

Lesson II.

THE DUTY OF FORGIVENESS

July 8, 1906

Matthew 18 : 21-35. Commit to memory vs. 21, 22. Read Matthew 18 : 15-20 ; Luke 17 : 1-5.

GOLDEN TEXT—Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.—Matthew 6 : 12.

21 Then came Pe'ter ¹ to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him ? till seven times ?

22 Je'sus 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 ² 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 ³ 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 ⁴ was moved with compassion, ⁵ and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But ⁷ the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hun-

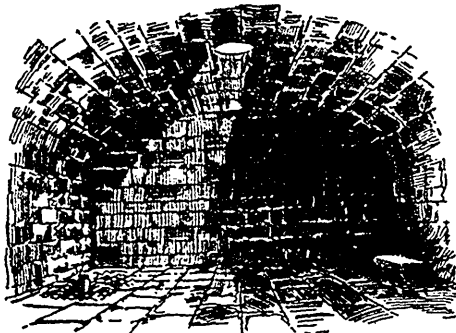
Revised Version—¹ and said to him ; ² make a reckoning with ; ³ wherewith to pay ; ⁴ And the lord ; ⁵ being ; ⁶ released ; ⁷ that servant ; ⁸ laid hold ; ⁹ what thou owest ; ¹⁰ So ; ¹¹ Omit at his feet ; ¹² Omit all ; ¹³ that which was due ; ¹⁴ exceeding ; ¹⁵ called him unto him, and saith to him ; ¹⁶ besoughtest ; ¹⁷ mercy ; ¹⁸ Omit unto him ; ¹⁹ shall also my heavenly Father do unto you ; ²⁰ Put "from your hearts" after "brother" ; ²¹ Omit their trespasses.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Time and Place—As in last Lesson, autumn, A.D. 29 ; Capernaum.

Connection—The Lesson is from the same conversation of Jesus with His disciples as last Lesson. In vs. 15-18 He tells them how to deal with those who have injured them, with some precious words about prayer and worship, vs. 19, 20.

I. THE FORGIVING KING.—21, 22. Then came Peter ; pressing forward among the disciples



The Mamertine Prison at Rome: showing a dungeon within a dungeon

while Jesus was speaking. Lord, how oft, etc.? The headlong Peter had likely frequently offended the rest of the Twelve, and been in turn offended at them. Till seven times ? The rabbis (Jewish teachers) said three times ; Jesus . . . seventy times seven : that is, times without number.

23-25 Kingdom of heaven likened, etc. Jesus teaches by a parable the spirit of heaven's King, and the spirit of His true subjects. A certain king ;

dred pence : and he ⁸ laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay ⁹ me that thou owest.

29 ¹⁰ And his fellowservant fell down ¹¹ at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee ¹² all.

30 And he would not ; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay ¹³ the debt.

31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were ¹⁴ very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, ¹⁵ after that he had cried him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou ¹⁶ desiredst me :

33 Shouldst not thou also have had ¹⁷ compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had ¹⁸ pity on thee ?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due ¹⁹ unto him.

35 So ²⁰ likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye ²¹ from your hearts forgive not every one his brother ²² their trespasses.

a great and wealthy monarch, as the sequel shows. Take account of his servants ("slaves") ; officers in various parts of his dominions, who collected taxes for their royal master. One was brought ; probably an officer of high rank, like a governor of a province. Owed him ten thousand talents ; about \$10,000,000, an immense sum. Had not to pay. Having wasted in extravagance the money that belonged to the king, he was a hopeless bankrupt. Commanded him to be sold ; as creditors in ancient times had power to do. It is so in Syria to-day. Wife, and children, etc. These were looked upon as simply property, which might also be sold by the creditor.

26, 27. Fell down . . . worshipped ; prostrating himself in token of humility. Lord, have patience. The debtor pleads for time. Pay thee all ; easy to promise, not so easy to do. Lord . . . moved with compassion . . . loosed . . . forgave. Three benefits the debtor received—release from imprisonment, the canceling of his debt, and probably continuance in office, all out of the king's great pity.

II. THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT.—28-30. The same servant ; the very one who had received so great kindness. Went out ; from the king's presence. Found one of his fellowservants. The great officer and the humble servant were alike slaves of the king. An hundred pence ; worth about \$100 of our money, a trifle compared with his own debt. Laid hands on him. No sign of humility now, but instead, a haughty and arrogant spirit. Took him by the throat ; choking him after the brutal manner allowed by ancient custom, and even by Roman law. Have patience, etc. ; the very words the other debtor had uttered. He would not ; so untouched was his hard heart by the king's mercy. Cast him into prison ; a horrible