

LESSON 9, February 27, 1955

LOVE

Golden Text: John 14:23. "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Bible References for the Lesson: 1 John 3:14-18, 5:3; 1 Cor. 13; Rom. 2:19-21.

Lesson Text: 1 Cor. 13:4-8; Romans 12:19-21; 1 John 3:14-19, 5:3

1 Cor. 13:4. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

1. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

Romans 12:19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

20. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. **1 Jn. 3:14.** We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

1 Jn. 5:3. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.

DAILY BIBLE READING

M. Lovers of Self. 2 Tim. 3:1-15.

T. Love's Many Elements. 1 Cor. 13:4-8.

W. The Constraining Love of Christ. 2 Cor. 5:11-16.

T. Loving in Deed and in Truth. 1 John 3:14-18.

F. Loving an Enemy. Luke 10:30-37.

S. Proof of Love. John 14:21-24.

S. Hate, But No Love. Rev. 2:1-6.

Comments on the Golden Text

"The first and great commandment." In Matthew 22:35-38 when the lawyer asked Jesus the question, tempting him, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus 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 first and great commandment." Why is this the first and great commandment? We have the answer in the words of our Golden Text today: "If a man love me he will keep my words ..." Love must precede everything else, and where there is no love, there will be no obedience. There can be forced slavery without love, but there can be no obedience

that pleases God, without real love.

"If a man love me." Judas, not Iscariot, had asked Jesus how he was going to manifest himself to them, but not to the world, and Jesus explained that it was not going to be an arbitrary manifestation of himself to a chosen few, but to any man who would open his heart to the pleading of Christ (Rev. 3:20), letting the Spirit of Christ permeate his being, letting Christ take over as he submits himself to the authority of Christ in obedience, it was to that person Christ would manifest himself. Where love for Christ is, there is never any question about obedience, for the favor of Christ is desired, and esteemed, and his authority is revered, and the whole man is surrendered to his government.

"He will keep my words." Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote to acquaint us with the life, teaching, character and person of Jesus Christ, that we might learn of him and become his followers. To know Christ and the sacrifice he made for us is to love him and be willing to submit to his authority and serve him. John 14:23-24 tells us of the man who loves Christ and keeps his words (word) and of those who do not keep his sayings, therefore do not love him. So, there are only two classes of responsible people on earth, the ones who love him and keep his commandments, and those who do not love, therefore do not keep his commandments.

The Revised Version, together with B. F. Westcott, and other scholars, point out that the original is "word" singular, rather than "words" plural, meaning "the Gospel message in its total unity, not broken up into separate commands or separate parts." "Word" then, has a wider meaning than commandments, for it includes all his sayings, not simply the positive commands. This should come as a shock to some who contend that there is no necessity for obeying anything that is not positively commanded in the word. They argue that we are not commanded to attend more than the "one essential service," therefore they will not attend, thereby proving their lack of love, for if they loved, they would obey the "word" in its entirety. This would include obeying Matthew 6:33 "Seek ye first the kingdom of God ..." Anyone who prefers a worldly entertainment to a church service, and neglects this service on the ground that he is not commanded to attend any but the one essential service, proves that he does not love the Lord, for he is disobeying the spirit of New Testament teaching. If one keeps the "word" he does not need a positive command to call out his obedience. He simply needs to find out what pleases Christ, and he then obeys because of the principle of love.

"He will come unto him." The sinner is pictured as having gone from God (Psalm 58:3; Prov. 27:10; Ezk. 14:11; Eph. 2:12; 4:18; Col. 1:21) and God has withdrawn his presence from him. When the sinner turns again to God and is baptized into Christ, entering a new relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20) he is then a fit residence for the Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16) and God and Christ enter into the Christian (John 14:23) together with the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32). This theme becomes more and more important, when we consider that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (1) If you do not have the Spirit of Christ, you are none of his (Romans 8:9) (2) The Spirit enters only on the condition of obedience (Acts 5:32). It follows then (3) that we are his, only on the condition of obedience!

Comments on the Lesson Text

In Luke 10, Jesus told the story of the Samaritan, whom all the world has called "good", to illustrate the principle of love which he has just made known to the "certain lawyer." (Luke 10:25). This great principle of love includes love of God with all the heart, with all the soul, all the strength and all the mind and love of neighbor as self. The heart, soul, and mind, here refer to the inner part of man, and the strength means the physical body devoted to his service. When thus one loves with his inner and outer man, the entire man is consecrated to the service of God. This is the man who is presenting his body a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2). As we journey through our lesson today, we will find that love for God is an active principle (1 John 5:3); love for man is active (1 John 3:17-18) and love for enemies is active (Rom. 12:20). We will see that love is not a tender feeling somewhere above the stomach, but a principle of service unto others.

Jesus compressed the ten commandments into two (Matt. 22:37), and so great are they, so all inclusive, that they will guide us in all our relations to God and man.

Spiritual Zeros

The apostle to the Gentiles makes it clear in 1 Corinthians 13, that even if a child of God had all spiritual gifts, and lacked the characteristics which go to make up love, he is simply nothing, a spiritual zero. Why have men of ages past who, do doubt, held positions of power and influence, left no imprint upon the world, no feeling of affection in the hearts of men and women? Because they lived for self, or worldly glory, while many others who were obscure in the eyes of the world, left memorials of love, memorials far more lasting in the hearts of people, than memorials in marble or stone. To live in the hearts of people because of your service to mankind, is a memorial that everyone can build for himself.

1 Cor. 13:4-8

"Suffereth long." Let us break love down into its many elements and see what it takes to make Bible love. Love endures wrongs and slights, patiently, and returns a kindly spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is longsuffering (Gal. 5:22). Christ when reviled, reviled not again (1 Pet. 2:23), and love is "slow to anger" (Psalm 103:8).

"Kind." Why does the world call the Samaritan "good"? We have only a brief glimpse of him for a moment, just a single snap-shot. The reason is, he was doing an act of kindness. It was Lincoln who said, "I want it said of me by those who knew me best, that I have always plucked a thistle and planted a flower wherever a flower would grow." When Jonathan was dead, David asked "Is there not one left of the house of Saul that I may show kindness to him?"

"Envieth not." No one is so miserable as the envious person, who is made unhappy by the good fortune of another. Cain is an example of this sin of envy. Every one is of the sins of the flesh (Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:21). Joseph's brothers sold him because of envy (Acts 7:9), and where envy is, there is every evil work (Jas. 3:14-16). Envy and jealousy are not the same. Jealousy is a child of love, and is a good thing. It is one of the pangs love feels when it has been slighted of that due it, for that reason we read of God being jealous, and also of Paul being jealous with godly jealousy. Envy is misery at the good fortune of someone else. When you made that catty remark about another, was it because of envy? Does it grieve you to hear another complimented? Does it bring pain when

another is praised? Does it bring happiness to you to hear another person picked to pieces? "Cain, you'd better beware. You are a potential murderer" (1 John 3:15).

"Vaunteth not itself." In honor we are to prefer one another (Rom. 12:10). If there is glory, praise and honor to be had, let us prefer that our brother get it. Love does not boast, or brag, or glory in accomplishments. It takes real love to do this. God has a way of humbling the person who would lift himself up by tearing someone else down.

"Not puffed up." Is not inflated or puffed up with pride. This differs from the above in that this is the feeling, and "vaunting" is the expression of the puffed up feeling.

"Behave unseemly." Love will never shock good manners or morals by the way it behaves.

"Seeketh not her own." This does not imply that the person who loves, seeks **nothing** for self, for you will not be long for this world if material things are not provided for self. It means that the one who loves, looks not to his own things (only) but looks also on the things of others. The spirit of Christianity is that of giving up self, for the sake of others or for Christ. Let us take an introspective view at this time and see if we have ever given up anything for Christ, or if we are motivated by love of self. Have I moved a finger in the last week that was not for self, with some selfish motive behind it? Have I opened my mouth in the last week when it was not to gain something for self? Have I moved a foot in the service of Christ for others? Have all my efforts been for self? Christianity is a religion of self-crucifixion, not of pleasing self (Gal. 2:20).

"Is not (easily) provoked." Keeps temper under control, and does not fly into anger. We should provoke unto love and good works (Heb. 10:24). Many of us are easy to provoke (to anger) but hard to provoke unto good works.

"Taketh no account of evil," (Revised Version). Love does not keep a list or a ledger of the wrongs of mankind that are done against it, ready to bring them forward on a moment's notice. Love puts the best construction on what others say and do, and is not looking for something wrong. Love not only is not easily provoked to anger, but does not even **think** evil. When the hatchet is buried, some leave the handle sticking out so they can pick it up again easily.

"Rejoiceth not in iniquity." The wicked world of which Paul spoke in Romans 1, guilty of the sins of Sodom (Genesis 19:5) not only practiced these evil things, but had pleasure in them that did them (Romans 1:32). Love not only refrains from such evils, but takes no pleasure in others who practice them. Instead, love rejoices in truth, purity, and goodness.

"Beareth all things." This word bear has two meanings, and which ever is meant here, the lesson is a good one. It may mean to endure, to bear up under great burdens, or it may mean to cover, as a roof, to hide or conceal. If so, it has to do with not making known the things that come to us.

"Believeth all things." Love has confidence in men as long as possible. Some have proven that we cannot place confidence in them, but until that time, love believes in them.

"Hopeth all things." The Christian's hope is laid up in heaven (Col. 1:5) and it is this hope that causes him to purify himself (1 Jn. 3:2-3.) His treasure is not upon earth but laid up in heaven in a character like Christ. This element of love which "hopeth all things" makes it possible for us to bear our burdens, resist temptation

and deny ourselves ungodliness and worldly lusts.

"Endureth all things." At the hands of men, love continues to endure persecution and suffering.

"Love never faileth." There is no truth in the Bible greater than this. The continuity of Christian character does not come to an end at death, or the judgment, or the end of spiritual gifts, but goes right on when material things come to an end. When all things else have failed, the character we have built will go right on influencing others for good.

Have you ever committed 1 Corinthians 13 to memory? Have you ever committed it to life? We have seen love broken down into its many elements. See how common and ordinary they are? Patience; kindness; generosity; humility; courtesy, etc.

Making Enemies to be Friends

Rom. 12:19-21

It is not always possible to live at peace with all men, as the story of Paul's life shows. Paul preached the word and the Jews were filled with envy and "spake against those things which were spoken by Paul ..." (Acts 13:45). Paul preached in Lystra and the Jews stoned him and drew him out of the city (Acts 14:19), and he was imprisoned in Philippi (Acts 16). We cannot be at peace with all men, but we can be at peace with all men who are at peace with Christ! If we have enemies, we can do our best to make friends out of them, feeding them when they are hungry, and giving them drink when thirsty. Thus we can heap coals of fire upon their heads, not to burn them, but to melt them. By doing good unto those who do evil unto us, they feel and regret the wrong that has been done. It is believed by some that the most excruciating punishment there is, is the feeling that we have wronged one who loves us and would do only good to us.

Love is a powerful force. "Love your enemies, and do good ..." (Matt. 5:44). "Pray for them that hate you ..." If the Christian fights with the weapons of the world, guns, fists, knives, he is bound to lose, but he cannot lose if he uses the Lord's weapons, for they are powerful; prayer and doing good.

Can we have feelings of tender emotion toward our enemies? Maybe not, but we can love them, for love is a principle of service, it is the product of the will; of doing and acting. We are not commanded to have certain feelings toward others, but we are commanded to love. Usually the proper feelings attend doing good unto others and praying for them, for "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he." No one can rise from prayer with his fists clenched, ready to strike his enemy.

The Badge of Discipleship

1 John 3:14-18

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." Are all murderers in prison? Not according to this passage. Is it possible for one to love the creator while hating the creature? Is it possible that we who have the same Father and partake of the same nature, and are working together for the same purpose and who expect to live together in the next world, can hate each other? Do we believe that death is going to bring about some change in character that will make one love there, the person whom he hated here?

Loving our brother; an active principle. We have seen that the way to love our enemies is to serve them; do good to them, and we find that the way to love our fellow man is to help him when he is in need. Love that spends itself on words when help is needed, is not real love. The story is told of the man whose house had burned, and all his friends had gath-

ered round telling how sorry they were. One man walked up and said, "Bill, I am sorry a hundred dollars worth," as he handed Bill the money. This is seeing your brother in need and opening up your tender mercies toward him.

To love mankind is to fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture (Jas. 2:8) "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and the way to do this is "thou shalt not kill ... do not commit adultery" (Jas. 2:11). Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. If we are as prompt in taking care of our obligations to our neighbor and fulfilling our duties to him as we are to ourselves, then we are loving our neighbor as ourselves.

If a man says he loves his children, but gives them less care than he does his cows or sheep, less than he does his fishing, hunting and golf, that man loves in word only. If one says he loves God but gives God less than he gives to some useless pleasure, or lust, that man loves in word only. God demonstrated his love to the world by laying down his life for us, and so we should demonstrate our love for men by giving ourselves wholeheartedly for them, then we are loving in deed and in truth.

Does God accept anyone in the family who hates his brother? A man who was having a little in-law trouble complained that he "didn't marry the whole family. He just married Mary." There is a sense however, in which we must have the same attitude toward the rest of the family that God does.

The Samaritan (Luke 10) probably knew that were the Jew in his place, he would not render a service to **him**, would not pay **him** any kindness, but he had compassion on him nevertheless, and he was loving his neighbor. If you can meet a man kindly who is seeking to do you harm; if you can speak well of the man who speaks harshly of you; if you can wish the best for the man who wishes the worst for you, you need not fear, you are loving your neighbor.

Loving God

1 John 5:3

"For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments ..." It is a little difficult to figure out how John came to be pictured as a meek quiet sort of a person, when Jesus called him and James "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17). It was James and John who wanted to call fire down from heaven and consume the Samaritans (Luke 9). Does this sound like the attitude of some of our day whom people applaud and keep over, for their weak and sickly spirit which men mistake for the spirit of love? John wrote much about love, and the world, mistaking what love is, thinking it is a soft, sentimental, emotional feeling, have pictured John as without much spirit.

Love for God is not measured in human terms. A good feeling in the fleshly heart is not the evidence, but the evidence is keeping his commandments. This is the test. Just as there is a gasoline gauge on your car, to tell you how much gasoline you have, and you do not stick a stick in the tank to find out, so the way to test one's love for God is to look at the gauge . . . does he keep God's commandments? Love for God is not just a sentimental dream of heaven, but the doing of his commandments. If anyone refuses to keep any requirement of the Lord, no matter how insignificant it might seem, he simply advertises the fact that he has not completely surrendered to the Lord.

Hate But No Love

Many people are unbalanced religiously, in that they either are all love and no hate, or all hate and no love. Ephesus hated but did not love.

"Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitians" (Rev. 2:6). Did you ever hear anyone say "Love is of God and hate is of the devil"? That is not true, for the Christian is commanded to hate just as he is commanded to love. We must love God and his works and hate the devil and his works. Ephesus had cultivated hatred but had failed to cultivate love. Occasionally one is seen who is all backbone and has none of the gentle graces which balance a person spiritually. Others will be all gentle, sweet-spirited, and tender, but they fail to cultivate that heroic spirit of opposition to sin and error and they are so weak they are worthless. God hates lying vanities (Ps. 31:6); them that turn aside (Ps. 101:3); every false way (119:104); them that are of double mind (119:113); proud look, lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet swift in running to mischief; false witness; and sowers of discord (Prov. 6:16-19). Abhor that which is evil (Rom. 12:9).

QUESTIONS

What is the first and great commandment in the law? Why is it the first and greatest? If love is present, will obedience follow? When do God, Christ and the Holy Spirit enter into man?

Is love a tender emotional feeling, or a principle of service? How may we prevent becoming spiritual zeros?

What is the first element of love when it is broken down? Is happiness possible when there is envy? Does love boast and brag? How does vaunting differ to being puffed up? Can there be love and selfishness at the same time? Does love easily become angry? Does love keep a ledger of the sins others have committed? Does character come to an end at death?

Could Paul live at peace with all men? What is the purpose of heaping coals of fire upon the heads of others? Is love for enemies an emotion? How do we love our enemies?

Are all murderers in prison? Is love real love that spends itself on words when help is needed? How do we fulfill the royal law?

How do we show our love for God? Is this a tender feeling or an act of service? Was John a little weak, meek, quiet sort of a person? What did Jesus name James and John?

LESSON 10 — March 6, 1955

WORSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Golden Text: John 4:24. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Bible References for the Lesson: Gen. 4:1-8; John 4:23-24; Acts 2:41-47; Col. 2:16-23 Heb. 12:28-29; Rev. 22:8-9.

Lesson Text: John 4:23-24; Acts 2:41-47; Col. 2:20-23; Heb. 12:28-29; Rev. 22:8-9.

John 4:23. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Acts 2:41. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.