

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

THE DUTY OF FORGIVENESS*

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How oft . . . shall I forgive . . . ? v.21—The kind of water that comes from the cistern depends upon that which flows into it. If it is connected with a pure and whole-some fountain, the outflow from it will sparkle in the sunlight. If it is connected with a turbid and polluted source, it will prove offensive to the sight and taste of him who uses it. So the questions which a man asks, depend upon the springs that feed his heart. If these are purely natural, he will ask from the earthly standpoint, "Am I forever to receive blows, endure insults, submit to slander and never strike back? How long is my sword arm to be fettered by legal or moral restraints? Three times at most surely?" But if it is the Spirit of Christ that dwells in him, he will not want to resent an injury; but his prayer will be, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Owed . . . ten thousand talents, v. 24.—Over \$10,000,000! An impossible debt to discharge! Such is the bankrupt condition of every human soul towards God. The intellect owes Him truth, the will obedience, the heart love, the hand service, the tongue praise the ear attention, the eye singleness, and the whole body consecration. But all the members have rendered a mere pittance of what they owed; and sin has accumulated its obligation at the highest rates of compound interest. One offence begets another, as one wave circle on the surface of a pond originates others in swift succession, until the poor, debt-burdened sinner despairs of ever making his peace with God.

Payment to be made, v. 25. The "Virgin's Kiss" was a horrible invention used by the fathers of the Inquisition. "The victim was pushed forward to embrace the image, when, lo, its arms enclosed him in a deadly embrace, piercing his body with a hundred knives." Just such a deceitful image is sin. Fair and plausible to behold, apparently little to be feared, she beckons to the simple-minded and he approaches. But swift and terrible is the punishment. A hundred pangs of shame, fear and remorse pierce through him. Nor even then will she let him go, not until full payment is made, and her wages is death. Such is the just punishment of those who render service to Satan rather than to God and refuse to discharge the debt they owe their Creator.

Forgave him the debt, v. 27—A wicked man, when he came to die, was visited by a Christian, who spoke to him about faith and pardon. But the man despairingly replied, "I have been such a sinner, that I do not think God Almighty can forgive me." "Very well," replied his visitor, "then you think you can do something greater than God. If your sin is greater than His mercy, you must be greater than God." The unhappy man realized that if sin abounded, grace did much more abound. The greatness of the debt forgiven serves but to show the infinite greatness of the God who pardons.

Thou also . . . even as I . . . thee, v. 33.—A slave owner, who had maltreated a poor negro, overheard him pray: "O God, bless poor massa, show him mercy, that he may be merciful; make him holy, that he may be happy." The Christian slave had learned how God had compassion on his own sinful condi-

tion and had pardoned him, and he in his turn felt pity for the cruel and wretched darkness of heart in which his master lay. It is through such a spirit that we best serve our Saviour and do most to promote the interests of His kingdom, though perhaps it is the hardest task that we may have to learn.

The tormentors, v. 34—It is not needful to picture the future abode of the wicked as haunted by hideous demons. There are other forms of suffering than those which come from external surroundings, and among these not the least is the unveiled knowledge of one's own wickedness. The mirror punishment of ancient times was more terrible than many a leathsome dungeon or physical torture. The victim was placed in a room made of mirrors, which from every side reflected portions of his body. Every weakness and ailment confronted him whatever way he looked, and few could stand the terrible presentation for very long, without losing their reason. So to see one's inner life, to know one's heart, to be appalled at one's own corruption is the inevitable doom which the sinner who will not receive Christ's Spirit, brings upon himself.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

(By Rev. James Ross, D.D.)

Sold—The institution of slavery was an integral part of all ancient civilizations. Slaves were to the old world what machinery is to ours. In Egypt there were many of them, both domestic and foreign, and they sometimes rose to high official positions in the state. In all lands there were generally four sources of supply; those born in slavery; prisoners taken in war; those sold in childhood by their parents or themselves in cases of extreme poverty; and those sold by their creditors when they were unable to pay their debts. It is doubtful if this was permitted by the terms of the Jewish law, but it was the custom of the nations around them, and many allusions in the Old Testament show that it was not uncommon in Israel. It was the law in Athens up to the time of Solon. In Rome, in the 4th century B.C., the unusual prevalence of usury consequent on hard times, led to so many being sold into slavery, that a section of the people revolted. In the third century B.C., the right of a creditor to enslave his insolvent debtor was abolished by law, but this law was evaded in various ways and the custom continued long afterwards.

CHRISTIAN ARITHMETIC.

Someone has compiled the following rules for Christian arithmetic from God's word. The best part of these rules is that we can begin with them when very young and will never grow too old for them:

Notation—"I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts."

Numeration—"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Addition—"Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity."

Subtraction—"Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

Multiplication—"Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied."

Division—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

THE STORY OF THE FACE.

We often fail to thoroughly realize how the face is an index of character. Children recognize instinctively whom they can trust.

The life we live writes its history on the features. Purity or sensuality, intelligence or ignorance, kindness or cynicism, trace their record in broad characters which everyone can read. The artist or the criminologist can read more of the details of the story which lines furrow tell, but all the world can understand the face which bears the seal of virtue or of vice, of Christlikeness or of brutality and sin.

An exchange tells of an infidel Swiss artist who was converted to Christ merely by studying the faces of a very humble band of Christians. He was commissioned to make a caricature of a Salvation Army meeting in Sheffield, England.

He went there on the errand, and scanned the faces of the people. With his heart, like the troubled sea that could not find rest, tossed and driven by tempests of passion and tormented by a conscience burdened by sin, he looked on the assembled worshippers, and he saw peace written on their faces, and an inward joy beaming from their countenances. The sight convinced him of his sinfulness. He saw that those people had what he had not, and what he needed; and their faces were the means of leading him to Christ and the peace which Christ alone can give.

The face of the Christian may not shine as that of Moses did when he came from Sinai, but Christ's seal is set upon it, and, in proportion as he lives Christ, it reflects the purity and love and peace of the Lord, and is a help and inspiration to weaker souls.—Unknown.

HOLY TO THE LORD.

It was once the custom in England, as it still is to some extent in Switzerland and Germany to place over the door of the dwelling a text or a motto, telling to the passer-by the faith and the hope of the dwellers within. At Temple New-some, in Yorkshire, there still exists a specimen of this public profession of faith. A battlement around the lofty roof is composed of capital letters, each more than two feet long, standing in full relief against the sky. Walking round the walls to decipher this profession of moral and religious duty, which has stood so many centuries, reminding the noble proprietors of that holy religion in which their fathers lived and died, one reads: "All glory and praise be given to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost on high. Peace on earth; God will reward His Gracious King. Loving affections among his subjects. Health and plenty within this house."—Watchman.

THE FATHER'S DUTY.

The father is the priest in the household. A man can never be what he ought to be till he is a Christian? Your boy is going to do just what you do, and in the way you do it. It appals me. If my boy is going to speak as I speak, to live as I live, then may God help me to live as a Christian. And so you will have to be a man of prayer. And, then such a man has got to be a Bible student. I am going to say something you may say is impossible. It is not impossible. Every home must have its family altar. You may say you are too busy. Then you ought not to be too busy. You say you must run to business. You could take five minutes.—Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman.

*8.8. Lesson, July 8, 1906, Matthew 18: 21-35. Commit to memory, Luke 17: 1-6. Golden Text—Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.—Matthew 6:12.