

all the credit for that reformation, for the change, and for that manifestation of the spirit of love within the heart of thy brother."

But Christ knew very well that some people would not listen unto these overtures of forgiveness. So He says:

"But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

If he will not hear thee, in all probability he will afterwards pervert thy words. If he is filled with the spirit of hate, which is the spirit of the devil, he will not speak of thee with love. Therefore take witnesses with thee, and all strive with him.

"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

Here we find a certain course of procedure laid down, marked off by stages, rising one above another like appellate courts. If the offender will not hear thee alone, take others with thee. If he will not hear them, then take it to the proper tribunals and let it be investigated. And if he will not yield to the authorities of my church and be not moved, then, as far as thy brother in the church is concerned, he shall be unto thee like a heathen man and a publican.

Now, Peter had been listening unto that. Some other verses on a subject slightly foreign are then interposed. I can still imagine the fisherman Apostle pondering over in his mind all that the Savior had said, and then arousing from that state of thought to address a question to his Master, referring to the subject that had been under discussion a short time before. "But, Lord, how often shall I forgive my brother?" Perhaps Peter had in mind somebody that had been offending himself, and he knew that as often as he forgave him, so often would that man offend. Then came the answer: "Forgive without limit. Let thy forgiveness be without stint; let it be infinite. Extend forgiveness unto thy brother whenever he is deserving of it; for as you forgive him so will your Father in heaven forgive you."

And we might go further and quote other words. When the Master was teaching His people how to pray, among other things, He said: "Pray in this wise: Forgive us our trespasses." But the prayer did not end there. Think of the subsequent provision: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." He did not teach His people to pray for forgiveness except upon that condition. Do not pray to the Master, the God of heaven, to forgive you for your trespasses if you will not forgive those who have trespassed against you. Thus did He seek to make it clear unto them by means of a parable—a story of earthly things with a heavenly meaning attached. Often did He teach them in parables. There was a certain king, He said, who wished to take account of his servants, and he called one to him that owed him ten thousand talents. That is a very large sum. We are told that a talent corresponded, although there are varying opinions as to its exact value, to about seven hundred and fifty ounces of silver. And this amount, therefore, would have certainly been many millions of dollars.

But I believe the Savior desired simply to indicate by that a tremendous sum. "What," say you, "was it possible for a man in that day to owe unto his king so large an amount?" I have yet to find the first instance of the Savior giving an illustration that was not in every way appropriate. Yes, in that day there prevailed this custom: the king of a country had a right to give unto certain men whom he chose to appoint, the privilege of farming the taxes in particular regions, on the consideration that those persons should pay a certain amount into the royal treasury; and after the man had been so appointed, then he would seek to levy taxes upon the inhabitants of the district and to collect from them, paying the stipulated amount unto the king, and taking all that came in. And here was one who was behind in his accounts. He owed his master ten thousand talents. And, learning of the fact, the king became angry; and finding also that the man had not the money to pay, he ordered, in accordance with the law of that day, that the debtor should be sold. We learn that it was the prevailing custom, that if a man fell into debt and had no means to extricate himself; if he had no houses to sell, no cattle and animals to dispose of, no land to put up at market, no stores of silks and satins, and ornaments, and precious stones, to use in paying that debt, they would come even closer to him and take himself. If he had nothing in the world but his own body, that body had to be taken and to be sold into slavery, the amount that was realized going to pay the debt. And if he would not bring enough in the slave market of that day, then his wife should be sold, and his children should be sold into slavery also, and his whole household should be put up at auction, as it were, with the inmates thereof, that the debt might be properly satisfied. And in this the king ordered no improper thing. Nay, you do not see a single intimation that the man himself thought the penalty was unjust. He did not argue with the king that that was a very hard sentence. He knew the law. He had contracted the debt and he could not pay it. Therefore he must be made a slave in order that the debt might be in some way satisfied, and the ends of justice reached. So he commenced to supplicate the king. He was humble and sued at the feet of the king and said, "Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all." And the king's heart was filled with love for that man, that he was willing, apparently, to do what he could towards honorably paying the debt; and the king forgave him the whole amount.

But this man had others owing him, and going out from his master's presence he met one of his own fellow servants that owed him a hundred pence. How much is that? Well, according to the most liberal allowance given to the ancient coins, a penny would correspond to about fifteen cents of our money. Here came a man owing that small amount—we will say fifteen dollars. He had just been forgiven the sum of millions, and finding that man in his way, he commenced to dun him for the money. The man protesting that he could not pay, he seized him, as he had the right to do, the law permitting the creditor to take the debtor

and cast him into prison. But said the servant "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." The very words being so like those that he had uttered unto his king but a short time before, should have awakened within his heart a remembrance of the mercy that had been extended unto him. But this had no effect. He cast the man into prison until he should pay the debt. But the king heard of it. The king realized that those were not works meet for repentance; that mercy could not be extended to such a man, unless the ends of justice were frustrated and trampled under foot. Mercy to the man that deserves it. Mercy to the man that is merciful. Mercy to the man that knows how to appreciate mercy. Did you ever know the Master to cast pearls before swine? Did you ever know Him to extend a favor to the man that would not appreciate it? Did you ever know Him to give the gift of repentance to a man who did not show himself in some way worthy to receive that gift? Mercy to the man that did not know what mercy was? Tenderness to the creature that had no tender feeling within his heart? Love for the being that looked upon it as a thing that was light and worthless? No mercy for such a one. And his Lord then pronounced the full sentence upon him. Mercy cannot be given. Justice demands that he shall be made an example of. He will not forgive his fellow, and "So likewise," says the master, "shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother his trespasses."

And I find in every dispensation since that time the Lord has re-enacted, as it were, that great law. He has taught that forgiveness should be unlimited; that it is a duty that men owe unto others to forgive them; for they will not become like unto God if they have not room within their hearts for unbounded forgiveness. And then to encourage us. He points out that if we do not forgive others, we will not be forgiven; and if we do forgive others, so shall we be forgiven.

What says the Lord in this day and age of the world? The Latter-day Saints are peculiar in that they have certain works which they regard as authentic, in addition to the Bible. The Bible is to them the first standard work of the Church. It is to them the law. It is given unto them with the voice of the Divine Being Himself. The statutes that are there laid down the laws that are there prescribed, they regard as binding in every way. But they have some other work also; and our enemies are apt to judge us and say that we make other works supercede the Bible; that we take other books and put them ahead of the Bible. I have thought that it would at least be consistent for such objectors to make an attempt to show one instance in which the doctrines of these other works contradict the doctrines of the Bible. They are in strict harmony. For instance, I turn to a passage in a revelation given unto the Church in this day, when the Lord spoke again with just as unmistakable a voice as He spoke unto Peter and Peter's fellow disciples in the days gone by. What said He unto the people in this day? You will find it in the 64th section of the Doctrine and Covenants,