

which is a revelation given through Joseph Smith at Kirtland, September 11th, 1831. And what do we understand by a revelation? We understand it to be indeed the very words of God given unto His people. And the Lord said there:

Wherefore I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another, for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses, standeth condemned before the Lord, for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.

Can we mistake those words? Do we need one versed in the languages that are dead and in the sciences of man made theology to explain those things? The Lord is too good a teacher to speak in a way that cannot be comprehended by His class. His words are not characterized by terms that are difficult to understand. He delighted Himself to point out the simplicity of His doctrine. Why, said He, men do not need to study in schools and in colleges to understand my doctrine. Even a wayfaring man—a tramp that goes from town to town—though he be a fool, need not err therein. And 'tis such a lesson, given in such a way, that is here laid down. "For he that forgiveth not his brother * * * there remaineth in him the greater sin." "I, the Lord," said He, "will forgive whom I will forgive," because, He might have said, "I know how to administer the laws of justice; but you do not. You may make a mistake; and if you err at all, let it be on the side of mercy. If you undertake to judge as to whom you shall forgive, and whom you shall not forgive, you may perhaps withhold forgiveness from one who is deserving. Do not make such a mistake as that. Do not leave a debt of that kind unpaid; for when the day of great reckoning comes, and you stand face to face with all with whom you have had dealing upon earth, and that too in the presence of an unerring judge, let not one stand up and say, 'I desired forgiveness of thee, and thou didst withhold it from me.' Therefore, inasmuch as you might make a mistake in this way, inasmuch as you may be too harsh, forgive every man. Let not your heart be filled with bitterness towards any."

What! shall we lay ourselves liable to attacks from unprincipled men who prey upon our spirit of forgiveness? Shall we seek not to guard ourselves against robbers and thieves that may break in and steal from us? Oh, no. Take all these necessary precautions. But have not bitterness in your heart. Remember that Christ, who is our Great Teacher by example as by precept, suffered more than any one among you has ever had to suffer. While in his dying moments upon the cross of suffering, passing through the agonies of one of the most painful of deaths that has ever been devised by man, what did He say? "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Let us be careful, every one of us, in deciding when forgiveness ceases to be a virtue.

But what about these wrongdoers? We hear what He taught unto His people in days gone by. We have heard what he said to Peter, how that the offender should be labored with by the one against whom the offense had

been committed, then by others, and then by the Church. And said he to the people in this day:

"And ye ought to say in your hearts, let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds."

"And he that repenteth not of his sins, and confesseth them not, then ye shall bring him before the church, and do with him as the Scripture saith unto you, either by commandment or by revelation."

I find nothing there that is at all antagonistic to the Scriptures laid down in days gone by. The Lord has re-enacted that great law. He has given it unto the people again, lest some of them might say that law had reference only to the disciples and Saints in former days. To those who looked for living revelation, here the Lord has given this doctrine again. Forgive your brethren, if you wish I should forgive you.

And what is the next condition indispensable to the obtaining of divine favor? Time will not permit us to go into details with regard to all of them. It is not enough that a man shall forgive his neighbor; though I do not believe that a man can forgive a neighbor who has actually sinned against him, unless he has within him the Spirit of God; and the Spirit of God will teach him what ought to be done next. After having forgiven others who have sinned against him, if he desires to obtain forgiveness himself, he must then repent of his own sins. And what does it mean to repent of his sins? In the first place let him cease to sin. Let him cultivate a feeling of godly sorrow for all his wicked deeds. Let that sorrow be so deep-seated and be so intense within his heart that it will give him an abhorrence for that that is wicked. Let him not dally with sin after that, lest his repentance be seen to be of a hollow kind. Let him not, if he is endeavoring to repent of the sin of drunkenness go where temptation to drink will be placed in his way. If he is repenting of the sin of profanity, let him not seek out profane companions and associate with them, thereby making himself liable to additional temptation. But let his repentance be of such a nature that he will strive to bring about a realization of the hopes and wishes of his heart. And this must be remembered: repentance is a gift from God, and will be placed within the reach only of those who have shown themselves worthy of it. What, say you, cannot all men repent? Yes, if they go the right way to work. But they must lead up to that great citadel. They must offer, as it were, their sacrifices on the portico of the temple before they can be admitted into the sacred precincts. Shall we take the man who has just committed a deed that is heinous in the sight of God, and say that he can repent immediately? He must, in the first place, convince himself that he has done wrong. The man that thinks lightly of sin cannot turn away from it with any degree of assurance that he will be protected from it. The man that does not think it particularly wrong to fall into a groveling state of intoxication will never be safe and secure against that temptation. He must seek to love righteousness, and if he loves righteousness he will hate sin. He

must seek in every way to make himself like unto God; for if this is done he will have a dislike for all things that are not godly in their nature.

We read in many instances that the Lord has hardened the hearts of men; and some who scoff at the doctrines laid down in the Bible—some infidels in heart—say that this is unjust. Here He sends Moses, His great High Priest, the law giver of old, down to Egypt with a command unto Pharaoh, "Let my people go." And the king of Egypt, who knows not that God, says, "Tell me who this being is. Who is it that dares send unto me, the king, such an abrupt command as that? I let this people go? Why, they are my slaves by all the laws that are recognized among the nations. They belong to me. They pay tribute to me. Who is it that commands that I should let them go? They are not his people; they are my people." "Why," says Moses, "the God of heaven, the Great I Am, sends me with that commission." And because Pharaoh will not listen to it; because that lesson cannot be understood by him; because that language is not one that he, the king, who rules by might, and who considers everything that might can establish and maintain to be in very truth right, could understand and speak, the Lord found it necessary to deliver words in a different tongue. The king recognized power. He knew that if ever there arose a king more mighty than he, that king would be his master. And Moses endeavored to show him that the Being who had sent that command was in actual truth a mightier being than he.

First, he wrought the miracle of causing the rod to become a serpent. Now the serpent figured conspicuously in the idolatrous rites of the Egyptians, indeed it was an object of adoration among them; and to see a living embodiment of one of the idols of his people, conjured before his eyes should have convinced him of the potency of Moses' authority. But no such purpose was served; he summoned the magicians, and by the power of the Evil One, they imitated the wonder on a smaller scale; but the serpent that sprang from Aaron's rod, devoured all the rest; and thus declared the superiority of the commission under which those men of God acted. Pharaoh, however, refused the evidence of reason; he was resolved to fight the power of the God of Moses, so he persisted in his refusal to liberate the people. Then Moses stretched forth his rod, and all the waters of Egypt became as blood; the fish died in the rivers and the waters sent forth a horrible stench. This miracle would have been sufficient to convince any thinking Egyptian of the superiority of Moses' and Aaron's God, over their deities. Why they worshipped the river Nile, esteeming it as the source of the fertility of their country; and that sacred stream, at the simple word of Moses, became loathsome and foul, and such a stench went up from the once pure and sparkling streams and springs, that the people could not bear it. Pharaoh seemed to understand that language; he could in a degree comprehend its meaning. Said he to Moses. If you will just bring back the fresh streams again, the pure water