

crackling musketry, and reverberating with the hoarse roar of artillery.

The third attack was a long time coming, and gave the Americans ample leisure to look their situation in the face.

Tom, worn out, hungry, and hollow-eyed, stretched himself on the board along the highest of the tier of steps just below the top of the parapet. The powder was being distributed in another part of the inclosure, and Brown, pitying the boy's exhaustion, had gone to get the supply for both. He had been very kind to Tom throughout the day, sharing the scanty loaf of bread which was all that remained at noon of his rations, and allowing him to drink of the meager supply of beer which came over at about two o'clock from Cambridge; but now, as he tendered him his ammunition, Tom looked in amazement at the small iron cup containing a few grains of powder and two or three bullets. "Is that all?" cried Tom. "Why, there is hardly enough for three rounds!"

"It is all there is," said Brown. "See, I have no more myself. They tore up the last artillery cartridges to get this."

Tom thought a moment, and then, climbing down, began to gather the stones that lay thick in the inclosure, and, bringing them up, piled them in a heap at his feet.



## Sunday Afternoon

### The Forgiveness of Sins

By the Rev. Frederick Palmer<sup>1</sup>

I believe in the forgiveness of sins.—*The Apostles' Creed.*

That is what we say in our Creed every Sunday. We suppose as a matter of course that we believe it. Perhaps we do believe it. But perhaps, when there comes the strain of a great need and we want to lean hard on it, we find that, like other articles of belief which are taken as matters of course, it gives way under us and we are left standing aghast, wondering whether there is such a thing as forgiveness, painfully trying to see what it is and whether, after all, we really do believe in it. For now we see there are times when forgiveness is the only key to unlock the approaches to our fellow-men; and that unless we can understand something of the mysteries of forgiveness the life of Christ must be an utter puzzle to us. And so the matter-of-course article of belief grows in preciousness, like a common stone which we have discovered is a jewel in the rough, and we examine it with a new interest. A part of our interest is from our desire to know how to meet our fellow-men who have trespassed against us or against whom we have trespassed, and another part is our desire to understand Christ—his influence over men and his power of making us at one with our heavenly Father.

At-one-ness—that is the first thing, the great thing we want when intimate friendly relations have been broken—that familiar consciousness of being at one again. You go on day after day in happy union with some dear friend, and suddenly a great chasm of offense breaks in between you. How wistfully you look across its apparently hopeless permanence, and long for five minutes of that old sweet time, so near and yet so infinitely remote, when a complete unconsciousness of your mutual relations bore witness to their loving intimacy! You long to get back to being at one again. Is there no process of at-one-ment?

If you have been the person most sinned against, it is likely that you will be misled into thinking you have nothing to do, but that the offender must make all right between you. If, however, you look more deeply and truly, you will see that you, for your part, must be willing to give up something, and you will perhaps mistake at first what this something is. You will say to your brother who has sinned against you and is longing to be forgiven and restored, "I have, it is true, the power to inflict some penalty on you for what you have done. I may legally

arrest you or fine or imprison you. I will not, however, inflict the penalty. You shall go free. But I will take good care that you shall never have a second chance to cheat me. I shall never trust you again."

Would that be forgiveness? Would that be what the longing heart of your penitent brother wants? Would he not say: "Inflict the severest penalty on me the law allows. I shall feel a satisfaction even in every stroke if only I can be sure that the barrier which this sin of mine built up between you and me is broken down; sure that you have given up your right to put me away from you, and have taken me back to your trust and your love again"? Would not the infliction of the penalty be a matter of little importance, of no importance, to a really noble nature weighed down with a sense of its sin?

Often we make a grave mistake here. We suppose that forgiveness means remission of the penalty, and that the bearing of the penalty makes full atonement for the sin. If you should say to a man who has stolen from you, "Yes, I forgive you, but I shall prosecute and imprison you," would he not be apt to think your action contradicted your words? And yet your forgiveness might be quite real. You have given up the attitude of alienation from him you were compelled into, and are now working lovingly for him and with him; and yet you judge it best for the community, best for him, too, that he should taste the full fruits of his sin and pay the legal penalty. That may be the truest forgiveness. In case of a crime in which the community is concerned that is generally the best course. The reason why we feel obliged to remit the penalty is because forgiveness is so difficult that we are often justly suspected of not really forgiving, and so we must remit the penalty to prove our sincerity. And it is by no means the case, as we sometimes carelessly suppose, that bearing the penalty is all that is needed to restore the offender; that a man can buy a sin as he does a house. He must be willing to pay the price—the legal penalty; but when once that is paid all is again as it was before. What a rightful indignation we feel when the absconded cashier coolly proposes to restore what he has stolen and pay the legal expenses, and then have everything go on just as it formerly did! No; the penalty, whether borne or remitted, has really little to do with the forgiveness of the sin.

If I am to forgive, I must be willing to give up something; that we have found. But what is that something? That question has a barbarous answer and a Christian answer. Among barbarous men, whether they lived in former times or are living now, I may lawfully inflict on my enemy the same pain he has inflicted on me: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." And if I am at heart a barbarian, I shall feel this infliction of pain on my enemy to be so keen a delight that I shall not be willing to forego it, unless I am bought off with some equivalent. The dragging of the dead body of Hector around the walls of Troy is to Achilles a precious part of his triumph. The giving up, then, of this personal delight in witnessing another's pain is the barbarous conception of forgiveness, if barbarism can be said to know forgiveness at all. And barbarism has succeeded at times in putting its dark conception into many of the doctrines of theology; and so men have pictured God's forgiveness as consisting in his reluctantly consenting not to inflict infinite torment on his children because Christ allowed infinite pain to be inflicted on him. All theories of the Atonement which make Christ's sufferings a satisfaction to an angry God are barbarous, and would be blasphemous if those holding them were conscious of their enormity.

That is barbarism's answer to our question. And then there is Christ's answer. See what he gave as he forgave. Take that most wonderful case, where the outcast woman utters no word of penitence, and yet, because Jesus saw the soul's ability to be forgiven, he crowns her with the crown of a full forgiveness: "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." How precious those uplifting words must have been to her for ever after! Must she not have felt in them that here was one who saw a degradation, a horror, in her sin such as she had never seen in it? And yet, in the midst of this, must she not have felt

<sup>1</sup> Andover, Mass.

a loving pity for her, the far-off sinner? felt that those searching, knowing eyes saw that she was not utterly worthless, and had trust in a better self lying hidden within her? What an awakening, comforting support that pity and trust must have been! And almost as great a comfort, too, must have been this sight of the evil of her sin, which for the first time she gained in seeing it as Jesus saw it. For to see facts as facts, whatever the inference, is always comforting. And so, penitent or not hitherto, she rose to receive the divine forgiveness, and in rising became worthy of it.

That is Christian forgiveness. The old idea of giving up a private vengeance has vanished, and instead there has come a deep sense of the sinfulness of sin, a loving pity for the sinner, and an insight that can see in him, still undestroyed, a power to rise above his sin.

Does it seem as if, in leaving the idea of vengeance to be given up, we had left the idea of giving up altogether? Perhaps it does seem so when we stand at a distance and coldly analyze the matter. But look at the eager missionary, zealous and self-sacrificing and inextinguishable of hope, as he walks the shores of his desert island or threads the slums of the city. He is bringing the divine forgiveness to men; and does it involve no giving up on his part? Look no further than your own loving pain when your husband or your child has sinned, not so much against you as against manliness, against honor, against that ideal self which makes him dear to you. As you go down after him into his sin, are you not giving up, in order to forgive and reclaim him, all the joy of life? are you not giving your very life-force to save his soul? Yes, your life-force, all that is symbolized by your blood, you must pour out; for "Without shedding of blood is no remission." If you would redeem a soul, you must give yourself for it; Christ reveals that. And this experience flashes its interpretive light back on Christ's life and explains the necessity that made him the Bearer of the sins of the world and its Saviour.

But every one who has longed to forgive his brother and be at peace with him, and at the same time to be loyal to the rightful cause he believed himself upholding in his quarrel, must have met here a difficulty. He has not the slightest desire for vengeance. He has turned away from his brother because he saw in him a gnawing evil—a cowardliness, a lust, a willing baseness. This is a thing he was bound to oppose. He cannot, then, for the sake of peace give up his opposition, for it is not a personal one; he is but the agent in it of a higher Power of righteousness. Even if he should say he would put it aside, it would still be there, just as long as he is loyal to the right and the evil is gnawing at his brother's soul. The only thing that can abolish it is the abolishing of its cause. Until that is removed, he cannot be at one with his brother. His side of the bridge is ready; but the keystone cannot make the bridge complete until something on his brother's side is built up to meet it.

Yes, that is a difficulty in the way of our forgiveness and of God's. The one to be forgiven has a part, and unless his part is performed, the full forgiveness must wait, unmarried and incomplete. Just as love, for the splendor of its full-orbed glory, needs reciprocation, needs one to love and one to return, so forgiveness must be met by repentance, or it must stand ready, calling but unsatisfied. And what is repentance? It is not surely a mere desire to escape punishment. Did you ever look into your soul as it rose from a sin to the dignity of an honest penitence? Then you will remember now, as we said, you welcomed the punishment as helping to express your own newly gained hatred of your sin; now you refused to allow that the sinning you was the real you, but stood up concentrating all your forceful energy into a mighty protest against it: "I will never do that evil thing again; I will be free from its power." How eagerly you looked to your forgiver to see whether he believed you deserving of anything better than contempt! And how, on the one hand, his discerning trust in you revealed a cleaner, larger self as possible for you, or, on the other, his scornful refusal to believe you capable of anything better went far to break down

your timid hope, just arising, of the possibility of amendment and uprightness of soul and life! If you have ever passed manfully through such a sinful fall and penitent rising, you will have learned a lesson in spiritual analysis—that repentance involves these three things: hatred of the sin as distinct from the punishment, a determination to amend, and a resolute belief in the possibility of freedom.

We are sometimes amazed at the power of repentance, and we are right. It can do almost anything. But we sometimes fail to see the power of forgiveness. This is Christianity's characteristic discovery; this is the center of the power of Christ. For ages the world had tried to punish men into being good. One code of law after another had stood sternly erect and declared, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." It all was of no use. Men did sin and did die, and the law was justified in its assertions. But something more was needed than the justifying of law; the need was that men should be saved. And then came Christ's wonderful policy of forgiving them; and it saved them, and changed them, and raised them, and made them sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. "For what the law could not do," says St. Paul, "God did in sending his own Son." Law was weak; punishment was weak; but forgiveness was mighty to save. How deeply some of the old theologies which discovered this saw into facts! and how utterly meaningless, or else barbarously unchristian, their phrases sound until their point of view is discovered! And yet it is true; the forgiveness of the sinner is substituted for the punishment of the sin. Christ's vicarious sufferings—for the one who brings God's forgiveness must always be plunged by love into the fortunes of the sinner—the sufferings of Christ make an atonement between man and God.

Have we not learned something about forgiveness this morning from studying these cases of forgiving and repenting between man and man? We have not, you see, been able to separate them from repentance and forgiveness between man and God; and it is interesting and comforting that we have not. All relations between God and man are the same as the relations between man and man seen at their highest. And so we may have certain knowledge about the Godward side of them, and get a taste of their joy, by realizing at their best our relations to one another as enemies and friends, parents and children, husbands and wives. How much torment to souls and ecclesiastical persecution would have been spared if men had only perceived this, that God forgives us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us! that like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him!

These common facts of forgiveness cast, as I have said, their interpretive light on Christ, and help us to understand why his life was such as it was—wealthy with a sense of God's infinite, just forgiveness for men; joyous with the mission of bringing this good news to them; heavy with the burden of the sins of the world; and ending in rejection and death. It shows us why all this must have been so. We cannot stop to study in detail the application of these great common laws of forgiveness in the case of Christ, but in treasuring the connections we have seen there are two things to be specially noted. One is that forgiveness inevitably involves suffering to the forgiver. It is not every one who has learned this. But you have discovered it if you have ever labored over some loved one who has sunk into sin and been covered up by it into insensibility to his condition. He cannot be forgiven and redeemed as he is, because he is not conscious of needing forgiveness. Then has not your labor become agony as you have tried to evolve in him the capacity of being forgiven? You have gone down and put yourself beside him, and your loving identification of yourself with him has brought upon you the sense of shame and the pangs of sin which belong to him, but which his hardened conscience does not feel. You take him into the purity of the region in which, in respect to this sin at least, you dwell. You entice him with its charm; you clothe him with your righteousness. You persist in seeing him more truly because more nobly than he sees himself, and you insist with your loving persistence on his taking this ideal



self as the real one. Is it all a holiday play? Does not the struggle between life and death, going on in his soul, transfer itself through loving sympathy to yours, so that you feel the wear and the damage, and all but the actual guilt? Yes, you are wounded for his transgressions, you are bruised for his iniquities; the chastisement of his peace is upon you; and it may be, with God's blessing, that by your stripes he will be healed.

Do I need to complete the parallel which these words suggest? Just so it was, by this divine, common process, that Christ suffered and bore the sins of the world. It was inevitable that his loving heart should identify itself with all the fortunes of sinful men, and so should vicariously suffer with and for them. It was inevitable that he whose spirit was one with his Father's should be bowed under the weight of God's eternal grief at sin. Because he felt both God's side and man's side, he could reveal God to men and bring men to God.

The suffering which forgiveness brings to the forgiver—that is one thing to be noted. And the other is—what we have touched upon already—the raising power of forgiveness for the forgiven. As you go down with your larger life and place yourself in the condition of the sinner, you take up the sin-narrowed life and endue it with some of your own righteous and joyful vitality; in your life it sees life, and lives through you. Your forgiveness of your brother, loosing him thus as it does from his sins on earth, goes far to effect that he shall be loosed in heaven. And the sad converse is true: if, with an unforgiving spirit, you refuse to count him worthy of anything but his miserable habit of sinning, and so bind it more firmly on him, he and his sin tend to become bound together even in heaven. Oh, remember, as you stand with the offering of his penitence, made explicitly or silently before you, that you are holding in your hands your brother's soul!

Yes, if the soul has but the capacity of being forgiven, forgiveness may lift it and raise it to the stature of Christ himself. If we have had experience of this, it is no marvel to see the effect of Bishop Bienvenu's words on the convict whom he forgives for his theft: "Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. I have bought your soul of you. I withdraw it from black thoughts and the spirit of perdition and give it to God."

Nor do we need to go to fiction for examples of this uplifting power. They come crowding in on us—the forgiven, uprisen souls; Jacob and David, Mary Magdalen and Zacchæus and Peter; the man whose fall and rise you yourself witnessed years ago, the man who years ago you yourself were; they all come, a great multitude which no man can number, of those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; who love much, because to them much has been forgiven.

Is forgiveness the trivial matter we fancied? Are we great enough to bring our souls within its uplifting influence? Are we humble enough and self-sacrificing enough to wield that soul-controlling power? Do we understand it, and recognize joyfully its sway, and put faith in it, and rely upon it, and practice it, and commend our souls trustingly to it? Then let us say our Creed over again with a renewed and humble sense of thankfulness: "I believe in the forgiveness of sins."



## An Ideal Ministry<sup>1</sup>

By Lyman Abbott

What are the elements which make a successful minister? In some respects they differ from age to age; in more important respects they are the same in all ages. What were the elements which made Paul a successful minister? The answer to this question will certainly help us to understand what are the elements in all ages, and Paul's autobiographical recital of his long pastorate at Ephesus will help us to understand what were the elements in his character and work which made him successful.

He was, first of all, a servant of the Lord, not merely a

servant of the Church. Protestants, in their reaction against hierarchical control, have sometimes fallen into the other extreme of hierarchical subjection. Paul served the churches, but he was not a servant of the churches. He was not a men-pleaser. He knew no master but Christ.

In this service he was conscious of his own weakness and imperfections. We know in part, he said; we see through a glass, darkly; we have the treasure in earthen vessels; we were with you in fear and much weakness. These are the impressions of his own personal experience. His confidence was not a self-confidence; his courage was not the child of vanity. Self-conceit, I am inclined to think, is the commonest vice of the clergy. They are too often surrounded by flattering friends, too often limit their vision to their parish, and treat it as though it were the whole world. Too often these come to think of themselves as the center of the world. Not so Paul. He served in humility of mind and with many tears.

In this ministry his one object was to be profitable to others. He did not preach to build up a church organization or a society of theology, but to serve men. For this he believed the Bible to be given. It is profitable, he said, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. For this he believed the church was organized and all its officers ordained. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, were all given for the perfecting of men in holiness. Keeping this object constantly in view, no motive of personal fame or safety made him silent on any theme, and no motive of personal ambition or self-glorification incited him to speak on any theme. Whatever truth was profitable he uttered; whatever truth was not profitable he did not utter. As a skillful physician adapts his medicine to his patient, so Paul adapted his teaching to the needs of his congregation. His sermon in Antioch was very different from his sermon in Athens.

His public ministry was accompanied by a private ministry. He taught from house to house, but this teaching was not, like a great deal of modern pastoral calling, simply social. He was everywhere a teacher of righteousness. Going from house to house, he testified repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The purely official preacher is never a truly successful preacher. Only he succeeds in the ministry who is as truly a minister out of the pulpit as in it.

He did not shun to declare unto his people all the counsel of God. He got his message from God and gave it as he received it. He was a messenger with a message, and uttered the holy message, keeping nothing back.

His preaching was surcharged with emotion. His heart was full as well as his head. The man who could write that he could wish himself accursed from Christ for the sake of his brethren; that he travailed in pain that souls might be born; that the less he was loved the more he loved; who, in his Ephesian ministry, warned every one night and day with tears, was no cold-blooded philosopher dealing with abstraction. To him truth was real and vital, and therefore his preaching was vitalized by a deep, genuine, unhistrionic emotion.

The motive of his ministry was the blessedness of imparting. He had, and he loved to give what he had. A larger salary would not have been to him a divine call. He took no account of the reward which he was to receive other than the reward which is received in the very process of giving.

Such were some of the elements in this greatest missionary of all times, whose life and example are well worthy the study and imitation of the modern minister.

*Christian Endeavor Topics, Daily Readings:* August 7—What Peter could say (Matt. xix., 27-30); August 8—Persecuted for righteousness' sake (Luke vi., 20-26); August 9—The servant not greater than his Lord (John xv., 18-25); August 10—What the disciples bore (Luke xxi., 12-19); August 11—What Paul bore (2 Cor. xi., 24-33); August 12—Paul's word to us (Phil. i., 25-30); August 13—Topic: How much have we borne for Christ? (Acts xxi., 30-36; Phil. i., 29.)

<sup>1</sup>International Sunday-School Lesson for August 6, 1893.—Acts xx., 22-35.