

## Thou Shalt Love

By Harry E. Jessop, D. D.

"Jesus said unto him, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets**" *Matthew 22: 37-40*.

Consider this supreme characteristic of our most holy faith—"Thou Shalt Love."

There can be no Christian experience without it. One can no more be a Christian without love than he can be a scholar without knowledge, an artist without perception, a genius without insight, or a tradesman without craft. It is the Christian's supreme characteristic.

It is not by any means the only characteristic nor the only demand, yet once this is given central place within the life, all else naturally falls into line. Seek to substitute other things for it, even the best things, and note the difference.

That for instance—*Thou shalt work*. It is immediately apparent that this is not sufficient.

**Anyone could work without loving**—as did the prodigal's brother as recorded in Luke 15. He had put in *many years* of service which to his poor, limited mind nobody seemed to appreciate. Yet although for years one could work without loving, none could ever love without working, for love must serve. "*The love of Christ constraineth us*" (2 Cor. 5: 14).

"*God so loved the world that He gave . . .*" (John 3: 16). "*The Son of God, who loved . . . and gave . . .*" (Gal. 2: 20). "*Christ also loved . . . and gave . . .*" (Eph. 5: 25).

"*Love ever gives—forgives—outlines, And ever stands with open hands And while it lives, it gives; For this is Love's prerogative To give—and give—and give.*"

We cannot substitute—*Thou shalt pray*, because even that would not be sufficient; men have prayed without loving—the Pharisees did it; standing in the synagogues and in public places, wherever they could attract human attention, they raised their voices in prayer, but did they love the God to whom their prayers were professedly directed? Hear the word of the Master concerning it. "*And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are*" (Matt. 6: 5). It is possible to pray without loving, but whoever could love the Lord without praying?

Whatever then may be of value in Christian experience is comprehended within that expression, "Thou shalt love."

A love-centered life has **no need of a perpetual rule book** to keep it straight, the inner motives being actuated by a spirit which delights to keep the law. The rule book is not rejected, but rather the life is spontaneously actuated by a love which delights to obey.

It will manifest itself in a twofold way: *Reaching upward*—it touches God. "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.*" That love for God is to dominate the entire being.

*It is emotional*—dominating the affections, Regulating the realm of feeling, it brings all earth-love and all creaturely enticement into subjection to Him whom it honours as Lord. "*With all thy heart.*"

*It is dynamical*—dominating the life. Taking possession as a driving force, it makes service a joy and sacrifice a delight. "*With all thy soul.*"

*It is intellectual*—dominating the mind. The deep things of God are worthy of the attention of the finest intellects. Full salvation rightly understood, is not a mental repressive, dwarfing the

intellect; it is the crown of all mental culture. It is not a sin to think and to think hard, provided we learn to think with God. "*With all thy mind.*"

Here then is an all-pervading, all-permeating love taking possession of the entire man.

*Reaching outward*—it contacts "thy neighbour." "*And thy neighbour as thyself.*"

This is often glibly quoted, but do we realize what it involves—and what it implies? *As thyself!* Then in all circumstances, dealing with my fellowman, I am to put myself in his place.

**How different would be conditions if that really happened to day.**

Socially! Nationally! Internationally Individually! You can never rightly appraise another's conduct until you have gotten close enough to him to gauge his conditions and even then you cannot read his heart.

"*Thou shalt love . . . thy neighbour as thyself.*" What does it mean? It means I must be as careful about his reputation as I am about my own. It means I must be as considerate of his feelings as I want him to be about mine. It means I must be as honorable in my dealings with him as I would desire him to be with me. It means—and please do take this to heart—I must be as concerned about his salvation as I am about my own. If I am to meet God without fear of censure at the judgment, I dare not nurse myself and neglect my neighbour.

By nature we do not possess that love—and the lack is not merely one of *quantity*; it is that of *quality*; it is not that we do not have *much*—but rather that we do not have *any*. Until the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost we are utterly without it.

In human nature unchanged by grace there is more than a lack; there is a perversion. Not only is man destitute of the love quality—he is possessed by an opposite tendency. His governing principle is "*the carnal mind*" which "*is enmity against God.*" This mind "*is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be*" (Rom. 8:7). Within man is a nature which makes him a fighting rebel. He fights God and fights his neighbour. When he wants to manifest a better disposition he has a struggle on hand, even the new life divinely given in regeneration being contested by remaining carnality. Thus until sanctified wholly, the fight goes on.

**What God demands of us He waits to impart to us.**

At our disposal is a new life, a new love in overwhelming fullness. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not merely a baptism for power, nor even for purity, true, of course, though it be that by its operation both these things are accomplished. The baptism of the Holy Spirit floods the soul with perfect love, and that is "Christian Perfection."

"Jesus comes, He fills my soul;  
Perfected in love I am;  
I am every whit made whole;  
Glory, glory to the Lamb."  
—The Flame

### THE ATHEIST

An atheist has been whimsically described as "a man who has no invisible means of support." Robert Ingersoll, an infidel notorious a generation ago for his attack on the Bible, had a godly aunt. To her he sent a copy of one of his books against the Bible. Yet on the fly leaf over his signature were written these words: "If all Christians had lived like Aunt Sarah perhaps this book would never have been written."—Selected.

### SUNDAY—HOLY DAY or HOLIDAY

Sunday or the Lord's Day if properly observed is one of the great means of preserving spirituality or Godliness among people of all nations. Of course one can become legalistic and keep the letter of the law without a spirit of true love, but assuming that one has been born again, and is walking in the light of God's Word, that individual will seek to know not the least but the most that God requires, in order that he may "be an example of the believer."

The fact that many professing Christians have so little real devotion to God and the church program is reflected also in the manner in which they keep the Lord's Day. Sunday is not the day for planning or taking excursions, swimming parties, attending ball games either at the park or via radio and TV. Neither is it the day when the Christian will plan his business or make business agreements. The Bible says, "It is the Lord's Day," and as such we must consider it. We, like Jesus, can "go about doing good" on this important day. It is not the day that the student chooses to cram for Monday's exams or classes; "it is holy unto the Lord," and the Christian student will carefully avoid profaning this day. It is not the day for buying or selling of goods but rather a day for witnessing to His power to deal with sin. "Them that honor me I will honor." (I Sam. 2:30).—K. H. Ross in Wesleyan Methodist.

### WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?

With God as your witness, what excuse can you offer for the life you are now living? St. Paul reminds us that the "wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are **without excuse.**" What is your excuse when all Nature calls you to worship the Creator, when church doors are open wide, the Bible available and Gospel literature put into your hands? What is your excuse when you have denied Mother's God, forsaken the One who spared your life, and neglected the way of salvation of which sincere Christian comrades tried so often to convince you? God has given you every chance to put Him to the test and prove that His way is best, but you have foolishly forfeited the only way to perfect contentment on earth and glorious reality in eternity rather than give up your pride, weakness and selfishness. Have your own way, if you must, but be prepared to give an answer to the all-wise, all-powerful God when He asks you, "What's your excuse?"—Louise Hollett.

### FAITHFULNESS

The least action of life can be as surely done from the loftiest motive as the highest and noblest. Faithfulness measures acts as God measures them. True conscientiousness deals with our duties as God deals with them. Duty is duty, conscience is conscience, right is right, and wrong is wrong, whatever sized type they be printed in.

Dr. Alex McLaren.