

HOPE'S QUIET HOUR

OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD

Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.—S. Luke, vi.: 35.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered," says the inspired poet; but think of the unblessed and dangerous state of a man or woman who is indulging an unforgiving spirit. Our Lord's words on this point cannot be mistaken by the most superficial reader, and His warning is clear and solemn. If words have any meaning at all, then one who is nursing a grievance and refusing to forgive, need not appeal to God for forgiveness. Our Lord says: "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven," and again: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."—S. Matt. vi.: 14, 15.

We constantly pray to be forgiven "as we forgive," but sometimes we should hardly dare to say the Lord's Prayer if we thought what we were asking. Even the pardon for past sins, which God has already freely bestowed, may be recalled. The servant who owed ten thousand talents had been set entirely free of that enormous debt. His master let him start fair again without anything to clog his progress; but when he refused to forgive the fellow-servant who owed him a trifling sum, the cancelled debt was again written up in full against him, and he was delivered to the tormentors with faint hope of release. We are not left in the slightest doubt about the application of this parable, for the conclusion is: "So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." You see, outward forgiveness is not enough, a decent appearance of friendliness will not deceive God, forgiveness must be in thought, as well as in word and deed: "from your hearts."

"But," some may protest, "this is an impossible thing to require of any man, for love cannot be forced." Yet God never requires impossibilities, though He sometimes may seem to do so, as when Israel at the Red Sea received the order to go forward. That apparently impossible command was quite possible—as those who tried to obey it soon found out—and, when God not only says that we must forgive those who have injured or offended us "until seventy times seven," but must also "love" our enemies, those who set themselves determined to obey the hard command will find that it is not impossible. The trouble generally is that we don't very much want to forgive or love either, being quite content to settle down on a level, which even the heathen can reach without the slightest effort—the easy business of loving those who love us, and being kind to those who are kind to us. As one of my S. S. class once expressed it: "I act white to the fellows who are white to me." He really seemed to think that was very meritorious, instead of being the most easy and natural thing for anyone to do.

But, if the person with whom you are quarrelling should refuse to accept your advances, or if love should refuse to spring up in your own heart, the wisest plan is to follow the advice given by the Captain of the Lord's Host to Joshua. Jericho like your enemy's heart—was straitly shut up inside a high wall, but after the ark of God (the sign of His presence) had been carried round it once every week-day and seven times on the seventh day, the defences dropped at the first shout of victory, and it could be entered at any point without the slightest difficulty. If you

follow out the type in spirit, obeying our Captain's command: "Pray for them which despitefully use you," at least once a day and seven times on Sunday—you, too, shall find that Love has sprung up in your own heart and has undermined the wall of ice between you and your enemy, so that it is ready to fall at the first kindly word.

"For those who wound with bitter words,
Who say untruthful things,
Whose slander, worse than two-edged swords,
Deep wounds of anguish brings
Entreat, when at God's throne you bend,
His grace may these subdue;
Thus be to those indeed a friend,
Who never pray for you."

We all need forgiveness every day of our lives, therefore it is a terribly dangerous thing to be presumptuous, and it is both useless and presumptuous to ask forgiveness for ourselves when we are refusing it to anyone else. For our own sake, then, it is important to be honest in approaching the subject. "It takes two to make a quarrel" is a very true saying, and, if we think we have a grievance, probably the other party in the quarrel is equally sure that he has something against us. A genu-



A COOLING PROSPECT FOR AN AUGUST DAY

ine, truthful apology will generally be met by another equally frank. To make a pretense of asking forgiveness—thinking all the time that the blame is all on the other side—is to be a hypocrite. Hypocrisy is always felt and resented, and can do no possible good; so it is both foolish and wrong to ask pardon unless you really feel that at least part of the blame is on your side. Nursing a grievance is a grand way of making one's self miserable, and only when it is buried and forgotten can peace and happiness come back to the heart. The Puritans used to plant corn over the graves of their dead so that the Indians might not know how their numbers were decreasing; and soon, of course, they could not be sure of the spot themselves. So, it has been wisely suggested, we should always bury a grudge without erecting a lofty tombstone to remind us of its past existence, and should plant over it flowers and grain of kindly thoughts, words and acts in favor of the person who has wronged us. Our Lord was not satisfied only to forgive the men who seized Him in Gethsemane, He was actively kind, healing the wound which St. Peter's rash loyalty had caused. Then let us try hard not to make the grievance larger by talking about it here, there and everywhere. Our orders are: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then talk with one or two more,

that in the mouth of one or two witnesses every word may be established." If this wise command were obeyed, simply and literally, how few serious quarrels there would be.

But, as a matter of fact, the person who has given offence is usually the last, instead of the first, to hear of it. The one who has taken offence—probably at some careless remark which has been maliciously repeated by a scandal-monger—tells the grievance over and over to all the friends and acquaintances within reach, carefully avoiding all intercourse with the only person who could clear the matter up. The necessity of making the grievance important enough to be worth talking about, causes it to be exaggerated almost unconsciously, foolish condolence fans the flame of anger, sometimes the matter is exposed to public view in the columns of a local paper (that is a grand way of making a mountain out of a mole-hill and stirring up life-long bitterness), or it is, quite unnecessarily, carried by post to distant correspondents who may be trusted to spread the fire still further and make more mischief. If a letter to or about anyone be written in a white heat of anger, it is folly to post it. You will be pretty certain to be very sorry if you do. Put it quite out of sight for a week, and then read it again. Probably by that time you will be thankful to have it safely in your own hands so that it can be put in its proper place—the fire. When a grievance is pushed about from hand to hand, it grows, like the snowballs

changed into a friend in your thoughts; understand that he is really a friend and then the next step will be to make him not an enemy any longer.

"My proud foe at my hand to take
no boon will choose—
My prayers are the one grace which
he cannot refuse."

DORA FARNCOMB.

WORK WITH THE HANDS

Work with the hands! Let others toil
With magic pen and mighty brain,
But you and I, let's till the soil
And plant bright roses on the plain.
Let genius dwell on peak in cloud,
But in the sunlit lower lands
Tasks wait for us that call aloud:
Work with the hands!

Let's rise at dawn; then morn is young—
Let's do that thing that we should do.

Out of each task is triumph wrung,
Out of pain is the soul made new.
Let's use our common tools with pride;
Let's join the strong heroic bands
That answer to the summons wide—
Work with the hands!

Sweet peace shall light our days with cheer,
And gladness crown us like a sun.
We shall have conquest of our fear
From sorrow and from travail won.
As Christ of Nazareth toiled with art
Obeying all the Lord's commands,
So shall we give him with rapt heart
Work with the hands!

—Edward Wilbur Mason.

YOUR BEST

Your best is never too good to give,
And your best is never too good to do

In the service of those for whom you live.
Who repay with their love and their faith in you.

To cheerfully do the best you may
Is never too much for the wage you earn,
And whoever does less, whatever his pay,
Is getting much more than a fair return.

The best you can do is never too good
And never too much, though your soul be tried,
And if you aspire as brave men should,
You must do your best to be satisfied.

—S. E. KISER.

INGLE NOOK

HOPE'S BOOK

Dear Chatterers,—I know from the messages you send to Hope and from the references made to the Quiet Hour, in what esteem you hold the writer of that page and her message. You will be pleased to know that some of her cheering talks are destined to live more than the transient life of magazine print, being put into the more durable book form. Hope has called her book "The Vision of His Face," and you can judge from the title and from what you know of her weekly talks, how much of spiritual nourishment and help there is between those two book covers. The first chapter is called "The Vision of His Face," and all the other chapters point back to it, and amplify and explain it. Here are a few of the eighteen titles: "The Vision Whitens the Garments," "The Vision Transforms Drudgery Into Service," "The Vision Brightens Dull Days," "When the Vision is Dim," "When the Vision is Clear."

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