

Forgiving Freely

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. **Matthew 18:21, 22.** {UL 43.1}

If the Lord should deal with the human family as men deal with one another, we should have been consumed; but He is long-suffering, of tender pity, forgiving our transgressions and sins. When we seek Him with the whole heart, He will be found of us.... {UL 43.2}

Christ is our sin-bearer, one who constantly pardons iniquity and sin. Mercy, forbearance, long-suffering, is the glory of His character. When Moses prayed to the Lord, saying, "Show me Thy glory," He said, "I will cause all My goodness to pass before thee." The question that Peter asked of Christ was suggested to him by the lessons that Christ had previously given in regard to church discipline. {UL 43.3}

The Jewish precepts enjoined upon men the duty of forgiving five offenses, and Peter thought that in suggesting seven times he had reached the limit of human patience. But Jesus would have him understand that those who have the divine mind, and were imbued with the divine spirit, would exercise forgiveness without limit. The plan and ground of salvation, which is love, is the principle which must be carried out by [the] human family. Should Christ limit His mercy, compassion, and forgiveness by a certain number of sins, how few men would be saved! {UL 43.4}

But the mercy of Christ in forgiving the iniquities of men teaches us that there must be free forgiveness of wrongs and sins that are committed against us by our fellow men. Christ gave this lesson to His disciples to correct the evils that were being taught and practiced in the precepts and examples of those who were interpreting the Scriptures at that time. {UL 43.5}

The principle upon which Christ acted in seeking the recovery of the human family through the plan of salvation was the very same principle that must actuate His followers in their dealings one with another when brought into church capacity. The lesson was also to impress upon our minds the fact that we cannot reach heaven by our own merits, but only through the wonderful mercy and forbearance of God which is exercised toward us who can in no way render an equivalent. {UL 43.6}

Man can be saved only through the wonderful forbearance of God in the forgiveness of his many sins and transgressions. But those who are blessed by the mercy of God should exercise the same spirit of forbearance and forgiveness toward those who constitute the Lord's family.— Letter 30, January 29, 1895, to "Brother Hardy." {UL 43.7}