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RT SYMONDS,
Treasurer,

Lesson.

June 15th, 1890.

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strength to abuse and injure those who are weaker than ourselves, is not only unmanly but the part of a coward. Not only should we refrain from injuring our neighbours, but it is our duty to prevent them as far as we are able, from injuring each other. Not many years ago a crowd was gathered round a couple of men engaged in a desperate fight in the streets of Detroit, when a Bishop of the Church happened to pass that way; the crowd was urging the fighters on, but the Bishop at once pushed his way through the crowd and separated the fighters, thus shewing himself to be a far braver man than any one else in that crowd. Not long ago a crowd of cowards stood round in the streets of Toronto, and looked on while three ruffians brutally attacked and ill-used a man, without any cause; it is a pity the brave Bishop was not there then to show them how they should act.

II.—HOW TO PRESERVE INNOCENCE.

As murder is occasioned by indulging in evil passions, such as hatred, revenge, envy, &c., the best way for us to preserve ourselves in innocence is by cultivating by God's help, a spirit of love towards all our fellow creatures. If we really love our neighbour we cannot injure him. We must even love those who hate us (St. Matt. v. 43-45). This love of our neighbour must spring from love to God. If we remember how often we offend Him by our ingratitude, and our disobedience of His laws, we shall be less disposed to think hardly of our fellow creatures who offend us.

Not only should we love our neighbours as ourselves, we should also be kind to animals, and never put them to unnecessary pain, nor permit others to do so (See Prov. xii. 10).

Coleridge, in his "Ancient Mariner," has well said:

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small:
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

Family Reading.

Devotional Notes on the Sermon on the Mount.

No. 21.—THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW

St. Matt. v. 43-48: "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good; and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Our Lord here goes down to the fundamental principle which underlies all the preceding exhortations. Particular precepts are not unneeded. They help towards the education of the conscience, and they enlarge the sphere of action of the principle; but it is in the principle itself that we are to discover the meaning of all the precepts. That principle is love. This is the fulfilling of the Law. This is the whole of human life. It must needs be so; for the true life of man is the life of God. Man was made in the image of God; and God is love. It must be, therefore, that man is truly man when he is like God, that is to say, when he loves and as he loves.

How beautifully do all truths of revelation harmonize, support, and complete each other! Here is that radiant, self-evidencing power of truth in the presence of which all opposition of unbelief is dispelled, and even the ordinary external evidences to the faith become unnecessary.

In bringing out clearly the nature and action of this divine principle, our Lord, as before, makes reference to the teaching of the ancient law, and to that teaching as it had been expounded or misunderstood by the authoritative masters of Israel. They had been told, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." The first part of this command came from Lev. xix. 18; the second part was a rabbinical gloss upon it. The law nowhere required or permitted hatred; yet it must be granted that there are many passages of the Old Testament which might seem to justify this interpretation; and assuredly these words repre-

sented only too accurately the ordinary spirit of the Jewish people towards the heathen.

Must we not go further? Has this mutual hatred between nation and nation, between man and man, ceased with the downfall of Judaism? Is it absolutely banished from the hearts of individual men and women who are regular attendants not only in the House of Prayer, but at the Table of the Lord? "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." For here we are considering THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

It will be noted that some phrases occurring in the Authorized Version are omitted from the Revised, given above. They were probably transferred from S. Luke vi. 27, 28; and it is quite likely that they were spoken in this place. But the words recorded by S. Matthew set forth the principle clearly, the universal love of mankind, including our enemies, and the highest expression of it in intercession.

We need hardly repeat that we have here no absolute condemnation of war, nor any prohibition from appealing, in certain cases, to the judicial tribunals of the countries in which we may live. If we go to war to secure the liberty, the religion, the lives of our fellow-men, then we are fighting under the banner of love. If we bring the malefactor to justice for God's sake and for man's sake, we are blessing society, and perhaps the evil doer himself. It is the same with our social wars. No man, speaking according to the mind of Christ, can absolutely condemn strikes and lockouts. They may be needful safeguards against oppression on the one side or the other. But we must equally declare that such conflicts undertaken in a merely selfish or vindictive spirit are in direct opposition to the Christian Law of Love.

We are to love our enemies; and this love is to be no mere passive sentiment, but an active principle expressing itself in words of blessing and acts of beneficence, and finding its supreme expression in intercession with God. We are to love, to bless, to benefit, to pray for all, even those who hate us. O, it is terrible to think how far we are from this exalted spirit and condition. We brood over our wrongs, real or supposed, we harden ourselves against our fellowmen, we speak of them rashly, unkindly, unjustly. We bear nothing or little and we hope for almost nothing, when we should bear all things, hope all things. And then we pray: Our Father in heaven, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. Be merciful to us; for Thou hast said that the merciful receive mercy.

And the strange thing is, that we think it a hard matter that we should be required to exercise universal love; whereas the cruellest thing would be to allow men to hate one another. If we could imagine the Ruler of the universe to be a malignant Being, we can see that He could not vent His malignity upon us more effectually than by suffering us and inducing us to hate one another.

When is it that our "enemy" does us deadly evil? Not when he inflicts an injury upon us, but when he leads us to injure him. So long as we can press down the thoughts which arise within us in resentment of wrong or injury, so long as we can say of an enemy, May God bless him, and pour His love upon him, and give him of His own blessed Spirit—so long as we can say this from our hearts, so long does our enemy bring us good and not evil, blessing and not cursing.

Let it not, however, be imagined that our Lord intended to condemn righteous anger, true moral indignation, or even the resolution in certain cases to punish the evil doer. The very inducement to loving kindness which He brings forward—that by living in this spirit we shall be like our heavenly Father—may remind us that He who "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust," yet does not treat evil and good alike. He rewards the good and He punishes the bad. Yet here again, in punishing, He is showing love no less than in rewarding.

And here is the resolution of our doubts and the removing of our difficulties. It is indeed possible that cases may arise in which it will not be easy for us to decide whether duty requires us to punish or to forbear; yet he who sets the Lord Jesus before his eyes, and asks with earnest prayer and

ferent desire that he may be enabled to do as Christ would have done in the same circumstances will seldom go astray; and even when he errs, which will hardly happen in any serious degree, he may confidently cast his burden upon the Lord Who knows that he erred not from intention but from ignorance.

When it shall please God to give us this spirit in its fullness—and He will give it when we sincerely desire it—then will the Church repair her shattered breaches and have peace and joy within her borders; and will go forth and gather in a regenerated world. Then shall we be truly "the sons of our Father which is in heaven;" then shall we be "perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect." Amen.

The Tongue.

"The boneless tongue, so small and weak,
Can crush and kill," declared the Greek.

"The tongue destroys a greater horde,"
The Turk asserts, "than does the sword."

A Persian proverb wisely saith,
"A lengthy tongue—an early death."

Or sometime takes this form instead,
"Don't let your tongue cut off your head."

"The tongue can speak a word whose speed,"
Say the Chinese, "outstrips the steed."

While Arab sages this impart,
"The tongue's great storehouse is the heart."

From Hebrew wit the maxim sprung,
"Though feet should slip, ne'er let the tongue."

The sacred writer crowns the whole,
"Who keeps the tongue doth keep his soul."

Some Things well to Remember.

There are some things in this world we should always remember, and some which it would be wise to forget.

For example, among the things which it is always well to remember, is that in saying things against any religion, you are not only guilty of bad taste, but you do not know whose feelings you may hurt.

It is good to remember that many words and a loud voice never constituted conversation.

That all your own children are not swans, nor your neighbours children ugly ducklings.

That the long lane which has no turning is to be compared to that one which says, "The darkest hour is just before dawn."

That virtue is not alone peculiar to your own family and friends, but that there are good people with whom you have not even a bowing acquaintance.

It is also good to remember just what the surroundings where when you formed such decided opinions, and to think a little bit before you express them.

Remember, too, the beginning of most things in this life, and then your judgments are apt to be more true and greater to your own credit.

Also, that evil spoken of another woman is always set down to envy.

But it is best of all to remember that the unkind word left unspoken, the unkind look averted, the unkind manner changed to one of sweetness and dignity, are never regretted.

Whose Will Shall it Be?

One of the hardest and most difficult lessons for a Christian to learn is to submit his own will to the will of God. Upon this point human nature is not only rebellious and stubborn but easily deceived and led astray. It will often, very often, be found that when we are the most positive in thinking and asserting that our will is right and should be followed, that a little more time, a little more knowledge, experience or patience, will show that we are mistaken—that we have reached our conclusions too hastily, and that our opinions are erroneous and unwise. Our daily lives are full of illustrations upon this matter. How great the need that Christians should ever be on their guard against such mistakes. They profess to be the children of God. They tell the world that as His children they can go to Him at all times and ask for a divine wisdom and guidance in all things,