

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

IV. QUAR., LESSON VII., NOV. 18, LUKE 6:20-31.

Golden Text – "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." – Luke 6:31.

This sermon of our Lord to the disciples, and specially to the twelve apostles whom he had just ordained, is a very precious one to all who are endeavoring to walk in their footsteps. The twelve, specially, had left all their earthly prospects, ambitions, possessions and friends to follow the Lord through evil and through good report, with no hope of earthly gain, but, on the contrary, forewarned of hardship, persecution, pain and loss, yet with the eye of faith fixed upon heavenly things. – Matt. 19:27-29.

Considering the fulness of their consecration, the Lord looked tenderly and approvingly on them (verse 20), and out of the fulness of his heart sought to impress upon their minds a sense of blessedness of their privilege of service and even of suffering, saying – "Blessed are ye poor," – who have nothing to call your own; and ye that "hunger now" – for righteousness and truth; and that "weep now" – in sympathy with the groaning creation; and that are "hated and persecuted" and "reproached" and have "your names cast out as evil, for the Son of man's sake," – for the kingdom of heaven is yours; your hunger shall be satisfied, and your sorrow shall be turned into joy. All these things are occasions for great rejoicing, in view of the new order of things to be inaugurated at the appearing and kingdom of our Lord and Savior. – "Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold your reward is great in heaven."

But to those who receive their consolation now, in riches and fulness of bread; who revel in luxury and pleasure now, all unmindful of the suffering and death and sorrow and mourning that reign abroad;

who enjoy the favor of the world because they partake of its selfish spirit; to these is coming a time of reckoning. And the evasive answer, "Am I my brother's keeper?" will not avail to turn aside the wrath of God which will burn against all sin and selfishness until it is consumed. "Woe, woe," is coming upon all such – a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation: the iron rod of Christ's rule must bring down every high thing and subdue all things unto him. – Verses 24-26; Rev. 19:15; Psa. 2:9.

Verses 27,28 urge upon all the Lord's people a loving spirit – a love which reaches out even to enemies and makes due allowance for hereditary taint and weakness and temptation; which seeks to heal the wounds and bruises which have resulted to them from the fall, rather than to have revenge upon them; and which prays for their deliverance from the snares and delusions of Satan and the blindness which hinders them from discerning the beauty of holiness.

Verses 29,30 inculcate the principle of non-resistance, in contradistinction to the world's usual method of exacting their rights to the fullest extent possible, and often more than their rights. The Lord's people are to manifest an opposite spirit – a spirit of generosity, which prefers to let men take some advantage in temporal things, rather than, by contention, to indicate that their treasure is on earth instead of in heaven.

Comparison with Matt. 5:39-42 makes the matter quite clear, indicating that *if no* LAWFUL *redress can be obtained*, the smiting, the parting with the cloak, etc., are to be endured gracefully and with due reverence for law and order and respectful submission to the powers that be. We may only strive *lawfully* for our rights, unless they are too small to be worthy of such consideration. – "If any man will *sue thee at [R1735 : page 366] the law*, and [so *lawfully*, even though it may be unjustly] take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also" – let the law take its course, and give something over to show your generosity, rather than be found kicking against the pricks.

The Lord would have his people a noble, generous, order loving and law-abiding people, far above the petty bickerings of a small and mean disposition. Lend to the borrower; don't be exacting with the debtor; be generous, unselfish, frank and courteous – giving place unto wrath and meanness, and overcoming them by showing a more excellent way. Thus may we honor the worthy name we bear.

The Golden Text – the Golden Rule – is a very safe measure to apply to all our actions, and should be in constant use every day of our lives.
