

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

– *SEPTEMBER 14. – EXODUS 20:12-21. –*

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." – Luke 10:27.

THE Ten Commandments delivered to Moses were written upon two stone tablets. One bore the first four commandments, which appertain to God; the other bore the remaining six, which appertain to humanity. The essence of these last six, constituting the Study of today, was expressed in Jesus' words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The "thou shalt not's" might be multiplied indefinitely to fit the thousands of occurrences in daily life, but the one "thou shalt" covers the entire situation. Whoever loves his neighbor will not intentionally injure him, in act, in word or in thought. Hence love expresses the full measure of the Law's requirements. (Rom. 13:10.) Love is at liberty to do more than the Law requires, but it cannot do less.

While only Christians are credited by the Lord with fulfilling the requirements of the Law – and they only because of the allowance made for their weaknesses on account of their relationship with Christ – nevertheless, the Jews and many others have obtained partial blessings in proportion as they have endeavored to fulfil the Divine Law. The natural man, not spirit-begotten, and therefore not a son of God, but still in alienation, receives a blessing of character-development in proportion as he recognizes the principles of righteousness and seeks to conform to them. Hence it is wise and proper at all times and before all people to lift high the Divine standards.

HONOR FATHER AND MOTHER

No matter how old, or ignorant, or stupid, or vicious, parents may be, they are deserving of consideration from their children.

Yet, of course, the kind or degree of respect must depend upon the character of the parent to some extent. With disobedience to parents rank and rampant everywhere, it may seem a hard saying, but we believe it a true one, that the disobedience is due to the parent, or the guardian, of the child.

The child may have been ill-born. Discontent and rebellion in the mind of the mother during the period of gestation may have marked the child before its birth, so that no amount of training may ever fully recover it. In such a case, the parents may well be patient and long-suffering with such unhappy, disobedient dispositions in their children.

And perhaps the parents were only partially to blame; perhaps their minister preached not the laws of God, their human operation and the penalties of their violation, but instead, gave flowery essays and anecdotes containing neither food for the spiritual nature nor assistance in understanding and combating the weaknesses of the human nature. Perhaps the fault was not wholly the mother's. The father may have forgotten that he, too, had a duty toward his offspring, chiefly served by assisting his wife at the critical period to thoughts of kindness, gentleness, nobility, etc.

At any rate, the conscientious parent has a wonderful task to train the perverted child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Those who strive faithfully in this direction cannot be too much appreciated and encouraged; and more and more we should think of esteeming the parents of every noble man and woman of our acquaintance. And if strangers should appreciate the parents, much more should the child.

THE EFFECT OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS

A modern writer of considerable force and influence holds that Sunday Schools, while accomplishing good in one direction, may have done considerable harm in another – by weakening the respect

of the children for their parents, and by releasing the parents from an appreciation of their responsibilities toward their children. The parents are, in the Divine arrangement, the priests of God, particularly in respect to their children. To whatever extent they shirk this responsibility, or to whatever extent the honor of this station is ignored, their influence over the child is lost; and one hour's time per week in a Sunday School class can never take the place of a continual parental supervision.

Statistics show that boys of from sixteen to twenty years of age constitute about one-third of all the dangerous criminals, and that their proportionate number is increasing. Hence all benevolent people should be on the alert for the right training of the rising generation. All should especially co-operate with the Divine commandment by urging and encouraging parental authority and obedience thereto. Long life and prosperity were the rewards promised to the Jews under this commandment.

"THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER"

Nothing in this commandment forbids the killing of animals when necessary to the interests of the human family, either to abate pests or to sustain life. Neither does it forbid the execution of criminals; for thus it would be in conflict with the Divine Law elsewhere expressed, and practised under the guidance of Moses and by Divine direction.

This commandment, however, does teach that life is to be prized, not jeopardized. The spirit of this commandment, Jesus declared, includes the thought that we are not to have an angry spirit of murder, restrained merely by fear of consequences. We may thus see that the spirit of this commandment would make it incumbent upon those who employ labor or who have any supervision of their fellowmen to take all reasonable precaution for safeguarding against accidents of any kind. To allow self-interest or a love of money to perpetuate dangerous conditions **[R5288 : page**

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COMMIT NOT ADULTERY

One result of the fall has been a depravity of the sexual appetites. The result is impurity, unchastity, a lack of self-control. All of these tendencies lead away from God, from righteousness and from true happiness. The family unit of one husband and one wife, originally established by the Almighty in Eden, seems to be a cornerstone of righteousness, in the family and in national life. Purity, no adulteration, is the Divine requirement.

"THOU SHALT NOT STEAL"

To steal is to take from another his possessions. Had not inventions in the line of electricity and steam kept pace with our increase of knowledge, the world today would be a thieves' paradise. But while buccaneering, piracy, robbery, burglary are reprobated by all intelligent people, many have a chance for a more subtle form of stealing, through stock speculations, organization of fake companies with glittering prospects, according to description, but really organized to take advantage of the less informed or weaker minded. This is stealing.

Making false returns to tax assessors is stealing. Attempt to smuggle without proper payment of customs duty is stealing. Failure to give agreed upon services for wages received is stealing. But the worst form of stealing, the one that does more harm than all the rest combined, is the one indicated in Shakespeare's words:

"Who steals my purse, steals trash,
But he who filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And leaves me poor indeed."

The Scriptural instruction to "speak evil of no man" seems to be comparatively unknown. As a result, many defile their own characters ignobly, blight the happiness of others and add to the distress of the already groaning creation.

"BEAR NO FALSE WITNESS"

In a thousand ways the spirit of this injunction may be violated, and is violated every day, not only by misrepresenting the goods we sell, or the goods we wish to buy, but in a thousand ways of slandering a neighbor.

"THOU SHALT NOT COVET"

Covetousness comes in first before the stealing, before the murdering, before the injury of slander. Covetousness is a heart disease which has to do with every other crime; for all sins have their basis in selfishness, and selfishness is covetousness. Well is this placed at the conclusion of the list. Whoever would keep the spirit of God's Law must guard his heart against covetousness.

