

self-sacrifice, so vehement in anger, so impetuous in vengeance—fond, rash woman! pitied and beloved of Him who said, "Oh, woman! great is thy faith"—how often the part of victim is the only part assigned to thee on God's misused earth!

Surely if human laws are made to punish, they should also be made to protect. If justice condemns the strong, it should shield the weak. Surely our Christian nation should have a conscience at least as sensitive as that of the disciples of Mohammed or Confucius, who proclaim this truth, "No government should enrich itself by tempting and corrupting its subjects."

[THE END.]

**WIFELY LOVE**

Mrs. Harriett Beecher Stowe says that many women suppose that they love their husbands, when, unfortunately, they have not the beginning of an idea what love is. Let me explain it to you, my dear lady. Loving to be admired by a man, loving to be petted by him, loving to be caressed by him, and loving to be praised by him, is not loving a man. All these may be when a woman has no power of loving at all—they may all be simply because she loves herself, and loves to be flattered, praised, caressed, coaxed—a cat likes to be coaxed and stroked, and fed with cream, and have a warm corner. But all this is not love. It may exist, to be sure, where there is love; it generally does. But it may also exist where there is no love. Love, my dear ladies, is self-sacrifice; it is a life out of self and in another. Its very essence is the preferring of the comfort, the ease, the wishes of another to one's own for the love we bear them. Love is giving and not receiving. Love is not a sheet of blotting paper or a sponge, sucking in everything to itself; it is an out-springing fountain, giving from itself. Love's motto has been dropped in this world as a chance gem of great price by the loveliest, the fairest, the purest, the strongest of lovers that ever trod this mortal earth, of whom it is recorded that He said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Now, in love, there are ten receivers to one giver. There are ten persons in this world who like to be loved and love, where there is one who knows how to love.—*Exchange.*

**"HERE I AM."**

A lawyer had a cage hanging on the wall in his office in which was a starling. He had taught the little fellow to answer when he called it. A boy named Charlie came in one morning. The lawyer left the boy there while he went out for a few minutes. When he returned, the bird was gone. He asked, "Where is my bird?" Charlie replied that he did not know anything about it. "But," said the gentleman, "Charlie, that bird was in the cage when I went out. Now tell me all about it; where is it?" Charlie declared that he knew nothing about it; that the cage-door was open, and he guessed the bird had flown out. The lawyer called out, "Starling, where are you?" The bird spoke right out of the boy's pocket, "Here I am!" Ah, what a fix that boy was in! He had stolen the bird, had hid it, as he supposed, in a safe place, and had told two lies to conceal his guilt. It was testimony that all the world would believe. The boy had nothing to say. The bird was a living witness that he was a thief and a liar.

We have not all of us a starling, but we have a conscience—not in our pocket, but in a more secure place—in our soul; and that tells the story of our guilt or our innocence. As the bird answered when the lawyer called it, so when God speaks our conscience will reply, and give such testimony as we cannot deny.

**INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSON.**

Sunday, May 22.

Parables on Prayer.—Luko xviii. 1-14.

**GOLDEN TEXT,** Luko xi. 9.—Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Commit 11-14.

**INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION.**

Between our last lesson and this, occurred, probably, our Lord's journey to Bethany and the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John xi. 1-44; after which, owing to the hostility of the Jews, He journeyed to Ephraim, a place some sixteen miles to the N.W. of Jerusalem (John xi. 45-54.) Thence, after a time, He set forth on His last tour through Judea and Galilee, with Jerusalem as His ultimate goal. On this tour, the incidents recorded in ch. xviii 1-37, probably transpired, and also the teaching which constitutes our present lesson.

**LESSON NOTES.**

(1.) *And He spake a parable to them to this end*—in order to show that—*men ought always to pray*—not necessarily be always in the attitude of prayer, but be always in the spirit of prayer;—*and not to faint*,—that is, be discouraged, as though God either failed to hear, or, hearing, was indifferent; but, having brought their requests to Him, they should both wait for, and expect an answer.

(2-4.) *A judge which feared not God nor regarded men*, a godless, wicked man, alike regardless of his duty to God, the Supreme Judge, and to men over the disposal of whose affairs he had been set.

Such a character is chosen by the Lord on account of his utter unlikeness to God; and in order to make the teaching of the parable the more forcible and impressive.

*A widow*—one who had neither wealth nor influence to commend her, to the judge's consideration, and for whom he had not the slightest regard. *Avenge me of mine adversary*,—in other words,—consider my case, and grant me justice. I am helpless of myself to secure justice, therefore I appeal to you. *He would not for a while*. This man feared not God, so he had no terror of retribution for his misuse of power; he regarded not man, so in his stony bosom there was no pity or sympathy. What help, then, could she expect to meet from him! None unless through wearing him out with her importunity.

(5.) *But afterwards he saith within himself—because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me*. He had absolutely no motive for helping the petitioner but one that grew out of his selfishness—the desire not to be troubled. What a contrast to our God, who can have no motive for helping us but that which results from *unselfness*—the simple aim to benefit and bless!

(6-8.) *Hear what the unjust judge saith*, that is, consider it carefully; and contrast this person, and the motive of his action, with *God and His motives*. The one is a godless sinner, the other the holy and righteous God; the one utterly selfish, the other absolutely unselfish; the one regardless of men, the other full of the tenderest compassion;—the one a judge, cold, selfish, unsympathizing, the other a Father yearning with overflowing tenderness over His afflicted children. Now—and here is the special point of the parable—if such as this judge could be brought to compliance by the persistent urgency of the petitioner, *how much more will God the holy, the just, the pitiful, the tender, be moved to grant the petition of His elect* (chosen, redeemed ones) *which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them*,—that is, wait long, before sending the answer. For reasons we cannot comprehend, God often delays to send the answer to prayer, but Christ Himself says—and we should believe Him;—

(8.) *I tell you he will avenge them* (do justice for them) *speedily* (Heb. x. 37), sooner, perhaps, than they expected, or even hoped. *Shall He find faith, &c.*—that is, will there, after all, be any such strong prevailing faith in God, as His faithfulness and constancy to His promises give Him the right to expect from His own people?

(9.) *And He spake this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others*—a numerous class in our Lord's day, and a no less numerous one in our own, were the thoughts of their hearts as fully exposed as those of this Pharisee.

(10.) Two men went up into the temple to pray—the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican—a tax-gatherer.

(11,12.) *Stood and prayed thus with himself*. This man's thoughts were of, and towards himself;—they contain the essence of self-worship; hence, must have been abhorrent to God. *I thank thee that I am not as other men, &c, &c, &c; or even as this publican*. So much by way of self-gratulation before God;—so much by way of contrast with other men, in which the supposed advantage is always on his own side.

(12.) *I fast, &c, &c.*—so much by way of reminding God of his meritorious deeds; as though had they been really meritorious, God could or would have been unmindful of them.

(13.) *Standing*. In v. 11, the idea is of one assuming an attitude; here, it is of one occupying a place. *Afar off*—in some obscure or inconspicuous part of the temple. *Would not lift up his eyes to heaven*,—esteeming himself utterly unworthy. *Smote upon his breast*,—an act indicative of sorrow and self-reproach. *God be merciful to me a sinner*—words implying a profound sense of ill-desert and of God's unquestionable right to cast him off forever.

(14.) *I tell you*—the same language as v. 8,—a bold and emphatic assertion. *Justified rather than the other*,—that is, accounted just by God. He who justified himself was in God's sight condemned;—he who condemned himself was in God's sight justified: *for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased* (brought low); *and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted* (lifted up).

**SUGGESTED THOUGHTS.**

The answer to the prayer of faith, though long delayed, will come. Impertinently, when seeking any thing not opposed to God's will, is not offensive to Him; but, on the contrary, is well-pleasing, as a proof of the value we attach to the thing we ask for.

He who prays in faith not only expects but waits for the answer. He trusts in God's faithfulness to His promises, and, in so doing honors God.

The Pharisee's prayer is a proof that we may, while *professionally* worshipping God, be *really* worshipping ourselves;—an impious and flagrant violation of the first commandment.

The Publican's prayer shows that the lower we sink in our own sight, the higher we stand in God's, that the more we abhor ourselves, the more He esteems us.

**QUESTION SUMMARY.**

(For the Children.)

(1.) Why (to what end) did Jesus speak this parable? What is meant by *to pray always*?—by *not to faint*? See note. (3-5) Give this parable in your own words. What did the widow mean by *avenge*? See note. Did the judge obtain justice for her at once? Did he at last? Why did he? What was his motive for helping her? See note. (6-8) What is meant by *hear, &c.*? Pay attention, think about it. Now, which do you think would be more likely to hear a person's prayer, a wicked unjust judge, or our kind, loving Heavenly Father? Why did the judge answer her prayer? Why does God answer our prayer? See note. Should we not go to Him very confidently then? Repeat the golden text. (9.) To whom was this parable spoken? Are there very many such people? (10-13.) Who went up to the temple to pray? What is a Pharisee?—A publican? What did the Pharisee say in his prayer? Was he worshipping and praising God, do you think? Whom, then? If he was worshipping and praising himself, what commandment did he break? What sin did he add to that? The sin of insulting God. What did the publican do and say?

With which of the two was God better pleased? What is meant by *justified*? Accounted just, or acceptable. What does God do for those who *exalt themselves*? What, for those who *humble themselves*. Which are you doing from day to day?

**THE HONOR DUE TO WEAKNESSES.**

Peter's exhortation to husbands, so to dwell with their wives as to render honor to them, "as the weaker vessel," (1 Pet. iii. 7), seems to me the most nobly chivalrous utterance which I ever heard or

read. All that historic chivalry has worthily aimed at would find its consummation in such recognition of the honor that is due to weakness.

What kind of weakness is that to which it is possible for right manly strength to give honor? Surely it is not any sort of weakness that is akin to worthlessness. The weakness of frivolity or of silliness cannot be honored. It may be our duty to bear with it, but I do not see how we can honor it. Perhaps it will help us if we notice a little more particularly the figurative form in which Peter gives us his thought, "the weaker vessel." By a vessel we mean "a utensil proper for holding something." "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor and some to dishonor." (2 Tim. ii. 20.) Now, among the many vessels in a great house, which are they that are treated with the most honor, touched the most gently, handled the most carefully?

These questions make you think of your glass and your porcelain. They make you think of vessels on your table through which the daylight shines freely, making them glitter like jewels. They make you think of costly vases which you commission to hold the choicest Summer flowers, or vials which imprison and keep for you the most delicious perfumes. Of all the vessels in your house, these upon which you bestow the most abundant honor are the same which could be most easily broken—which can least bear hard pressure or rough usage. Their weakness comes of their fineness, and their fineness makes them worth all the care which their weakness needs. Such weakness can be honored. Such weakness is honored. So is it that every true man honors his wife. So is it that every true man honors every true woman. And this is Christian chivalry, the consummate flower of Christian civilization.

But I do not think that we have yet reached the utmost meaning of Peter's beautiful exhortation. There has been a disposition in men to use that figure of speech as if it represented their wives to be their vessels choice and goodly vessels indeed, "vessels unto honor," to adorn and beautify their homes, as well as to furnish forth the highest and noblest utilities, but *theirs*, they being the owners. A careful study of Peter's figurative expression shows that he rather conceives of both the husband and wife as vessels, the wife the finer and therefore the weaker or more fragile of the two. His phrase would be more exactly rendered, "giving honor unto the feminine vessel as the weaker." The Christian man and woman dwelling together in happy and holy union, "as heirs together of the grace of life," are to conceive of themselves as a pair of vessels "sanctified for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. ii. 21.) And Peter bids us reverently recognize the natural difference between these two vessels. The coarser, harder, stronger, should accept the rougher and harder uses, and the finer and frailer should be honored with the gentler and finer and sweeter uses.

Can human thought carry the refinement of genuine courtesy higher than these inspired writers have carried it? Can womanhood make a greater mistake than to exchange this honor accorded to its weakness for all that can be won in a strenuous and bold assertion of equality in powers and prerogatives?—*Rev. Henry A. Nelson, in N. Y. Evangelist.*

Seldom can the heart be lonely,  
If it seek a lonelier still.  
Self-forgetting, seeking only  
Emptier cups of love to fill.

—F. R. Havergal

If thou wouldst find much favor and peace with God and man, be very low in thine own eyes. Forgive thyself little, and others much.—*Lichten.*