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Second Quarter.

Lesson I. April 6. Luke 6: 27-35.

CHRIST'S LAW OF LOVE.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."—Luke 6: 31.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE LAW OF LOVE AS APPLIED TO ENEMIES. 27. But I say unto you. Emphasis on the L. Contrasting Jesus' teaching with the false views of the scribes, who said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor," quoting from Lev. 19: 18, and then added their own teaching to this, "and hate thine enemy." (Matt. 5: 43). Love your enemies. That we shall be willing to make sacrifices for them, are we willing for our own. Do good to them which hate you. Who doest, pursue with hatred, act out their inward feelings of hatred. Solomon in his Proverbs (25: 21, 22), and Paul, quoting the same in his Epistle to the Romans 12: 20, give an example of the key to fulfill this command. "Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

35. Bless them that curse you. Speak words of peace, kindness and love to those who revile and insult you. And pray for them. Bear them upon your hearts to the good Father of all; seek the highest influences for their good. Which deeply fulfils you. "Treat you abusively."

Jesus gives two examples to illustrate the treatment of enemies which He had just enjoined.

FIRST EXAMPLE. 29. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek. This is a further manifestation of hatred. Offer also "the other." The general principle also "do not resist evil" (Matt. 5: 39; 1 Cor. 6: 7; 1 Pet. 2: 19-23) impressed forever on the memory and conscience of mankind by a striking paradox. That it is only meant as a paradox in its literal sense is shown by the fact that our Lord himself, while most divinely true to spirit, did not act on the letter of it (John 18: 22, 23). Now there is an example of patience more perfect than that of the Lord; yet He, when He was smitten, said not, "Behold the other cheek," but "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if not, why smitest thou Me?" (John 18: 23), hereby showing us that the turning of the other cheek should be in the heart. See also Paul's interpretation of this command by his conduct (Acts 23: 3).

SECOND EXAMPLE. And him that taketh away thy cloak. From personal violence Jesus descends to the demand of property by legal or forcible means. The cloak or mantle was the outer, larger, and more valuable garment. It was worn loose around the body, and made of various materials, according to the circumstances of the wearer. It was also used as a blanket or covering to wrap one's self in at night; hence it was not allowed by the law to be taken by the creditor and retained as a pledge over night (Ex. 22: 26-27). This fact shows how great the wrong and violence which would be done by the creditor. But if anyone should go so far as to take this away, rather than contend with him, *Forbid not to take thy coat also.* The tunic or undergarment, which was made of linen or cotton and folded close to the body. In matters of personal violence and wrong we are not to show a retaliating and revengeful spirit, but a forgiving and generous one. We are to suffer loss ourselves rather than to resort to quarrelling or law suits.

III. THE LAW OF LOVE APPLIED TO ALL. 30. Give to every man (without regard to class or condition or race) that asketh of thee. Here again our Lord teaches us by the method of seeming paradox, and enforces a principle binding upon every one in the form of a rule which in its letter is binding upon no man. Were we to give to all men what they ask, we should in many cases be cursing, not blessing, them with our gifts. Not so does our Father give us what we ask in prayer; not so did Christ grant the prayers of His disciples. That which the words really teach as the ideal of the perfect life which we ought to aim at, is the loving and the giving temper which sees in every request made to us the expression of a want of some kind, which we are to consider as a call to thoughtful inquiry how best to meet the want, giving what is asked for if we honestly believe that it is really for the good of him who asks, giving something else if that would seem to be really better for him. The joy the Christian's life is to give, and to help all the people he can in all the ways he can. And of him that taketh away thy goods ask them (demand them) not again. Do not show a revengeful spirit, and neither by violence nor by legal forms demand them back, but by a kind and liberal spirit strive to win back the offender to right views and acts.

31. And as ye would, etc. The Golden Rule here sums up the precepts so far given into one great heavenly principle, obedience to which would make earth a heaven.

III. THE LAW OF LOVE. REASONS WHY CHRIST'S DISCIPLES SHOULD LIVE ACCORDING TO IT. FIRST REASON. Because it is the principle of the highest kingdom to which you belong, and proves both to yourselves and others that you belong to the kingdom of heaven.

32. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye, etc. What have you done that deserves thanks or reward (so in Matthew) as belonging to a higher kingdom?

33. For sinners also do even the same. A man ought to tremble with fear if beside the external part of his religion he finds nothing in his life but what may be found in a Turk or a heathen.

34. And if ye lend, etc. Here the same principle applies. Actions which are common to all are no mark of a divine life, or of membership in Christ's heavenly kingdom.

SECOND REASON.—THE SPIRITUAL REWARD. 35. But love ye your enemies. That is a mark of heavenly love, for it is the exact opposite of what sinners do. And one reason God allows His people to have enemies and to be ill-treated, is to give them an opportunity to exercise

and strengthen and prove their Christian spirit of love. And do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again. Without expectation of reward for what you have done. The Rev. Ver. has another translation in place of "hoping for nothing again," viz. "never desiring," equivalent to "be not weary in well doing." And your reward shall be great. What is the reward? (1) More love, a better character, more giving and lending, more power to do good, more likeness to God. (2) The beneficent results of doing good, the enemies conquered, the people helped, the kingdom extended, religion increased, Jesus glorified, souls saved. (3) The joy and blessedness which flows from such a character and such deeds. The spiritual rewards never lead to selfishness, but to more love.

THIRD REASON.—Ye shall be the children of the Highest. For he that does these things proves that he is a son of God, that he has received eternal life from his heavenly Father. This shows also the source of such disinterested love. For He is kind to the unthankful. Showing this kindness by making His sun to shine and His rain to fall on just and unjust alike (Matt. 5: 45), and in sending His Son to die for the whole world.

36. Be ye therefore merciful. Mercy is kindness and love shown toward those who are guilty, compassion toward the miserable and sorrowing. As your Father is merciful. If you are children you will manifest the character of your Father.

IV. THE LAW OF LOVE APPLIED TO JUSTICE. 37. Judge not. Be not censorious. Do not assume the right to find fault with others, and unjustly and falsely condemn them. The word "judge," here does not mean "form an opinion," for every one must do this of many persons and things. It means to impute wrong motives, to put the worst and not the best construction on the actions or words of others. And ye shall not be judged. By others, as you have judged them. Because your goodness will touch their hearts. Condemn not. Pitilessly, and without taking into account any reasons for forbearance. And ye shall be forgiven. You will be in such a state of heart that God can safely, and therefore will gladly, forgive you. The unforgiving spirit cannot receive forgiveness, even if it were offered.

V. THE LAW OF LOVE. ITS HARVEST. 38. Give what ye can. All possible help, by word, deed, sympathy, and material contributions. It is a comprehensive re-statement of the law of love, in practice. And it shall be given unto you. (1) By men to some extent. But (2) chiefly by God. This is not a mercenary offer, but, "it is more blessed to give than to receive," this is a promise of that blessing in abundance. Good measure, pressed down, etc. All you can possibly receive, and more. Shall men. Shall they, as in Rev. Ver. Give into your bosom. Here is an allusion to the form of the Eastern garment, which like a large pocket can contain many things in the fold above the girdle. For with the same measure that ye mete. Or measure. Charity for charity, severity for severity, generosity for generosity, niggardliness for niggardliness. Heman was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. (1) The same kind shall be returned. (2) In the same manner. If you give freely, you shall receive freely. It is not possible for the niggardly and stingy giver to receive largely of God's best gifts. His cup is too small.

Uncle Phil's Story.

"Tell us a story, Uncle Phil," said Rob and Archie, running to him.

"What about?" said Uncle Phil, as Rob climbed on his right knee and Archie on his left.

"Oh! about something that happened to you," said Rob.

"Something when you were a little boy," said Archie.

"Once when I was a little boy," said Uncle Phil, "I asked my mother to let Roy and myself go and play by the river."

"Was Roy your brother?" asked Rob.

"No; but he was very fond of playing with me. My mother said yes; so we went and had a good deal of sport."

"After a while I took a shingle for a boat and sailed it along the bank. At last it began to get into deep water, where I couldn't reach it with a stick. Then I told Roy to go and bring it to me."

"He almost always did what I told him, but this time he did not. I began scolding him, and he ran towards home. Then I was angry. I picked up a stone and threw it at him as hard as I could."

"Oh, Uncle Phil!" said Archie.

"Just then Roy turned his head, and it struck him right over his eye."

"Oh, Uncle Phil!" cried Rob.

"Yes, it made him stagger. He gave a little cry and lay down on the ground. But I was still angry with him. I did not go to him, but waded into the water for my boat."

"But it was deeper than I thought. Before I knew it I was in a strong current. I screamed as I carried me down stream, but no men were near to help me."

"But as I went down under the deep waters, something took hold of me and dragged me towards shore. And when I was safe on the bank I saw it was Roy. He had saved my life."

"Oh good fellow! Was he your cousin?" asked Rob.

"No," replied Uncle Phil.

Free Schools in England.

From every quarter the noise of battle in this matter of Church and State, especially in the domain of the education of the young, is sounding. The United States has got its hands full; the Catholics are bound to break down the public school system. In England, after having a fairly liberal school law in operation for some years, the clergy of the Church of England find it does not put enough power in their hands, and so they are working the Salisbury Tory government for all they are worth for a change. There is some danger that they may have their way. The Freeman, the great Baptist weekly, gives it hot and hot to the weak-minded who are disposed to let the Church of England work the shadow back on the dial. This is a sample:

"Now, all the way along the weakness has been that Nonconformists have hesitated to carry out their principles. Had they definitely from the beginning rallied round their standard and acted on the belief that it is neither the province nor the power of the state to forward true religion, the victory would have been won for education long ago. But a considerable number were quite prepared to accept government aid for their religion so far as it agreed with their opinions. The leaders of the Establishing Party know this well. They calculated on finding a victory through our disunion. Like the Russian general, they count upon sickness doing their work in the enemy's camp. The struggle grows furious, and one of the most important in our generation. If Nonconformists will but unite upon principle they will carry at least half the Conformists with them, and the victory will be sublime. We have but to keep to the clear, simple, elementary truth. Let no government be given, be the method ever so roundabout and subtle, for the inoculation of religious opinion."

Government cannot touch vital religion. It may advance a party, but the result is certain to be adverse to the progress of that for which alone we are anxious, the development of spiritual life, which is no part of public school work.—North West Herald.

Parliament Field, a portion of Liverpool, England, is said to contain 168 streets, 10,300 houses, 50,000 population and not a grog shop. Pauperism is almost unknown; the police are nearly idle and the people save \$100,000 a year in poor rates, besides avoiding the maintenance of hundreds of dramshops. The death rate in this sober district is only ten to fourteen as against twenty-five in the thousands in the drinking parish adjoining.—Canada Citizen.

A Queen of Denmark made a visit to the Danish colony of Iceland, where the good old bishop exerted himself to the utmost to show her everything that was worth seeing. The Queen paid many compliments to her host, and having learned that he was a family man graciously inquired how many children he had. Now, it happened that the Danish word for "children" was almost identical in sound with the Icelandic word for "sheep," so the worthy bishop—whose knowledge of Danish was not so complete as it might have been—understood her Majesty to ask how many sheep he owned, and promptly answered, "Two hundred." "Two hundred children!" cried the Queen, astounded.

"How can you possibly maintain such a number?" "Easily enough, please your majesty," replied the hyperborean prelate, with a cheerful smile. "In the summer I turn them out upon the hills to graze, and when winter comes I kill and eat them."

A SECRET

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