

AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION.

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(Continued from last issue.)

Offer this type of obedience now to the Governor. Will he accept it? Yet men insult the intelligence of God thus. After ten thousand wilful violations of His laws they say, "God knows my heart. He knows I desire to do His will."

A school teacher said with a broken heart, "I see myself as I am. I have been deceived. I always thought God knew my heart and He knew I desired to do His will; and I thought as long as He knew I desired to do His will that that was enough."

But we said to her, "Do you accept the desire of your pupils to obey the rules, or do you exact obedience of them?"

"Oh no," she replied, "the intention is not enough. I expect them to obey the rules."

Go thou and do likewise in dealing with God! He expects as much. He no more accepts the desire of obedience as a substitute for obedience than the school teacher or the judge. Does the husband exact the desire of fidelity from the wife, or fidelity? Is it not amazing we think God is satisfied with less than we are satisfied with? I tell you nay. He is not satisfied with your desires of obedience or your knowledge or approbation of His laws and will. He says "Do it, do it! happy are ye if you do it!"

"Take the will for the deed," passes current among men, but not with God, where it is possible to perform the doing of His will. His law is "Obey my voice and live."

Pretending to desire His will while not submitting the heart to Him is *hypocrisy*. Do you know that a vast number of professing Christians have gotten no further than pious desires to do His will at some far-off, misty, vague, indefinite future day? But to yield now, to submit now, to obey now is far from their thought. Still this people draw nigh with their lips and profess much love, but their heart is far from (submission to) me. "The pretending to desire God's will, while not doing it is *but a plea for present indulgence and ease*." Even as the student often desires more the leisure of to-day than the success of to-morrow. Though admonished to study, he wastes his time and he thus loses incomparably greater future pleasure when he is tossed to the rear in the struggle for existence. Of course he will tell you he *desires to succeed in life*, but he does not put forth the requisite effort which brings the success.

So of the soul who says, "I desire to so live that when I die I may have a home in heaven," tell him he must so live, he must search the scriptures and obey God. He must submit, he must yield, he must repent. But he had not thought of this phase of getting to heaven. Do you not see his feeble desires based on no knowledge, or wrong knowledge, of God's requirements in order to go to heaven, are not sufficient while he refuses to do the things God says? In reality this man does not submit to God. He only has the desire to do it some other time. But not now. From this consideration I object to popular revival methods. A preference of church or a desire to lead a better life is taken for the thing itself. The converts express desire for a certain church or preacher and even to lead a better life, but they are (in most cases) not now converted. They desire to be and look to joining the church to bring about this happy result, not now, of course, but some other time. Whereas God demands repentance *now*, submission *now*, a new

heart *now*! Any desire for God or salvation which does not submit to His claims now, is only stubbornness and rebellion which will damn the soul if not repented of. God demands as there was a willing mind, now that he perform the doing of it. Do you not see that for a child to protest desire to obey his earthly father, while persisting in disobeying him, is the most exasperating conduct. So similar procedure grieves God. It insults His intelligence to say, "Father, I desire to obey thee," while making no effort so to do. Oh, I love the Bible and wish to live in harmony with its teachings; I read it and admire it. "Happy are ye if ye *do* these things."

SUBTLE SOURCES OF DECEPTION.

Men mistake constitutional approbation of God's law, morality and spirituality, for obedience. Even bad men constitutionally approve the law of God, though they have no idea of submitting to it as the rule of their lives. One of the most beautiful letters we ever received was written by a man who went into ecstasies in contemplation of the beauties of God's character and law. But the poor fellow still lives on in adultery.

Again, men are deceived by taking obedience and yieldedness in the abstract with possessions they do not possess, for the actual willing God's will in what they do possess. Hence we hear much of what men would do for the poor if they only had a million dollars. This is only an abstract obedience. They will squirm if you bring the principle home and pin them down to using the means possessed to lift burdens. For example, a man said to his neighbor, "If you had a hundred horses and a hundred sheep and a hundred hogs and a hundred cattle, would you be willing to give God fifty of each?" "Sure I would," was the reply. "If you had two hogs, would you give God one?" "No I wouldn't," angrily, "and you have no right to ask me such a question when you know I have only two hogs."

So men have a strong desire to do God's will in the abstract, but shrink from the practical application. They love much in word and tongue, but little in deed and truth.

The *desire* to help another is not sufficient. We must *bear* (actually) one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. Desire to be unselfish will not answer. We must be unselfish—the desire avails naught while we continue in our selfishness.

This class of deceived souls have mistaken feeling or emotion for religion. There is a distinction between feeling and will. We often experience emotions and feeling which do not result in action; will is concerned with action. If Jesus has only conquered us till our wills are wholly on His side. "He that willeth to do (and so does) shall know."

One might have ever so many emotions in contemplation of the needs of the poor and heathen. He might even weep when their sufferings are portrayed, even shed tears at their degradation and sin. But what does all this desire and emotion amount to while our barns are filled with plenty and we have thousands tied up in investments and banks, and yet made no effort to relieve their distress?

Until will is exercised and we act, God is not pleased. As the practical James said, "Hearken, my brethren, what doth it profit to say, 'be clothed, be filled, and yet we give not the things which are needful?'" Or John, the beloved, "If we see our brother have need and shut up our bowels of compassion (pocketbook) from him, how dwells the love of God in us?" That story is very familiar of the man who said he was very sorry for an afflicted widow.

Here is the religion of emotion, desire, sentiment. Another man steps forward and says, "I am sorry, too. Take her ten dollars' worth of groceries for me." Here is where will comes in. This incident is a perfect illustration of the distinction between desire and will, or the wish and action.

EMOTIONAL NOT THE HIGHEST TYPE.

Emotion has its place in religion. We only condemn the false. Jesus spoke of some who received His word with glad joyous emotions; but by and by, when persecutions or afflictions arose because of the word, they were easily offended. It is so much easier to shout than to suffer. Demonstration is so much less trouble than self-denial. Many are making the sad mistake of judging their progress by their emotions. The worldling feels emotions too, in contemplation of things religious; still he goes on in his selfishness. A Russian lady wept at the sad plight of a fictitious character in the play. Doubtless she felt she was not so bad after all. She could still weep. Her heart was not altogether hard; but while she was shedding the surface tear her poor coachman froze to death outside.

Is it a time to be concerned about our selfish joys when the world is dying? Has God saved us to keep us feeling good all the while, or to serve? Finney said, "The Christian who is all the while taken up with personal blessings is seldom a real soul winner. He would rather be always on the ecstatic mountain top than at its foot casting out devils. He prefers transfiguration glory to Gethsemane agony for souls."

We said to a railroad official, "What does your system care about your shouting and lauding its praises to the skies while you neglect to carry out and obey orders?" Now what does God care about your singing and shouting his praises and calling him "Lord, Lord," while you persist in not doing the things he says? A brother arose in a meeting and said emotionally, "I desire to do His will." We simply said, "Brother, are you doing it?" His friendship for us ceased forthwith.

There is a blessedly sanctified man of our acquaintance. He has no form or comeliness that we should desire him. He is very homely. He cares nothing about his own personal joys or blessings, but he carries the world on his heart. He is never content unless souls are being travailed into the kingdom. God honors heart agonies. At times it seems he will die from the Spirit's unutterable groanings. God recompenses his prayers with scores of souls. The willing, serving, volitional Christian is the highest type. Would you have a servant around who always wanted you to make him feel glad and joyous? Nay, you want service. So of God. He has not designed a perpetual spiritual outing or picnic for us, but service for others; and in living, toiling, fasting, praying, denying ourselves for others, we shall find the highest joy.—Christian Witness.

A SEVENFOLD CONSECRATION.

1. My eyes are upon Jesus. (Heb. 12, 2.)
2. My feet to be in the race. (Heb. 12, 1.)
3. My hands to minister to others. (Eph. 4, 28.)
4. My mind to be set on things above. (Col. 3, 2, margin.)
5. My heart to be established in grace. (Heb. 13, 9.)
6. My body to be a living sacrifice. (Rom. 12, 1.)
7. Myself to be blameless at the coming of Jesus Christ. (1 Thes. 5, 23.)—*Selected.*