

clear that the hospitality was meant to be qualified and condescending."—*Farrar*.

It is necessary to distinguish between the incident which is recorded by Luke, and the one related in *Matt.* 26: 7; *Mark* 14: 3; and *John* 12: 3. The only points in common are the names and the anointing of the feet of Jesus. That one was at Bethany, this in the city; that was near the close of His ministry, and had reference to His final, this at a simple conference, and had no such reference; that was by Mary the sister of Lazarus, and was a token of deep affection and gratitude; this by a woman who was a notorious sinner, and was an expression of love for sins forgiven.

"The anointing of the feet with odours or with oil, and with ointments, though less usual than anointing the head, was not without precedent."—*French*. Sandals were taken off before meals, which would have the service easy and natural. In ancient times the guests reclined with their feet bare. And so the anointing of the feet of Jesus, especially when the woman saw that the Pharisee had neglected the common act of courtesy of having them washed, would be simply an expression of homage arising out of the deepest and truest feelings of the human heart, and from a recognition of His true character. "It is the custom in the East, where there has never been such a separation of classes as with us, for the houses to be open even at meal time, and for strangers to enter and converse with those present though not joining at the table."—*Stock*.

"In the room where we were received, besides the divan on which we sat, there were seats all round the walls. Many came in and took their place on these seats, uninvited and yet unchallenged. This made us understand the scene in the Pharisee's house, where the woman who was a sinner came in, uninvited yet not unbidden."—*A Narrative of Missions*.

There are apparent difficulties in the parable of the two debtors that are variously explained. The drapery, scenery, and other adjuncts of our Lord's parabolic teaching must never be pressed too far, as though every point had a meaning. Certainly He did not intend to imply that Simon's debt was as 'fifty pence' in comparison with the woman's 'five hundred,' nor that Simon had actually been forgiven at all, or loved at all. Yet these points had their purpose. They gave Simon very impressive teaching, the significance of which he could not fail to perceive. Neither must it be supposed that because the one who is forgiven most, loved most, the greatest sinner will become the greatest saint. It is not so much the actual amount of sin that is spoken of as the degree in which it is *rooted*."—*Stock*.

Simon's *consciousness* of sin was very little, the woman's very great; moreover Simon considered the woman a *very great* sinner, which probably she was; our Lord condescended to meet Simon on his own ground, to look on him from his point of view, and show him his true position. He holds up to Simon the glass that he may see himself.

We are not to understand that the woman was forgiven because she loved much, but that her love was the consequence of faith in Christ, and the result of a sense of forgiveness. "She is conscious of having been forgiven much for she loved much,"—her love is the *evidence*, Christ's answer in v. 50 was the assurance from His own lips of the forgiveness she already had. As Luke places this incident at the conclusion of the Discourse about John, *Luke* 7: 24-35; and as *Matt.* (11: 28-30) adds the words "Come unto me," etc., the probability is that this woman was brought to cast her burden on Jesus by that invitation that has been the means of salvation to so many. No wonder therefore that she followed Jesus to the Pharisee's house that she might in some way express her gratitude, and hear yet more from His gracious lips.

IN THE CLASS.

Either of the following outlines may serve the teacher as a frame-work around which to twine the truths of our lesson. "1st. Two ways of treating Christ, 2nd. Why He was treated so differently. She had faith in Jesus as the Saviour, felt her sins, and loved Him who forgave them, and manifested that love. He had no faith, no consciousness of sin, no love to Christ, no evidence."—*Stock*. The two debtors—1st. Their debts, 2nd. Their ability, 3rd. Their forgiveness, 4th. Their gratitude.

THE TWO DEBTORS—THEIR DEBTS.

Answering said. Christ read his thoughts, and answered them. *1 Chr.* 28: 9; *Ps.* 139: 1-2; *Matt.* 9: 4. **Simon**, a very common name in the time of our Lord. A certain creditor. Under the figure of a creditor, the Lord represents himself. He has claims against us, that we have never paid, love and obedience. Five hundred pence . . . fifty, a Roman penny or *denarius* was equal to about 14 cents, so that the one owed about \$70.00, and other \$7.00. But a penny was the pay for a day's work, *Matt.* 20: 2; *Luke* 10: 35; *Rev.* 6: 6; and had as much purchasing power as our \$1.00 or \$1.50, hence the debts were large, representing in the one a labouring man's pay for nearly two months and in the other for nearly two years.

THEIR ABILITY.

Nothing to pay. To him who is penniless, a debt of filly is as fatal as one of five hundred. There is no ability to pay, and if the creditor forces his claim, the prison is as sure to be one as the other; and if they remain until their debts are paid, they will both stay forever. *Matt.* 5: 26. So it is with us all before God: let our sins be many or few we are utterly unable to atone for them or make satisfaction to divine justice. One sin is enough to ruin us, for, for one only we cannot make atonement. What has the sinner to offer? But *confession* of this fact is implied in the parable, and also a casting of themselves on the mercy of the creditor. *1 John* 1: 8-10; *Prov.* 28: 13.

THEIR FORGIVENESS.

He frankly forgave. As soon as they owned their debts and confessed their inability to pay, and cast themselves on his mercy, he forgave them. And so soon as a man owns his sinfulness and helplessness, and casts himself upon God's mercy; He pardons him. But how can God forgive the sinner? Christ has died, He has paid the debt, paid it in blood; and so God can be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The forgiveness was free, full and unreserved. God holds nothing back. He casts our sins into the sea of His forgetfulness. The forgiveness was cheerfully, not grudgingly or surlily given. God is more ready to forgive than we are to ask, and as ready to forgive the great sinner as the little sinner. The ground of forgiveness is the same—the finished work of Christ.

THEIR GRATITUDE.

Which of them will love most? Is there any advantage in being a great sinner? Our parable does not proceed on the idea of actual transgressions but the *consciousness* of sin. "Often they who have the least of what the world can call sin, have yet the deepest sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and therefore, having groaned most under the burden of sin, are the most thankful for the fact of a redemption, for the gift of a Redeemer."—*Troy*. We keep a book, and God keeps one, and we seldom thank they agree. He who has most to repent of often has the least to be thankful for. And those who have most to be grateful for often manifest the least gratitude. Professing Christians who live a life of worldly conformity, who manifest but little devotion, or consecration to the Master's service speak more

powerfully than by words, that their sense of obligation to Christ is small indeed.

Seest thou this woman? How often the sight of some true-hearted Christian puts the proud sinner to the blush. "Ye Jesus (Judges,) No water for my feet! *Gen.* 18: 4; *Judges* 19: 12. **No kiss**—the salutation of friendship, *Gen.* 22: 4; *Ex.* 18: 7; and it is still the common mode of salutation in the east. **My head**, anointing with oil mixed with odors was a mark of honor to guests at feasts. *Ps.* 23: 5; *141: 5*.

Her sins which are many are forgiven, for—not because, as if the love were the cause of forgiveness, but "inasmuch as "or " in proof of which." The latter clause of the verse and the whole structure of the parable shows this to be the case.—*J. F. and B.*

Who is this that forgiveth sins? *Matt.* 9: 23; *Mark* 2: 7. **Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.** "Not Thy love hath saved thee." *Rom.* 5: 1; *Rom.* 8: 1.

There is a story in the history of the famous Persian poet Saadi, which seems an echo of His evangelical history: Jesus, while on earth, was entertained in the cell of a dervish, or monk, of eminent reputation for sanctity. In the same city dwelt a youth sunk in every kind of sin, "whose heart was so black that Satan himself shrank back from it in horror." This last presently appeared before the cell of the monk, and, as if smitten by the very presence of the divine prophet, began to lament deeply the sin and misery of his life past, and shedding abundant tears, to implore pardon and grace. The monk indignantly interrupted him, demanding how he dared to appear in his presence, and in that of God's holy prophet; assured him that it was in vain for him to seek forgiveness; and, to prove how inseparably his lot was fixed for hell, exclaimed, "My God, grant me but one thing,—that I may stand far from this man in the judgment day. On this Jesus spoke, "It shall be even so, the prayer of both is granted. The sinner has sought mercy and grace, and has not sought them in vain; His sins are forgiven; his place shall be in paradise at the last day. But the monk has prayed that he may never stand near this sinner. His prayer, too, is granted; hell shall be his place; for there this sinner shall never come."—*French*.

Religious Intelligence.

DENOMINATIONAL.

ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

Baptists reported during the month: Abbott's Corners 22; Aylinton 4; Artemesia 8; Bramton 4; Burgessville 6; Clinton 1; Chesley 30; Durham 10; East 1; Elzogog 4; Montreal—*St. Catherine* st. 5; Smith's Forest 1; Ottawa 6; Paisley 5; Smith's Forest 11; Toronto—*Alzamesia* st. 2; *Cliff* st. 13; *Jarvis* st. 5; *Parliament* st. 13.

Pastoral Settlements.—Rev. J. B. McDONALD from Nova Scotia has accepted the pastorate of the *Tiverton* church. Rev. G. L. OLIVER, late pastor of the church in Pembroke, has accepted a call from the *Broadstone* church. His P.O. address is Dalkeith, Ont. Rev. THOS. HOWLAND, late pastor of the Fitzroy church, has settled as pastor of the *East Lorrain* church.

Pastoral Resignations.—Rev. JOHN ALEXANDER has given up his agency of the *Grande Ligne Mission*, and gone to be pastor of the Baptist church in Ottawa, Illinois. Rev. C. GOODFIELD, M.A., has resigned the pastorate of the *Woodstock* church. Rev. S. CUNNINGHAM has resigned the pastorate of the *Mount Forest* church.

Ordination.—Bro. WM. MCGREGOR, one of the recent graduates from Woodstock, having