

***"Thy word is very pure:  
therefore thy servant loveth it."***

Psalm 119:140

The Psalmist's *love* for the law of his God may account for the *zeal* he felt on account of its general neglect. All other systems of religion (or rather of "philosophy falsely so called") allure their disciples by the indulgence of carnal lust or self-complacent pride. *The word of God* outweighs them all in its chief excellence--peculiar to itself--its purity. "Every word is *very pure* (Prov. xxx. 5. Ps. xix. 8)--tried to the uttermost" in the furnace, and found to be absolutely without dross.<sup>1</sup> Its promises are without a shadow of change or unfaithfulness. Its precepts reflect the holy image of their Divine Author. In a word, it contains 'truth without any mixture of error for its matter'<sup>2</sup>--*Therefore thy servant loveth it.*

'No one but a true servant of God can *therefore love it*, because it is *pure*; since he who loves it must desire to be like it, to feel its efficacy, to be reformed by it.'<sup>3</sup> The unlettered believer cannot well discern its *sublimity*; but he loves it for its *holiness*. The mere scholar, on the other hand, *admires* its sublimity--but the *secrets* which it reveals (such as the pride of the natural heart struggles to conceal) forbid him to love it. (See John, iii. 20.) Its purity, which is the matter of love to the one, excites enmity in the other. From "the glass" which shows him "his natural face"--his neglected obligations--his fearfully self-deluded state--and his appalling prospects--he turns away in disgust. The indulgence of sin effectually precludes the benefit of the most industrious search into the word of God. The heart must undergo an entire renewal--it must be sanctified and cleansed, yea, be "baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Matt. iii. 11), before it can discern, or--when it has discerned--can love, the purity of the word of God.

Witness the breathings of Brainerd's soul in this holy atmosphere--'*Oh, that my soul were holy, as he is holy! Oh, that it were pure, even as Christ is pure; and perfect, as my Father in heaven is perfect! These I feel are the sweetest commands in God's book, comprising all others.*'<sup>4</sup> 'Oh, how refreshing'--exclaims the beloved Martyn--'*and supporting to my soul was the holiness of the word of God! Sweeter than the sweetest promise at this time, was the constant and manifest tendency of the word, to lead men to holiness and the deepest seriousness.*'<sup>5</sup>

The valuable end for which we "desire this word" is, "that we may grow thereby" (1 Pet. ii. 2)--grow in purity of heart and conduct; learning to shrink from the touch of sin; "cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. vii. 1.) Our "esteem" for it--"*more than our necessary food*" (Job, xxiii. 12)--will be in proportion to our growth in grace, an evidence of this growth, and a constant spring of holy enjoyment.

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1 Prayer Book translation.--Comp. Ps. xii. 6.

2 LOCKE.

3 Bishop HORNE *in loco*.

4 EDWARDS' WORKS, iii. 171.

5 MARTYN'S LIFE, pp. 206, 207.

An additional excitement to *love its purity* is the exhibition of *that purity* embodied in our perfect pattern, in Him, *who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."* (Heb. vii. 26.) For the habit of "beholding the Saviour" with the eye of faith "in the glass of the word," conforms us to his image. (Comp. 2 Cor. iii. 18.) But be it ever remembered, that its holiness can have no fellowship, and communicate no life, except in its own atmosphere. Oh, for a larger influence of the Spirit of God upon our souls, that we may enjoy the purifying delights of the word of God; that we may live in it, live by it to the glory of our dear Redeemer, and to the edification of his Church!