

Commentary Chapter 40

The authority of the apostles. Our Lord gave the power of binding and loosing to the other apostles also; but as He had already made Peter the foundation-rock of the Church and the key-bearer of the kingdom of heaven, it is clear that the other apostles (and their successors) must exercise this power in unity with Peter (the Papal See), and in subjection to him.

To admonish and convert sinners is a spiritual work of mercy; but it should be done without passion, and with the pure intention of converting and saving the sinner. "He who causes a sinner to be converted from the error of his ways, shall save his soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins" (James 5, 20)

The infinite mercy of God to repentant sinners, and the hardness of man towards his neighbor are equally shown in the parable we have just read. The king is God. The servant who owed ten thousand talents is the sinner. Sin being an injury to the infinite Majesty of God, there rests on the sinner the burden of an infinite debt, which he can never pay of himself, and for which he deserves an eternal punishment. If, however, the sinner confesses his guilt with contrition, and prays to God for pardon, Almighty God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, will remit the whole overwhelming debt of his sin, as well as its eternal punishment—but on the condition that he will equally forgive those who injure him. The second servant who owed the first a hundred pence is one who has injured his fellowman. In comparison with the offence against the Majesty of God, any injury towards a fellow-creature is, as far as the fellow-creature is concerned, only a trifle. Now, if the injured man, who is a sinner in the eyes of God, wishes to obtain from the divine mercy pardon of his infinite debt of sin, it is only fair and just that he should himself show mercy to one who has injured him, and forgive what is such a trifling debt. If he will not do so, he proves himself to be unforgiving and revengeful; the just (the angels and saints) will be filled with holy indignation, and accuse him before God; and God will not forgive him his debt, but will thrust him into hell, where he must remain forever, because he is incapable of ever paying his debt.

The fifth petition of the Our Father is explained by this parable; it being clearly shown that he who does not forgive his fellow-men "from his heart", cannot obtain forgiveness from God, but will be rejected by Him, and banished forever from His Presence.