

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD AND THE LOVE OF GOD

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"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 1 John 2:15-17

The various writers of the Epistles of the New Testament, though all equally inspired of God, though they all preach the same doctrine, unfold the same experience, and enforce the same practice, yet differ widely in their mode of setting forth divine truths. Thus Paul shines conspicuously in setting forth the grand doctrines of the gospel, such as the union of the Church, as chosen in Christ, with her great covenant Head, salvation by free, sovereign, distinguishing, and superabounding grace, justification by faith in the Son of God, and the blessed and abundant fruits and privileges which spring out of the relationship of the Church to God from her union with the Son of His love. It was necessary for the instruction, edification, and consolation of the Church of God that these grand and glorious truths should be not only revealed in the gospel, and preached by the Apostles, but be put upon permanent record for all ages as a part of the inspired Scriptures. God therefore chose Paul and endowed him with the largest of intellects, the greatest amount of grace, and the fullest possession of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which perhaps ever met in any one man. Thus to him was given to write the greater part of the inspired Epistles of the New Testament.

James keeps on lower ground. He does not soar into those sublime heights in which his brother Paul found himself borne up and sustained with his strong pinion; but directing his pen against the perversions of Paul's gospel, which had crept into the Churches, and aiming his keen arrows against the Antinomians of his day, shows that there was no use talking about being justified by faith without works, if they meant thereby to exclude works altogether from having part or lot in the ministry of the gospel or the walk of a believer; and that it would not do to say if men only believed in Christ they might live as they listed, without paying the least regard to doing the will of God, or bringing forth the fruits of righteousness. All this loose, licentious, Antinomian doctrine, James cuts up root and branch.

Peter, melted and mellowed in the furnace of affliction, writes as one who had experienced much inward conflict, and therefore deals much with the trials, temptations, and sufferings of the Church of God; yet looks with steady eye, and points with clear pen, to the glory which is to be revealed that shall make amends for all.

Jude bursts forth into a stern and severe denunciation against the ungodly men, who, in his day, had abused the grand truths of gospel grace to walk after their own lusts. He points his keen pen against "the spots in their feasts of charity," that would seem in those days to have sprung up to defile the clean garments which should have been worn at such holy celebrations of the love and blood of the Lamb. He denounces the judgment of God against the "trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots; the clouds without water, and the wandering stars, to whom was reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

When we come to John, we seem to come into a different atmosphere—an atmosphere of love and holiness. He in his youth had laid his head upon the Redeemer's bosom, and there had drunk in large and deep draughts of love. He had stood by Him when upon the cross, had witnessed His agonies, heard His dying words, and seen the spear of the Roman soldier pierce His heart, so that out of it came blood and water. It seems, therefore, as if the reflection of what he had thus tasted, felt, and handled, tinged as it were his Epistle with golden light. If I may use a figure, it seems almost to resemble what we see on a summer eve, when the setting sun sheds a bright glow of golden light upon every object; or if I may borrow an illustration from art as well as nature, as we see it transferred to the canvas of great painters, such as Claude or Turner, where every object seems lit up with this golden beam. Thus when we come to this Epistle, it seems as if a ray of golden light, the light of holiness and love, spread itself over every word and bathed it with the hues of heaven. It is this peculiar atmosphere of love and holiness which makes every word of this Epistle so full of light, life, and power.

Standing then as if upon this high and holy ground, and breathing this heavenly air, this atmosphere of purity and love, the disciple whom Jesus loved sends a warning voice to the children of God in the words of our text, and solemnly cautions them against the love of the world. He knew their propensity, what was in the heart of man, and that though the saints of God were redeemed by the blood of Christ, taught by His Spirit, and wrought upon by His grace, yet still there was in them a carnal, earthly principle, which cleaved to, and loved the world. He therefore lifts up a warning voice: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." And to shew that this was not a matter of small importance, but involved in it life or death, he goes on to

testify that whatever profession a man might make, if he really loved the world, the love of the Father was not in his heart. He then takes a rapid view of all that was in the world, and summing it up under three heads, as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, passes upon it this condemning sentence, that it is not of the Father, but of the world. He then lifts up in still stronger strain his warning voice, that the world is passing away and the lust thereof, and that there will be a speedy end to all this show and glitter. But he adds, to encourage those who, in spite of all opposition, are doing the will of God, that when all things here below shall pass away and perish, they shall abide for ever.

This is a simple sketch of the way in which I shall this morning attempt to handle the subject before us; and you will see it is in close accord with the outline of our text.

I.—Let us **first** then consider John's **solemn admonition**: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

II.—**Secondly**. the **reasons** why we should not love the world, which are:

1. That if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in our heart.

2. That all that is in the world is ipso facto condemned as being not of the Father, and therefore opposed to and alien from Him.

3. That the world is passing away and the lust thereof.

III.—**Thirdly**. the **blessing** that rests upon him that doeth the will of God: that he abideth for ever.

I.—If there were not a strong tendency in the heart of the partakers of grace to love the world, why need this admonition be dropped by holy John? It is because there is so strong a tendency in the human mind to love the world, that this caution is needed; and happy are those by whom it is taken, heeded, and acted upon.

1. But what are we to understand by the expression "world," as used here? For if we are warned against the love of the world, we ought to have some clear understanding what is meant by the term, in order that we may know whether we love it or not.

i. The word "world" then, in Scripture, has various significations. It signifies sometimes the **material world;** as in the passages, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." In these passages is meant the material world, this lower sphere in which our earthly lot is cast.

ii. Sometimes it signifies **men and women generally,** human kind, man viewed simply as man. It seems to have this meaning in the passage, "God so loved the world." We cannot understand by "the world" here, the whole of the human race, as all being alike personal and definite objects of the love of God; for such a view would exclude the love which God has to His chosen people in Christ; and would make Him love Esau as much as Jacob, and Judas as well as John. Our Lord says to His heavenly Father in His special prayer, "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." **Joh 17:23** But if He loved the whole world with the same eternal love as He loved those whom He gave unto His dear Son,

what becomes of this special appeal of the Lord in the days of His flesh to His heavenly Father? It would have been no prevailing plea for God to keep them from evil, if every man in the world were loved with the same love as that wherewith He loved those for whom the Lord so specially and earnestly prayed. When, then, we read that "God loved the world," it must mean not every individual of the human race, but men and women, as partakers of flesh and blood, and thus distinct from angelic beings.

iii. Sometimes "the world" means **the Gentiles as** distinct from the Jews; as in that passage where Abraham is said to be "the heir of the world." **Ro 4:13** This is an explanation of the promise that "in him and in his seed, all the nations of the earth, should be blessed;" by which was meant, that salvation by the promised seed should not be limited to the lineal descendants of Abraham, but that the Gentiles also should have an interest in the work of redemption, and that Abraham should be the father, not only of the Jew, literally and lineally, but the father of the Gentile also, as walking in his steps.

iv. But in our text the expression "world" signifies, as it often does in the Scripture, that **general state of things** here below, that moral, or rather **immoral** world, which consists in the aggregate of men and women, who live, move, and act without the fear of God, dead in sin, who have no regard to the word of God, pay no heed to the will of God, and are altogether under the influence of the god and prince of this world. This, then, is the World which we are not to love.

Why should we not love it? There are many reasons, as I shall presently show; but the chief is, because it is a **fallen** world; fallen from its proper allegiance. Man was made in God's image, in God's likeness; therefore he owed allegiance

to God as his Creator, and the least he could do was to serve Him to whose creating hand and inspiring breath he owed the possession of body and soul. Nor was this difficult in him, as it is difficult in us; for sin had not corrupted his mind, nor deprived him of the power of obedience, as it has deprived us. As he bore the image of God stamped upon him, he could approach God in the purity of his native innocence, and his worship was acceptable to God as a pure offering. But when he sinned and fell, sin at once broke off that obedience, that allegiance, and that pure and simple dependence upon God which he had in his primitive innocence.

The great sin of Adam was, that he sinned wilfully, deliberately, and with his eyes open. The woman was deceived by the craft of Satan; but "Adam was not deceived" as she was, but sinned, knowing what he was doing, and not entangled in temptation, or persuaded to it by another. By thus deliberately disobeying God's command, he cast off his allegiance to God; and as man is, from his very nature in body and soul, a dependent creature, by withdrawing himself from dependence upon God, he fell under the dominion of Satan. Thus Satan, through whose temptation in the first instance sin was introduced, set himself up, with God's permission, as man's god and king. As, then, Adam's race all inherit Adam's sin and nature, Satan became the prince of this world, and brought the whole in subjection to himself; setting up his laws against God's laws, his maxims against God's maxims, his policy against God's counsel, and his infernal and wicked will against the pure and holy will of God.

Sin is of that nature that it is ever generating itself, and like fire, spreading as it goes. Thus when once Satan had breathed into the heart of man, and infected his nature with his own infernal spawn, it generated there and produced a crop similar to the spawn itself. As we see in the case of

natural disease, a breath of infection once caught will generate fever or smallpox through the whole body, so by the fall, human nature became thoroughly depraved, alienated from the life of God, subservient to Satan, madly in love with sin, opposed to God, and hostile to Him at every point.

It is this infection of our nature which makes the precept not to love the world so suitable and so important. As the subjects of regenerating grace, as having a living faith in the Lord Jesus, as having a good hope through grace, as loving the Lord, and cleaving to Him with purpose of heart, we publicly and openly profess to be the children of God; and as such we profess to come unto Him as the object of our worship, to obey Him as our Prince and King, to whom we owe allegiance. So also, as believers in the word of His grace, we profess to take His word to be our guide, His will to be our law, and His precepts to be the directing principle of our words and works. But we daily find, from painful experience, that there is not in us that willing heart, and that obedient mind, so as to make God's word and will the guide of our life. We fully acknowledge, and for the most part sincerely and earnestly desire, to walk in obedience to what He, in His holy word, has laid down as incumbent upon those who fear His name. But through the perversity of our mind, the weakness of the flesh, and the deep set corruption of our fallen nature, we find that there is in us a contrary and opposing principle to our better mind and will.

We fully see at times what this world is; how sunk in sin, how full of rebellion, perversity, and alienation from the life of God; how desperately and determinately opposed to everything that is holy, heavenly, or spiritual; how under the sentence of God's wrath, and that most justly. All this we see and feel. God, we trust, has given us a new heart and a new

spirit, which has separated us from the world that lieth in wickedness. And yet, strange to say, there is in us a cleaving to, and a loving the world, though we see it and feel it too, as I have described it. Now, how can this be explained, except that there is in us a corrupt principle in union with the world, and opposed to that inward life of God which hates it and is separate from it? Is not this what the apostle found when he said: "The good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not that I do?.... I find then a law that when I would do good evil is present with me." **Ro 7:19,21**

Now the question is, which principle is to reign and rule? Am I, if I possess and profess the fear of God, to obey God, to listen to His word and will, to seek to do those things which are pleasing in His sight? Or am I to love what God abhors, and thus really place myself amongst the ranks of the enemies of God and godliness? Surely it is by our love to things, that the point is decided where our heart and treasure is. And this will even hold good whether we apply the rule to measure the whole or to measure a part. I may not, I hope I do not love the world in the same full way as a carnal man loves it, to whom it is his all; but I may love it partially, if I do not love it fully, love a little of it if I do not love the whole of it, long after a slice of the cake, if I do not want to have and eat it all. But, just so far as I love the world and the things that are in the world, I love God's enemy; I love a state of things which is in direct opposition to the revealed will of God; I forsake my banner and range myself under the opposite flag; I stand in the ranks of those who are fighting against God and against whom God fights; and by my love toward them, I show my approbation of their principles, their maxims, their pursuits, their customs, and their ways, and so in heart, if not in person, I side with those who lie under the wrath and condemnation of God.

This, then, is the reason why God bids me not love the world; for if I love the world, my heart declines from the strait and narrow path, slips into an easy groove, walks in compliance with those who are travelling down the broad road, and like Ephraim, though armed, turns back in the day of battle. God, therefore, by His inspired apostle, drops this caution in my ears, and O that God the Holy Ghost would convey it into my heart and yours in all its sacred light, life, and grace: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

If this precept is to be carried out, we must not love the **men and women** of the world; we must not love their company, nor seek and take a pleasure in their society. The calls and claims of business, and in most of your cases the daily duties of your vocation in life, may, and indeed must take you into the world. The professional man must attend to his clients or patients; the tradesman must wait upon his customers; the mechanic must work at the same bench with his mate; and even those of us who are not so engaged are sometimes obliged to transact with worldly characters. But all this is a very different thing from loving their company and seeking their society. If your heart is under divine influence, the world will not hurt you so long as you do not mix with it more than you are absolutely compelled.

We are not called to go out of the world and shut up ourselves in monasteries and nunneries. What we have to shun, is the company of the world on those occasions when it is not needed. Thus you need not go out of the world to be separated from it. You may be out of the world and love it; you may be in the world and hate it. You may walk in Cheapside and have your heart in heaven; you may walk on Salisbury Plain and have your heart in Cheapside. It is where our heart is, where our affections are, and what we inwardly

love, which shews whether we are of the world or not; for you will observe, that the main force of the precept lies in this, "Love not the world." John does not say **Leave** the world, but do not **love** it. And why should John bid us so forcibly not to love it? For this simple reason, that love is the strongest passion of the human breast, and never can be satisfied without enjoyment and possession. If a man love a thing, he will have it if he can, sooner or later, by hook or by crook, by foul means or by fair means. If he is desperately in love with an object, he is miserable till he gain it; for love is the strongest passion that moves the human breast. You all know this who have ever been, to use a common expression, "in love;" and, though this is especially true of the love which man has for woman and woman for man, it is also true of all other love, though not perhaps to the same intense degree. If, therefore, a man love the world, he is sure to be straining every nerve to get at, and to possess the object of his love; and nothing will satisfy him but the enjoyment of that upon which his heart is set.

Now, viewing this love of the world as a disease, if we could find some mysterious remedy which would cure that propensity at the very root; if there were, say, some holy balm brought us by an angel from heaven, like the oil which, according to the Romish legend, was brought to anoint the kings of France, and we could drop, drop, drop it into the seat of all this worldly love and purge it out, cleanse, and remove it; and if, by the dropping in of this mysterious yet blessed oil, there could be communicated another love of a purer kind, of holier nature, which was fixed upon God Himself, and the things of God, how by this mysterious yet blessed remedy the disease would be removed, and how the love of the world would at once be purged out by the entrance of a better love, which would, so to speak, reach

down to, and wither it, and put another in its place, as a new root.

It is in grace as in nature. A strong love will drive out a weak one. Take the instance of a young man or young woman who may have a kind of roving affection toward some object; but let another object come before them who is more attractive, more winning, more beautiful, or more engaging, and let that new object not merely strike the eye, but strike a root into the natural affections, the old object is immediately dropped, and the roving affections, at once centre in the new object and there remain fixed and firm. So it is in divine things. You have, by nature, a roving eye and roaming heart, ever roaming after this and that idol, and that lover. And thus you go on for months or years, roving in affection after a multitude of worldly objects. But you are arrested by the power of God. The arrows of conviction pierce your conscience: you are made to cry for mercy, and in due time the Lord reveals Himself with power in your soul. Now when the Lord is pleased thus to shed abroad His love in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and to drop into the bosom a holier and purer, because a heavenly and spiritual love, then those roving affections which were loosely roaming after every worldly object, are gathered up, and the love of God coming into the soul in divine power, sets before us Jesus as the only object of our love. It is thus that another higher, purer, and more powerful love cures and purges that love of the world which, though it pleased us in our carnal days, yet was found in the end to bring with it only misery, bondage, and death.

2. You will observe that the precept takes a very wide range; it says: "Love not the world, neither **the things that are in the world.**" This is a very wide sentence. It stretches forth a hand of vast grasp. It places us, as it were, upon a high mountain, such as the Lord stood upon when tempted of Satan, and it says to us, "Look around you: now there is not

one of these things which you must love." It takes us, again, to the streets of a crowded city; it shows us shop windows filled with objects of beauty and ornament; it points us to all the wealth and grandeur of the rich and noble, and everything that the human heart admires and loves. And having thus set before us, as Satan did before our Lord upon the high mountain, the kingdoms of the world, it says, not as he did, "All this will I give you," but, "All this I take from you. None of these things are for you. You must not love one of these glittering baubles; you must not touch one of them, or scarcely look at them, lest, as with Achan, the golden wedge and the Babylonish garment should tempt you to take them and hide them in your tent."

The precept takes us through the world as a mother takes a child through a bazaar, with playthings and ornaments on every side, and says, "You must not touch one of these things." In some such similar way the precept would, as it were, take us through the world, and when we had looked at all its playthings and its ornaments, it will sound in our ears, "Don't touch any one of them; they are not yours; not for you to enjoy, not for you even to covet." Can anything less than this be intended by those words which should be ever sounding in the ears of the children of God, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world?"

II.—Now come the **reasons**, the first of which is as plain as it is decisive: "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

1. We may take it in two points of view: first, as a **test**; secondly, as a **remedy**.

Take it first as a **test**. Some of you may say, "I am very fond of hearing the gospel faithfully preached, and I could willingly

walk any distance to hear a sound, experimental minister, a real servant of Jesus Christ, who preached with savour, unction, and power. I have many years professed to know the things of God for myself, and I am very fond of hearing the truth set forth in accordance with my feelings." All this sounds well, and is indeed, more or less, the language of those who know and love the truth. But words at best are but words; and many speak well with their lips who speak very badly with their feet.

Apply, then, this test to your heart and to your life. Do you love the world, the things of time and sense? Are they entwined round your affections? Do they occupy the chief place in your heart? What are your pursuits, when free to follow them? I say pursuits, for I do not mean necessary engagements. Who are your companions? Whose society do you prefer? That of the light, vain, and trifling, the carnal and the worldly, or the tried, afflicted, exercised children of God? What subject most engages your mind, occupies your thoughts, dwells with you night and day, is to you your all in all? Is it the things of God, or the things of the world? What are you most bent upon attending to and acquiring? Is it the manifestation of the Lord's goodness and mercy, the breakings in of His pardoning love, the application of His atoning blood, the secret whispers of His favour to you, and the enjoyment of His presence? Or are you satisfied without these divine realities, and spend days and hours without ever longing after, or looking out for them? Now if so, the love of the Father is most certainly not in you. Talk as long and speak as loudly as you may about religion, this one thing will stamp "Tekel" upon it all. Weighed in the balance it is found wanting: If you love the world, and the things that are in the world, the love of God is not in your heart.

Now view it as a **remedy**. We all by nature love the world; and if you said you did not, I would not believe you, for I know you do. But is there no remedy for it? There is; and if you had it revealed to your heart you would find its effects. For what would the love of God do if it were in your heart?

i. First, it would shew you, by the contrast, what a wretched, ungodly, miserable world this is, and how different the love of God is from the love of the world. It would teach you that we cannot love God and mammon; and that either the love of the world must prevail and shut out the love of God; or the love of God prevail and keep out the love of the world.

ii. Secondly, you would find very gracious fruits and effects springing from it. If the love of God were in your heart, it would spiritualize your mind; it would draw forth every tender affection of your soul; it would make you seek and love communion with God and His dear Son; it would make you love the word of God, and be, from time to time, searching the Scriptures to know the mind and will of God, that you might walk before Him in the light of His countenance. You would also find, that all this would have a very separating effect upon your spirit, and would throw a great light upon what the world and the spirit of it really are; so that when you were forced unwillingly into it, you would continually sigh and say, "O, what a miserable world this is! I see nothing in it but sin and death, misery and bondage; and if I get entangled with the spirit of it, how it deadens my soul, carnalises my mind, robs me of every tender, gracious feeling, fills me with lightness and frivolity, and stamps inward death, darkness, and bondage upon my soul."

Now try this test by your own experience. You come from your chamber sometimes in the morning, with your mind in some measure fixed upon divine things. You have been

favoured during the night, or in getting up, or on your knees, or in reading a portion of the word, with some nearness to the Lord; and have felt a sweetness and blessedness in waiting upon Him. But you leave your peaceful home to follow the pursuits of your temporal calling; you go into the world, not willingly but of necessity, and mix with your fellow men. O what a change from your feelings in your bedroom, and the savour of which still abides upon your spirit. It is like going from day to night, or rather, from heaven to hell. What levity, what carnality, what worldly-mindedness, often what filthy and disgusting language, what a contempt of God's will and word, what dislike of His people and ways, and what a thorough determination to enjoy sin, cost what it will and may. What a poor, miserable creature do you feel yourself to be in such a scene and such society; and yet you cannot help saying to yourself, "O what a contrast! Am I, can I be happy here? Do I feel at home with these wretched men and women? Is there any comfort to my soul in their society? Do I feel I can join with them in their light, vain, and trifling conversation, and unite in spirit with their worldliness? O no, I feel I cannot do so; for what they hate I love, and what I love they hate." Thus you may judge, from your own experience, if you have any of the right sort, what the effect is of a little drop of the love of God shed abroad in the heart; what is the fruit of a gentle gale from the everlasting hills, a little of John's holiness and happiness breathed into the soul. Does it not clearly shew you what the world is, and does it not produce in your spirit such a separation from it, that you cannot but wonder at and adore the grace of God which has made such a difference between you and them?

John goes on to unfold more fully and clearly what is in the world, that he may give us another reason why we should not love it, summing up the things of the world under these

three pregnant and pointed heads: "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

i. The first is "**the lust of the flesh.**" By this we may, in the first place, understand those base sensual lusts which I shall not enlarge upon in a mixed congregation, as it would not be prudent, or scarcely consistent with modesty and propriety, to do so; and yet it is a feature in our fallen nature with which most of God's children are acquainted, and some by very painful experience.

The expression, lust of the flesh, embraces a very wide scope: and yet every part and portion which it reaches and denounces is opposed to God and godliness; for not only are there those baser lusts and more sensual propensities, at which I may hint and no more, intended by the expression, but it includes also **gluttony** in all its various branches. This is one of the commonest sins in the rich and prosperous, but is shared also with them by every rank and class, from the alderman to the mechanic, and indeed all who find a pleasure in stuffing and gorging themselves with acceptable food, or even take a delight in eating for eating sake.

"The lust of the flesh" embraces also the love of **strong drink** in all its various degrees and ramifications, from a propensity to, and an indulgence in moderate sips and drams and stimulating liquors, to positive drunkenness. There are many secret, greedy, and gluttonous professors whose god is their belly, and many hidden sippers of strong drink who carry a good face in the visible church of God; and who, as being undetected and unsuspected, feel no condemnation for their gluttonous appetite, or their secret indulgence in strong drink, excusing themselves with a plausible pretext that their health requires it, or they only take just so much as does them good, when all the while they are under the dominion

of the love of food or the love of drink. A tender conscience will feel the least excess in either. Solomon says, "Put a knife to thy throat if thou be a man given to appetite," **Pr 23:2**; as though he would say, "Stick a knife into thy gluttony; let out its life-blood, if such be thy besetment; hold thy hand when thou art tempted to take too much food and to eat it too greedily and pleasurably." What secret glutton, what sly lover of strong drink ever manifested spirituality of mind in lip or life, or ever was a pattern and an example to the church of God?

Every fleshly lust, whether they be the base and sensual lusts of our vile nature, or gluttony and love of drink, are all under the same marked disapprobation of God. They all come under the same unqualified sentence, that they are things in the world and of the world, and that God is not in them, but opposed to them. It matters not, therefore, what lust of the flesh it be, whether open or secret, whether strong or weak, whether countenanced by the example of others or generally disapproved of. If a man be under the influence and power of any lust of the flesh, so far he is not under the influence and power of the love of God.

You will observe, also, that it is not the actings of the flesh only, but the lust of the flesh which John condemns. Thus it is not only gross acts of criminal sin, indulged gluttony, or habits of secret drink, which John condemns, but the very desire after them. The Apostle declares that "they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," and that we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh; "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." **Ro 8:13** Now, nothing short of the love of God shed abroad in his heart will cleanse and purge a man from the lusts of the flesh, by operating upon his mind in the way I

have described. As so taught and blest, he will see such evil in sin, and especially in the lust of the flesh, that he will learn to hate it and himself for it; and as the Holy Spirit draws and guides his affections into a purer channel, and by the fear of God, in living exercise, subdues and mortifies the lusts of the flesh which he may painfully feel, he will not suffer them to have dominion over him.

ii. The next thing, which John denounces is "the lust of the eyes." This seems to include everything that gratifies the natural eyesight. What an avenue is the eye to sin, and how quickly, how instantaneously sin can pass in the way of lust through the eye into the inner chambers of the mind. Job made a covenant with his eyes, that he would not look upon a maid. And our Lord tells us, "Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." No one scarcely ever fell under the power of this special temptation but it first entered into his heart through his eye. It was so with David; it was so with Solomon; it was so with Samson. The man after God's own heart, the wisest and the strongest of the children of men, alike fell, and foully fell, through the lust of the eye.

Look also at the love of dress and display, and see the influence it exercises upon the weaker, or to speak more politely, the fairer sex. I believe that I shall not go very far wrong when I say that there is scarcely a woman of any age, except the very old, or of any rank or station, high or low, who is not, more or less, under the influence of this lust of the eye—who does not seek to adorn her person with dress to the utmost of her power, that she may raise envy in the eyes of her own sex, or please the eye of the opposite one. It is so deeply engrained in the female bosom, that it is continually manifesting itself, and even under the most unlooked for and extraordinary circumstances. I remember

reading some time ago an account given by a matron of some jail where female prisoners were confined, and where of course all wore the prison dress; but O the glee if one of these poor prisoners could get hold of a piece of ribbon and stick it in her dress. Thus even when shut up in a prison where they could see nobody but a gaoler and their imprisoned companions, the love of dress, so innate in the female heart, displayed itself in putting on the prison dress the ornament of a paltry piece of ribbon.

Are not all of us, whether men or women, guilty of the lust of the eye besides in the mere love of dress? How attractive to the eye of man is beauty and grace in woman, and I suppose I may add, how attractive to the eye of woman is manly vigour, with comely features set off by the bloom of health and youth on the cheek of man. And yet all this is but the lust of the eye; it only feeds the carnal mind; it only gratifies our natural senses, and if this lust be indulged in and carried out, none know into what paths of sin it may not lead. Many a woman has been seduced into sin by the love of dress and admiration; and many a man, attracted by the charm of female beauty, has made concerning faith awful shipwreck. We need well guard our eye—you, the female sex, lest you spend your time and thoughts upon making yourselves attractive to men; and you men, beware of being seduced by the charms and beauty of women. The lust of the eye has made even many a poor child grieve and groan during life, and perhaps made many a restless, if not dark and mournful death-bed. Therefore, God keep us from gratifying the lust of the eye, as well as the lust of the flesh. We can only do it at the expense of conscience; we can only do it to the robbery of our soul.

iii. John lifts up his voice a third time, and denounces "**the pride of life.**" O how this reigns in this great metropolis!

What an aspiring after living above their station in life seems to animate both high and low. What a spirit there is abroad to set men and women grasping after something to feed their pride and swell themselves into some kind of imaginary importance. How many seem willing almost to starve themselves and their families, and wear rags at home to make a display abroad, and are making every exertion to feed the pride of life, not only in dress, but in furniture; in living beyond their means; contracting debts which they will never be able to pay, and outrunning their annual income by extravagant expenditure. How many are drawn aside by this pride of life out of their right sphere; and sad to say, there are too many instances in which even the children of God have been so influenced by it as to wander sadly from the strait and narrow path.

2. Now all this lust of the flesh, and of the eye, as well as pride, that river in which the world swims, and in which too many, even of those who fear God, are tempted to dabble, is **ipso facto** condemned as not of the Father, but of the world. God is not here; His word is not here; His will is not here; His wisdom is not here; His love, goodness, presence, power, are none of them here. It is all man, false, fallen, deceived and deceiving man; it is all the spawn of maxims, pursuits, delight, and approbation of a world lying in the wicked one; of a world under the awful curse and denunciation of the Almighty. On which side, then, will you rank yourself? A lover of the world, or a lover of God? Which are you? "Well," some of you perhaps may say, "I scarcely know." You scarcely will know as long as you are halting between two opinions; as long as by your life and conduct you are walking hand in hand with the world. But if there be the life and fear of God in your breast, you must be a very miserable being in this state of doubt and uncertainty. You must have many cutting reflections upon your bed; must often hang your head before

God, and before His people too, and gloom must spread itself over your face, when silence and solitude leave you time to think and feel.

If the fear and love of God be in your soul, you cannot go out in affection after the world and God take no notice of it in your conscience, and never bring down His frown upon it sensibly in your heart. But you may say, "I would be more free from this wretched love of the world, but I cannot deliver myself." No, nor will you ever be freed until you fall down flat before God, crying to Him to deliver you from it. But should He answer your prayer, and bless you with a sense of His love, you would find when it came into your soul in divine power, it would in a moment effect what you could not do for yourself in a century. It would cleanse and purify you from that wretched love of the world which is now both your temptation and your burden, by giving you a better object of love; for it would take your affections and fix them upon things above, where Jesus sits at the right hand of God.

3. Observe what is to be the **end of all these things**, which is another **reason** why we should not love the world: "The world passeth away and the lust thereof."

The world and all that is in it comes to an end. Where are the great bulk of the men and women who fifty, sixty, or seventy years ago trod London streets? Where are they who rode about in their gay carriages, gave their splendid entertainments, decked themselves with feathers and jewels, and enjoyed all the pleasures of life? Where are they? The grave holds their bodies, and hell holds their souls. "The world **passeth** away." It is like a pageant, or a gay and splendid procession, which passes before the eye for a few minutes, then turns the corner of the street, and is lost to view. It is now to you who had looked upon it just as if it

were not, and is gone to amuse other eyes. So, could you go on for years enjoying all your natural heart could wish; lay up money by thousands; ride in your carriage; deck your person with jewellery; fill your house with splendid furniture; enjoy everything that earth can give; then there would come, some day or other, sickness to lay you upon a dying bed. To you the world has now passed away with all its lusts; with you all is now come to an end; and now you have, with a guilty soul, to face a holy God. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof."

All these lusts for which men have sold body and soul, half ruined their families, and stained their own name; all these lusts for which they were so mad that they would have them at any price, snatch them even from hell's mouth; all these lusts are passed away, and what have they left? A gnawing worm—a worm that can never die, and the wrath of God as an unquenchable fire. That is all which the love of the world, and all that is in it, can do for you, with all your toil and anxiety, or all your amusement and pleasure. You have not gained much perhaps of this world's goods, with all your striving after them; but could the world fill your heart with enjoyment, and your money bags with gold, as the dust of the grave will one day fill your mouth, it would be much to the same purpose. If you had got all the world, you would have got nothing after your coffin was screwed down but gravedust in your mouth. Such is the end of the world. "It passeth away and the lust thereof." This rings the knell of all that is in the world, the passing-bell which announces the coming of the great extinguisher of all human hopes and pleasures—the great and final extinguisher, **death**. Just as you put an extinguisher upon your candle before you step into bed, and all is dark, so the great extinguisher death extinguishes all the light of man. Only look and see how he sickens and dies, and is tumbled into the cemetery, where

his body is left to the worms, and his soul to **face** an angry God, on the great judgment day.

III.—Now look at the **blessing** which rests upon him "that doeth the will of God." He abideth for ever.

Compare the two characters. Take first, a man of the world, who says in his heart, "I will have as much of the world as ever I can get; I will spend my time, thoughts, money, all that I have to gain what my heart loves, to enjoy myself if I possibly can. I will not keep my heart back from any lust—whether lust of the eye, lust of the flesh, or the pride of life. I will have them all."

Now, contrast with this wretched worldling, the believing, obedient child of grace, who does the will of God in coming out of the world, in being separated from it, in abstaining from its society, in leaving it, as far as he can, consistently with his calling in life; and above all things, by having the love of God shed abroad in his heart. Mark how he seeks and endeavours not to love the world, nor the things that are in the world, but by the power of God's grace, to be separated from it in body, soul, and spirit. This man does the will of God, for God's command is, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing." He does the will of God in coming out and being separate; he does also the will of God in believing in His dear Son; he does the will of God by repenting of his sins with godly sorrow, which needs not to be repented of; he does the will of God by keeping close to His word, ever desirous to know His will and do it; he does the will of God by seeking to have testimonies, tokens, manifestations of the pardoning mercy and love of God to his soul, prizing the application of atoning blood and love more than thousands of gold and silver; he does the will of God when he chooses to suffer afflictions with the people

of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He does the will of God when he chooses to suffer persecution rather than deny his Master; when he would bear any amount of shame and scorn sooner than comply with the maxims and invitations of an ungodly world; and when he would sooner live alone with the Bible in his hand, and God's presence in his soul than be introduced to the highest company, mix with the most refined and educated, or the most polished society upon earth. He does the will of God when he seeks to have his life regulated by the revealed will of God, repents early of his sins when he is entangled in them, and seeks to have the blood of the Lamb sprinkled upon his conscience to purge it from their guilt, love, and power. And he does the will of God by ever labouring still to look right on, still to believe that what God has said is true, to stand by the truth and power of God's word, come what will, and suffer what he may.

Now such a man does the will of God, and God declares of him that "he abideth for ever." The work of God is in that man's heart, and that work abides for ever. When all empty profession comes to nought; when all boasting ceases; when loud talkers are silent in darkness, then the quiet, secret, and sacred work of God upon that man's soul will shine forth more and more. It abides, and therefore he abides. It is God's work in his heart and is not to be put out by the great extinguisher, nor blown out by the gusts of temptation, like a candle in a gale of wind. The love and goodness of God are with him in all his troubles, attend a dying bed, and go with him into eternity; when the work of God's grace upon his soul will be crowned with everlasting glory. Then he will stand for ever as a pillar in the temple of God and go no more out.

Now contrast the two. Here are two people now before me, sitting in the same pew, both professors of religion, but one, a secret lover of the world, and the other, a secret lover of God. They both can talk pretty much the same language, read the same Bible, sing the same hymns, and hear the same preaching; but one's heart goes out after his covetousness, after his lusts; and the other's heart goes out after his God. Now what will be the end of these two men? The one, when death, the great extinguisher comes, will be silent in darkness; and the other will shine like the stars for ever and ever. He lives well, will die well, and will rise well; for he will rise to immortal glory, when the Lord comes to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.