

## THE KEEPING OF THE COMMANDMENTS.

### "The Lust of the Eyes."

"I AM the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Ex. 20:2, 3.

The second of the three forms under which "the world" is embraced, and idolatry manifested, is—

"The lust of the eyes."

The lust of the eyes can be summed up in one word, vanity; and vanity is simply love of display. Something is put on ourselves, or that which is ours, merely for display, to attract the attention and excite the lust of the eyes of others, and cause them to envy our condition.

Further, on our own part, this idolatry is indulged in our seeing something that somebody else has, and not being content until we have imitated him by obtaining for ourselves a like thing.

That which we see with others may be perfectly proper, and strictly becoming, to them; yet, when imitated by us, it may be altogether improper, and unbecoming in itself, besides our indulging idolatry in the use of it. Because, if our eyes had not seen that particular thing, no thought of our own, and no need of our life, would ever have suggested that we should have it. The only reason of our having it being solely that our eyes saw it in possession of some other one, the possession of it by us is sheer idolatry in the lust of the eyes.

This principle of idolatry is expressed in the one word, the worldly word, "fashion." The world spends time in inventing particular styles of dress, or whatever else may be a part of the living. The world is expected to follow, and expects to follow, the fashion set by the world.

But *we* are studying how to serve God. We are studying how to be *separate* from the world; how to be "not of the world;" how to be completely divorced from the love of the world, or of the things that are in the world. And in this we are studying how to be separated from this lust of the eyes which follows the world, which accepts the dictates of the world, and which itself is "of the world."

God has made no two persons alike. He has made each person with characteristics which single him out distinctly from all others in the universe. This is for a purpose. We are created for the glory of God; that is, the purpose of our creation is that each one, in the characteristics which make him himself alone, distinct from all others in the universe, shall be a means of making God manifest,—of reflecting a ray of the light of God, in a way that no other can possibly do, that by each one God shall be manifested as not by any other one. And, in order that this shall be so, it is essential that each one

shall be joined *only to God*, and this with all his heart, and all his soul, and all his mind, and all his strength—the whole being.

This principle is expressed in the parable of the talents, in Matthew 25. When the master took his journey into a far country, and delivered to his servants his goods,—to one five talents, to another two, and to another one, he gave "to every man according to his several [individual; not common to two or more; separate, particular] ability." And from the master, at His returning and reckoning, each one receives according as he has used the gift of God, according to this "several ability."

No one is to use, indeed no one can use, this gift of God in *imitation of others*. To attempt to use it in imitation of others is to separate from God, and put others in His place; it is to have other gods before the Lord; it is idolatry.

There are desires of the flesh which are not lusts of the flesh, in the wrong sense. While we are in this world, it will be necessary for us to eat and to drink—not to make a god of the belly, not for the satisfaction of appetite, not for the lust of the flesh, but for *the glory of God*. Those who serve God in the keeping of the First Commandment eat and drink that which, in every respect, enables them best to discern what is the will of God, and how best to serve Him according to that will.

While we are in the world, it will be essential to clothe ourselves—not to please the world; not to conform to some silly style that our eyes see, which is altogether of the world, and which we ourselves would never think of if our eyes had not seen it as displayed by the world—not that; but the *glory of God*.

It is proper, indeed it is essential, to our glorifying God, that we shall dress neatly; that we shall wear as good clothing as we honestly can; that it shall be made to fit us becomingly, that is, that it shall conform strictly to our own individuality; that it shall be a proper expression of our own several selves, as God has made us. But to imitate the dress of others, to put something on ourselves simply because we have seen it on others, to adopt a style for ourselves which we have seen adopted by others,—all this is of the lust of the eyes; all this is not of the Father, but is of the world; it is idolatry.

A long coat is strictly becoming to a long man, but not at all so to a short man. A high collar is entirely proper for a man who has a long neck; but for a man with a short neck to wear a collar so high that it throws up his head as if he were constantly gazing at the moon, is not at all proper. A blue dress, or one of some other color, may be exactly becoming to the one whom you saw wearing it; but it may be the last color in the world that you should wear in a dress.

Now, all this imitating of others, all following of fashion, is but the lust of the eyes, is of the world, and is idolatry.

Ask God what He will have *you* do. It can never be a proper question with you, as to whether anybody else in the wide universe does it. You are to glorify God, not others.

Study, in the fear of God, your own self as the workmanship of God; and study, in the fear of God, asking *Him only* what you shall wear, what you shall eat, what you shall drink, what you shall do, that shall most fully glorify Him, that shall most fully represent

the talent which He has given you to be used for Him only, according to *your* "several ability."

In every way it means much to love God with all the heart and all the soul and all the mind and all the strength. It means much to be not of the world; to love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. Yet that which it means is simply the keeping of the First Commandment.

"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." "Out of Egypt have I called my son." "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." "Here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

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