



LESSON VII.—AUGUST 12.

The Forgiving Spirit.

Matt. xviii., 21-35. Memory verses, 21, 22.
Read Matt. xviii., 15-35.

Daily Readings.

M. Not Perish. Matt. xviii., 1-14.
T. His Fault. Matt. xviii., 15-20.
W. I Forgive. Matt. xviii., 21-35.
T. The Law. Luke xvii., 1-10.
F. As Christ. Col. iii., 1-13.
S. The Gospel. Matt. vi., 1-15.

Golden Text.

'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.'—Matt. vi., 12.

Lesson Text.

(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 said 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 fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence; 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, till 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.

Suggestions.

God is love. He is slow to anger and of great mercy. God loves to forgive the penitent sinner.

When Peter asked the Lord Jesus how often he should forgive those who trespassed against him or offended him in any way, he thought that seven times would be quite often enough to forgive any one. Peter was not taking into account how often he himself offended and had to be forgiven. Our Lord answered that seven times would not be often enough; seventy times seven would be more necessary. Seventy multiplied by seven equals 490. But our Saviour did not mean that we should only forgive a person 490 times. He meant that we should forgive as often as we were offended or injured.

The Lord Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven was like a certain king who was making a reckoning with his servants, and he found that one of them owed him an immense sum of money, ten thousand talents, which would amount to about twenty million dollars of our money. This enormous debt the debtor was perfectly unable to pay, so the king commanded that he and everything that he had should be sold, to make money to pay the debt. In those days the law allowed a creditor to seize all the goods of a debtor, and even to sell the debtor himself and his household in order to pay the debt.

This cruel custom is still practiced in Syria and Palestine.

The debtor, when he heard that he was to be sold into slavery because he was unable to pay the twenty million dollars, fell down on his face before the king and cried for mercy. Have patience, he cried, and I will pay it all. Then the king in great compassion and pity for the poor man, who he knew could never pay the debt, freely forgave him the whole of it. How should that servant have felt as he went out from the king's presence a free man? Not merely let off for the time, but forgiven, free forever from the awful burden of that unpayable debt, the man should have been filled not only with intense gratitude toward the king who forgave him, but also with love and mercy and patience to all his fellow-beings, specially to those who might be in the same difficulties as he had been himself.

But this man's heart was all wrong. Very soon after he had been so generously forgiven his enormous debt, he met a fellow-servant who owed him a hundred pence, which according to our money would be about seventeen dollars, less than a month's part of the debt, which he had owed to the king. Seizing his debtor by the throat, the wicked servant demanded that the poor man should at once pay what he owed him. Then the fellow-servant fell down before his tormentor, and in the same words that the other had used before to the king, cried out for mercy. But the hard-hearted wretch had no mercy, and cast his poor debtor into prison. Indignant at such conduct, the other servants who had seen the unkindness of the forgiven man, went to the king and told him what had happened. The king sent for that man, and asked him what he meant by such bad conduct. O wicked servant, he said, I forgave you all that debt, should you not have forgiven your fellow-servant? Should you not have had mercy on him as I had on you? Then the king was very angry and declared that the wicked servant must be punished until he should pay all.

This parable is to show the necessity of forgiveness. God forgives us the enormous debt of sin, which every soul owes, but if our hearts are filled with hatred to others, if our souls cling to the sin of unforgiveness, God cannot cleanse away the sins we choose to keep; he cannot give peace to the uncleansed soul. We can only ask God to forgive us as we forgive those who offend us. Those who will not forgive others make it practically impossible for God to forgive them, because God cannot forgive a sin that is retained. If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matt. vi., 15.) Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. (Matt. v., 23, 24.) Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Jesus has paid our great debt of sin, but we can only receive forgiveness and peace by accepting his salvation, acknowledging his sacrifice, and giving up our lives in humble submission to him. The unforgiving soul is in a very dangerous place, for not only is it shutting God out of itself, but it is a stumbling block in the way of others. Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. God holds the handle of the sword of vengeance; if any man tries to wield it, he only can grasp the sharp two-edged blade which hurts himself far more than it can hurt any one else.

Questions.

How often should we forgive those who offend us?

Relate the parable of the unmerciful servant.

Who is the king to whom we owe a great debt?

What is the debt?

Can we ever pay it?

Who paid it for us? When?

How can we be forgiven this debt?

Does God wish us to forgive others?

What kind of persons are we if we do not forgive those who offend us?

How should we treat those who are unkind to us?

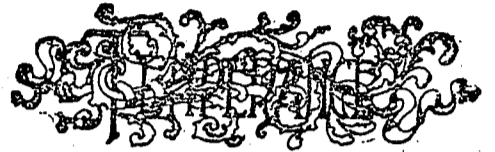
C. E. Topic.

Aug. 12.—Zeal. Luke xvi., 1-13.

Junior C. E. Topic.

IMITATING TWO SONS.

Mon., Aug. 6.—We make choices. I. Kings xviii., 21.
Tues., Aug. 7.—We must choose. Luke xvi., 12.
Wed., Aug. 8.—The right life is the best. Heb. xi., 25.
Thu., Aug. 9.—God is the first choice. Ruth i., 16.
Fri., Aug. 10.—By whom are you influenced? Matt. xxvii., 20, 21.
Sat., Aug. 11.—Sons and daughters of God. John i., 12.
Sun., Aug. 12.—Topic—Two sons; which are you imitating? Luke ii., 51; II. Sam. xviii., 24-33.



Alcohol Catechism.

(Dr. R. H. Macdonald, of San Francisco.)

CHAPTER XX.—(Continued.)

9. When was the first temperance society organized?

A.—In 1789, by 200 farmers, at Litchfield, Connecticut, who agreed not to use distilled liquors during harvest.

10. Q.—What was the fourth stage?

A.—That of total abstinence. The first society of that kind was formed in 1809 at Greenfield, N.H.

11. Q.—What was the fifth stage?

A. The no license agitation in 1831.

12. Q.—What follows in this fifth stage?

A.—The total abstinence work of Father Matthew, from 1842 to 1847, and the great Washingtonian movement, from 1840 to 1850.

13. Q.—What was the Washingtonian movement?

A.—It was started by a few men at Chase's Tavern, at Baltimore, and its object was to reform men by moral suasion.

14. Q.—What was the result?

A.—That thousands were reformed, but as the saloons were still allowed to keep open many went back to drink.*

15. Q.—What did this prove?

A.—That the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors must be stopped.

16. Q.—What stage comes next?

A.—The sixth or prohibition stage, and this brought the temperance question into politics.

17. Q.—What was the outgrowth of no license in different counties of several states?

A.—The prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquors except as medicine, or for use in the arts, in the State of Maine, in 1846, but the law was not made perfect until 1851.

'Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.'—Psa. xxxiii., 12.

* A Washingtonian, who sank into a drunkard's grave, said, pointing to a grog shop on the left, 'If I escape that hell, this hell,' pointing to another one on the right, 'yawns to receive me.'

The Story of Sandy Porte.

Sandy Porter was the last of eight children; his father had served a term in the state prison, and his mother was a broken-hearted invalid. It was reported that, when the seventh child lay dead in the house, the unnatural father, on finding his wife in tears, roughly rebuked her, saying, 'What are you bawling for? Anybody'd s'pose you had buried young uns enough to get used to it by this time.'

Poor little Sandy! it was a pity that he, too, had not died when he was a baby.

He was not a slum boy, as you may suppose. No, he lived in a small hamlet where the free air and sunshine were his, and he could roam at will over the green fields and through the forests.

He might have been a healthy, robust boy, instead of the dwarfed, pinched, muscleless little fellow that he was; but when he was