No. 93.

On the liability of the forgiven debtor.

Feb. 1821
Matthew XXIII. 21-35. "Then came Peter to him and said of him:"

Never was there a more beautiful representation of the duty of forgiveness, than this. Who is the meanest creature that ever taught so noble a lesson, before. Jesus of Nazareth, was ready to meet the lowest sinner, yea, with the hand of forgiveness: so should man be ever prepared to forgive his offending brother. Such is a few words, is the instruction contained in this fine parable. It was suggested, as we see, by the question of Peter, "how oft shall my brother sin against me?" If ye forgive him, unto seven times." This probably was a question, which had occupied the thoughts of Peter, concerning which he had perhaps been engaged in a...
Despite, it therefore wished to have it attested by the authority of this Master. The parable of anonomous Peter, with the duty of overlooking one's duties, offences were not confined in their occurrence to any particular number of times. As if it meant a subject of numerical calculation, but was to be performed as often as occasion might demand. It then very naturally & beautifully introduces the parable before us. Our Par. Fable, is represented under the character of a man, who called to account the servants of stewards for the manner in which they discharged their duty; the property of improving the estates among them was one who owed him 140.000 talents; he had no means to pay the debt, but when he fell an one near he became his bondsman. If he had been a steward on him, the manners of tenderness, kindness, the debt was remitted. But he was not to be deprived of the honours of his master, but must at all times apply the lessons of experience to his own conduct. This same man, whose disowned heart, had just been addressed by the master of his master, went out to pay a fellow servant, who owed him an hundred, he owed a debt compared with that, which had taken a few moments before been remitted to him; yet he proceeded in a most urgent & enforcing manner to demand payment. It is his fellow servant, the same servant, requests, who obtrudes his past wrongs from him in a similar situation. "Have patience with me, I will pay thee all," instead of expressing the same compassion, with the bondman, he cast him into prison, without one reflecting feeling of kindness. This brutal conduct was reported to the king, who addressed the unfeeling servant, in a tone of mitigation, that he was unwilling to give to others the same mercy, which he himself had experienced, he commanded him to deduce the "giver", the bondman, to pay all that was due. "So says the master at the conclusion of this beautiful parable, "so shall my New Father also unto you, if ye from angry hearts forgive not every one that offends thee;"
led such as unexampled charity, the whole tenor of Scripture uniformly represents him, as compassionate of figuring. He teaches us, that He is in his own nature essentially merciful: that He does not, as some professors of human invention assert, need the influence of any external means to move him to be gracious, that he is satisfied by these prisons, and in man's heart, when the hand of Christ with all his wrath is appeased— that he requires no sacrifice but the sacrifice of our very souls, sin, deserting himself that in our most fanciful imaginations of sin, there is no consume?— that God is ever ready to forgive the unpenitent, who comes to him with a heart bleeding for his sins, speaking strength to defeat, if to be saved, is a work of which a glance of nature does not furnish evidence. Every day's experience tells us that God is punishing: the very air we are now standing on the earth, breathing, and weather? Is there any why are the means of the operations of wars, of civil improvement, continued to these, who have provoked them by neglect or abuse? Does not the air, held back as it were, the shadow on our chim, that before it is too late, we may return to them of here? When we wander far from him, in the paths of sin, the temptations of pure heart. Is it, does he often do kindness to us, return us back, before the reluctant hand of grace is stretched forth to guide us from our way? Are not the church-who of this generation in coming, does he not give us as profane time reasons to fall? If there is any thing in the fulness of heaven or on earth, in the declarations of the time, and this- there is no abundant reason to think that God is ready to forgive. But when we turn to the external world, is there not a different scene? Is man always ready to forgive his offending brother? Alas for us, from the last, he is not more so. The church has too much of the unfailing, relentless spirit of that servant, who is condemned in the parable. Whether, that person, who cannot live a moment without the dross of gold, should yet not find it in his heart to show dross to others. But so it is;— the desperation is too great to be small. Why? dwell the causes of offense, instead of forgetting or considering them of thus the life blood, which should warm society, is made men.
We are led by this precept to consider the motives to forgiving temper, not in a general point of view, but as they are suggested by reflexion on the divine example, or the essential perfectionness & pliability of our Father God figures us. Therefore we should forgive our brother, but we consider the reasons for this.

1. We ought to have compassion on our brother, even as we have pity on us, because the pardon, all the afflictions to us are so much more large & terrible than any we can conceive on men. This is a motive adapted to create powerfully on every mind, that is not dead to virtuous & pure feelings. The offences, with we commit, are committed against One, who is our unceasing Benefactor, our arminating Presence; One who holds over us the shield of His Favour, & scatters blessings upon us, even while we forget Him. We cannot render to our fellow creatures any services, that deserve for a moment to be compared with the constant benedicitions we receive from heaven, & though others may wound us by ingratitude or enmity, yet the goodness of God, if it be not very inconceivable in itself, still is a talent, which weighs with that divine goodness, & we dearly have a day without abusing. Do not all men that are here & more, have our being? Do not the range of this benevolence infinitely beyond any thing we can describe? If this all sustaining care were for a moment withdrawn from the universe, would not nature itself sink into emptiness of nothing, if it should act be become helpless & trivial? Nor when we remember that this is the being against whom we have sinned, yah yet is willing to grant a pardon to the sinner of his own, shall we not be ashamed to cherish our unmeriting defects, but rejoice to render thanks to the Father of mercies?
...giving spirit towards those of our fellow men, who have been unthankful... It is often more
endearing and beloved than it is just; and when
...all the world have... the capacity of the means of
happiness... the various degrees... has created as we are,
...the capacity of the means of happiness... The
...essence of the contrite heart... the contrite heart.
...his breast against every one... charitable feelings... 
...by one that is their own... What after all is it, that we are
...able to do for others...? Though the whole, in which we may move, is limited
...large enough for the full exercise of our powers of
...resentment on our part...
sation," should build up a wall of separation between us, our brother, in many instances the obtain of human fellowship? - The servant in the tower to cover his master 14,000 talents, yet this was all freely committed to him, yet he could go forth, if desired, with entirely the fees paid to 100 genes, due from his fellow-servant. This conduct, how is it not a faint representation of ours, when we see the arm of mercy extended from heaven to render pardon for our heavy burdens of offenses, - if then, as it were an annunciation of God's goodness, refuse to forgive an offending fellow-sinister.

2. - The example of the divine patience should great as a motive on our minds to the same extent, because the divine pliability of the man is one of the most lovely and admirable of his attributes. Of course when we imitate it, we are acting the most amiable part that the parents man with an opportunity to act. Among all the bright and rare, not enter into the composition of the character of infinite perfection, if one may be allowed to mention one, more than any other stands fremont, it, it is that mercy, so great a ready pardon to the returning sinner. If the character of the All be divided of this attribute, it may reason the objects of our reverence, is one, but not of love. If when we received, the door of heaven's favor was shut upon us, we were condemned to grope in the darkness without, with no hope of without and, if all our petition fell our tears were in vain, - if nothing could avail to wipe the dark blot of transgression, - so to throw away upon the offspring of the mind produced by the admonitions of a gentle conscience, - if in these circumstances one were implacable, pontent, beaming, how could the homage of affection arise? It were rise to heaven from the heart of man? But it is not so. The pliability of God is embedded, engrained in the very foundation of the heart; yet it is this in fact, which makes the yes, to be good tidings of great joy. Nor, if it is forgiving mercy, pardoning love in the Deity, that more than any thing else from, divine if affecting to him.
connects with our best sentiments of piety, of benevolence, and devotion. What is the duty of the Lord’s people concerning the duty of forbearing? and what is the duty of our thoughts concerning the Lord’s Faith? are we to say, or are we not to say? with our thoughts concerning our Lord’s Faith, are we not to say? some spirit cannot be otherwise than amiable but humano.

All our mercy and kindness, it is true, is but a faint, a very faint, approach to the goodness of God; it is not in the same proportion as we cherish a forgiving temper; it is not in the same proportion as we cherish a forgiving temper; we display some thing of that, and form the idea of the divine character. This consideration may prove to us, the duty of forbearing from that contempt, with which it is usually viewed by the aggrieved, or the injured. There are those who look upon it as mean, as mean, as mean, as mean.

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They can in no way so well preserve their reputation of their honor, as by avenging what they choose to call affronts, by perceiving with unsparing keenness the dictates of resentment; but let not re.

But let not re.

Not for a moment on the example of the Majesty to his creatures. God does not think it beneath the dignity of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon the improper will of his infinitely perfect character, to pardon 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with the feelings. To forgive an injury is the noblest act of a great mind; for it is the act which God, in his own person, has enjoined. The maxim that revenge is sweet, may not find place in a generous and elevated soul. Pity, giving mercy, God is his most venerable and lovely attribute. It brightens the splendor of heaven, it endows the golden hair of immortal spirits with all their finest strains of praise; it gives to us, in this little span of earth, with all our felicity, and all our joys, our heads, we can stretch ourselves out in the dimensions of our little, petty pride. I protest that to forgive an injury is so disagreeable that we cannot assimilate it to the spirit of the gospel; but not then have we compassion, as thy fellow servant, even as I had compassion on thee. Are we hard enough to resist this appeal? Does God point us to the example of his own forgiving love, to bid us do likewise? Can we then away without trying to imitate this sublime love, this celestial dignity of virtue?  

3. The divine forgiveness carries with it a remission of...
will follow us into that scene, where we are separated from our sights. Yet it was more a source of painful distress to bring us back to that state of peace and love, in which much of the bliss of heaven must consist. Surely then we have here a strong motive to the exercise of a loving spirit, since that is the condition in which the goodness of God to ourselves is presented to us, in which we shall be unprepared for future felicity. The love of God, in the way he would not relent at his beloved son, was brought into the presence of the master of that master by whom he had just been absolved from his debt. It was not that, think you, a meeting of shame or doct for it is not an emblem of the confusion. Enough, this will one day arise, the guilty mind of him who, under the eye of the presence of a merciful and compassionate God, is compelled to remember, that he has habitually indulged malignant and sanguinary passions, against an offending fellow servant, perhaps against another fellow servant. We must strive, in the humble measure of our capacity, to resemble God, if we hope for his favor: now God is placable; if we repent, he, if we aspire to the reward of his children. We cannot but acquiesce in the judgment of the state of the uncompassionate servant, "he should pay all that was due unto him." So will you, Sir, if we also unite again, if we from the heart forgive one another, or his brethren, their trespassers?"

Our parable has led us to consider the duty of forgiveness, as it is recommended by the example of our Lord. And now, Sir, if there were no brighter motives the self-interest, let me ask, is it worth the while to spend the few days we have on earth in hostility to each other, in heartburnings, jealousies, in coldness, in bitterness? Is it good policy thus to lay waste our own happiness, for the sake of gratifying our passions? There is great force of beauty in the words, Sir, the poet has put into the mouth of the mother of mankind, at the first moment of man, man enmity—whenever we are disposed to be unkind.
forgiving towards each other, we should hold fast to apply them.

"While yet we live, secure one short hour perhaps,

"Between us two let there be peace."

But strife we have higher motives, were with you the words of an old poet:— "putting away wrath & clamor,

word speaking, be ye kindly affectionate one toward another,

bearing & forgiving, even as ye hope that G. in x v

forgive you." —

Feb. 1824…

God of mercy, Source of all good, we beseech thee to

from our hearts, from our thoughts to the spirit of the age

May we cherish that kind, middle, forgiving temper, as

is acquired in the interests of that war, who was made

truly in heart, with and wise when we do the consideration

of thy pardoning love. And, about an hour, forgive us

our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us

dare us from the spirit of perfect amicability, from

including angry passions & unkind feelings. May the

consideration that they are ready to pardon our offenses in

case to pardon the offenses of our fellowmen. O, then

who art love & devoutness in love, may we imitate thy un-

selfish goodness, & more our hearts to be filled with that

charity, which beholds long is kind. May we be faithful

full to all our social & relative duties, nusing the spirit

of our religion into all the walks of life do.