

LOVE MIGHTIER THAN FEAR

Text: 1st John IV:18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.

One of the greatest enemies to the peace and happiness of the soul is the spirit of fear. It is not merely a fortress in which carnality hides and makes its attacks, it is the essential element of carnality. It is the inspirer of unbelief, the antagonist of faith and the adulterator and perverter of love, till love comes to full strength and proves its superior power. Personify Fear and we see it as a great hulking form hanging on the outskirts of our soul, or else sweeping in with its awful shadowy form to cast a pall of darkness over all. Joy hangs up its harp when fear is in the ascendent; faith takes on a questioning attitude under the shadow of fear; and love seems to compromise its testimony under its threatening tones. It is fear that magnifies the dangers in the way and makes little kittens look like lions. It prophesies defeat and failure to everyone who dares venture out without a regular schedule for future action, and at least one bridge left that will make retreat possible. So until there has come into our soul a power mightier than this monster Fear, which can conquer and cast him out, the soul is more or less in bondage to this enemy of its progress heavenward.

But John tells us there is a power more than a match for this enemy of our soul. It is Love; Love come to its full stature and strength; Love made perfect through the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This love does not merely come to grips with fear and hold him down; Love says there is no room in the soul for you and me together: out you must go. Perfect Love casteth out Fear; for Fear hath torment and he that feareth is not made perfect in love.

A good theological definition of entire sanctification is: "A second definite work of grace wrought in the heart of the fully justified believer instantaneously by faith, in which the affections are purified from all sin and exalted to a supreme love for God." Love becomes the dominator and ruling power. And one of the evidences that this work has been wrought in us in that carnal fear is gone. The fear that had torment.

Gone is the fear of man. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." Carnal fear cringes before those of our own household, for often that which makes us a true Christian in the sight of God may mean reproach, scorn and separation by those nearest to us by earthly ties. When one has been delivered from fear of his own household that has been a great victory. The preacher in the pulpit is saved from the fear of the pew, even the man who would be boss and dictate the policy of the church.

"Cease from men whose breath is in his nostrils for wherein is he to be accounted of." Oh the joy of being saved from the fear of what people will say or what they won't say! what they will do or what they won't do! True, we must ever have respect for rules of society, and perfect love does not have to assume a defiant, arrogant attitude, but, it cannot tone down its testimony to please carnal devotees, or fail to praise the Lord when the Spirit gives the impulse. It was when the proud Pharisees, who had crucified Jesus, and had forbidden the apostles to preach the resurrection in their presence, saw the boldness of Peter and John, and knew they had no college degrees, and had little book learning, they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. This was

the same Peter who had denied his Lord with bitter oaths in the presence of a little maid, only a few days before. Something had happened to Peter; it is the same experience that you and I must have if we are to be bold for Christ in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom we are to shine as lights in the world.

Again, this love drives out of our soul the fear of defeat and failure. We trust no longer to the arm of flesh. "The Lord is our light and our salvation whom shall we fear, the Lord is the strength of our life of whom shall we be afraid?" It was carnal fear that inspired the report of the ten spies. It was the spirit of faith working by perfect love that enabled Joshua and Caleb to cry "Let us go up at once for we are well able to overcome it." Hear the old prophet cry: "Fear thou not for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness". "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the floods they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned neither shall its flame kindle upon thee."

If this promise is mine and a thousand more just as reassuring, how can I fret or be afraid of the future even though Satan is set to trap and defeat me! He could easily defeat me but he that is in me is greater than he that is in the world. Love cries out "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Hallelujah!

No, I need not be afraid of poverty or the poor house. When I was a pastor, in Eaton, N. Y., I often preached in the county house. We once called it the "Poor House." It was a beautiful place. Lovely farm and splendid buildings. I told my wife that there was little to dread in going to the county house. I had to be willing for that when I made my consecration. The name of it of course would not sound nice; but the fare was most excellent.

Not so long ago, some practical jokers put on a great broadcast which purported to be an invasion of our earth from another planet, with atomic bombs and other awful enginery of destruction. The blasts that came over the air were most terrifying. And it was that to a host of listeners who took it not as a joke but as awful realism. Many rushed into the streets pale-faced and shrieking in fear. They thought the end of the world had come. It was not till the din had subsided and a voice over the air assured everyone that it was only a pantomime, were all fears quenched.

If such fear can spring up in the hearts of people through the perpetration of a joke, what will be the fear of men when that awful day shall come of which Peter speaks, coming as a thief in the night in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; when the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. The awful devastating power of the atomic bomb, no doubt only in the incipient stage of its development, makes us feel that Peter was speaking under the inspiration of Almighty God. Today we are seeing the possibility of this earth being destroyed by the inventions of science. American statesmen have been painting in most lurid colors, the devastation to be wrought by the next war, when entire cities will be annihilated by a few bombs. But the coming of Jesus will be more terrible than atomic war. The thought of it is enough to make us serious and sober;

but perfect love can save us from the bondage of carnal fear. Peter brightens the scene by saying, "Nevertheless we according to his promise look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." How can righteousness dwell in the earth? Not in mountains and hills or any material creation. It must dwell in the hearts of wholly sanctified men and women. I somehow feel with this old world completely renovated; a perfectly equalized climate, no storms or pestilences; no microbes of disease and death, no sickness or sighing—everything made new. This makes me feel that such a place with sin all gone would be a good enough heaven to live in forever.

But who can predict the immediate future, when Peter says "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day?" David of old shouted his confidence, "God is our Refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Hallelujah! is it not sweet to rest in God and to feel assured that he is still at the helm. Our hearts can cry "Come Lord Jesus; we love thy appearing!"

In the opinion of many of my brethren I am not orthodox on the Second Coming of our Lord. If I thought it were going to be in my time, I would not bother buying a house, enlarging my farm, or scrimping and scraping in order to add to my bank account. The Millerites believed what they preached and sold out everything and clad in white ascended to the top of a mountain to be caught up with the Lord in the air. But they came down in disappointment, to be jollied by their unbelieving neighbors, and to be a warning to all prophets who should come.

The main thing is to be ready. He may come suddenly. If Love fills your heart you will not be taken by surprise; you will be holding the things of this life loosely. In this Perfect Love we have a real coming of Jesus to our little world. He is the center and the circumference of all our joys, desires and ambitions. But after all we each walk every day near the death line. A great holiness leader went to bed the other night seemingly quite well. In the night his wife heard him breathing heavily. She soon found that he was gone. Thus may He come for you and me. "Be ye therefor ready for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." We all feel that the able, godly Dr. Chapman was ready.

But the apostle says that Jesus came that he might deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Even the great Dr. Samuel Johnson, accounted the most brilliant controversialist in all England, confessed that his greatest dread was that of death. Some have such a fear of death that they rush to meet it. This was seen in the appearance of Halley's comet, concerning which many prophecies were made of awful world disaster by a collision. The fears of some became so great they committed suicide.

I don't know how I would feel if a man were to poke a gun in my ribs some dark night and demand my money. John Wesley met the gaze of the highwayman and said, "I am a servant of the Lord; and what I have belongs to him; take it if you dare." The robber was confounded and let Mr. Wesley pass. How great the bondage of those who sleep behind heavily barricaded doors in a mansion surrounded by high walls. And when they go forth it is to be

(Continued on Page 8)