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# ICE REVUE

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on

Friday, March 15 8 p.m.

in the

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## Varied Program for Horticultural Convention

Anyone interested in horticulture will be welcomed when the Ontario Horticultural Association holds its 51st Annual Convention at the Royal Connaught Hotel in Hamilton on March 7 and 8.

The Convention gets under way with registration at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, March 7th. During the morning there will be an address by the President, Ken Gardner of Brantford; reports will be heard and there will be a discussion period. In the afternoon Prof. L. A. McDermott of the O.A.C. will speak on "Life in Earth." Thomas W. Thompson, Metro Parks Com-

missioner, Toronto, will discuss "The Trend in Public Planting" and Mrs. H. Brooker of Brantford will have as her subject "Junior Work."

At 6:45 p.m. the Annual Banquet will be held in the Crystal Ballroom with a Civic Welcome being extended by Mayor Jackson of Hamilton. Hon. W. A. Goodfellow, Minister of Agriculture and Honorary President of the Association, will bring greetings from the Ontario Government. The guest speaker will be John F. Clark of Toronto.

The morning of March 8th will include demonstrations and discussion periods when such

topics as annuals, bulbs and perennials and soils, fertilizers and insecticides will be dealt with. In the afternoon F. W. Warren of Dundas will show colored slides of British Columbia. Following this the election of officers will be held. R. F. Gummell of Hamilton will give an illustrated talk on "Cavalcade of the North" and Leslie Laking, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton, will speak on "Recommended Trees for Various Purposes." Mr. Laking's address will also be illustrated. The Convention will close with a meeting of the 1957 Board of Directors.

## Local Gideon Group Marks Ten Yrs. Service

The York County Camp of Gideons are celebrating their tenth year of service to the Stouffville and District citizens. It has been their goal to have the Scriptures in Bible and Testament form placed in as many local Hospitals, Schools, Hotels, Motels, Prisons and other Public Institutions where the doors have been opened to them. This group of dedicated Christian business and professional men have been going about their appointed task, taking time out from their regular duties and they are pleased to report that over 2,000 Bibles and Testaments were placed in the schools of the County in 1956. Also, in the spring of last year, close to 600 Hospital Testaments were dedicated and placed in the Green Acres Moeto Home in Newmarket. Further evidences of their progress are witnessed in the fact that since January 1956, over 400 Bibles were dedicated in memory of loved ones laid to rest, through the Gideon Memorial Bible Plan which has been faithfully promoted through the kind efforts and co-operation of the Funeral Directors throughout the entire Coun-

The York County Camp of Gideons are also playing a part in the task of supporting the work of fellow Gideons in the new fields of ministry opening up in Mexico and South Africa. This endeavour has been undertaken by the Gideons International in Canada with all local camps assisting with funds to personally thank all the Scriptures to be distributed the same way as we do here in York County. Funds for the support of the overall Gideon Ministry are obtained through Church Services conducted by qualified Gideon Laymen in the leading congregations of the area, through the Gideon Memorial Bible Plan, grants from Church budgets, individual gifts and some 35% through Gideon membership contributions.

All the members of the organization would like at this time to personally thank all the people of Stouffville and district who have so faithfully assisted them throughout the years in carrying on this rewarding Interdenominational Ministry.

## The Sunday School Lesson

**UNLIMITED FORGIVENESS**  
(Lesson for March 10)  
Matthew 18 to 20  
**GOLDEN TEXT**—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.—Matt. 18: 21, 22

**THE LESSON AS A WHOLE**  
Approach to the Lesson  
As we saw last week, a new division of Matthew's Gospel begins at 16:21. Presenting the King in His Passion. A new note is introduced there, the note of the cross. Even before those events began to take shape that hastened our Lord to the cross, He was moving toward it as to a certain goal. In other words, He was "living in His passion," and in the subdivision to which we gave this title, 16:21 to 20:34, this week's lesson is found.

It will be noticed, also, that our present lesson is a part of the fourth great body of teaching, 18:1 to 19:1, to which we gave the title, The Problems of the Kingdom. A careful study of

(this portion will reveal that the problems under review are not concerned with the enemies of the Kingdom but with its friends—its servants. It begins with a lesson about greatness (vs. 1-4) in response to a question on the part of the disciples which indicated that some of them at least had their eyes on place and promotion.

Following is a lesson on offenses (vs. 5-14), with special reference to little children. While our Lord intimates that offenses in this sphere would come from the world, the indications are that they might also come from members of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore He took occasion to insist on the rights of little children in the fellowship of believers.

Next is a lesson about discipline (vs. 15-20). Our Lord warns us that one of the problems facing the new community would be that of one member wronging another, so He gave directions as to how these matters were to be handled for the salvation of the offender, and the well-being of the whole group.

Finally, there came the lesson about forgiveness, which constitutes our lesson portion. This also came in answer to a question asked by Peter, and doubtless elicited by what our Lord had said concerning discipline.

If we were to analyze Matthew's Gospel geographically we would have to make the division in 19:1, where we are told of His departure from Galilee. Our present lesson, then, ends the Galilean ministry as far as Matthew's record goes.

**Verse by Verse**  
Matt. 18:21—"... how oft shall I forgive him? till seven times?" Peter's question was doubtless an outgrowth of Christ's teaching in verses 15-17. Forgiving seven times was the most magnanimous of the rabbinical suggestions, the more general being three times, based on Amos 2:4.

Verse 22—"... I say not... seven times; but... seventy times seven." The rabbinical generosity is put to shame by our Lord's startling answer. Some read "seventy-seven times." Whichever is the correct reading, the real sense is that forgiveness is to be unlimited, not calculated mathematically.

Verse 23—"... a certain king... would take account of his servants." The servants here are stewards, who had access to their king's revenue. It was not unusual for slaves to fill the office of steward.

Verse 24—"... one was brought... which owed him ten thousand talents." It is not easy to calculate the value of this sum in today's money. A talent was 750 ounces of silver. At a dollar an ounce the debt would be \$7,500,000. The likelihood of a slave owing that amount does not enter the picture. The parable requires an enormous figure.

Verse 25—"... he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold... and payment to be made." The sale would not meet the amount owed, but it would be penalty for incurring such a debt. This presents the hopelessness of the condition.

Verse 26—"The servant... worshipped him... Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." "Worshiped" is the correct word here, but must be regarded in the sense of beseeching, while of necessity submitting to his lord's will. The promise to "pay all" is absurd, arising out of the man's panic.

Verse 27—"Then the lord... was moved with compassion... and forgave him the debt." Notice that the king did not free his servant to pay the debt, but freed him from it.

Verse 28—"... one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence... took him by the throat... Pay me that thou owest." Following the

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same reckoning as in verse 24,

this debt would be \$12.50. The vast difference between the two debts is an important item in the parable. The king's forgiveness had hardened him instead of making him tender.

Verse 29—"... besought him... Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." Notice the exact echo of his own prayer (v. 26), which should have stirred his compassion.

Verse 30—"... cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt." The mercy he had received he would not show to a lesser offender. Prison is a poor place to make money to pay off a debt!

Verse 31—"... his fellow servants... were very sorry... told unto their lord all that was done." The disgraceful conduct of the ingrate could not but arouse the resentment of others, who rightly felt that it ought to be reported to the king.

Verse 32—"... O thou wicked servant, I forgive thee, all that debt because thou desiredst me. The "wicked" doubtless refers both to the behavior which brought him into debt, and to his treatment of his fellow servant after having received such mercy from the king.

Verse 33—"Shouldst not thou have had compassion... as I had pity on thee?" The king's conduct should be a pattern to the servants, and one to whom great pity has been shown certainly ought to show pity to others.

Verse 34—"And his lord... delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due." The seven and a half million dollars had been forgiven. What then was due? Omit the words "unto him."

Verse 35—"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye... forgive not... The answer to the question under verse 34 will determine the interpretation of this verse. The lesson however, is clear. See Ephesians 4:32.

**The Heart of the Lesson**  
Jesus had given directions for dealing with an offending brother (Matt. 18:15-17). This raised the question of forgiveness in the mind of Peter. Most rabbis held that one might forgive another three times, but on the fourth another was not expected to forgive. Some stretched it to seven, adding the three and the four in Amos 2:4. Peter suggested the higher figure, but received an answer which really took forgiveness out of the realm of arithmetic altogether. The spirit of forgiveness is not interested in such calculations.

To press the lesson, Jesus gave a parable. The day of inventory finds one of the king's servants in debt to the tune of about seven and a half million dollars. The whole setting suggests that it was not a legitimate debt, but a matter of dishonest dealing. Yet, out of pure compassion for the man in his extremity, the king pardoned him and cancelled the debt. On the human plane it is fantastic, but it has to be in order to represent what God is doing for sinners every day.

But the forgiven man did not understand forgiveness. Since he was now free of debt, he reckoned that all he could make would be clear profit; so he determined to have the trifle that another servant owed him. When a man sets his heart on money, pity and gratitude are expelled. So the man who was forgiven the illegitimate debt of seven and a half million dollars refused to forgive a legitimate debt of twelve dollars and fifty cents.

Such ingratitude must be dealt with. If forgiveness does not beget forgiveness, other methods must be found. Called again before the king, the offender is sternly rebuked and handed over to the "tormentors." In whose hands he would learn the lesson that kindness had not taught him.

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