

277. How a Christian Should Heartily Forgive Those who Offend Him.

Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. *Luke 6, 37.*

What is to be done when a Christian has been wronged by another? The children of this world have a general rule in such cases, which is, "Go for him, hit him back, get even with him, make him suffer for it!" Shall Christians do the same thing? Shall they take revenge upon their fellow-Christians when they have been wronged? No; Jesus says, Forgive. "Forgive ye every one his brother their trespasses." "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." But if you do not forgive, you are a wicked servant, a Christian in name only, but not in reality. This is what Jesus means to impress on our minds by the parable of the wicked servant. Matt. 18, 23-35. That servant found one of his fellow-servants who owed him a paltry sum, only a trifle compared with the overwhelming debt which he had owed to his lord; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, "Pay me that thou owest!"

Is not this our own picture? The wrongs done to us by others are sins, it is true, debts; and those who have sinned against us must answer to God for it. But how small, how insignificant, is that debt compared with the great debt which God, in His boundless grace, forgave us! Why, then, make a great ado about those wrongs done to you? Is it not pride and selfishness that lie at the bottom of it? When an offense is committed against God or against others, most men are not much wrought up about it; but when the offense is directed against their own person, they act as if it were the greatest crime. And what violence and cruelty do men often resort to when a wrong has been committed against their persons! The wicked servant takes his fellow-servant by the throat and ill-treats him for a few paltry coppers! You say, you are not doing that when you refuse to forgive those who have trespassed against you? Not to forgive means that your fellow-servant's sins are to remain, that his debt is to stand, and that he is to suffer the consequences; and what else is that than to take him by the throat and to cast him into prison and not to be concerned about him even if he should be eternally lost?

Let us therefore not attempt to belittle the wickedness of a harsh, hard, unforgiving heart.

Prayer.

I humbly entreat Thee, O Lord, to take out of my flesh the heart of stone and to give me a heart of flesh, a heart of love and reconciliation. Make of me a person who loves his enemy, blesses those who curse him, does good to those who hate him, and prays for those who despitely use him and persecute him. Oh, let me ever be mindful of Judgment Day and of the strict account I must render that I may abandon the enmity and agree with mine adversary and not let the sun go down upon my wrath. Amen.

Naught, naught, dear Lord, could move Thee
To leave Thy rightful place
Save love, for which I love Thee;
A love that could embrace
A world where sorrow dwelleth,
Which sin and suffering fill,
More than the tongue e'er telleth; –
Yet Thou couldst love it still!

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries.

You may contact Rev. Ley at: pastorley@leychalet.com.

You are invited to go to www.scholia.net for the other devotions from *Daily Bread*.