

Sunday School Lesson.

7th Sunday after Trinity.

July 20th, 1890.

THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.

To-day's lesson is a summary of the Lessons on the Commandments, showing how they are linked together with the golden cord of love. Duty has many sides, and each of the Commandments shows us one of these sides; but something more is necessary. Obedience to laws may rise from fear or love; if fear alone spurs us on, the task will seem hard and unpleasant. It is love only which can make hard tasks easy, disagreeable duties pleasant, and lift the common everyday actions of life into an atmosphere of joy and gladness. S. Paul shows the way in which even slaves, whose obedience is compulsory, can change the value of their work by doing it for Christ's sake (Eph. vi. 5-8), and thus "make drudgery divine."

The Commandments then have taught us our duty to God and man; now let us consider the surest, and also the pleasantest way of fulfilling the Law.

I. THE END OF THE COMMANDMENT.

S. Paul says (1 Tim. i. 5): The end of the commandment is charity ("Love," R. V.) [Illustr.—Going along a road in which the finger posts all point one way—The Commandments, like finger posts, all point to the end, which is love.]

This underlying principle is fully brought out by the Church in the explanations of the Commandments, *Duty towards God and duty towards Man*. The children can see for themselves that great love is required of them; even to love God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength, and all other people as themselves.

The Jews lived under this inner law of love, as well as the outer law of obedience to the letter of the Commandments. Love to God is enjoined (Deut. vi. 5), and love to man (Levit. xix. 18). Our Lord placed these two passages side by side, and brought more clearly before the Christian Church the fact that love includes the whole law (S. Mark xii. 30-31).

Obedience, then, without love, is like a road without an end or object, for "the end of the charge is love." (1 Tim. i. 5 R. V.)

II. LOVE THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW.

All the lessons which we have lately studied only show more clearly the many duties required of us, and the great difficulties in the way. For instance, the Sixth Commandment, which on the surface forbids murder only, on a closer examination was found to forbid also even *thoughts* of harm, envy, hatred, revenge, etc. To keep all the Law rightly, then, requires the closest watch over thoughts, words, and actions; and it seems as though Christians would hardly dare to do anything for fear it might be forbidden by one or other of the Commandments. [Illustr.—A man walking in the dark, who feels his way carefully, and walks slowly, for fear of falling.] But God does not wish His children to be fearful, but fearless, and "walk as children of the light" (Eph. v. 8). "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light" (1 John ii. 10), and, as a natural consequence, is saved from "occasion of stumbling." That is the secret charm which can make the yoke easy and the burden light (S. Matt. xi. 30). "Love is the fulfilling of the law," because "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour" (Rom. xiii. 10). Even little children know how to give pleasure to those they love, and every act of service becomes a delight, if done for a dear friend. Apply this principle to the Sixth Commandment, mentioned above, and see how the difficulties vanish before it. Loving others, at once destroys even the desire to hurt them. Take the Commandments. Love can prevent stealing, coveting, etc., by taking away the desire to be better off than other people.

But this love to others is only the *Second* Commandment; the *First*, our Master tells us, is to "love God with all the soul, with all the mind, and with all the strength" (S. Mark xii. 30, 31). Loving thus, the only natural thing to do would be "to worship Him, to give Him thanks," etc.

Love, then, is not the end only, but also the way.

Family Reading.

Devotional Notes on the Sermon on the Mount.

No 27.—GOD SUPREME.

S. Matt. vi. 19-23: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and

steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But, if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!"

Although the connexion between these words and the preceding passage may not be at once obvious, there is no great difficulty in tracing it. In regard to almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, we are told that these things are to be done not to man but to God; and accordingly as they are done to the one or the other, there is a reward. There is a reward, such as it is, from man, and there is a reward from God. You may labour for the one or the other; but, if you are doing your works so as to be seen of men, you must not expect your reward from God.

But God's reward is the only valuable and permanent one. The other has little worth, and it does not endure. Only that which is with God is eternal. Hence the counsel: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

The references here are easily explained. The laying up of treasure, the providing for the future, whether in regard to temporal or spiritual interests, must be considered to be a duty. Parents had to provide (lay up) for their children (2 Cor. xii. 14). The treasures of the East consisted in ancient times, as they do now, partly of valuable articles of apparel (Ezra ii. 69; Neb. vii. 70; Job xxvii. 16; S. James v. 2), which might be destroyed by moths (Job xiii. 28; Isaiah l. 9; li. 8). Hence the reference to the moth and to thieves in connexion with this kind of treasure. It is not quite certain what is meant by the word translated *rust*. Probably the word thus given in both of our versions is the right one. In any case, the general meaning is clear enough. If we are accumulating only perishable material, then it may pass away. We must be contented to have it only for a season. They are liable to destruction by decay, and they may be carried off by force or fraud. And if we have nothing left, then shall we be poor indeed.

Here, as throughout the whole discourse, we must beware of pushing our Lord's words to fanatical meanings which were the furthest from His mind, and which have been foisted into His words by an unspiritual literalism. Our Lord was certainly not condemning the accumulation of property. It may indicate a nobler and deeper consecration for a man to part with his gains at once for the benefit of mankind. There are cases, too, in which a voluntary poverty may be a means of serving the Church as it could not otherwise be served. But the very fact that the duties of the rich are set forth in Holy Scripture shows that the possession of riches is recognized as lawful. As far as we can judge respecting the present condition of society, it would be difficult to understand how men could live and labour without the existence of capital, that is to say, riches; so that the man who accumulates wealth and gives it forth, righteously and benevolently, for the employment of labour, may be quite as useful to mankind, and doing work quite as acceptable to God, as the man who gives away his money for philanthropic purposes.

But what our Lord means is that we are not to regard our earthly possessions as our real treasures. They are means and not ends. If they are regarded as ends, as things in themselves desirable, then they will be the objects of our affection. Our hearts will be there. And how terrible will be our condition when the objects of our affection have perished. If, on the contrary, we are using this world as not abusing it, if we are making our earthly possessions a means of serving God and blessing men, then our treasure is laid up where corruption cannot touch it, and thieves cannot come; it is laid up in the bosom of God.

The passage following, respecting the light of the body, is given in a different connexion in S. Luke xi. 34-36; but it is not necessary to infer that it occurs here without any reference to the preceding words. It seems as that there is the closest connexion between them. An eye which is fixed upon the earthly and the transient must be dark. What spiritual light can come from such

an end? On the other hand, the eye which is fixed upon God is irradiated by His light. The Divine Word is that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; but the human eye is the organ through which and into which the light penetrates. The true life of a man is a life to God. Where that is forgotten, man's life is perverted and distorted. It has lost its true meaning; and so its whole interior is darkened; and man no longer has a guide for his path. The eye is evil and the whole body is full of darkness. Where the eye is single, where it has no obstacle between it and God, the Eternal Light, there the whole body is full of light.

The Child Spy.

FROM THE FRENCH OF ALPHONSE DAUDET.

He was called Stenne, Little Stenne.

He was a Paris child, weakly and pale, who might be ten years old, perhaps fifteen; with these puny things, one never knows. His mother was dead; his father, an old marine, was keeper of a square in the Temple Quarter. Babies, nursemaids, old ladies with folding-chairs, poor mothers, the whole of slow-going Paris that comes to shelter itself from the carriages in these garden-plots bordered with footpaths, knew Father Stenne and adored him. They knew that beneath this rough moustache, terror of dogs and of those who dragged the seats about, there was hidden a kindly, almost motherly smile, and that in order to see this smile, one had only to say to the good fellow, "How is your little boy?"

He loved his little boy so much, did Father Stenne. He was so happy in the evening, after school, when the little fellow came for him, and they made the round of the paths together, stopping at each bench to greet the customers and to reply to their civilities.

With the siege everything, unfortunately, was changed. Father Stenne's square was closed, some petroleum was put into it, and the poor man, bound to incessant supervision, passed his life among the deserted and overthrown walls, alone, without smoking, no longer having his boy at home, except very late in the evening. Thus, you should have seen his moustache when he spoke of the Prussians! Little Stenne himself did not complain overmuch of this new life.

A siege! it is so amusing for the urchins. No more school! no more hearing and answering! Holidays all the time, and the street like a field at a fair.

The child stayed out of doors till evening, strolling about. He accompanied the battalions of the district which were going to the ramparts, choosing, by preference, those which had a good band; and in this subject Stenne was very skilled. He could tell you quite well that the band of the 96th was not worth much, but as to that of the 55th, it was excellent. At other times he watched the guards doing their exercises.

With his basket on his arm, he mingled with those long files which formed themselves in the twilight of the winter mornings, without gas, in front of the gratings of the butchers' and bakers' houses. There, with feet in the water, acquaintances were made, politics were talked, and as Monsieur Stenne's son, every one asked his opinion. When little Stenne was neither on the rampart nor at the bake-houses, you were certain to find him at the *galoche* party at the square Château d'Eau. He did not himself play, that is quite understood, it needed too much money. He contented himself with watching the players with all his eyes—one especially, a big fellow in a blue blouse, who never put down anything but five hundred sous pieces—excited his admiration. Whenever he ran, this big youth, you could hear the crown pieces rattling at the bottom of his blouse.

One day, when picking up a piece which had rolled just under little Stenne's feet, the big lad said to him in a low voice: "That makes you squint, hey? Well, if you like, I will tell you where some may be found."

The game finished, he took Stenne to a corner of the square and proposed to him to come with him to sell newspapers to the Prussians; thirty francs could be had for each journey. At first Stenne, very indignant, refused; and owing to the