

## The End of the Commandment

Preached at North Street Chapel, Stamford, on Thursday Evening, December 9, 1858  
(A Posthumous Sermon)

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

I have thought sometimes it was a great pity that our excellent translators, who were not only very learned, but, we have every reason to believe, very godly men, and who have given us a translation which has scarcely its paramount, should have retained the word *charity* instead of *love*. And they seem to have been very consistent with themselves; for we have again and again the word *love* in the gospels, but in the epistles, instead of using the word *love*, which is exactly the same word in the *original* as it is in the gospels, they have preserved the word *charity*, and the effect has been to mislead many poor ignorant minds. Numbers of ignorant people think that what we call *charity* means *giving*. When the Apostle spoke so strongly about *charity*, he did not mean a man putting his hand into his pocket and giving half-a-crown to some benevolent institution. The Holy Ghost never meant to convey such an idea, nor to make *giving* to stand upon the same footing with that blessed grace, the *love* of which we read, "Now abideth faith, hope and charity, or *love*, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." You will perceive then that *charity*, as we understand the word, is not meant here, but *love*; that *love* of which we read so much in the first chapter of John's gospel, and which shines through the whole of the New Testament as one of the greatest and most blessed gifts of God.

The Apostle tells us here it is the end of the commandment. He says the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of a faith unfeigned. In opening up these words I shall, therefore, with God's blessing—

I.—*First, show you, What the commandment is, and how love is the end of it.*

II.—*Secondly, What this love must consist in, what are its elements and its constituent principles, and that this love to be the end of the commandment must have these three things—It must come out of a pure heart, out of a good conscience, and out of a faith unfeigned, and what these three things are I shall attempt to lay before you, with God's blessing, this evening.*

By the commandment we may understand two things, which I shall severally enter into.

1. First, the Law.
2. Secondly, the Gospel,

For love is the end of both. The Apostle tells us very plainly, that he who hath loved his brother hath fulfilled the law, which is tantamount to the expression "the end of the commandment is love." What are the two great commandments of the law? They are these. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." He who does not love God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbour as himself, does not fulfil the law, and if he do not fulfil the law he is brought under its curse; for the sentence is, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written

in the book of the law to do them." And amongst them is love to God, perfect love, and love to man. Now there is not, nor ever was a single individual upon the face of this globe, from the days of Adam to the present hour, who could perform that law. No man yet ever loved the Lord with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbour as himself. It is not possible. Human nature has ever been, since the fall, too deeply sunk and alienated from the love of God; and being utterly destitute of any principle of love, it is impossible for any man, with all his religion, piety, and righteousness, to raise up in his soul any such love to God or his fellow-creatures as the law speaks of or the commandment enjoins. What is the consequence? Why, every man is condemned by the holy law. As the Apostle says most plainly, "that every mouth may be stopped and all the world might become guilty before God." Has that law reached your conscience? Has it ever brought you in guilty? Have you ever tried to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? Have you ever tried to love your neighbour as yourself, and found you could not? If you have, the sentence that you have not fulfilled the law must come upon you, and therefore you are brought under condemnation. Well, does not it say "the end of the *commandment* is love?" and did not you say five minutes ago it was the law? Yes; but when the Lord by his Spirit communicates grace to a sinner's heart, and especially when he sheds abroad his love in his soul, then he enables him to love the Lord with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength. He cannot but love God then; for God sheds abroad his love in his heart, and shows him that he is altogether lovely; and then he cannot help loving the Lord his God with all his mind, soul, heart, and strength, when the Lord gives him power to do so by communicating his grace to his soul, and giving him a sweet interest in the blood of the Lamb; so that though no man ever did fulfil the law in *self*-strength or *self*-wisdom,

yet when the Lord manifests to the soul an interest in his blood, he fulfils the law, by the Lord giving him love which is the end of it.

This is very beautifully and sweetly opened up in the 8th chapter of Romans, where we find the Apostle speaking in this language:—"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh." It could not enable a man to do what it required; to love God and his neighbour, because it was weak. And when it was weak, so that it could not do what God commanded, God took good care it should be done; for he sent his own Son and condemned sin in the flesh, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled *in us*;" not *for us*, but *in us*, as it was in Christ's obedience, in our heart and conscience, lips and lives. There is an internal fulfilment of the righteousness of the law as well as external, by the obedience of the Son of God; therefore the Apostle says, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Now if you are enabled to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, and you are enabled to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, you will love the dear saints of God, who are your neighbours, as yourselves. Then you have fulfilled the law; and thus righteousness is fulfilled in you by the power of God. Then the end of the commandment is love. Men are trying to keep the law, and they are bringing, as they think, what the law demands in full tale, but like the children of Israel in Egypt they are making bricks without straw; and many live and die depending for salvation upon a righteousness of their own. Oh, poor deluded creatures! None of their works will deliver their souls! It must be the precious blood of the Lord the Lamb that must save any

sinner from the consequences of the fall, and every saint will through the covenant goodness of God, fulfil the law, because he has that love in his heart which is the end of the commandment, and whereby he loves both God and his neighbour. So that whilst the self-righteous Pharisee only brings himself under the curse of the law more and more by thinking he can fulfil it by his own strength, the poor child of grace, in whose heart the mercy and grace of God are found, is fulfilling the law, because he loves the Lord and his people; and having that love, he has the end of the commandment.

2. But I hinted that the commandment also signified the gospel, as the Lord said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34.) Now this is the grand test of the sanctuary, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35.) We live in a day of great profession. Men run to and fro; the knowledge of the Bible is spread about; religious books and tracts are sown broadcast across the land, and thus there is a vast amount of Scripture information in the country; but how different this is from the teaching of God in the soul, and with all man's knowledge, how deficient men are in that new commandment! We have wisdom, we have intellect, we have understanding, but where is love? Where is that holy dove? Fled into its nest again to dwell once more under the wing of Jesus. Where is love to the people of God in our day, which is the end of the commandment? If there is no love to Jesus there will be no love to the saints of God, and if not, you know neither law nor gospel. But if the Lord has given you any of his grace and blessedness, and constrained you to love him, you will love his people. If you love not the Lord, and if you love not the people of God, you may talk about the gospel, but you know and have felt neither law nor gospel. But I pass on to show, which is a more important point,

II.—*What this love is, what are its elements and constituent principles, and that this love to be the end of the commandment must have three things.* The Apostle advances them in a very blessed manner, and leaves us at a point as to what is its nature and constituent elements. *It must be out of a pure heart, out of a good conscience, and out of a faith unfeigned.* There must be these three things in order that there may be that love, which is the end of the commandment. The first is *a pure heart.* "O," say you, "where is that to be found? Surely not in me; for my heart is impure. I find nothing but filth and folly there." But, stay a moment. Let us see whether we cannot clear up this point. With what a sweet and blessed testimony did the Redeemer open up his ministry. *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."* And by implication none shall see God, but those who are pure in heart. There is a generation who are pure in their own eyes, and yet not washed from their filthiness. The soul must be cleansed from its filth and guilt in the blood and love of the Lamb, and in it there must be pure thoughts, pure principles, pure affections, pure desires, pure faith, hope and love; pure because implanted by him who is perfect purity, and where there is grace in the heart, there is as the Apostle says in the Epistle to Titus, "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." There is the washing of the heart, because the heart is defiled with sin and guilt, and these need to be removed. You know the leper of old was not only cleansed by the application of blood to his foot, finger, and ear, but by being washed in the bath. So the priests also, when they offered sacrifice in the temple, not only were sprinkled with the blood but washed in water, a beautiful type and figure to show that the saint of God is not merely sprinkled with the atoning blood of the Lamb to purify his conscience from filth, but washed also in the lather of the Holy Ghost, that he may be clean every whit. What a

sight was that which the disciple John saw, when the heart of his dear Lord was pierced with the Roman spear, and blood and water came out. Blood to atone for sin, water to sanctify. Out of the same heart came the blood to purify and take away the guilt of sin, and the water to wash by regeneration. So when the Lord is pleased to lay the burden of guilt upon a sinner's conscience, he teaches nothing but the washing and application of the atoning blood, and then purges it by the renewings of the Holy Ghost; and thus when sanctified by the influences and operations of the Holy Spirit upon his heart he is not only sprinkled but washed, and love flows out of a pure heart, the heart being purified by the love of God coming into it. This love is the end of the commandment. But you may have a pretended love. There is a love like the love of one of whom we read, "Art thou come in love, my brother?" but he perceived not that there was a sword in his right hand. There may be a great profession of love, but is there a sword in the right hand? Is it love out of a pure heart, or out of a heart full of hypocrisy, selfishness, and deception? A pure heart is one in which the grace of God dwells, which the blood of Christ has sprinkled, and is kept pure by the Holy Spirit, by the washing away of self-righteousness and conceit. The believer's body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, as God hath said, "I will dwell in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

A good conscience.—This is an important matter. Men make sad work of conscience. There is a natural conscience, as we read in the 2nd chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where the Apostle speaks of those which know the work of the law written in their hearts, their *conscience* also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another; and we find a striking instance as to the working of the natural conscience in those who brought the woman taken in adultery, when the Lord said, "He that is

without sin among you let him cast the first stone," and they all went out, from the least unto the greatest, being convicted by their own conscience. There was natural conscience doing its work. Then, there is a natural conscience, but that is not what is spoken of here. There is also a *seared conscience*, as the Apostle speaks, "Having their *conscience seared* with a hot iron." Men may go on in sin till their conscience ceases to give them warning. The idea is taken from the ancients, who were not acquainted with our mode or art of tying up veins, so they used to burn them, and that produced a scar, which was always hard and unfeeling. So he speaks of the conscience as having been *seared with a hot iron* so that nothing could touch it; and thus it is with some men—their *consciences are seared*. It is a dangerous thing to sit under the sound of the gospel and not to receive the truth in a believing heart, for such men have consciences which are not like others. They are gospel hardened, dead to the promises, threats, and warnings of the gospel. They have become as hard and as unfeeling as the stones in the street. Well, that is not a good conscience, is it? That is a bad conscience—a conscience that is indecisive, that sometimes excuses and sometimes condemns. That conscience is never to be depended upon. Supposing a judge never gave the same decision upon the same point, you would say that he was anything but a good judge; you would say he was a bad judge, there not being a single person who could depend upon his decision. Natural conscience is a bad conscience, because sometimes it excuses and sometimes condemns. It is like a superstitious person, who would tell you he would feel guilty if he ate meat on Good Friday, and the next moment is guilty of a most horrible thing, perhaps even of murder. But this is an extreme case, and I have mentioned it merely to show you how far the natural conscience is bad, and how imperfect such a conscience is, because it excuses one moment what it condemns the next.



This is a bad conscience, because it does not act with the will and heart of God, nor by the regulation of the Holy Ghost. Then there is an *evil conscience*, as the Apostle speaks of being "torn from an *evil conscience*." That is a guilty conscience—a conscience full of doubt, bondage, wrath and fear; that is an evil conscience. When you have committed sin, and foolishly brought guilt upon your soul, then you have an evil conscience, and you have to be purged by atoning blood. Then there is a *good conscience*, sprinkled by atoning blood, washed in the regenerating lather, whereby you fear God, and whereby you see, speak, move, act and walk in the holy fear of God, and in reverence of his great and glorious name. This is a good conscience, made tender by the fear of God and washed in the regenerating lather of the Holy Ghost's secret influences, and love to be the end of the commandment must proceed out of this *good conscience*. What is your conscience? Is it a seared conscience? is it an evil conscience? is it a bad conscience? or is it a good conscience? It must be one or the other. Have you any hope that it is a good conscience? Have you any hope that there is the fear of God in your heart? Is your conscience made alive and tender? Is it purged by the blood sprinkled upon it, softened by the love of God, kept clean by a daily recurrence to the fountain, and thus its decisions are in strict harmony with the revealed will of God Almighty?

And then there is faith unfeigned. What a blessed gift the grace of faith is! There is a great deal of false and pretended faith. But the love spoken of in our text which is the end of the commandment is out of a faith *unfeigned*. O, my friends! What a dreadful thing it is to be a hypocrite! to live and die in a false profession! to be nothing less than a mass of insincerity before God and man! and this every man will be, except so far as grace preserves him. Only the light, power, and fear of God in your soul can keep you from that terrible

deception of having a feigned faith, and the most dreadful thing is that those persons who possess it are the last persons to see it. If a man is known to be a covetous man, and the whole town is crying out against his covetousness, he himself cannot see it, but his pride and worldliness keep him from paying the few shillings he owes, and the man is the last man to see it. So it is with the deceptiveness of the human heart. There may be professors here who think they have faith, yet God who knows everything, knows that they have not a grain of the faith *unfeigned*. Can you appear before God? Do you ever think, what a mass of hypocrisy you are? Have you ever come to that spot where you could say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Do you beg and pray of the Lord to make and keep your heart sincere, and give an *unfeigned* faith, a faith that will save your soul; for we are saved by faith. And it must be God's gift of his grace. All who are trusting in natural faith are trusting in feigned faith; but those who are in possession of living faith, these have a faith *unfeigned*, because the God of truth is the author and finisher of it. Now the end of the commandment is love, and this love is of such a blessed nature that it springs out of a pure heart made so by grace, and then attending this pure heart, side by side with it, dwelling with it in the same bosom, is a good conscience; because if there be a bad conscience, a seared conscience, a natural conscience love cannot dwell with it; for love must have a good conscience to live in. The love of God or man cannot dwell with a bad conscience, it would be frightened away. There must be also faith, a faith in God's word, which works by love, overcomes the world, the flesh, and the devil, and separates from evil, of which is salvation. What a mercy to have the love of God shed abroad in the heart, to have love to God and love to the people of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost, and to have

the love which is attended by and springs out of these three different realities, that none can possess but the saint of God, out of a *pure heart*, of a *good conscience*, and by *faith unfeigned*. These things I assure you, my friends, are very momentous. You cannot hope to be saved without them. There is no hope whatever of your reaching the land of eternal delight unless you are partakers of these things. If you live without love to Jesus can you hope to be saved? What are the words of the Apostle? "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha:" that is, may the curse of God rest upon him. So that if you live and die without the love of Jesus in your heart the solemn curse lies upon you. If you love not the saints of God you have neither part nor lot in the matter, for the first evidence of having passed from death unto life is love towards the brethren; and if you go out of life without a *pure heart*, a *good conscience*, and *faith unfeigned*, will heaven receive you at last? Will angels attend your dying bed? Will the Lord of life and glory come down to your soul, and will the portals of heaven be unbarred for you? Shall you be sweetly led in with the trumpet and the welcome of the redeemed saints of God? No; but your soul will sink into utter perdition. Devils will bear you away to those regions where eternal misery will be your portion. What a difference between dying a saint in the love of God and faith of Christ, and dying without the truth of God by divine teaching—dying in a faith unfeigned, and dying in a faith feigned, which is destruction from the presence of God. These are momentous matters. The Lord enable us to lay them to our hearts, and may we find the benefit of them as wrought by the power of God.