

The Teaching of Jesus



CONCERNING
CHRISTIAN
CONDUCT



THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS
Edited by JOHN H. KERR, D. D.

THE TEACHING OF JESUS
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CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

ANDREW C. ZENOS, D. D.

THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS

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THE TEACHING OF JESUS

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By *Andrew C. Zenos, D.D.*

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TO MY WIFE

WHOSE CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP
HAS THROWN A FLOOD OF LIGHT ON
THE SUBJECT OF THIS BOOK.

PREFACE

THE subject of this little book will be at once recognized as a very large and important one. Broadly defined, it has often been made the theme of full and detailed treatment. The justification for a new presentation of it does not lie in the fact of a need for a thorough and extensive reinvestigation of it, but rather of a call for a condensed and brief restatement in popular form of the essentials of Jesus' thought. In such an effort, the processes by which results are reached are necessarily left out of sight. Notes have been carefully avoided, except in two or three instances where their

insertion seemed to be more than usually illuminative. Of course, it will be easily understood that exhaustiveness could not have been expected, and has not been aimed at in such a brief treatment of the subject. The general principles alone are given. The reader who is desirous of pursuing the subject into minuter details will know where to find these adequately treated.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY.

The Sources.

THE critical questions regarding the Gospels are, for good or for ill, before the Christian public, and it does not become those who wish to have a perfect knowledge of the mind of Christ to ignore them. It is not necessary, however, in the study of a special department of the teaching of Jesus to rehearse the processes by which results are reached. The results, no doubt, depend largely on the methods employed, and the methods are complex, taking for

granted in many instances what stands in need of ample demonstration. Partly on account of their complexity, leaving it open to the critic to emphasize some elements or stages in them and minimize or pass over others, and partly because of personal points of view, the results reached by different critics and schools of criticism differ widely.

On the one side stand those who can find nothing in the Gospels of what Jesus said with the possible exception of a few colorless utterances,* on the other those who regard everything reported by the evangelists as spoken *verbatim et literatim* by the Lord Himself; and between these many shades and varieties of interpreters. The success of our own task depends less on our reaching the exact phraseology of our sources and more on a thorough appreciation of the general spirit and principles of Jesus. There can be no question regarding the great moral change

* Schmiedel, in *Encycl. Bibl.*, art., "Gospels."

which He wrought in the conduct of His disciples ; and indirectly through the contagion of their example, as well as through the force of their teachings, upon multitudes of others in the apostolic generation. Even those who can see no more than nine, more or less, genuine sayings of Jesus in the Gospels must admit that the Master uttered such things as those reported. In what words He uttered them is a matter of comparatively less importance to those who attempt to identify the general outline and spirit of His teaching rather than its precise forms and ramifications.

To avoid misunderstanding, however, we may say that we hold the evangelists to be correct reporters of Jesus' word. There is a certain uniqueness about these words, a certain characteristic ring, which it is impossible to believe the simple and uneducated men the Apostles are known to have been, could have infused into them. There is, moreover, a verisimili-

tude in the theory that these reports are generally speaking verbal reproductions of what Jesus said. The time and the place were propitious for the reception and repetition of maxims and parables such as we find in the evangelic narratives. The practice was common in the schools for the teacher to frame his thought in some striking, carefully-balanced sentence or similitude and thus profoundly to impress it on the minds of his disciples. The disciples could, and did, then go forth and repeat His utterance with literal exactness. In the Wisdom form of the "Saying" (*Logion*), a special literary vehicle was developed, admirably suited to this end. It embodied in a symmetrical and rhythmical couplet or triplet, a teaching worthy of being remembered and disseminated. The Wisdom form may not have been used by Jesus Himself as extensively as some scholars would have us believe* but

* Briggs, *Ethical Teaching of Jesus*.

it was manifestly used by all the public teachers of the day. That many utterances of Jesus had been preserved in the form of the "Saying" is put beyond question, apart from the Gospels themselves, by the groups of Sayings (Logia) of Jesus recently brought to light by Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt.

Upon the whole the critical considerations support the belief that the words ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels are His, and that we have in them no mythological growths but actual historical speeches embodying His distinctive thought.*

* Wernle, who cannot be accused of leaning towards the traditional or anticritical views on questions of criticism in the New Testament, says of Matthew: "Without any additions of his own, merely by selecting the words of eternal life, he has bequeathed to us a picture of all that is essential in Christianity, which is striking in its grandeur" (*Beginnings of Christianity*, I. pp. 148, 149). Jülicher, another representative of thorough-going criticism in the New Testament sphere, says: "The true merit of the synoptists is that, in spite of all the poetical touches they employ, they did not repaint, but only handed on the Christ of history." And again, "As a rule, there lies in all the synoptic Logia a kernel of individual character

But when the four Gospels are compared with one another, even in the most casual manner, there emerge certain questions concerning their mutual relations. The first three and the fourth are at once seen to stand upon different levels. The first question, therefore, is as to the origin and meaning of this difference. The first three again are seen to be more similar in language and plan of arrangement than could be accounted for by the mere fact that they were dealing with one common subject. The second question is thus as to the origin and meaning of the similarities of the first three. As these three are called the Synoptic Gospels, this second question has been called the Synoptic Problem.

To enter at all adequately into the discussion of the Synoptic problem would take us too far from our immediate theme and require more space than can possibly

so inimitable and so fresh that their authenticity is above all suspicion." (*Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 371, 372.)

be given to it in our little treatise. To treat of it but casually would be useless. It is far better to dismiss the subject with the affirmation of our conviction that the net result of the discussion will be a clearer conception of the teaching of Jesus and a fuller knowledge of what He thought, planned and did.

The relation of the Gospel of John to the Synoptic Gospels is also a larger subject than can be properly treated in as brief a way as our space permits. Nevertheless, this can be said, that whatever differences may emerge elsewhere between the first three and the fourth Gospels, in the sphere of ethical teaching, absolutely no differences have been pointed out. The Jesus of John holds up the same ideals, illustrates the same fundamental principles, and rouses the same impulses and motives of conduct as the Jesus of the Synoptists. If the Fourth Gospel presents the conduct of the follower of Jesus in a clearer light, it is not

because the author has added anything essential of his own creation to the Master's ideas, but because he was writing at a time when experience had enabled him to realize more of their infinite stretch and richness, and to see deeper into their inner life and more broadly into their bearing.

Jesus' Interest in Conduct

Another point in question may be dismissed with a single word. It is that of the exact outlook of Jesus into the future. It is held on one side that Jesus saw the Kingdom of God which He preached as in the future (not in the distant future, but in the immediate) as a consummation to be realized by a sudden manifestation of the power of God, carrying with it the destruction of the world-powers and the establishment of the Messianic reign. It is held on the other side that Jesus looked upon the Kingdom as already established by His own coming

into the world, and that He foresaw for it a long development upon earth. Our own view coincides more nearly with the latter position ; but whether one or the other of these positions be true, His teaching on conduct is not materially affected. It remains true that Jesus commended to His disciples the same kind of moral conduct whether the world were to last ten milleniums or twenty-four hours. They were to live the same kind of life whether they expected the Kingdom to be ushered in some time in the future, no matter how soon or how late, or accepted it as already in operation and calling upon them to obey its laws.

But did Jesus after all concern Himself with conduct at all ? Was He not rather a Teacher of truth, a Revealer of God and heaven, and of the way of eternal life ? If by conduct be meant simply a manner of outward bearing towards those with whom one has to do in earthly relations, and if this manner of acting is conceived

of as beginning and ending with these relations, then we may say that Jesus was but little concerned with mere conduct. But if conduct is the fruit of an inner knowledge of self and of God and of one's destiny, then it was not possible for Jesus to disregard or minimize it. The question, Did Jesus lay down a law of conduct, or did He teach a doctrine of God? becomes in this light an irrelevant one. "Conduct" says Matthew Arnold, "is three-fourths of life." If so, it is the three-fourths that is exposed to view. The other fourth is not in itself open to observation. But its existence and nature must necessarily be evinced by that which is visible. Neither the visible three-fourths nor the invisible one-fourth, however, can be separated from one another.

To put the case in other words, we may say that Jesus is concerned first of all and throughout with the salvation of men. He teaches truth; He stimulates

desire; He arouses aspirations; He awakens loves and hatreds, love of that which is noble and good, hatred of that which is mean and destructive; He calls to repentance and He promises forgiveness; and all in order that men may be brought to the saving knowledge of God the Father, and received into the Kingdom He had established. The impartation of knowledge has a very important function in the bringing about of this result; so has the quickening of desire and aspiration. But only when these burst out into the blossom and fruit of conduct, does the full revelation of the work of Jesus come.

His own description of His mission is given in the words "I came that they may have life" (John x. 10). The nature and results of this life He further describes in the allegory of the Vine and the Branches. As the life of the branches is tested by their fruit-bearing, so the life of His followers is tested by right think-

ing about Him and His teaching, and by right conduct under His guidance.

Conduct and Life

What now is the sphere of Christian Conduct and how is it differentiated from that of Christian Life? Life is a term which does not easily lend itself to clear definition. And yet, on the other hand, it is a term whose meaning is not easily mistaken. The Christian life is the whole spiritual movement which begins with the appearance of Christ before the soul, and the soul's acceptance of Him as the revelation of God the Father. This movement necessarily includes an inner and an outer development. As an inner movement, it begins with the quickening of spiritual insight, the apprehension of Christ as the Redeemer from sin, and the surrender of one's will and affections to Him as the Lord.

As an outward movement, it consists in regulating one's relations to God and

to the world of animate and inanimate beings, so as to carry out certain ideas and actualize certain ideals which have entered into one's purview through Christ. And this is Christian conduct. Our inquiry will, therefore, take the direction of a search for the guidance which Jesus furnishes to His followers as they strive to conform their outward actions to the new and distinctively Christian ideals.

CHAPTER II

The Christian Man: Presuppositions of Christian Conduct.

THAT man's ideal of conduct will depend in a large measure on his conception of his origin, nature and destiny, is hardly open to question. No ethical teacher who has failed to ground his system on firm foundations in these matters has succeeded in furthering the cause of ethical culture and development. Jesus is not an exception to the rule. There is a difference, however, between Jesus and other ethical teachers, and it lies in the fact that whereas they build theories of psychology

as a substructure for their ethics, He goes deeper and grounds His teaching on the religious nature of man. He relates the moral nature directly with God.

Synthetic View of Man

It is one of the most obvious features of Jesus' view of man that it is synthetic and not analytic. Man is not to Him a complex being, consisting of body, soul and spirit ; intellect, sensibility and will ; cognitive and motive powers ; affections, desires and conscience ; but a unitary organism. The distinctions carried in these terms are not necessarily wrong or misleading : neither does Jesus ignore them altogether. The distinction between body and soul is indeed so far from being ignored in His teaching that it is quite clearly brought into the foreground, when He urges His disciples not to "be afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" (Matt. x. 28 ; Luke xii. 4). But it is not

wrought out into a psychological theory. It is simply made the ground of a practical appeal in behalf of conduct worthy of the child of God. Similarly, with the so-called "faculties of the mind," while the varied activities designated by them are assumed to exist, they are nowhere enumerated, classified, defined or distinguished from one another with a view to scientific precision.

Neither does Jesus take any special interest in the question of the origin of the soul. There were those in His day who like the Essenes and the followers of Philo held that every human soul had a prenatal existence in a most subtle, ethereal form, that it was dragged down and entangled in the body, as in a prison cell, and held there until the time of its liberation.* The more prevalent view, basing itself on the Old Testament, presented each soul as a special creation of

*Jos. *de Bell. Jud.* II, viii, 11; Philo, *Mund. Op.*, 22 [I, 15]: 46 [1, 32].

God. But Jesus takes no notice of these discussions.

Conduct Grounded in Religion

It is otherwise with the deeper lying rock of the religious nature. On this Jesus builds His ethics. About it therefore He has something definite to say. Whatever the origin or the inner constitution of the soul, or its relation to the body may be, man as man, either stands or is capable of standing in the relation of a child to God. Without entering into the question whether all human beings are the children of God by creation, or may become so by faith in Jesus Christ (a question which the more it is studied, the more it appears to possess a merely verbal importance), we may assert that the whole course of a human being in this life and in the life to come is determined by his willingness to live in the relation of a child to God.

Immortality

But if a child of God, man has the pledge of immortality. Immortality is not to be mistaken for eternal life. That expression is used in the Fourth Gospel as the broad equivalent of all the blessings brought to man by Jesus Christ through His revelation of God the Father. Immortality is simply the deathlessness of personality. Eternal life is the life lived even before bodily death by him who has come to the true knowledge of God through Jesus Christ (John xvii. 4). Immortality is associated with the resurrection of the dead. It is only as He is approached with the question of the Sadducees regarding the resurrection that Jesus teaches immortality. They thought they would perplex Him with the implications of a second life. He answered: The second life is not only not difficult to account for when one divests the idea of it of merely earthly

elements, but it is a fact apart from the reëmbodiment of the departed soul. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are now living; for God, who said that He was their God, could not have done so unless they were immortal. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. xxii. 32). When God pledges Himself to such a relation of intimacy to mankind, the pledge means that He has made men different from the brute creation and endowed them with deathlessness.

There is nothing inconsistent in this with the Apostle's dictum that "the King of kings and Lord of lords . . . only hath immortality" (I Tim. vi. 15). For it is the immortality that is conveyed by the Creator to the creature, not the immortality of the absolute and unconditioned being that is asserted of man. In one sense, there is no immortality outside of God; for only God is in Himself deathless, but those whom God chooses

to make deathless are certainly such. Without putting it into an academic formula, Jesus thus plainly declares the doctrine of human immortality.

Inestimable Value of Man

And if man is immortal, he is of inestimable value. He may not, must not think too meanly of himself. Nay, he will find it hard to think of himself highly enough. The temptation which assails most human beings is to think too highly of themselves in comparison with others and too unworthily in comparison with the ideal for them designed by the Creator. It was because they thoroughly yielded to this temptation that the Pharisees of Jesus' day on the one hand looked upon the publicans and sinners as so far inferior to themselves that they gave up all hope of rescuing them from their evil manner of life, and on the other hand thought so unworthily of themselves that they were satisfied with

hollow externalism and fell easily into the snares of hypocrisy and pride. They were indeed in their own judgment on a different and a vastly higher level than the reprobates whom they called sinners (*Am Haaretz*), but they did not value themselves highly enough to aim at the best within their reach.

Jesus' view of the dignity of human nature was revolutionary. It found a priceless jewel in what was looked upon as a useless rubbish heap. It called men in the lowest depths of degradation to rise to sublime heights and gave them the promise of help if they would only try to soar. It made it worth while for every one without exception to make the effort to live a better life.

But Jesus did not ignore *sin* or minimize the greatness and difficulty of the task of regeneration. Nor did He lower ideals of the divine law and underestimate the seriousness of transgressing it. Sin as sin is vastly more abhorrent to Him

than it is to the Pharisee who gathers his skirts about him lest by touching the sinner he should become contaminated. Jesus came to save that which was lost. He was so thoroughly possessed by the infinite moment of the difference between the lost and the saved that He was willing "to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 25 ; Mark x. 45). The havoc wrought by sin even in the physical man, the tears and groans and soul-anguish it caused in this life, always stirred Him to sympathy for its victims, to hatred for the evil itself and to saving deeds of supernatural power. Sinners were *lost*—lost to God, lost to themselves, lost to their fellow-creatures, and He would do all that it was possible to save them.

Jesus and Utilitarianism

Thus Jesus tied conduct to a faith in God, and in man's nature and destiny as related to God. He infused into it the life

of motives drawn from the eternal sphere. It is needless to say that His standpoint is the very opposite of utilitarianism. It has indeed often been presented as essentially utilitarian. But the presentation is nothing more than a caricature. "Do right that you may receive a reward in heaven," is reported to be the sum and substance of its philosophic basis. But while Jesus does hold eternal rewards and penalties in prospect, He does so not in order to induce men to do right and eschew evil, but in order to help them bear the hardships which a utilitarian world will impose upon them when they attempt to follow the path of duty. It is only to counteract the manifest paralyzing effects of persecution and suffering, and steel His followers to endurance that He points to what lies beyond (Matt. x. 28, ff. ; xix. 29 ; John xvi. 33). So far from inculcating a utilitarian ethics, Jesus is constantly warning His disciples that He has nothing to promise them and

nothing to give them for their pains but the hatred of the world and the burden of the cross.

Jesus and Intuitional Ethics

On the other hand, Jesus does not call on men to do right just because it is right. Philosophically, that may be a tenable position. At any rate, it is a fairly debatable thesis. It is quite true, in a certain sense, that right must be loved and done for its own sake. But Jesus lifts the curtain from behind that flat and perspectiveless proposition, and reveals a world of personalities with which moral conduct is inextricably associated. "Do right because you love God and God loves you, and you are eternally related to Him in the closest of all relationships," is His answer to the basal question of ethics.

Without, therefore, discrediting theoretical ethics as a science, but rather making it all the more necessary and in-

teresting by the enthusiasm which He creates in the whole subject, Jesus devotes Himself primarily and almost exclusively to the practical side of morality. He has no word to say as to whether conscience is a single and separate faculty or a complex of tendencies and powers in man. The question, Did man receive his moral nature by a direct *ab extra* endowment, or by a subconscious evolution and gradual development, does not emerge in the part of the field which He has chosen to occupy. These and all other kindred matters are left to the intellect of man as legitimate regions for exploration and investigation, just as the mechanism of the heavens or the knowledge and uses of the great nature powers are. It is a privilege given to men to investigate, discuss and use what they can find in these spheres. As for Jesus, He is bent upon the more vital task of begetting living children of God. To this end He quickens the consciousness

of kinship with God, and with it the impulses towards a complete and completely holy life. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v. 48).

Jesus the Ideal

One more aspect of Jesus' general attitude towards conduct must be mentioned, that He enforces by living example what He imparts in oral teaching. Here, too, He differs from all other teachers. Some in His own day He had reason to reproach as "loading men with burdens grievous to be borne," and themselves not touching the burdens "with one of their fingers" (Luke xi. 46). In all ages there have existed imitators and predecessors of these, men who could easily and fluently discourse on the beauty of virtues which they did not even try to practice. At the most, they could only make attempts to live up to their ideals and confess when they had done their

best that they had come short of actualizing them in their lives (*video meliora deteriora sequor*). Jesus, on the contrary, taught nothing which He did not illustrate with His perfect example. Indeed, because His teaching is expressed in human language, and human language is interpreted by those who hear or read it according to the best there is in them, the mere oral teaching of Jesus would have conveyed a much less adequate idea of what He designed His followers to be, had not He Himself placed the highest interpretation upon that teaching by His own life. The example of Jesus may thus be said from the point of view of the disciples to transcend His teaching. As one who knew Him closely through all the days of His ministry declared "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not" (I Pet. ii. 22, 23).

It was impossible, speaking even from the merest human point of view, and without regard to the presence of the Holy Spirit, that teaching framed with such unerring insight into the nature of the subject, adapted so marvellously to the needs of men, and carried with such a living force of example, should totally fail. Coming into the hearts of men full of frailty, and working against mighty forces of evil deeply rooted, it has never indeed been fully realized in the life of any single man besides the one who gave it to the world. But as an ideal it has commanded unbounded admiration, challenged comparison with the best the world has had to offer, and drawn countless multitudes out of degradation and misery into nobility and godlikeness.

CHAPTER III

The Antecedents of Christ's Teaching on Conduct.

JESUS spoke to men who were already measurably equipped with ethical conceptions. He did not assume that the minds of His disciples were blank tablets on which anything might be written. He spoke with due regard to the effect which His own teaching might have on these preconceptions, and to the reciprocal effect of the preconceptions on His teaching. He found them familiar with a definite law of life, which was upon the whole sound and helpful. No law of life adopted by a

large section of humanity is ever totally devoid of a sound kernel at its core, no matter how much error and unwholesomeness may have grown about it. But the law governing the people with whom Jesus had direct dealings was no mere human law, adopted or developed as a consequence of ordinary experience. It was given from above, and, though designed for crude ages, it contained principles of eternal validity. And it was ever the way of Jesus to lay hold of that which was sound, and work it out into its fullness. He "did not come to destroy, but to fulfill."

Moreover, in doing so, He adapted His work, as already said, to the conditions and circumstances. He did not scatter seed irrespective of the prospects of growth. He taught the uselessness of casting pearls before swine. The law of adaptation was always before Him. He did not believe in putting new wine into old wine skins. Contrary as it might ap-

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pear to expectation, He held that even moral regulations must be suited to the capacities of those who are to receive and live by them. "The hardness of their hearts" did lead to the adaptation of the law of marriage to the men of the Old Testament, and to the permission of divorce upon conditions where the ideal could not be appreciated and enforced. And if there was that which was relative and changeable in the old conditions, there was the possibility of advance upon it. It was at least rudimentary and could be developed. "Ye have heard that it was said," He declared with reference to the old; and then set over His own more perfect thought in the formula, "But I say unto you."

The Old Testament Law of Conduct

What then was the Old Testament law of conduct, which Jesus used as a starting-point? It was a law in which God was recognized as supreme, and

conformity to His expressed will as the norm for the faithful Israelite. God's will moreover had been definitely revealed in a series of explicit commandments, the Ten Words of the Decalogue. But the Decalogue bears on its very face the marks of a preparatory stage. It is the code of a society in its infancy. It prescribes the duty of the individual, but it does so in the negative form of prohibition. It hedges the path on every side with a "Thou shalt not." It is indeed based upon a comprehensive and unified view of the sphere of duty; but this unity is conventional; it is imposed by the framer of the commandment; it does not inhere in the subject itself. The subdivision and arrangement of the law in the Ten Commandments are only such as to help in the grasping and holding of their content by a people in the earlier stages of civilization. It is this feature of it that makes the Decalogue so permanently valuable in the instruction of

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the young, and will continue to give it vitality as a pedagogical instrument as long as there shall be undeveloped minds in the world. But it is significant at the same time of its elementary character. And so it is to the Decalogue that Jesus goes to illustrate the contrast between the old and the new morality, for here He finds the germ of the true which also, however, is in need of development. Apart from this development it is quite inadequate.

Two characteristics distinguish the conduct prescribed for the Old Testament saint. First, he was never to forget that he was an Israelite. In his consciousness, there should always be vivid the thought of the special favor he was enjoying as a member of God's chosen people. First as a member of a tribe, then as of a nation, the descendent of Abraham must live worthily of his privileges. But in the days of Jesus, the time had become ripe for the passing from

this nationalism to the consciousness of the unity of the human race. It is not meant, of course, that the average Jew realized this change, but that the history immediately preceding had brought the world to the point where a conduct could be held up as ideal in which the consciousness of merely national relationships should fade into comparative indifference.

Secondly, the Israelite viewed every detail of conduct as consisting of two sides, a Godward and heavenward, and a manward and earthward side. And the Godward was symbolized in a ceremonial religious act. It was not simply that the religious ceremonial stood as a constant expression of the religious nature, but that each part of a human life's whole make-up had its particular ceremonial. Birth and death, work and rest, morning and evening, peace and strife, the home and the market, were associated with special ceremonial symbols.

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If a man committed a trespass against his neighbor, it was not enough that he should make restitution. The act of restitution must be accompanied by a special sacrifice to Jehovah.

Both of these features were done away with by Jesus. The consciousness of nationalism disappeared as He practiced His kindnesses to non-Israelites, such as the Syro-Phœnician woman, the Roman centurion, and the Samaritans with whom He came in touch during the course of His ministry. The ritual element was put away even more summarily because it had come to be a source of many serious abuses. The ceremonial accompaniment originally intended to indicate God's presence and share in every relation of life was practically emptied of its holiness, and in its jejune form it usurped the place of the moral principles of life. Hence Jesus sent men to the prophets to learn "what that means, I will have mercy and not sacrifice."

So far then as the Old Testament is concerned, Jesus recognizes it as the preparation and basis for His own teaching. He finds in it some special provisions meant to be effectual for a time and meet passing conditions. With the disappearance of these conditions, those provisions were to lapse. He finds, however, also, some principles which could not pass away because they are valid for all time. The primitive and ideal was unchangeable, the prescriptive was temporary. "From the beginning it was not so."

Though it may be true in one sense that the ethics of Jesus are a development of the Old Testament ethics, in another sense this is not the case. Neither the Old Testament nor the environment can account for Jesus. He is "a divine miracle in that age and environment" (Wellhausen). His relation to His age is that of the transcendent personality, who, emerging in it stands above

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it. He is in it to mould it, not to be affected by it.

Pagan Ethical Teaching

Does Jesus owe anything to pagan teachers for His ideas on conduct? If the question has reference to a direct indebtedness based upon a first-hand contact with the great masters of heathen thought, it can only be answered in the negative. If it refer to the filtering in of Greek, Hindoo, or even Persian and Babylonian elements into Jewish thought, it is a question of the indebtedness of Judaism to paganism, not one of a relation of Jesus to heathen teachers. Jesus stands towards the pagan elements of thought as He does towards those originally developed within Judaism. They are the conditions He recognizes and with reference to which He frames the form of His teaching. So far as they are true and sound, they are the germs which He fosters and develops. They

are the materials which He organizes and vitalizes into a living entity. They are never the things which He borrows and retails even though in a modified form as the Stoics did the thoughts of Socrates and Plato.

As a matter of fact, there were some rich and valuable ethical teachings gathered together in ancient heathendom. Not to speak of the mechanical maxims of Confucius, and the more dynamic ethical precepts of Buddha, as being too far removed from Palestine to enter into vital connection with anything that Jesus may have taught, there were in Greece and Alexandria moral conceptions current which exerted a strong influence throughout the Judaic world. Virtue, temperance, wisdom and justice had been preached by Plato himself as the four sides of a perfect character. The Stoics seizing on one of these, that of temperance, or self-control, had wrought out a perfect ideal of a life of calmness and

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strength. The Epicureans in their turn, by turning the Platonic wisdom into the practical sphere had set the goal of happiness as the test and end of all conduct.*

With these ideals and systems of the Greeks, the teaching of Jesus was destined to come into contact by and by. But in its origin it was entirely independent of them. Its historical connection leads back rather into Hebrew prophecy. If we use this term to cover broadly the ethical content of the Old Testament, we shall find that conduct is defined here either as a matter of requirement by God Himself, as in the Decalogue, and by the prophets in the stricter sense, or as a matter of the highest prudence, as in the Book of Proverbs, or in the Wisdom Literature in general.

Righteousness

The watchword of Hebrew prophecy was righteousness. Those who were

* Cf. W. D. Hyde. "*From Epicurus to Christ*," chs. 1, and 2.

called to preach it were also given the vision of its eternal bearings. They saw it grounded in the nature of God and they watched its issues in a judgment of the ages. If Israel prospered, it was to be by righteousness. If the heathen were to be brought to nought, it was because of their lack of conformity to it. If they turned to Jehovah, and took His law as their guide, they should be saved by righteousness. This is the ethical key to the puzzling Book of Jonah, as well as the underlying thought of many an obscure passage in the rest of the Old Testament.

This law is individualized. The righteous one shall be saved by his faithfulness (Hab. ii. 4). All the scathing denunciations of Amos and Isaiah, all the complaints of Ezra and Jeremiah, all the urgent appeals of Hosea and Haggai and Zechariah are occasioned by the lapse from, or the failure to realize, this law of God in private as well as in civic life. Old Testament the-

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ology with its doctrines of the unity and holiness of God, the election of a people to be holy, the expression of that holiness in a ceremonial system, the Messiah, the Remnant, the Great Day of Jehovah, is nothing but a series of deductions from the central thought of righteousness in God and man.

Jesus takes up the lesson just where the prophets left it. He takes it up where they found the conditions and their own limitations incapacitating them from continuing it. He clears the ground, prunes off foreign accretions, and infuses a new life into the plant. It is true His own message and work are more than ethical ; but they are ethical before they are anything more. The Kingdom of God was the realization of long cherished ideals of a perfect order in which men would deal with one another as God would have them do, *i. e.*, righteously. Jesus' law of conduct is then a continuation, purification and expansion of the law of perfect

righteousness given to Abraham, to Moses and the prophets. What was dimly seen as a flickering light by the earlier of God's messengers was shown by Him in its full and constant blaze. In this, as in all other parts, of Revelation, "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in *His* Son " (Heb. i. 1).

CHAPTER IV

The Mainspring of Christian Conduct.

IT was said above that the key word of Old Testament morality is Righteousness. Righteousness as conduct, however, may spring from a perception of results. The fact that it produces happiness for its votary or that it issues in perfection, harmony and beauty of character, or that it secures recognition and standing among men, or that its opposite is the source of frightful ravages, or that there are penalties attached to the doing of unrighteousness, may lead to its practice. Righteousness may also

spring from a knowledge and genuine and spontaneous love of Him who is the source of it. The Old Testament had given the commandments which should yield righteousness, but had not exhibited the inner unity and harmony of these commandments in any one of these roots. One of the points at which Jesus transcends the Old Testament conception is just this idea of morality as a unity, controlled by one living and moulding principle.

The Great Commandment

When the Pharisees incited one of their own number, a lawyer, to test His knowledge of the Old Testament Law, with the question, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" He promptly answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou

shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth and the prophets" (Matt. xxii. 35-39).

These two commandments were quoted from the Old Testament law, but they were taken from different parts of it. Under the Old Testament, their connection was not apparent. Each in its place was recognized as proper and effective. It did not seem necessary to join them together under one principle. Neither was their universal sweep clearly seen. "Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God" meant the God of thy nation, the God who saved thee "out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." That the same Jehovah should be the object of love for all men of every land and every age, the Old Testament saint did not realize. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," meant, Thou shalt have regard for and do good unto the Israelite with whom thou art in daily re-

lation. In the days when national life broke up merely local lines of relationship, and men came into frequent touch with strangers, and these presently established themselves in the places of neighbors, the question, "Who is my neighbor?" could not fail to rise and puzzle the conscience. In the parallel but slightly varying account of Luke (x. 25), this question actually follows, with its magnificent answer in the parable of the True Neighbor, commonly called the Good Samaritan.

That answer means simply that the love at the root of conduct must be universal. All artificial distinctions must melt before it. The Jews were not quite ready to have their national prerogatives annulled by such universalism. More than this, within the nation, a special class had been formed with the claim to special privileges before God and men. And they based this claim on their very relation to the Law. By de-

fining the Law as He did, Jesus put Himself into the position of implacable hostility to the Pharisaic standpoint.

Defectiveness of Pharisaic Righteousness

He declared the Pharisaic ideal to be totally inadequate. Quite deliberately and dispassionately, He said to His followers: "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. v. 20).

I. It Exalts Human Authority above Divine

More particularly, Jesus criticised the Pharisaic idea of morality first of all for subordinating the divine to human authority. "Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men." And of this He gave a familiar illustration. The fifth commandment of

the Decalogue had enjoined in explicit terms the rendering of honor to father and mother, but the Pharisees taught otherwise. "If a man shall say to his father or his mother, that wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God, Ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother; making void the word of God by your tradition" (Mark vii. 8-13). Here was a case of the manifest reversal of the intent of the law. The law was of divine authority. The tradition which annuls it was of human origin; and yet when it came to a choice between the two, the preference was given to the human rather than the divine. Such tampering with conscience as this involved would only result in the deadening of the moral nature.

II. Prefers External to Internal Elements

Another point at which Jesus found the current ideal defective was its prefer-

ence for the external rather than the internal. The moral law is a mere abstraction if it do not issue in outward application. And in the application of it outwardly, questions must necessarily arise. A strong, healthy nature will answer these questions for itself ; but the weak have always clamored for prescriptions, defining the law in detail, and making it unnecessary for them to grapple with these questions. It was this that led to the formation of the so-called Hedge of the Law. The Hedge was nothing but a series of precepts covering every imaginable combination of circumstances that may arise. It aimed to externalize the spirit of the law, and render its observance or violation easy of discernment.

In a certain way, the Hedge accomplished its purpose. The multitude of its prescriptions could be easily grasped ; they were outward rules. As a matter of inner right, for instance, the law pro-

vided for the payment of tithes, but it was not easy to decide what sort of products should be tithed. So many of them appeared to be too insignificant or too much aside from the main channels of life for the law to take notice of them. The Rabbis undertook to say just what the law meant to cover in this respect. Garden herbs, such as mint, anise and cummin must be tithed. The difficulty was removed. The plain man could now observe the law as to tithes, without puzzling his mind. But the process by which the difficulty was removed raised an external and subordinate matter to the level of the internal and primary matters of "judgment and the love of God." No sooner raised to this level, however, the external, from the nature of the case, overshadowed and eclipsed the internal. The weightier matters were completely lost sight of. Men were so busy about making "clean the outside of the cup and platter" that they could not perceive

that their "inward parts were being filled with ravening and wickedness."

III. Deprives Morality of Motive

Akin to the criticism for laying undue emphasis on the outward, is that for depriving the moral of its true significance by ignoring the motive and fixing upon the performance of action as the alone sufficient thing; or, worse still, upon its performance from selfish and unworthy motives. In either case, morality ceases to exist. If good is done perfunctorily, it has no ethical character and value; it has settled to the level of mechanical action. If it is done from other than the motive furnished by conscience, it is not the offspring of the moral nature, but of the intellectual. It becomes a matter of calculation and self-interest. The state of things which Jesus found partook of both of these evils. Men obeyed the law either perfunctorily (the common people), or from love of osten-

tation (the more zealous Pharisees). In both cases, they deserved rebuke and correction.

IV. Multiplies Precepts

Still another fault of the moral system of the Pharisees was its breaking into a vast multitude of disconnected precepts. Behind this feature, there was doubtless the laudable desire to be exhaustive. Every portion of the law must be carefully guarded with rules, making it impossible for the loyal Israelite to transgress it. But the result was a burdensome code with an enormous number of specifications, impossible to grasp and hold in the mind. It is to this that Jesus refers when He speaks of the Pharisees as binding "heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and laying them on men's shoulders" (Matt. xxiii. 4). Evidently, the only remedy for this state of things was to sum up the whole moral system in one great principle; and Jesus

does this in the Law of Love with its two phases, the Godward and the manward.

The Righteousness of the Kingdom

Over against the righteousness which is inadequate, Jesus places the righteousness of God (Matt. vi. 33). It is the great and ultimate aim of the disciple to approve himself a worthy child of the Father who is in heaven. To this end, he must begin by knowing God aright. For only in the character of God will he find a normal expression of the law of right conduct for himself. His righteousness must be the same in its principle and pattern as the righteousness of God. The phrase itself, "righteousness of God," is liable to be misunderstood, because it is used by the Apostle Paul in a slightly different sense. It is not, however, on that account to be assumed as not used by Jesus at all. It certainly expresses His genuine thought and sets it over against the teaching of the rabbis of

His day. They conceived of God as a lawgiver, and of man's relation to Him as essentially a legal one. Obedience out of proper regard for or without proper regard to the personal element in the case was the essence of righteousness. Jesus' conception of God as Father involved the retirement of law into the background because of the more potent and effective consciousness of the filial relation. Therefore this view yields better fruit. It achieves all that respect for law aims at and much more. Morality is to do the will of God and God is the Father.

But if the consciousness of filial relation lies at the root of the moral life, the moving and shaping force of it can be nothing less than the principle of love, and so we return to Jesus' enunciation of the Great Commandment (Matt. xxii. 35-39). The mainspring of all conduct must be love.

Love is not a virtue among other vir-

tues, but the spirit and life of all the virtues. In a certain aspect of it, love is broader than righteousness. Yet practically the two conceptions are coextensive. Even if it be not true to say, love is righteousness, it is correct to say, righteousness is the expression of love. It would be quite possible, and in fact an easy task, were it not entirely superfluous, to show by an exhaustive examination of the teachings of Jesus that every one of them recognizes the centering of all good around the vital point of love. Pure abstract good may exist in reality, but Jesus leaves it out of account in His ideal of conduct.

*Inwardness of Morality: Spontaneity of
Conduct*

The qualities of morality which Jesus inculcates are, therefore, lofty ideality in combination with regard for common, practical ends. First, and above all else, this morality is a spontaneous outgrowth. Commonly, this feature of it is called in-

wardness. So far as the term refers to the fact that Jesus finds the seat of merit and demerit not in the outward action but in the inner thought or feeling from which the action springs, it is truly descriptive. Moreover, it distinguishes the ideal of Jesus from the Pharisaic ideal, which, as already shown, lays undue stress on mere outward observances. But if inwardness is to be understood as pointing back to a hidden source within man, a mysterious something beneath the surface that cannot be probed, it were better to set the term aside and use the word spontaneity instead.

It must be clearly understood, however, that spontaneity is not causelessness, but rather naturalness and freedom from constraint from without. Moral conduct is from this aspect of it not mechanical obedience to an external law, but the glad expression of a willing spirit. Compliance to the will of God makes up the essence of spontaneous loving righteousness.

Freedom

Spontaneity, moreover, means not merely inwardness or freedom from external restraint, but also positive ability to determine one's own moral course. Jesus would have His disciples decide the questions of conscience for themselves, without asking for authoritative pronouncements by rabbis, whether living or ancient. Help from external sources is not only permissible, but may be in given circumstances even necessary. But the gulf between help and authority must be always held as impassable. Where love does its perfect work, it may contribute to others the light necessary for the better understanding of ways and means, and the better expression of self, but it will not be at a loss as to whether it shall give vent or not. It is only fear that seeks for human authority to prescribe to it its narrow path.

When this principle is fully understood, no difficulty will be felt with reference

to the independent attitude which Jesus assumed and imparted to His disciples in all matters pertaining to the outward practices of fasting and prayer, of ceremonial purifications and abstinences, and of the observance of Sabbatic times and seasons. These practices are, to be sure, more ceremonial than moral; and yet the principle involved in them is equally applicable to the moral sphere. It means that Jesus aims at the development of a self-directed power in His follower.

Breadth

With freedom, the moral ideal of Jesus introduces the element of breadth. Righteousness is not merely the keeping of one's self free from blame for doing some things, but also for leaving undone certain others. Where any other motive than that of love rules, neglect and omissions will be natural and frequent. To scrupulous but loveless Pharisees, who punctiliously observed the requirements

of an external law, but overlooked the subtler and spiritual obligations of life, Jesus said, "These ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone." His ethical ideal was comprehensive of all of man's conduct. The little and insignificant things like the tithing of anise, mint and cummin, as well as the great and momentous things of righteousness and the love of God must be included, and will be, where the disciple is moved by the true motive and takes God's desire as his rule. There is no sphere or department of human life into which the subtle element of love may not penetrate and infuse its power. Hence the outward and inner man, the acts of ritual or spiritual nature, of Godward or manward direction can and must all be pervaded and governed by it if the ethical ideal of Jesus shall be realized. All relations, whether to the world of nature, to men or to God, must be sanctified and vitalized by its universal and pervasive sway.

CHAPTER V

The Comprehensive Rule of Conduct : The Golden Rule.

THERE is another statement of duty besides the Great Commandment to which Jesus attaches the expression "This is the law and the prophets." It is the Golden Rule.* We pass by all critical discussions such as Ewald's contention that this verse is misplaced and should have occurred after v. 44. The difference between the two summaries of the law and the prophets is the difference between the principle and the rule. The one presents the

*Matt. vii. 12.

essence and life, the other the form of the same thing.

Originality of the Golden Rule

As pertaining to the form and body rather than to the spirit and life of the moral law, the Golden Rule must take a secondary place. It does not give the thought of Jesus at its highest and best. It was customary to claim upon this point that in the gift of the Golden Rule to His disciples and to the world, Jesus had made the most valuable contribution to the moral progress of the human race. As against this position, it was claimed on the other side that the same truth had been taught long before the days of Jesus by others.* As a matter of fact more than one parallel to the Golden Rule has been pointed out in heathen literature.†

*Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. 54, n.

†Confucius taught, "Do not to others what you do not wish done to yourself" (Legge, *Chinese Classics*, i 192f.) Isocrates advises, "What ye resent when suffering at the hands of others,

To meet the implications of these parallels, the counterclaim has been set up that whereas in them the law is stated in a negative form, it was put by Jesus on its aggressive and positive side. If Confucius said: "Do not do to others what you would not wish done to yourself," it was because of his rudimentary conception of a principle which Jesus grasps and gives in its fullness and maturity. This is perfectly true. There is a marked difference between the parallels. But should it affect our ideas of the originality of Jesus if we were to discover that the law had been enunciated even in its positive form? We cannot think so. The originality of Jesus does not consist in teaching pre-

do not do to others" (*Nicocl*, 12): The Stoic maxim was "Quod tibi fieri, non vis alteri non feceris." A familiar story has it that an inquirer demanded of Shammai to be taught the Law while he stood on one foot. Shammai sent him away with indignation. He went to Hillel and made the same request. With keener insight, this teacher promptly replied: "Whatsoever thou wouldest that men should not do to thee, that do not thou to them. All our Law is summed up in this saying. All the rest is only comment upon it."

cepts never heard by men previously, but in revealing the true nature of God. His life in the world, His claim to be obeyed perfectly, and His gracious purpose towards those who having failed to do their best might still come to Him for forgiveness and strength for a new endeavor. Originality does not consist in bringing into existence new materials of thought, but in infusing a new life into those already at hand. And Christ the revelation of God does transform all the golden rules ever taught by others into a new law.

Distinctiveness of Jesus' Form of It

Nevertheless, the Golden Rule, as given by Jesus, is a far more vital and vitalizing guide to conduct than its predecessors. Lurking in its background, there lies the thought of a motive power. If it makes no mention of the law of love, it assumes it as at the root of the conduct it prescribes. Had Jesus never

spoken a single word regarding the springs of all action in love, this reading of the motive in the background might have been called unwarranted; but in view of the fact that He called the law of love the sum and substance of the ancient law and the prophets, and further, in view of the fact that He lived and died in conformity to a richer and larger conception than the measure of doing to others as He would have had others do to Himself, it is perfectly legitimate to read the Golden Rule as His conception of what conduct should be in the concrete, when it is actuated by the love He shows as necessary to all true sonship of God.

The Essential Element in It

The pith of the Golden Rule is the principle of mutualism. It recognizes the necessity of social relations, and the equality of the related parts in the social organism. The temptation in social life

is to regard self as the center, and all that ministers to self as proper and right. For all things this temptation holds out one end and aim, self. All other things or persons are mere means. The gospel of altruism, at least in some of its forms, goes to the opposite extreme. It reduces self to a means and other persons and things (as in Buddhism) to ends. The Golden Rule is the golden mean between natural utilitarianism and utopian altruism. It regards all personality as an end in itself. Kant gave expression to the truth embodied in it when he said: "So act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person, or in that of another, in every case as an end, and never as a means only."

The Golden Rule is, therefore, the necessary solvent of all social complications. Without a considerable observance of it, society becomes a hard thing to move. If it were to cease being regarded altogether, society must come to

a standstill. It is like air to sound. If the air becomes thin, as in the upper strata of the atmosphere, sound becomes faint; and when perfect vacuum is reached, sound is impossible. Its necessity is so manifest, that one does not wonder at its being discovered before Christ's day.

The Golden Rule is the expression of all genuine sympathy. To put one's self in the place of another, is to feel as he does and to feel with him; and to feel with him is to rouse in one's self the motives which will treat him as one would treat one's self, or would have one's self treated. If one would turn a sensitive ear unto his own heart, he would hear there the pleadings of the claims of others.

The Golden Rule in Operation

But sympathy is a feeling. Its spontaneous rise may be encouraged or repressed. In any case, it is in need of

guidance and control; and the Golden Rule is intended to furnish its guide. First of all, it does not touch those cases in which the good of others or their ill are not dependent upon the action of self. In such cases sympathy may exist, but it can only result at most in a bare expression in word or deed. Secondly, where action is called for, more than the mere expression of sympathy is demanded by the rule, in fact nothing less than the wisest and kindest action. The mere impulse moving along the line of the least resistance would often dictate that which is pleasing to the other. But the rule demands what is most profitable. Mere sympathy for instance would lead to the bestowment of help directly; a wise regard for the highest welfare of the person to be helped would suggest the special kind of help which would render him able to help himself.

One would not wish for flattery for himself where criticism would be more

beneficial ; one would not wish a gratuity where the opportunity to earn by working would be of much greater benefit in the long run ; one would not wish a meretricious reputation for virtue or capability where the unvarnished statement of facts would prove of more lasting value. Therefore, in practicing the Golden Rule one is called upon not to regard the passing comfort of pleasure, but the permanent well-being of his neighbor.

But suppose the neighbor is blind and blunt and incapable of wishing the things that one sees plainly to be the best ? That has nothing to do with one's action. It is not what the other would desire, but what one would desire with the better light which he possesses for himself were he in the place of the other that one must promote. Whatever wisdom and kindness one has gathered that is over and above the others, he is to put at the service of the other.

The distinction between want and wish

may help to throw light on the subject. It is not what the other wishes, but what he wants ; it is not what one wants to do, but what one would wish to have done for himself in the same circumstances that is prescribed as his duty.

But is this not the same as the law of love ? Does it not amount to loving one's neighbor as one's self ? It is, but with a difference. And the difference consists in this, that the law of love underlies the rule of conduct. If one is possessed by the law of neighborly love as defined by Christ, he will practice the Golden Rule. If he fails to practice the rule, it will be because his love is defective. If he practice the rule without the underlying and actuating motive of love, his obedience will not be Christian ; it will scarcely rise to the level of the ethical. In other words, the law of love gives us a principle, the Golden Rule shows the practical working of that principle.

The effect of the observance of the

Golden Rule cannot but lead to something more than a cold moralism. And this is the difference between Christian and non-Christian ethics. In the one, altruism and even mutualism, are purely expediential, in the other all conduct springs from an inexhaustible fountain-head. In the one, the moment it ceases to be expedient to treat others right, right conduct loses its force ; in the other it always remains valid. Not only so, but it educates toward a higher and a purer character.

CHAPTER VI

Self-Culture.

THE great principle of regard for personality as an end in itself calls attention not only to those with whom one finds himself in social relations, but to one's self also. This is implicit in the Law of Love, as framed and expressed in both of the utterances of Jesus just considered. The law of love to one's neighbor sets up a standard of measurement. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." That takes for granted, of course, that one love one's self. Neither the Old Testament nor any other system

of morals knows of a specific commandment, "Thou shalt love thyself."

On the contrary, paradoxically enough, the neglect and even the apparently unloving treatment of one's self have often been inculcated as moral excellencies. The reasons for this are not far to seek. Human nature stands in no need of the exhortation to self-regard. It is rather sorely in need of restraints and limitations to its natural tendencies in that direction.

The Care of Self Provided for in Human Nature

Through a wise provision in the human constitution, the care of self is abundantly secured by means of a series of imperative instincts and appetites. So strong are these that the problem of the welfare, and even of the existence, both of the individual and of society depends upon their proper regulation and control. Less compelling they could not have been made without the risk of failing to ac-

comply with their end, *i. e.*, self-preservation and race-preservation. More lively they could not have been made without defeating their own end. But being such as they are, they demand not a general commandment, "Thou shalt love thyself," but a series of ideals which will lead to their use without abuse.

The need for such restraining ideals has been universally recognized and will be, in spite of occasional protests against them, like that of Friedrich Nietzsche in our own days. To what extent it was Jesus' thought that the appetites and instincts should be restrained is to be ascertained from a careful examination of all His utterances. It would be quite easy to take isolated sayings and interpret them* in the light of certain ideas and practices current in a limited and local way in His own day, and thus make Jesus appear an advocate of asceticism. This

* An instance can be pointed out in the case of Origen and his misinterpretation of Matt. xix. 12.

has indeed been done in a rather thoroughgoing way.

Self-Realization, a Duty

The sum and essence of a complete view of Jesus' thought regarding one's duty to himself is that, as a child of God, every human being should give due attention to the development of all his powers and capacities, physical, intellectual and spiritual, in accordance with the relative importance of each as a part or aspect of the whole man.

Self-Knowledge the First Step in Self-Culture

This involves first of all the duty of self-knowledge. Jesus did not use the language of the ancient schools; but His meaning is just as plain on this point as if among His sayings there had been preserved something similar to the Delphic "Know thyself," which Socrates was so fond of repeating. No one can rise to

the sphere of privilege revealed by the Master without coming to appreciate at the same time something of his own possibilities, and of the estimate which God Himself puts upon him. What has been said of Jesus' view of human nature as a presupposition of His ethical teaching must become in some measure or form the individual Christian's view of himself.

Self-Discovery

Standing upon this platform, we may say that Jesus is not only the revealer of God to man, but also of man to himself. Indeed, He could not be the one without being the other in the same fact. If He was to reveal God the Father, He must reveal also man the child. The revelation is a revelation of relation, and both terms must come into light if it shall be complete and effective for its purposes. In the parable of the Prodigal, the lost son first "comes to himself." He finds him-

self, *i. e.*, comes to realize who he is, what he might have been, and what he may still be. The step of self-discovery is so inherently necessary that it cannot be regarded as forcing the parable to find it pictured in this feature of the prodigal's imaged experience.

Self-Study

But it is more than a self-discovery that man needs. What is discovered must be appreciated. The duty of self-knowledge must result in self-study. Human nature is a complex and ever-changing subject. It does not show its whole content at the moment of discovery. It can neither be grasped at a single glance in one act of self-discovery, nor can it be held in a steadfast and continuous view, like an immovable picture fixed upon canvas once for all. The depths and variations of the soul's life must be constantly and closely kept under scrutiny. In a sense, the dictum "the proper study of mankind is

man" expresses a genuine thought of Jesus.

This sort of self-study will be at once recognized as a very different thing from the morbid introspection sometimes practiced and commended in the history of Christianity. It is not a self-examination which looks for and terminates with the finding of the evil in the heart, and thus fills one with gloom and despair ; nor is it the self-examination that pulls up each growing good impulse by the roots in order to ascertain how much vitality it has gained. It is rather that calm and sober appreciation of capacities and tendencies which culminates in a healthy self-esteem in general.

The child of the honorable parent, no matter how severely he may reproach himself for falling into low habits and keeping company with unworthy persons, must have with the returning sense of his high birth, a correct appreciation of his dignity. He must know the difference

between what he ought to be and what he is. And to know this difference is to honor his own ideal self, and to attempt to realize it.

“ Could’st thou in vision see
The man that God hath meant
Thyself, thou would’st not be
The man thou art content.”

Self-Mastery

But self-knowledge is not complete until it has passed into self-mastery. It would, in fact, be a source of unhappiness if it were nothing more than the consciousness of powers and conditions within, which one could not bend and utilize, whose victim and slave one must therefore remain. Whatever else a person may not be able to control, he can control himself ; he can grasp the reins of his powers and tendencies with a firm hand and direct them into the paths of his own choice ; if driven to the last resort, he can “ cut off and cast from ” him-

self an offending part ; he can cause the polluting stream of “ evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, railings ” to dry up within his heart. Of the virtue which modern Christendom calls temperance, either in its narrower sense, as abstinence from intoxicants, or in its older and broader sense of pure self-control, Jesus does not discourse extensively. An occasional allusion to drunkenness, among other evils, shows that He held this form of sin as much in abhorrence as others. But His whole view of conduct is based on a theory of self-mastery which must inevitably lead to temperance in all its senses.

A Sense of Proportion in Estimating Different Elements in Self

Another duty growing from the complexity of human nature is the relative and proportionate estimating of its different parts and powers. They are not all of equal importance. There is that in

man which is worth more than the whole world, at least to himself: "For what shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life" *(Matt. xvi. 26). And there is that in him with which he can dispense if necessary (Matt. v. 29). His aim should be undoubtedly to preserve himself complete. All his powers are talents (the use of the word "talent" as the equivalent of power or "faculty," though of late origin, is quite true to the thought of Jesus) which he must use and develop. But if in the stress of the conflict he should lose or find it necessary to suppress or discard one in order that the rest of his manhood may be preserved, and put to the best use, he is acting both faithfully and wisely. Jesus' appeal is always

* It makes little difference for our purposes whether the word "soul" is retained here with the A. V., or the more correct "life" of the R. V. be accepted. The main point is that there is in man that which is incomparable in value to anything else.

to the personality as a whole and in behalf of the personality as a whole.

The sense of proportion necessary in the distribution of self-regard He shows only in its most general bearing. Its special applications must be adjusted in harmony with the general principle pointed out. The bodily life and the inner life are the two specially contrasted. The Kingdom of God, whether regarded as the sudden appearance upon earth in an apocalyptic fashion of the divine reign with its heavenly hierarchy of officers, or as a gradual evolution through natural processes and stages, of a moral dispensation, is of vastly more importance than mere earthly welfare. Its bearings are eternal; therefore, it is the first thing to be sought. All other things will be added to him who is absorbed in seeking for it.

Care for Bodily Needs

And care of the body may be relegated

into the place of secondary importance all the more cheerfully because there is abundant provision made for it in the wise orderings of nature itself, which is nothing but the workmanship of the heavenly Father. "Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?" (Matt. vi. 25 f.) It is hardly necessary to repeat the commonplace remark that there is no intention here to encourage idleness, recklessness or fanaticism. It is not labor and prudence that are deprecated. These are a part of the equipment of the world; through them the heavenly Father supplies the needs of His creatures. Even "the fowls of the air" and "the lilies of the fields," though "they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns;" though "they toil not, neither do they spin," yet do each that which is appointed as the proper means for attaining to the end held in view for them by the Father which is in heaven. None of them would be fed or clothed

with glory greater than Solomon's if some work were not lavished on them somewhere by creature agencies. It was not the due use of forethought, but the undue exaltation of the secondary to the level of the primary concerns of life that Jesus designed to rebuke through His words in this connection. He who seeks first the Kingdom of God will find it easy to gain through the means appointed thereto the other necessary things.

But what a meaning is added by modern scientific knowledge to these words of Jesus about the part of God in the arrangements and provisions of the universe. Life with its infinite variety and complication, and in its inextricably intricate adjustments is seen in the light of physical and biological research to require a care nothing short of divine. To him who has the confidence that it is his Father's house, the world will be fuller of interest and each of its provisions the more reassuring because of that confi-

dence. While we may not cease to care for the health and welfare of the body, he will not waste his precious life on worrying about these matters.

The supreme element, however, in self-regard, is the culture and full realization of the true self, the heavenly element in man which allies him to eternity. Jesus has much to say of this. But as this self rises into the eternal sphere, the teaching of Jesus about it also passes from the ethical to the spiritual, from the sphere of conduct to the sphere of the inner life. There it may be left to be studied more appropriately.

CHAPTER VII

The Sabbath.

WHATEVER may have been the understanding of the ancient Hebrew about the origin and design of the Sabbath, it cannot be reasonably questioned that the observance of the commandment resulted in a high type of self-culture. The fourth commandment by its very phraseology aims at two good things, first, rest from routine and drudgery, and second, touch with the sphere of the infinite and eternal. The latter of these brings as an inevitable consequence the deepening and enlarging of the idea of holiness. As the idea

of holiness is in the Old Testament the inseparable correlate of divinity, to sanctify anything is to consecrate it to God, and use it as He wills ; or in other words, to honor Him through it. To hallow a portion of time can, then, only mean so to use it as to do honor to God and become partaker in His holiness. This part of the Sabbath law thus passes into the inner life.

The other side of the good aimed at by the fourth commandment is more external. It is secured through the cessation for a while of those activities that wear and tear, and the opportunity to replenish and repair the wasted energies. So patent is the benefit of rest that thoughtful men of all schools and types have never failed to admire and praise the provision for it found in this elemental law of the Old Testament moral code.

The Sabbath under the Old Testament

In the nature of the case, the provi-

sions made in the Old Testament for the securing of the advantages of the Sabbath laws were minute and prescriptive. It could not have been otherwise. The degree of progress in intellectual and moral ideas was not compatible with anything less than a system of detailed directions intended to safeguard the institution of the Sabbath and guarantee its benevolent operation. The analogies of all other spheres of life called for these statutory provisions. But for these the law must dissolve into a vague tradition and vanish away.

Rabbinical Sabbath-Legislation

It was intended undoubtedly that as intelligence and moral vigor were developed, a freer use of the privileges of the law of rest should take the place of these detailed prescriptions; that individual judgment should be trusted to adapt this means of moral and spiritual culture to individual needs. But the course of

events took exactly the opposite turn. Instead of a freer, there prevailed a more burdensome Sabbath law. Rabbinical ingenuity found here a favorite ground for its inventiveness. The Talmud contains a whole tractate, twenty-four chapters in length, entitled "The Sabbath," in which these prescriptions are elaborated into wearisome minutiae. An ass might not be led out on the road with its covering on unless such had been put on the animal previous to the Sabbath; but it was lawful to lead the animal about in this fashion in one's own courtyard. The same rule applied to a pack-saddle provided it was not fastened by girth or backstraps.*

Instead of a help, the Sabbath law was made a burden. And the strange thing about it is that the burdensomeness of these regulations was felt and confessed even by the rabbis themselves. Com-

Cf. Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, vol. ii, App. xvii.

menting upon the above-mentioned regulation, one of them is reported as bursting into the indignant exclamation that "such laws were like mountains suspended by a hair." Jesus in a series of inevitable controversies (Matt. xii. 11 ff. ; Mark ii. 26 ff. ; Luke vi. 9 ; xiii. 3, 14 ; John viii. 22) recalled His followers from them to the primitive principle and design of the law. The pith of His thought is given in the declaration : "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, so that the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark ii. 27, 28).

Man needs the Sabbath

This means in the first place that man needs the Sabbath. It is not an arbitrary enactment designed to torment him or to test his obedience, but a beneficent provision to help him to the fullest realization of what is best in himself. There may be commandments of God which

must be simply obeyed with the implicit faith which asks not why, and takes it for granted that the Heavenly Father has ordained all things in love. But the Sabbath commandment is not one of these. Its reason is not only rooted in the needs of human nature, but becomes apparent without a very long and laborious search.

In fact the Sabbath law is exactly on the same basis as the other nine commandments of the Decalogue, so far as inherent grounds for their existence are concerned. The only difference between it and them is that they are readier to show the good they are meant to accomplish, while the beneficence of the Sabbath law, though not hard to discover, does require some study and experience to make itself felt. In the last analysis, however, the law of rest can no more be violated with impunity than the laws of respect for life, property, truth and chaste relations between the sexes.

*Sabbath Observance Adaptable to
Changing Conditions*

Secondly, if the Sabbath law is rooted in a human need and its observance results in good to man, it follows that the manner of its observance must depend on the form that this need may take from time to time. The perfect keeping of the Sabbath law is a matter of adaptation to conditions. Under the Old Testament, conditions demanded a rather extensive code of statutory provisions with severe penalties attached to violation. Under the New, the conditions are more favorable for a freer, and, to employ a philosophical word, a more teleological use of the law.

It will not be necessary here to enter into the question whether Jesus Himself commanded the change of the day from the seventh to the first of the week. It is nearly certain that He did not. But it is sufficient to point out that if the change

ministers to the need which the Sabbath law is designed to meet more effectively than the preservation of the original day of the week, then it is more than justified. But who will deny that for the disciple of Jesus Christ, the risen Redeemer, it must necessarily minister more abundantly by putting him in touch with the great historical fact of his Saviour's triumph over the last great enemy?

*Change in Method of Sabbath Observance
not Unlimited*

Does this view of the Sabbath give men too much freedom with a divine ordinance? Does it seem to reduce a great and fundamental law into a matter of mere convenience? In answer it may be said that the range of freedom given by Jesus, though absolute from one point of view, is practically limited and adequately safeguarded. If the Sabbath was made for man and man remains essentially the same, the manner of its helping him

cannot change very much. In fact the changes in the means that minister to man at any part of his being cannot be very radical. If man's body, for instance, needs a fixed quantity of starchy and nitrogenous foods, he will not be obeying the law of his being if he depart very far from the habit of using these elements of nourishment. Neither will he be justified if he should complain that his freedom is not real when he finds that he cannot extend the variety and range of his diet so as to include minerals and metals. But within the range prescribed by nature, he may move with a considerable freedom, and command the elements to support and strengthen him. The principle applies to the case of the Sabbath law. Though set free from prescription and allowed to adapt it to his spiritual as well as physical and intellectual health and welfare, man is not set free from the obligation of using the Sabbath for his edification and refreshment in accordance with the dictates

of the highest wisdom, as reached in the experience of his fellow beings.

The Social Element in Sabbath-Observance

There is, moreover, a social element in the observance of the Sabbath law which cannot very well be neglected. Though the benefits of the Sabbath observance must come to the individual as he observes it, yet the observance is from the nature of the case made either more or less effective as a means towards this end according as men undertake it in harmony with one another, or at cross purposes. It is as a law of the Kingdom ; and the King (the Son of man) is Lord even of the Sabbath. But if it be affected by the fact that men must live in society, a certain element of conventionalism necessarily enters into the practical working of it. What one might have a right to do or not to do if he were alone in the world, he might find it not only inexpedient but even wrong to do or not to do as he came to

act with reference to those with whom he is coöperating.

Restatement of the Sabbath-Law

A very helpful way of stating Jesus' thought regarding the Sabbath is to lay down the general law that the Christian should rest one day out of the seven in the week and devote it to the cultivation of his spiritual life, that he should do no work on it "except works of necessity and mercy." This is clear and easily understood. But the pith and essence of the matter might be put even better, *i. e.*, more comprehensively and scientifically in the formula that whatever promotes the spiritual welfare of men, whether through ministering to the imperative necessities of the body or directly to the higher nature may be done. "For the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath."

In addition to the undisputed sayings of Jesus on the Sabbath, the Cambridge

manuscript of the Gospels* contains an insertion after Luke vi. 4, as follows: "On the same day, having seen one working on the Sabbath, he said to him, O man, if indeed thou knowest what thou doest, blessed art thou; but if thou knowest not, thou art accursed, and a transgressor of the law." Whether, as Bishop Westcott says, "the saying must rest on some real incident" or not, it shows that very early in the history of the Christian community, the full meaning of Jesus' teaching on the Sabbath began to be realized.

* Known as Codex D.

CHAPTER VIII

The Christian in Social Relations.

IN the Golden Rule, Christ gave a comprehensive guide to conduct as it might affect others. Men would cease to be human, however, if they did not need and ask for explanations and illustrations of a general law. And Jesus must have been very much less considerate of the weakness of His disciples than He was had He declined or neglected to supply them with these illustrations and explanations.

The Law of Love Concretely Illustrated

The Sermon on the Mount is indeed

nothing more nor less than the answer of Jesus to these implicit appeals for light upon the practical operation of His fundamental principles. It begins with the Beatitudes ; and the Beatitudes show the law of love analyzed just as a beam of sunlight is analyzed into the colors of the spectrum when passed through a prism. But the Beatitudes present an ideal citizen of the Kingdom of God. In order to attain to that ideal, the disciple may have to pass through many a perplexing situation. Jesus does not hesitate to select some typical applications of His principle in such puzzling experiences.

First and most frequent in its recurrence is the question of the treatment of personal offences, whether real or imaginary. They are the most common of the violations of love. That the question of offences occurred soon after Jesus had announced His central and governing principle of love, appears from the fact that Peter directly asks : “ How oft shall

my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?" (Matt. xviii. 21). The query is based upon a measurably firm grasp of the thought of Jesus. But it shows also how novel that thought must have appeared to Peter.

The Law of Retaliation

But the question shows at the same time, how hard it is for those who first heard the commandment of love to fathom its full depth. They were accustomed to a very different ideal under the law of retaliation. It must be remembered, however, in justice to the ethics of the Old Testament, that the law of retaliation itself was given not as a means of encouraging the feeling of revenge, but as a check and regulator. When one receives an injury, the natural propensity is to return evil for evil, not according to the amount or kind of the injury suffered, but without limitation. Anger is a blinding passion; it will not calculate. The

moment one takes time to estimate the damage done him and plan to inflict proportionate damage upon its perpetrator, the moment one stops to weigh and measure and calculate, that moment he furnishes his passions an opportunity to evaporate. The *lex talionis* was designed to accomplish this very end. It was friendly to justice as against the unjust and unmeasured infliction of vengeance so natural to the human heart. Hence, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," means, Be careful you do not go beyond. Justice you may have a right to demand ; your pound of flesh you may require and have ; but not the smallest fraction of an ounce more than the pound shall go with it ; not a drop of blood are you entitled to take.

The Old Testament law of retaliation is a vast stride forward from the impulses of nature. When men are unprepared for the higher principles of Jesus, it is found greatly to lessen the savageries and

cruelties to which blind passion might lead men to give vent. It is in the interest not only of strict justice but also of humanity that it is inserted in the Old Testament system.

From Retaliation to Unlimited Forgiveness

But the change from unrestrained vengeance to retaliation does not compare in its radical character and effects to that from retaliation to love. No wonder that the disciples were taken aback and wished to know exactly how such a method of dealing with offences would work. Jesus in answer reiterates the principle of love with more amplitude and emphasis: "I say not unto thee until seven times seven; but until seventy times seven." "The quality of mercy is not strained." Strict justice may moderate natural inhumanity and make an approach toward humanity, but the essence of godlike humanity goes far beyond strict justice. In this sense it is

the only perfectly humanizing principle.

*Reconciliation with a Supposed Offended
Brother*

The first concrete, though hypothetical, case, through which Jesus illustrates His principle of love, is that of a suspected grievance on the part of another. "If thou rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee . . ." It may be a mere suspicion, it may be a matter of common rumor, the brother's feeling may be unwarranted, it may lack sufficient grounds for existence, still if he only thinks that it is well founded, it breaks the force of loving relations, and must not be allowed to stand. And the effort to remove it must take precedence of everything else. Even on such a sacred occasion as religious worship, so jealously to be guarded against intrusion, if one should call to mind the existence of a possible violation of love in his rela-

tions, he should not allow the solemnity of the religious service to go on, but should first have that root of bitterness removed. "First, be reconciled to thy brother." We cannot but believe that this is meant only as an illustration of a large class of similar cases.

Non-Resistance to Evil

The next case that may be properly taken up at this point is that in which ill feeling has passed from the stage of a lurking suspicion into an open expression, where, moreover, the place of its appearance is not the neighbor's or brother's heart, but one's own. This is the reverse of the preceding. It is not, "if thy brother hath aught against thee," but "if thou hast aught against thy brother." But like the preceding case, hypothetically, it is: "When thy brother has offended thee" (Matt. v. 39 ff.). "Who-soever smiteth thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." What does

Jesus mean by these words? They seem to enjoin the doctrine commonly called non-resistance of evil. But when one considers the fact that Jesus often expressed His thoughts in a vivid and rhetorically exaggerated way, not in the way of the pedant; and when one still further takes into account the fact that He did not Himself practice literally what He says here (John xviii. 22, 23), the injunction can scarcely be taken as intended in the cold pedantic way of the letter.

And after all, it may fairly be questioned whether the policy of passive non-resistance which has been deduced from these words can be made to consist with Jesus' cardinal principle of love. Can it be the truest and highest form of love to encourage a second act of injustice by actually turning the other cheek to the hardened hand which has already committed one act of brutality? Can it further the ends of love to enable one who has dishonestly taken a coat to add

to his dishonesty a confused notion of a distinction between "mine" and "thine" by giving to him also one's cloak? Would it help the true and godlike manhood to encourage the parasitic borrower by giving him what he asks every time? How could it help to advance brotherliness to yield to the selfish and arbitrary demand to go a mile by going with him two?

Nay, as against these absurd extremes, one may very well say that it is possible to do exactly the opposite of what the words of Jesus apparently convey, and carry out the real intent of what He does say. To those who misunderstood Him by such literalism, He says Himself: "It is the spirit that giveth life: the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" (John vi. 63).

What then does Jesus mean by urging non-resistance to evil? He means that by the display of supreme and genuine

love His disciples should melt the hatred of those who hate them wherever this is possible. There is only one method for the cure of all evil, and it is not the homœopathic cure of evil by evil, but the allopathic one of evil by good. Unkindness can be turned into kindness only by love; dishonesty, greed, sensuality, are the demons that can be cast out only by the breath of love.

*Literal Non-Resistance may be Best in Some
Instances*

Just how this love is to be most wisely administered in each separate case must always remain for the Christian himself to decide. It may be that there will arise cases in which the literal turning of the other cheek shall prove the best way of exhibiting the love which Jesus inculcates. If the offending person could only be made aware that it was love for him that moved the offended one to his course, and not some wily form of sel-

fishness, seeking to secure ulterior ends, to gain an advantage in the game, nor craven cowardice and weakness, it might easily be seen that non-resistance would be the precise conduct proper to adopt. But in any case it is not so much just what is done as that what is done expresses one's love for the offender and is best calculated to win him from hatred to love.

“Blessed are the Peacemakers”

And, as in the case of one's own personal relations, so in that of the conduct and relations of others. The disciple's instinctive attitude should be towards the extinction of all hatred and strife. So abhorrent indeed should he hold every breach of the law of love that he should spare no effort to heal such breach. In doing this, he will illustrate his true relation to God Himself. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

Rebuke of Anger

As to the positive outbreaks which raise the question of resistance or non-resistance, Jesus nowhere expresses Himself more severely and more explicitly than against them. "Everyone that is angry with his brother (without a cause) shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire" (Matt. v. 22).

"Judge not"

Jesus is manifestly not content to wait until lovelessness has reached an open outbreak. He would watch its beginnings, and pluck it out like a foul weed before it has come to produce its poisonous fruit. He searches for it in the depths of the heart. "Every one that is angry shall be in danger of the judgment" even before he has expressed his anger in the first word. "Judge not that

ye be not judged." Censoriousness is the first step in the steep downward course.

Positive Expression of Love

Thus far, we have taken into account only the cases in which the law of love is violated or is in danger of violation. These are a part, possibly the smaller part, of its whole sphere of operation. After all, the experience of man includes more peace than warfare, more harmony than conflict, the pessimist to the contrary notwithstanding. Jesus would have all these more normal stages suffused and glorified by the control of a positive love. But this portion of the field was not debatable ground, and Jesus does not go out of His way to speak of it simply in order to make an academically complete thesis on the subject. He takes it for granted that where the provocations to violate the requirement do not emerge, the law of love will be observed.

Love's Many Forms

Love is not indiscriminate; but it is not exclusive. In other words, as there are different kinds and degrees of it, different individuals coming into touch with the follower of Christ will claim each what is appropriate to himself. The kinsman will have a right to the love of kinship, the friend to the love of friendship, the distressed and needy to the love of compassion, and the prosperous to the unenvying love of congratulation. But there must be love for all, even the enemy and the persecutor, the love which wishes the highest welfare, and will not deny those who bear these relations to one's self any needed blessing. This is the type of the love which God the heavenly Father lavishes. "For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

Finally, love must be aggressive. It

must not wait for an occasion which shall call it forth in order to make itself felt. It must seek, we may go further and say, it must create such occasions. This is undoubtedly to be gathered from the incident of the feet washing (John xiii). Here, Jesus shows in an acted parable the spirit of humble service. The time has perhaps passed for insisting on not taking the incident in a literal sense, either as establishing a sacrament or as defining with precision the actual performance of such a duty simply in token of humility. Yet the spirit of the teaching, inculcating as it does the expression of love, in the self-abasing service of others, has not been and is not likely to be outgrown.

CHAPTER IX

The Christian in the State.

THE attitude of Jesus to the civil government of His day was a matter of the deepest interest and keenest concern to His own contemporaries. The ideal relation of the loyal Israelite to the world-powers was differently conceived by representatives of different factions. It was a many-sided question. Should the faithful refuse to tolerate foreign rule and actively engage in schemes designed to terminate it? Should he accept the *status quo* under protest, but patiently wait the apocalyptic

establishment of the divine order? Or should he consent to take it as the expression of the divine will, and by submission to it as unto God's righteous visitation for national sin, help to expiate that sin and bring the evil to an end?

Interest in Jesus' Political Views

What would Jesus say and teach the people on these questions? They sent a deputation to Him to find out. They had a general idea that His view was not sound, and hoped He would explicitly commit Himself to an extreme statement. It were better that His statement should be explicit and extreme rather than mediating and ambiguous; for in the former case, by charging Him with seditious teaching and proving Him guilty, they could be rid of his irritating activity. It is very plain that they meant to use any anti-Roman expressions in this way; for their chief lever in moving

Pilate to His crucifixion was just the charge of treason against Cæsar. "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar" (John xix. 12).

The question, Where does Jesus stand in politics? has not lost its interest and importance through the change from Roman imperial domination to modern democratic conditions. What did Jesus say of the ideal state? is still being asked, and still variously answered. The believer in the unrighteousness of all government claims Jesus on his side; and the advocate of the strict authoritative organization of human society, with the definite commission of authority from above into the hands of rulers, asserts that his view is inevitably deduced from the principles of Jesus. The one may plead the absolute freedom which Jesus preached for all who were imbued with the spirit of filial love to God and

brotherly love to man for his side of the case. The sons of God need no constraints of authority. But the other may plead the fact that Jesus recognized Cæsar as having legitimate authority (Matt. xxii. 21).

*Jesus does not theorize on the State. His
Double Relation to It*

Happily, we are not concerned with the question so far as it is a question of theory. This may be said, however, by way of a passing remark, that neither of the political schools alluded to have an unqualified right to cite Jesus as a supporter of their tenets. Jesus bears toward the state a double relation in the sphere of conduct. As far as His own personal actions are concerned (and let it be remembered that He would have all His disciples as nearly like Himself as possible), state authority did not exist and does not exist. That there is a govern-

ment at some central place in the land, watching over all, and preserving for all their rights and privileges, adds nothing and takes away nothing from His character. It is not meant that the safety and the right of the Christian to live in accordance with his Christian convictions are not secured by an ideal state, as they would not be where no government existed; but that as far as His conduct is concerned it would be neither less righteous if the state were not there, nor is it more so because it is there.

The other side of Jesus' relation to the state is that of the guardian of the brother's welfare. Since humanity is not in its ideal state, since, that is to say, there are in it those who are "lost," it is a part of the law of love to reduce to the least the harm which such may do to themselves and to their fellow-beings. From this point of view, Jesus and His disciples become auxiliaries, even counterparts of the state as such. They have a

definite duty to perform. It belongs to them to restrain, and, as far as possible, to abolish the outcropping of lovelessness.

It cannot be reiterated too often that the root and essence of all the evils from which mankind is suffering is lovelessness. When these evils assume outward and glaring forms, the state interferes to counteract them. Its work is necessarily outward. It is none the less in the same interest as the work of the Christian disciple, and may rightfully claim his encouragement and active support. The state's function properly exercised curbs and removes the excesses of that which the Christian opposes, not simply as an excess, but in its every stage and form—"root and branch." The Christian, therefore, cannot be indifferent to the state's efforts to suppress and abolish all open evils since he himself is aiming to suppress and abolish not only all open but also all secret evil.

The Christian Citizen

The conduct of the Christian in the state is not then to be limited to the mere recognition of the government as a necessity to be outgrown. He cannot be a mere apathetic and quiescent law-abiding citizen. That he must be and will be, not as a Christian but as a citizen. As a Christian he will so act as never to be aware from his own experience that there are laws to obey, except perhaps unrighteous ones. His Christianity and his citizenship will coalesce up to this point as a matter of course.

The Christian citizen, however, will be much more than this. He will be a man interested in every measure of public welfare. He will throw himself actively into the purification of politics. He will endorse and support all efforts calculated to lessen vice and to send that remnant of it which may not be exterminated into comparatively innocuous hiding. He

will sympathize with those who are struggling with the problems of social reform and amelioration, and, if he be not himself an active participant in these struggles, he will give substantial encouragement and financial backing to those who are.

In a word, everything that will tend to make government thoroughly Christian, everything that will tend to produce such legislation as will raise the person of man to a pinnacle, everything that will lead men to regulate their relations to one another upon the basis of fraternity, everything that will infuse the spirit of love into the administration of justice and will train the citizens to recognize in each other the image of the heavenly Father, must call for the enthusiastic approval and active co-operation of the disciple of Jesus Christ.

Christian Citizenship and the Christian Nation

There is still another side to the civic

life of the disciple of Jesus. As the leaf has stamped on itself the pattern of the tree, so the individual has on himself the pattern of the community or nation of which he is a member. It is often said that corporations have no souls. If this is true, it is because the souls of the individuals that make them up are in some way defective, and their totality in the corporation results in the lack of a corporate soul big enough to make its presence known. One man with a great soul has many a time made an honorable exception to the rule by infusing his own soul-force into its affairs. What is true of the corporation is equally true of the nation. A nation of true Christians could not help being a Christian nation.

It has been said that "Christianity has been a powerful influence in the personal life of men, but it has failed equally to control the commercial and political life." There is a large grain of truth in this criticism, but it holds not against the ideal

Christianity, but against men's failure to actualize it. Let the law of Jesus be practised in its integrity and completeness by individuals, and the result must inevitably be a nation possessed of and controlled by a Christian national conscience. And a nation acting out among nations the life which is ideally Christian will be exactly like an individual living his faith in Christ and his acceptance of Christ's teaching among individuals. The next step in the development of Christianity in the world's history should be the appearance of a thoroughly Christian nation to Christianize international relations.

The Christian Citizen and International Relations

All this points to the final goal for all civic activity on the part of the disciple of Jesus ; it is the establishment of fraternal relations among all the races and nations and tribes of mankind. The disciple

as an individual may appear impotent before such a tremendous task. But it is as each individual disciple does what he can towards its accomplishment that the task will eventually be accomplished, and the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of our Lord. Whatever, therefore, makes for peace and helpfulness in international relations, whatever conduces to fairness, frankness and fraternity in diplomacy, whatever diminishes the oppression of the weaker races by the stronger, whatever tends to the taking of the burdens of the inferior by the superior upon themselves, calls for the cordial approval and help of the disciple of Jesus.

CHAPTER X

The Christian in the Family.

THERE are no relations in life which bring into clearer view the beauties of a character formed upon the basis of the principles of Jesus, than those which center about the home. Here, on account of the controlling presence of natural affection, there is a beginning of loving service and self-sacrifice, even before the teaching of Jesus has come. But here, too, there are possibilities of a contrary tendency, such as appear nowhere else. The relations are close and at the same time

compulsory. Should the natural affection which is depended on to make them healthy and helpful prove weak or fail, the home is changed from a haven of rest and happiness into a place of fearful torment.

*The Home a Legitimate Sphere for
Christian Love*

Accordingly, the home, where the love preached by Jesus might have appeared to be unnecessary, stands all the more in urgent need of that love. For this purer and holier love supplements the weakness of natural affection, making it constant and firm when it is in danger of failing ; it sanctifies and enhances it when sufficiently strong and imparts to all its workings the afflatus and aroma of divinity itself ; it takes up the lines created by the home, adopts them into the spiritual sphere, and fastens them on the eternal life of God Himself. It makes God a

constant member and witness of the experiences of the home. In a true though spiritual sense, the commandment of love erects an altar in every household that may adopt it as its governing principle.

The Family in the Age of Jesus

It is of the highest importance, then, to ask, How did Jesus teach His disciples to regard the home and himself as a member of it? The condition of affairs in His day did not leave Jesus the option of speaking or keeping silence upon this subject. The question was fairly thrust before His attention. Among the Romans, the household had ceased to be what it once was, a sacred unity. The moralists and poets of the age give a sad picture of the situation. The Christian writers of a century or two later may be considered prejudiced in favor of another ideal, and therefore their accounts of family life among the heathen may have

to be discounted ; but the heathen philosophers, speaking out of the midst of the conditions themselves, give the same picture in quite as clear lines and colors.

In the nearer circle of Judaism also, the spirit of laxity had appeared. By adopting a liberal interpretation of the law in Deuteronomy the rabbis had inculcated loose views of the marriage tie, and without theorizing on the subject, the Jews had practically settled to the modern day doctrine that marriage is a civil contract.

The Family a Divine Institution

Here then, at the very root of the whole matter, Jesus found it necessary to strike the first blow. The foundation of His teaching is that the home is a divine institution, not a result of gradual development during the course of human history. If that had been the case, there would have been a time when the human race lived and fulfilled the will of

God without the family. And there might be a time in a different stage of evolution in the future, when the family should be antiquated and outlived as a matter of convenience. This, according to Jesus, is impossible. "He who made them from the beginning, made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh" (Matt. xix. 4, 5).

The origin of the home, then, is to be traced to a direct act of God. "From the beginning," He had a definite plan on the subject, and it was a plan to prevail and last as long as mankind should. That plan involved the union of one man with one woman. Violations of this rule, Jesus considers as departures from the ideal. To this His age and generation could not interpose any objection. Judaism had settled down to the general conclusion that polygamy should be

abandoned. With very few exceptions, no Israelite took advantage of the precedents given in the earlier history of the Old Testament in favor of polygamy.

Jesus and Divorce

There was, however, another practice which amounted to virtual polygamy, *i. e.*, easy divorce. The ancients had entered into legalized relations with more than one wife at the same time ; the men of Jesus' age substituted for this, separation from one wife upon slight grounds and union with another. The appearance and responsibility of a polygamous household were avoided ; but the essential principle of the family as a divine ordinance headed by one man and one woman, was effectually set at nought. The difference between the ancients and the contemporaries of Jesus was simply that the former did not put away one wife in order to take another, and the latter did. Jesus,

of course, could not but denounce the practice. "Everyone that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery, and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery" (Luke xvi. 18; Matt. v. 32).

Marriage was according to Jesus a lifelong union. Divorce was not to be thought of as included in this idea. Neither state nor church could in the strict sense grant a divorce. The only person or persons that could accomplish the breaking of the tie were the parties united in marriage, and they could not do so except by a heinous sin against the law of God. A man "could put away his wife for the cause of fornication only" (Matt. xix. 9), which means that putting away is simply a testimony against the sin committed, a declaration that the tie is broken. It is not divorce that breaks up the marriage relation, but the sin which precedes and furnishes ground for

it. The separation which takes place and which may be called by the name of divorce, or any other, is nothing more than the recognition of the fact that the bond has been broken. Divorce of an innocent nature, *i. e.*, divorce out of which both parties emerge without sin before God and men is unthinkable in the ideal of Jesus.

The theory underlying this view seems to be that when marriage is constituted as an ordinance of God, it results in the creation of a new unity, which is a new organism. That organism cannot be destroyed without offence to God any more than a living human being can be arbitrarily put to death. But when by a transgression of this law it has been destroyed, as there are two parties constituting it, the party that is blameless has the right to have the rupture declared and thus secure freedom.

He or she has this right. Jesus does not, however, through His teaching make

it obligatory on them to use it. It is a permissive rather than a mandatory law. In a case where the ground of divorce recognized by Jesus as the only valid one exists, and the aggrieved party is perfectly satisfied that the sin has been sincerely repented of, and desires to extend forgiveness and a continuation of the old relation, there is nothing in what Jesus has said to forbid. Rather the opposite; the law of forgiveness and reconciliation would dictate, or at any rate encourage, this course.

When Marriage May Not Be Entered

This element of voluntariness in the matter applies with equal force to the whole subject of marriage. It is not obligatory to marry. Rather than do so, and violate the law of the Kingdom, Jesus would have men made "eunuchs" for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven (Matt. xix. 12). The emphasis here is upon the phrase "Kingdom of heaven."

The disciples had objected to His law regarding marriage, that it made it preferable not to marry. He grants the position that it is better at times not to marry, but explains that the ground for such conduct should not be the impossibility of dissolving the tie without sin, nor the obligation to abide perpetually in the covenant relationship, but other and higher reasons. There are some who by birth and natural endowment are shut out to a single life. There are others whom the exigencies of human affairs compel to the same state. "They are made eunuchs of men." There is a third class consisting of those who voluntarily adopt this mode of life "for the Kingdom of heaven's sake." In all cases, but especially the last, the law of fraternal love dictates this course.

Purity an Inner Quality

The same law of fraternal love guards individuals against those offences which

without breaking the marriage bond directly, relax and lower this high ideal, preached by Jesus. It is not necessary that the act of adultery should have been performed ; not even the act of fornication, which may not involve an attack upon the sanctity of a particular family ; it is enough that the lustful thought should have been encouraged in the heart to call for the condemnation of Jesus (Matt. v. 28).

Relations within the Home

The regulation of the relations of the various members of the household to one another and the prescription of their respective duties was not within the scope of the mission of Jesus. On this matter, as on all other matters of detail, He allowed the principles He taught to work out their own practical bearings. It was enough that the divine origin, the sacred character and the lifelong duration of the social bond of the family should be held

before the eye. If this was appreciated, it could not but result in the engendering of the constitutive power of love. Nay, it must do more than that ; it must foster and develop this motive by the healthy result of the ideally organized household. And where love rules, the prescription of duties to husbands towards their wives, or to wives towards their husbands ; to children towards their parents and to parents towards their children, to brothers and sisters towards one another, would be a work of supererogation. Such flagrant violations of duty as that rebuked in Mark vii. 10-13, would be absolutely impossible.

Jesus and Woman

The attitude of Jesus towards the question of woman's position in society is left in the sources in such an indefinite form that diametrically opposite views regarding it have been propounded. On the one side it has been said that Jesus treated women as the rest of the Jews of

His day did ; and this as a natural consequence of His acceptance of the Old Testament system and its generally low view of woman. Hence His teaching, had He cared to give it explicitly, would not have been far above the level of that of His contemporaries.

On the other hand, all that has gone towards the emancipation and elevation of woman to the position of equality with her brother man has been read into His teaching. The truth is that Jesus said nothing explicitly ; but His personal attitude towards women, while little different perhaps outwardly from that of His contemporaries, was in spirit exactly the opposite, and by placing love and fraternity at the center of the whole circle of human activity, He set in motion the social forces that were destined inevitably to bring about a complete revolution and lead to the later developments on this point.

CHAPTER XI

The Christian in Business.

MUCH of what Jesus says on business affairs appears to be in glaring contradiction with the rules and practices of modern Christendom. And perhaps upon the whole there is no department of human activity into which it has been more difficult to admit His influence than the industrial and commercial world. If His precepts were adhered to with even ordinary regard to their superficial sense, present-day commerce and finance would have to be radically reorganized.

*General Character of Jesus' Teaching on
Business*

But it is quite possible on the other hand to take these utterances of Jesus so literally that they could not possibly be put into execution as rules of conduct. "Give to him that asketh of thee, and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again." How long would a man be in position to carry on business transactions if he acted that out literally? The fact is, that in this matter, as in the teachings regarding apparent non-resistance to evil, Jesus is expressing emphatically and impressively the cardinal law of love. Philanthropy and business are ordinarily supposed to be at the opposite poles of the sphere. "You would not expect a philanthropist to be a practical man," says one who claims to represent the latter type. And as Jesus' predominant teaching had a philanthropic tendency and result, even though it may

not come under that misused name as commonly understood, it has occasionally been charged with being visionary. But Jesus is not a philanthropist of the type found in works of fiction. If He does lay stress on the altruistic side of all relations, it is because men in His day, like men in all ages, have more need of being driven to see these than the selfish sides of the same relations.

In fact there is that in business pursuits which fosters and nourishes the selfish instincts. "Not in the business for love," is a colloquialism showing how completely business and love are supposed to be separated from one another and irreconcilable in the same person. Men are willing to be benevolent, but they do not care to have their benevolence mixed with their business. It is these conditions, the same in His day as now, that determined the form of Jesus' expressions on this subject. But after we realize that in order to reach His thought

we must seize upon the central principle, and not upon the accidental and passing features of the way He expressed it, we shall have little trouble in seeing here, too, the one dominant idea of love to men as men to be the ruling principle of the conduct prescribed by Jesus.

Jesus and the Question of Property

Here, for instance, is the question: Is the disciple of Jesus permitted to hold property? The answer is, Only if he can do so consistently with the law of love. What a man is, is of more importance than what he has or does. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Jesus did not give every rich man that came to Him the command to go and sell all that he had and to distribute unto the poor (Luke xviii. 22). In the case in which He did give this command, the event showed that that was precisely what the young man needed to be told;

without that self-stripping and self-consecration, for him it was impossible to attain Christ's condition for holding wealth. Only as he was willing to renounce all, would he have proven himself to possess the state of mind and heart which would make him competent to use it rightly.

Upon this condition, however, *i. e.*, of the ability to make proper use of property, Jesus bases the tacit but unquestionable recognition of the right to acquire and hold it. "Sell that ye have and give alms" (Luke xii. 33), He says. But how can one sell what he does not have a right to own or use? Zacchæus was converted from an extortioner to a just man, and declared that he would make restitution of what he had unjustly taken. Jesus did not require him to give up everything. Among His friends there were persons who owned houses, like the family at Bethany (John xii. 1-5), also Peter (Matt. viii. 14), and means out

of which they ministered to him (Luke viii. 3). He nowhere requires them to relinquish their hold on these things. In His parables, He repeatedly bases His moral teachings upon the right use of money. The word "talent" has come to be so generally understood in the sense of a natural gift or power, that we often forget its primary meaning of a unit of money (Matt. xxv. 14-30; Luke xix. 13-27; xvi. 1-13; xii. 16-31).

Spiritual Perils of Wealth

But if the acquisition of wealth is in itself right and necessary, the temptations and dangers that beset it are both numerous and serious. So are the dangers attending the use of money. The first and most obvious of these is the insidious transference of wealth from the place of a means to that of an end of life. Where this takes place, and it does take place in an incredibly large proportion of instances, the sin of covetousness has made

its appearance full-fledged, and against covetousness Jesus has a definite warning to give. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." This is what makes riches such a hindrance in the effort to enter the kingdom of heaven. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke xviii. 25).

Character above all Wealth

If riches are always to be regarded as a means towards an end, and not an end in themselves, the slightest blemish produced in the soul in the process of their acquisition and use is an incalculable loss. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" must not be interpreted too narrowly as referring simply to the total loss of a person in eternity, but to all weakenings and pollutions of the spiritual life, to all sacrifice of spiritual interest, for mere material advantage in the life that now is. No amount of money can pay for a blot on character.

The Right Use of Wealth

But this is a negative conclusion. Its converse in the positive form is quite as true and even more urgent. Wealth must be transformed into manhood if it shall serve its true and lawful purpose. Otherwise, even though not abused, it is no better than rubbish. It can be transmuted into the pure gold of manhood by being used in the expression of love or in the relief of distress and want. Both of these uses are perfectly legitimate. Ordinarily, the latter is given the preference. Its propriety is, of course, more obvious. But there are circumstances when the mere expression of well-placed sentiment would rightfully claim precedence. When they murmured because in the house of Simon the leper at Bethany a woman poured upon His head the precious ointment from the alabaster cruse (Matt. xxvi. 7). Jesus bade them not interfere with her,

and declared her act to be a good work ; it expressed her devotion.

Jesus' Wholesome Reticence on Details.

It is becoming clearer as the modern industrial evolution is rapidly presenting the new phases of the problem of employment, that there was a supreme wisdom in the silence with which Jesus treats the relations of the laboring men of His day to their rich employers. Had He pronounced judgment upon the facts as existing in His day, it would have been an easy matter to plead that the changed conditions of modern life rendered His judgments inapplicable and therefore valueless. As it is, He effectively reaches all conditions of all ages by laying down fundamental principles whose value and applicability can never be outgrown.

Capitalist and laboring man will have no difficulty in solving their problems, if they will only go to Jesus and learn from Him His law of love. There is no

crying evil in the situation which is not provided for by some application of that law. Were the law perfectly obeyed, dishonesty either on a large scale or on a small scale would utterly disappear. So would cruelty and the sacrifice of purity and honor. To diminish one's respect for truth, to come out less kind and considerate from a business transaction for the sake of any amount of material gain, would be impossible.

J

CHAPTER XII

The Christian in the Church

JESUS not only outlined the ideal which His followers should realize in the world, but He also provided a social organization which should enact and enforce His ideals. The question, did He do this in a formal and explicit manner need not detain us. It is enough that He gathered about Himself a band of associates and followers, and that out of that band there has arisen a large community, held together by peculiar ties ; it is enough that the Church exists as the visible body of those who take Jesus

Christ as their final authority on all things. That fact must have inevitable bearings on the conduct of those who constitute the community. And if the relations of the members of the church to one another are in principle the relations which the members of the original band of His intimate followers sustained to one another, His instructions to these are in a sense the charter and constitution of the church of the ages succeeding.

*The Law of Love Adapted to the New
Community*

But did not He give the same law of love to His disciples to govern them in their relations with one another as well as to govern them in their conduct and relations to the world? He undoubtedly did. Yet this law works into varying expressions as it operates upon different classes of relationships, just as the same sunshine operates differently as it falls on water or on the germ-laden soil in the

spring time ; the one it transforms into vapor and scatters abroad, the other it helps to integrate the forces imbedded in it and push them to the surface in the form of organized living, growing plants.

Let us look at the working of the law of love within the community of those who with one accord put themselves under its sway and undertake to harmonize their conduct to its requirements. The first visible result is that these at once recognize in each other children of the same heavenly Father. They are "brethren." That is what they called each other in the earliest days. And it was not a name which they devised for themselves, though they might have done so in the circumstances, but one which they took in pursuance of His desire and teaching. "And all ye are brethren" (Matt. xiii. 8). And they are His brethren (John xx 17; Luke viii. 21); but if His brethren, could they be anything else than brethren to one another?

The Love of the Brethren.

From the recognition of the relationships there naturally sprang a peculiar affection, that of brotherly love. It has already been remarked (p. 46.) that Christian love must be all-comprehensive; but all-comprehensiveness is by no means inconsistent with discrimination. To love one's enemies is just as much a Christian duty as to love one's friends. But it is as impossible to bestow the same kind of affection alike on friends and enemies as it is to think of one's enemies as friends and of friends as enemies. Neither the principle nor the example of Jesus points to a blotting out of all distinctions and the dealing out of affection to all in equal measure and of identical kind. Every special relationship creates a special bond whose strength and value depend upon the conditions that call it forth.

The relationship created by community of life and interest in the Kingdom of God

engenders a unique bond. Here the conditions for intimacy are so favorable that the love for one another of those who recognize in each other the special signs of loyalty to a common Master takes a new name. The early Christians called it the "love of the brethren" (*φιλαδελφία*). Its distinctive sign was its resemblance to the love which Christ displayed for His followers. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John xiii. 34, 35).

Distinctive Signs of Brotherly Love

What, then, was the character of His love to them? How did it differ from other forms of love? First of all, it was spontaneous and not responsive. He first loved them because His Father in heaven wished to have them made the recipients of a special blessing. His

love sprang not from the discovery of any ground or conditions in them. It had its roots in the mere fact that they were to enjoy the privileges of the children of God. That was sufficient. So the Christian must love those who bear the name of Christ before they have done anything to show that they merit that love. The mere fact that they have identified themselves with the cause and name of Christ should of itself be sufficient as an appeal to the Christian's heart, to rouse in him the love of the brethren.

If this love shall be like Christ's, however, it must, further, be a self-denying love. It is easy to love when it costs nothing. It is easier to love when love produces satisfaction. Such love, however, is more or less selfish. It is not so easy to love when sacrifice of time and comfort and life are sure to follow. But that is the type of love that Christ leaves as an example to His followers. "As I have loved you."

Duties of Christian Brotherhood: Care for the Brother's Soul

The duties which grow out of brotherly love are pointed out quite clearly. One of them is to do all that it is possible towards helping the brother in the right path. A case is supposed: If a brother offend, the first duty is to give him an opportunity in a private interview to correct his offence. If this should prove insufficient, a second and more earnest effort must be made. Before a limited number of witnesses, he should lovingly be called upon to recognize and make amends for his fault. But if this also prove a failure, a third and more impressive appeal to his conscience should be made before the whole body of those who love Christ, the Church. If he prove intractable to all these influences, then, and only then, may one cease to regard him as a brother in Christ. All this is evidently intended rather to secure

the rescue of the sinning brother than to guarantee the rendering of justice to the one sinned against. It is rather the performance of the duty of guardianship than that of the vindication of law.

II. Mutual Service

In a similar strain is the principle of mutual service in the organization of believers. An organization must have officers and regulations subordinating some to the authority of others. While this is a necessity, those who are ambitious to fill the places of office in the church should see that their ambition is rooted in the desire to serve not in the love of authority. The lust for dominion is essentially a non-Christian sentiment. "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you; but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first

among you shall be your servant" (Matt. xx. 25-27 ; also Matt. xxiii. 8-10, " Be ye not called Rabbi," etc.). In other words, mutual helpfulness is the distinguishing badge of the disciples in their relations with one another as disciples. Of course, essentially, the disciple's conduct towards all men, even those without the circle to which he belongs, should be one of self-sacrificing service. The difference between his attitude towards men at large and his attitude towards his fellow-disciples is simply that with reference to the latter, in the nature of the case, a tenderer feeling pervades, and an expectation of responsiveness exists.

III. Submission to the Brethren in Love

For if it is incumbent to exercise a certain watchful care over those who, like him, bear the name of Christ, it is also incumbent on him to receive from his brethren the word of exhortation and

admonition with fraternal trust in the underlying love that prompts it.

Finally, the Christian owes a duty to the Church as a whole. He must contribute all the service of which he is capable towards its helpful life and expansion. It is his part to preserve it from all corruption and make it the most effective vehicle towards the carrying out of Christ's desire to conquer the world and bring it into subjection to God.

Jesus and Public Worship

Of worship, whether in the Church or apart from its public function, Jesus has little to say. It was a part of that external sphere whose exact forms always depend on changing conditions and circumstances. Though He is not anywhere recorded to have offered sacrifices at the Temple, or fasted, He does not forbid others from doing so. On the contrary, He distinctly implies that life would furnish emergencies for the ex-

pression of the spirit in fasting and self-denial. He does, however, see and warn against the danger of hypocrisy in such matters. When religious practices are actuated not by the impulse to express the content of the heart, but by the desire for ostentation or by worse motives, His denunciation of them is unmeasured. On the other hand, nothing exceeds in its cordiality and warmth His commendation of simple acts of religious service which truly represent a healthy spiritual condition. The widow with her two mites stands on a vastly higher plain than all those who out of their abundance had cast into the treasury their incomparably larger offerings. He judged them all not by what they gave, but by what they had left. They had practically as much as before they made their contributions. Therefore, she excelled them.

But at this point, Christian conduct once more ceases to be a mere matter of external relationships and passes into the

realm of the inner life. It issues in the love of God and His Kingdom, runs the whole circle of earthly relationships and returns to the love for God and man, which will not allow its possessor to remain satisfied with his own assured blessedness, but is destined to lead him to communicate the good he has to others as widely as possible.

CHAPTER XIII

Summary.

IT will be unnecessary, after what has been said, to call special attention to the absolute uniqueness of the ethical teaching of Jesus. It differs from every other system the world has ever seen. Even what is called Christian ethics must not be mistaken for Jesus' idea of righteousness. Christian ethics is an interpretation of the thought of Jesus; and, like all interpretations, it is only an approximation. Christian ethics is a growing science. It grows by the addition through experience of the new

insight gained into the ideal at its core. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching." As Christians earnestly accept and practice the principles of Jesus, they discover more and more of the divine mind in them. Meantime, the ideal remains always in advance of the actual, whether that actual be embodied in a theoretical statement of what conduct should be, or in a practical expression of conduct in life.

The chief features of Jesus' ideal of conduct may be summed up in the following :

1. Jesus shows conduct as the result of a vital inner force. Conduct may be produced mechanically, as when certain unvarying rules are blindly obeyed. It may be produced dynamically as when some motive, be it selfish or altruistic, actuates it ; but it may be the result of a vital unifying, organizing and integrating energy. In the ideal of Jesus it is this, and the force which produces it is love.

2. Jesus shows conduct to be a matter of divine concern. Its roots and its issue are in eternity. No one who appreciates the thought of the Master can live as if what he did was his own business only. Or that it began and ended in this earthly existence. The picture of a great judgment and reward according to the deeds done in the body is necessary to fill out Jesus' idea of conduct as a whole.

3. Jesus not only tells what conduct should be, but lives it; and He proves thereby that it is no mere vision in the clouds which cannot be brought down to earth. But through this same feature of it, He shows the perfection of the ideal. Perfection includes the best quality in the highest quantity and with absolute proportion and harmony of parts. The revelation of perfection in Jesus shows the disciple what he ought to do, what he can do, but what he has not done; it thus drives him to seek for his peace of mind and his hope of blessedness not

in the sphere of outward conduct, but in the inner life of his relation with the Father.

4. Jesus gives a true starting-point and standard for conduct in a just and sane self-regard. Complete self-regard begins with self-discovery, proceeds with self-study and self-mastery, rises to self-esteem and culminates in self-culture, including self-development and self-realization.

5. Jesus unifies and universalizes the social principle in conduct. Modern science, through the spectroscope, reveals the fact that the same ultimate elements and the same forces are found throughout the whole universe. Science appears indeed to be coming to the conclusion that all the various forces are forms of but one energy. Jesus anticipates this conclusion of physical science in the moral world. He posits at the centre of all moral action the one law of love. Whether in the state, in society,

in the home, in commerce and industry or in the church, the one normal motive for action is love.

6. Finally, Jesus shows the goal of all conduct to be assimilation to the one absolute and ultimate personality, the heavenly Father. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Man was made in the image of God, and to possess this image in perfection is the highest achievement of his moral activities.

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