

but He explains to us how we can do so, namely, by forgiving them.

Forgiveness is the best proof of love. More than any other virtue it distinguishes Christ's teachings from the teachings of men. As long as one cherishes resentment, he cannot love or even do justice.

Reference has been made to the teachings of Confucius; they are in marked contrast with the teachings of Christ on many points. When one of his followers asked him his opinion of the doctrine of rewarding evil with good he replied:

"If you reward evil with good, with what will you reward good?" And then he announced the rule of "Reward evil with justice and reward good with good."

Christ understood human nature better than Confucius did. He understood it well enough to know that a heart which has hatred or resentment in it cannot understand what justice is. The heart must first be purged of illwill and then filled with love before it can hold the scales of justice.

One cannot obey the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," until he obeys the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

WE CAN CONTROL OUR LOVE

Christ's injunction to love one's enemies teaches, by implication, a very important doctrine, that love is under man's control.

The decision rests in that indefinable personality which we call man's will. It loves or hates. At its command the bodily agents help or harm.

If love were beyond control, man would not be commanded to direct it either toward God or toward one's fellows. Love can be extended, withheld, or withdrawn, according to that imperious power that rules within man's being.

This truth has a very practical application at this time when men, and even women, try to excuse sin by saying, "I am not to blame; I could not control my love."

Man can love God; he can love his neighbors; he can love even his enemies. If he can love his enemies, he ought to be able to love his wife in spite of the lure of so-called "soul-mates" and "affinities." Christ warns against the beginnings of evil.

It is Satan—the serpent—that bids one eat of the forbidden fruit, no matter in what orchard it grows. Christ's advice is plain. His wisdom unimpeachable.

The Great Teacher left nothing unsaid or undone; everything that the world needs for its moral welfare is found in Christ's teachings and in Christ's teachings alone.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST MORAL CODE

By WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

BIBLE TEXT—LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 19 (Luke 7:37-48)

And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment.

And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment.

Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner.

And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

In our weekly study of events in Christ's life, we now come to a lesson of surpassing beauty, although it deals with sin and the sinner.

It exhibits one of the wonderful attributes of the Saviour; namely, His ability to separate the

sinner from his sin and to love the former while hating the latter.

Christ, in the second year of His ministry, sat at meat in a Pharisee's house when "a woman in the city"—Luke describes her simply as a "sinner"—came to Jesus with an alabaster cruse of ointment. Let me quote the description of the scene which we find in Luke's Gospel:

"And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

"Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner."

The Pharisee felt offended that such a woman—a sinner—should come into his house, and it raised suspicion as to Christ's power that He seemed not to perceive the kind of woman that she was.

Just like a Pharisee; it was one of his school that Christ used to draw a contrast between the imitation prayer and the real prayer. It was a Pharisee who prided himself upon his own superiority and thanked God that he was not as other men.

How could a woman like this have the courage to come into a house like his? And how could one who claimed to be a prophet allow such a woman to wash his feet with her tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head—and even kiss his feet and anoint them with ointment?

AN UNEQUALED REBUKE

Of all the rebukes in history and literature few, if any, equal the one administered to this Pharisee by Jesus.

"Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee," said the guest to His host.

"Master, say on," replied the Pharisee.

Then Christ put a question to him; if one debtor owed five hundred pence and another fifty and both were forgiven, which would love the lender most?

Simon, the Pharisee, did not seem to be greatly impressed by the problem; he did not answer very heartily; there was even an air of flippancy in his reply. "I suppose,"—he did not care to announce any positive decision in so trivial a case—but he "supposed" that the one to whom the creditor forgave most would love most.

Then Christ turned to the woman, but speaking to Simon, said what might seem even rude where politeness is estimated more highly than truth.

"Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

"Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

"My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment."

MODERN PHARISEES

How the eyes of Jesus must have pierced the Pharisee's heart as He held up before him the devotion of the woman and contrasted her attentions with the indifference of the Pharisee. Before saying to the woman, "Thy sins are forgiven," He informed Simon that "her sins, which are many, are forgiven," and then he applied the rule that He had forced Simon to admit to be just, "For she loved much."

And we must not overlook the philosophy embodied in the concluding clause of the verse, "But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Here we have Jesus, who came to be the propitiation for man's sins, announcing the possession of all power to forgive and the completeness of that forgiveness.

We have Pharisees today who think themselves sinless—who draw their cloaks about them for fear they may be contaminated by a sinner.

They reject the idea that man ever fell or can fall. They profess to believe that man has been improving throughout the ages and therefore needs no Saviour. Having no place in their philosophy for a fall, they recognize no need of salvation. They can see no blackness in sin. If man makes mistakes, they say we must not be too severe with him—just a little reprimand will be sufficient.

Such is the philosophy of those who today feel themselves superior to all who confess their sins and see in Christ their Saviour.

MAN'S NATURAL TENDENCY

There is no subject upon which the Bible is more explicit than the subject of sin. Philip Mauro, in a recent book, declares that the Bible is the most hated book ever published and he

explains this hatred on the ground that the Bible is the only book that does not flatter man. It holds up before him a life-like picture of himself and declares him to be wicked and in need of a Saviour. This is a subject which every human being should study and upon which every one should have an opinion because it is a subject which concerns every one.

Is man's natural tendency downward or upward? Who, if he examines himself and understands others, can doubt that it is downward? That invisible, intangible, eternal thing that we call life is in a constant struggle with the influences that would destroy the body.

From birth it is a fight against disease and lurking danger. Sometimes the spark of life is extinguished as the babe enters life; sometimes it is put out in infancy or youth; sometimes the battle continues until maturity is reached; sometimes all of life's foes are kept at bay until old age lowers the body's vitality and makes it the prey of some disease which would have been impotent when the pulse was full and the resisting power at its maximum.

NEED OF A SPIRITUAL FORCE

But there is never a day when life can make a treaty of peace with hidden enemies or suspend its vigilance. Finally, either without notice or at the end of a siege of sickness, the surrender is announced and man drops back into the dust from which he sprang.

Drummond has used this gravitation toward the grave to illustrate the necessity for a lifting power. Just as the body needs life to keep it from yielding to an unrelenting force that pulls it downward toward the earth, so man needs a spiritual force from above to keep him from the grossest transgressions.

Look at the victims of sin.

One man is an athlete in frame, a scholar in training, and a saint in hopes and ideals; he falls a victim to the appetite for drink. Watch him as he drops out of church, and then out of business, and then out of society and then into the grave. The mother who rejoiced at his birth and dreamed of great achievements in his youth sighs between her tears and feels relieved when the tragedy is ended.

Take one who has just as good a start, but who walks the road of immorality; his rotting flesh will at last disgrace a tomb. One cannot be born upon a plane so high but he can fall to the lowest depths of degradation.

THE SUPREME FALSE GOD

And so with the gambler; he can become so diseased as to be indifferent to God's law of rewards which limits one's collections to his earnings and measures his earnings by the service which he renders.

But the god of drink, the god of passion, and the god of chance are only three of the many false gods which men worship.

There is the god of ease that those worship who think only of having a good time; the god of intellect that those worship who put the brain above the heart and the reason above faith; the travel god that those worship who yield to the wanderlust until the ordinary experiences of life become uninteresting to them; the god of fame that those worship who are willing to exchange everything for fleeting applause; the god of fashion that those worship who put social distinction above solid service to society; and the god of gold whose devotees find their hearts shriveling and their sympathies contracting because of their worship of money.

All of these false gods have their worshippers and all are but masks for the one supreme false god—self.

The worship of self is the fundamental sin, back and degrading. It may not lead one to the violation of statute laws; it may simply make him as worthless to society as the brute—more worthless because he consumes, while the brute may yield its body to man for food.

AN AWE-INSPIRING THOUGHT

Until one is brought under conviction, he does not understand his need for forgiveness, but let him once see the carnal heart as it really is and he can understand how far man has fallen and how helpless man is without a power from above to lift his load of guilt and lead him on the upward way.

Bible scholars have pointed out as evidence of the fall of man that the human being is the only creature that does not live up to its possibilities.

The horse, the cow, the sheep, the hog—all animals, domestic and wild—live upon the highest plane possible for them. There are no delinquents, no degenerates among the brutes—only man is vile."

The difference between the value of the highest and the lowest of any given species is not great, but consider the infinitude of space that