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INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Second Quarter—Lesson IV Apr 24 '98

A LESSON ON FORGIVENESS.

NESS.—Matthew 18 21-35.

Read Chapter 18.

Commit Verses 21, 22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Forgive, and ye
shall be forgiven.—LUKE 6: 37.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—Autumn of A. D. 29.
After the Feast of Tabernacles
which that year occurred October
11.—Andrews. Others place it
just before that feast.

Place.—Capernaum, near the Sea
of Galilee.

Jesus nearly 33 years old, five
months before his crucifixion.

THE LAW OF FORGIVENESS FOR
PERSONAL OFFENCES.—Vs. 21, 22.

Then came Peter to him. Jesus had
referred to offenses which led others
to sin, and had been teaching the
disciples what to do when others
trespassed against them. The duty
seemed to Peter one difficult to
perform. Hence he asked, *How*

*oft shall my brother sin against me,
and I forgive him? If forgiving
failed to cure him of his sin, how
long should he continue to apply
the remedy that failed till seven
times? Is seven times sufficient?*

To do that seemed a great stretch
of virtue. *I say not unto thee, Un-
til seven times; but, Until seventy
times seven.* A symbolical expres-
sion for never-ending forgiveness.

Love is not to be limited by the
multiplication table.

THE PRINCIPLE ENFORCED BY A
PARABLE IN THREE SCENES.—Vs.

23-24. Therefore, etc. In order
that thereby we may learn the duty
of forgiveness. A certain king, a
human king. Which would take ac-
count of. Better, as R. V., make a
reckoning with his servants, his
officers, as governors, or nobles.

The picture is drawn from an
Oriental court. The officials are
summoned before a despotic sover-
eign to give an account of their ad-
ministration. One was brought un-
to him, which owed him ten thou-
sands talents. A talent was a weight,
not a coin. Hence a talent of gold
would be worth about sixteen times
as much as a talent of silver. A
Hebrew silver talent was worth
3,000 shekels or 12,000 denarii (the
pence of V. 28). The 10,000 talents
would, therefore, be worth \$19,000,
000 or \$20,000,000, a sum impos-
sible to pay. A Greek talent would
be about half as much. As he had
not to pay. Having wasted his
money in luxurious living *His*

Lord commanded him to be sold, etc.
It is still common in Oriental coun-
tries to inflict all this upon a man
of the highest station. In Palestine
at the present day, creditors show
little or no mercy. *Worshipped him.*
Did him reverence by prostrating
himself. *Loosed him* (released him),
and forgave him the debt. There was
no other way of deliverance.

THE KING represents God.

THE SERVANTS are all to whom
God has committed great blessings
and opportunities and high trusts,
—as the gospel, the knowledge of
Jesus, a sense of duty, the Holy
Spirit, talents, influence, every-
thing by which they can serve God,
help men, and grow into holy
character.

THE RECKONING is not merely
the last judgment, but every time
when God brings to man's heart a
consciousness of his sin.

THE DEBT OF SIN. We cannot
pay the debt. No bitter tears of
repentance, no acts of righteous-
ness, can take away the sin.

THE DIVINE FORGIVENESS. All
this debt of sin God freely forgives
for the sake of Jesus, his Son. He
forgives in such a way as to take
away both the sin and the penalty
of sin. The forgiven sinner is re-
ceived back into the family of God.
Forgiveness does not remove the
fact that we have sinned, but does
remove the curse of sin. *The same
servant went out.* From his king's
presence. And found one of his
fellow servants. An inferior officer.

Owed him a hundred pence. A
hundred pence was worth \$16 or
\$17 about one millionth part of
the debt the unmerciful servant
had owed the king. *Took him by
the throat.* Or more literally, went
to choking him. The Roman law
allowed a creditor to seize a debtor
and drag him before the judge.

*Fell down at his feet....I will pay
thee all.* The very act and words
which he himself had so lately
uttered. And this fellow servant
could pay in time, for it was only
about three months' wages that he
owed. And he would not: but,
went (went away) and cast him into
prison. The man, who is most sin-
ful toward God is apt to be the
hardest in dealing with those who
sin against himself. *His fellow
servants.* The other servants felt
great pity for the unfortunate man,
and told unto their Lord, who had
been so compassionate toward the
first debtor. *O thou wicked servant,*
etc. His heart must have been
very hard and cruel. The mercy
of his king could not soften it.

And his Lord was wroth. Angry,
indignant, at such misconduct.
Delivered him to the tormentors. Not
simply "jailers," but those who
(among the ancient Romans) sought
by legal tortures to find out whether
the debtor had any concealed hoard.
*So likewise, shall my heavenly Father
do also unto you, if ye from your
hearts.* Not merely in form and in
words, but with true forgiveness.
All that was due. The Lord really
forgave the great sinner his debts,
but he did not receive the forgive-
ness; he did not accept of the re-
lease. The debt of sin differs from
a debt of money, in that the money
account can be blotted out whether
the debtor wills it or not; but the
debt of sin cannot be paid, and
necessarily hold against the sinner,
till he repents and accepts the for-
giveness by hating sin and loving
the good.

APPLICATIONS ETC.

THE NEED of the law of forgive-
ness. Many occasions arise when
it is both necessary and difficult to
practise this precept. There are
wrongs against us, consciously and
unconsciously committed; evil words
spoken, bad motives attributed. It
often takes many times as much
courage to forgive as it does to re-
taliate.

The aim of forgiveness is the de-
liverance of ourselves and others
from sin. The forgiving spirit does
this (1) by keeping evil from our
own hearts (revenge, hate, anger),
and giving us the victory over our-
selves; (2) by influencing others to
repent and forsake their sin. Hate
inflames hate, but love kindles love.

We learn from God's forgiveness,
how we also should forgive.

Always, under all circumstances,
we are to feel and to show a for-
giving spirit, with a sincere pity
and love.

Always, under all circumstances,
we can do good to our enemies,
seeking to overcome evil with good.

Forgiving others is the test of
our fitness to receive forgiveness
from God.

Personal Talks with Scholars

The teacher's work does not end
when the lesson closes and the class
scatters; he is a pastor, with the
care of souls, and must seek in
every way to bring them into the
fold of Christ. Class-teaching may
be earnest and faithful, and the
divine word may be so presented as
to produce deep convictions and a
strong desire to be saved and to
confess Christ; yet there is need, in
most cases at least, of private con-
versation besides to guide the trem-
bling penitent to the cross, and to
impart to the timid soul the cour-
age necessary for a public confession.

Many sincere seekers after Christ
walk along in darkness and perplex-
ity for want of only a few wise
words to bring them out into the
full light. Many who have truly
given themselves to Christ and are
faithfully following him in secret,
do not for a long time make a pub-
lic confession, and simply because
no one speaks to them the word of
encouragement which they need to
enable them to take this decisive
step.

But while this personal work is
so important, it is also one of very
great delicacy and responsibility,
and requires much wisdom. It is
not enough, each time a communion
is approaching, to urge a scholar to
unite with the church. There is
too much of this sort of perfunctory
and mechanical talk in many classes,
which results too, often in church
membership without conversion.

The true aim in teaching is not to
get scholars to join the church, but
to lead them to Christ and to attach
them to him by saving faith.

No rules can be prescribed for
this part of the teacher's work. In
deed, it should never be done by
rule at all, or from a sense of duty,
but always from love. No teacher
is ever qualified for such words un-
less his heart is burdened with a
desire for his scholar's salvation.

Perfunctory appeals will accomplish
nothing. It is loving and gentle
guidance that the young need. This
the teacher can best give by being
the close and intimate friend of his
scholars, by meeting them frequent-
ly outside of the school, by keeping
up a constant familiarity with their
life and thought, by conversing
with them whenever opportunity
offers, thus knowing their state of
mind at all times with regard to
religious things, and being ready at
any point to speak the word in sea-
son. If a certain lesson appears to
make a deep impression on a par-
ticular scholar, the watchful teacher
will take the earliest opportunity, in
a few quiet words in private, to
deepen the impression. This must
be done very cautiously, for reli-
gious feelings are very sensitive.

Often a single warm, earnest
word, spoken as the teacher takes
the scholar's hand at parting, will
do more to deepen feeling, to start
serious thought, or to fix god re-
solving than an hour of pleading and
urging would do at another time.
Often direct influence is better than
purposed effort.

But the teacher who is truly in-
terested in the salvation of his
scholars will find ways of reaching
them; for, after all, it is a heart of
love that is the best qualification
for winning souls. Christ loved
sinners into loving him. He entered
into sympathy with them; he was
moved with compassion for them;
he went down to them where they
lay in their sins, and by the
strength of his affection for them
drew them up toward his own bless-
ed purity, as the sun lifts the soiled
water from the gutters and leaves
it on the mountain tops in flakes
of snow as white as its own radiant
beams.

The great secret for the teacher
is love—love for Christ and love for
souls; for souls must be won, and
only love can win.—Westminster
Teacher.

A Suggestion.

The following suggestive incident,
illustrating the great importance of
a Sunday-school teacher bringing
himself in close personal touch with
his scholars, is related by The Ex-
aminer:

"The teacher of a Bible-class of
adults, a man of great intelligence
and of high social position, observed
a gradual falling away of attend-
ance and a lessening of interest.
He inquired of a candid friend if
he could suggest the reason. The
latter replied, 'They have an idea
that you don't care anything about
them personally, that you just come
here to teach the lesson because you
think it your duty.' The teacher
at once adopted a different course.
He made it a point to shake hands
with each member of the class, both
coming and going. He addressed
them by name. He asked after
their health and that of their fami-
lies, and did all in his power to
establish a personal interest be-
tween himself and them. Nor was
all this a form merely. The out-
ward acted on the inward, and he
felt a new and real concern in
their welfare. The effect was soon
apparent. The attendance was en-
larged. The scholars valued the
instructions more highly, for man
hears with the heart, and every
session was prized as a privilege
that must not be lost.

Spare the Children's Feet.

A ragged woman was crossing the
corner of a public park in London,
where the children of the poor are
accustomed to play, many of them
barefoot. Half way across she stop-
ped and picked up something which
she hid in her apron. In an in-
stant a policeman was by her side.
With gruff voice and threatening
manner he demanded:

"What are you carrying off in
your apron? The woman seemed
embarrassed and refused to answer.
Thereupon the officer of the law
thinking that she had doubtless
picked up a pocket book, which she
was trying to make way with, threat-
ened to arrest her unless she told
him at once what she had in her
apron.

At this the woman reluctantly
unfolded her apron and disclosed
a handful of broken glass. In
stupid wonderment the policeman
asked:

"What do you want with that stuff?"
A flush passed over the woman's
face, then she answered simply:

"If you please, sir, I just thought
I'd like to take it out of the way of
the children's feet."—[Presbyterian.

Never Set a Dangerous Example.

Once I saw a flock of boys and
girls trying to walk on the narrow
top of the fence railing that ran
along a causeway. The water was
white and foamy below, and the
rocks looked dark and dangerous.
One big boy "stumped" another to
walk the railing.

"You don't dare!" he cried mock-
ingly.

The other boy sprang up in an
instant. But the next minute down
he came. Close behind him was
his little sister. She was going to
"dare" too.

"No, I'll not do it!" he cried,
taking her in his arms. "I could,
but she might fall!"—The Pilgrim
Teacher.

PRIMARY CLASS.—A teacher in
The Sunday-school Herald suggests
what can be done for a primary
class which is compelled to use the
same room with the main depart-
ment as follows:

"Gather the class behind all the
others in a corner, and enclose that
corner with screens.

"The enclosing screens may be
very plain. Two ordinary large
clothes covered with dark calico,
will answer ever purpose. A row
of nails along the top will hang the
picture roll, etc. A piece of flexible
blackboard cloth, hemmed at bot-
tom and top, and stiffened by two
sticks, may be attached to the
screen by rings or cords at top and
bottom. It will not be perfectly

steady, but it is a great deal better
than no board. Of course, there
can be no singing, but a great many
of the simpler motion exercises can
be quietly done. Each child can be
taught to speak gently, just as the
skilful leader of a chorus can com-
mand a pianissimo passage."

He who waits to do a great deal
of good at once, will never do any.
—Johnson.

Contact with the good never fails
to impart good, and we carry away
with us some of the blessing, as
travellers' garments retain some of
the odor of the flowers through
which they have passed.—Smiles.

Years ago Edward Eggleston
said: "Personal sympathy is nine-
tenths of success in Sunday-school
teaching; it is that without which
all the rest is nothing." Interest
in Bible study as a rule comes as a
result of somebody else's personal
interest. The teacher must project
himself into the lives of his scholars.
Scholars like their teachers first—
the Bible afterwards. And sym-
pathy, born of love, draws.

No good deed, no genuine sacri-
fice, is ever wasted. If there be
good in it, God will use it for his
own holy purposes; and whatever
of ignorance, or weakness, or mis-
take was mingled with it will drop
away, as the withered petals drop
away when the full flower has
blown.—Frederic W. Farrar.

Mr. Thomas Ballard, Syracuse, N.
Y., writes: "I have been afflicted for
nearly a year with that most to be
dreaded disease dyspepsia, and at
times worn out with pain and want of
sleep, and after trying almost every-
thing recommended, I tried one box of
Parnelle's Vegetable Pills. I am now
nearly well, and believe they will cure
me. I would not be without them for
any money."

Sick Headache Subsides.

"I have been troubled with Sick
Headache for over a year. Lately I
have used Laxa Liver Pills and find
they help me more than any other
medicine I have ever taken. They do
not gripe, and leave no ill effects."
MARY ELLEN HICKS.

A Toronto Tobacconist.

Mr. J. Bretz, 104 Church Street,
Toronto, the popular tobacconist, says
he was troubled with weak and inter-
mittent action of the heart, was sleep-
less, nervous and losing flesh. Three
boxes of Milburn's Heart and Nerve
Pills completely cured him.

WHAT ONE DID.—An old Sun-
day-school superintendent asked his
pupils to bring, each of them, a
new scholar to Sunday-school. One
went to his father and said, "Father,
will you go to Sunday school with
me?" I can't read, my son, replied
the father. Our teacher will teach
you, answered the boy, with feeling
in his tones. Well, I'll go, said
the father. He went learned to
read, sought and found the Saviour,
and at length became a colporteur.

Years passed on, and that man has
established four hundred Sunday-
schools, into which thirty-five thou-
sand children were gathered.—
Christian Herald.

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unfolded her apron and disclosed
a handful of broken glass. In
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