

Study for the Month of March, 2009

BIBLICAL PERFECTION

Part XI, Last Part

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This is the final issue on the topic of Biblical Perfection, although the topic itself, by its very nature, as this study has amply shown, is as endless and measureless as the fullness of the Godhead bodily as it is in Jesus. Col. 1: 18; 2:9. The plan of redemption, as spelled out in minute detail in the sanctuary message, was so designed in the councils of heaven that any and all sinners who haven't yet committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit, can, by simple, humble faith, receive Christ and begin their walk on earth with Him, each day growing more and more into His moral character likeness or *image*. Such will, during their lifetime, finally reach character perfection *in their sphere*, even as the Father is perfect *in His sphere*, fulfilling Christ's command: "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Matt. 5:48.

All such, yet in their fallen, human flesh nature, will reach *the condition of sinlessness* that Adam and Eve had *before* their fall. By constantly appropriating the empowering grace of Christ—the divine nature imparted by the Holy Spirit—will finally gain the victory over every sin, temptation, and besetment, perfecting their lives "by bringing every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10: 5. Christ was, in fact and truth fully revealed in and through them which Paul says, "is the hope of glory." Col. 1:26, 27. Like their Master Jesus Christ, they were perfected through self-denial and suffering. Luke 9: 23; Heb. 5:8, 9.

This glorious perfection is even more possible and dramatic in the very last remnant of earth's probation time for the contrast between the true followers of Christ and the professed Christian follower of the antichrist will be complete and unmistakable. Religious zeal will not be wanting in both classes of people but one will fully manifest the venom with which the papacy displayed when anyone refused to bow down and accept their edicts; the other will be proscribed and persecuted for refusing the compromise the truth even at the price of losing their lives.

Such was the demonstrated typical experience of Enoch as he walked with God for three hundred years---just before the Flood destroyed that long-lived, wicked, generation. **Enoch**, whose name means *dedicated*, lived a godly life that pleased God so much that He took him to heaven—the very first mortal to be translated to heaven without tasting death. Heb. 11:5; Gen. 5: 21-24. **Elijah**, whose name means *Jehovah is God*, was the next one translated to heaven after his appointed work of battling the great apostasy of his time was accomplished. 2 Kings 2: 1-15.

Such will be the *combined* antitypical experience of **144,000** literal saints in the very last remnant of time, just before earth's probation ends. They are the living trophies and

proof of God to present to Satan, the fallen churches, the world, and the whole universe that *perfect obedience* is possible in every sinner by the grace of God, in the very midst and in the final, darkest period of earth's fallen history when every deception, test and trial that Satan has ever conceived and has been finally and fully administered.

All the rest of the perfect overcomers in Christ will be laid to rest and will come up either in the special resurrection at the seventh and last plague or during the general resurrection when Christ appears through the clouds.

We will now pick up from where we left off in our last issue that simulates an interview with Daniel T. Bourdeau, and end with several more references from the law and testimony (Isa. 8:20)

Bodily Cleanliness

NF: As has been said, “cleanliness is next to godliness.” How closely connected to sanctification or character perfection is bodily cleanliness, as some believers think that it little matters as long as they are overcoming their weaknesses and sins?

DB: “It may be thought by some that this point is foreign to the subject. But its bearing on the subject will be readily seen, if it can be shown that bodily cleanliness is a duty enjoined by the Lord on His people. Now this is shown in the following New Testament Scriptures: ‘But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you –(See Eph. 5: 3, 5, 6; 2 Cor. 6:1; 1 Thess. 4:7; James 1:19).

NF: Did God specify bodily cleanliness with ancient Israel?

DB: “When God separated the children of Israel from other nations that they might be a holy people unto Himself, He enjoined upon them physical cleanliness, by enacting and enforcing certain laws on *diet* and on *physical purification*. By these laws the Israelites were commanded to wash their bodies and their garments when they had become unclean, and were made to see the propriety of keeping their persons, their garments and dwellings clean. And they saw the importance of being clean when they appeared before the Lord. Now God cannot be less particular with us in this respect than He was with His ancient people. He is pure and holy as He was then, and requires His people to be pure and clean in body as well as in mind.”

NF: On what grounds is God's requirement for bodily cleanliness based upon?

DB: “God's requisitions respecting body cleanliness, are not merely arbitrary, but are grounded on reasons connected with health, self-respect, respect for our fellow-creatures, and respect and reverence for our Creator. To attend to body cleanliness by washing the body and its garments occasionally, is highly conducive to health. Filthiness genders disease and corruption. Many diseases are caused by suffering the pores of the skin to be clogged with filth and dirt. When the pores are thus clogged they fail to do their work, viz., to throw off by perspiration, impurities which would remain in the system and eventually injure the body, by hindering the circulation of the blood and producing various diseases.

“But let the body be washed with pure water, and *with proper exercise*, the pores will fulfill their function, the circulation of the blood will be helped, and nature will be *more apt* to keep off disease. But to keep our bodies pure, we must not only wash the body and its garments, we must divest ourselves of all *impure* physical habits, and see to it that we eat clean food, and breathe pure air, and that our dwellings and all that pertains to them, be kept clean; and healthy results will follow. Thus we see that cleanliness must be attended to as a matter of self-preservation. To attend to cleanliness evinces self-respect and respect for others. By neglecting cleanliness, we show a lack of self-respect for our own persons, and for those with whom we associate.”

NF: Can we grieve the Holy Spirit by unclean habits?

DB: “Lovers of purity cannot look with complacency upon persons of filthy habits; neither can they fully delight themselves in their society. And will the Holy Spirit and good angels approbate and delight to abide with filthy persons? When persons who love taste and purity expect a visit from those whom they respect, how natural it is for them to clean up, that they may be in a condition to receive them. So should we purify our bodies as well as our minds, that we may be in readiness to receive the Holy Spirit and the ministration of the good angels, and to worship the Lord with His saints. Nature itself teaches us that we should keep our persons clean. Even individuals of unclean habits, who have not entirely lost their fine feelings and sense of propriety, will appear *ashamed* when they fall in with the clean and tidy unawares. And how would they feel if they were introduced into the presence of the pure in Heaven. Yet known to the Lord is the condition of all; for all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do [Heb. 4:13].

NF: Is it possible to be filthy in person and be able to appreciate and comprehend the deep things of God in His word?

DB: “Real filthy persons are unrefined in their taste, for, and discernment of, spiritual things, and cannot fully appreciate the pure and elevating truths of God’s word unless they reform by addicting themselves to clean and refined physical habits. And though we may to a certain degree attend to physical purity without being pure in heart, yet we cannot be said to be wholly sanctified if we neglect bodily cleanliness.”

Comments:

These valuable insights on bodily cleanliness by Daniel Bourdeau, him being the earliest French convert to the Advent faith and eminently knowledgeable of the history of the godly Waldenses and United Brethren of Europe, quite naturally assumes that (a) the individual is of a rational mind (b) is not so physically handicapped that he cannot, on his own, maintain the ideal condition of bodily cleanliness, particularly so if there is no one to assist him. Furthermore, temperance in all things also warns against over-emphasizing and overdoing bodily cleanliness to the point that it becomes an obsession. Some carry these to fanatical extremes so that they look down on those who might not be able to bathe or change their clothes as often as they do, such as the weak or destitute, etc. The Waldenses, the holy people of God hiding in the wilderness and forests for centuries, particularly in the deep fastness of the frigid parts of the Alps, and constantly on the run, could not bathe as often as Christians living in the warmer parts of the earth.

AFFECTIONS

Note: In the King James Version the word affection is the English translation of several Greek words, such as in: 1 Cor. 7: 15 (Strong's# 4698); Col. 3:2 (Strong's# 5426); Col. 3:5 (# 3806); 2 Tim. 3: 3 (# 794).

Webster defines it affection as: "(Noun): a feeling or emotion, now usually a moderate one. Bent of mind; natural impulse swaying the mind; disposition; a settled good will; zealous tender attachment; love, as *filial* affection—often in the plural. (Obsession): a condition, state, or mode of being which is not essential or unalterable; as the *affections* of time and place. (Psychological): the feeling aspect of consciousness, as in pleasure, displeasure, or any emotion;--contrasted with *cognition* and conation. Synonymous with tenderness, fondness; attachment."- *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, fifth edition, 1942.*

NF: We now turn our discussion on the topic of affections. Paul says, "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Rom. 12:10). Can such honorable affections become corrupted in any way?

DB: "Man by creation, is endowed with affections with which to love. Without affections, man would be unhappy indeed. He could have no feeling, no heart, in his devotions, and in the performance of his several duties, and could know none of the sweets and satisfaction produced by a proper attachment for those things which are held out as objects of his love. The affections were designed to serve as a link to sweetly unite us to the Creator, to Christ and heavenly things, to our fellow creatures, and various other objects that we are related to, and with which we have to do, and to give true grace and unction to all we say and do.

NF: How can we prevent such affections from going awry?

DB: "The affections should be exercised according to knowledge and judgment. Says Paul, 'And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment (or sense, margin); that you may approve things that are excellent (or try things that differ, margin); that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.' Phil. 1: 9, 10, K.J.V. *The affections should be proportioned to the just value of things, and God should be the first object of our love. His value cannot be too highly estimated. He is supreme in all His perfections. In Him centers all goodness—all that is lovely. The more we become with God's glorious and exalted character, the more we see in Him that is to be loved. To Him all creatures and created objects owe their existence. In Him we live and move and have our being [], and from Him we receive all our blessings; and it is self-evident that our affections should be supremely set on Him. In other words, we should love Him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. Luke 10: 27; Matt. 22:37.*"

NF: That is an excellent magnification of the first of all commandments. A.T. Jones, in his exposition "The Individuality of Religion" introduces his powerful arguments against the introduction of the Breckenridge Sunday Law Bill to Congress in 1889, with the same thoughts though couched in different words. Such first all affections and duties belong to Christ as well, doesn't it?

DB: Definitely! “Christ should be loved as the blessed and exalted, and only begotten Son of God, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. John 3:16; 1 John 4:9; Phil. 2:6; as one who is possessed of the all the fullness of the Godhead, through whom, and for whom, all things were made, and by whom we have redemption.’ Col. 2:9; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 5:9; as the being who is One with the Father, and is entitled to *equal* honor with the Father, John 10: 30; 5:23; as the chief among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely, whom angels adore, and who should be revered and worshipped by every son and daughter of Adam. Song of Solomon 6:10, 16; Heb. 1: 6, etc., etc. In short, Christ should be loved with the same affection with which we should love the Father. All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. ‘Him that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him.’ John 5:23, KJV.”

NF: The Authorized Version says, “Set your *affection* on things above, not on things of the earth” (Col. 3:2), while the N.K.J.V. says, “Set your *mind* on things above, not on things on the earth,” so does the N.I.V and the Open Bible. The thought is the same when we understand the expanded meaning of the word “mind” as used in the Bible, as when Paul says, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 2:5, KJV. We are likewise commanded “to love our neighbor as ourselves.” How do we put into proper spiritual perspective the affections we have for God and for all mankind whom God loves as much—for He died for all sinners? Would there be any difference between loving one of God’s true followers and the really wicked ones?

DB: “Our love for heavenly things should be as much stronger than that for earthly things, as the heavenly are above the earth, and as eternal things are infinitely more valuable than temporal things. But our fellow-creatures also claim our affections. As they are worth less than the Creator, we should love them less than God. But we can judge of their worth by the exalted position that they occupy in God’s creation, and by the sacrifice that was made to redeem them. As beings who are God’s intelligent and responsible creatures as well as ourselves, and are the objects of His general care, love and mercy equally with ourselves, sustaining the same relation to God that we do, and to us, that we do to them, and having the same rights by creation that we have, we should love them as ourselves. But while we are love our fellow-beings in harmony with these principles, *our affections for them must be regulated by their moral condition.*”

NF: **How, and in what way should our affections for our fellow-beings be “regulated by their moral condition”? Isn’t this being judgmental in any way?**

DB: “Not that we are to *hate* anyone, or refrain from loving the wicked. For if we love only the good; if we love only those who love us, as the Savior says, what reward have we? We should love all men, our enemies not excepted. *But we cannot always love the wicked with a love of approbation and complacency*, yet our affections for them should be blended with pity and commiseration, and with a desire to promote their happiness.”

“Special ties unite us to the good. We love them with a special love because there is more in them in them to be loved than in others. *We should esteem them highly because of their moral worth; for the sake of the work that God has wrought in them, and for their works’ sake.* Those things that man was made to have dominion over, and which might be termed man’s property, having made to serve man, and being less valuable than man, should be loved less than man, and less than the Creator [such as pet animals].”

NF: Does this in any way mean then that we can love the world and things of this world as long as it is *less* the love we have for God and heavenly things? How do we harmonize 1 John 2: 15-17 and John 3:16?

DB: “To this we reply, that the world *as perverted in its use by sin and sinners, should not be loved.* To love it thus, would be loving it to excess, and with the love that we owe to God and to our brother. If we love the world and the things that are in the world with our *best affections*, of course the love of the Father is *not* in us.

“But the world *as* made by the Creator should be esteemed and loved for His sake, and for the *uses* for which it was designed. True, the Bible furnishes no special command to love the world. We see no need of such a command; for man in his *fallen* condition is naturally inclined to love the world *more* than he ought. Yet the general tenor of the Scriptures shows that we should place a *proper* estimate upon those things which God has given us for our use and for His glory. We see that the *knowledge* of the nature, worth, and condition of things, is requisite in order that we may know *how* to bestow our affections; and it is evident that we should, as far as our knowledge extends, love all that God loves.”

NF: “But how may we know that and evince to others that our affections are sanctified, and that we love as we should?” (in the original).

DB: “This is the grand, the all-important question on this subject. We get a clue to an answer on this point, in Phil. 1:9-11, a portion of which has already been introduced. Paul having shown that love should *abound in knowledge and judgment*, says, ‘Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God,’ V. 11, thus *connecting genuine love with the fruits of righteousness*, and intimating that those who love aright are filled with the fruits of righteousness, or right doing. With this view accords the following injunction from the apostle whom Jesus loved: ‘My little children let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.’ 1 John 3:18.”

NF: Does this mean that expressing proper words of love and affection are out of place?

DB: “We are not to understand by these words that we should not show our love with our tongues, and with our words; for if our affections are *sanctified* we shall speak accordingly.”

NF: Then where does danger lurk?

DB: “But there is such a thing as feigned love. For instance, the prophet Ezekiel speaks of those who show much love with their mouth, but their heart is after covetousness. Eze. 33: 31. Again, the Scriptures speak of, and encourage unfeigned love, which prove that the opposite exists. 1 Cor. 6: 6; 1 Pet. 1:2. There is danger of boasting of sanctified affections and perfect love, while the affections are not sanctified and perfect love is not enjoyed and practiced. But there is no danger of deception on this point if we love in deed and truth. Hence the fitness and force of John’s injunction.”

NF: Dos that mean that unless our affections are *fully* sanctified and we yet do not enjoy *perfect* love that we should not even attempt to express words of affection? Isn’t it true that what we also say with our mouth

reaches our ears and thus influences us either for good or evil? What if we *feel* like saying it? Should we suppress it?

DB: “To say that our affections are sanctified and that we enjoy perfect love is a very easy task. The wickedest person under the sun can *say* this as strongly as the best Christian. But to *show* that our affections are sanctified by *corresponding good deeds* is not an easy task. If love consisted merely in saying that we love, all that would be necessary on the part of God to show us how to love would simply be, Say, I love. But to meet the faith and practice of thousands of *religionists* of the present age, the Lord would have to add, because I *feel* in my heart. But there are those who will not accept men’s feeling, and say-so in the matter, though many, alas! have been driven away from the path of holiness by false pretensions to sanctified affections and perfect love.”

NF: **That is so true. Mainstream Christian denominations for the longest time have maintained that all Christians have already been saved by grace, and any attempt to obey the Ten Commandments, particularly the Creation Sabbath of the fourth commandment was denounced or ridiculed as “boasting” and “legalism” and of making of no effect the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary. But suddenly, without proper prior notice explaining in detail as to why they were suddenly reversing their own theological antinomian platform, with corresponding apologies by 2006, major denominations have suddenly flip-flopped and are aligned with a Ten Commandment Commission Their first annual Ten Commandment day was celebrated on, you guessed it right, Sunday, May 6, and will be held annually on the first Sunday of each month.**

NOTE: For those who understand the core issue of the final chapters of the great controversy and how it was prophesied in Revelation 13 to be staged *first* in America, the “lamb-like beast,” with the ensuing formation of the “image to the beast,” recent developments unmistakably indicate that we are rapidly nearing its fulfillment. The once-*Protestant* Christian churches of America, who used to protest against the papacy and the Church of Rome and their doctrines, now called mainstream *Evangelical* Christian churches, have already made their bold move. The **Ten Commandments Commission** was formed in the Spring of 2005, following the Court Rulings against the Ten Commandments. . .” The first annual Ten Commandments Day was celebrated May 7, 2006, **Sunday**, and will be held annually on the **first Sunday of each month** thereafter, so says their website: www.tencommandmentsday.com/commission.html. The Commission calls itself “Watchmen United on the Wall.” The “wall” here meant is the law—as *altered* by the “man of sin” because their interpretation of the Sabbath is Sunday. These are the very steps that will lead to the eventual breaking down of the wall *separating* church and state (First Amendment) in the long-anticipated passage of the Sunday Law—rendering it the “mark of the beast.” We should review and continue updating ourselves with the developments of this end-time test. I intend to do in this in the coming issues.

DB: “We show our love to God by obeying Him, and we should obey Him not only with our tongues, but with *all* the power of our beings. Hence, we are commanded to love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. Again, we evince our love to God by keeping His commandments. ‘This is the love of God,’ says John, ‘that we keep His commandments.’ 1 John 5:3. And in like manner we show our love to Christ by keeping His commandments or sayings. Says Christ, ‘If you love Me keep My commandments. . . . He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he is that loveth Me. . . . If a man love Me, he will keep My words. . . . He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings.’ John 14: 5-24, K.J.V.”

“Now if we keep God’s commandments and Christ’s teachings, we shall manifest it by our deeds. If we profess love for God, and Christ, while we refuse to obey them, we say not the truth, and are corrupt at heart. To illustrate, let us suppose a case: A just parent has two sons whom he requires obedience. One of these sons comes to his parent and says, Father I love you, but I wish I felt like obeying you, and refuses to do the will of his parent. The other son answers, Father, I love you, and will try to obey you. Which of these children do you think really loves his father? The first or the second? All reasonable persons will answer, The second: the one who said he loved his parent, and would try to obey him. And no enlightened and judicious parent would accept mere feelings for obedience, and the mere assertion, I love you, for genuine love. Neither can we expect that God will accept our feeling, for obedience; or the simple declaration that we love Him, for the love that we *owe* Him.”

NF: This may sound childish but there are those who say that if we love God with *all* our heart, soul, mind, and strength, then there would be nothing left over to love our fellow-men. Is this true? How does the “golden rule” apply here?

DB: “We show that we love our fellow-beings by keeping those obligations that grow out of the relations that we sustain to them, and by doing unto them in all things as we, would like them do unto us. But an objection is urged on this point [as you posed in your question]. But this seeming objection vanishes away when we bear in mind that one very prominent way of showing our love to God, is to love *what* God loves, and we cannot love God as we should, without loving our fellow creatures. 1 John 4: 20, 21, is to the point: ‘If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a *liar*; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath *seen*, how can he love God whom he hath *not* seen? And this commandment we have from Him, that he, who loveth God, love his brother also.’ Again we have seen that we manifest our love for God by keeping His commandments. Now some of God’s commandments [the last six] relate to our duty to our fellow-creatures, and by keeping these commandments we show our love to our fellow-beings.”

“Thus it is evident that we can love God with all the powers of our beings, and yet love those who are made in His image. To love our brethren is so important a duty that John says, ‘We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in *death*.’ 1 John 3:14.”

NF: Let’s bring in the famous “love chapter” of 1 Corinthians 13 which many preachers use to excuse away with the necessity of obeying the law of God. What needs to be emphasized here?

DB: “In 1 Cor. 13:4-7, charity, or love, is personified. This passage, though brief, is very comprehensive. Let the reader pause as he reads it: ‘Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not’ charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.’ ***Charity or love never faileth, and is greater than hope or faith—even the faith that would remove mountains.*** Without it everything else is as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal and profiteth nothing.”

NOTE: For nearly twelve centuries the apostate church, “the mother of harlots” deceived its numberless adherents by emphasizing “*faith*,” i.e., their self-serving,

corrupted interpretation of God's word and His authority *over love*—that love described by apostle Paul that leads to obeying God rather than man, and loving our enemies. In fact it is this corrupted faith that underwrote the horrors of the Dark Ages when those who resisted obeying this “faith” of the Romish Church *as enforced by the state*, were declared “heretics” and burned alive at the stake and subjected to the worst forms of torture ever invented by human minds under the control of devils. Where was *God's love* demonstrated by the church that claimed and still claims unbroken “apostolic succession,” from the first apostles?—the love that led God to sacrifice Himself in His only begotten Son, to die for *all sinners*—including the satanic persecutors of His humble and godly followers on earth? Where is that love of the Shepherd who says He lays down His life for His sheep, including the straying ones? Where is the love described in John 3: 16, and in 1 John 3: 16 that says, “By this we know love, because He lay down His life for us. *And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*”? They crucified Christ afresh in the person of His people, and continue to crucify Him in the abomination of the “Mass” which, according to their invented doctrine of “transubstantiation,” empowers the priest to *repeatedly* change the baked wafer into the *literal* body of Christ calling it the “host” celebrated in their sacred Liturgy—drinking *fermented* wine and becoming inebriated while performing this “most sacred” of their rites! The blood of Christ, the Sinless One, was pure and uncorrupted and can only be symbolized by the pure, unfermented juice of the grapes. The Word says Christ, the Lamb of God, was offered only *once* and for all at Calvary! Once more, countless millions were put to death for refusing to accept this “host” as the body of Christ!

NF: How can that love which “endures all things” be practiced, particularly by parents and the spiritual guardians of God's true church, while living up to the instructions of God to “cry aloud and spare not, and show My people their transgressions”? (Isa. 58:1).

DB: “Through love we are to arrive at the pinnacle of holiness. Love should not be confounded with *false sympathy* which is very different from, and opposed to love, and which sometimes prevents parents from correcting, and crossing the wills of their children, and leads them to humor them in wrong practices. False sympathy sometimes leads individuals to bestow upon others that which proves injurious to them, and frequently prevents well-meaning Christians from frankly opening their minds to, and meekly reproving their brethren, when duty and wisdom *demand* that they be admonished and corrected. *How many souls have been ruined by false sympathy.* We should therefore see to it that we mistake it not for love.

“We can also derive instruction on how to know and prove the genuineness of our love, and thereby give evidence that our affections are sanctified, by considering *how* God and Christ love. God is love, and in this respect Christ is one with God; ‘He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.’ The same may be said of Christ. We understand that God and Christ carry out in the strictest sense these principles of love that are made obligatory upon us. If this is not true, why do the Scriptures furnish us with declarations like these: ‘Everyone that loveth is born of God;’ and ‘If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us?’ 1 John 4: 7, 12. And why are we exhorted to love one another as Christ has loved us? To walk in love as Christ has also loved us,” etc.? Is it not manifesting love that we can be followers of God as dear children, walk in love as Christ has loved us, and walk in the light as God is in the light? Eph. 5: 1,2; 1 John 1: 5-7; 2: 8-11.”

NF: In what way, and how will our affection for those of the “household of faith” and the rest of the world differ?

DB: “God and Christ love in deed and in truth, and not in word only; and so it should be with us. The love of God shines gloriously in all His dealings with His creatures; in like manner should we manifest love in our dealings with our fellow-creatures. God shows His love in *laboring* to promote the happiness of His creatures; so should we evince our love by laboring for the happiness of our fellow-beings, and for the happiness of the creatures that are under them. God’s love leads Him to bestow *general blessings* upon all men, and to extend the plan of salvation to all, *yet it prompts Him to confer special favors on the righteous*. *So love leads us to do good to all men, but especially to those of the household of faith.*”

NF: So what alone should motivate us to correct and chasten the erring?

DB: “God loved us when we were His enemies; and on the same principle we should love our enemies. God in love extends mercy and pardon unto us, suffers long with us, and helps us overcome sin, and develop a holy character; and so should we extend mercy, pardon, and long-suffering to others, and help [not condemn or discourage] them in overcoming their sins and developing a holy character. God’s love for His children induces Him to correct and chasten them; so earthly parents should be prompted by love, to chasten their children betimes; and so we should all be moved to love to *meekly* reprove others *when* their good and the *glory* of God demands it.”

NF: As in all cases, there is reason to beware of extremes and fanaticism. How do we treat our earthly possessions, which are also God’s gifts, while placing the love of God first, and our fellowmen next above such?

DB: “The love of God is unselfish; it prompts Him to *elevate* His creatures, and to make them partakers of His rich blessings. So it is with the love of Christ; and so it is with the charity, the love that we should exercise. God’s amazing love moved Him to sacrifice for us, to give His beloved Son to die for our fallen race; and Christ so loved the world that He sacrificed His life to save them [John 3:16], ‘we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.’ [1 John 3:16].

“If these points of similarity are not sufficient, the reader can carry the analogy still further. We show our love for heavenly things by laboring to obtain them; and if our affections are set on heavenly things, our conversation will be in Heaven, and the whole course of our life will be in a heavenly direction, and will indicate that we are pilgrims and strangers here, and that this world is not our home.

“We prove that we place a proper estimate on property, by honestly and temperately laboring to obtain in it, and by using it in meeting our wants, and the wants of others, and in promoting the cause of [present] truth. We should love our property with reference to our well-being, the well-being of others and the glory of God. By the use of what we make of our property, we show how much we love ourselves, our fellow-beings, the Creator, and heavenly things.”

NF: Can you explain this with a practical example as some will say that we need to take good care of our property and keep it clean for this is consistent with true Christianity.

DB: “By using our property as a traveler uses his *staff*, we evince that we love it less than we love ourselves; by using it to promote the temporal and spiritual welfare of others, we show our love for our fellow-beings, for God and heavenly things, and that we love God, our fellow-creatures, and heavenly things more than we do our property. But if we get property in laboring to excess, and at the sacrifice of health and happiness and use it not for the purposes for which it was intended, but apply it to where it will not meet our real wants, and the wants of others, refusing to render unto God the things that are His, and that He justly claims to advance the interests of His cause, we thereby prove to love it to excess---that we love it more than we love ourselves, our fellow creatures, the Creator and heavenly things. We show that this is our home, and that our portion will be in this life.”

NOTE: A staff, according to Webster, is “a pole, stick, or bar used for various purposes. A long stick carried in the hand for support; a cudgel or a club; a pole stick or wand, as an ensign of authority.” Hence, in an expanded sense, it addresses a wide variety of applications, both literal and spiritual. It can mean the trusty, old cane, simple or downright fancy, used by the aged to move around, or to any modern gadget designed to do just that. Or it can mean any thing we use to accomplish essential tasks such as a car or a computer, etc., and treat it to an excess. It may even be a personal opinion, viewpoint, interpretation, or tradition that we idolize over the preponderance of Scriptural evidence against it.

NF: What “love” did Jesus say would “grow cold the last days”?

DB: “Christ in speaking of the last days says, ‘And because lawlessness (iniquity, KJV) will abound, the love of many will grow cold.’ Matt. 24:12. The Savior does not here refer to self-love, or the love of property; for the apostle while speaking of the same thing says, ‘For men shall be lovers of their *own selves*, covetous. . . . without natural affection.’ 2 Tim. 3: 1-3. The Savior therefore must have reference to the love that we owe to God and to our fellow-creatures. And the reader is left to judge whether these predictions of Christ, and Paul are not being fulfilled before our eyes; whether love is not growing cold even among the professors or religion generally; whether natural affection, that sacred tie that used to bind parents to their children and children to their parents, and made home so pleasant and attracting, is not departing; whether self-love and excessive and perverted love for money, which is the root of all evil [1 Tim. 6:10], and which is seen in the unprecedented anxiety to get rich, and lay up treasures upon the earth against the prohibition of Christ (Matt. 6:19), do not generally predominate. Who that has given this subject serious and candid attention cannot see the truth in the following paragraph from Dr. Griffon:

“The world! The world! The world! This is the object which engrosses every care; this is the supreme deity that is adored. Buy and sell and get gain—out with the thought of death—away with the judgment and Heaven—my farms, my merchandise; I will have them though the earth trembles under my feet, and Heaven weeps blood on my head!”

Note: See Yahoo News on Obama’s economic plan and the unprecedented deficit it will leave for generations to come; and *Maranatha*, pp. 68,67, “A Crisis Ahead,” “A Safe Refuge.”

NF: Jesus came to magnify the law and make it honorable. He explained that the thought and intention alone without the act constitutes the act itself, saying that if a man looks upon a woman with lust in his heart he has committed adultery, a transgression of the seventh commandment. How are

the first and second commandments transgressed in this spiritual magnification?

DB: “The evil of loving things to excess is seen in the fact that whatever we love with an inordinate attachment, takes the shape of an *idol* in our hearts. And idolatry is not confined to heathen lands. There are as many idols as there are objects that are loved to excess, and that steal away our affections from God, and lead us to disobey Him [and His commandments]. It would be therefore difficult to enumerate all the idols or false gods that are worshipped even in Christian lands.

NF: Can you name just a few of the prominent ones that are not recognized by most who are guilty of them as idolatry?

DB: “Among these are *fashion, wealth, and fame*. Thousands of professed Christians worship deities with perhaps more than heathen idolatry; and value things in proportion as they further these objects. Think of the enormous *sacrifices* that are made to pay devotion to these strange gods, which lead men away from the true God, just as truly the golden calf led the Israelites away from Jehovah.”

“How many would receive and obey the sanctifying truths for these last days, were it not for the homage and worship they pay to these and other deities. It frequently happens that *relatives and friends* occupy the place of God in the affections. This is the case when they are obeyed in preference to God. But God is a jealous God; and Jesus says, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.’ Matt. 10: 37, 38.’

“Again, the heart’s best affections are sometime lavished on the *appetites*. Therefore we read of a class ‘whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who set their mind on earthly things--whose end is destruction.’ Phil. 3: 19, NKJV.

“But perhaps no object is more universally idolized than *self*. With many, self is the great god that is worshipped and obeyed. To it everything must bow. Everything that is loved is loved with reference to self. Self must occupy the throne—the easiest chair. The interests of self must be attended to first. The interests of others, and the glory of God, come in as an after consideration—if they are [even] noticed at all. And perhaps if these are attended to, it is to get the applause of men, and that self may receive more honor and glory thereby. When self is idolized it is seen in pride, boasting, self-praise, and selfish uneasiness when self is abased, and a swelling and puffing up when self is praised and exalted. But boasting is excluded, unless we boast in the Lord, from whom we receive every perfect gift [James 1:17] either through creation or through grace.”

NF: How painfully true, accurate, and convicting these explanations are on what idolatry and worship of images comprehend—which are hardly expounded upon and explained by most ministers to their congregants! When will all these idols and images fail?

DB: “But the vanity and weakness of self, and other deities will appear, in their insufficiency to save those fondly cling to them, in the day of trouble that is just before us. Self, friends, and wealth cannot deliver us in that day. Vain fashions will have no attractions then and fame will vanish away.”

NF: Please provide the Scriptures that clearly speak of the terrible truth of the real “Day of the Lord” and the “fire of His jealousy.”

Isa. 2: 17-22 (see verses 1-16): “And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be brought low; the Lord alone will be exalted in *that day*, but the *idols* He shall utterly abolish. They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily. In *that day* a man will cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they made, each for himself to worship, to moles and bats, to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the crags of the rugged rocks, and *from the terror of the Lord* and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily.” [cf. Rev. 6: 12-17].

Eze. 7: 19: “They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will be like their refuse; their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord, they will not satisfy their souls, for fill their *stomachs*, because it became the *stumbling block* of their iniquity.”

Zeph. 1: 18: “Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, for He will make *speedy riddance* of all those who dwell in the land.”

James 5: 1-3. “Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and your corrosion will be a witness against you and you will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.”

NOTE: See also Isa. 3:16-24; 44: 9-30; Rev. 6:12-17 (sixth seal—parenthetical chapter of the seven seals of Revelation).

NF: What are your final thoughts on this enlightening discourse on the salvation-determining subject of sanctification?

DB: “But if our affections are sanctified, if we love as we should, we shall reap a reward in this life, and a rich reward in the life to come. That which a man sows he will also reap, and like begets like. [Gal. 6:7, 8]. If we sow love, we shall reap and beget love in others. We shall reap it in our brethren, and be more apt to reap it in our enemies; and even the domestic animals will notice it, and will repay it with love as far as their natures and powers will permit. God and Christ will love as freely here, deliver us from all our troubles, and make us partakers of all those temporal and spiritual blessings that we need to supply our wants in this life and prepare us for a place in the world to come, where a pure, perpetual stream of love will freely flow from God to His creatures, and from God’s creatures back to God the source of love.”

We now conclude this series on the subject of perfection, ever reminded of the awesome truth that *character perfection* in our fallen, sinful nature is required of all who choose to be saved in God’s appointed way and is but the preparation for us to enter heaven where growth in divine knowledge and wisdom will continue throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity! Such was God’s original plan for Adam and Eve, which was interrupted by the experiment with yielding to temptation resulting in sin and

disobedience and its inevitable consequences of guilt, suffering, pain, woe, and death. But the glorious, comprehensive plan of redemption contemplated in the councils of heaven between the Godhead before the foundation of the earth, was designed to accomplish the work of moral character restoration through the grace of God in the everlasting gospel—which was taught in types and symbols in the Old Testament and is now being taught in its antitypical applications since Christ incarnated into the human flesh, won the battle against temptation, sin, and Satan, died at Calvary to pay the ransom price demanded by His transgressed law, resurrected on the third day, ascended and is now finishing the closing work of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary as merciful High Priest, Mediator, and Advocate of all the *penitent*, and the righteous Judge of *all the earth*. He returns to earth after this final work is done, as King of kings and Lord of lords, bringing His just rewards of eternal life or death to those shown deserving of these final rewards, as determined by the pre-advent or investigative judgment.

The following are choice references from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, particularly referring to what it means to strive for perfection, the standard being Christ's life and teachings as the only Example and Pattern (emphasis and added quotes, verses, notes, or thoughts in brackets added. (See *Sons & Daughters*, pp. 154-158).

We Are to Be Perfect In Our Sphere As Christ Is Perfect In His

Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected [as our Savior] , He became the author of eternal salvation all who obey Him. Heb. 5: 8, 9, N.K.J.V.

“God our Savior took up the true relationship of a human being as the Son of God. We are sons and daughters of God. In order to know how we are to behave circumspectly, we must follow where Christ leads the way. For thirty years He lived the life of a perfect man, meeting the high standard of perfection.”

“Our work is to strive to attain in our sphere of action the perfection that Christ in His life on the earth attained in every phase of character.”

“To go forward without stumbling, we must have the assurance that a hand all-powerful will hold us up, and an infinite pity be exercised toward us *if we fall*. God alone can at all times hear our cry for help.

It is a solemn thought that a removal of *one* safeguard from the *conscience*, the failure to fulfill one good *resolution*, the formation of one wrong *habit*, may result not only in our ruin, but in the ruin of those who have put confidence in us. Our *only safety* is to follow where the steps of the Master lead the way, to trust for *protection* implicitly to Him who says, ‘Follow Me.’ Our *constant prayer* should be, ‘hold up goings [my steps] in Thy paths, O Lord, that my footsteps slip not.’ Ps. 17:5.”

“Every *faculty* with which the Creator has endowed us should be cultivated to the highest degree of perfection, that we may be able to do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable. In order to purify and refine our characters, we need the grace given us of Christ, that will enable us to see and correct our deficiencies, and improve that which is excellent in our characters.”

“The Son of God was faultless. We must aim at this perfection, and overcome as He overcame, if we would have a seat at His right hand.” – *Sons & Daughters*, p. 154.

We Are to Be Holy as Christ is Holy

Be ye holy for I am holy. 1 Peter 1: 16.

“With our *limited* powers we are to be as holy in our *sphere* as God is holy in His sphere.”

Note: The word “sphere” has various meanings, however, the context above justifies the specific definition that it refers to the “circuit or range of action, knowledge or influence; compass; province; place or scene of action or existence.”- *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 5th ed., 1942.*

Jesus took on the lowly trade of a *carpenter*---not a lawyer, engineer, architect, physician, teacher, military strategist, scientist, preacher, or theologian, etc., though He was all of them, in a divine sense, wrapped up in one—because He would build *houses and mansions of character*, its foundation and cornerstone being Himself, the Rock of ages!

“God expects us to build characters in accordance with the Pattern set before us. We are to lay brick upon brick, adding grace to grace, finding our weak points and correcting them in accordance with the directions given. When a crack is seen in the walls of a mansion, we know that something about the building is wrong. In our character building, cracks are often seen. Unless these defects are remedied, the house will fall when the tempest of trial beat upon it.”

Note: See the parable of the foolish man and the wise man, Matt. 7: 23-27, 12-22; compare to Christ’s words to Peter, Matt. 16: 18, 19; and Paul’s declaration as to who this Rock is. See 1 Cor. 10:4 cf; 2 Sam. 22: 2, 3, 32, 47; Ps. 61: 2, 6; 92:15; 94:22, etc. This “rock” is most certainly not Peter, as papal church has, for centuries, deceived countless millions of her credulous adherents. See Luke 22: 31-34, 54-62, etc.

“God *gives* us strength, reasoning power, time, in order that we may *build characters* on which He can place His *stamp* [or seal] of approval. He desires that each child of His shall to build a noble character, by doing of pure, noble, deeds, that in the end He may present a *symmetrical* structure, a fair temple, honored by man and God.

In our character building we must build on Christ. He is the sure Foundation—a foundation which can never be moved. The tempest of temptation and trial cannot move the building which is riveted to the Eternal Rock. He who would grow into a beautiful building for the Lord must cultivate every power of the being. It is only by the *right use* of the talents that the character can develop harmoniously. Thus we bring to the foundation that which is *represented* in the Word as gold, silver, precious stones---materials that will stand the test of God’s purifying fires.” ()

Notes: **1.** Paul says, “don’t you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. . . that your body is the temple of the living God?” 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20; 3: 16, 17. **2.** On “gold, silver, and precious stones,” see 1 Cor. 3: 9-15. **3.** On “purifying fires,” see Mal. 3: 2-6; Matt. 3: 11, 12; 2 Pet. 4: 12, 13; Rev. 3: 18.

“Holiness is not rapture [spiritual or emotional ecstasy]; it is an *entire surrender* of the will to God; it is *living by every word* that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is *doing the will* of our heavenly Father; it is *trusting God* in trial, in darkness as well as in light; it is *walking by faith* and not by sight; it is *relying on God* with unquestioning confidence, and *resting in His love.*” (Acts of the Apostles, p. 51.)- *Sons & Daughters*, p. 155.

We Are to Overcome as Christ Overcame

These things have I spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. John 16: 33. To him that overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Rev. 3: 31.

“Satan made stronger attacks upon Christ than he will ever make upon us. There was much at stake with him, whether Christ or himself should be conqueror. If Christ resisted his most powerful temptations, and Satan did not succeed in leading him to sin, he knew that he must lose his power, and finally be punished with everlasting destruction. Therefore Satan worked with mighty power to lead Christ to do a wrong action, for then he would gain advantage over him. . . . You can never be tempted in so a determined and cruel a manner as was our Savior. Satan was upon his path every moment.”

“Will man take hold of divine power and with determination and perseverance resist Satan, as Christ has given him example in his conflict with the foe in the wilderness of temptation? God cannot save man against his will from the power of Satan’s artifices. *Man must work with his human power, aided by the divine power of Christ, to resist and conquer at any cost to himself.*”

Note: On resisting Satan, see James 4: 7, 8; Christ’s temptation, see Matt. 4: 7-11. On working out our own salvation, see Phil. 2: 12, 13.

“In short, man must overcome even as Christ overcame. And then, through the victory that it is his privilege to gain by the all-powerful name of Jesus, he may become an heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus Christ. This could not be the case if Christ alone did all the overcoming. Man must do his part; he must be victor on his own account, through he strength and grace that God gives him. Man must be co-worker with Christ in the labor of overcoming, and then he will be a partaker with Christ in His glory.”

Note: On gaining the victory through the all-powerful name of Jesus Christ, see 1 Cor. 15:7; Acts 4:2; 2 Tim. 2:19. On using the strength and grace God gives in order to overcome sin, Rom. 5: 20, 21; Phil. 4: 3. On being a co-worker or co-laborer with God, see 2 Cor. 6: 1-10; Matt. 11: 28-30; Phil. 4: 3. On partaking of Christ’s glory, see 1 Pet. 4: 12, 13; 5: 1.

“The Savior overcame to show man *how* he may overcome. All the temptations of Satan, Christ met with the Word of God. By trusting in God’s promises, He received power to obey God’s commandments, and tempter could gain no advantage.” – *Sons & Daughters*, p. 156.

Note: On meeting temptation with God’s word, “It is written,” see Matt. 4: 4, 6, 10; Luke 10: 26; Acts 1:20. “To the law and testimony,” see Isa. 8:20; “the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy,” see Rev. 19:10; 12: 17, 18. “Thus, says the Lord,” see Concordance.

God’s Love Gives Us the Hope of Perfection

In words of Scriptures so familiar and so loved by all Bible-reading Christians, Paul says that it is the love *of and for* Christ that conquers all and achieves all that God expects and empower us with, to wit (emphasis mine): “For the love of Christ *constrains* us.” 2 Cor. 5: 14. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ [Ps. 44:22]. Yet in all these things *we are more than conquerors* through His who loved

us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other *created* thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom. 8: 34-39. “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the width and the length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Eph. 3: 16-19, N.K.J.V.

E.G. White explains these in the following:

“God’s love for the fallen race is a peculiar manifestation of love, ---a *love born of mercy*; for human beings are all undeserving. Mercy implies *imperfection* of the object toward which it is shown. It is because of *sin* that mercy was brought into active exercise. The angels look with awe and amazement upon the mission of Christ to the world. They marvel at the love that moved Him to give Himself a sacrifice for the sins of men. But how lightly human beings regard the purchase of His blood!” - *With God at Dawn*, p. 48.

“With untold love our God has loved us, and our love awakens toward Him as we comprehend something of the length and breadth and depth and height of this love that passeth knowledge. By the revelation of the attractive loveliness of Christ, by the knowledge of His love expressed to us while we were yet sinners [], the stubborn heart is melted and subdued, and the sinner is transformed and becomes a child of heaven. God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it [love] He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith.

(See Matthew chapters 5-7). “The Jews had been wearily toiling to reach perfection by their *own* efforts, and they had failed. Christ had already told them that their righteousness could never enter the kingdom of heaven. Now He points out to them the character of the righteousness that all who enter heaven will possess. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount He describes its *fruits*, and now in one sentence He points out its source and its nature; *Be perfect as God is perfect*. The law is but a transcript of the character of God. Behold in your heavenly Father a perfect manifestation of the principles which are the foundation of His government. God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love. . . . He tells us to be perfect as He is--- in the same manner. We are to be centers of light and blessing to our *little circle*, even as He is to the *universe*. We have nothing of ourselves, but the light of His love shines *upon* us, and we are to *reflect* its brightness. In His ‘borrowed goodness good,’ we may be perfect in our sphere, even as God is perfect in His.

Jesus said, be perfect as *your Father* in heaven is perfect. If you are the children of God you are *partakers of His nature*, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God’s children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells ‘all the fullness of the Godhead bodily’ (Col. 2:9); and the life of Jesus is made manifest ‘in our mortal flesh’ (2 Cor. 4: 11). *That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him*. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law; for ‘*the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul*.’ Ps. 19:7, margin. Through love ‘the righteousness of the law’ will be ‘fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.’ Rom. 8:4.” – *Mount of Blessing*, pp. 76-78.

We can therefore be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect!

