

heart of man. What constitutes the essence of sin? Rebellion. Ah! some of the greatest sinners on earth never swore an oath, never told a lie, perhaps, never did an outwardly immoral thing; but they have been monstrous rebels against God all their lives. They have been sinning against light. These, the Saviour said, were the great sinners. He judged not after the outward appearance but after the heart. Now what is necessary in the nature of the case for God to win completely back again such as a rebel at heart? That He shall renew the heart and take the rebellion out. It is of no use *subduing* me merely; He must renew me.

You have a rebellious son. He has run away from your home, spent your money, and trampled your influence in the dust. You love him, and weep over, and entreat him to return, and you have no selfish motive in your heart. You only want him to come back and be reinstated as a son in all his relations and privileges. What is necessary? To win his heart. Some gentleman comes along and says, "I will go after him and bring him back. I will put a halter round his neck and bring him back and compel him to live in your house and be subject to your rule." Or the Queen might pass a law to do it if that were possible. Would that satisfy you, father? "Oh, no," you say, "that is all very well, but I want the lad's heart. I want him to see that I love him and to accept me again as his father and reinstate me on the throne of his affections. It's of no use unless you do that." And do you think the great God wants or will be satisfied with anything less than that? Can it ever satisfy you to be less than perfectly restored—brought back into perfect harmony with your Father? Your father wants you back so that you will take your stand by Him as Job did, if need be, alone on the dung-hill, and say, "Yes, though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. I love Him. I am on His side. He has my heart. I love Him with all my heart and soul and strength."

This is the end of the commandment, "Love out of a pure heart." This is the centre of the scheme of redemption. If God could have saved you short of that, He could have saved you without Christ at all, and might have spared His Son His agony and blood; but He must have you back *cured of your sin*, pure in heart.

Thirdly. I argue the attainability of holiness because it is repeatedly made the object of inspired prayer.

Jesus prayed for His disciples, "Sanctify them through Thy truth," and also, "As Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they may also be one in Us." Paul prays for the Thessalonians, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

There are many other texts of similar import, but these are sufficient; for surely neither Christ nor Paul could possibly have prayed for an experience in believers which they knew to be impossible. Such prayers would be utterly incompatible with manly sincerity, much less