

The Quiet Hour.

The Law of Love. Temperance Lesson.

S. S. LESSON. Rom. 13: 17-14. Commit to memory vs. 9, 10.

April 19, 1903

GOLDEN TEXT.—Rom. 13: 10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

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Owe no man anything, but to love one another, v. 8. It is a common thing in cities and towns to have a reservoir built on some elevation, into which water is forced from lake or stream. From the reservoir the water is distributed through pipes in every direction. God has freely poured his love into our hearts, and it is His purpose that we should dispense it to others. When we pay our daily debt of love to those around us, we are simply sharing with them what God has given to us.

Fulfilled the law, v. 8. Love cannot injure anyone, since it always desires the well-being of those who are loved. There may be lack of wisdom, but there can be no intentional injury where there is sincere affection. Love finds its greatest pleasure in the pleasure of another. If the drunkard were to yield himself to the influence of love, he would no longer bring wretchedness and misery upon others through his selfish indulgence. If all men were controlled by love the rich would no longer oppress the poor, nor the poor envy the rich. Love is the only true and enduring bond of a universal brotherhood, in which each member will seek not his own good alone, but also the good of his fellow men.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, v. 9. Love is the controlling principle in all Christian conduct. Three things are worth being noted regarding this great requirement (1) Love is a universal duty. It overleaps all barriers of race and color and country. It crosses oceans and climbs mountains to bring its blessings to those whom it has never seen. (2) A principle replaces a law. When the Christian man asks how he is to act in given circumstances, he is not pointed to a code containing many thousands of rules like those prescribed to his followers by Mohammed, but he is required simply to act towards him. (3) It is Christ who makes this spirit of love possible. From Him the love of God shines into the hearts of men, and they become reflectors, to direct these blessed rays into the lives of those around. And then Christ teaches us to see in every man, even the worst and most degraded, something that is worthy of love.

Knowing the time, v. 11. How many never stop to remember that the time is going by and the end of all things is drawing near! Jesus does not ask us to think all the time about death and the judgment, for such an attitude would render us unfit for our work, but He does teach us that we should live under the influence of the certain facts, that we must die and that after death comes the judgment.

The day is at hand, v. 12. No religion gives so bright a prospect as the religion of Jesus. Day, and not night, is coming. The future of the Christian is irrigated with the promises of God.

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, v. 13. It will be necessary for this

Christian to do this as long as he lives in this world. His own sinful nature still retains much of its power and he is surrounded by an atmosphere of evil. He must expect to meet temptations. But in the grace of his Lord he can prevent these clinging to him and dragging him into sin.

Let us walk honestly, as in the day, v. 13. Strange it is, and yet true, that the religion which deals most with the other world is the one most concerned about this present world. Though Christ teaches us about heaven, He yet never fails to insist upon it that we must live right in this earth below. The duties of common life are never trivial; they may become part of heaven.

Not in drunkenness, v. 13. The teaching of this lesson as regards temperance, may be summed up as follows: (1) Intemperance makes bad citizens. It does more to fill our jails and prisons than any other cause. It leads men to waste money on drink that ought to be spent in paying their honest debts and supporting in comfort their wives and children. (2) Intemperance makes bad neighbors. The man who is under the influence of drink is ready for folly or crime which may bring great and lasting injury upon those around him. (3) Intemperance imperils a man's future. The gates of the holy city are shut against the drunkard. Drunkards shall not "inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. 6: 10.

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, v. 14. The great Dr. Chalmers was once sitting beside a driver, when one of his horses took fright in a dangerous place. The driver struck the horse a smart blow with the whip. The pain made the animal lose its fear. Dr. Chalmers afterwards wrote a sermon on "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection," the idea of which was suggested to him by the action of the driver. Love to the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts will drive out the love of everything that is holy and impure. It is the only unailing specific against the evil that is within us.

Bible Study: One Clause at a Time.

No. 2, Luke 11: 1-13.

MRS. ANNA ROSS.

"Lord, teach us to pray."

"And He said unto them, 'When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven.'

"He had opened His mouth and taught them" the same prayer more than a year earlier, just after spending a whole night in prayer Himself. He had chosen His twelve apostles in the early morning, and later in the day, yet having His disciples round Him on the mountain side, He had taught them as never man taught before in His sermon on the Mount. Then He had given them this prayer. Why did He repeat it now? Had it fallen upon heedless ears the first time?

He gives it now with a stronger emphasis than at the first. Then He had said, "After this manner pray ye." Now He says, "When ye pray, say 'Our Father which art in heaven.'"

Our Lord has told us plainly, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." But here He takes His praying people by the hand, and Himself leads us into His Father's presence. Thus led by Him we can look up into the face of the eternal God and say,

"Our Father," and become little children before Him—His little children, with Christ's own right, (speak it reverently but seriously) with Christ's own right to a warm acceptance and an unstinted supply. Apart from Jesus Christ the sweet place of a little child before God is unattainable. Apart from Him we cannot get out of the place of the condemned criminal. Even when taking the sacred name of "Our Father" into our lips, it consciously lacks reality.

There is often some dimness of vision as to the ground on which we stand in drawing near to God as "Our Father." But the truth is very simple. We must come either in our own name and character, or in the name and character of the Son of God. If we come in our own name, we can get from Him nothing but what our own character warrants, and the quicker we get out of His presence the better. But if we come in the name of the Son of God, as he has expressly told us to do, we can press upon Our Father for exactly what His character warrants, counting all our own deservings already laid upon the head of the dying Christ. Then we come with boldness in deed, both for mercy to pardon, and for grace—grace sufficient—to help in time of need.

A further study of this teaching of Jesus Christ about prayer will make it plain that He is encouraging us to come with the same glad boldness when seeking mercy and grace for others as when we come for ourselves.

The Called of God.

In Mr. Taylor Innes' biography of the late Professor A. B. Davidson is given his sermon on Saul from which we quote the following characteristic sentences:

"There are characters incapable of being deeply religious. You have seen them many times. You have seen them even in your own families. Have you not felt when you were striving to inculcate truth upon your child, that the boy's mind was strangely unimpressible; that there seemed no affinity between the religious truth and his heart; that it took no hold of a mind, keen and retentive of all other truth? He was not a bad child, not wild, not disobedient, a boy of fine feeling, high-minded, truthful, honourable; but to make him markedly religious seemed beyond you; and you were content, at last, to wait and hope that there was some good thing in him toward God.

"This was precisely the character of Saul. He was, in the highest sense, what we term a man of honour. All the qualities that go to make up a chivalrous character were united in him. He was gallant, brave, liberal, right royal. He was a goodly man in his person, and his qualities of mind and heart corresponded to his outward appearance. Consider his modesty when destined to the throne, how on his return he told his relative about finding the asses, but said not a word about the kingdom; and, when the day of election came, he hid himself away and could not be found. Consider his soldierly courage and chivalry, and how even on the field of Gilboa, his last act of self destruction was done at the bidding of a fastidious honour, lest the unclean hands of the uncircumcised Philistines should abuse him. Consider his almost immaculate moral life, so singular in an Oriental ruler, and in such contrast with the life even of his successor; and yet so ruthlessly did fate pursue him, and so sure is any breach, even the least, of the law of God and nature to avenge itself, that the one concubine whom he had, became on his death the centre of a most tragic history."