

THE STONE THROWER ... who lived in a glass house
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(MATMEW 18:23-35)

Power in the Church will never be possible unless peace reigns in the assembly. " Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity . . . for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore " (Ps. 133). Christ's memorable words had so impressed Simon Peter that the disciple said: " Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" The Saviour answered, " I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." Probably He realized that Simon Peter would be far too impatient to continue counting-it would be infinitely easier to continue forgiving. Then followed one of the most amazing illustrations.

Grace Delivering

" Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents." According to the Standard International Encyclopedia a talent of silver would be worth £410. A talent of gold would be worth £ 6,150. It is impossible to say which of these the Master had in mind, but if the servant owed that number of silver talents, then he was indebted for £4,100,000. If the talents were of gold, he owed sixty-one and a half million pounds. To say the least, that amount is staggering. Let us read the account again. " One was brought unto him, which owed him £61,500,000 (172,815,000 dollars). But forasmuch as he had nothing to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made." The immensity of the debt suggests questions. In what way did the debt increase to such an extent? It would seem that this man held a very responsible position-a position of trust in the kingdom. Perhaps he was the Minister of Finance-the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If that were the case, his sin was even more grievous. And what had become of the money? It might be possible to account for a slight discrepancy, but it would be hard to explain the disappearance of 61 million. Someone was guilty! The man had no excuses to offer. Yet when he asked for mercy, the king's grace granted his request. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us

Guilt Demanding

" But the same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants which owed him £3 2s. 6d. -8 dollars, 50 cents - (a 'penny' is the Roman denarius, worth 7 1/2d.), and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt." He was a man with a poor memory! He seemed to know nothing of the great law of life-Do unto others as you would have them do to you. However, we must not forget that this story was given in reply to Peter's words about forgiving seven times. The Lord answered, " Until seventy times seven," but His illustration reveals the need for higher mathematics in reaching a complete answer. If the talent in question were a talent of gold, and if the £3 2s. 6d. had to be multiplied until both debts were almost equal, then the financier would need

THE STONE THROWER ... who lived in a glass house to forgive his fellow servant-not seventy times seven, but nearly three million times seven. This would be almost a thousand times per day every day from ten to seventy years. Such figures are apt to make us dizzy, but we must remember that thus did Christ refer to the debt of gratitude we owe to God. It matters not what we may be called upon to suffer; whatever injustices we may face. We have been forgiven far more than we shall ever be required to forgive. Therefore, bitterness should never inhabit our hearts.

Gratitude Demonstrating

"And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." These are solemn words. Will God be angry if my actions betray a lack of sympathetic understanding bordering on hypocrisy? Is it possible that some of the benefits of grace might be denied me because of my unworthiness? I do not know. This verse may contain depths of teaching hard to fathom, but the warning is clear. People who live in glass-houses should never throw stones. And thus did Christ reveal that unity in the Church is an essential. When people become annoyed with each other, they should meet together in the spirit of humility-forgiving one another, even as they have been forgiven, and always, "there am I in the midst of them."

In Search of Wisdom

"The story of In Ho Oh is not very long; it was cut short when it was just getting nicely under way, but it is worth remembering and thinking about. At the time of his death In Ho Oh was a student at the University of Pennsylvania. He had gone to the United States soon after the Korea war. In Korea he had studied theology at the Seoul National University; and his parents, who are devout Christians thought themselves very fortunate that they could send their son to complete his studies in a Christian country. The had encouraged him to dream of going to the United States and in his mind, America had become the Promised Land.

"When he arrived, he took up his studies at the Easter Baptist College in Philadelphia, and then went on to the University of Pennsylvania. He did not go out often, because he was rather shy, although he had a ready smile and seemed anxious that people should like him. But one evening he went out to mail a letter home, and a group of school-age boys stopped him and beat him to death.

"That was early last month (May, 1958). Since then, Oh's parents have sent a message from Korea to the authorities in Philadelphia. In it they expressed the hope that the eleven boys accused of killing Oh will receive the 'most lenient possible treatment within the laws of your government.' And Oh's father, who manages a textile factory in Pusan, said that he and his wife are establishing a fund which they would like to be used 'for the religious, educational, vocational and social guidance' of the boys who killed their son.

"If In Ho Oh had lived he might have made good use of the lessons he had come so far to learn. But it is doubtful if any of those lessons could have been more profound or more difficult to grasp than the one his parents in Korea are so qualified to teach."

-The Winnipeg Free Press, June 3, 1958.

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The Strong Silent Man

Years ago, when I was a very young preacher, I visited a certain English town in which one of the foremost Christian workers seemed a man apart. He was tall, dignified, and a little reserved. Yet a strange power emanated from his face, and although he took no public part in the various meetings, I was always conscious of his presence. My colleagues similarly became aware of his strange influence, and when we began discussing him, our leader smiled. For some time he remained thoughtful, but ultimately deciding to take us into his confidence, he told us the story of the strong, silent man.

Years earlier, when he had reached a place of importance in the community, when his life more than adorned the faith he professed, he had fallen in love with a young woman. She accepted his proposal of marriage, and in due course the wedding bells rang. That same night, the first of their honeymoon, she sat on her bed and admitted she was soon to become a mother. She told of another man who had seduced and abandoned her; calmly she confessed she had entered into the marriage contract because it offered security for her unborn child. Bewildered and dismayed, her husband listened to the sordid story, and then fought the greatest battle of his career. He permitted her to stay; apparently he overlooked her glaring indiscretions, and forgot her base treachery. Only a few people ever heard the true facts, for when the child was born, the strong, silent man ignored the whispering campaign and proceeded to be a good father to his wife's child. That he had weathered the storm no one could dispute. His silent eloquence enthralled his friends. When next he came into our services I watched his kindly face, and realized more than ever how much I had to learn.

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I once knew of a wagtail's nest in which a cuckoo had deposited an egg. When the young cuckoo made his appearance, he proceeded to push the other birds out of the nest. It was rather disconcerting to see this foreigner bringing disaster to the family. However, it was even more thought-provoking to watch the mother bird struggling valiantly to feed the murderer. The huge hungry baby made her appear very diminutive. He was greedy, impatient, annoying; but never for a moment did the faithful wagtail shirk her duty nor leave her task. And I wondered if my Christian principles would have been sufficiently strong to enable me to do a similar task in my particular sphere of life. To forgive and keep on forgiving; to love those who hate you; to serve those who persecute you-these are the hall-marks of greatness.

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