

## 99. Love Is the Sum of All Commandments.

Therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law. *Rom. 13, 10.*

Does God demand nothing more of us than that we lead an outwardly honest and decent life? Is He satisfied if we fulfil the outward letter of His Law, commit no gross offenses, and conduct ourselves in such a manner as not to give anybody a just cause to speak evil against us? Does He demand nothing more than such an outwardly good behavior? No; a man may be an angel on the surface, but be a devil at heart. God, however, is not deceived by man's outward conduct; He looks at the heart.

God demands love, and if man's works do not proceed from love, he has not kept the Law of his God; for "love is the fulfilling of the Law." God says: "My son, give Me thine heart and let thine eyes observe My ways." What God demands of us is our heart, that is, our love, our affection. By nature our hearts are void of the love of God. By nature we love everything but God. Our hearts must undergo a radical change. We must be born again. We must be made the children of God, and that is done by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If we have tasted of God's love to us in Christ, we shall say: Let us love Him because He first loved us. We will ask what God demands of us in order that we may observe His ways.

If the question arises, Is this or that action sinful? we ought to ask first of all whether there is some specific direction in God's Word concerning this particular thing of which we are inquiring. If there is nothing specifically said upon the question, we are then to ask whether it violates the love which we owe to God or the love which we owe our neighbor. Love is the first and the last: the highest good. Life without love is death in life. God is Love. And the love of God is shed in our hearts by His Word.

### *Prayer.*

Almighty God, who hast formed our bodies and hast given us an immortal soul, in whom we live, move, and have our being, shed abroad, we beseech Thee, Thy love in our hearts that we may love Thee who hast first loved us; and let loving consideration for our neighbor fill our hearts. Cause the comfort of Thy heavenly grace to abound in us as the earnest and pledge of joys to come, that, casting away all anxious thought for the transitory things of this world, we may seek first Thy kingdom and righteousness; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

So we should be ever careful  
Of the kind of seeds we sow.  
Hate from hate is sure to ripen;  
Love from love is sure to grow.

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