

BE AN EXAMPLE IN PURITY

Br. George Wilmott

How blessed, how glorious, how joyful to feel, The love everlasting of sonship a seal, The love that is perfect, the love that is pure, That we may with patience all things well endure. I want the pure wisdom that comes from above, That warns those in danger with tenderest love; I want the sweet spirit of Jesus, my Lord, And perfect accordance with his blessed Word.

As Brother Roach mentioned, the program for Wednesday, August 2, has a portion of our beautiful theme text. (I Tim. 4:12) This portion is "Be thou an example in purity." We'll read the text again. It is well that we emphasize it. "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity." What does Paul mean by the words, "be thou an example"? In order to answer this, let us ask ourselves a very personal question, "Am I an example of the believers?" Let us note that our text reads 'of' and not 'to' Be thou an example OF the believers. We are to be an example to other believers; but, we are also to be an example to the world of mankind.

Who are these believers? The Apostle Paul tells us in # He 4:3, "We which have believed do enter into rest." We who have made a full, unreserved consecration to do God's will are the believers. We have entered into rest—a rest of faith. We have been justified to life by faith. Consequently, we are at peace with our heavenly Father. We have the peace of God which passeth all human understanding.

In considering further this thought 'be an example in purity', we would like to read a quote from the Reprints I believe it is, "Everything impure is contrary to God." Let us think about that statement for just a moment. The Psalmist tells us in chapter 12, verse 6, "The words of the LORD are pure words". The wise man in # Proverbs 30:5 tells us that, "Every word of God is pure." Not just some of the words, but, "Every word of God is pure." In II Tim. 3:16, Paul reminds us that, "All scripture (i.e. , every word of the Lord which is pure) given by inspiration of God, is profitable." These pure words of the Lord are, "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." These pure words are given to us he reminds us in verse 17, "That the man of God (that those who have entered into a rest of faith) may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The Apostle Paul in writing to Titus says in Chapter 2, verses 13, 14: "Looking for that blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." Our Lord gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time. He gave himself a ransom (a corresponding price) for Adam; and, all of Adam's race are included. Continuing, we read, not only redeem us from all iniquity, but also, "purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

We believers, we who are to be an example of believers, are not to be peculiar in the clothing that we wear. We are not to be peculiar in the way that we arrange our hair. We are not to be peculiar in manners that are contrary to the truth or customs which are contrary to the truth. In all the affairs of life we are to be an example of believers. Remember that we are the only epistles that some men read.

Be an example in purity! As the Apostle Paul reminds us in writing to Titus, there is this particular work of our heavenly Father by and through our Lord of purifying a peculiar people. As we shall note a little later in the words of John, we have a part also in this work of being purified. This reminds us of the scriptures which tell us to sanctify yourselves and the Lord will also sanctify you. He desires a peculiar people and this peculiar people is being purified. We, dear brethren, also have a part in this work.

May we now turn to Hebrews the 10th chapter. We shall begin with verse 21. "And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." We who have believed realize that we are no longer condemned with the world. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. We have been justified to life by faith and begotten of the spirit. Our imperfections are covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness. Our heavenly Father looks at us as though we are perfect.

While we are in the 10th chapter of Hebrews, in this context, let us also note some of the exhortations by the apostle Paul beginning with verse 23: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith (the thought here is, the profession of our hope) without wavering; for he is faithful that promised." We have been begotten to a hope of life and if we are faithful in carrying out our covenant, surely Paul is telling us that our heavenly Father is faithful that has inspired us and has given us this hope of life. " And let us consider one

another to provoke unto love and good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and So much the more, as ye see the day approaching." We can now say, "as we see the day drawing on." What a blessed privilege it has been for us, dear brethren, to assemble ourselves together here in convention May we also assemble together in the little study groups at home. May we go to the meetings with a desire to not only receive a blessing, but also to be a blessing.

Our lesson next takes us to the words of Peter (# 1 Peter 1:22,23): "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit (since we have made this full consecration, since we have this peace of God, since we are at peace with him) unto unfeigned love of the brethren, (this word love is from phileo which means duty love) see that ye love one another (this word love is agape—the highest form of love) see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." If we have this unfeigned love for the brethren, if we love our brethren with this pure heart, then we will endeavor to serve our brethren with the pure truth- - with the pure words of the Lord. We again remind ourselves of the words of the wise man; "Every word of God is pure." This is the greatest manifestation of love that we can express toward our brethren. We are to have the interest of our brethren at heart.

The Apostle James in chapter 1:27 in part reminds us what pure religion is. There he says, "Pure religion. . . is.. to keep himself unspotted from the world. " This is pure religion. There are many of the Lord's dear consecrated followers who allow their robes to become spotted. This has been going on all down through the Gospel age. Today there are still many consecrated believers who allow their robes to become spotted. We all sin; we all come short. We all allow spots to get on our robes. But, our responsibility is to remove these as quickly as possible. Each one of us has this privilege of coming to our heavenly Father through our advocate and removing these spots—these spots from the robe.

We are grateful for our heavenly Father's arrangement for this class, who allow many spots to accumulate and who do not wash them day by day, to eventually be before the throne; but, to be aware of this possibility of not being more than an overcomer, we can make use of this privilege of coming to our heavenly Father and removing these spots. This great multitude will eventually have to wash their robes through great tribulation. Eventually they will have to call upon the Lord. They will have to come to our advocate and then they will remove these spots (they will wash

their robes), but it will be too late for them to have this position of being on the throne. Their service will be before the throne.

Paul, in writing to the Philippians (chapter 4:8) reminds us that we are to think upon whatsoever things are pure. He relates many other things for us to think upon, but our lesson deals with purity. We need to think about what Paul has reminded us. We need to constantly think upon pure things if there be any virtue and if there be any praise.

We have some beautiful Manna comments along this lesson of thinking upon the pure things. We would like to turn to March 4. If you have your Manna with you may want to read the comments as we do.

"We are to love and cultivate that which is pure to such an extent that that which is impure will become painful to us, distressing, and we will desire to drop it from memory, and this will only be accomplished by continually thinking upon those things that are pure, and avoiding the giving of thought to the things that are impure. We are to recognize true loveliness, and to esteem it. When we would think on the purest of things we must of necessity lift our mental vision to as high a point as possible, and, as nearly as we may be able, discern the loveliness of the perfect character of our God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and proportionately the loveliness manifested in one or another of the followers of Jesus, who walk closely in His footsteps."

Let us think upon these pure things. The highest examples that we have are our heavenly Father and our Lord. Then, we can look at one another- - those who are closely following in the footsteps of Jesus. "Be thou an example of the believers. . in purity."

Again, we would like to read from the Manna comments for February 3,

"Few recognize the influence of the mind over the body. God has so organized our beings that pure, noble, holy thoughts in general have not only an elevating and ennobling effect upon the mental and moral constitution, but an invigorating influence upon the physical system. And, on the contrary, every unclean, ignoble, unchaste, unholy thought (as well as act) has a direct effect not only toward debasement of mind and morals, but toward the germination of seeds of disease already in the constitution of the fallen race."

We must have a perfect heart condition. We must be pure and clean in thought, in word, in action. Along this line we would also again like to turn to the Manna for December 12,

"It behooves the Lords consecrated people to carefully strain out the impurities, and see that they do not enter into our hearts, our thoughts, realizing that with them in, the result will be to work to our defilement, to a greater or less degree. Whoever maintains purity of thought will have comparatively little effort in maintaining purity of word and of action. Whether the impurity come from one direction or another- - from the world or the flesh or the devil—its attack must first of all be upon the mind; and if repelled there the victory is won; if not repelled we cannot know what the consequences might be, as the Apostle James declares: "Lust (selfish desire of any kind), when it has conceived (in the mind) bringeth forth sin (develops sinful words or deeds), and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."

We of this peculiar people class have the privilege of praying for heavenly wisdom. The Apostle James reminds us of this in chapter 1, verses 5 & 6. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But, let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." In chapter 3, verse 17, the apostle tells us what this heavenly wisdom is. Remember, he has told us to pray for this heavenly wisdom. What are the elements of this heavenly wisdom? In answering that, let us go back to the words of the wise man, "Every word of God is pure." This heavenly wisdom then, is "first pure (Hebrews reminds us), then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." Isn't it a wonderful privilege that we can approach the heavenly Father and ask for this heavenly wisdom- - this wisdom which is from above?

These sons of God in this embryonic condition have been begotten to a hope of life—to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away. Furthering this thought may we turn to I # John 3:1- 3. There the apostle says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." Be thou an example of believers. Be an example of believers to the world of mankind. The world will not appreciate our stand, (Our position), but we are to let our light shine before them.

He continues by saying, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Notice our part in the next verse. We have already quoted the scripture which shows this purifying is of the Father and by the son, and now here we have a part. "And every man that hath this hope in him (every one who has been begotten to this hope of life - to this inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away) John says, "purifieth himself even as he is pure." Here is our great example of purity. We are to follow in his footsteps.

Paul explains when we shall be like our Lord and see him as he is. The ones, we have seen, who will be with our Lord are those who purify themselves. When is this? In I Thes. 4:15 the apostle answers: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the (parousia) presence of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." Let us go back to the words of John: "when he (our Lord) shall appear... we shall see him as he is." All of the saints down through the age who fell asleep in death have now been resurrected to be with our Lord, and they are seeing him as he is. What about us who are still alive and remain? He answers in verse 17, "Then we which are alive and remain (the thought is as we finish our earthly course faithfully unto death) shall be caught up together (i.e. will be caught up to be closely associated with the other resurrected saints and our Lord)... and So shall we ever be with the Lord."

The same apostle in I Cor. 15 reminds us that since we are in the dawning of the resurrection age, (we know that we are in the resurrection age because the last trump is sounding - pictured by the jubilee trump) we know that the first resurrection is in progress; and, now as one finished his earthly course faithfully, Paul says that he would not have to sleep as did the other saints. No! There is work for him to do. There is kingdom work for him to do and So he is changed in a moment in a twinkling of an eye.

The Revelator tells us in chapter 14:13, "Blessed are the dead (these dead ones, these who have made a full consecration and these who have submitted to the purifying influences and who have also purified themselves) who die in the Lord from henceforth' (from a certain time—from the time the 7th trump would begin to sound or shortly thereafter). These would "rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." These of this

peculiar class, then, are doing kingdom work on this side of the veil. We have this work, then, of purifying ourselves now. This is kingdom work. If we are purifying ourselves and submitting to these purifying influences, then we are going to be a part of that spiritual phase of the kingdom.

In the lesson of the beatitudes, (# Matthew 5:8) our Lord says, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." Who shall see God? The pure in heart. This has been illustrated by a palace window. Just visualize a palace with a beautiful window. If you look out this window you can see the wonderful and beautiful handiwork of God. You can see outside So long as you keep the window clean. If you do not keep the window clean, you cannot see outside. If we do not keep our hearts pure, we will not see God. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

There is another Manna text along this line for June 29.

"The thought of "pure in heart" is not perfection of conduct, nor of word, nor of thought, but perfection of intention as respects all of these. Our desire and effort must be for perfection- - in thought, word and deed. The standard before us, to which our hearts, wills, must give assent, is the divine standard, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." (# Matthew 5:48) God has set no lower standard than this absolute perfection, but He has provided for us grace, mercy and peace through Christ, if we will walk in His footsteps, —this purity of heart being one of the essential steps in the narrow way.

In this present work that is before us, we also have the responsibility of assisting others. Paul, in writing to the Galatians, chapter 6, verse 10, reminds us that we are to "do good unto all men, (as we have opportunity), especially unto... the household of faith." We hope that each one of us will go away from this convention encouraged to spread the truth to all as we have opportunity to the greatest extent possible. We also hope that we will go away with the desire to assist our brethren of the household of faith. Encourage them to faithfulness, to purity of heart.

At the present time we have the responsibility (kingdom work) of following the advice of the prophet Isaiah in chapter 52, verse 7, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him". They are to do a number of things; and, what are these? He starts the list by reminding us to bring good tidings. We are privileged to share these good tidings with others. Let us do it! We are to publish peace. We are to be peacemakers. Remember that the word of the

Lord is first pure. Wisdom is first pure but then peaceable. We are to bring good tidings of good. We are to publish salvation. While we are privileged to do this kingdom work, we are to encourage the consecrated in the privileges of this "so great salvation". We are to encourage others who have not yet fully consecrated but who love the Lord—to point them in the proper way. We are also to share with others our wonderful understanding of this common salvation—the earthly salvation—the restitution of all things. And, also a part of our kingdom work now is to say unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Referring back to # Revelation 14:13, we note that those who now are engaged in kingdom work find it is laborious. It requires sacrifice; it requires effort. But, looking at the joys we receive, we count these things as insignificant. Those, then, faithfully engaging in this kingdom work will, on finishing their course, continue this kingdom work on the other side. There it will be without the laborious efforts now required.

Everyone, John tells us, who has this hope (everyone who has been begotten to this hope of being one of the members of the little flock) will purify himself even as our Lord is pure. This is a daily matter. It is not something that we can wait to do on Sunday and forget about it the rest of the week. This is a daily matter of constantly purifying our thoughts, our words, and our deeds.

Go with me in your minds to that time when the earthly phase of the kingdom is established- - when all the little flock is beyond the veil. Let us think what they will be doing. In # Revelation 22:1, the Revelator tells us that there will be a "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." In verse 17 he says, "The spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Yes, aren't we grateful for this pure river of water of life! Aren't we grateful for this understanding that in due time all the families of the earth will be blessed with an accurate knowledge of the truth! It will be a pure knowledge- - an accurate knowledge.

This is brought to our attention by the prophet Zephaniah in chapter 3, verse 9, where he reminds us that after the trouble is stopped, then a pure message, a pure language, the pure word of truth will be turned to the people. It will be given to them So that they can make an intelligent decision whether or not they will choose life or death. This pure word of the Lord will be written or

be in the minds of each individual Everyone will learn the truth and those who respond will have this truth rewritten in their hearts.

We are exhorted by the apostle in II Cor. 6 not to receive this grace of God in vain. May we turn to this chapter, beginning with verse 1 and read some of the other verses there: "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." Verse 3: "Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed." What a high standard we have. "Giving no offence in anything... but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings and in fastings." Verse 6: "By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, "—and he continues on with the list. Yes, we have a very high standard indeed.

Let us think for a moment about this exhortation, "receive not the grace of God in vain." There are some who receive the grace of God in vain. One who has not fully consecrated but yet is seeking after the Lord would receive a measure of the grace of God. Whatever portion of grace he receives, if he failed to go on to full consecration he would be receiving that much of God's favor or grace in vain. Such an one would not be on trial for life or death.

But, if one has taken the step of full consecration and then receives the grace of God in vain, it would mean the second death. The Apostle Paul in Hebrews 10 reminds us that some who receive the grace of God in vain do so by losing their faith. They don't necessarily go into things sinful; they lose the faith which justified them. If one loses his faith, then he would die the second death. There is another class, he tells us in Hebrews 6 who, after being justified to life by faith, fall into sinful living. These too would die the second death.

Coming now to the words of Peter, (II Peter 3) we will use the words of the 1st verse to mention that we have endeavored this morning to, "stir up your pure (or sincere) minds by way of remembrance." All of these things that have been brought to your attention have been brought to your attention before. We are just endeavoring to stir up your pure (your sincere) minds.

Let us see what the Apostle Peter was saying in his second letter, chapter 3. He says: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were

spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his (parousia) presence? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

Coming to verse 8, the apostle explains how long this day of the Lord is. He tells us that it is a thousand years. Elsewhere, we have noted that this thousand year day of the Lord is the resurrection age. God has set aside a thousand years for the resurrection first of the church, then of the great company, then the ancient worthies and finally the world of mankind.

In verse 10, he reminds us that this thousand year day of the Lord would come as a "thief in the night." When our Lord would come as a thief, it would result in trouble. There the heavens (not the literal heavens, but the nominal heavens) would begin to pass away. This would be with a great noise. The various elements, the various denominations of Christendom, then would begin to pass away. Not only would the nominal heavens begin to pass away, but during this beginning of the day of the Lord, the earth (the social arrangements) would be burned up. The social arrangement with its various works—financial, economic, political etc., would begin to be burned up.

We thought of an illustration recently which is just a simple one. We hope it will convey the thought. We just noted here that when the day of the Lord would come (and it has come) it would be moving day. The old order would be moved away—moved out. I suppose all of us have had the experience of moving. Perhaps the sisters feel they are pretty good housekeepers; but, when you move the stove out from the wall what do you see behind the stove? When you move the other furniture from its place, the hidden things of darkness begin to come to light; they are exposed aren't they? Does that describe our day? Are the hidden things of darkness being brought to light? Why? It's moving day! The old order passing away. Continuing here, the apostle reminds us that this old order is to be replaced by a "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

To assist us in what Peter is telling us, let us turn to the words of the Revelator in the 21st chapter. There he reminds us that the new heavens, new Jerusalem, gradually comes into power and control. Isn't that just what we see? The dead in Christ have been raised and one by one as the saints finish their earthly course, this heavenly phase is getting closer to completion. When it is completely set up, then it will be time for the heavenly kingdom (the heavenly government) to extend its influence to the earth in the sense of then causing righteousness to prevail. Isn't that the way Peter describes it? "A new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." It is at that point, when the earthly phase of the kingdom is established, that righteousness will begin to prevail and gradually all evil and evil doers will be cut off. So may we continue to pray for this incoming kingdom!

Now, going back to verse 11, the apostle reminds us something about our conduct. This fits in with our lesson of being examples of the believers in purity. He says, "Seeing, then that all these things shall be dissolved, (since we are in the day of the Lord, we can use the present tense—are being dissolved) what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation (or conduct) and godliness." You see, it has always been important to be an example of the believers in purity. Here Peter is telling us that it is much more important at this present time. The Apostle Paul in Romans 12 reminds us, "Be not conformed to this world." May we not submit ourselves to the conforming influences of this world all around us, but rather, as the apostle suggests, may we submit to the transforming influences. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds."

Then, in verse 14 he says, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, (seeing that ye have this hope of sharing in the spiritual phase of the kingdom—and this kingdom extending its influence to earth wherein dwelleth righteousness) be diligent (i.e. use haste, redeem the time) that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

In verses 17 and 18 he says, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." Then these beautiful words, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever, Amen." Yes, grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord. Remember that not just some of the words of the Lord are pure. "Every word of God is pure."

In ## Isaiah 52:11 we read in part the words of the prophet, "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD." Each one, who has made a full consecration, has the privilege of bearing the message of the truth—of telling the truth to others. Each one is to seek to be clean—to be pure in heart.

In closing, we would like to quote from the Reprints, page 5259. "Doubtless it is the experience of all the Lord's children that in proportion as their hearts are clean their spiritual vision is clear. And in proportion as they depart from this purity, in that proportion they would have less and less opportunity for service—for bearing the vessels of the truth." (- 8- Wilmott)