

paring scripture with scripture, learn all the great truths of religion from the parables our Saviour uttered.

In this parable we are, in thought, conveyed to the scene of one of the great empires of the East where the despot rules. We see the satrap sent to the distant dependency, as Britain sends the Governor-General to rule over India. We see him, there, false to his charge, embezzling the monies received by him as tribute to his lord. We see him called to account and then freely forgiven by his master.

And then we are asked to picture the dungeon into which he is thrown and the instruments of torture awaiting him there when he shows the unforgiving spirit to his fellow-servant. Thus we are continually being called to account for our stewardship at the bar of conscience; and, by this means, we can judge whither we are growing in grace or no.

II. *The source of the forgiving spirit.*

The prime source is the new heart spoken of in Ezekiel, 36, 26. Thus the gaoler at Philippi, when he believes, shows at once evidence of a change of heart, taking the apostles and washing their stripes. The great theme of the New Testament after atonement is that of *heart culture* in Christ's followers—the gradual process of sanctification through the work of the Spirit. This is one of the gifts of the Spirit, comprehending, indeed, them all—the spirit of love. I John IV. 20.

There is a remarkable illustration of our lesson narrated in the Life of Dr. Geddie missionary to the New Hebrides. The missionary was conducting a communion service with his congregation of native converts. While engaged in the service he was struck by the conduct of a young man who arose from his seat in the front part of the church and took his place among those sitting in the rear.

After waiting there, for a time, he arose and resumed his former seat where he partook of communion. At the close of the service Dr. Geddie asked him the meaning of this strange proceeding. The young man answered that, on first sitting down, he found that, beside him, was the murderer of his father; and he himself was so filled with murderous hate that he could not remain where he was, but was compelled to take a seat at a distance from that of the murderer.

After praying for grace, however, the feeling

of hate passed away; and he was enabled calmly to take his seat near the man who had so deeply injured him, and to partake of the communion by his side.

W. Edgerton Young, the missionary to the North West, also tells us a similar tale regarding a christian chief who forgave the murderer of his son.

It is true that in tales of fiction, as for example. "God and the man," the attempt has been made to show that the feeling of forgiveness may spring from pity only; but the experience of actual life has shown that only *the love of Jesus* can change the heart.

This is the evidence of Christian experience; and theologians are recognizing that it is one of the strongest proofs of the truth of the Christian Faith.

This constitutes the charm of Church History. There, in page after page, we read what God has done in ennobling man and enabling him to conquer sin.

It has been said that Gibbon's History, though written by a sceptic, is one of the greatest monuments to the power of the Christian faith, showing as it does, the work of Christ in winning the heathen to the truth.

IV. *The forgiveness of God.*

This is the great message of Scripture—Forgiveness of our sins through Jesus Christ. This note struck in the opening pages of Genesis, is never lost till the last book of Revelation is closed.

It is taught in symbol, history, prophecy; and above all, in the life and death of Jesus Christ. It is taught in the feasts of the Jews, taught in the Psalms, taught in the glowing pages of Isaiah, taught by our Saviour in his sermons, taught by the Cross of Calvary, taught in the vision of Heaven itself where we are invited to see the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. No sweeter music can fall upon the ear of suffering humanity than that contained in the words. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

HOW TO TEACH THE LESSON.

First ask your class to narrate the parable in their own words, helping them, yourself, to fill in the picture. Speak to them of the infinite love of God pardoning sin; and press