
Shield of Faith

A Primitive Baptist Publication

February 2006

A New Commandment

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also 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).

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” was a positive precept of the law. Leviticus 19:18 states, “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.” How, then, could Jesus’ command for disciples to love one another be called a *new* commandment? John the Apostle viewed the commandment as being both old and new. “Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth” (1 John 2:7-8).

The Greek word translated *new* in John 13:34 means *new as to freshness*; rather than *new with respect to age*. Jesus brought freshness to an old law. His commandment could be said to be new because He purged the commandment from the old corrupt biased views of the Pharisees, who had limited the duty of love, and confined it to their own countrymen, or even to their own party. Christ enlarged the object, and obliges his disciples to love all mankind, even their very enemies.

The commandment could be said to be new because this duty of love was so greatly advanced and heightened by our Saviour, as to the measures and degrees of it, even to the laying down of our lives one for another.

It is called a new commandment, because there is a new motive to love, and

love is illustrated by a new example. As Christ loves His disciples, His disciples are to love one another.

The commandment is new in that, for the first time, love is given as an identifying mark of discipleship. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

The commandment of Jesus is new because the duty is raised to a much higher degree. Under the Law, the Israelite was to “love thy neighbour as *thyself*.” Jesus loved others *more* than He loved Himself, giving His life for others. “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:16).

Jesus gave a *commandment* rather than a recommendation or suggestion. A commandment is an *injunction, an order directing specific action, given with authority*. The authority is the of the highest order, given by God Almighty. As with all commandments of God, there are blessings in obedience and chastisement in disobedience.

The repetition of the commandment to love one another should show us the importance of this precept. Jesus often gave this commandment. “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12). “These things I command you, that ye love one another” (John 15:17). Paul wrote, “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8). Peter said, “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). John, in his Epistles, repeats the commandment several times. “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth

God” (1 John 4:7).

On one occasion, a scribe asked Jesus, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?” (Matthew 22:36). “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40). That is, these embrace the substance of what Moses in the law, and what the prophets have spoken. There is nothing commanded in all the Old Testament cannot be reduced to these two heads. This is the whole duty of man. If these two commandments are properly obeyed, all other commands will, as a consequence be obeyed.

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments” (1 John 5:1-2). In verse 1 John says that we know we love God because we love our Christian brothers. In verse 2 he says we love them because we love God. John is reasoning in a circle. You can’t love the brothers without loving God, and you can’t love God without loving the brethren. One proves the other. John is saying that it is characteristic of true believers to love one another.

One does not fully “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,” if he does not love the brethren. One cannot love the brethren rightly unless he loves the Lord with all his heart, soul and mind.

The greatest failure, I believe, of the church today is the failure to obey this commandment of Jesus: “*that ye love*

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A New Commandment

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one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” It is not that we have not loved, for God’s people are the most loving of people. We have, however, failed to love to the extent and in the manner that Jesus commanded, “as I have loved you.”

Jesus asked, “For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?” (Matthew 5:46-47). If we love only those who love us, we have done no more than the publicans did. Publicans were despicable to the Romans, the Greeks, and the Jews, for their intolerable greed. They were abhorred in an especial manner by the Jews, to whom the Roman government was hateful. The Publicans, assisting in collecting the Roman tribute, were considered as betrayers of their country, and supporters of those who enslaved it. A Greek writer, Theocritus, was asked, Which of the wild beasts were the most cruel? He answered, “Bears and lions, in the mountains; and TAX-GATHERERS and calumniators [slanderers], in cities.” If we love as did the Publicans, we have done very little.

We are to love not only those who love us, but our enemies as well. “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). Too often we have failed in this regard.

Christian love is to be of a higher order than the love that may be seen in the world. To the church at Thessalonica Paul wrote, “But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another” (1 Thessalonians 4:9). Paul used two different Greek words for love in this passage. In the first instance, brotherly love, the Greek word is *philadelphia*, meaning fraternal affection; kindness. The word means the natural human affection, with its strong feeling, or sentiment, and is never used in Scripture language to designate man’s love to God.

In the second instance, “ye yourselves

are taught of God to love one another,” the word for love is *agapao*. *Agapao*, denotes the highest, most perfect kind of love, and implies a clear determination of will and judgment, and belongs particularly to the sphere Christianity.

Timothy had brought to Paul tidings of the “faith and charity” of the church at Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 3:6). Since they demonstrated charity (*agape*), the higher love, Paul felt no need to teach concerning brotherly love, a lower sort of love. If we have *agape* love, we will love in a greater way than mere *philadelphia*, brotherly love.

Love (*agape*) is a sacrificial act. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Ephesians 5:2). Love *without sacrifice* does not meet the standard set forth by Jesus Christ.

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:16-18). The spirit which led the Saviour to sacrifice his life for the good of the church, should lead us to do the same thing for our brethren if circumstances should require it. The Saviour did it, and we are bound to imitate his example. The prophets, apostles, and martyrs did it, laying down their lives in the cause of truth, and for the good of the church and the world. It has always been held that it is right and proper, in certain circumstances, for a man to lay down his life for the good of others. We see the example the patriots who sacrifice their life for the good of their country. We believe that in the case

of a shipwreck, that it may be the duty of a captain to sacrifice his life for the good of his passengers and crew. In the case of a pestilent disease, a physician should not regard his own life, if he may save others. We always honor the man who is willing to jeopardize his own life on noble principles of self-denial for the good of his fellow-men. Christians should be the first to make such sacrifice. Eusebius (Eccl. His. vii. 22) says of Christians that “in a time of plague they visited one another, and not only hazarded their lives, but actually lost them in their zeal to preserve the lives of others.”

A tradition of the church states that when John, in his extreme old age, could no longer walk to the meetings of the Church but was borne to the public assemblies of the believers by his disciples, he always uttered the same address to the Church; “Little children, love one another. His disciples, wearied at last with the constant repetition of the same words, asked him, Why he constantly said the same thing? “Because,” he said, “it is the commandment of the Lord, and if this one thing be attained, it is enough.” Indeed, if we attain to the standard of love set by Jesus Christ, it is enough.

We ought to constantly compare our love for one another to the love with which the Saviour has loved us. Anyone who fairly examines himself according to that standard will surely say, “My love is insufficient.” There should be a constant, fervent desire to obey the Master in loving one another better. Paul urged the church at Thessalonica to ever be increasing in their love for one another. We must do the same. But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10)

Bible Quiz

In spite of tremendous trials, some people do not waver in their faith. Match these unwavering Bible people with their trials.

1. Peter (Acts 12:5)
2. Daniel (Daniel 6:7)
3. Moses (Exodus 14:21)
4. John (Revelation 1:9)
5. Noah (Genesis 7:15-18)
6. Sarah (Hebrews 11:11-12)
7. Abraham (Hebrews 11:8-9)
8. Hosea (Hosea 1:2)
9. John the Baptist (Matthew 14:10)
10. Paul (Acts 21:32)
12. Joseph (Genesis 37:28)

- a. King's sword
- b. childless state
- c. exile on Patmos
- d. sold into slavery
- e. sojourned in a strange country
- f. beating
- g. prison
- h. unfaithful wife
- i. flood
- j. Red Sea
- k. lions' den

Answers on page 4.

Bearing Precious Seed

He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Psalm 126:6

Many times we may get discouraged with the means we have to produce any increase of spiritual fruit. The psalmist speaks of a man who is weeping. His tears are apparently because the seed he has been given to sow is "precious," meaning that there is not much of it. His need for a return on his investment - the seed he was sowing - was great. He wept; but he also sowed what he had. The promise of the psalm is that this small amount would yield great returns. Once the precious seed was sown, sprang up, and yielded its fruit, this man would be able to rejoice as he harvested an abundance of sheaves in return for his seeming modest investment.

Do you think you don't have much to give? Are you in a place where there doesn't seem to be much to sow, and the need for an abundant harvest is great if the work is to continue? Weep, if you must; but go forth and sow what you have where God had provided you a place to sow it. He is the husbandman (master gardener) in charge of bringing forth abundantly from our meager supply of seed, and He has promised to give the increase.

A practical application of this concept may be found in small congregations of God's people. Many times it seems our strength and our efforts are so small that any fruit they might bring forth can't possibly be sufficient to meet future needs. Weep; but go forth and sow. God will take care of the rest.

Elder Bill Taylor
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Gathering of Saints

The spring *Gathering of Saints* will be held March 3-4, 2006 at Fairview Primitive Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee, the Lord willing.

The *Gathering of Saints* is a time of worship and fellowship open to all believers. Services begin at 1:00 PM EST on Friday with speakers at 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, and 4:00. Dinner will be served at the church at 5:30. There will be an evening worship service at 7:00.

On Saturday morning services will begin at 9:00 AM with speakers at 9:00, 10:00, and 11:00. Lunch will be served at noon and will conclude the meeting.

Speakers will be selected at the meeting, so all preachers should come expecting to preach.

We want to emphasize that this meeting is open to all who love the Lord and His people. In all past meetings, the Lord has truly blessed us with spiritual worship and warm and loving fellowship. It is a wonderful opportunity to renew old friendships and make new friends in the Lord.

Please make your plans now to attend these services. For more information, contact Elder Greg Phillips, 807 Ashwood Lane, Chattanooga, TN 37415. Phone (423) 875-3652.

A Red Sea Place

Have you come to the Red Sea place in your life,
Where in spite of all you can do,
There is no way out, there is no way back,
There is no other way but through?
Then wait on the Lord with a trust serene
Till the night of your fear is gone;
He will send the wind, He will heap the floods,
When He says to your soul "Go on."
And His hand will lead you through - clear through -
Ere the watery walls roll down,
No foe can reach you, no wave can touch,
No mightiest sea can drown;
The tossing billows may rear their crests,
Their foam at your feet may break,
But over their bed you shall walk dryshod
In the path that your Lord will make.
In the morning watch, 'neath the lifted cloud,
You shall see but the Lord alone,
When He leads you on from the place of the sea,
To a land that you have not known;
And your fears shall pass as your foes have passed,
You shall no more be afraid;
You shall sing His praise in a better place,
A place that His hand has made.

Annie Johnson Flint

TULIP

The tulip, as we know, is a cup shapen flower on a long, straight stem with two green leaves extending over half the length of the flower's stem. Some of the sisters of Woodcrest Primitive Baptist Church supplied me with information concerning the tulip. It closes up as night falls and opens up in the day's light. What was really surprising was that its beauty is overshadowed by its terrible stench.

Beauty is only skin deep. Some of our ministers, the late Elder Khomer Beaty being one of that number, have taken the letters in the word *tulip* and taught wonderful biblical truths. With the Lord as our helper and His word as our guide, we will examine the first letter, *T: Total Depravity*. This is one of the articles of faith which Primitive Baptists believe. We believe this because this doctrine is taught in the Bible, and is the experience of many of God's people. To some degree, Moses experienced this when he argued with God, saying that he was not able to do what God required of him.

We often criticize biblical characters, when we are really like them, and the important lesson for us is to learn from their experiences.

Isaiah was another who realized his total depravity. Listen to this major prophet: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5). With these words Isaiah speaks of total depravity, his and the people among whom he dwelt. This was the first truth God showed Isaiah of himself, not of God, but of Isaiah himself.

"The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psalms 14:2-3). There is more than a hint here and elsewhere that God "looked" and would take gracious action upon this condition. "And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me" (Isaiah 63:5). When our Saviour,

the Lord Jesus Christ, came into the world, total depravity was manifested in the lives of those he touched and healed. When only one thing is spoken of (for example, some were blind, some were deaf, some were dumb) this does not, nor did not speak of a *degree* of depravity, but their total depravity. The blind could not see God nor the things of God. Let us look at New Testament examples. "Then was brought unto him one possessed [taken over completely by the devil] with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw" (Matthew 12:22). To this writer, that is *total depravity*. Another instance is Luke 8:1-2, "And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils." This writer cannot heal in this manner. Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour, Who has been give all power in heaven and earth did, and can. We need to remember from whence He brought us. He find His own in total depravity.

Hear the publican, "...God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). Who told this man he was a sinner? Now, brethren, we have known men and women who have been noble men and women all their lives, but we can rest assured that the Spirit of God has been directing them from a youthful age. God must be given the glory for these gracious souls.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, taught, being directed and inspired of the Holy Spirit, total depravity. Writing to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus, had this to say of their total depravity: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of dis-

obedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, ..., (Ephesians 2:1-4). We will leave that for another time (if God will allow). My point: Paul taught total depravity. He knew that even though "called of God," "an apostle of Jesus Christ," he never got away [completely] from his depraved condition: what he was by nature. He numbered himself with those of whom he spoke: "we all had our conversation in times past."

We need to keep in mind our total depravity. Paul had a thorn in the flesh. To this writer this had to do with what he was engaged in before his conversion. We also need to keep in mind where God found us. What state, what was our actions of total depravity? To think of these things should be and will be humiliating and humbling, but God, through the thorn in the flesh, will ever keep us mindful where He found us and the riches of His grace will become most precious.

Listen to Paul's words of his knowledge of total depravity: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). He answers the question with these words: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord..." (Romans 7:25).

If the Lord continues to bless us, we will continue until we have spelled out the biblical teaching of each letter of the word *TULIP*.

Sincere love,
Elder Wallace Johnson,
Pastor, Woodcrest Primitive Baptist
Church, Ashland, MO

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalms 51:4-5).

Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. (Psalms 39:5 KJV)

Answers to Bible Quiz

1-g, 2-k, 3-j, 4-c, 5-i, 6-b, 7-e, 8-h, 9-a, 10-f, 11-d

Devotions:

Psalms In Reflection

From the book of the same title by Elder Len Dalton

THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH PSALM

Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire: Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth. He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches. He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart. (Psalms 104:1-15)

In this psalm we have another psalm of personal praise, commencing and closing with the same note of personal praise. In the previous psalm the dominant note is that of the mercy of Jehovah, here it is that of His majesty. The former is the song of love to love, this is the song of loyalty to royalty. The psalm opens with a declaration of the essential greatness of God, and then proceeds in beautiful language to describe the manifestations to His greatness in creation. It is a truth worthy of mention, although beneficent purposes are recognized. The springs in the valleys serve a wonderful purpose as well as beautifying the valley. Birds and beasts get their water supply, plants get their water on which to grow. In a burst of praise the psalmist recognizes the dependence of all things on Jehovah. If He for a moment hides His face, all around Him are disturbed. If He even withdraws His breath, death is the result. From the words of the psalmist it would certainly seem that to him all nature was praising God. He solemnly promises to make a contribution of his personal worship.

In this way others are moved to offer their praise and worship. The conception is full of beauty. This widespread revelation of the power and glory of God makes its appeal to the individual worship of any and all who study the psalm. The psalm is a wonderful revelation of God as creator and sustainer.

Hymns and Hymn Writers

Leave It There

Charles Albert Tindley is one of the earliest and most influential writers of gospel music. His two most popular songs are "I'll Overcome Someday" (which is popularly known as "We Shall Overcome", the anthem for the civil rights movement) and "Stand By Me." "Stand By Me" became a national hit when Ben E. King and the Drifters sang their version during the 1960's.

Charles Tindley was born in Berlin, Md. As a child, he never received any formal schooling. In fact, he taught himself to read and write. He married Daisy Henry around the age of seventeen then moved to Philadelphia to make a better life for both of them. In Philadelphia, Tindley worked as a hod carrier and a sexton in John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church. He wanted to become a minister but lacked a formal education. How could he earn enough money to take care of his family and get an education? Tindley took correspondence classes so that he could keep his job and support his family. The classes he took enabled him to pass his examination to become a minister.

Afterwards, he pastored congregations in New Jersey and Delaware. In Wilmington, Delaware, Tindley was appointed elder of the Wilmington District. Then a wonderful thing happened! Tindley was asked to become the minister of the church he had been a sexton when he first moved to Philadelphia! He accepted becoming the new minister of Bainbridge St. Methodist Church, as the church was now called. Starting with 200 members, Tindley used his intellectual ability, eloquence, and spiritual singing to amass a congregation of over ten-thousand members. During this time he worked for civil rights, took care of Philadelphia's poor and disadvantaged and wrote over forty-five hymns.

A man who was a constant worrier visited Tindley one day. After listening a while, Tindley replied:

"My advice to you is put all your troubles in a sack, take 'em to the Lord, and *leave 'em there.*"

From these words came the hymn, *Leave It There.*

*If the world from you withhold; of its silver and its gold
And you have to get along with meager fare,
Just remember in His word, how He feeds the little bird;
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.*

*If your body suffers pain,
And your health you can't regain,
And your soul is almost sinking in despair,
Jesus knows the pain you feel,
He can save and He can heal;
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there*

Current and past issues of the *Shield of Faith* can be found online at www.shieldoffaith.us

The Love of God, Considered

And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. (2 Thessalonians 3:5)

It is very useful to increase our love to God. Never was love to God, to Christ, to his gospel, people, ways, and ordinances, more cold than it is now. Great need there is to have it revived and increased; and nothing can more effectually do it, than this, to have our hearts directed into the Love of God. It was this, which, being let down into our hearts, first produced our love to God; and which only can animate and excite it, when it is grown cold. According to the perception we have of God's love to us, does our love to him rise. "Her sins, which were many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, same loveth little" (Luke 7:4).

It is very useful to promote our love to one another. There is a very visible decay of brotherly love among the saints, in this day; as is manifest from those discords, divisions, contentions, and backbitings, which every where abound in churches. Now nothing is more likely to retrieve our love to one another, than to have our hearts directed into the love of God. The primitive saints having a large effusion of the Spirit upon them, and a large sense of the love of God to them, were full of affection to each other. Inasmuch that they had no need to be stirred up; for they were taught of God to love one another. Nay, even in Tertullian's time, so strong and vehement was their love to each other, that the very Heathens could not but take notice of them, as they walked about the streets, and say, *Vide, ut se invicem diligant*. "See, how they love one another!"

No greater incentive to this duty is there than the love of God and of Christ. Hence the apostle John, after having discoursed of the love of God in sending his Son to die for sinners, thus argues, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another": well knowing, that nothing could more vehemently provoke unto it.

It is very useful to enlarge our obedience to God. And indeed, it seems to be with this view, that the apostle puts up this petition here. In the preceding

verse he expresses his confidence in these Thessalonians, that they both did, and would do, the things that were commanded them: and in order to that, he prays, that the Lord would direct their hearts into the love of God; knowing, that nothing would more enlarge their hearts, to run with cheerfulness in the ways of God's commandments. 'Tis this which constrains souls to live to the glory of God; and makes even those that were slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Never was there more need of having our hearts directed into the love of God than now; when there is such a neglect of duty among professors; not only in their closets and families, but also in the church of God.

It is very useful to enable us to mourn for sin aright. We have great reason to be humbled before God, and to mourn both for our own sins, and for the sins of others. But we never mourn more, nor better, than when impressed with a sense of God's love. It is this which throws our humiliation for sin into a proper channel. Our sorrow for it never rises higher; nor are our shame for it, and detestation of it more increased, than when we are made sensible of God's pacifying love towards us. It was a look of love from Christ that sent Peter out of the hall to weep bitterly, after he had so shamefully denied his Lord; and it was a discovery of Christ's love to the poor woman, which fetched those floods of tears from her eyes, and which put her upon washing Christ's feet therewith, and wiping them with the hairs of her head.

It is very useful to enable us to bear the cross of Christ cheerfully; and perhaps that may be the reason why this other clause is added, And unto the patient waiting for Christ. This may intend, either a patient waiting for Christ's second Advent, and is what our version seems to regard; or a patient bearing the cross for the sake of Christ. The words in the original, will admit of either sense. It is the saints' duty to bear all reproaches and trials, patiently, for the sake of Christ; and that, in imitation of him who has left them an example. And great need they have to consider him, who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself; lest they be weary,

and faint in their minds. And not only a consideration of Christ's person, but a sense of God's love is very requisite to support them under adverse dispensations of providence; which when they have, they glory in tribulations; "knowing, that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5).

Wherefore the apostle may be thought to pray, that their hearts might be directed into the love of God, in order that they might patiently bear all things for the sake of Christ. Thus having considered the nature of God's love, and shewn you what it is to be directed into it, I shall close all with those hearty petitions of the apostle in the two last verses of the preceding chapter... "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work" (II Thessalonians 2:16-17)

by John Gill

A mother, in one of those delicious moments that make mothers what they are, drew her two-year-old daughter to her and said, "Oh, I love you!" The little girl, very much occupied with the whim of the moment, drew away and said, "Yes, I know." Love was taken for granted.

As early in life as the second year the Word was being illustrated: "Even a child is known by his doings . . ." (Proverbs 20:11). Tragedy occurs when someone hears the voice of God saying, as He does from Calvary, and as He does from a thousand thousand circumstances of life, "My child, I love you," and is answered with an indifference that shows that His love is not really returned. Most of life's sadness flows from such an attitude. The windows of heaven are opened when we can learn to feel deeply: "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19).

A Godly Man is a Lover of the Word

by Thomas Watson

“O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psalms 119:97).

Part A: Godly Man Loves the Word Written.

Chrysostom compares the Scripture to a garden set with ornaments and flowers. A godly man delights to walk in this garden and sweetly solace himself. He loves every branch and part of the Word:

1. *He loves the counseling part of the Word, as it is a directory and rule of life.*

The Word is the direction sign which points us to our duty. It contains in it things to be believed and practiced. A godly man loves the directions of the Word.

2. *He loves the threatening part of the Word.* The Scripture is like the Garden of Eden: as it has a tree of life in it, so it has a flaming sword at its gates. This is the threatening of the Word. It flashes fire in the face of every person who goes on obstinately in wickedness. “God will wound the head of His enemies, the hairy scalp of the one who still goes on in his trespasses” (Psalm 68:21). The Word gives no indulgence to evil. It will not let a man halt half-way between God and sin. The true mother would not let the child be divided (I Kings 3:26), and God will not have the heart divided. The Word thunders out threats against the very appearance of evil. It is like that flying scroll full of curses (Zechariah 5:1).

A godly man loves the menaces of the Word. He knows there is love in every threat. God would not have us perish; he therefore mercifully threatens us, so that he may scare us from sin. God’s threats are like the buoy, which shows the rocks in the sea and threatens death to such as come near. The threat is a curbing bit to check us, so that we may not run in full career to hell. There is mercy in every threat.

3. *He loves the consolatory part of the Word - the promises.* He goes feeding on these as Samson went on his way eating the honeycomb (Judges 14:8,9). The promises are all marrow and sweetness. They are reviving to us when we are fainting; they are the conduits of the water of life. “In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul” (Psalm 94:19). The promises were David’s harp to drive away sad thoughts;

they were the breast which gave him the milk of divine consolation.

A godly man shows his love to the Word written: (a) By diligently reading it. The noble Bereans “searched the Scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11). Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures (Acts 18:12). The Word is our Magna Carta for heaven; we should be daily reading over this charter. The Word shows what is truth and what is error. It is the field where the pearl of price is hidden. How we should dig for this pearl! A godly man’s heart is the library to hold the Word of God; it dwells richly in him (Col. 3:16). It is reported of Melancthon that when he was young, he always carried the Bible with him and read it greedily. The Word has a double work: to teach us and to judge us. Those who will not be taught by the Word shall be judged by the Word. Oh, let us make ourselves familiar with the Scripture! What if it should be as in the times of Diocletian, who commanded by proclamation that the Bible be burned? Or as in Queen Mary’s days, when it spelled death to have a Bible in English? By diligent conversing with Scripture, we may carry a Bible in our heads.

(b) By frequently *meditating* on it: “It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97). A pious soul meditates on the truth and holiness of the Word. He not only has a few transient thoughts, but leaves his mind steeping in the Scripture. By meditation, he sucks from this sweet flower and ruminates on holy truths in his mind.

(c) By *delighting* in it. It is his recreation: “Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart” (Jeremiah 15:16). Never did a man take such delight in a dish that he loved as the prophet did in the Word. And indeed, how can a saint choose but take great pleasure in the Word? All that he ever hopes to be worth is contained in it. Does not a son take pleasure in reading his father’s will and testament, in which he bequeaths his estate to him?

(d) By *hiding* it: “Your word I have hidden in my heart” (Psalm 119:11) - as one hides a treasure so that it should not be stolen. The Word is the jewel; the heart is the cabinet where it must be locked up. Many hide the Word in their memory, but not in their heart. And why would David

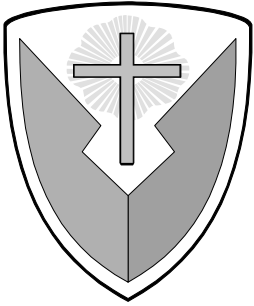
enclose the Word in his heart? “That I might not sin against you.” As a man would carry an antidote about him when he comes near an infected place, so a godly man carries the Word in his heart as a spiritual antidote to preserve him from the infection of sin. Why have so many been poisoned with error, others with moral vice, but because they have not hidden the Word as a holy antidote in their heart?

(e) By *defending* it. A wise man will not let his land be taken from him but will defend his title. David looked upon the Word as his land of inheritance: “Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart” (Psalm 119:111). And do you think he will let his inheritance be wrested out of his hands? A godly man will not only dispute for the Word but die for it: “I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God” (Revelation 6:9).

(f) By *preferring* it above things most precious: (1) Above food: “I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food” (Job. 23:12). (2) Above riches: “The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver” (Psalm 119:72). (3) Above worldly honour. Memorable is the story of King Edward the Sixth. On the day of his coronation, when they presented three swords before him, signifying to him that he was monarch of three kingdoms, the king said, “There is still one sword missing.” On being asked what that was, he answered, “The Holy Bible, which is the ‘sword of the Spirit’ and is to be preferred before these ensigns of royalty.”

(g) By *talking* about it: “My tongue shall speak of your word” (Psalm 119:172). As a covetous man talks of his rich purchase, so a godly man speaks of the Word. What a treasure it is, how full of beauty and sweetness! Those whose mouths the devil has gagged, who never speak of God’s Word, indicate that they never reaped any good from it.

(h) By *conforming* to it. The Word is his compass, by which he sets his life, the balance in which he weighs his actions. He copies out the Word in his daily walk: “I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7).. St Paul kept the doctrine of faith, and lived the life of faith.



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And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, Hebrews 10:24

WE ARE NOT IGNORANT

“... And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers.” – Acts ii 42.

We are not “ignorant.” We stand side by with other peoples in material progress, and we read our Bibles as much as other people do. Now, listen, while I tell you our reason for not trying to improve on the ways of our fathers in religion. It is because our religion is God-given, and men cannot improve what God has given. He has all wisdom; there can never be anything new with him. He cannot improve on his own ways, for all that he does is perfect. If men can improve on God’s doctrines it must be because they know more that God knows. If men can improve on the practices of the church, it must be because God did not see that time would change and demand something different to what was suitable in the time of Christ.

We do not want to try to improve on the Bible, because we believe it to be the word of God. If it is not the word of God then we may discard all it says in regard to salvation. We believe the first verse in the Bible – “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” If it can be proven that this is not the truth, then it is not God’s word, and we are without guide or compass. It is not because we are behind the times that we refuse to accept the statements of so-called scientific men, but because the statements which used to be called scientific have been discarded because of later discoveries, and those made now may have to be altered. But we believe God’s word will stand, we aim to stand by it

WILL STAND ON BIBLE STATEMENTS

We believe that God created man, not an animal without in-

telligence, that later developed into man, and the reason we so believe is because the Bible so states, and we accept it as God’s word – and we do not intend to be moved from it.

As with these things, so with other matters which pertain to man, sin, and salvation. We are not moving with much of the modern thought in regard to the Bible, because it makes void the word of God. Here we plant our feet, and by God’s help we shall not be moved from God’s word.

Jesus lived on the earth and taught his disciples, and showed by many signs and wonders that He was in truth God. He endowed these apostles with light and power from on high that they might set in order the things in the church. We accept them as infallible, because Jesus selected and endowed them with power from on high. Desert this position and the whole of the New Testament must be thrown away. Our very first article of faith asserts our confidence in it. “We believe that the scriptures comprising the Old and New Testaments, as given in what is known as the King James translation, are of divine authority, and are to be taken as the only rule of faith and practice.” It is not “old fogyism” to believe in the Bible as being true and revealing the perfect will of God. We are standing where the New Testament churches stood, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” To thus stand we must believe that all men are dead in sins, and this sin must be put away by the death of Christ and the benefits of his death applied by the Holy Spirit.

Elder Walter Cash

From a sermon delivered at the Fishing River Association on Sunday, September 23, 1923,

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