

THE KEEPING OF THE COMMANDMENTS.

“The Pride of Life.”

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

"The pride of life."

The word here used to express the thought of "life" is a form of the Greek word *βίος*, and signifies *not* animal life; *not* the breath of life; *not* spiritual life; *not* life itself, the life which comes from God; *but* "the life which we live; the life led; hence, manner of life, course of life."

The word used to express the thought of "pride" is *ἀλαζονεία* ("*alazoneia*"), "the character of an *ἀλαζών* ("*alazon*"). And an *ἀλαζών* is literally "a wanderer about the country;" hence, literally, "a false pretender, imposter, quack; hence, swaggering, boastful, braggart; and by implication, ostentation, arrogance, pride." It is the same word that is used in 1 Tim. 3:6: "Being *lifted up with pride.*"

The closest equivalent English word is "ambition," which signifies, literally, "a going about, as of a candidate soliciting votes;" again, "the act of going about to solicit or obtain an office or other object of desire;" a "desire for some object that confers distinction;" "desire to distinguish one's self from other men;" "desirous of obtaining power, superiority, or distinction."

Another word that corresponds to this "pride of life" and "ambition," is "self-exaltation," self-aggrandizement. The Latin word that corresponds to the Greek word used to express "pride of life," is *gloriosus*, and expresses the idea of worldly glory.

In the light of these definitions, it is easier to see the real nature of the temptation of Jesus, when "the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." And then all the fires of ambition, of worldly glory, that were ever manifested in human flesh—in Alexander, Napoleon, and all other like—poured like a driving storm upon Jesus, to entice Him to the desire of that which was before Him.

But by the Spirit of God, Jesus knew that none of all that "glory" which He saw was "of the Father," but all "of the world." He knew that it was only a false, fleeting glory. He knew that true glory lies not in "the pride of life," not in ambition, not in self-exaltation; but in self-emptying, self-renunciation. And, therefore, He promptly answered: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

As pointed out in a previous study, the divine account of this temptation reveals the fact that worldly glory, the glory of the kingdoms of this world; the glory of rulership, of overlordship; the glory of position, of office,—all this, or any of it, can be had only by idolatry, only by the worship of "the god of this world."

Christianity, the true keeping of the commandments of God, is not rulership, but *service*. The liberty wherewith Christ makes men free, the liberty in which Christians stand fast, is the liberty by love to serve one another; as it is written, and as it has been studied only lately, in the Sabbath-school lessons all over the world: "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Gal. 5:13, 14. And to love our neighbor as ourselves is to do good to him always, in all things, and by whatsoever means. In "all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

And when, in this same "pride of life," this spirit of ambition, the disciples were striving among themselves as to who should be the greatest, or who should be counted the greatest, "Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles *exercise dominion over them*, and they that are great *exercise authority upon them*. But *it shall not be so among you*: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Matt. 20:25-28.

Thus, all desire for place or for position; all exercise of dominion or of authority *in* place or position; all national distinctions, all racial distinctions, all aristocratic distinctions, all class distinctions, all place or official distinctions, are only of the pride of life, are not of the Father, but of the world, and are idolatry. They are all vanity, which is only idolatry.

The greatest curse that has ever come upon the earth since the original curse itself, has been, and is, in men, in the world and in the Church occupying *places* of authority, and *exercising* authority, who have no true authority. What has been the greatest curse that all history has known among men in the world, as they have existed in nations or organizations? What organization has been the most oppressive, and the most far-reaching in its oppression? Everybody can answer in a moment and in a word—the papacy. And what is the papacy?—It is summed up in a man in place of authority, who has no true authority. It is simply a man, having seized authority over men, and the means of enforcing it, and demanding respect and subjection to that authority, who yet has not authority at all except that which he has seized by unlawful means. And the Scripture description of the papacy is that he "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he *as God* sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that *he* is God." This is the extremity to which men can possibly go in the violation of the First Commandment. And yet it is all simply the desire for place, position, and to exercise authority.

But the papacy has no true authority, because it has no truth. Truth is the only source of authority. He who has the truth has authority. And he who has the most truth has the most authority. This is why it is that Jesus had all authority in heaven and in earth: He had all authority because He had all the truth—He *is* the Truth *itself*. "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." "I am the Way, the Truth." Those two sentences belong together. Each explains the other.

And yet Jesus had no *position*: He occupied no *place*. And that simply expresses the eternal truth that *position* never gives true *authority*. And that is simply to say that, in the Church and work of God, *position* never gives *authority* to anybody. *Authority* may qualify a person for a *position* that he has not. But *position* never can give to a person authority that he has not *without the position*. Position entails *responsibility*, but never gives authority.

Jesus *taught* "as one having authority." And that authority was readily recognized by those who heard. This was because the authority was *in what He taught*. The authority was in the truth that He had. And whosoever in the world has the truth as it is in Jesus, in that he has also authority in heaven and on earth—not to *exercise* authority, but to *speak* with authority. "The princes of the Gentiles *exercise* . . . authority," "but it shall *not be so among you*." God does give authority; but He gives it *in the truth* which He gives: and he who receives the truth of God as it is, as it is in Jesus, *in that* receives authority. The *authority* which he has is in the *truth which he has*, in the message which he bears.

Where, then, is the true position of greatness, and the position of true greatness? Here is the answer: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." The greatest position is that of servant; and the greatest work is that of service. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "I am among you as He that serveth."

In Christ and the way of Christ is the keeping of the First Commandment. In the papacy and in the way of the papacy is the breaking 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 me son."

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Alonzo T. Jones.

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