

## LESSON VII.

## THE FORGIVING SPIRIT

August 12, 1900

Matt. 18: 21-35. Commit to memory vs. 21, 22. Read Matt. 18: 15-35.

21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred

**Revised Version.**—<sup>1</sup> Make a reckoning with; <sup>2</sup> Wherewith; <sup>3</sup> Released; <sup>4</sup> That servant; <sup>5</sup> Hold; <sup>6</sup> What; <sup>7</sup> So his fellow-servant fell down and besought; <sup>8</sup> On all; <sup>9</sup> Exceeding; <sup>10</sup> Called him unto him, and saith to him; <sup>11</sup> Besoughtest; <sup>12</sup> Mercy; <sup>13</sup> Shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

## EXPLANATION

*Revised Version*  
**Connection.**—In our last lesson Jesus dealt with the sin of "offending," or causing others to stumble. This led on naturally to the sins of others against us, and how they are to be dealt with. This, in its turn, suggested puzzled Peter's question.

**21. Then came Peter;** seeking more light on the question of forgiveness. **My brother;** his brother in Christ, or his brother Jew. The rule given applies to all men. **How oft?** The Rabbis had set rules for forgiving. They measured out religion as one might count bricks. **Until seven times.** The Rabbis said "three times," and Peter thinks seven a great stretch of generosity.

**22. Seventy times seven;** either 490 or seventy times and seven, as in margin of Rev. Ver. It means "always." There is no outward rule. Forgiveness springs from a merciful heart. It is never exhausted.

**23. Likened unto.** The parable illustrates a governing principle of the Kingdom of God. **Take account.** Oriental despots entrusted everything to favorites, and made a reckoning only on rare occasions.

**24, 25. One;** in very high position. **Ten thousand talents;** an enormous debt. A Hebrew silver talent was worth 12,000 *denarii* (the "pence" of v. 28), say \$2,000; the 10,000 talents, \$20,000,000, a quite possible debt for a very corrupt official with great opportunities for stealing; but an utterly hopeless debt. **To be sold, and his wife and children.** The rule, to this day, in Syria. **Wives and children** were mere chattels.

**26, 27. Worshipped him;** abject prostration before his lord and master. **Have**

patience: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, until he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 So, likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

**patience.** "Defer your anger and give me time." **Loosed;** released him. It was an exceedingly generous act, to which the King's compassion moved him.

**28. The same servant.** What a fine scorn here, in Jesus' words! One of his fellow servants; inferior officer of the same court, both dependent on the king. **An hundred pence.** The *denarius* ("penny") was worth about 17 cents, and was the ordinary daily wage of a laborer; so that this was a little over three months' wages, say \$17, less than a millionth part of his own debt.

**29, 30. Have patience;** the same request as he himself had made of the king. **He would not;** ungrateful churl that he was. **Cast him into prison;** the Turkish method to-day of dealing with debtors.

**31. His fellow servants . . . were sorry;** the only good feature in the story.

**32-34. Thou wicked servant.** Want of gratitude and want of heart are sins. **Shouldest not thou?** Perfectly fair reasoning. **Even as I had pity.** How vast the king's mercy had been. **Wroth;** and no wonder. **Delivered him to the tormentors.** Until very lately, in Turkey, no torment was spared with debtors, even to the pulling of teeth and the slitting of ears and noses.

**35. So, likewise.** God abhors mercilessness. **My heavenly Father.** Jesus makes Himself one with God in this abhorrence. **Do also unto you;** not in the details of the punishment, but following the principle of mercilessness to the merciless. The contrary is blessedly true. (Matt. 5: 7.) Read also Ex. 36: 5-7.