

~Other Speakers S-Z: D.S. Warner:

If, as we have proved, the Bible teaches a distinct blessing of purity after conversion, Then we should also expect to find a corresponding uplift in all the concomitant graces. The removal of all anger, malice, selfishness, pride and hatred from the heart naturally gives place for an increased measure and unmixed manifestation of love corresponding to the two degrees of holiness. They are denominated "first love" and "perfect love." The expression "first love" (Revelation 2:5) implies a succession of love states. Were there no sharply defined transition from one degree and condition of love to another, but only a gradual development of the same love received at conversion, there would be no occasion for the above language and Christ would doubtless have said, "Ye have left your love." From "first love" we therefore infer a second love or a state of divine love in the heart distinct from and in advance of that received when first inducted into the kingdom. These two states of grace are enjoyed by two distinct commandments:

Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had 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)

In the following chapter John proceeds to explain the old commandment:

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, . . . In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning. (1 John 3:9-11)

The old commandment, we see, is love in the positive degree, and, as possessed by every one that is born of God. Now let us follow John to the new commandment:

And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He (Christ) gave us commandment. (1 John 3:23)

For an explication of the new commandment, John refers us to Christ. Let us hear Him:

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. (John 13:34)

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:12-13)

How beautifully the Word of God explains itself. John's old and new commandments enjoin love in two different degrees; the first is unqualified and is the distinguishing mark of all who are born of God. The second is love in the superlative degree. It consists in loving, as Christ loved; which, all will allow, is perfect love. He says, "Greater love hath no man than this," and this same absolute reign of love that filled the entire being of the adorable Redeemer and offered up his precious life for a lost world, He proposes to establish in the heart of every one of His disciples.

This new commandment does not impose any particular outward observance, but "which thing is true in Him and in you, it is an inner state" i.e., the unmixed love of Jesus. It is true in you, namely, in all in whom "the darkness (all moral corruption) is past," or all sin is destroyed, and in whom "the true light now shineth."

In the first chapter of this Epistle, the beloved Apostle says that he writes to them "that their joy might be full," and that they might have "fellowship with Him," i.e., that sweet union of love which flows from perfect fellowship with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

He further declares unto them that "God is light (this is the true light of the new commandment) and in Him is no darkness at all," and adds: "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." This shows that the new commandment of perfect love involves perfect heart purity, both being identified with the "true light" of God. The Apostle continues his explanation of the new commandment as follows:

If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us . . . God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, (raised from the old to the new commandment) that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. (1 John 4:12, 16-18)

Here is clearly taught a transition from a first to a second state of love. What a halo of glory all these Scriptures throw around the new commandment. In this luminous zone the soul dwells in the bosom of God in freedom from sin, fullness of joy, and perfect fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and one with another.

Sin is the source of all strife, discord and division; but in obedience to the new commandment, we walk in the light as God is in the light, having perfect fellowship and union because the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.

Party names and discord ceasing,
Lo, before His feet they fall.
In the universal blessing,
FULL SALVATION SWEEPS THEM ALL.
Hallelujah!
JESUS CHRIST IS ALL IN ALL.

This identifies the new command with sanctification for He that sanctifieth, and they which are sanctified are all of one. (Hebrews 2:11) And with the Savior's crowning gift to the church (John 17:22). All hail the sinless glory which makes us one even as Christ and the Father are one. God is light, ever the true light which shines in them in whom the new commandment is fulfilled; and He that dwelleth in love (the new commandment) dwelleth in God and God in him: that is, he dwells in eternal light and infinite love. O, the cloudless glory of full salvation! Praise the Lord, oh my soul! The Lord God is thy sun and thy shield. The heaven of love is thy everlasting abode! For love, the soul was formed; this is its native element; here only can it live; and here in the bosom of infinite love that God prepared its dwelling place.

Everlasting thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, even that inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith.

O, the riches of the glory of His inheritance. To the church dwelling on this holy delectable mount of God says, Thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise; the sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness, shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light . . . and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy peoples also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land forever. (Isaiah 60:18-22). While in the imperfect, or mixed state of love, such Scriptures are generally applied to the future heaven; but no sooner hath God shined into our hearts, to give us the (true) light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus: than we find ourselves in the blissful sunlight of the above inheritance, even among the sanctified. The soul that is made free from sin and swallowed up in the boundless ocean and beatific glory of divine love, is so perfectly satisfied and enraptured with the divine Being Himself, that all created good sinks into comparative nothingness. Natural sunshine or darkness, health or sickness, prosperity or adversity, wealth or indigence, whether befriended or persecuted, are all the same to him. Dwelling in the bosom of the Father of all-good, the very source of every blessing, he can but realize at all times; I am perfect entire, wanting nothing. Being filled with perfect faith and absolute loyalty to God, he sees God's sweet will and his own highest good in every thing that affects him; hence, he loves God alike and is equally happy in the most opposite conditions of life.

So deeply was the Savior's new commandment engraven upon the heart of the beloved Apostle John, that Saint Jerome says in his extreme old age when he used to be carried to the public assembly of believers, his constant saying was, Little children, love one another. His disciples asked him why he constantly said the same words. Because, said he, it is the commandment of the Lord, and the observance of it alone is sufficient. Here we have the conclusion of the whole matter. He who had learned the glory of this heaven born passion on the very bosom of the Son of God's love and in the fires of Pentecost, sums up all the essential elements of the kingdom of heaven in the Lord's new commandment of absolute love. Who is richer than he

Whose bosom is filled with love?

Who is not poor without it? O, my brother, leave all your murmurings in the wilderness and come and dwell in this blessed zone of perfected love where our happiness does not depend upon a thousand varying circumstances, but center in God alone.

I've found a joy in sorrow sweet,
A sacred balm for every pain.
All that I wish, in God complete,
And every loss, a greater gain.

These two states of divine love are clearly brought to view in the epistle to the Corinthians. The disciples at that place had believed in Christ and received the ordinance of baptism over four years previous, and still remained "in Christ." But, not having "perfected holiness," they were yet in the first, or infantile state of grace, that is, they were "yet carnal," even "babes in Christ." Here are both nature and grace, love and its opposites.

Paul, therefore, wishing to lead them on to the new commandment, shows them the "more excellent way" of which the prophet had said, "It shall be called the way of holiness," but the Apostle here describes it as love in a "more excellent" degree: love that "believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;" love that "seeketh not her own" and "thinketh no evil;" "saves from all evil thought, having the mind of Christ." Moreover, this more excellent love "never faileth" and is the "greatest of all the graces" (1 Corinthians 12:31 and chapter 13). I have followed other versions in rendering "agape" love instead of charity; it is our only Greek word for love. The higher type of love here shown by Saint Paul to the church corresponds with the "greater," or "perfected" love of the new commandment.

But, it may be inquired "how account for the first, or imperfect form of love; is it from God? And if so, does He bestow imperfect gifts? We answer, it is from God; nevertheless, there is no imperfection in that which He gives us. This may look like a contradiction; but, dear reader, if you will come directly to the Word of God all trouble will vanish from your mind.

We have seen that Saint John associates "perfect love," the new commandment, with the "true light" and tells us that walking in this light, the "blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin;" hence, perfect love is identical with perfect purity. Therefore, it is easy to understand that our "first love" though pure or perfect in kind does not constitute us perfect because we are still possessed with a contrary nature, which God has not given us; but is conceived in us through the fall.

The love and all the graces that God gives us in regeneration never needs changing; but the corruption of our nature needs to be removed, that the entire capacity, thus vacated, may be filled with the same pure love and may be permitted to bring forth its fruit unencumbered by the weeds of inbred depravity.

This whole truth is clearly expressed in 1 Timothy 1:5, "Now, the end of the commandment is charity (love) out of a pure heart." In this experience we reach the terminus of the law of works and "prove the perfect will of God" in the "new commandment." Now, love out of a pure heart implies such a thing as love out of a heart not yet pure; such is love "not yet made perfect: because of the impurity of the heart where it dwells. Its manifestations will, therefore, be comparatively feeble and more or less mixed with selfishness, hatred and pride, as we have shown in the chapter on the dual state.

The blessedness of perfected love may be inferred from the fact that love is the only and all pervading law of the soul. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Now, a law is a standard or rule of action. Love, the prevailing passion that prompts to action; it underlies the will and if left free gives course to all our desires and pursuits; and, in full possession of divine love, the motive of action and rule of action are both the same thing, i.e., love. That is, this mighty element "love divine" enters into and becomes identified with the very life of the soul, the mainspring of all our volitions; our will of course, acting conjointly so that we do not cease to be responsible creatures; for at all times we possess the power of divergence from its shining pathway.

With this exception, love sways a supreme sceptre. For, since "love worketh no ill," it needs the restraints of no law; but is, itself, the highest law in God's universe. Now, every desire of the pure in heart is the holy impulse of love and all its promptings the will of God revealed in him; so that, in this blessed fullness, all duty is changed into delightful privilege: the holy soul acting perfectly natural following all the desire of the heart, yet walking blameless in all the law of the Lord. Is not this the "glorious liberty of the sons of God?" Truly love is a sweet and "perfect law of liberty;" its language is not, "thou shalt," but "thou mayest," for gems of divine glory and flowers of bliss strew all the pathway in which it leads the happy soul.

As thou didst give no law for me,
But that of perfect liberty,
Which neither tires nor doth corrode,
Which is a pillow, not a load,
Teach both my eyes and hands to move
Within those bonds set by thy love.
Grant I may pure and lowly be,
And live my life, O Christ, to thee.

Fuller.

Instead of ruling with rigor, the law of love is but the sweet, constraining hand of God, which gently conducts us in all the paths of His good pleasure.

And I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes. (Ezekiel 36:27)

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law (love) into their minds, and write them in their hearts. (Hebrews 8:10)

The heart is the fountain of desire and to be free to follow that which is in the heart is the enjoyment of liberty. And as the Lord writes His law in the pure heart and mind, the Holy soul walks in the utmost freedom in fulfilling the same. This golden sceptre of righteousness orders all our steps in the higher divine walk, touches into action every desire of the heart, and opens the infinite store of heaven's rich blessings for their gratification. To the perfected in love, God is not afraid to say, ask what ye will and it shall be given you. The desire of the righteous shall be granted because the desire of the righteous is only good (Proverbs 10:24) because the desire of the righteous is only good (Proverbs 11:23).

All this will not fully apply to those in their first love because there is another law in their members besides the law of love, and many of their desires arise from this law and cannot therefore be indulged; these often ask but receive not, because they would consume it on their lusts and rob God of His glory through the deceitfulness of inbred sin: hence, the purified have special promises of answer to prayer.

And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God. (Zechariah 13:9)

Yea, to them that dwell in perfect love who do not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain, saith the Lord. It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear (Isaiah 65:24-25).

I have said that love is the supreme law in the moral universe. But, it may be asked, is it no subject to God? I answer, nay, but it is identical with God. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him.

O, the beauty and excellency of the divine government! Instead of leaving us with only His precious written will wherein our enfeebled judgments might possibly have missed the way; the Father of mercies enters into our soul with the living, all pervading, and sweetly constraining law of love, which abideth and teacheth us of all things and guides all our paths and though His edicts are sweetly blended with our own conscious volitions, for he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, yet they are love whispers of Him who reigns in the holy temple of the heart.

I am walking close to Jesus' side,
So close that I can hear
The softest whisper of His love,
In fellowship so dear;
And feel His great Almighty hand
Protect me in this hostile land.
O, wondrous bliss, oh joy sublime,
I've Jesus with me all the time.

But we must not allow the blessedness of this divine life to transport our mind from the special object of this work. Hence, dear reader, we call your attention to the following facts.

1. Both Christ and Saint John enjoined this new commandment upon converted believers. Now, it must be apparent to all, that if it were essential to the grace that inducts into the divine family, the disciples could not have followed Christ in the regeneration, nor John's little children became the sons of God without it. Hence, as already shown, it is a state of divine grace distinct from and posterior to justification.
2. Both Christ and the Apostle enjoined this new commandment to the end that your joys may be full (John 15:11-13; 1 John 1:4) Hence, it is identical with that fullness which we have shown to be a second endowment from God. Behold, the coincidence of the two Christ calls the fullness of joy, My joy fulfilled in them, and John describes the new commandment as that thing which is true in Him and in you.
3. This new commandment represents a love state which is in Him, (Christ) and in us, but not being inwrought when born of God, (for then our love is represented by the old commandment {1 John 3:9-11}), it necessarily is an after attainment.
4. The new commandment, or Christ like love, John describes as love made perfect; this implies a previous state in which our love is not perfect; but as neither will apply to the sinner, of whom Christ testifies

that the "love of God is not in you," therefore, they must represent two distinct state of the Christian: and as salvation is all of grace, these two states must have been induced by two successive works of grace.

5. There is a growth in love but that is not referred to in these Scriptures; here we read of love, not grown, "but made perfect." The implanting of divine love is God's work in regeneration and the Bible is no less positive in teaching that "the God of peace does, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect." Which perfection is limited in the Bible to "perfect love," "perfect holiness," (2 Corinthians 7:1), and perfect purity. (1 John 3:3) Therefore, dear reader, if you accept the Bible as true, you must accept the truth of two distinct and divinely wrought works of grace in the soul.

Lo! The promise of the Father,
Pours upon the waiting race,
And the willing people gather,
Where He shows His smiling face.
Hallelujah!
Shout the triumphs of His grace.
Love, the only bond of union,
Love, the balm for every wound,
Love, the secret of communion,
Spreads its healing all around.
Hallelujah!
Let the love of God abound.