

# **An Awakening Call to Professors of Religion**

By Daniel Musser

*Foreword: This treatise was originally written by Bishop Daniel Musser, Lampeter, Pennsylvania, about 1868.*

*It is well adapted to the present age and has been transcribed from a pamphlet published in 1947 with the hope that it may be a means of awakening an interest in searching the Scriptures.*

In reflecting upon the infinite value of the soul, and how few seem to be really concerned about the importance of providing for its eternal welfare, and how very carelessly and inconsiderately many of those who profess to be concerned, are prosecuting the work, there has been awakened in my soul a strong desire, by the help of God, to arouse some from their apathy and false security, and beget in them a sense of their danger and a desire to flee from the wrath to come.

I do not expect to receive much countenance in the religious world, because the masses are averse to being disturbed; and prejudices are also very strong and hard to overcome. Still, I hope there may be a few who perceive the apathy which prevails among professors of religion, and who will also feel sufficient interest to beget serious reflection. Besides, I know that the true disciples of Jesus Christ are scattered far and wide, all of whom have need of encouragement and support.

When we observe the glaring inconsistency between the practice or life of many professors of religion, and the teachings of Christ and his apostles, we cannot but feel great surprise; and the question arises, whether such professors really believe the Holy Scriptures to be true.

Christ intimates in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> verses of the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew, that not many will be saved. If he had said that a few will fail to find the strait gate and narrow way which leadeth unto life, we would all have reason to fear, that we ourselves might be of those few; but when he says there be few that find it, the expression becomes a fearful one.

As a text for special consideration, I will take the 21<sup>st</sup> verse of the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

The kingdom of heaven, which the Savior refers to in the words of the foregoing text, is undoubtedly the kingdom of glory in the world to come, which shall be the abode of the saints throughout the ages of eternity. But what will become of those who cannot enter there? Undoubtedly, they will be cast into outer darkness, where will be weeping and gnashing of teeth! We can imagine no terror or amazement equal to that which must seize the soul, which, in expectation of admittance into heaven, will hear the awful sentence: Depart, I know you not. This, however, is intimated in the text, and plainly declared in other scriptures. These expressions, I doubt not, were intended to excite a fear in the minds of those who desire or hope to enter heaven, that they might possibly fail; and thereby incite them to diligent inquiry, whether they are in the sure way of realizing their hopes and accomplishing their desires.

There can be no question, but that it is the will of God that all men shall be saved.

This he has repeatedly declared in his word. He has also made ample provision that all may be saved, and invites, entreats, and beseeches everyone to come and receive the great salvation which has been wrought, and declares that he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come to him through Jesus Christ. The Holy Scriptures were given to instruct and direct man how to be saved. The text settles the matter conclusively, that no one can enter into the kingdom of heaven, but by doing the will of the Father which is in heaven.

The will of the Father may be known by his word; and therein, everyone who sincerely desires to do his will, may learn what it is. If God gave his word for the purpose, that by it, man should know his will, then it must effect that purpose in all those who truly desire to obey him; for everything that God does, must effectually and infallibly accomplish His purpose. If any fail then, in doing the will of the Father, it is because they have not truly desired and sought to know and do it, with singleness of heart. The will of God is, that all shall come to Christ and live; and he that comes will in no wise be cast out. Whosoever seeks, shall find; whosoever knocks, the Lord will open unto; and “whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” Rom. Xii. Yet the Savior said, “Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Luke xiii:24.

We might ask them, what is the reason they shall not be able, if they seek to do so, and God wills they shall? Evidently because they do not seek in the way God has appointed in His word. God in His word charges us, first to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. This, then, is the first part of His will, which He will have us do.

God has also enjoined other duties upon us, which He will have us perform; namely to labor with our hands, and eat our bread in the sweat of our face. Man by nature being carnal, and most concerned about carnal things, usually gives this latter charge the precedence of the former. The Savior, by the expression of first, does not intend to divide the time of the performance of these several duties as if they could not be pursued together, but rather that we shall make the Kingdom of God and his righteousness have the precedence of every other pursuit, or duty, and the first consideration or most earnest pursuit. It is the Father’s will, that we shall sow and plant, and labor with our hands the thing which is good; also be diligent in business, so that we can eat our own bread in quietness, and have means to give to those in want, and provide for the welfare of our own household. But it is not the will of God that we should be anxious about the result of these labors, or be swallowed up with care; neither to let our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, or the cares of this life; but God’s will is, that we should commit all things to Him, as He knows best what is for our good, and He will also have us remember that with all our care we cannot make one hair of our head white or black. It is His will that our chief concern or care shall be for the kingdom of God and His righteousness. In this manner it shall be first, that we would rather suffer loss or damage in any other pursuit or interest, than in this. Whenever we grow so anxious about our interest in worldly things, whether in cares of what we shall eat or drink, or wherewithal we shall be clothed, or absorbed in laying up treasures, so that these interests take precedence of our heavenly treasures, in our thoughts and affections, we are not doing the will of our Father which is in heaven.

The Savior, in speaking of our concern about worldly treasures, asks, “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Matt. Xvi: 26. And in drawing a comparison

between the body and soul, he says: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matt. X:28. Whence then is it, that so little attention is paid to the word of God? - for it must be, that all those who perish or fail to enter into the kingdom of heaven, have not diligently and sincerely sought to know and do the will of God.

The expression of the Savior in the words of our text, also where He speaks of such as expect and seek to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and shall not be able, seems to be designed to arouse expectants to a diligent search and inquiry, as to whether they are doing the will of the Father in heaven, or not. This also, is the object I have in view; and which I am persuaded is of vital importance to myself and to everyone who desires to enter into the kingdom of heaven. My motive is, to incite everyone to search the Scriptures for the knowledge of the will of the Father which is in heaven; and to lead him to prove himself by the same, whether his calling and election is sure.

There are certain fundamental principles, which govern the details in all works of art, science, and industry. Persons ignorant of this principles may spend much time and labor to no effect, because they are violating the vital principle of the pursuit they are engaged in. Charity or love is the vital or fundamental principle of Christ's religion; without which all worship, exercise, and service is in vain.

Paul says: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as 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." I Cor. Xiii.

Paul's words clearly prove that no deed or action, however good of itself, can be according to the will of the Father, if it is not prompted by divine love. It is self-evident that where this love or principle does not exist it cannot prompt or exert an influence. Job alludes to this principle when he says (chapter xiv: 4), "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." All Scripture represents man in his unregenerated state to be unclean, impure, and defiled. Why is he so? Because he is destitute of the principle of divine love. It is on this ground that Christ says (Matt. Xii: 34), "How can ye, being evil, speak good things?" and again (Matt vii: 18), "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Paul also says (Titus I: 15), "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."

In the condition in which man was created, God could regard him favorably, and receive him into his presence; and all that man did was acceptable to God except eating of the forbidden fruit. This shows that man was in possession of a principle, which made him pleasing to God; and what he did, was according to the will of God. That principle was divine love; and as long as man was under its influence he had fellowship with God, and enjoyed himself in God's presence.

God said to Adam, that in the day he would transgress His command, he should die; and the Scriptures attest that all men died with Adam. Adam died a spiritual death, and by reason of his transgression, all his descendents with him fell under the power of death, and were dead in trespasses and sins. This death was the consequence of man's having lost the principle of divine love.

John says, "God is light, and in him is not darkness at all." (I John I: 5). So long as man was in fellowship with God, he stood in this divine light; but by yielding himself in obedience to the prince of darkness, he fell into darkness and was no more under the influence of the Spirit, but under the power of the flesh. Now, as God is love, and also light, nothing but these attributes can abide in His presence. Man being destitute of these attributes, was therefore barred from the presence of God, and could do nothing that was according to His will, though God commanded Israel to bring and sacrifice burnt offerings and sin-offerings, (and it was His will they should do so) because this was all they had capacity to do at that time, being destitute of the principle which could enable them to do His entire will.

Paul quotes David, as speaking in the person of Christ; saying, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." (Heb. X: 7). Whatsoever, therefore, was not, or is not dictated and prompted by divine love, is not wholly according to the will of the Father which is in heaven.

When man yielded his will to sin he yielded himself to Satan who is the author of sin, and thereby became his servant; as Paul says, "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans vi: 16).

Satan infused self-love into the heart of man, which made everything unclean which proceeded from him. As divine love is the principle which influences all that is according to the will of God, so self-love influences all the works of the flesh. After the fall of man, every imagination of his heart was evil continually, and the earth was filled with violence. I am aware that the word nowhere says that the devil infused self-love into the heart of man; but as man became his captive, and yielded himself to his service, self-love influenced man in all his actions; therefore, observing the fruits which followed, I feel fully justified in making the assertion. John says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." Nearly all, or all sin and the works of the flesh, proceed from self-love so that I cannot but regard self-love as an influence of the devil, by which he works in the children of disobedience. Self-love and divine love are antagonistic; and no more can harmonize or swell together in the same heart, than light and darkness can commune, or Christ can have concord with Belial, or than we can serve God and mammon.

Now man, being in this impure, defiled, and impotent state, it was said: "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek after God." The answer was, "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Ps. Xiv: 3). The absence of divine love, and the presence of self-love, prevented man from doing anything in accordance with the will of God. True, as we have said before, God did command man in this defiled and destitute state to do certain things; and it was His will, that man should do them, but these commands only had reference to things when man would be brought into a capacity to do the perfect will of God; but could not at that time make the commands thereunto perfect; therefore, all these works, duties, and obediences were still short of the will of the Father in heaven.

Although the influence of self-love affected the whole human family, it did not, however, exert its baneful influence to the same extent upon all; for the law which God

had written in the heart (or soul) of man, and afterwards gave to him engraven in tablets of stone, so far restrained those who regarded its motions, as to forbid their doing any violence or injustice to their neighbor or fellow man. But a very large proportion of mankind did not regard the motions of this law, and in consequence sin, iniquity, and violence abounded. In those, however, who regarded the motions of the law of God, we perceive that the evidences of the existence and influence of self-love were less marked; but there are few examples, even among those who were accounted holy men of old, in whom the influence of self-love was not perceptible; and sometimes it was manifest to such an extent, as to cause surprise that no disapprobation was expressed.

Although obedience to the Decalogue would restrain self-love, yet self-denial is nowhere specially enjoined; and acts of deception and sensuality are passed by in silence, if not with approval. The reason of this is obvious; self-love existed in man, and he had not the power to expel it, or wholly to control it. These were the times of ignorance at which God winked, in which it was impossible for man to do the whole and perfect will of God, therefore God did not require it of him.

God being love, was moved by His divine nature to promise fallen man a Redeemer or Restorer in the woman's seed, which should bruise the serpent's head. This Messiah (as He is also called) was sent in the fullness of time to restore that which man has lost by the transgression, namely, that divine principle which would enable him to do the will of the Father which is in heaven.

Satan, the author of self-love, self-will, or the flesh, whichever we please to call it, I conceive to be the strong man armed, who keeps the palace of the heart until a stronger than he comes upon him, and overcomes him. So long as he holds possession of the heart, it matters not what religious service is held, worship performed, or good words done, the will of the Father cannot be done. The work of the devil must be destroyed, and the love of God again restored to the heart, before God's will can be done. this is what I regard as being the conversion, which the Savior said (Matt. XVIII: 3) must take place, or we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. In the text it is said, we must do the will of the Father in heaven; here Christ says we must be converted, and become as little children; which conversion, it is very evident, must take place before we can do the will of the Father.

Christ said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

This, again signifies the same thing. The destruction of self-love in the heart, and restoring the lost divine love to it, begets a new life in the soul, without which we cannot see the kingdom of God. Christ said: "The kingdom of God is within you." (Luke xvii: 21), and "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." (Luke XVII: 17). Now, the love of God is the kingdom, and self-love being destroyed in the heart, brings man into comparison with a little child, and makes the heart a fit receptacle for the word of God.

Conversion may be said to be the work of four distinct operations, each one in succession being a consequence of that which precedes it. The first operation is a sense and knowledge of sin. This is wrought and brought about by the law of God. The soul by this knowledge and sense is overwhelmed with terror and guilt. The agency of self-love in the commission of sin becomes very apparent, and thus becomes a most detestable influence. This operation brings on repentance, which could not take place

unless the other preceded it. The operation of repentance leads to a cessation from sinful acts and deeds, so that there is a change in the outward walk and conversation; but repentance does not take away the guilt of sin, nor does it change the disposition of the heart, in which the vicious disposition of self-love, or the flesh, will still be perceptible. But God, in His wisdom and power, turns this to the advantage of the penitent soul by bringing him more into humility, submission, and subjection, by the perception of his own baseness and utter impotency, and the necessity of a better righteousness than he can attain of himself, thereby being brought to the feet of Christ. Here the third operation is experienced, being brought about by the two preceding it. Christ reveals himself, to all such sin-sick and lost souls, as having wrought a sufficient righteousness to make them acceptable to God; and besides, by his death, made a full satisfaction to the justice of God, for the sins which had so greatly terrified them. Here, then, is a full and complete satisfaction offered to God for all the sins committed. Now the whole power, and every faculty of the soul, is subdued and subjected, but is not yet changed. Then the fourth operation comes in, which is a consequence of the three preceding it. The promise of the Savior to all believers is, that He will send the comforter, or the Holy Ghost, who will infuse the love of God into the heart. By this means, man receives power to become a child of God; he is quickened, renewed, regenerated, and the kingdom of God is erected within him. Christ said, He and the Father will make their abode with such, and sup with them. God is love, and all His influence and reign is in and by love. This is what makes heaven; and as He now rules in the soul by the same influence and power as He does in heaven, that which is wrought by the change here set forth, is called the kingdom of heaven.

We thought it necessary to make this short explication of the work of conversion or regeneration, because conversion is a part of the will of the Father which is in heaven; and without true conversion we cannot do His will, nor enter into the kingdom of heaven.

My purpose in this little tract is to speak especially to those who think they are converted and in a condition to enter into the kingdom heaven, and entertain a hope of doing so. I do not, therefore, say so much about the work of conversion, or how it is wrought or brought about, as of its consequences. I do not say much of how to enter in at the strait gate, but speak more particularly of the walk on the narrow way. We never can get to heaven without entering in through the strait gate; but having entered in, it is just as necessary for us to walk upon the narrow way, as it was for us to enter at the gate.

God has but one spirit to prompt and influence His children, and but one narrow way for them to walk upon. Satan has also but one spirit by which to prompt and influence his people; but he has many ways by which that influence may be exerted, by operating on the love for self, by which they are governed; and he has devised many by-ways which may lead the unwary pilgrim from the narrow way of holiness and truth.

The true knowledge of conversion bears very little proportion to its profession, and the talk about it. Conversion is regarded quite too much in the light of an outward work and reformation of life; while in truth, it is something altogether distinct from them. True, there is a reformation of life attending conversion, but it is only the effect or fruit of conversion, and not the work itself. Reformation of life must and will attend conversion, and where it does not follow, there is no true conversion; but yet, reformation and conversion are in themselves, quite distinct one from the other.

There may also be conversion of mind, opinion, belief or life, all of which may

exist without the conversion spoken of by the Savior, which brings man under the promise of entering into the kingdom of heaven; and consequently they differ from that conversion which it is the will of the Father in heaven that man should experience.

The Savior speaks of conversion as a new birth, or a birth of the spirit; consequently, the life which is a consequence of this new birth, must also be spiritual. Therefore, the new life is wrought in the inward man, and is effected by the love of God being infused into the soul, which inclines the converted to desire what God desires, to love what God loves, and to do what God declares in His word as His will; it also inclines them to hate and oppose what God hates and protests against; and being in possession of divine love, they live in the element of love, and are governed by the principle which our first parents lost. This is altogether a different life from that which we possessed before conversion, which former life only inclines us to that which ministers to the enjoyment of our carnal nature. Whatever crossed our carnal inclinations and desires, was repugnant to our feelings, and if any one did us an injury, in person, estate, or character, it caused in us feelings of enmity and ill will toward him.

Love is the divine nature, and is manifested in all of God's dealings with us. Divine love is entirely different from that love which influences us as long as we are carnal. We experience a sensation in our carnal nature, which is called love, which loves that which appears lovely and good to the carnal mind - that which loves us and does us good. The Savior, speaking of the difference between the influence which governs the carnal mind, and that which controls the spiritual mind, says: The Gentiles love and do good to those that love and do good to them; but He said to His disciples, if they do no more than this, they prove nothing. But, they shall show the nature and disposition which God shows in His dealings with the children of men; "That they may be the children of their Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. V: 45.

The world, we know, by every testimony of the word of God, lay in wickedness, and was in enmity against God; yet God, out of love to the sinful world, sent his Son to redeem it from this sinful condition. There was surely nothing lovely or good here to move God towards man, for when "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God," we read that, "Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Ps. Liii: 2-3. "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known." Rom. Iii: 13-17. Paul also speaks of God commending His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom. V. and John says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." I John iii. The apostle here calls our attention to the manner of love. Its peculiarity is, that it can embrace an object that is neither good nor lovely.

If we examine the New Testament - which was certainly given for the purpose of teaching man what the will of God is - we will find that everything which Christ and his apostles have disapproved and declared to be contrary to the will of God (and that those who do such things cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven) are such things as are prompted and wrought through the influence of self-love, or self-will and are called

carnal, or works of the flesh. We cannot find a word of approval or commendation of anything of this nature in the New Testament, but we find much of condemnation. Read the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter Romans, 5<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> verses; 5<sup>th</sup> chapter Galatians, 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> verses - 6<sup>th</sup> chapter, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> verses; the first nine verses of the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Ephesians, and ask yourself whether it is possible that anyone can reasonably entertain a hope of entering heaven, who indulges in the spirit of self, or the works of the flesh.

I would further ask, are not the works of the flesh, the fruit of the fall? and is not the fruit of the fall, the work of the devil?

It is further said, that those who are under this carnal influence cannot discern or comprehend the things of the spirit; and “the carnal mind is in enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” Rom, viii: 7. And Christ says, (Matt. Xii: 34) “How can ye, being evil, speak good things?” “An evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things.” Again, Christ asks (John v: 44), “How can ye believe, which receive honor one from another?” This shows that those who are called by the word of God, carnal, unbelievers, or the world, are influenced by a spirit which is offensive to God, and that He cannot approve of anything which is prompted by this spirit, however good it may seem to be of itself.

Christ or his apostles never expressed approval of any act of man, unless it was dictated by the love of God. Nothing is acceptable to God but that which is prompted by divine love. Divine love ever moves man to consider what the will of the Father in heaven is, and to seek His honor. The Savior said He “came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him,” and all the duties and commands of the gospel are of the nature of divine love.

God himself is love, and all His dealings with the children of men are done out of love. Out of love He gave the promise to our first parents, out of love He sent His son to redeem us, out of love He follows us with His grace, and beseeches us to be reconciled to Him; out of love he gives those who believe on Him power to become sons of god, and bestows upon them the divine nature; and out of love He supports them, and enables them to walk in His ways of love, His love toward us is incomprehensible, and far beyond expression.

It is the will of the heavenly Father that all men should be brought into this element of love, because they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, without being brought into it. This is the conversion they must experience, if they would enter heaven; the soul must be converted or changed from under the influence of self love to the influence of divine love, or from the influence of the flesh to the influence of the spirit.

God is pure and holy, and only that which is entirely pure and holy can stand in His presence. Man in his primitive state must have been pure and holy, or he could not have stood in the presence of God as he did. Besides, he then was as God had created him, and God could not create anything impure. By the fall, man became impure and unholy, and could no longer stand in the presence of God; nor had he power to purify himself or become holy. For this reason, God sent His son into the world that all men might by him be made pure and holy, and enabled to stand in the presence of God. This is accomplished by faith in Jesus Christ, who sanctified himself for the believer. The soul is sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ, and God looks upon those who believe in Christ as pure and holy, because of what Christ has done for them; nevertheless, the flesh is not redeemed or made holy. The flesh is still impure, and because of its sin and impurity,



must die, see corruption, and return to the ground from which it was taken.

So long as the soul is not purified by faith, the will of the flesh and the mind prevail in our body; but when we by faith embrace Christ with all His merits, and are thereby made free from the guilt of sin, and clothed with the virtues of Christ, and receive the Holy Spirit, we also receive power over the flesh and mind, to keep them in subjection and obedience to Christ, in which obedience we do the will of the Father in heaven. "As many as received Christ, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." John I: 12. This power of the soul over the body is imparted to it by the Spirit; and on this ground Paul says (Rom. Viii: 13), "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." By faith in Jesus Christ the soul is purified, and is also delivered and made free from the power of Satan. By the divine love which is shed abroad in the heart of man, he is prompted to yield in obedience to the motions of the Spirit, and to suppress and subdue the motions of sin in the flesh.

It is very evident that the conversion, which it is the will of the Father (that) man should experience, is an inward work wrought in the soul, and does not change the nature or disposition of the flesh; but the soul, by this change receives power to control the flesh and bring it into subjection and obedience, into a walk which is according to the will of the Father, and in agreement to the nature of the Spirit, which influences the soul.

Christ said, He and the Father will come unto those who believe on Him, and make their abode with them. Then, since God is love, this must also be the nature of those with whom He dwells or abides. This nature of love is what gives the soul power over the flesh. Christ, in His prayer to the Father (John xvii: 2), says the Father gave Him power over all flesh, that He might give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him. Mark! *the Father has given Him power over the flesh* for the purpose that He might give man eternal life. It is also said, as many as received Christ, to them He gave power to become the sons of God. Everyone will admit that those with whom the Father and Son make their abode, those in whom Christ has power over all flesh, and those who receive Him, and He gives power to become sons of God, are converted and under the promise of entering into the kingdom of heaven. This divine power then, is exerted in bringing them into obedience to the will of the Father in heaven.

We have said that conversion is the change of the soul being brought from the influence of self-love to that of divine love. The commands of our Savior to his disciples have reference to this change; because they have by this change received the divine nature, he desires them to be distinguished from the unconverted world by showing the principles, nature, and disposition which they possess. He very plainly alludes to and mentions what the nature of the spirit or influence was which governed mankind, and which they were permitted to indulge, so long as they were under the law and destitute of the gracious spirit of the Gospel, even though they were accounted as believers or God's people. He says, "It hath been said, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But now, since they have received power to become sons of God, He bade them love their enemies, bless them that curse them, and pray for and do good to them that despitefully use and persecute them. Self-love would induce them to retaliate and resent injury and insult; but Jesus says they must deny self, or they can not be His disciples.

Now, I would ask any rational, candid person whether all the Savior taught is not to this purpose? Can there be one word taken out of all His teachings which is not in

harmony with this position? Deny self, take up the cross and follow Me, or ye cannot be My disciples, was His language on all occasions. How can we then question this as being the will of the Father in heaven and how can we expect to enter heaven without doing His will?

Paul very plainly indicates how he understands the Savior. In Romans xii, 17, he says "Recompense to no man evil for evil." Also in the 18<sup>th</sup> verse, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves; but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." In 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. V, 15, speaking to the church, he says, "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men." In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter Ephesians, Paul speaks of his brethren having put off the old man, and putting on the new man. That they shall put away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, and all malice. Then in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter he tells them: "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us," etc. We might ask then, how can we follow God, or walk in love as Christ did, without showing the disposition and nature which Christ has shown unto us? When we were sinners and enemies of God, he sent Christ to die for us; and to follow God as children, we must *walk* in love; that is, in our walk and conversation we should do to all men what love would dictate.

John say, 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle iv, "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love."

This shows very plainly how the Apostles Paul and John understood the Savior, and how the Holy Ghost led them to teach the lambs and babes of Christ. Take all the epistles together, and no rational mind can come to any other conclusion than this, (that) if the apostles taught the will of God, then it must be His will that all men should be brought into possession of this divine disposition, and walk in love towards their fellow men. This divine love, then, is the principle, or new life, which is begotten in the soul by the new birth, or regeneration. It is the will of God that this shall be preserved. All the commands and duties enjoined in the Scriptures tend to preserve this love, and for this purpose the church was also designed.

Christ says, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and Paul says, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." But the Savior again says, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The Savior and Paul here allude to that which I have spoken of as self-love and divine love. All men are born in possession of self-love, or the flesh, and walk after this self-love. The children of God are born again, or regenerated; that is, they have received a birth and life subsequent to, and in addition to that which they have by the flesh.

Now, as our body is flesh and blood, and this cannot be born again or receive the kingdom of God, but must be kept in subjection and submission by the new life or power which the soul has received in its regeneration, therefore the devil can, through the corrupt and sinful flesh, tempt the renewed or regenerated soul, with a view of bringing it back again under his power and control. To this end, he is continually presenting such things as stimulate and incite self-love in the flesh, in order that he may bring it into life and action in the soul. Therefore Christ so earnestly and repeatedly urges the denying of

*self*; and Paul teaches that we shall mortify our members which are on the earth, and not let sin reign in our mortal bodies. Christ says, if we will save this life of self-love and the flesh, we shall lose the eternal or everlasting life; and Paul says, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. Viii: 13; and "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Gal. vi: 7-8. Again, "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as the children of light; (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.)" Eph. V: 6-9.

Now, although this regeneration or conversion is an inward work, which is not effected or wrought by any action of the outward man, yet it is evident that it must exert an influence on man's actions. The converted soul has obtained power over the flesh by which it is able even to "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." II Cor. X: 5. Every action of the body is therefore performed by the consent of the soul and no action of the soul can be manifest, except through the body.

The works of the flesh which Paul says are manifest, and which prevent our inheriting the kingdom of God, must be the result of the soul yielding its assent to the action of the body. The soul is not defiled by the action of the body, but by the consent which permit's the body to act; and the action of the body is only the fruit, effect, or evidence, of the defilement of the soul. The soul in reality is defiled by the conception of lust in the heart, before the action of the body occurs, and it may indeed be defiled where no action of the body is committed. Christ says: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Matt. V: 27-28. The Savior further says, "Wherefore, if thy hand or foot offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." Matt. xviii: 8-9. It is evident from this that the devil may tempt the soul through the members of the body, but if the soul resists the temptation, and strives against it, it will not be defiled. But if the soul cherishes an evil emotion, be it carnal or unclean lust, vanity, hatred, envy, covetousness of wealth, honor, applause, distinction, or any of the emotions which bring on the works of the flesh, the soul is as truly defiled as if the members of the body had been guilty of any or all of those actions.

Here is a nice point to discriminate, because the devil always tries to pervert the truth as it is in Jesus. No one is guilty of sin because he is tempted to sin, no matter how fierce or persistent the temptation or assault may be, if he does not yield or assent to it, or seek indulgence by its entertainment. The devil tempts as he pleases or is permitted; and if we resist him and draw nigh to God, God will preserve us, that we do not fall under sin. But if we entertain a desire in our heart to indulge in sin, the soul is defiled in the sight of God as really as if we had acted it out. John says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." I John iii: 15. Our Savior says, "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, etc." Mark vii: 20. These sins then, must have existed within before they were

committed. In Matt. Xxiii, the Savior also speaks of the Scribes and Pharisees, who outwardly appear beautiful unto men, but inwardly they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. He calls them hypocrites and a generation of vipers who cannot escape the damnation of hell. This certainly shows that sin cherished in the soul defiles it, and is altogether contrary to the will of the Father, even though the conduct appears righteous unto men.

But the soul which resists sinful thoughts and emotions is not defiled, because as Paul says, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Rom. Vii: 17. The difference of these two cases should be well borne in mind. They are both cases where the emotion is within, and invisible to man. The one laments, grieves, and mourns over the *emotion*, and labors and strives to expel it from the soul; but the other cherishes it, for the gratification it affords the flesh. But in no case can the soul be undefiled, when the body or its members yield themselves to walk after or indulge in the deeds, which the lusts and desires of the flesh would prompt. Paul says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. Viii: 1. No one, therefore can plead purity of heart or soul who lives in sin or indulges in sinful acts.

All those works which Paul enumerates in Gal. v, 21, as works of the flesh, as sin. Mark! He says, they which *do such things!* What the Apostle refers to is certainly not the will of the Father; therefore, those who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. No matter what their profession is, no matter what anyone thinks of them, no matter how much they say or cry, Lord, Lord; no matter how sound or scriptural their doctrine, no matter how they can preach or pray, and no matter how much charity they show or good works they do, the declaration is conclusive; they cannot enter in the kingdom of heaven, because they do not do the will of the Father. The will of the Father is that they shall *deny self*, crucify the flesh with its lusts and desires, and die unto sin.

We admit that a gracious soul who has received the kingdom of God as a little child, may sometimes, by sudden temptation, or by giving way too much, fall into one or more of these sins, and not fall out of grace, because he repents, humbles himself, confesses his sin, and makes all the amends and restitution which is in his power. These have the promise, if they rise again. Solomon says (Prov. xxiv, 16), "A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again." Micah says, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me: I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." Micah vii: 8-9.

Now mark the difference between this language and the language of those who habitually walk in such a carnal course as Paul mentions, and who plead for their innocence and indulgence, contrary to the express will of the Father in heaven as declared in his word. God is a God of love and a God of mercy, and has great patience and forbearance with His poor struggling children in their conflict here, and sent His son to save them *from* their sins, but not to save them *in* their sins.

I do not now allude to such carnalities as murders, fornication, drunkenness, lying, and stealing (for scarcely anyone will plead for their lawfulness), yet even some of these are not unknown to such as express a hope of entering into the kingdom of heaven. But I desire to draw the attention of those who expect to enter heaven to such things as

emulations, wrath, strife, variance, hatred, envying, covetousness, foolish talking and jesting, etc. Everyone knows that these things are very common among professors of religion, and that they are justified, encouraged, and connived at - even by those who profess to be ministers of the gospel, and freely indulged in by the members of their charge, who all profess to be desirous of heaven, and laboring to enter into rest.

I would ask any rational person, whether these things do not proceed from self, which the Savior says we shall deny? Paul calls them the works of the flesh, and says we shall mortify, crucify, and die to them. And I would ask, how do we deny self, when we indulge these passions and emotions? Certainly no one can pretend that we do. How can we imagine that we are doing the will of the Father, when we are doing those things which the Scriptures declare are contrary to his will? We may, however, be doing many things which are considered virtues, and are indeed in themselves very good and commendable, and even commanded of the Lord; therefore, we may hope to receive favor from the Lord. The doing of these things may also require some degree of self-denial, but the flesh will willingly submit to this if it may only with it enjoy life in some other direction. But I would remind my beloved reader, that we are neither saved by what we do or what we do not do. We are saved by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ; and those who are under the influence of this grace and possess this faith have received the Holy Spirit which converts the soul, by shedding the love of God abroad in the heart; this love constrains its possessor to obedience, so that mortifying the works of the flesh, walking in the spirit, and denying self, are only the fruits of the spirit, and are evidences that the soul is in grace by the possession of a living faith that works by love.

I would ask everyone interested (and who is not) *what is conversion*, or being born again? We are not told we *ought* to be born again, or it would be well if we *were* converted; but, *we must be born again*, and unless we are converted, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. The question to us is, not whether we think we are, or whether others take us to be - this will not help us a whit - *but are we?* The will of the father is we shall be, *and we must be!* Now then, what is conversion? Is it a change of opinion? A change of life? A profession of religion? Or does it consist in moral works or religious duties or ordinances? We say, *in none of these*, nor in all of them together. But it consists of a change in the soul, in its being brought from under the influence of self-love, self-will or the flesh, to the possession of divine love; and the soul hereby receives the love of God in such a measure, as to enable it to bring the body into subjection and obedience to the divine will, as set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

The Holy Spirit has wrought this change and brought the new life into being; and dwelling in the soul it maintains the divine life and gives the soul power to overcome the deeds of the body. The Spirit brings to mind all things that Christ has said, and leads its possessor into all truth. Christ also says, in His prayer to His Father (John xvii), that He has received power over all flesh, for the purpose of giving eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him.

If then the influence of self or the flesh is the work of the devil which he infused into the soul when man fell, and by it still keeps up so much disorder and confusion in the world, and it is that influence which brings forth sin, we would ask: can Christ save from sin without giving power to overcome the work of the devil, which begets sin? Has Christ power over my flesh, while yet the flesh rules and reigns in me? We certainly cannot be led by the Spirit when we walk after the flesh, and if we are not led by the

Spirit of Christ, we are none of His.

It is not possible that we can have a conception of what the will of God is, and be in the spirit while we are walking after the flesh as we have indicated; for Paul says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.." I Cor. Ii: 14. Christ asks, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Mat. Vii: 16.

Christ says, "Except ye become converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mat. XVIII: 3. The disciples had done no harm to anyone, when the Savior administered this severe rebuke to them. What then, was the reason He did so? Because He perceived by the question they asked Him that they were influenced by self-love, which was foreign to the divine nature, and which spirit, with Lucifer, was cast out of heaven and can never enter that blissful realm.

A little child has nothing of this spirit, and the Savior places it before the face of everyone, as a mirror in which to view his stature. But if the wondering of the disciples drew from the Savior this solemn warning and declaration, that even they must be converted, or they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, what must we think of those professors of the religion of Jesus Christ in our day who not only wonder and desire, but labor and strive for worldly honor, even to the extent of slander and detraction, in which many who are not seeking position themselves, interest themselves for their favorites and friends, so that the spirit which prompts them far exceeds that manifested by the Apostles, frequently amounting to virulence and animosity? If the feeling which the Apostles showed was such as to justify the declaration that they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven with it, because it was contrary to the will of the Father, how far must that be contrary to his will, which in our day prevails with many who desire and expect to enter heaven?

Is it not lamentable to behold how lightly people regard a work which is of such infinite weight and importance - even in the face of the warning of Christ and his Apostles? We hear great boasts of conversion, revivals, and getting of religion. There is much of preaching, praying, singing, and shouting, with invitations to come forward and get religion, as if it were a work to be done by our own performances; and the result is, that at best there is only a little outward reformation which the spirit of covetousness, vanity, contention, and strife which prevails, gives conclusive evidence that they are destitute of the principle of submission, humiliation, and self-denial, which underlies pure religion.

God is love. Love rules and reigns in heaven. For this reason those who are truly converted and are under the influence of the Holy Spirit are said to be in the kingdom of heaven, or that it is within them. Christ said, unless we receive the kingdom of God as a little child, we shall in no wise enter therein. He also said, many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able. This is because they engage in religion as a work which they *have* to do, and fall in with certain views and doctrines which they embrace, and are never brought by the grace of God to a right sense and knowledge of sin and righteousness; consequently, they do not receive the work *as done* for them, but go on in a spirit of legalism; self-love is not destroyed, and the love of God cannot be shed abroad in the heart.

The influence which controls us by nature we must come to rightly know; it must be subdued and kept under control, and the principle which our first parents lost in the

fall must be restored and kept in life and supremacy; otherwise, there will be nothing but confusion and inconsistency prevailing, and we will be ever learning and never able to come to the true knowledge of the divine will.

I would therefore ask every candid, rational and God-fearing soul to reflect whether it is possible that the pride, ostentation, jesting, foolishness, rivalry, emulation, strife, and contention which prevails so generally among religious communities, can possibly be according to the will of the Father in heaven? Also, whether these professors can have a reasonable hope of being able to enter into the kingdom of heaven? It is in vain to say they are zealous in the performance of religious services and duties; for this is the very thing the Savior strikes at, for they cry, Lord, Lord, but do not attend to what he teaches. He asks, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke vi: 46. No one thinks of entering into the kingdom of heaven, who does not think he loves the Savior; and yet Christ says, they that do not keep his commandments do not love him! Do not those things alluded to belong to the works of the flesh, of which Paul says: they that do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Are they not in direct opposition to the fruits of the Spirit, and therefore opposed to that which it is the will of God we shall do?

I would ask the clergy and pastors, whether it is not the will of the Father in heaven, that they shall teach the members under their charge to be humble, meek, and gentle? Not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind? Not to mind high things, but to condescend to men of low estate? Not to adorn their bodies with gold, silver, precious stones, or costly array? But that their adorning shall be in modest apparel, with a meek and gentle spirit, shamefacedness, sobriety, and good works? Whether it is not the will of the Father in heaven that they shall teach their charge that they shall not let any corrupt communications proceed out of their mouth, but only that which is good to the use of edifying? That foolish talking and jesting are not convenient, and are ranked by the Apostle among such things as shall not once be heard among them, as becometh saints?

But if they were to teach their charges these things in their public service, would they not encourage them in their sins and render their public teachings nugatory, in receiving those at the communion table who they know are living in open violation of these divine precepts? Everyone knows that these things do prevail, with the knowledge of the pastors, without ever receiving any private admonition or reproof from them; much less do they withdraw themselves from those who walk in this disorderly manner. They do not purge the leaven out of their churches, and how can the whole lump fail to become leavened, when the Apostle says it will?

Everyone knows that worse things than those I have mentioned prevail among the churches, and are well known to pastors and congregations, but are connived at; and I would ask, how can they claim to be doing the will of the Father in heaven when they are doing and living contrary to what he teaches in His word? And how can they expect to enter the kingdom of heaven?

I hope no one will be offended at this language, or think that we judge or condemn others. The word of God is given for us to judge ourselves by, and where this condemns, the righteous must also condemn. Everyone that is willing to know it, may know that these things are true; and no one can say we judge when the open fact is before the eyes of everyone. My object is to awaken and alarm, and I would therefore desire to

speak so that I may be heard and understood. It is with sorrow and pain that I do it, and I pray God to make it effectual.

I would, therefore, my beloved brothers and sister, that these important truths might be kept in view, and may we persistently labor to this end. Paul, in Heb. Iv., says to his brethren, "Let us therefore labor to enter into that rest." The Apostle frequently warns the believers of failing. The only efficient way of laboring, is to keep that spirit in subjection which exercised and controlled us when we were living according to our fallen nature; and to preserve in our heart that divine element which the Holy Ghost implanted or shed abroad therein when we came to the faith. To do this we have the devil, the world, and our own flesh to contend against. The influence of each will be brought to bear upon us, and frequently, as it were, all of them at the same time; but our Savior tells us, we shall be of good cheer, He has overcome the world.

The influence of self-love or the flesh, under which man fell in the transgression, and under which we with all mankind lay by nature, is a restless, troublesome spirit; and all those who are captivated by it can neither enjoy peace nor rest; consequently, they have a hard master. But all those, who by a sense of the grievous yoke or servitude of sin, are moved to renounce the devil, and join themselves to Christ under the banner of the cross, and freely take upon themselves His easy yoke and light burden, find such a rest unto their souls that their service is one of joy and comfort. This all comes by resisting self-love and bringing it into subjection, and allowing the divine principle, the love of God to rule in our hearts. This is the principle that reigns in heaven, and is the source of the happiness existing there. When this reigns in our hearts, we are in possession of the kingdom of heaven, and cannot fail to be happy.

We can no more fail of being happy in possessing of divine love than we can fail of being happy in heaven. Satan sought to destroy this happiness in heaven, but he failed. He was cast out and happiness in heaven continued. He sought to destroy it in the blessed and happy creatures which God placed in paradise; and here he succeeded, because they did not oppose him by the word of God, which is the sword of the spirit. So he has also ever tried to destroy it in those who have been re-created, and he has also succeeded with all those who did not oppose him with the word of God; but all those who use the spiritual weapons of warfare and endure in the conflict unto the end will come out conquerors; or as Paul says, more then conquerors. Satan's assaults on the soul always are and ever have been by self, through the flesh. He has no other way of approach or other weapon by which he can wound or injure. *Our armor is faith and self-denial, and our weapons the word of God, the sword of the spirit*, by which every faithful soul has been able to defend himself against all the wiles, devices, and power of Satan. And how could it be otherwise, when God has appointed his word for that purpose? Surely none of God's means could ever fail! Let us then ever keep ourselves well clad in our armor, and be valiant in the use of our weapons, and we can never fail to enjoy peace and comfort.

In conclusion, I will commit the reader, with myself, to the Lord, and the word of His grace, praying Him for His blessing, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.