No. 175.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive others."
Matth. VI. 11. — "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

The course of the Gospels history shows that it was a favorite object of our Saviour, to form in his disciples a mild, pacific, humble, forgiving spirit. Never were men placed in circumstances, whererendered this spirit so necessary. It was necessary to the success of the great cause of the Gospel, y necessary to their own happiness. When our Saviour told his disciples, that they would go forth as lambs in the midst of wolves, the picture was not exaggerated in a single feature. Thus they died in truth, got faith. The worst of human passions were leagued in warfare against them, y some who united in nothing else united in this common cause of hatred. Wherever they went, malice dogged their steps, persecution met them at the gates of every city. The pride of the rulers, the fierceness of the populace, the resentments of the detected hypocrite, were all in array against them. They fled from one place to another, from one place to another. They were followed with relenting.
hope from God. In the discharge of their high and holy office, as ambassadors of x, they were doubtless, by guilt of many omissions, and many transgressions of duty, led to direct them to pray for the pardon of their own sins; for we have much to suffer from others, be therefore merciful to the...
give us our transgressions, as we forgive those who have
perjured or trespassed against us.

Let us now see what instruction we may derive from the pre-
tension in the text.

It suggests two topics: the duty of asking forgiveness of
the duty of forgiving our fellow men.

1. The duty of coming forgiveness of God. Forgive us our
transgressions. This is a duty, teach we are directed not only
by the scriptures but by the natural dictates of reason. This
question, whether we ought or ought not to submit to the exigence
of each individual, whether we are bound to ask pardon. We
are conscious to ourselves of many foolish, silly
improving thoughts, many unworthy passions, many errors
of duty, many steps on the forbidden ground. Sin; then
all must surely should carry the heart in the humblest
for forgiveness to the throne of grace. We know we are placed
in this world as strictly under a moral government, as
are under the civil government of the state in which we live.
We are here as agents entrusted with certain powers and
privileges, as objects under the dominion of a Ruler of heaven
the shepherd of certain laws, as children under a wise and good
God. With regard to each one of us, there is an experiment going
on; it is an examination, an may be seen. Duties arising
may ascend the upward course, as descend the downward
course, as may give better course, as may give meaner
virtue, or may remain aside with the dark and secret
vice. God has sent us into this world, with the powers of
the coming good of happiness, or wished of misery. He has not
placed us here with any predilection to sin in the game of
nature, as under any necessity of sinning. But we know
that in the course of our passage through this world, we
are exposed to many temptations, that by some of these we
are overcome, that in looking back on our lives we can
perceive the stream, that we should have run more, tinge
with some, perhaps with many, dark stains. Now it is the
abuse of our free agency, this doing less than we ought to
done more than we ought have done, that should make
us humble hearted, ready to ask forgiveness of God. This
is the only solid ground of the duty of asking pardon for
sin in heaven. And great is the degree we have become
unwilling, as if, when we should not pray for mercy. There result-
ing in this humblest duty, it requires us to resign
ourselves, or to make a parade of our unworthiness, as some have
thought proper to do. It requires us only to have a greater
sense of our own weaknesses, that humility, which as we
carry the banners up, in the uniform of transgressors of the
prayer for mercy, does not consist in taking upon ourselves the sin of Adam, as in confessing that we are by nature subject to the wrath of God, but in having a feeling conviction of our own sinfulness and transgressions; and of how much more little we have rendered to the Lord of all good. Of how much we might have done, how little we have done on the cause of virtue, of the great distance we stand from that point, to which the disciple of Jesus should aim. This is the humility, this like that of the publican in our parable, does not go about to multiply words of protestations, but speaks in the sincerity of repentant contrition. "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!" When we think of these things, and we must confess, it becomes not us, beings raised from the dust by every crumbling to the dust again, to exult in what we merit, or we may imagine we possess, but rather to go with broken-hearted contrition to Him, who is more ready to forgive, than we are to one for forgiveness. There is nothing in that penitence for sin, for we plead, the Lord has found us to have a proper self respect, or require us to think ourselves worse than we are. But there is that in it, which continually calls us to remember that the fruits of the field is not faulder, than we are, as the dust on the same more easily turns into ashes, than our heart and life hopes.

are sometimes dissipated in the storms of life; there is that in it, a tells us that almost every day we have, if we were to turn up the accounts of what we have done well, that we have been ill in what we have done. If we look together, we should not except to think, that against that day, the succeeding angel might write 'thief' then at every word in the balance of judgment; there is that in it also points it to the precept of example of Christ, then it asks us are only to consider how little we have obeyed the one imitated by the other. There is that in it, which calls upon us to reflect that we are subjects of His moral government; that the world is the school in which we are placed to learn these lessons, which shall be fit us for immortality, that this is the morning of life designed by God to introduce an endless even above, is then it calls us to remember the moment. This precious season we have waited in, is not a time now wasting away, nor have seen the sands without glass rapidly streaming down, how little careful are we been, it make them tell well for our moral improvement; it is to such considerations as these, that this humility calls us; by suggesting such reflections, if we are not to get good, it brings us to the broken hearted confession, so sons of penitence, of the first language in which the soul ex
presses his subdued feelings in the language of confession. He says in an application for mercy. "If there, I should, massa, acquit thee, O Lord, who shall stand?" Yes, when we remember what we have been and what we ought to be, how far we have wandered from the heavenly course; how, after laying vanities, the last days of goodness must have been coming from our hearts, if we do not lay ourselves in the dust, 'praying only for that mercy, which is mighty to save us if we seek, and are the true ground on which rests the obligation of the sin to pray for forgiveness.' The genius of his sentiments required doing, of his missions of duty. We have to ask forgiveness for nothing not the God, who has made us to be. No, the heart, when all hearts, is to seek that same blessing, is not found abundant reason for that prayer, 'Forgive us our trespasses.' The Psalmist says, "Let my sin, before one," let our sins be before God, then the petition for mercy will our practically dwell on our hearts, or we see the duty of praying for forgiveness. If we made still further, how we are to expect God to forgive us, when the pardon of in means, different answers may be given according to the different views. All men have of the punishment incurred by one. If this punishment be sufficient to be an arbitrary penalty annexed to sin, to the natural flow of nature, the forgiveness of God's exercises would doubtless consist in remitting that arbitrary penalty. But if the punishment of one consist in those consequences which are naturally there, then the question may arise, on what this punishment may be supposed to punish our sin, it by checking these consequences? But that would be to revert the established course of consequences, and cause effects. If it be an essential law, of His, that shall be produced in every if this does not in effect, shall be to produce, are we to suppose that penitence is the prayer for forgiveness will instinc the law to prevent those consequences which He himself originally bound fast to our, as to such effects? If the intemperate man, for instance, who has given himself up to this brutal, degrading vice, who has stupified himself, and his mental, moral, bodily faculties, who has been planting within himself the seeds of disease, and children, poverty, death, if, long, he should turn from this unhallowed course, repent of his ways, and in the spirit of sincere contrition implore forgiveness of God, can we
think, that the garden, for all his many worldly prizes, will save him from all those unhappy consequences, such naturally and inevitably result from this form of wicked habits. This much cannot be expected; for it could not be done except by a perfect natural interposition of forgiveness, and then be a miracle. The seeds, oh, the unhappy man has sown and underlaid in the spring up, bear their bitter fruit; his whole life will be more or less affected by the sufferings of the past. Now then, you will see, can God be said to forgive sin, if that encouragement is then to be given for forgiveness? There is no way. Although you cannot escape all the consequences of these bad habits, yet surely the scenes you break off, the less dreadful, extensive and these consequences become, every day, that you continue in vice, you are making the account of consequences more black and fearful. When you turn to God for his forgiveness, your enemy will soon get away. And is it with this much standing, preventing, waiting for? When you speak of the efficacy of the petition for pardon, it is its efficacy, you never come to that you should chiefly regard of value. It makes us so humble and watchful; it places us less in our own eyes, in order that we may ultimately rise higher on the scale of virtue. The heart, moreover, may turn to virtue, deceive us into the possession, that it is continually in humble we are made to make us. Yet I can hardly suppose, that the soul can be preserved; often at the altar in the form of sin, the rivers for pardon, without being more affected, if there were no other reason for offering the petition, forgive us trespasses. This would be on our own. But there may be other reasons. None can tell what consequences may be appended to vice in another world, see its consequences here, if they are better enough, but how much more better they may be in futurity, who shall say? When the soul shall have left its abode of flesh, shadows forth into the immense unknown before us, it rests in the power of man to decide of how much sooner suffering may be averted than in this life; then the worm of cenotaph may grow at the heart with ever-increasing ceaseless torture. The every past vice, every bad habit, may start up like an angel of wrath to chastise the torment; then the remembrance of ingratitude, falsehoods to God, of injurious, unkindness to man, of brutal, polluting pleasures, of broken resolutions, heart's services, may come around, I come over the soul, with a half universal horror, of all the most severe in this reign, in its loftiest moments of agony, can form to to a point of concept.
From this may be, with all probability, it will be seen, that if sincere contrition is the best effect of true penitence, it may be obtained, through the mercy of God, by that degree of agony, that is, by the suppliant, that and by sincere contrition, as the heart of man, the sins of our fellow men: "When we are in debt, we are to forgive our debtors," i.e., we imply three. Of God, to forgive us, in proportion as we cherish the spirit of forgiveness towards others. This beautifully affecting the more, where we are thus given to this bumbling state of the petition. At the same time, it avers the soul as it is. God, it earns it, abroad, to man. We are to pray for pardon; but that same prayer to remind us, that, we too, must, pardon those, who have offended us. As it is made, a condition on the forgiveness, if our comment, is dispensed, the pledge, the earnest, that we shall receive his favor, and acceptance. One has, it is true, did not intend, by this, to teach us, that the mercy of God depends on the temper of our minds, but that so long as we cherish an unforgiving spirit, we are not fitted subjects for the favor of pardoning love of God. Our disposition to forgive is made the measure of our hope of forgiveness; to the animals, towards man, as well as towards God, is beautifully communicated to us. And the rule of measure that we might be such as absolve themselves to right reason. No rational man will deny it; to be merciful to forgive. God would be forgiving, to mercy to others; our
would receive mercy. *We do pray for mercy; that same prayer
both teach as well to render the deeds of mercy*. But you will
ask, shall we not even piously surrender the greatest injuries
receive mercy without resentment? will the nearest inquirer
permit anyone he may choose to make as the object of his
will, to rob us of our good name, or make our life as unhappily
as possible, and not resist his malicious attempts? *Nay, if I do
not think reason or religion requires of us any such unresisting
endurance of avontur injuries*, the promises in the
first, to favour each a separation, were designed to
destroy the abode of it, at that time. But while we make
this allowance, we must be careful that we do not abuse it.
The danger is all on this side. Most of us encry have billings
on its apprehension, that we shall be given over to the lust of
some submission to every injury, I should want a breaker from
resentment. There is too large a stock of this sort of temper
to have any room to feast, it will be exhausted. The great
danger of becoming bitter, quarrelsome, vindictive. But the
inquiries are severe, and such if it can be expected
that we shall bear such things? But, safe, grant for a minute
discuss whether you have not greatly overestimated the injury
imagined much, blacker motives, than ever existed. When
one is furious are excited, it is mondo, what a strong gel-

obeying only shrinks blind to the mind; every one, but the
approved person, can see, how he has magnified a trifling
injury, into a monstrous injury, if it was to himself, black
of dreadful malice, where there was nothing worse, than one
abnormal acting. You may see was a small one, that
would have been derided, if it itself, till its effects becomes
a source of pain publick lining. There is a great deal of their
calculating, to call it by no worse a name. We overrate the
injuries on others, and upon us, you desire these shame
that upon them. We are full of bitterness, breathe into revenge
ance against them, but renders why they should be even
reasonable as to be offered with us. Our pains are one side
because of the warming balance shifts. *This is altogether
probable, that the man, whom upon subject have inflicted
or such a deadly injury a few years, had not had intention
thought not the time of doing any wrong* — at least
he did, his intentions were by no means the foul, terminus,
as you imagine. Such considerations as these, one
ought to dwell in our minds, do induce us to exercise harms
forgiveness; if it may be, others have quite as much
to say against us, as we have against them. *But won't
let how great the injury you have received of how bad the
motive, if the offender respect of his wrong, and one
forgiveness
you are bound to forgive him. You implore pardon. God you humbly hope it will be granted to your neighbor; for stone, - your neighbor's fellow sinner, one of your fellow sinner, shall not grant it. On the same ground, that you hope for the one, you should without hesitation confer on the other. It would be a mockery indeed to extort pardon of God if then turn round in the bitterness of resentment to your fellow man. You can help get no forgiveness from men, and even if the one who has offended is wrong, you must not acknowledge his errors, and not seek to be reconciled with him, no principles of reason or religion will allow you to plot revenge. You may show that you feel the wrong as it deserves to be felt, you may work off the attack, guard against his enmity; you may seek to put it out of your power to injure you once; but the more to grudge beyond the laws of self-preservation self-defense, seek to gratify the thirst for revenge, you are entering an forbidding, shameful ground. When you go forth to meet ingratitude, injury, want, with wrath, malice with malice, the disciple of Jesus can no longer sympathize with you, your course is an unhallowed one; no good man can look upon it and be profane. The remembrance in heaven shall not be taken as a different example: - for no one knows that He is kind. To the inhabitants east and west, over the surer head, the sight of a good man is seen in comfort. But, shows to us passions we can bear with or without, nurse up bitterness. I plan revenge against one another, while God from on high will smite into all, his tender consciences are ever all his mouth: How can you come to the altars of the Most High with the prayers for many of your forgiveness. How do you bear with your mate or your brother against your fellow man? Think upon it, that God can see every passion, every feeling in that heart; with each passion, every feeling, think upon that prayer, how our heart will reach this ear? No, it will be scattered on the winds as empty breath and you will remain unforgiven. When you present yourself at the throne of grace for pardon, will it not make your tongue fail, and your heart faint to remember at that moment that your neighbor has borne the same unkind to you? You have turned away in stingy wertful disdain; or, whether he has one or not, you then as kindled in your breast towards him an unforgiving spirit, not something but vengeance can quench? Let the thin lay there, your sins to heart; I then open his Bible, and look in the verses
immediately following the 20 prayers. He will hear the words of Jesus saying, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

My own thoughts in this subject to interest us both as we are related to God in high degree and as we are related to each other in society. I can only say we all abundant need to forgive as to be forgiven. I can only ask you to stretch your thoughts toward to that solemn hour when the judgment shall be set, when the books shall be opened, when the offender arraigned, when the crime made known. At that time, if fulness of repentance, would your mercy, mercy from God, be an inestimable boon. Might we experience such pardon and joy and gratitude? Oh! it would be like the shade of the mighty oak tree the weary traveler in the desert, like having moths after the dusty wings of the way weary man. Remembering then, that the day is come, when you may cry for mercy and forgiveness, be careful then you have it not, then to reflect upon that you have not for on your fellow men.

Jan. 1829

At home, Jan. 12th, 1829, afternoon.