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## AN AFFECTIONATE APPEAL

To all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity.

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[The author earnestly entreats all Christians, into whose hands this paper may fall, by their love to Christ, not to decide upon the subject-matter of it, till they have first given it their Christian and prayerful attention; and not to lay it aside without coming to a decision, for they cannot possibly know how important the subject herein contained may be, how near and dear to the interests of Christ's kingdom, or how great the sin of ignorance, till they have read it with Christian candour and humility, and prayed to be directed aright concerning it.]

*"If ye love me, keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."  
"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."  
"The love of Christ constraineth us."*

BROTHERS AND FELLOW CHRISTIANS,—

I earnestly beseech your Christian and prayerful attention to the subject I have now to bring before you, I am especially anxious to win your affections, and, by God's blessing upon my endeavours, to point out to you what I believe, as in the presence of God and of his Christ, to be your line of duty on the present occasion; because, when once the true follower of Christ is convinced of his duty in any particular case, he will earnestly pursue it. Though he may at first be mistaken; yet, if it should please God to let him see the path of duty, and to show him, that any cause set before him is the cause of Christ and of his Gospel, and will advance the interests of his kingdom, he will take it up with all his heart and soul, and carry it forward with all his energies. For who are they who are the chief supporters of every charity? Who are they who are foremost in every good and holy work? Are they not the followers of Christ? And this is the reason why I am so anxious to convince you, my brethren in Christ Jesus, because I am sure, that the cause I have now to recommend to your support, is for the glory of God and the promotion of Christ's kingdom; it is the cause of the Gospel, against one of the very strongest holds of the kingdom of Satan. If you be indeed Christians, your creed is the Gospel—the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel; you abhor that system that would mar and mutilate the Gospel, and separate faith and obedience. On the one hand you place all your hope, and trust, and joy, in the blessed doctrine of salvation by faith—and faith alone. You well know that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus and him crucified," and that "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we may be saved." But on the other hand, you long to adorn the Gospel you profess by your holy walk and conversation, and to show by your good works, by your zeal for the glory of God, and your practical love to man, that you have indeed that faith which worketh by love and overcometh the world.

Look back then, fellow Christians, to the history of our own church, and see how miserably and wickedly these two things have been separated, and set your faces like a flint against this wicked separation.

Thirty years ago, and for many years preceding that period, the great and glorious doctrines of the Gospel were fallen into neglect; and, in place of them, moral essays occupied the greater part of our pulpits; as if it were possible to build genuine sterling morality, and real purity of heart and life, upon any other foundation than the doctrines of salvation by faith in Christ, sanctification by his Holy Spirit, and by the mighty energy of that Spirit a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness. But of latter

years a great change has taken place in the public sentiment. The doctrines of the Gospel have become popular, the multitude of professors has increased, and a soft, smooth, easy religion, styled evangelical, has become fashionable, and taken the place of the moral disquisitions of the last century. The doctrinal parts of the Gospel are taught; the privileges of believers are enlarged upon: while it is to be feared, that the struggles of the Christian race, the toils of the Christian warfare, the hardy virtues of the Christian soldier, are far too feebly and too seldom insisted upon, if not altogether unheeded and forgotten. These smooth religionists seem to have forgotten that the Saviour has said, the Lord Jesus Christ has said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." They seem to have forgotten that the very same Apostle who teaches the comfortable doctrine of salvation by faith only, and the assured safety and final perseverance of the believer in Christ, still says, "I, therefore, so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." "Be not conformed to this world. Avoid even the appearance of evil. Follow not a multitude to do evil. Neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure." "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

It is my intention, in the present discourse, to bring forward a number of these practical commands of our Lord and his Apostles, in order to see how far we are heartily willing to obey them. It is not a soft religious sentimentalism, but sterling obedience to his commands, that Christ requires of us. He says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." "And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren? For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

I shall then, in the present discourse, consider several of the practical commands of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and of Paul the inspired Apostle of the Gentiles, in order to see how far you are really willing to obey them. And I shall this day put your sincerity to the test by proposing to you a specific manner in which you may obey them; by setting before you some positive and practical thing which you may do in order to show your willing obedience. This is by far the most useful mode of handling the subject: 1st, Because general principles are best illustrated by particular examples—and 2nd, Because this mode of treating the subject is absolutely necessary to detect the deceitfulness of our own hearts. For it is quite common for men to admire these commands in the abstract; but as soon as they are brought to bear upon any specific action of their lives, and something is proposed for them to do in order to show their love to Christ, and their willingness to obey him; this they do not like at all; they are willing enough to deal in generalities, but cannot endure to come to specifics. Something similar to this is seen in men's confession of sin. Some men will delight to talk in evangelical language, and confess themselves to be miserable sinners; but if a friend should point out a single fault that they have, they would be immediately offended. So it is here; they admire these commands in the abstract, but as soon as the preacher proposes a specific opportunity of obeying them, and presses it home to their consciences, this, I say, they do not like at all, and they try to