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# "The Oberlin Evangelist"

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Sermons and Lectures given in 1860

by

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(This 2-part sermon was listed in the Table of Contents of the "Oberlin Evangelist" as "Spiritual Declension")

## GLOSSARY

of easily misunderstood terms as defined by Mr. Finney himself.

## **On Loving God - No. 1**

Lecture I

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by Charles Grandison Finney

President of Oberlin College

LECTURE I.

June 20, 1860

## **ON LOVING GOD --No. 1**

Text.--Matt. 22:37-38: "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."

The connection in which this passage stands is striking. Our Savior was constantly engaged in rebuking the delusions and sophistries of the Sadducees. They were a sect of semi-infidels, embracing in the times of our Savior, many of the rich and honored of the nation. On this occasion, Matthew remarks that when the Pharisees had heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they gathered about Him, and one of them being a lawyer (not an attorney in our modern sense of lawyer, but a man who was skilled in the Mosaic law,) asked Him a question, tempting Him. It was this: "Which is the great commandment of the law?"

To this question, Jesus promptly answered as in our text: "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."

Mark how comprehensive our Lord makes His exposition of the fundamental law. All the books of Moses and the prophets hang upon it -- are embraced within it. Everything indeed written or unwritten -- the entire preceptive part of religion is here. It covers the whole field of moral obligation to God and to man.

It would require a whole course of lectures to discuss this subject fully. I propose only to touch briefly on some of its main points:

*I. The kind of love here required.*

*II. I must next notice some things implied in this love.*

*III. I must next enquire -- What are the grounds of this obligation to love God?*

*IV. Next let us notice the natural consequences of refusing to render this supreme love and service to God.*

*V. I must next notice some delusions which prevail on this subject.*

### **I. The kind of love here required.**

You will readily see that this is a vital question. How can we hope to obey this first and great commandment, unless we understand what it requires?

- 1. I observe then first that it must be a voluntary thing -- not involuntary, as is shown plainly by the fact that it is required. Nothing but what is voluntary can be properly demanded. The justice of God forbids Him to require and demand on pain of damnation, things that are beyond our

power to do -- that lie not within the control of our voluntary powers. This fundamental precept of the law cannot therefore be a thing of such sort that we have no voluntary power to do it. In all reasonable law, every precept requires only voluntary action; otherwise it is absurd.

- 2. It is an essential feature in the character of this love, that it be supreme -- else it cannot be right in kind. The language used by our Lord most fully implies this -- "Thou shalt love with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind."
- 3. It must be an abiding love. It must be a state of good-will, as distinguished from transient acts. A state of mind that is continuous must manifestly be implied and required.

## **II. I must next notice some things implied in this love.**

- 1. If this love be good-will -- a perpetual purposing to promote the highest happiness of all, then it must imply a life devoted to this object. The love of the heart naturally and surely controls the life. Supreme love to God must therefore imply supreme devotion of the life to God, and by this I mean, to pleasing God and doing faithfully all His known will. If love be supreme and abiding, it must forever control the life and hold it to perpetual devotion, to the things that please God.

Here some will ask -- "What can we do for God? What should He care what we do?"

Ah, do you assume that God does not care what we do? Did God have no care for it when those two young men shot down a father and mother in the field, and left their children orphans? To suppose this, were to suppose that He is no Father of His creatures at all.

- 2. Again, this law of love implies that we find our highest pleasure in seeking to know and do God's pleasure. If we have this love, it will be most grateful to us to please Him. It will be a richer joy to us to please God than to please ourselves. It will be our supreme pleasure to please God. We shall devote ourselves to pleasing Him and shall both seek and find our chief joy in this.

We sometimes see human beings so devoted to each other that they find their supreme pleasure in promoting each other's welfare. Such devotion, obedience to this great law implies, towards God.

- 3. Again, the exercise of this love implies a sympathy with whatever pleases God, so that anything that anybody does to please God will surely please us. We shall naturally have a great complacency with anything that pleases God.
- 4. On the same principle, it implies a state of mind that will be pained with anything that displeases God. If we love God supremely, we shall account anything done against God as if it were done against ourselves -- nay, more painful than if done against ourselves merely. It will give us more pain than if done against ourselves only.
- 5. Of course it also implies that we are joyful in the exercise of self-denial for Christ's sake.

It sometimes happens that persons receiving favors from us, express so much gratitude that we are ready to thank them for the privilege of doing anything for them. See that little child sick and faint; she motions for a drink of water. Poor child; she can only lisp out, "Thank you, Ma!" Her mother did not need those uttered thanks. The grateful look sufficed. Nay, she so loved that dear sick one that it was joy enough for her to do anything for her welfare, because of the love she bore. You have felt this. You have felt such love, and such joy in doing any kindness to one you love that you were ready to thank that dear one for the privilege of doing him any good. Your heart has been so set on doing good that you have felt it more blessed to give than to receive.

So God feels. God's love is of this sort -- pure good-willing -- pure love of doing all the good He can safely and wisely, to His children. His children feel so towards Him. If they can do anything for His cause, it is the highest joy of their heart. Suppose the Lord were to say to some of you -- You may do any way you please. Would you not at once reply -- Not so, Lord, but rather anything that pleases Thee? Nothing else can ever please me, but doing what pleases Thee. What do I live for but to please and honor Thee?

- 6. If you find one who cannot deny himself, but chooses his ways to please himself otherwise than in pleasing God, you may know he does not love God.
- 7. If you seek anyone's good with real love, you will certainly avail yourself to every means to learn what will please him. So of loving and pleasing God.
- 8. Of course supreme love implies a greater dread of displeasing God than of displeasing anyone else. Nothing will distress one who loves God, so much as the thought of displeasing Him.

You may each and all, apply every one of these principles warm and fresh, to your own heart in self-examination. Say, does my love to God bear this test?

- 9. Again, if you truly love God, there will always be a spontaneous sorrow if you become conscious of having displeased Him. If you should be overcome by temptation, you would not need to make a great effort to feel sorry for it. When you have injured any friend whom you love more than any other being, you can easily regret and sorrow over the sad wrong.
- 10. Again, when the heart is supremely engrossed with love to God, the thoughts will turn naturally towards Him. Where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.
- 11. Moreover God will become the object of our complacent affections. The fact that He is infinitely lovely and good, will secure in our hearts an intense complacency in His character, words, and ways.
- 12. We shall find supreme satisfaction in His service. We always find most satisfaction while pursuing the objects on which our affections are concentrated.
- 13. There will be a perpetual reference to God in all we do. Take the case of a man supremely

devoted to his family; he will see everything in the light of its bearing on his family. So a father will do for his children if he supremely loves them. So a husband for his wife; every thing will be referred to the question of the happiness of the loved one. Thus real love to any friend begets spontaneous sympathy with him and with all his interests, and equally spontaneous sympathy against all his enemies.

### **III. I must next enquire -- What are the grounds of this obligation to love God?**

It is not that God has commanded it. We do not and cannot love merely out of regard to authority. God does not expect that His mere authority will beget and ensure love. But He bases His claim for our love on His own infinite worthiness, and on the infinite importance of having His creatures obey Him. The obligation to love God must always be equal to the value of God's happiness and glory, and to the good of His creatures as depending on His relations to them. To withhold due love from God is therefore to derogate from His rights and claims, and by consequence, from the rights and claims of the universe He has made and rules over to bless.

### **IV. Next let us notice the natural consequences of refusing to render this supreme love and service to God.**

- 1. First, refusing to love God, you must inevitably lose all true peace of mind. Every rational being is so constituted that he cannot be satisfied unless he gives God his heart's best love. He cannot have peace with God, nor peace with himself. So long as this love is withheld, his soul will be uneasy and jarring because supremely selfish. [sic.]
- 2. Then also there are governmental consequences. God must condemn those who deny to Him the love of their heart and the devotion of their life. He must regard them with holy displeasure. By all the love He bears to the best interest of His creatures, He must disown and be displeased with those who array themselves against Himself and His great family. He is bound to reveal to all His creatures His displeasure against those who hate both Him and them. He ought to make the fact of this displeasure as patent as He possibly can, for the happiness of the universe depends upon His revealing it most fully. He should make the revelations of His heart and of His hand against sin as nearly according to the right and justice of the case as He can.
- 3. Consequently He must make this revelation as enduring as His own government. Both the natural and governmental consequences of sin must be as enduring and as striking as God can make them. Else God cannot do justice to His responsibilities as the Great Moral Father of the universe.

### **V. I must next notice some delusions which prevail on this subject.**

- 1. Men get up some other standard of right. By a sort of mutual consent or conventionalism, they frame a code of morals in trade -- morals in social life or in politics, and then take great credit to themselves for having done right.

Now let men devise their own codes and notions as they may, this law of God is forevermore the one great and only standard of right. Nothing is right except it be in

accordance with this law. If men talk about doing right, on any rule of right short of this, they egregiously deceive themselves. What do you mean to doing right? Do you mean that your life is a constant offering to God? Do you offer yourself to God as a living sacrifice? If not, why do you talk about pleasing God? Do you say -- I pay all my debts; I live fairly in society; I injure no man?

Suppose it were true that you were doing no wrong to your neighbor, yet how is the case between your own soul and God? If you care nothing for Him, what is this but, as far lies in you, to dethrone God, to deny His right to reign, and to deny His parental love and care over all His creatures?

Place before your mind a band of robbers, outlaws against all human governments. They may have what they are pleased to call excellent rules among themselves; they may treat each other with great kindness; when they have sallied out of their fastness and come down upon some lovely, quiet village; burned down their houses, murdered whoever resists, and plundered them of everything they care for, they go back, and divide this booty perhaps very honorably among each other; they are careful to provide for their sick, and they take great interest in training themselves to adroitness and skill so as to rob and murder with the best success.

Now what of all the good and right things in these bandits? What would you think of them if they were to justify themselves before the bar of mankind, by appealing to their kindness to each other, their justice to each other, and their great diligence in caring for everything that would make them good and successful robbers?

Just so, all sinners are out-laws as to God. They have their own ways and choose none of His; as towards God their whole spirit is transgression, just as the band of robbers subsist on the principle of setting at nought all human governments, and abjuring all obligation to seek or to respect the welfare of their fellow beings, outside of their own pale.

A gang of these outlawed freebooters, if arrested and brought before a court of justice, might be very apt to say, if they dared -- Why, what evil have we done? Naturally, if they chance to escape, they go back to their comrades and appeal to them -- Have not we done right? Are not we all good fellows? To which the whole band respond -- "First rate; all noble and true, generous fellows!"

A pretty farce this, to play before the face of the civilized world!

Suppose a pirate ship should be fitted up with her black flag and cross bows and her brave buccaneers, and then boast of being the best managed ship on the seas. Nowhere, say they, can you find seamen so experienced, so brave, so faithful to their commander; nowhere else officers so daring and so true.

But what commendations are these to pirates? Do they sanctify the guilty business of piracy?

But the pirate may still ask -- What have I done? Pause and see what. Just what the selfishness and wickedness of your heart has prompted; nothing else; nothing better. Men could do nothing in the pirate's business without these virtues. Those therefore who choose a pirate's life must pay at least so much homage to virtue as to be truthful, kind and generous to each other. And then shall they be blind enough to plead in self-defense that they are very moral pirates -- very kind and true to one another, and very much devoted to their business?

- 2. Like the self-justifying pirate, so the sinner asks -- What have I done? Done? You have waged war against God and all the nations of men. And can you call that, doing right? Will you plead that you are trying to do right?

It is a very simple thing to examine yourself and to know whether you are right as before God and His law. Is it your great aim to please God? Is it the business of your life? What have you done today to learn His will and to do His pleasure? Have you given yourself to prayer and to the faithful study of His word? Have you been seeking in all possible ways to please and honor your Father in heaven? Have you not been pluming yourself to display your beauty? Or is it true that you really bathe yourself in His presence all the day long and deem yourself blest then and then only then when you have the consciousness of pleasing Him?

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

## LECTURE II.

July 4, 1860

### **ON LOVE TO OUR NEIGHBOR--No. 2**

Text.--Matt. 22:39: "And the second is like unto is; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

In speaking upon this portion of our Lord's epitome of the divine law, I will first enquire

*I. What kind of love is here required;*

*II. Second, state some of the things implied in this love;*

*III. Third, show that nothing short of this love is true humanity; and*

*IV. Lastly, that nothing less is true morality.*

#### **I. The love required toward our neighbor is certainly not complacency in his character.**

- 1. Complacency is approbation and delight in character; but our Lord makes no distinction

between the good and the bad, and therefore He requires us to love them all. But it cannot be that He requires us to approve and delight in the character of bad men; and hence we must conclude that the love of complacency is not in His mind, and is not the thing He requires. To have complacency in the character of wicked men as wicked, is to be as bad as they. This no reasonable man can suppose to be what the Savior requires, or what He interprets the law of God to require.

- 2. Again, it is not the love of fondness which we sometimes feel towards particular individuals. Some persons are naturally pleasing to certain other persons; some are so to all, being naturally amiable and adapted to awaken pleasing emotions. But this is not the love referred to in the text.
- 3. Again, this love cannot be involuntary. As I said before of the love required towards God that it must be a voluntary act and could not be involuntary because if it were, it could not be justly demanded; so I say of this love to our neighbor. It cannot be involuntary, for if it were, no just being could require it.
- 4. Positively, this love to our neighbor is and must be good-will. God's love to man is good-will -- a pure and strong interest in his welfare, a desire for his happiness, and the positive willing of his happiness as the object dearest to his heart. The way in which His great love has manifested itself proves this. Our very reason affirms that this is the love God has borne and now bears to our race. Consequently we must conclude that this is the love which He requires men to exercise towards each other.
- 5. Note again, that this love requires us to esteem our neighbor's interests as our own. This rule applies to all our neighbors -- to our enemies as well as to our friends.
- 6. Again, it is a constant love; not fitful and evanescent; and not impulsive, but flowing from a fountain of good-will, ever enduring. It is a state of mind -- an established state, which regards our neighbor's interests as our own.

## **II. I pass now to name some things implied in this love.**

- 1. It does not imply the universal and equal distribution of our energies and means among all mankind, or even among all who may be near enough to be known to us. It cannot mean to imply this, because with such a meaning, it would be impossible to obey it.
- 2. There can be no doubt that the law of God demands good-will towards all mankind, always, under all circumstances; but there are circumstances which forbid such modes of expressing it as would be proper at other times. A criminal, suffering the just sentence of human law, must not have from us the same acts of good-will as would be fitting after his sentence is served out, or if he were not under sentence at all. The relation which sinners come to sustain towards God under the sentence of His law is such as forbids Him to bless them. It is not that He has ceased to love them in the sense of a deep, intense interest in their happiness; but He loves all the rest of His intelligent creatures, no less, and their interests demand of Him that He should execute His righteous law against the wicked. Hence He cannot give them even so much good as a cup

of cold water.

- 3. The same circumstances may sometimes demand of us the same withholding of positive efforts to do good to the wicked.
- 4. Again, since each one is by this law required to love his neighbor, it is plain that God intends these kind offices should be mutual. If God does us good, we should seek gratefully to do Him good. If He promotes our interests, we should strive to promote His.
- 5. So of children as towards their parents. Children should not always receive and never give, but should account it a great privilege to repay their parents for the labor and care bestowed on themselves. When parents are spared in life so long as to become old and helpless, their children should rejoice in the opportunity to requite the favors shown them when they too were helpless.
- 6. So of subjects and rulers. So between pupils and teachers, there are reciprocal interests. On neither side should it be all receiving and no giving; but there should be mutual receiving and giving on both sides.
- 7. In like manner this Institution, including its teachers and its students, sustains close relations to its founders and patrons. Others have labored; we enter into their labors. Others have given their money; we are enjoying its benefit. There is not a building here but is indebted to some donors abroad. Others have prayed, and we have received blessings from God for those prayers.
- 8. Hence we should seek to requite those favors, doing all we can to promote the very objects to which those Christian friends have so devoted their wealth and their prayers.

So ministers who preach and their people who hear, should be mutually giving and receiving good, to and from each other. All of us, instead of being merely recipients of good from others, should strive to do good to others also, rendering back into their bosoms liberally.

- 9. Why should not this principle apply to all men towards God? Ye who have never cared for God; is it right that you should receive everything from God and make Him no returns of love and obedience? Have you no zeal for His honor and no devotion to His interests? He has nourished and brought you up as a child, and you have done nothing else but rebel against Him. Is that right? Why should you not rather say, God has given me talents and I must render back to Him in their use as I may have opportunity? Certainly you must regard God as your neighbor in this sense, that He has interests and rights, and you are under the highest obligations to requite Him for unnumbered favors.
- 10. The same is true also of your relations to the church of Jesus Christ. How much do you owe to Him? In view of it all, have you any right to say --"Not one word of acknowledgement, not one thank-offering shall He ever have from me!" What do you not owe Him! Has it ever occurred to you how really you owe to Him your very existence, since, but for His mission of mercy, you had never lived? But for that offering and sacrifice on Calvary, none of us could

have had any existence at all. But for that, Adam and Eve must have been cut down at once in their sin, the law taking its course of righteous judgment. -- "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." You live, therefore, only because God has had mercy on our race. Come now, walk up at once to meet the claims of this great truth. Are you not indebted to God for everything? And will you pay back absolutely nothing? Here you are in the house of God, surrounded with an atmosphere of prayer, instead of being in hell, shrieking and wailing in the depths of despair!

Do you say "I don't owe Christ anything?" But you profess to be respectable. Yet who can respect you if you treat Jesus Christ so? Have you no sympathy with His great sacrifices and sufferings to save you? Would you leave all the labor and sacrifice for Him, and make no response of love or gratitude? Will you utterly refuse to love Him? Do you say -- "He is welcome to love me and to die for me; but I have nothing to pay him in return? I leave it for him to do and to suffer all, and not a word of things can he have from me." Do you think this is right? Is it generous? Ought it to be deemed respectable?

### **III. Nothing short of the love here required is true humanity.**

It is not true humanity to do good only to one's own offspring. They are regarded as parts of one's self, and hence doing good to them only, is nothing beyond a slightly enlarged selfishness. Nothing is really love to man -- true humanity -- except that love which estimates human well-being for its intrinsic value, and loves man as man.

### **IV. Nothing short of this is true morality.**

- 1. Nothing less is required by our reason and our conscience. To lay special stress on our own interests because they are our own is not true morality. It is not, even though we aim to be honest in seeking the good of particular individuals. If it be only special individuals that we love, this is partiality.
- 2. Again, no man loves his friends in the sense that pleases God, unless he also truly loves his enemies. Suppose a man does love his friends. Hear what Jesus Christ says of precisely this case: "If ye love them who love you, what reward have ye?" "Do not even publicans [notorious sinners] the same?" Jesus Christ says: "Love your enemies." It can never be supposed that one does right unless he loves his enemies. Some one says: "There are certain persons whom I never wrong." What is the motive that leads you to do them good and not evil? If you truly loved your neighbor for right reasons, you would love every neighbor, and you would take every living man for your neighbor in the sense of this law. You would love every known being, because you would love to promote the happiness of all sentient existences, and you would aim to love each one according to the value of his well-being. Real benevolence would as truly seek to do good to enemies as to friends, if it could reach them, and do them as much good. Understand, that to love your friend aright, you must love him as God does, and for the same reasons. You can not love him aright unless you love your enemies also and for a similar reason. No man does anything for his friend acceptably to God, unless he would do as much for his enemies, if he could. God can give him no credit for doing good to his friends, unless he does it on a principle which would make him do as much for his enemies if he could. No man does any duty

acceptably to God for one man, while he refuses or willfully neglects to do the same for another; and this I put on the ground that God's law requires you to love all your neighbors -- every neighbor; and if you have the spirit of obedience to God, you will.

- 3. No man does right in any proper sense who does not act from universal and disinterested love. On any other ground it cannot be acceptable for one moment. That mother nursing her babe has no credit from God for this, if she does it on no higher principle than the mere animal. She is bound to love her own offspring because God has placed her in precisely those relations. But let her by no means think she has any credit from God for obeying merely her animal instincts. Her soul should go higher than the mere animal. She is bound to study to please God.
- 4. Nothing short of this can be the condition of salvation. No man can be out of sin and in grace who is not brought into a state of true love to his neighbor. What would become of a man, applying at heavens' gate for admittance, who should meet there an enemy -- a man he had never loved, whom he had hated and never prayed for? Could he pass by such a man into heaven?
- 5. How could you enjoy heaven without a holy heart? Some of you would hasten out as we have sometimes seen rude, unmannered boys rush to get out of church, even before the services of worship were closed. He who loves his neighbor will understand that it is one of his neighbor's rights to enjoy the public worship of God without being disturbed.
- 6. Without this love, salvation is naturally impossible. It is governmentally impossible; it cannot be, so long as God rules and cares for the interests of his great kingdom. The entrance to heaven is so guarded all round about that nothing shall by any means enter that worketh abomination -- nothing unholy. A man go there in his selfishness! Not if God can keep him out!

## REMARKS.

1. If all men obeyed the laws of God, society would be perfect. I do not mean that there would be no further progress, no advance, no improvement; no, not this, for much remains to be done. But this is true, that morality would be perfect; there would be no more war and strife. Every family would be a little emblem of heaven. Every community would bear the image of heaven. The wings of angels would come down so near, they would fan such loving hearts; and heaven's doors would stand open all day long before such a people.

2. We see how we are to treat those who are oppressed and in slavery. We are to put ourselves in their position and enquire what we should ask them to do for us, in their circumstances. Suppose that I and my family are in slavery. Election is coming on. Have I a right to expect that my friends in Ohio will cast their votes so as to bear most directly upon my liberation? I should be very prone to think that no man ought to cast his vote against my liberty, for the mere sake of money or office. Even politicians can see how shameful and how outrageously wrong it is to hold man as a chattel. That this should be deemed a Bible institution is of all monstrous things most monstrous! It is so revolting that I cannot well imagine how anybody can be honest in holding this opinion. Yet let us be candid: I can easily see that the merely legal relation may exist without any violation of the law of love.

3. This golden rule is equally applicable everywhere and in all circumstances. It is good when applied in the matter of asking favors. We ought not to ask a favor of any man when a knowledge of his circumstances and a proper sympathy for his welfare, such as we would have him feel for ours, would forbid it.

4. The same is true of receiving favors. This law, honestly applied, would show us what favors we should be willing to allow others to do for us. Sometimes we cannot properly allow others to do us favors. If a poor man has labored for me a month and refuses to receive compensation, I too must by all means refuse to receive his labor as a gift. A proper regard to his circumstances compels me to refuse so great a gift from him. He cannot afford to give it; there fore I cannot afford to receive it.

5. You may see from this subject what the morality of unregenerate men is. It is not morality at all, in any just sense. All their morals is only sin.

6. You may also see God's personal relations to selfishness. Every particle of selfishness is personally hostile and hateful to God. It is so utterly unlike his heart, so totally opposed to all his principles and to all his acts, he can have no fellowship with it. He must forever hold it in utter abhorrence.

7. You may also see his governmental relations to sin. He can bear the personal insult and he does -- does for the time, and, but for governmental reasons, would pass it over perhaps forever. He endures with sinners now; he does not fret; does not manifest excited passion, as men do under insult; but the governmental bearings of sin he cannot overlook. The selfishness of men towards himself and towards each other, he must see. He is a magistrate, bearing the highest responsibilities of the universe. All eyes are turned upon him. He must mark the iniquities that are done among his subjects and his creatures. He must see all their wickedness, biting and devouring one another, trampling each other down. All eyes are upturned towards him. What says the Judge of all the earth to this! Ah, this must be answered! God's relations to his government make it an awful thing for man to love selfishness.

8. Every selfish sinner is in certain peril of eternal death. Men know this and cannot but know it. God's mercy flows at your feet, a deep, broad, glorious current; yet you heed it not! Yet you thrust Jesus away! You have done so often and long. Can you do it yet longer? Jesus with bleeding heart and loving hand pressing near to save you, but you are saying -- Depart from me! let me alone in my sins yet longer! I will not have this man to rule over me, nor to save me, on such terms of salvation!

O sinner! will you still pursue a course so ruinous, and so outrageously abusive to Jesus Christ?

## **Spiritual Delusion - No. 1**

Lecture III

## **On Leaving One's First Love - No. 2**

Lecture IV

(This 2-part sermon was listed in the Table of Contents of the "Oberlin Evangelist" as "Spiritual Declension")

by Charles Grandison Finney  
President of Oberlin College

LECTURE III.

August 1, 1860

**SPIRITUAL DELUSION--No. 1**

Text.--Rev. 2:4: "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

This passage is found in Christ's message to the church of Ephesus. In these messages, Jesus appears in unearthly majesty walking amid the golden candlesticks which represent the churches. Thus He indicated that His eye can never cease to be fastened on His professed people.

It is very noticeable in all these epistles that Christ commended wherever He honestly could. He found some things to commend in the Ephesian church. "I know thy works," said He, "and thy labor and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and hast tried them who say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars." They were opposed to many forms of iniquity even as you are to slavery. They pushed some useful reforms no doubt, perhaps with zeal as you do, for Christ says of them -- "Ye cannot bear them that are evil." They held fast their orthodoxy; for they tried false apostles and proved them liars. They had also "borne and had patience, and for Christ's name, had labored and had not fainted."

"Nevertheless," -- despite of so many good things, -- Jesus said, "I have this against thee, that thou hast left thy first love." The words I have here used express the true sense of the original. Christ did not mean, "I have a small somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love," but "I have this solemn charge against thee" -- viz. that thou hast left thy first love. This is precisely the sin they had committed.

Does it not strike you, my brethren, that their case was remarkably like your own? They had many good things; great reformatory zeal; had hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans which said Christ, "I also hate," -- but they had left their first love.

So, it often happens that after one's first love is gone, the heart still hates and denounces manifest, outrageous evil. We see this in many churches and in many prominent men of our age. O, if they might only take counsel from the messages of their professed Lord!

In discussing the subject involved in the text, I shall show,

*I. What the first love of the Christian really is;*

*II. How this may be distinguished from spurious religion;*

*III. How the true love of any Christian may be infallibly known;*

*IV. When it may truly be said that persons have left their first love;*

*V. Let us next enquire how Christians come to lose their first love;*

*VI. Show the consequences of this sin.*

### **I. What the first love of the Christian really is.**

- 1. It is in one word, devotion to God. It may be illustrated in many ways. You may take, for one, the devotion of a true wife to her husband. This is God's standing illustration. You find it everywhere in the Old Testament prophets, and often in the New Testament.

What do we see in the devotion of a wife to her husband? Or of the husband to his wife?

The desire to please each other. Each is set upon promoting the other's happiness.

Or you may study the devotion of the father and the mother to their child. They live their life over in the little one. How many are living and toiling all their lives to get something for their children.

- 2. The essential element of this love to Christ is voluntary. It implies voluntary consecration, giving one's self up to the promotion of the highest good of the person loved. This good-will carries with it the affections. Such is the relation of the will to the sensibility that when the will is fixed, the sensibilities are borne along in harmony with it.

Voluntary love is in this respect entirely different from natural affection. In voluntary good-willing, the will acts first, takes the lead, and carries the sensibility after it. The affections and sensibilities do not lead the will, but follow it.

- 3. But in natural affection, this order is reversed. The natural impulses go forward and take the lead. In the conjugal relation, the taste is gratified and leads on to the devotion of the will. Hence this devotion is not obedience to the law of God -- that is, it may exist without any thought of God's law. It is often controlled by the tastes and the sensibilities only.
- 4. But in religion this order is reversed. The will is first committed. This draws after it the sensibilities. The Christian purpose has respect to God's law; conscience demands obedience; the will yields and becomes fixed in obedience to God; then and thenceforward, it carries with itself the emotions and sensibilities. This distinction is worthy of special regard.

### **II. Let us next notice how true Christian love differs from the spurious.**

- 1. Just as prudential marriage differs from a marriage of sincere affection. These prudential cases sometimes take place; a man marries a woman for her property, or for her talents, or for

her value in the family. The woman is dependent, wants a home, so she gives her consent. There is no real love on either side, although each may suppose the other to love sincerely.

- 2. On precisely this principle some persons become religious, and with the same consequences. They think it very imprudent, not to become Christians, since they may die and go down to hell. Hence they become religious from mere prudence. Just as in a prudential marriage, the woman consents in order to provide for her own support and safety, and having got what she aimed to get, she is satisfied. Little does she care for her husband's comfort or happiness.

But if she had married from real love, she would go with her husband to prison and to death. She would be truly devoted to his interests. If he were sick, she would not eat or sleep but he would have all needful care. One of these wives makes herself her chief end; the other, her husband.

- 3. So, true Christian love makes Christ its end; the spurious makes itself its end. True love adores Christ, holds Him in highest reverence and purest affection, and the heart is so drawn out that even life is not held dear if one may only please Christ and be found in Him.

### **III. I am next to show how true Christians may be infallibly known.**

- 1. Just as true love in the marriage relation may be known. For so far as this point is concerned it matters not which is first in time, the will, or the sensibility. It makes no difference as to the manifestations of real love, whether it began with the purpose of the will as in love to God, or with the attractions of the sensibility, as in conjugal love.

I say then that true love to Christ will bear the same characteristics, the same infallible proofs, as the true love of a husband or of a wife.

The loving wife does not need a formal code of law to induce her to do all she can to please her husband, for she has the law written on her heart, and this law of love inwardly impels her to do all the duties of her station. So the Christian does not need the impulses of law, for the law to him is not now written on stone, but on the heart of flesh. I do not mean that the law becomes part of the constitution, but that it has become seated in the heart.

Mark again, Christians who are truly in love to Christ, cannot neglect Christ. As the wife who loves her husband does not and cannot neglect him, for the reason that she is so united to him in heart; so the Christian, truly loving Christ, cannot neglect Him. Christ is in all his thoughts. Never was a bride more in the thoughts of her husband, or a husband in the thoughts of his bride.

- 2. Of course if love to Christ be true, it must be supreme. Nothing else can compare with it in strength. The Christian can by no means find it in his heart to neglect Christ. What! neglect his own Redeemer! Neglect those precious words that reveal to him his precious Savior! No more than a faithful wife can neglect a letter just received from her long absent husband. So the convert reads his Bible -- reads and loves -- reads and weeps, and still looks through his tears to

read more. He finds so many loving promises, so many fond utterances of love. Never did a friend receive anything so rich and so dear from a friend as this Bible which the Christian receives from God.

- 3. Such a Christian can never neglect worship of God. His soul is full of worship. To him the very sound of prayer or praise is full of worship and of love. Never shall I forget how much, soon after my conversion, it affected me to hear the voice of prayer. It was in a barn, during a revival of religion. It seemed to me like the praises of heaven. I wept for joy. I caught some of the words. O, how precious to me was the thought -- There is a soul in communion with God! What! can a Christian in his first love neglect God? What! a convert need urging to read his Bible? Need to be urged to pray? Tell me, do you need to urge your wife to do her duty? If you do, you have lost her love. So the Christian needs no more urging. It is all in his heart without being urged. He will do all for Christ that he can. It is as spontaneous as his life.
- 4. Christians in their first love are not easily prevented from doing all they can to manifest their love in the performance of their duty to God. They will be careful to lay their plans so as to have plenty of time to spend with God. They will not embark in selfish, worldly schemes which make it necessary to turn aside from the great duties of their calling as Christians. What would you think of the wife who should have so many other things to divert her that she could not please her husband? So persons in their first love will not have separate ends to divert themselves from labor for the salvation of souls.
- 5. Again, Christians, in real love to Christ, will spontaneously avoid whatever they suppose will displease God. It is impossible while truly loving God with their heart, that they should not avoid displeasing Him. What would you think of a wife full of love to her husband, yet continually doing things to displease him? The thing is impossible, absurd!
- 6. It is no dreadful thing to the loving Christian to give up all sin. Yet sinners look on this as a dreadful thing. To bid farewell to such pleasures forever! But the young convert feels no such attractions and bonds holding him to the follies of the world. No loving, faithful wife has trouble with a heart going after other lovers. No true husband has conflicts and struggles to prevent his conjugal affections from sinful wanderings. It is no trial on either side to restrict their conjugal love to each other. They do it naturally.
- 7. The Christian's love is in a yet higher sense spontaneous in his supreme devotion to God. The very thought of displeasing God makes him tremble. The very danger makes him turn pale.
- 8. Again, first love makes it a standard principle to do the whole will of God.
- 9. The convert will study the scriptures to learn there what will please God. So the affectionate wife or husband, parent, or child, always strives to anticipate the wants of the loved one, and do what can be done to promote his real happiness. Loving hearts make swift feet and willing hands. Whatever we see that we can do for those we love, we shall do with alacrity and with joy.

- 10. Look into any of the relations of life where true love exists, and there you find this devotion to the interests and well-being of the loved one. Neither wife or husband, if really loving deem any suitable service for the other a task, but rather do all they can with the utmost joy. The secret of this is that they neither of them seek their own good supremely, but each the other's good. If these things were done selfishly, it could be but a poor and sorry satisfaction. But done in love, no joy can be richer. The labors of love are always sweet. If you ask the Christian what gives him the greatest joy, he will answer -- To please God, to have the consciousness of having aimed supremely to please Him, and the divine testimony that our aims and efforts have come up in remembrance before God. Ask the living Christian what gives him the greatest sorrow? He answers, that I should grieve my Savior; that I should ever displease him.
- 11. Again, a Christian in a state of real love to God will love God's friends, even as God Himself does, and His enemies, with the same love of pity, not of complacency, that God feels towards them. He will love to pray for God's enemies.
- 12. His mind will be given to God and not to worldliness. This is true both of his voluntary, purposed control of his own thoughts, and also of the natural proclivities of his mind; for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. He will love to converse about God and will speak not coldly but warmly, as one who loves.
- 13. He is not given to fleshly indulgences -- is not mainly asking, "What shall I eat or what shall I drink, or wherewithal shall I be clothed?"
- 14. He will have a zeal for souls, warm, spontaneous and loving.
- 15. His spirit is universally forgiving. That love for others which is often so partial and limited in its regards, he delights to extend to all. If of old he had hard feelings towards others, now all is changed. He loves everybody, and finds it easy to forgive, even as we forgive our children easily and joyfully. He cannot retain hard feelings. Parents toward their children may become hard-hearted and lose even their natural affection, but converts, in the freshness of their affection, have more than a mother's and a father's love. If you have ever felt the saint's first love, you know this. You may have had prejudice, or ill-will before, but all that is passed away now. You love to pour out your soul in confession.
- 16. The Christian's love is always charitable. It thinketh no evil -- is not suspicious, but inclines to impute good and not bad motives. It is also patient and meek under injuries; ready also to press forbearance even to the extent of long-suffering.
- 17. Such a man has no enemies. Not that others may not hate him bad enough to kill him; but he hates no one. He has no quarrel with his neighbors. If they hate and persecute him, he knows it must be a mistake, because they misapprehend him. So completely is his selfishness subdued and supplanted by love, that he has none of the rasped feelings of wicked men.
- 18. True Christian love has great joy in God. This is a new experience -- new as the love which gave it birth. Strangers to love are stranger to real joy. They may have a low, base sort of joy in

themselves, that they shall be saved, and are out of danger of perdition; but this is only a selfish joy. Self, not God, is its object.

- 19. Again, great peace is characteristic of true love to God. Their peace is like a deep flowing river. There is no state of mind in which one is so conscious of a divine flowing, a deep moving current, which no language can so fitly describe as this of scripture -- "like a river." Not like the river that dashes furiously and roars boisterously; but like the waters of Siloam that flow gently.
- 20. This experience is always new to the young convert. He knows he never realized this love and peace before.
- 21. This peace never can exist without love, nor indeed can this true love exist without producing this peace of soul. You cannot interrupt this peace if the love rules there. It is a peace and repose like that you feel in friends when you are sure you know them and may confide in them most entirely and without fear. The mind, conscious of being in sympathy with God, is of course full of peace.
- 22. Again, obedience will be universal. A soul moved by love does not find some things hard and some things easy, but finds all easy and sweet to do for God. Some persons find in their experience that they shrink from some duties, while they can perform other duties with tolerable ease. Not so the Christian whose soul is full of love.
- 23. Again, when this love is fresh, the soul is conscious of a great cleaving to Christ. No other consciousness can be more full and distinct than this that the affections are fastened on Christ. The very thought of Him, the bare mention of His name, suffices to stir up all the tenderest sensibilities of the heart.
- 24. In this state of mind, you do not easily feel the force of any temptation. No external influence is properly a temptation till its alluring influence is felt -- till it sensibly acts on our sensibilities. Mark the case of Eve. Her sensibilities were not excited instantly. They seem not to have been moved by the first suggestion. It was rather under the repeated suggestions of the serpent tempter and the combination of appeals to her various sensibilities to pleasure through the eye, the taste, and her thirst for knowledge, that she finally yielded. Under the influence of a convert's first love, it is always very hard for a temptation to reach the sensibilities, so that its influence is felt as an impulse towards sin. When the heart is left loose, floating, so to speak, at large with no object of love on which the affections are fixed, temptations come in easily and get hold readily. They find the heart unoccupied. It must be a state of fearful danger in such a world as this, to move about with a soul open to every bad influence. How different the case of those whose soul is filled already with the love of Jesus!

#### LECTURE IV.

August 15, 1860

#### ON LEAVING ONE'S FIRST LOVE--No. 2

Text.--Rev. 2:4: "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

In speaking from this text, I was to enquire --

- I. What the first love of the Christian really is;*
- II. How this may be distinguished from spurious religion;*
- III. How the true love of any Christian may be infallibly known;*
- IV. When it may truly be said that persons have left their first love;*
- V. Let us next enquire how Christians come to lose their first love;*
- VI. Show the consequences of this sin.*

Three of these points, first in order, have been already considered. We now come to the fourth.

#### **IV. When may it truly be said that Christians have left their first love?**

The state in which one has left his first love is far different, and almost the opposite of that which I have just described. If you were to recall each separate characteristic of a convert's first love, you would find the corresponding characteristics of one who has left his first love right over against them. Whereas the former did not need the constraint of law and precept to induce him to obey, but obedience was spontaneous, in the latter case obedience has ceased to be spontaneous, and the man needs to be coerced by the scourge of law and penalty to induce him to obey. When you detect this in yourself, you may know you have left your first love.

- 1. So the convert in his first love will not, and cannot neglect God. He will not neglect his worship or his fear.

But after he has left his first love, he neglects God and his worship. He naturally neglects secret prayer. He can be absent from the communion of the supper and from the worship of God in the Sabbath Congregation. When you see this neglect, whether in yourself or in another, you may safely infer that "first love" has gone.

- 2. On the same principle, one who has left his first love will neglect God's word. The soul in the fullness of its love, will not neglect the Blessed Bible. Often you will hear him cry out -- "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day." You may perhaps hear him declare that no words can express his joy in reading it. But now, alas, it lies on its shelf unread. As you pass through the room, or as you take up your daily paper or some empty tale, practically saying -- I prefer this to God's word; it might well left up its voice to rebuke and reproach you! What! is this the way you treat God as he comes before you in his revealed word?

Now when professed Christians are inclined to neglect their Bibles, and their accustomed

times and places of social worship, and when they need to be preached to earnestly, and almost sternly, to bring them to even a reluctant attendance, you may know their first love is gone. The Christian in his first love cannot be induced to neglect such meetings. Sometimes he will go though very much unwell. No trifling excuses will be made for non-attendance. He will not allow the demands of business to detain him. Serving God with them is always above and more than business. Nay, business is all made subordinate to serving God, so much so that he would do no business at all if he could not honestly serve and please God in and by it.

- 3. Again, when one has left his first love, there is no spontaneous avoidance of evil habits. If he does anything in this line, it is all constrained. His heart is manifestly not set upon it, and love does not constrain him.
- 4. Again, comparing these two classes -- those in their first love, and those not in it; the former are God-minded; the latter, world-minded. The former are minded towards God, as opposed to being minded after the flesh. The latter are strongly minded towards the world. Their thoughts are engrossed with earthly things. If reformed from any vice, back he goes as the dog to his vomit. Any appetite readily enslaves him. All slavery is bad; none so bad, so tyrannous, and so debasing, as this.

The former has a universal zeal for God and his cause. The reason is, his heart is there. In the case of the latter, all zeal seems to have died out. If you ever get him to speak about religion, you will readily see that he has no heart in it.

- (1.) Again, they do not labor for souls. They do not feel any real love for the souls of men. It is plain enough that such love does not fill their hearts.
- (2.) They have no spirit of universal forgiveness. They will often say -- "It is soon enough to forgive when I see proof of repentance." And they are none too ready to see and accept this proof.
- 5. In the exercise of first love, one cannot have animosity and ill-will. It is all gone out of sight. All enmities have ceased. Its spirit is dead.

But when first love has languished, how irritable! How uncharitable! How many bickerings! How full of heart-burnings! Where these feelings exist, you may know the heart is far from God.

He will perhaps say in self-vindication -- The man greatly abused me! Indeed! Then hear the dying Savior cry -- "Forgive, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Or think of Stephen when the hurled stones smote him down -- "Lord lay not this sin to their charge!"

- 6. Are not those cases God-like?

But he who has lost his first love has no such sympathies.

- 7. In the life of its first love, the convert has peace like a river. Not so when one has lost his first love. He knows he has no such peace. In one's first love, he is full of gratitude, love, trust in Christ. When first love is left, these first and blessed frames of soul pass away.

#### **V. Let us next enquire how Christians come to lose their first love.**

This point often seems full of wonder. They don't know how it comes to pass, and are in great confusion. They do not see the philosophy of this rapid decline and loss of first love.

- 1. It is often to be ascribed specially to the seductive arts of Satan. These are so manifold and almost universal that no Christian altogether escapes their assault. None of the children of God "are ignorant of his devices." Satan seduces God's children more artfully and with more direct purpose to draw into sin than any vile seducer who goes about to ruin the virtue of women.
- 2. Take the case of Eve as tempted by Satan. After long parley, he at length gained her attention. This was his first artful, dangerous step. Then he went on saying smooth things -- gentle insinuations against God -- seductive solicitations addressed to her love of knowledge, and her animal appetites -- until his point was gained.
- 3. This is Satan's policy. To the young man, he says -- You must go in company with the wicked. Take care not to be too particular. You want to make your mark in the world. Strike boldly, and high.

Here is a case for illustration. In 1830, a Christian lady of N.-- was very full of prayer and of the Holy Ghost. In this frame she went on well for a time, till one evening in public service, during the closing prayer as she was asking -- What can I do for Christ and his cause? the suggestion came powerfully -- Buy a lottery ticket; you may be sure of getting the highest prize, because your only object is to please God and help forward his kingdom.

Her first thought was -- No; that will never do for me! But the response came -- It will certainly be a prize; somebody will get the prizes; better you than any one else because you mean to do good with it.

She yielded and went immediately out from the meeting. She is now prepared to justify her purpose to buy a ticket, insisting that the suggestion came to her immediately from the Spirit. She went and bought her lottery ticket. No sooner done than Satan changed his tone, and thundered in her ear -- Now you have committed the unpardonable sin! You are forever certain of damnation! Now go and take your life. Why should you live any longer? -- That was Satan -- the arch-deceiver of souls.

- 4. Very much like this is his way of tempting businessmen. Make money whatever you do or fail to do, make money; then you can do good with it. To Christians of this generation, as to Jesus in the wilderness, Satan offers all the world if they will only bow down and do homage to him. O this is a terrible snare!

- 5. Satan tempts converts by the seductions of the flesh. To one he says -- Take tobacco; it will be good for your cold stomach, or for your teeth, or for your nerves. To others he has other forms of seduction. Everywhere he is the great Seducer.

## **VI. But I must hasten to speak of the consequences of losing one's first love.**

- 1. Persons who have taken the first step know it. They know that their neglected Bible and closet and sanctuary could tell the story. They are brought into bondage. They lose the sense of free and open communion with God. They might know what has befallen them, even as the wife who has given her heart to another than her husband might know her guilt and shame. So the fallen Christian who serves God only because he must. Think of his case. His heart will not go forth freely and lovingly to God. He has lost the spirit of prayer. His comfort is gone. Whereas once it was the daily comfort of his soul to please God, it is so no longer. He has lost his God.
- 2. He has fallen into great doubts as to his good estate. Perhaps he never was a Christian. His hope is almost gone; he can scarcely sustain a very trembling hope. Yet he thinks a great deal about his hope. A convert in the strength of his first love makes little of hope -- thinks little about it; thinks much more of Jesus than of his hope.
- 3. He has the spirit of self-condemnation. I have seen brethren so cast down, the very lines of their face revealed self-condemnation.
- 4. His heart will not pray. It is not congenial. All is intellectual, and void of emotion. His soul is sluggish, his heart inert. This is another consequence of losing first love.
- 5. He cannot realize the truths of religion. To him, they seem only a dread theory. They have lost their hold upon his heart.

(I wonder if any of you are saying in your heart -- He is just reading off the history of my experience. Who has been telling him how I feel?)

Now all these experiences are just what a loveless wife would have as towards her husband. Take one who has once known true love, but has been seduced by some villain. What is left to her? Not her joy in wedded life -- not her peace of mind -- not one joy that a virtuous woman can prize. Where is she? Just where you are if you have left your first love towards Jesus Christ. You are the loveless wife or husband.

## **REMARKS.**

1. Where does this sermon find you? Have you ever had this first love? In delineating the convert's first love, I have only given its general type and not its higher and more advanced manifestations. Hence if you have not had this, you must say -- I have had nothing.

Now let me ask -- As I described this first love did you say -- I know all that; I have felt it; I have loved the precious Bible; I so loved meetings for prayer that I could have stayed in the hallowed place

all night; yes I have known all that.

Have you the same spirit now? Can you say, Indeed I know by my own precious experience what all that is now?

2. But some of you are not there. On the contrary you know you have lost your first love. Yet let me ask -- Have you no heart to return? Do you say -- I would fain return, but I know God will not accept me. How can he accept so vile a being as I -- and one who has dishonored him so falsely? Ah but you may have confidence if you will return, for he says, -- "Return unto me, and I will return unto you."

3. Are you still making the profession of loving Christ while yet your first love is gone? How odious must that profession be to Jesus Christ? Suppose you are a wife and your husband should run off after other lovers and scatter his ways to the ends of the earth. Then when he should hear of your grief, suppose he should come back with flattering lips and a lying tongue, but no confessions, would you not say -- Away, away with such hypocrisy and such infidelity! And will you come to God in like manner with lying lips? And can you delude yourself with the thought that you can deceive the omniscient God?

4. It is your business at once to return, but not with a proud heart. It is not our business to ask how you shall be received, but whether you can be, upon any confessions you can make and any mercy God can show. As a wife who had played the harlot should lay herself at her husband's door and humble herself greatly for her sin, making no conditions as to her being received, but be humble enough to accept any conditions gladly; so your business is to return to your Father's house and repent deeply in sackcloth and ashes there. No backslider ever returned really to God until they had this spirit -- I will go back in all my guilt and lay my bones there.

"I can but perish if I go;

I am resolved to try;

For if I stay away, I know

I must forever die."

Sinners who have never come to Christ at all must come in this same spirit. Let no such sinners be ashamed to say -- I have wronged Jesus Christ and have abused his love exceedingly. I will surely go and confess it all, though all the world revile and disown me for it. And return now, for this is your accepted time; perhaps your last time.

Can any of you say -- I have no need to return? If so I am glad for it.

5. But some of you have left your first love. And what reason did you have for it? Are you like that poor unfortunate wife who was so mistaken in her husband, whose soul is full of sorrow, who is lost for life because she did not know the man before she married him? Is that your case? And did Jesus Christ deceive you? Did he prove unfaithful in his love to you? Has he treated you so ill and abused you and wounded your feelings?

How is this?

How? Hear what the Lord says: What have I done to you that you should lose your first love to me? Have I been a wilderness to you? Has my heart been cold towards you? Wherein have I wearied you? Testify against me. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord."

Yes, come, wanderer from God, and consider your ways.

Why are you afar from God to-day?

## GLOSSARY

of easily misunderstood terms as defined by Mr. Finney himself.

Compiled by Katie Stewart

1. **Complacency, or Esteem:** "Complacency, as a state of will or heart, is only benevolence modified by the consideration or relation of right character in the object of it. God, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints, in all ages, are as virtuous in their self-denying and untiring labours to save the wicked, as they are in their complacent love to the saints." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE VII)*. Also, "approbation of the character of its object. Complacency is due only to the good and holy." *Lectures to Professing Christians (LECTURE XII)*.
2. **Disinterested Benevolence:** "By disinterested benevolence I do not mean, that a person who is disinterested feels no interest in his object of pursuit, but that he seeks the happiness of others for its own sake, and not for the sake of its reaction on himself, in promoting his own happiness. He chooses to do good because he rejoices in the happiness of others, and desires their happiness for its own sake. God is purely and disinterestedly benevolent. He does not make His creatures happy for the sake of thereby promoting His own happiness, but because He loves their happiness and chooses it for its own sake. Not that He does not feel happy in promoting the happiness of His creatures, but that He does not do it for the sake of His own gratification." *Lectures to Professing Christians (LECTURE I)*.
3. **Divine Sovereignty:** "The sovereignty of God consists in the independence of his will, in consulting his own intelligence and discretion, in the selection of his end, and the means of accomplishing it. In other words, the sovereignty of God is nothing else than infinite benevolence directed by infinite knowledge." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE LXXVI)*.
4. **Election:** "That all of Adam's race, who are or ever will be saved, were from eternity chosen by God to eternal salvation, through the sanctification of their hearts by faith in Christ. In other words, they are chosen to salvation by means of sanctification. Their salvation is the end- their sanctification is a means. Both the end and the means are elected, appointed, chosen; the means

as really as the end, and for the sake of the end." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE LXXIV)*.

5. **Entire Sanctification:** "Sanctification may be entire in two senses: (1.) In the sense of present, full obedience, or entire consecration to God; and, (2.) In the sense of continued, abiding consecration or obedience to God. Entire sanctification, when the terms are used in this sense, consists in being established, confirmed, preserved, continued in a state of sanctification or of entire consecration to God." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE LVIII)*.
6. **Moral Agency:** "Moral agency is universally a condition of moral obligation. The attributes of moral agency are intellect, sensibility, and free will." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE III)*.
7. **Moral Depravity:** "Moral depravity is the depravity of free-will, not of the faculty itself, but of its free action. It consists in a violation of moral law. Depravity of the will, as a faculty, is, or would be, physical, and not moral depravity. It would be depravity of substance, and not of free, responsible choice. Moral depravity is depravity of choice. It is a choice at variance with moral law, moral right. It is synonymous with sin or sinfulness. It is moral depravity, because it consists in a violation of moral law, and because it has moral character." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE XXXVIII)*.
8. **Human Reason:** "the intuitive faculty or function of the intellect... it is the faculty that intuits moral relations and affirms moral obligation to act in conformity with perceived moral relations." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE III)*.
9. **Retributive Justice:** "Retributive justice consists in treating every subject of government according to his character. It respects the intrinsic merit or demerit of each individual, and deals with him accordingly." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE XXXIV)*.
10. **Total Depravity:** "Moral depravity of the unregenerate is without any mixture of moral goodness or virtue, that while they remain unregenerate, they never in any instance, nor in any degree, exercise true love to God and to man." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE XXXVIII)*.
11. **Unbelief:** "the soul's withholding confidence from truth and the God of truth. The heart's rejection of evidence, and refusal to be influenced by it. The will in the attitude of opposition to truth perceived, or evidence presented." *Systematic Theology (LECTURE LV)*.

**End of the 1860 Collection.**