by some of the godly learned ancients “shining sins.” And why we may not call them so now, I know of no reason. That is the judgment they give of such men’s good actions, for, as Christ tells the Pharisees in Luke 16:15, “That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.” Why? Because it lacks this principle.

And to be sure, though their box of ointment—I mean the good things done by persons who have not these principles—may have a fragrant smell among men, yet there are many dead flies in it, especially one great one called unbelief, which makes their whole box of ointment very unsavory in the nostrils of God. For so said the Apostle in Hebrews 11:6: “Without faith it is impossible to please Him.” And that is one of the springs expressly spoken of in the text. Gospel charity is of a nobler extract than to be found in the whole compass of nature, and godliness moves in a higher sphere than the best dress that the happiest moralist ever reached unto. Matthew 5:20: “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God.” That is a word for information.

USE 2. Now let me take up a second use by way of lamentation. If this is a truth, then it is to be lamented that the religious duties and charitable acts of many who bear the name of Christ flow merely from a natural principle. And, doing so, they are not the fulfilling of the commandment. Most men love one another with affection no more spiritual than Damon and Pithius and Pilades and

Orestes, or any others who are most memorialized or admired among the heathens for love. Yea, I may say, they worship God and Jesus Christ with a devotion no more raised and spiritual than the old Romans worshiped their Jupiter or the Ephesians their great goddess Diana.

And surely it is to be lamented that Christian acts should be done, but not from a spiritual principle or from a Christian principle. It is very possible and very common to follow Christ, yea, to call upon Christ, merely with human and carnal affections. Jesus Christ found it so. John 6:26: "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." To follow Christ was an excellent work, but they did it merely upon a human principle. Yea, that prayer of theirs in verse 34 may well be judged to have come merely from a carnal spirit. When Christ had discoursed of the bread that came down from heaven and gives life into the world, they said, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." And yet this was but from a carnal desire, not knowing what that bread meant spiritually.

And it appears clearly to be so, for in the close of the chapter many of His hearers went quite away; they forsook Him. Now, certainly, to do these excellent things, and to do them but with carnal principles, is a thing to be lamented. Solomon reports it as a thing to be lamented that often in this world it is done to good men according to the works of the wicked, and it is done to wicked men according to the works of the righteous (Ecclesiastes 8:14). This is a thing to be lamented, but I now shall show you two sights much more to be lamented.

First, it is a very lamentable thing to see good men do according to the works of the wicked. Thus David did in the matter of Uriah (2 Samuel 11). Thus Solomon did when his heart went after strange gods and he built high places to their abominations (1 Kings 11:4–5). Thus Asa did, a good king, when he imprisoned the prophet, and in his disease sought the physicians and not God (2 Chronicles 16:10–12). Yea, thus Peter did, that holy Apostle, when he denied, yea, forswore his Master in Matthew 26:72–74. And thus have many other godly men done under the pressures of temptation and corruption. And is not this a sad sight, to see one professing godliness, yea, one who is really godly, act thus like a wicked man? This is to act (as I have sometimes expressed it) the old creature's part in the new creature's state. This is a very sad thing.

But now I have another sight to show you, according to the tenor of this text and doctrine, which is very sad also. And what is that? Why, to see bad men do according to the works of good men, still continuing in their bad state. They plod on and go on doing good things, but never mind to become good themselves. And so bad men do according to the works of the righteous. I say, this is a sad sight. And thus Saul did when he was among the prophets. There was a bad man doing good things (1 Samuel 10). And thus did Ahab when he humbled himself; a wicked man doing a very good thing (1 Kings 21). Thus did Jehu when he destroyed idolatry (2 Kings 10:28); a very good work, but a very bad man. Thus did Judas when he preached the gospel; a very good work, but himself a traitor. Thus did Demas when he

professed the gospel and followed the apostles; a very good work, but himself a hypocrite and a lover of the world. Thus indeed do all hypocrites and mere formalists in their performing of gospel worship. And thus Christ will tell them at the last day, as He said in Matthew 7:22–23, when they came upon Him so to upbraid Him (as it were) with the good things which they had done. “We have prophesied in Thy name; we have cast out devils in Thy name; we have done many good and mighty works in Thy name.” Said Christ to them, “Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity. Though you did these good things, yet you never did them from a sound principle, from a principle of grace. No, you yourselves were secret workers and lovers of iniquity, while you did all these good things.”

Now is not this a sad sight? I confess, it is a sad sight to see a bad man do that which is bad, or a wicked man to do that which is wicked; yet, I say, it is a sadder sight to see a bad man continuing in his state, having no spiritual principles, to go on doing good. For what is this but the opposite to what I said before? This is the acting of the new creature’s part in the old creature’s state. And what will that avail?

And I would say these two things further: God often declares Himself very strongly against such as do good, while themselves to be continuing evil. He declares Himself weary of their services, especially when there is hypocrisy in them (Isaiah 1:14). “The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?” (Proverbs 21:27)—that is, when he brings it for base ends, hoping by his sacrifice to satisfy God for his

sin. Some hope by their good works to turn away the wrath of God, and they hope to get heaven by their good prayers and by their alms (and the like). I say, when a man does a good thing with such an evil mind as this, hoping to satisfy the justice of God and turn away His wrath by his doings, this is now an abomination to God. Or when he hopes that God will be well pleased with him in that he brings Him a sacrifice, or does Him some outward service, though he goes on in his sin. These are those things the Lord so often protests against.

And I would say to them further: the good you do in that state, not having a spiritual principle, will not profit you. It will not advantage you. It will be no plea in the great day. All the profit you can have by it at most, when you have had the utmost that it comes to, is but some external or outward mercy. Ahab humbled himself. Why, he had something to show for it; he had his penny. And therefore, said the Lord, "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself? The judgment shall not come in his days." A deliverance from an outward judgment, but here was no deliverance from wrath and eternal judgment. Jehu, for the good works that he did, had something, but alas, what was it? Indeed, a great thing in the eyes of the world, a kingdom, and a kingdom for several generations. But the truth is, it was a poor thing, for that was all indeed he had for his zeal in destroying idolatry. He had the kingdom for four generations. But he, abiding as a wicked man while he did that good thing, was cut off forever.

You see the ruler in Mark 10:20 who came to Christ and told Him how he had done almost all the

matters of the law. Why, Jesus Christ saw indeed he had done them, but He knew he had not done them from a right principle. And therefore what was it that Christ gave him? Said He, "He beheld him, and loved him" (verse 21). But it was a love of pity, as some expound the place. "Oh, it is a pity that such a person as you are, who has been a keeper of the law, yet has not done it upon a right principle." And that he did not is plain, for when Christ put him to the test he went away sorrowful. Now all that he had for it was that Christ gave him some approbation. And as He said to that other man in Mark 12:34: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Aye, but he was so far that he should never come there unless he changed his state. So, I say, the condition of those who do good things, but not out of a good principle, is indeed very lamentable upon these and many other accounts.

But possibly you will say, "If it is so that the work of those who do good, but not out of a right principle, will not turn to their profit, and therefore their case is to be lamented—if it is so, is it not best to advise those who yet remain unconverted to forbear doing good until they themselves are better?"

I answer, "No, by no means." We give no such advice in the matter. But let all men do all the good they can. And I would exhort the worst of men to do good, to hear the Word preached, to pray, to give alms. Daniel gave that counsel to Nebuchadnezzar, a heathen king, in Daniel 4:27. The Apostle Peter gave that counsel to Simon Magus, whom he saw to be "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:23). The good that he had done, his re-

ceiving baptism and outward profession of faith, was so far from coming from a good principle that he was in the very gall of bitterness. Yet, said Peter, "Pray, if it may be, thy sins may be forgiven thee." Though men are evil, yet let them do good as far as they can. And I would say these things about it.

First, they are under an obligation to do good. For man's inability to perform a duty rightly does not take off the obligation which is upon him to perform it. And though a bad man sins in his manner of doing it, yet his refusing to do it would be more sinful.

And, I would say further, though he does not please God in doing it, yet he displeases God in not doing it, so that, indeed, man naturally considered or in his fallen state has fallen into a very sad dilemma. If he neglects to do good, he sins. If he does good, he spoils it in the doing of it. But notwithstanding all this (I say), I am far from discouraging the worst of men to do good, or to advise any to forbear to do good. No, I would convince all that their present state is bad, and exhort all to apply themselves to all means whereby they may be made better.

And that is the use which I shall briefly make of this point, and so I shall conclude.

USE 3. Is it so that those good works that flow from a good principle are pleasing to God? Why, then, we see the necessity of regeneration. Christ said in John 3:3-5, "Verily, verily (there is a strong and a double asseveration) I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." We are not born with this pure heart,

with this good conscience, with this faith unfeigned, which are the requisites to a good work in the text. We are not born with these. For “who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one” (Job 14:4). Not one among the sons of men.

A pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned are the results of the new birth. Education cannot make the heart pure. It must be revelation which makes the heart pure. Good education may change the life and the conversation. As they say, to study arts and philosophy takes off the roughness that is in man’s nature, smoothes them, and frames them very much for excellent uses. Good literature and education may civilize, but it cannot spiritualize. It may change a man’s course, but it cannot change his nature. That is only done by regeneration.

Now, I say, a man’s state, his nature must be changed; he must have a pure heart, which we never have until our natures are changed. He must be good before he can do good spiritually. Mark that word of the Apostle in Ephesians 2:10: “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Mark it, here are good works. But how do we come to these good works? Why, we are His workmanship, said He. God works on us before we can work for Him. He makes us good before we can do good. Said Paul, “We are His workmanship. And then we are created, or so created in Christ Jesus, to good works.” We, by union to Jesus Christ, come to have a spiritual principle to carry us out in the doing of all good works. Here is your way.

You must be God's workmanship before you can do God's work. You must be new creatures, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, before you can do them.

A crab tree will never yield pleasant fruit until you change the nature of it. Take a crab tree and plant it in the best soil that you have, water it and dress it and prune it as much as you can, yet this crab tree will bear nothing but crabs, sour fruit, till you come to graft it. And then your grafting of it changes the nature of the stock, and it has another principle; and so then it brings forth good fruit.

So it is in this case. Take the best-natured man in the world, plant him in the best soil, in the best ground, in church ground; plant him in the house of God, and there let him be watered by the rain of holy doctrine, and let him be dressed and cultivated every day, yet he will bring forth nothing but crabs, nothing but unsavory fruit, till he himself is changed. Though he is under all those spiritual means, yet, till those means have wrought effectually in him, his actions are all unsavory. It is only by our implantation into Jesus Christ that we become fit to do good, so as to be acceptable unto God. It is this that makes the change. For as in nature the graft changes the stock, so in grace the stock changes the grafted branch. As we are grafted into Christ, He changes the branch. Being planted into Christ by the power of the Spirit, we are then made like Him, and then we bring forth fruits of righteousness which are to the glory of God by Him. Mark the expression, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:11),

that is, by virtue of union with Christ, of implantation and ingrafting into Christ. Once it is thus, then all your fruits are sweet fruit, and pleasant fruit; it is well tasted. Why, it is done first from a principle of life in Christ. And second it is done from a principle of love unto Christ. And then when your works, whether respecting God or man, are thus done, then they are the fulfilling and the final end of the commandment. For then they come from the pure heart, of which hereafter (if God wills) I may speak.

And so much at the present for the point in general, that until there is a good principle there cannot be a good work.

Sermon 2

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” 1 Timothy 1:5

Having shown that every good work which is to answer to the commandment of God must flow from a good spring, I shall now come to speak of the springs from whence they flow, beginning with that which is first in the text, a pure heart. “The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart.” A pure heart is the point I am now to speak to and the matter I am to make discovery about. It is, in this text, the first of those three most blessed springs out of which all duties well-pleasing unto God must proceed.

“A pure heart.” Two things are here to be spoken to: first, what is meant by “heart,” and, second, what is meant by purity of heart. And so put both together, and you have a pure heart.

For the first I need not spend time showing you what is meant by the heart, it being that which you have so often heard. By “heart,” the Scripture often intends the whole inner man. And sometimes it intends some special faculties of the inner man. The understanding is noted by the heart; the will by the heart; the affections by the heart; the conscience by the heart. And in this large sense we are to take the word “heart” here, only excepting the reference of it

unto conscience, which is spoken of as the second distinct spring from whence good actions flow.

The heart then here is the understanding, the will, the affections. Indeed, whatever lies in the bosom of man you may call his heart. Yet I shall not prosecute the point in this distinctness of these particular faculties of the soul, showing how the understanding is pure, which is by its freedom from error and clear light in divine truths, or how the will is pure, which is by its freedom from the bondage, from the obstinacy and rebellion which naturally and wholly possess it, and by having a freedom in choosing good, and refusing that which is evil. Nor shall I stay strictly to show what the purity of the affections is, namely, their freedom from all inordinacy and irregularity, either as to the object upon which they are fixed, or as to the measure and degree in which they are fixed upon those objects.

That which I shall do indeed shall be to speak to the heart, and so of the purity of it in a general notion as it concerns the whole inner man. And the heart as to purity may be considered in two ways: first, as made, and, second, as remade.

The heart of man as made was pure, I mean in its primitive constitution. So Adam had a pure heart; his understanding was pure, his will was pure, his affections were pure. God made him upright, but he lost his pure heart, or the purity of his heart. Sin "impured" his whole inner man; and he, being our representative, lost purity of heart not only for himself, but for us. All mankind lost that "made" purity of heart when Adam fell. And therefore the very first complaint which the Lord made of the fallen world

was concerning the depravity and impurity of their hearts. Genesis 6:5: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth (that is, wickedness of life), and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." By this we see clearly that the first-made purity of the heart was lost.

Here are so many particulars setting forth the evil of man's heart that they plainly show that it is nothing but evil. Here is the evil of his imaginations, the imagination of the thoughts of his heart. And not here and there one, but every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was evil; and not evil with some mixture of good, but purely evil. It was evil without any goodness in it. And therefore said He, "only evil." Nor was it in this impure state only for a fit, or now and then, but, said the text, "continually evil"; or, as the Hebrew is, "every day," day by day, which we render "continually."

So now the made-pure heart was lost, and no man has a pure heart by nature; nor has any man a heart less impure by nature than another man has. Our hearts in nature are all of a kind, and that is stark naught. So spoke the prophet Jeremiah likewise in Jeremiah 17:9, that the heart of man is deceitful "above all things." The heart of man is the greatest cheat in the world and the greatest imposter in the world. And, said he, it is "desperately wicked." And it is so wicked that the wickedness of it is beyond human comprehension. The wickedness of it is beyond the knowledge of man—who knows it? Neither he who has the heart, nor any other who sees him who has it knows how wicked the heart of

man is. And, pray, take notice that the prophet does not speak there of some sort of vile, base, debauched, wicked men whose hearts were so deceitful and wicked, but he speaks of men in general, as they are in nature. And much of that deceitfulness and wickedness remains even when they are in grace.

We may therefore conclude (at least in this matter), alluding to the words of Solomon in Proverbs 27:19: "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." There are some who trouble the water in that text with various interpretations. I shall not stay upon them. But all that I allege the text for is to show that what is in one man's heart naturally, the same is in another's. Just as he who looks into the water: the face in the water upon which he looks answers his own face looking into it. So does the heart of man to man. The hearts of all good men, of persons regenerate, answer one another in the main.

Look what the heart of one godly man is; the same is the heart of another godly man in the main, though there may be particular differences. And so, take all men in their natural condition. Look what the heart of one man is; the same is the heart of another, and all stark naught. So, then, there is now no pure heart in nature. Seeing the made-pure heart is lost, we must then consider the heart as remade pure.

Here is a pure heart in the text. It is a heart remade pure, a heart made pure by a gracious restitution. And mark it, I say, it is a heart remade. It is not a heart mended; that will not serve the turn. The heart of man received such a crack in the fall that

there is no mending it. It must be newly made. Therefore, I say, the pure heart is a heart remade, newly made. We commonly say that if a bell receives a crack there is no mending it. You cannot mend a bell as you may mend a brass pan, by putting a piece to it. There is no way to mend a cracked bell but by newly casting it; it must go to the foundry.

Truly thus it is with man's heart. There is no mending it, no putting a patch to it, no repairing it, as you may repair a house that is dilapidated. No, it must be newly made. And therefore the pure heart which is here spoken of in the text is called in other texts a new heart, as in Ezekiel 36:26. It is not a mended heart, but a new heart. "I will take away the heart of stone." The former heart is a heart of stone, a heart that has no more remorse in it, no more softness or tenderness in it than a stone. "I will take away the heart of stone." He does not say, "I will mend the heart of stone," but "I will take it away." That is, I will take away the heart, so far as it is stony, "and I will give you a heart of flesh," that is, a new heart. The remade heart is a heart made wholly new. It is made wholly new by the power of God, and I may give it to you in these four things.

1. This pure heart of which I am speaking is purified or made new, first, meritoriously by the blood of Christ. For it is by blood that things are purified and purged, as the author to the Hebrews discourses at length, especially in 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." The heart is made pure, first, by the blood of Christ, that cleansing blood. The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin.

2. It is purified or made pure by the Spirit of Christ; therefore we find these two put together in 1 Peter 1:2: "Through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." As we are purified through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, so through the sanctification of the Spirit. The Spirit is pure and the Spirit is a purifier. The Spirit is compared to water; the Spirit is compared to fire that purifies, that fetches out the dross and the filth and makes all pure. And indeed, the impurity which is in the heart of man is such that nothing less than the blood of Christ, and therefore of the Spirit, can purge it out. The fire of afflictions will not purge out the impurities of the heart. The fire of hell will not fetch out the dross that is in the hearts of the damned. Nothing but the blood of Christ, nothing but the Spirit of Christ is able to do it. The blood of Christ does it meritoriously, the Spirit efficiently and efficaciously.

3. The heart remade pure is so made instrumentally by the Word. The Word of God is pure; it is as silver purified in the fire seven times. The Word of God is a purifier instrumentally, and the usual way by which the heart is remade pure is by the Word. Christ said in John 15:3, "Ye are clean." How? "Through the Word which I have spoken." And, more generally, the Apostle in Ephesians 5:26 said that Jesus Christ sanctifies and cleanses His Church "with the washing of water by the Word." With the washing of water, that is, with the Spirit. But what is the instrument? "By the Word." This way is purity of heart commonly and usually wrought by the Word.

4. The heart is made pure by the application of

faith (Acts 15:9). He “put no difference between us and them,” said the Apostle—that is, between Jews and Gentiles, having purified their hearts by faith. God works faith in the heart, and then faith purifies the heart by applying the blood of Christ, by receiving the Spirit, and by working the soul to a submission to the holy Word and will of God. So in these ways the heart is remade pure. And this remade pure heart is that of which the text speaks. That is the spring out of which holy and acceptable works to the Lord flow.

OBJECTION. But some may say, “Is there any such thing as a pure heart?” We find those questions somewhat rife in the book of Job: “What is man, that he should be clean?” (Job 15:14). Or “How can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job 25:4). And Solomon said expressly in Proverbs 20:9, “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” It is plain then by these Scriptures that there is no such thing as a pure heart.

ANSWER. I answer briefly in three points to these Scriptures, and to all Scriptures of a like import. When the Scripture speaks thus, it teaches us either:

First, that no man is born with a pure heart.

Or it teaches us, second, that no man by his own power has made his heart pure.

Or, third, it teaches us that no heart is made pure in this world with an absolutely perfect purity. Indeed, the best purity which the heart attains to in this world has a mixture of much impurity in it, so that thus indeed there is no heart pure, that is, there is no heart legally pure, strictly pure. But there are

thousands of hearts through grace that are sincerely pure, that are evangelically pure, and so esteemed in the thoughts of God and so expressed in His Word.

One may say, "You tell us there is an evangelical purity. What do you mean by it? When may the heart be said to be evangelically pure?"

I answer, the heart is evangelically pure though there is sin dwelling in us, or an indwelling sin; and though sin is stirring, having strong motions in us, it makes war in our souls from day to day, though sin sometimes prevails and gives us that foil; yet, notwithstanding all this, when:

First, the soul is free from the command of every sin.

Second, when the soul is free from the customary practice of every sin.

And, third, when the soul is free from the love of any sin, then the soul is evangelically pure. Indeed sin will hide; sin will stir; and I cannot warrant any man in the world who is a man of the purest heart in the world but that his sin may possibly give him a foil. But this is certain—he who has an evangelical purity is free from the commanding power of sin, from that constant and customary practice of sin, and from the love of sin. A man of a pure heart may have a special sin, that is, a sin to which he is more inclined than to any other; sometimes through the constitution of his body, sometimes through his occasions and in the way of his calling, there are many things which endanger men to some special sin. Now, a good man may have a special sin, a sin that he finds his heart most running out after, in which sense David calls some iniquities "his iniquity" as in

Psalm 18:23: "I have kept myself from mine iniquity," that is, from the iniquity that most beset him. A good man, then, may have a special sin which haunts him, which dogs and besets him, but yet he does not have a beloved sin. Evangelical purity and the love of sin cannot consist together. He who has a pure heart cannot play with his sin, cannot sport with his sin, cannot be content in thinking of sin either past or what may be to come. As they said to the prophet, "This day is thus with us and tomorrow shall be more abundant." No, he cannot please himself thus in reference to any sin. So I conclude that the pure heart is freed (if he is evangelically freed) from sin in all these notions, and so he is the person here meant in the text from whom all holy actions may proceed acceptably to the Lord. And that may serve for the opening of this point, for I intend to dispatch it at this time.

I shall make some use of it.

USE 1. Let this stir up all to consider whether they have this pure heart or not. You see the importance of it: it is one of the springs out of which every action that is pleasing to God, according to His appointment, must flow. Therefore it is essential to us lest we lose all things that we work to have a good assurance in our own bosoms, that we have a pure heart in our bosoms. And we need to consider it, for:

First, it is most sure that many think they have pure hearts and have them not. Agur had an expression: "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not cleansed from their wickedness" (Proverbs 30:12). It is an easy matter to be pure in our own eyes and yet remain altogether

unclean. “A generation . . . pure in their own eyes.” Augustine speaks of a group of people who called themselves “catharists” [from the Greek for “pure ones”]. They most proudly and odiously called themselves “the pure ones.” But, according to his discovery of them, they were not cleansed from their wickedness. And how many are thus indeed clean in their own eyes, and yet are unclean.

Second, there are many that are clean not only in their own eyes, but in the eyes of other men, yea possibly in very good men, godly men. Clean in their eyes, and yet for all this they are not cleansed from their filthiness. Our Lord Jesus Christ, detecting the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, said that they were like whited sepulchres which appear fair to men, but within are full of dead men’s bones and rottenness. Thus it is with many, very many in the world. They appear very beautiful, like a brave sepulchre—painted, and gilded. Perhaps they have a very pure hand—you can see no evil they do. They have possibly a very pure tongue—you can hear of no evil they speak. They speak even as those in Deuteronomy 5:28–29 of whom the Lord said, “they have well said all that they have spoken.” Did God say to Moses, “They have well *done* indeed in all that they have spoken”? But they did little of that which they had spoken.

Many are very good in the sight of other men, but not so in the sight of God. He easily discovers their impurities; and let me tell you, there are many that reveal their own impurity, and of whom we may conclude that they have no pure heart while we consider the gross impurities of their lives. Indeed some

carry their sin closely and others profanely, and as the Lord says in Jeremiah 2:34, their sin is in their skirts, you need not dig for it. Said God, "I have not found it by secret search," or by digging; their sin is in their skirts.

It is so with many—their sin is in their skirts, and you need not dig to find it out; the impurities of their life do plainly show the impurity of their hearts. The prophet Micah puts the question in 6:11: "Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?" Shall I count them pure? Do you think he has a good heart who has such a life as this, willing to deceive and willing to wrong his brethren, or those that he deals with? So we may carry on the prophet's chiding question to many. Shall we count them pure whose eyes are full of adultery? Shall we count them pure whose hands are full of blood? Shall we count them pure whose houses are full of oppression? Shall we think them pure whose mouths are full of cursing and oaths, of scurrility? Shall we count them pure whose mouths and tongues are often tipped with scoffs against purity? Why, the impurity of these men's hearts breaks out, "the show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not."

You see, then, there are a number who lack this purity of heart. Consider them first who are pure in their own eyes and have great thoughts of their own purity. Consider second those who have a great opinion for purity among men; they appear to others so and yet the Lord sees they are not so. And then, if you go abroad to the profane world, con-

sider those who proclaim their impurities and glory in their impurity.

Signs of a Pure Heart

And therefore, to urge that a little further, how may we know where there is purity of heart, that evangelical purity which I spoke of before? In opening the words, take a few touches as to the discovery of a pure heart.

First, he who indeed has a pure heart is very sensible that once he had an impure heart, as David in Psalm 51:5: "In sin was I conceived, and brought forth in iniquity." David was a man of a pure heart. He was very sensible that once his heart was very impure.

Second, he who has a pure heart is sensible that to this day there remains much impurity in his heart. And the purer anyone's heart is, the more he mourns under his heart impurities.

Third, he who has a pure heart loves everything that is pure; and the more pure it is, the more he loves it, the more he approves it. Here is a pure heart. In Philippians 1:10, Paul approves the "things that are excellent"—things that differ, so the word is. That is, things that differ in a way of excellency; not only things that differ as good and bad differ, but things that differ as good and good differ. For there is a gradual difference between good and good, as there is a specific difference between good and evil. As there is a difference between wheat and cockle, so there is a difference between wheat and wheat. As there is a difference between gold and

copper, so there is a difference between gold and gold. There is the gold of Ophir, the most pure gold. Now I say, he who has a pure heart loves all that is pure, and the more pure anything is, the more he loves it. That is the meaning of the Apostle—he approves things that differ in a way of excellency, not only as good differs from evil, but as one good differs from another. If there is anything which is more excellent than another, he is for that. Here is your pure heart, then.

Fourth, a pure heart will be full of pure thoughts, or you will be sure that no impure thoughts shall have any welcome in you. A pure heart converses chiefly with God in purity of thoughts, and good thoughts. The wicked are described in Psalm 10 to be such as have not God in all their thoughts. They have not the pure God nor the holy God in all their thoughts, that is, God is not at all in their thoughts to any purpose. So we may say of the pure heart that God *is* in all his thoughts, or he would fain have his thoughts always upon God. And so those that the Lord accounts His jewels are described in Malachi 3:16, where God had mercy on those who feared Him and thought upon His name. Mark, who think upon His name. A great part of our spiritual purity is to be often thinking upon the pure God. The pure heart (I say) is often full of pure thoughts, and you may take measure of the purity of your hearts very much by considering what your thoughts are.

Fifth, your heart is full of pure and good desires. Thoughts are single acts and puttings forth of the soul upon such and such objects and subjects, but desires are wrought up into such or such a special

point. A pure heart is full of good desires, and especially he desires to be more good, to be better; he desires to know more of God and to honor God more; he desires to enjoy God more; he hungers and thirsts after God. And what is the hunger and thirst of the soul? It is spiritual desire. Desire is the hunger and thirst of the soul. Now a pure heart is full of these desires, and these are the most spiritual discoveries of him who has a pure heart. Let him consider what his desires are, what he would have. Isaiah 26:9: "With my soul have I desired thee." Mark your desires.

And, then, sixth, if you have this pure heart you will not only have many pure desires, but you will have purposes, pure resolves. You will be full of good resolves, and by resolves the heart is fixed, fastened, and settled; resolution is the establishment of the soul.

Now a pure heart is full of pure resolves and purposes. The resolves and purposes are of two kinds:

He purposes and resolves to adhere and cleave to that which is good. Thus he resolves with himself, "Fall back or fall forward; let the winds blow high or low—this I am resolved, this is my purpose, to cleave to Christ and that which is good." That good man Barnabas is said to exhort the people in Acts 11:23: "He exhorted them . . . that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." Holy purposes are as the glue by which our hearts are fastened to the Lord Jesus Christ. I exhort you with purpose of heart that you would cleave to Christ.

And then there is a purpose in a pure heart against all that is evil, against all that is impure.

Daniel 1:8 says of that holy man Daniel that he “purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat.” He was resolved of that. Now he has a pure heart indeed who purposes that he will never defile himself—neither his heart nor his life. And indeed, such purposes have they that have pure hearts of one kind or of another. Yea, sometimes we find holy ones heightening their purposes to vows, yea to oaths. “I have sworn,” said David, “that I will keep Thy righteous judgments” (Psalm 119:106). Here were strong purposes indeed.

Seventh, he who has this pure heart certainly has pure ends in all that he does. He has a holy aim; he has a single eye—this is a great evidence of a pure heart. When we have pure aims, Christ calls that the single eye. Matthew 6:22: “If thine eye be single,” that is, if your ends and aims, that which you look at, are single, sincere, and pure, “thy whole body shall be full of light.” The ends that a pure heart purposes are not self, not self-profit, not self-applause, not pleasure; but he purposes the profit of many that they may be saved, of the good of all with whom he converses. He proposes these great ends which he carries quite through all unto the end. And that is that he may exalt the name of the Lord by all. Oh, look to your ends! The purity of your hearts will appear in the purity of your aims and your ends. And so much for that first point, for conviction and discovery about this purity of heart.

USE 2. Let it be a word of exhortation, and that in two branches.

First, if there is such a thing as a pure heart, and that be of such importance, then weigh it well whether you have this pure heart; consider it by all that has been forespoken concerning an evangelical pure heart, and the evidences thereof. And I would say this for the urging of it, that we all should look to this matter—the purity of our hearts.

The hardest thing that we have to do is the purifying of our hearts, and the greatest kindness which God can do us is to cleanse our hearts. The cleansing of the heart is the hardest piece of work. It is comparatively an easy thing to cleanse the hand, comparatively an easy thing to cleanse the tongue, and to have that pure, but to have the heart purified, there is the great stick.

Therefore, look to the purity of your hearts, for they have certainly need of purifying. They whose hearts are still in their first natural state have need indeed, and they who are in a spiritual state have need of daily purifying. Look, I say, therefore to the purifying of your hearts, for they have need to be purified; they are the filthiest part of us. If there be impurity in the hand, there is much more in the heart.

It is indeed a vain thing to go about to purify the hand, or tongue, or life, if the heart is impure. It would be a vain thing for anyone to go and cleanse a stream while he knows that there is a fountain above that sends forth filthy and unclean and poisonous water. It is just so in this case. Till the heart be made pure, nothing can be pure.

And the great esteem which God has of us is with

respect to this purity of heart. He is a friend indeed to those who have a pure heart. He has a great respect for them. There is an expression in Proverbs 22:11, "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend." Mark there the pureness of heart, and grace of lips. By grace of lips he means not only *graceful* speech, but *gracious* speech. Now grace in the lips, you see, has its dependence upon the pureness of the heart; and, he says, he who has such a pureness of heart as has from it a graceful lip, "the king shall be his friend." Doubtless Solomon spoke this with reference to himself, showing what a friend he would be to those who appeared before him in pureness of heart, and this graciousness of their lips.

But this is much more true in reference to the King of heaven. "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips, the King (of heaven) shall be his friend." He shall be accepted of God. And whatsoever grace there is, whatever gracefulness of speech anyone has, if there is not pureness of heart, he shall have no favor with the King of heaven, whatever he may find among any of the kings of the earth.

Oh, this, therefore, is the great thing: "My son," said Solomon, "give me thine heart." That is what the Lord so delights in: "My son, give Me thine heart" (Proverbs 23:26). What heart must it be? Not an unclean heart, not a filthy heart, not a proud heart, not a covetous heart, not a malicious heart, not an uncharitable heart, but "My son, give Me thine heart"; give Me your heart purified, purged, and cleansed. Or thus: "Give Me your heart; resign it

up to Me to be purified, to be purged, to be cleansed, to be made holy. Indeed we may give our proud hearts up to God and beg of Him that He would humble them, but we must not think to keep our hearts proud, and give them up to God proud. And we may give our unclean hearts to God, begging of Him that He would cleanse them, but we must not keep unclean hearts in our bosoms, and then say we give up our hearts to God. The heart in which God is pleased, and in which He takes delight, is the pure heart. Therefore upon all these considerations, let us be much looking after the purity of our hearts.

Second, do you find that, according to Scripture rule, you have a pure heart? Then I have a second word to say. Pray do what you can to keep your hearts pure, for they who have pure hearts may quickly find their hearts very impure, unless they look narrowly to it. A heart that is made pure will be made greatly impure unless we watch and keep it pure. Solomon had that expression in Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Keep thy heart, keep it with all diligence, with all manner of keeping.

You see, then, it is not enough to get a pure heart, but we must keep our hearts, and keep them clean. As it is in this case with your houses, you do not only make them clean, but you keep them clean. And if a house be made ever so clean, yet it will contract defilement. Dust will be upon it unless it be kept clean, unless it be watched that none throw dirt into it. Indeed we need to keep our hearts, to watch them continually. And that is the great business of keeping our hearts, for the devil, if we do not watch

our hearts, will do one of these two things:

He will either steal away our heart—for the devil comes heart-stealing continually, and especially when you are at a sermon or a holy duty—and if he can but steal away your hearts, he cares not how many bodies there are here.

Or he will be throwing dirt into your hearts, suggesting wickedness. He will throw dirt into the inner closet of your hearts, by his temptations, by his injections. Therefore, if you would keep your hearts clean, you must watch them.

And you must often wash your hearts, if you would keep them clean; for your hearts will contract filth, do what you can (in spite of what you do), unless they are daily washed and duly searched.

As it is with a garden—let a garden be dressed and made very exact so that there is not anything amiss, not a weed to be seen in it, but the garden must be kept thus or else in a little time it will be overrun with weeds again. It is so in our hearts. Suppose we have weeded out this, and that, and the other evil; if we do not keep a continual care of our hearts, the weeds will grow again; and therefore our hearts must be continually weeded and our hearts must be continually washed. We must go daily to the “fountain opened . . . for sin and for uncleanness” (Zechariah 13:1). We must wash our hearts by the renewed acts of repentance, confessing our sins, bewailing our sins, mortifying our sins. This is a great work for us. If you have pure hearts, look to it that you keep them pure; you may quickly be defiled. David, a man who had a pure heart, yet got so much defilement upon his heart that he could not tell

what to make of it, but begs God to create him a new heart, and all because he did not watch his heart, but gave way to temptation and so was overtaken. Then you will find if you do not daily sweep your houses, they will be defiled and the cobwebs will grow; the spiders will be at work. And though your hearts are never so pure, spiders will creep into them—this lust and that corruption—and they will be weaving their webs there. Oh, what sad webs we have in the hearts of men, and all because they look not after them! You must sweep down the cobwebs, and throw out the dirt every day, if you would keep your hearts clean.

And I would press all I have said by these four considerations. Look to it that you have pure hearts, and that you keep your hearts pure.

First, upon this consideration which you find in Psalm 18:25–26: “With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful; with an upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright; With the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure.” But if a man is not pure, will God show Himself impure towards him? No such thing. Let us be what we will, God is ever the same. Nothing can turn Him out of His purity. But the meaning is that if we are pure—pure in heart—God will show Himself pure to us. That is, He will perform all things; He will be that to us which He has promised. He will be all that to us which we can desire. “With the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure,” and he said, “With the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward.” God knows how to deal with men in ways of evil, to hit them according to what they are: “With the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward.”

Not that there is any frowardness or passion in the Lord; but men shall be dealt with according to their way. Those who will wrestle with God, as the Word there signifies, He will pay them in their own coin. So “with the pure, Thou wilt show Thyself pure.”

Second, look to this purity, for then all things are pure to you. As God will show Himself pure to you, so, if you are pure, all things will be pure to you, Titus 1:15: “Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure.” Here is a very strong argument to press you to this purity of heart. To the pure, all things are pure. To the impure, nothing is pure. Why is it that to the pure all things are pure? What, are evil actions pure to them? Is sin pure to them? No, God forbid that any should have such a thought.

This liberty some have taken to themselves, as if there were no difference to be made in actions. But to the pure, all things are pure. They need not trouble themselves about sin, or this or that. No, but to the pure all things are pure, that is, all things are blessed to them. All their enjoyments, all the ordinances of God, all their outward comforts, all their relations, all their duties, all things are pure to them. Whereas, said Paul, “To them that are defiled, there is nothing pure.” The very holy ordinances are not pure to them. Their callings, though honest, are not pure to them. Their riches, their great possessions in the world, are not pure to them. They have not a pure nor a holy use of any of these things.

This is an awakening consideration, to look after a pure heart: “Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is noth-

ing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.”

Third, only the pure in heart are only fit for communion with God, as 2 Timothy 2:22 refers to “them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” They only are fit to call upon God who have a pure heart. The Apostle would have them lift up clean hands in 1 Timothy 2:8 (much more, then, pure hearts who call upon God “out of a pure heart”). And when the Apostle James had exhorted them to draw nigh to God, with this promise of assurance, that He would draw nigh to them, presently he adds, “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (James 4:8). You are in no way fit for communion with God, for drawing near to God, unless your hearts are thus purified, thus purged, thus cleansed.

Fourth, and last, the pure in heart are those who have that great promise, the promise which concludes all good, namely, to see God. As in Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart.” Why? said He, “for they shall see God.” God is a Spirit, God is invisible; how shall they see Him? Him no man hath seen, nor can see. How shall the pure in heart see Him? Why, they shall see Him; that is, they shall enjoy Him, they shall have sweet communion with Him; they shall ascend into the holy hill. Psalm 24:3–4: “Who shall ascend into the (holy) hill of the LORD? . . . He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart.” They shall be admitted nigh to God, they shall see Him, they shall enjoy Him.

I may conclude with the words of the prophet in Habakkuk 1:13. He said that God is of purer eyes

than to behold iniquity. And the truth is, impure eyes cannot behold God. They cannot bear the glory, the excellency of His presence. They cannot enjoy God. There is a stop in the very nature of the thing, as well as there is a stop by a divine law. Thus the imposter shall not come into the presence of God; that is the divine law. And there is a stop in the very nature of the thing; they cannot abide in the presence of God. As He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil," so evil ones have such impure eyes that they cannot behold Him, they cannot see God.

Now then, let this be considered, and lay it to heart, what reason you have to look after this pure heart, which is the first of those three springs out of which, said the Apostle, all those holy actions which are the end and the fulfilling of the commandment of God must flow, and with which only it is that you may come to have acceptance. And so much now of the first of the springs—the pure heart. The second is a good conscience.

The Holy Exercise of Love

by
John Ball

Wherein the holy exercise of love consists, and why it is to be rightly ordered. The means or motives whereby love may be stirred up. What those exercises of love are that must be shunned. Of the marks or signs of love.

QUESTION. Let us now come to the sanctified use of some affections in particular, and first begin with love, which is the prime and chief affection intellectual or sensual. Wherein stands the holy exercise of it?

ANSWER. In that it follows the motions of faith, and, being ruled by the light of truth, embraces all good soundly, constantly, and in a uniform order according to the law of God.

QUESTION. Why is love to be rightly ordered?

ANSWER 1. When this passion contains itself within the bounds of honesty, it is a lively spring and fountain of all good things in the life of man. But when, like a wild and untamed beast, it exceeds the bounds of reason and limits of truth, there is no misery which it brings not into the world, nor any disorder which it causes not in our lives. It is, as it were, a fatal source

from whence flows all kinds of horror, uncleanness, adultery, incest, sacrilege, quarrels, wars, treasons, murders, parricides, cruelty, and violence. Besides, the particular torments it gives unto the souls of such as give themselves to be surprised, filling them with envy, jealousy, cares, terrors, yea and madness, draw them many times to despair and to do things at which heaven and earth blush and are ashamed.

ANSWER 2. Love prescribes a law to our other desires, and to all our other passions. So, as we may term it the key and beginning of our thoughts, of our words, of our actions, and of whatever we do in this life, so it makes the first impression in our souls where it excites the desire of that which we resolve to pursue. Then it fortifies this desire by hope, which enflames us to the pursuit of what we desire. And if there appears any difficulty, she has no rest until she has vanquished and surmounted all hindrances wherein she settles her contentment and rest.

ANSWER 3. Love has a uniting virtue by means whereof it causes him who loves to aspire to unite himself to the thing beloved. They who love, said Aristophanes, would passionately desire to be transformed and changed into one another, and of two bodies to become one. But for that, this transformation cannot be without the destruction of their being, they strive to recompense this defect by a civil and honest union which tends not to the ruin of their nature, but contents their affections. That is to say, they converse continually together, entertain their passions, and are as little absent as may be one from another. Moreover, they have the same thoughts, the same desires, the same affections, the same wills, the same de-

lights, and the same distastes, and seem to be but one soul in two bodies. So, as that which is pleasing to him who loves is in like manner to the party beloved, what he affects the other embraces, and what he rejects the other abhors. So, their wills being thus strictly united, all their actions and carriages conspire to the same end and propound unto themselves the same object. For love is a desire to enjoy the good we propound unto ourselves as proper for our contentment, and capable of making us in some sort better by the fruition. But this enjoying and participation cannot be effected but by uniting the object to our affection, which is the same good we propound unto ourselves, wherefore it is the essence of love that it produces this union.

4. Love causes the soul of him who loves to be more where it loves than where it lives. The reason is that the souls of such as love are perpetually attentive to contemplate the image of what they love, and have no other thought nor greater pleasure than what they receive by this sweet entertainment. Since the soul, makes show of a more exact presence where it most frequently works, it follows thereby that it is more with the party beloved than in its own body. For these reasons it follows that love, if it is not rightly ordered, will draw the heart to vanity, but being truly directed most sweetly links and unites the soul unto God. If love is not set upon God as it ought, we must necessarily stand guilty of spiritual adultery, because the heart is withdrawn from the chief Good by some carnal or base pleasure.

QUESTION. What are the means or motives whereby love may be stirred up in us?

ANSWER. The means or motives to stir up love are many, as we will show in one particular branch, the love of God, which may be applied to other things as occasion is offered.

1. We love our parents as authors of our being and imparters of life, and this without a teacher; by nature we are instructed. But there is a very small spark of paterinity in our progenitors compared to God. He gave them bodies, being and life to be parents. He preserved, conserved, and enabled them. He created our souls alone, wherein they neither had part nor action. He formed our bodies when they never minded us. He kept us day and night when they never remembered us; yea, when both they and we were fast asleep, His watchful eye looked over both them and us.

2. In the progress of our tender years, we love them who bestow favors and benefits upon us. But if we consider the meat we eat, the clothes we wear, the air we breathe, the senses we use, the life we enjoy, the wit wherewith we reason, the will wherewith we affect—all are God's daily gifts, hourly, momentary, yea, instantly, by His providential hand upheld and maintained. Of all benefactors He is the best, and worthily deserves to be loved most. In every instant we wholly, in body and soul, life and being, depend upon Him; and in every instant, if it were possible, we should consecrate ourselves entirely with most grateful recognition and remonstrance of His benefits bestowed upon us.

3. The excellency and worth of men famous for courage, justice, wisdom, or piety enforces a reverent affection towards them; and men count it an honor to be admitted into society with them. But what is the worth of man compared with the infinite, surpassing

glory and perfection of God? What has their power to do with His omnipotence? Their base excellency with His supreme majesty? Their prudence, policy, or stratagems with His infinite wisdom and incomprehensible counsels? As the high pitch of man's preeminence is vile vassalage compared to the sovereignty and blessedness of God, so His love should disdain not only to be equated, but also confused with theirs.

4. Many men are ravished with beauty, in that their hearts are more present in thoughts and desires with such bodies as they like and love than with that body wherein they sojourn and live. But that beauty of the Lord transcends this gross, terrestrial, corruptible beauty more than all the world surpasses the least grain of sand which lies upon the ocean shore. For His harmony, consort, and proportion spring from the admirable union of all His perfections. The beauty of any or all the creatures is finite, as they are of limited essence; of God most infinite, as He is boundless in Himself.

5. Bounty, humility, and goodness are principal motives of love. All beasts, though reasonless, yet in love follow this general instinct and inclination of reason imprinted in their hearts with the indelible characters of divine providence to affect nothing but that which in some sort concerns their good. But God is good of Himself, essentially without limit, all things else by limitation and participation. An angel has goodness and therefore is amiable, yet he is but a drop distilled from God in that quantity, degree, and measure His wisdom prescribed, and his limited nature required. As God is good in Himself, so is He to His creatures. "The Lord is good to them that fear Him, to

them that hope in His mercy." How good is the God of Israel to those who are pure in heart? How bountiful and humble, that He disdains not the signification of our affection towards Him? No, His goodness reaches to all things that He has made. What man ever lived and enjoyed not the heat and light of this visible sun? Or who ever lived or continued life, but by the beams of God's invisible bounty?

6. Beasts and men are carried with an insatiable desire for delight, as daily experience testifies. But God is the paradise of pleasure, the delight of delights. In His presence there is fullness of joy for evermore. Nor are all the treasures of spiritual, honest, virtuous, supernatural, divine pleasures reserved for the saints in heaven; but even in this barren wilderness, in this troublesome world, God refreshes His servants with spiritual manna and sweet streams of consolation. For what are those admirable comforts which the faithful feel in the inundation of their adversities, endured for the truth, but as rivers of water in a dry ground? What else can the sweetness of fervent prayers prognosticate but the infinite suavity and happy contentment which once fervent, believing lovers shall enjoy in blessed fellowship and communion with God?

7. All men love profit, and that best which they judge most profitable. But God is the inexhaustible treasure of all goodness, the end of all profits and commodities. Who does not know the innumerable means and helps he daily receives from God to conserve nature, and further grace, but he who neither knows God nor himself? God is the root, fountain, and origin of all creatures, profitable in all, by all, and above all. In the spiritual life of our souls, the sacra-

ments are means of grace, holy inspirations, helps to godliness; the Word is a medicine for spiritual maladies, crosses, and afflictions, and a means for amendment.

8. Virtue and honesty cause solid friendship, love, and amity. But if virtue and virtuous men ought to be loved and esteemed, what love is due to God, the supreme perfection of all goodness, dignity, and majesty? His virtues are as far above the pitch of all excellent virtues, heroical, supernatural, or theological, and infinitely more than the chiefest virtues surmount the worst vices. All men by nature are sinners; but God is spotless, as far from all sin as incomprehensible wisdom from ignorance, and infinite goodness from malice.

9. The diamond forms and fashions the diamond, and love forms and fashions love. Fire converts fuel into fire, and fuel converts into increased fire. Love causes love, and the beloved loving in return, augments the original love. What wrong shall we offer to God if we love Him not who has loved us first? It is of His love that we live, that we are preserved. It is of love that we are redeemed from death, adopted to be His sons. Great is Thy love, O God, to men in this life; for here Thou dost not only affect them, pour out Thy benefits upon them, distill Thy graces into their hearts, and in a thousand ways externally and internally work their salvation, but also that which surpasses all. It seems Thy will and power are at command, or rather ready to obey the desires of Thy faithful servants. And if in this life such is the power of love, what shall we conceive of the love wherewith the saints in glory are affected and embraced? It passes all that heart can

conceive or tongue express.

10. Union breeds love, and the stricter this union is, the stricter affection it engenders. But every Christian is most strictly united unto God and soundly renewed after His image.

11. The Lord is the only fit object of absolute love, and most agrees with a reasonable nature. For He is the prime truth in being and speaking, and infinite in both; the chief good, the only object of complete contentment. Who can explicate the admirable proportion, convenience, and agreeableness between His mercies and our miseries, His riches and our poverty, His abilities to perfect us and our indignities to be perfected, His patience and long-suffering to support injuries and our perverseness to commit offenses?

12. Pleasant arts, delightful creatures, and complementary ornaments are greatly loved and liked—necessary trades, creatures, and parts much more—because every one first loves himself, and then all those means which in some sort concern the being or conservation of himself, among which those that are most necessary have preeminence. But in all things we have dependence upon God, whose aid is as necessary to the preservation of our being as to the first imparting of it. If He upholds not the weak pillars of our bodies, they presently fall and come to nothing—such and so extreme is their feebleness that no hand but His almighty one is able to sustain them. What way can we walk, what sense can we use, what work can we work, what word can we speak, what thought can we think, what wish can we will, if He guides not our feet, concurs not with our senses, works not with our hands, directs not our tongues, manages not our wit, or moves

not our will?

13. The passing by and pardoning of injuries without intent or meditation of revenge much ravishes and affects the heart. Herein none is to be compared unto our God, who freely pardons iniquity, transgression, and sin. Who can recount the wrongs that are done unto His highness every day by disobedience to His commandments, contempt of His mercy, and abuse of His long-suffering? And yet no sooner do we cry, "I have sinned," but He forgives our transgressions. With invincible patience He awaits our repentance, and by internal favors and external benefits cherishes us as though He were not offended.

14. Our affections are strong to those who have delivered us out of danger, stand by us in the times of trouble and distress, and have suffered many wrongs, injuries, and disgraces for us. In this respect we owe God. He may challenge from us the most tender love. What pains has Christ suffered in soul and body to rid us from the eternal torment of soul and body deserved by sin!

15. The manner of giving gifts or bestowing favors much augments love. These gifts are to be considered in respect of the giver, if he is great and excellent, a stranger, our friend, or an enemy; in respect of the gift, if exceedingly great in itself, if marvelously dear to the giver, if common to many; in respect of the receiver, if it tends to his great good, or riddance from some great evil, if in giving he is singled out from the rest; in respect of the manner of giving, if with alacrity, if without suit or request, if with vehement affection, if without interest, if with the danger and damage of the giver. Most of these circumstances may be observed in

the gifts which God vouchsafes, especially in that gift of gifts—Christ Jesus, His only begotten Son whom He gave to die for us.

QUESTION. What are the exercises of love that must be shunned?

ANSWER. 1. Blind love must be shunned, that is, when vain devices and conceits are affected contrary to the direction, or at least without the warrant of the Word. This affection is ill-guided because it is not led by truth, and wrongly placed because the thing beloved can give no ease or profit to the soul. “Why do you lay out your money for that which is not bread?” (Isaiah 55:2).

ANSWER 2. Carnal love must be shunned, when wealth, health, honor, pleasure, friendship, ease, and life are more affected than honesty, virtue, piety, and the favor of God. To which heads must be referred the corrupt affection of them who will not venture the loss of their friends’ favor and good will to perform some necessary duty unto their souls. The love of money (and so of pleasure) is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). They who love earthly things in this neither love God soundly, nor are beloved of Him (1 John 2:15;; Psalm 14:1; Psalm 52;3–4; Proverbs 1:22; Psalm 58:2; Leviticus 19:17).

ANSWER 3. The love of sin is a notorious abuse of that affection. The mind errs when it is deluded with falsehood. The heart is perverted when it embraces evil for good. Sin deforms, corrupts, and troubles the soul, but all good desires tend to the good and perfection of it in some kind. It is a sign we love not our neighbor when we allow sin to rest upon him.

ANSWER 4. Love is disordered and not suitably formed when the least duties are earnestly affected, but greater duties are not performed with proper vehemence and freeness of spirit. Love is misshapen if it is not proportionate to the excellence of its object.

ANSWER 5. Partial love (which argues more indulgence to the corrupt disposition of the heart than the power of grace) must be shunned. Partial love performs such duties as cross not, but rather further our main designs and projects, whereas no less necessary, profitable, excellent, and well-pleasing duties are disregarded, because they suit not with our inclination. Love is not fashioned according to its true and proper sampler, nor moved by sound and lively faith, if in motion it is not uniform and universal, orderly and total, proportionate and general.

ANSWER 6. Inconstant love must be shunned, whose immediate and proper cause is want of soundness. Constant friendship is in greatest demand with men; as for those who are in and out, off and on, now pleased and then displeased, they are not respected of any unless it is for their own ends. Will God entertain them into His service who, upon every occasion of offense taken (for none can be given), are ready to cast off His service?

QUESTION. What are the signs of love?

ANSWER. 1. Sorrow and joy are the marks of our affections, and of that we have in the soul which rejoices or afflicts itself, as the objects which present themselves are pleasing or distasteful. If we grieve at the free passage of the gospel, or to see the prosperity of them that fear God, without question we love that

which is evil. If we rejoice in the misery of godly men, the overspreading of profaneness, or the decay of truth, it will not be hard to judge what affection bears sway.

ANSWER 2. Friends share equally between them the good and evil. There is such a bond of affection between friends, as the harm which happens to the one afflicts the other and fills him with bitterness, so as many times we have seen true friends die with sorrow for the loss of their friend. Yes, secular histories are full of people who have slain themselves because they could not survive those whom they have loved dearly. In like manner the prosperity of friends passes from one to another, as the triumphs of Alexander are the contentments of Ephestion, and the glory of Ephestion is the joy of Alexander.

ANSWER 3. They who love have the same friends and the same enemies. They say the adamant or lodestone not only makes an impression upon iron which it draws, but also imparts its virtue by touching, so that the iron which it has touched draws other iron unto it, and makes, as it were, a continual chain. In the same manner, a friend brings his friends to him he loves, and he reciprocally imparts unto him his friends; whereof there is framed a common bond which makes them ready to succor one another as if they were members of one body. Hence is that proverb, "How can he love me, who loves not them that I love?"

ANSWER 4. Thoughts and words are signs of love, for love desiring union with the thing beloved carries the thoughts where it would be, and so becomes present in heart with that from which it is severed by distance of place. Where our treasure is, there will our

heart be also (Matthew 6:21). If our cogitations, studies, cares, desires, and appetite are to earthly treasures, our love is carried to things below; but if our thoughts are lifted to heaven, our treasure is above.

ANSWER 5. Men testify that they love those before whom they are ashamed to do or say those things which of themselves are shameful or dishonest, wherein the Persians gave good testimony of their love for their wives when they caused them to retire from their banquets, being unwilling that their eyes should be spectators of their excess. For this respect and reverence which they gave them was a sign of true love, for we are ashamed to commit any unworthy act before those whom we love.

ANSWER 6. By our company we may try our affection, for men cannot but affect their manners with whom they delight to converse familiarly. Likeness of manners causes agreement among men. One wicked man loves another for the sake of his sins, and is the more willing and desirous of his company for his lewd conditions. But goodness, even such as is approved of God and pleasing to good men, unites the minds of those who are godly, and makes them loving and kind to each other. This caused Jonathan so earnestly to set his affection upon David, and to have him in such estimation, because he saw him to be full of grace and valor as he himself was also. And this caused David likewise so gladly to entertain the love of Jonathan with constant care as to requite the same unto him, and to his posterity.

ANSWER 7. Our affection is discovered by looks and gestures. The eyes are as glass windows, in and through which shine the motions of the heart. In the

countenance we may read what men desire. The affections have such affinity with the senses in their motions, that it is hard to hide them so at all times, that they shall not appear to such as do observe us.