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Lesson XII, June 19, Ex. 20:1-21.

THE COMMANDMENTS.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Matt. 22:39.

Ver. 12. Honor. In the heart and in the life. The word expresses far more than "obey." The duty of a child to its parents should all spring from a feeling of profound reverence and affection. Thy father and thy mother. The father and mother are distinctly specified, to indicate that they are equal in authority, and, therefore, equally entitled to that honor which the mother will attract by her love, and the father will enforce by his power. That thy days may be long. There is a double promise here. General prosperity (happiness and blessing) is involved and implied in long life.

Ver. 13. Thou shalt not kill. Or, as in Rev. Ver., "Thou shalt do no murder," for this is the killing forbidden. The general duty enforced by this command is the sacredness of human life.

Ver. 14. Thou shalt not commit adultery. This commandment is the wall around the family, the city of true love, with its home, its children, its heavenly life of love,—the type of the city of God.

Ver. 15. Thou shalt not steal. This commandment recognizes and protects the right of property. The application of the commandment will be much simplified if we lay it down, as a general principle, that all taking of the property of another, without giving a fair equivalent in exchange, is, except in case of gifts, stealing of property.

Ver. 16. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. The worst form of lying, and including all other forms. "Truth" implies two things. (1) Veracity, i.e., speaking and living according to our convictions and beliefs. (2) Justice, the convictions being according to the actual facts. The truthful man not only speaks what he believes, but seeks with all his heart to believe only what is true.

Ver. 17. Thou shalt not covet. This is the only one of the commandments which renders study of the human mind and heart as agreeable as at any other time of the year.

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allers, and I stayed away from meetin'. Bible Society day I'd generally a leech of euryalmy so I didn't feel like going out, so I stayed home. Tract Society day I'd begin to be afraid I was going to be deaf, and I oughtn't to be out in the wind, so I stayed indoors; and on the Sabbath for helping the Fabian Society, like as not my corns were unusually troublesome, and I didn't feel able to get out.

Young Man, You Will Do. A young man was recently graduated from a scientific school. His home had been a religious one. He was a member of a Christian church, had many parents, brothers and sisters; his family was one in Christ.

On graduating he determined upon a Western life among the mines. Full of courage and hope, he started out on his long journey to strike out for himself in a new world.

The Lone prayers followed him. As he went he fell into company with older men. They liked him for his frank manners and his usual independence. As they journeyed together they stopped for a Sabbath in a border town. On the morning of the Sabbath, one of his fellow-travelers said to him: 'Come let us be off for a driver and the night.'

'No,' said the young man, 'I am going to church. I have been brought up to keep the Sabbath, and I have promised my mother to keep it in that way.'

His road acquaintance looked at him for a moment, and then slapping him on the shoulder, said 'Right, my boy. I began in that way. I wish I had kept on. Young man, you will do. Stick to your bringing up and your mother's words, and you will win.'

The boy went to church, all honor to him in that far-away place, and among such men. His companions had their drive, and the boy gained their confidence and won their respect by his usual avowal of sacred obligations. Already success is smiling upon the young man. There is no lack of places for him.—Christian Weekly.

The Independent has made a fresh study of Church returns—those of all American churches without regard to denomination. The showing is a cheering one:

Four years ago we presented statistics showing that our churches, not including several denominational fragments, independent congregations, the Jews, or the Mormons, had 115,610 churches, 81,717 ministers, and 17,267,178 members. The totals for the same bodies are now 132,435 churches, 91,911 ministers, and 19,018,977 members. No deduction has been made for members in mission fields, but on the other hand, the Methodist statistics of members do not include the ministers, and the Congregational statistics do not include the missionary membership of the American Board. If the exact figures could be known, it is quite as likely that the increase would be still larger, but to be smaller than those we have given.

The gains of the four years are magnificent. The net increase of members is 1,631,799. That is, the churches have in this period not only received enough new members to make good their losses by death, discipline, and other causes, but to increase the number of professing members by over sixteen hundred thousand. This allows, as will be noticed, only a comparatively slight gain to the Roman Catholic Church. Sixteen hundred thousand increase in four years is at the rate of 407,500 a year, or 1117 every day. In the year of 46 every hour in the day. Is not this a grand demonstration of the propagating power of Christianity?

The increase in churches is every year, and more than ten every day. And every new society means a new building, means an investment of money, and such investments mean faith in the present and future of Christianity. The increase of ministers is 9694, which is about 12 per cent, and is at the rate of 63 a day, or 2423 a year. This, too, is an indication that the alleged decay of faith is purely imaginary. The churches must have some vitality if they go on adding 2400 ministers every year to the great army already in commission, and furnish means for their support.

It will be noticed that increase is the rule, and decrease the exception. There are only two cases of decrease in the column of churches, three in that of ministers, and only one in that of communicants. The Universalists, the Swedenborgians, and the Moravians, have lost slightly; the Moravians, 1 church and 6 ministers; the Swedenborgians, 4 ministers; and the Universalists, 24 churches, 40 ministers, and 688 members. Is not this general fact one of great significance?

The table set out above shows that the Methodist family is at the head of the list, with the Baptists second, the Lutherans third, the Presbyterians fourth, the Episcopalians fifth, and the Congregationalists sixth. The order is a little different if the various families be arranged according to present strength in numbers. The Methodists are first, the Roman Catholics second, the Baptists third, the Presbyterians fourth, the Lutherans fifth, the Congregationalists sixth, and the Episcopalians seventh.

More than 132,000 churches, almost 92,000 ministers, and over 19,000,000 members in a population of less than sixty millions! What a mighty force in the education, civilization, and elevation of our country!

It is our every-day life that decides what kind of Christians we are. We cannot form a proper estimate of Christian character by seeing our friends now and then, or passing a day or two in their society at intervals.

We are generally thrown into the society of our neighbors on occasional occasions. We meet them upon their holidays often, but in the usual routine of daily duties. We greet them upon social occasions when they are prepared to meet us with pleasant words and loving smiles. It is easy then to smile and speak kindly. It is easy to be courteous and kind. The social task are put away from them, and when free from the influences that obstruct and fret the body and soul.

Divine grace is not always required upon occasions like this to win the good opinion and approval of others. There is often enough a natural goodness about human beings to bring to the surface of their lives those general graces which charm other eyes and win the respect and confidence of those with whom they come in contact.

Not so, however, in the every-day life. Divine grace alone can master the soul when the burden is heavy, and care and trial meet us at every step. There is not enough moral strength in the heart of humanity to sustain it when the body is weary, and the poor, weak arms just ready to let fall the burden. It is our every-day life that builds up or breaks down the character. If we overcome the daily annoyances of life we grow strong and heroic, and it soon becomes a pleasant task to do, bear and suffer. It is our daily life that exerts a lasting influence over the world. It is this that sets the value of religion, and proves to others that it is pure gold and not a mere profession.—The Churchman.

A LADY BORN.—An aged truckman bent under the weight of a big roll of carpet. His hale-hoof fell from his hand and bounced into the gutter out of reach. Twenty idle clerks and salesmen saw the predicament and smiled at his look of helplessness. No one ventured to help him. A fashionably dressed young woman came along, took in the situation at a glance, and without looking to the right or left, stepped into the gutter, picked up the hook in her hand and handed it to the man with a pleasant smile. The ladies looked at each other and at the fair young woman. The truckman, in a violent effort to express his thanks politely, lost his hat. It fell into the gutter where the hook had been. This was almost too much for any woman, young or past young, but this New York girl was equal to the occasion. Into the gutter she stepped again, and got the soiled hat. When she handed it to the truckman a happy smile was seen to play about her lips. "God bless ye, miss," the old man said, as the fair maiden turned her back on the idlers and went on her way.—E.

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