

## SYMPOSIUM ON THE GOLDEN RULE

(A symposium on the Golden Rule in its application to various phases of life was participated in by the following brethren: J. W. Doane, C. B. Young, A. N. Marchant, W. H. Kimball, J. F. Stephenson and Walter Sargent. Some extracts from the sermonettes are recorded on pages 127 and 128 of the 1915 Convention Report, Supplement—convention at Truro, Nova Scotia, Justice Day, Friday, August 20th.)

*“Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”* According to a very popular thought it should read, “you do others as they do you, only you do them first.” The subject of the Golden Rule is in strict harmony with the general topic of the day, JUSTICE.

The Lord has so arranged it that we may not feel ourselves entirely self-sufficient, and that even our proper leaning on the Lord shall seem to require, also the cooperation, encouragement, sympathy, and love of our fellow-laborers in the work at the present time. Our dear Lord, knowing that we would need to come together for fellowship, has said to us in Hebrews 10:25, “Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.” Do we meet with trials when we come together in convention? Why, of course we do. We are all human, and if we watch our opportunities we will find a chance to ask the Lord to help us overcome some prejudice against a brother which has come into our heart, at some moment when we were off guard. If this were allowed to grow it would continue until we took a dislike to the brother, and perhaps it might keep us out of the kingdom. When such a thought first comes to us we ought to say, “Would I like to have that brother think that way of me?” Of course you would not. Then do as you would that he should do to you.

As we come together, desiring the sympathy and encouragement of the brethren, let us be sure to give the same to others. If you want to be greeted with a warm handclasp, give one yourselves. If you want to receive a sunny smile, wear one yourself and you will see the reflection in others. Give a helpful word at every opportunity. Especially should we be thoughtful of those dear ones who are isolated, or those who do not find it so easy to take part in the conversation. Let us be especially sweet and helpful to them, for they will treasure up our kindness, and ponder over the precious words they have heard for a long time. You who are spiritual, seek to give comfort, help, and strength to these needy ones, even as you would that others should do unto you. When some of these dear ones get home from this convention it will mean more persecution from the people with whom they come in contact. If we want to be loved, let us show ourselves lovable, and try to love the other fellow a little bit more than we expect him to love us.

Let us remember that justice is the first feature of the commandment of love, but we should go beyond strict justice. Our love should prompt us to exercise mercy and forgiveness. By thus doing we are copying divine love. So in our dealings with others, who like us are fallen and imperfect, we must remember to be merciful, even as we hope to obtain mercy. We must be generous, kind, lovable, humble, and obedient, that we may be children of our Father in Heaven.

Remembering our topic of justice, let us ask ourselves whether we allow our thoughts to run along lines that would be unjust, at conventions, or in our assemblies at home. Do we look across the hall, and envy someone their nice clothes? Are we jealous of the attention paid to some brother or sister, who may be entirely unaware of the position they occupy in your eyes? Would you like to have someone think that way of you? Would this be justice in thought, word, and act? No, dear friends, we must be merciful and forgiving. We must be careful not to criticize, not to entertain thoughts that would be harmful to ourselves or others. We are to grow in love, remembering that love is the principal thing. If we would grow in love we must be just. Our character structure of love must be built upon the foundation of justice. If our love be built upon injustice it will not stand the test which the Lord will put it to.

Brethren, what manner of persons ought we to be? Let the Word answer, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Now that is to all, but let us change the word "men" to "brethren" and we are bringing this right home. Are you willing to perform the service that you want a brother to render? Are you thinking that some brother or sister is always in the way? Are you criticizing some brother or sister on account of their zealous activity in the Lord's service? If they were not doing work, would you be doing it? Oh, beloved! let us keep our eyes ever on the blessed Master. Let us be meek and humble, ever ready and faithful to carry on any work the Master may entrust to us. If we would appreciate any little service from others, let us stand ready to give such service to others. If we love our neighbor we will be as just to him as we are to ourselves. We will not seek the best place, in meetings or elsewhere, and we will not say anything to hurt, even as we would not wish others to say what would hurt us. We will try to serve, try to be helpful, try to build up others.

We are told that if we would be just we must exclude whatever would encroach in any way upon the interests of others. We remember how Moses instructed the Jews in justice. He said, "That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Should we who are looking for divine life, and who are promised, if faithful, that we may reign with Christ a thousand years to judge all nations, be any less just than the Jews who were only promised earthly life? No, dear ones, we should be so filled with the spirit of justice that our lives will show forth continually the Lord's character; that the Golden Rule may be a bright star in our make-up. You know it is often said that you get out of a thing just what you put into it. So, if

you are not practicing the Golden Rule, how do you expect that it will show forth in your character?

Now we all want to be pure, we all want to have the perfect character of our God, and His Son, and how are we going to get this without trials? Does He not say that we shall pass through fiery trials, that we may come out pure, with the dross all taken out? The question is, will we stand these trials as they come from the Lord, and allow them to do the purifying work that is intended, that we may have divine life? You see we are all to be followers of our Lord and Master, who is altogether lovely. As we see in the loveliness and purity of His character the absence of anger, hatred, strife, vindictiveness, and contention, what manner of persons ought we to be? Dearly beloved, think on these things, and let the purifying influence of God's Holy Spirit have full sway, that you may develop the new creature daily. Let us study the inspired Word, and meditate upon it, not forgetting the keys which have been so helpful to many of God's consecrated children, that we may grow into a grace that will be everlasting.

As you take a microscopic view of yourselves, do you find anything in your nature that is not Christlike? If so, take it to the Lord in prayer at once, and may the dear Lord bless your efforts to be like Jesus. Let us remember that we represent the Lord's cause in the midst of the raging elements of human passions and oppositions, and our hearts would at times be dismayed were it not that faith enables us to see the Lord in the ship; except as we are able to grasp the thought of His mighty power to speak peace to the world, in His own time and way. It must not surprise us, however, if a dark hour is before us; if the time shall come when the stormy winds shall be so fierce that many will cry out in fear. Let us learn well the precious experiences of the present time, so that our faith shall not fail us then; so that in the darkest hour we shall be able to sing, and rejoice in Him who loved us and bought us with His own precious blood.

In Revelation we are given a picture of an angel with a golden rod, measuring the golden city. If we are to be members of that City it is necessary that we have deeply engraved in our characters the principles of the golden rule. The Prophet Micah shows us that the Lord requires us to be just, to love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. It is not that we shall require everyone to exercise justice toward us, but justice must regulate our words and acts toward others, not only our families and the brethren, but toward those of the world about us. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."

In the Lord's parable of the unjust steward He gives us an illustration of the proper way to use the mammon of unrighteousness in making friends, and thereby increasing our influence for the truth. If we follow this course we may not expect to accumulate vast sums of influence for the truth. If we follow this course we may not expect to accumulate vast sums of money. I remember an illustration of using the mammon of unrighteousness

to make friends, when I was working in a bank some years ago. None of the officers claimed to be Christians, and this was especially true of the cashier. A certain individual owed the bank a sum of money, and his note had been running a long time. The bank had been lenient with him, and he had paid it up until only a small sum remained unpaid. As the cashier was going over the securities one day, he picked out this note, and directed that it be cancelled and sent to the man. The man was deeply grateful when he came in and found they would not require him to pay the balance. It looked like an act of generosity, and it may have been, but the bank got much advertising out of that act. By that act the bank gained an influence that was no doubt of considerable value to it.

Not many of the Lord's people have much of this world's goods, and there may be a tendency to try to economize, and buy things as cheap as possible. But in doing this it is necessary to consider the other person. Suppose we are going to buy a suit of clothes. We go to a store and try to drive a bargain to get that suit at as low a price as possible. Suppose the man is in hard circumstances, where he is almost forced to sell. There is an opportunity not to take advantage of that person's circumstances. We should try to deal justly, and generously at all times. We might say, further, that we find nothing in the Word indicating that we shall be submissive in allowing others to hold us up, and take an unjust advantage, but if we can use what little we have of the mammon of unrighteousness to make friends, it will increase our influence for the truth, and our power for good. Mammon is the thing that the world appreciates. They may not be able to appreciate our pearls, our treasures, but they can appreciate what little mammon we have.

We might take the place of the milkman, who has to get up at two or three o'clock in the morning, and especially we might think of him when the weather is very cold. In this connection I remember hearing about a certain lady who was so noble that she would rise very early, when the weather was cold, and invite the milkman in to have a cup of coffee to cheer him up. If we had the experience of going out so early on a cold morning we would appreciate a thing of that kind.

We may take another illustration in the experiences of the dressmaker. I know of sisters in this work. Sometimes it is necessary for them to work from early morning until very late at night to get out a garment at a certain time. If you are going to have a dress made you should consider the other party who is to make the dress, and try to get your order in in time to give her opportunity to get it out without the necessity of working early and late to get it done. There would be an opportunity to put the golden rule into practical use.

Suppose we have a grocery business on this corner, and a widow has a grocery business just across the street. At times it is pretty hard for her to get along. Possibly because of your greater experience, or greater business capacity, or something else, you seem to

capture all of the business, and it forces that poor lady out of business. If you have the spirit of the Lord, and are trying to live according to the golden rule, you will try to support yourself and family, but you will endeavor not to injure someone else. You will try to run your business so as to permit others to make a livelihood also. If you “Let your moderation be known unto all men,” it will mean that your power for the truth will be increased tenfold. We will be able to witness far better for the Lord and His cause than if we violate the laws of justice, and try to be generous without first being just.

An incident related by another brother: A man and his wife lived at some little distance from my home, and one winter he was taken very sick. A terrible storm was raging for several days, and I wondered how they were getting along. I did not go to the house to visit them, because his wife was a bitter enemy of mine, and she was a big woman. But God works things out in His own way. The storm was so terrible that it was not fit for anyone to be out of doors. I got plenty of wood, and laid down in comfort. The thought struck me almost prostrate, “Why I am sure that poor sick man has not a stick of wood in the house, and he will freeze.” I put on my coat and went to the barn, and hitched up my horse. I loaded up some wood. As I drove along toward the home that wood seemed to be burning. That woman who was so bitter against me came to the door, and with tears in her eyes she said, “God bless you.” I did not say much. I received more good from that act than anything I ever undertook to do. It took all of the hatred and malice from that woman’s heart; it heaped coals of fire on her head.