

ment or anger towards a fellow-mortal. His character is described to the life in the servant's who, though forgiven himself, refused to forgive his fellow-servant. He can see himself in this gospel mirror. Let him trace his own features in this vivid representation. Let him reflect how hideous is the aspect he presents as thus practically exhibited. And let him consider also the inevitable result, provided he undergo no change. "So likewise," says the Lord, "shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

1. In explaining and enforcing the doctrine of the text, I shall notice first the duty itself; then the spirit in which it is to be discharged; and lastly, the motive used to ensure attention to it.

The duty here inculcated is to "forgive every one his brother their trespasses." That is, as I understand the meaning of the command, to regard and treat the offenders, at whose hands we have endured real or imaginary wrong, as if they had never committed an offence against us. He who does this expels from his heart and mind all recollection, and effaces from his aspect, acts, and language, every trace of that offence. In proof of this he will study, on every suitable occasion, and in every possible way, to do them good in soul, body, reputation, and outward estate. He who fails to do this, or does the very reverse, does not remit but resent the offence, or affront, or injustice. It is not, in this case, like a wound that has been so thoroughly healed, you can hardly, on a close inspection, tell that it ever existed; but, like one that has been concealed, or over which a thin, glassy, transparent skin has grown, and which the least exposure or gentlest touch serves to irritate and inflame and cause to bleed afresh. It is not like a

guished; but like one which, though hidden from view, has continued to smoke and smoulder, until, at an unexpected moment, it burst out in a sheet of flame. It is not like a poison injected into the human frame, which, ere it has had time to spread its deadly infection, has been extracted; but which has been permitted to insinuate itself and circulate through every vein, carrying pain and death in its silent, stealthy course. A poison, a fire, a wound—these terms but feebly express the magnitude of the evil implied and involved in the lodgment in the human soul of an evil thought or passion. On and by the dislodgment of that thought or passion, the wound is healed, the fire quenched, the poison ejected.

This duty, then, it may be assumed, is one not easy of performance. And some find it harder by far than others. Much depends upon the natural disposition, early training, habits, pursuits, associates, and surroundings. These and such like considerations may serve to explain—in some measure at least—why in one instance as compared with another, the pardon of an offence becomes a sort of death-struggle. But although a difference does exist amongst Christian men and women as to the ease and promptitude with which pardon of an offence is extended, yet it is in reality a difficult effort or exercise for any one of them; that is, on the supposition that the offence has been or is of such a kind as to touch them to the quick. No one is naturally possessed, or can, or will of his own accord, display the right spirit. On the contrary he will manifest a temper the exact opposite of that God requires and enjoins. In this respect we all closely resemble each other, or bear the family likeness.

The fact that any particular duty is very hard to discharge, is no proof that it is not a present and most urgent one—essential