; for that must have been the  
ground on which the narrative relates ver.  
39. We must not however forget that  
in similar cases “*Jesus knowing their  
thoughts*” is inserted (Matt. ix. 4), and  
doubtless might also have been here.

There is an *inner personal appeal* in the   
words addressing the Pharisee. The calling  
by name—the especial **I have somewhat to  
say unto thee** refer to the *inner thoughts  
of the heart*, and at once bring the answer  
**Master, say on**, so different from “*This man,  
if he were a prophet*.”

**41.]** We must remember that our Lord is here  
setting forth the matter *primarily* with  
reference to Simon’s subjective view of  
himself, and therefore not strictly as re-  
gards the actual comparative sinfulness  
of these two before God. Though however   
not to be pressed, *the case may have   
been so:* and, I am inclined to think, *was   
so.* The clear light of truth in which every word of His was spoken, will hardly allow us to suppose that such an admission would have been made to the Phrisee, if it had not really been so in fact. But see more below.

**two debtors]** The *debtors* are the prominent persons in the parable—the creditor is necessary indeed to it, but is *in the background.* And this remark is important—for on bearing it carefully in mind the right understanding of the parable depends. The Lord speaks *from the position of the debtors,* and applies to their case the considerations of ordinary gratitude and justice And in doing so it is to be noticed, that He makes an assumption for the purpose of the parable:—*that sin* is proportionate to *the sense of sin,*   
just as a debt is felt to the amount  
of the debt. The disorganisation of our  
moral nature, the deadly sedative effect of  
sin in lulling the conscience, which renders  
the greatest sinner the least ready for penitence,   
*does not here come* *into consideration;*   
the examples being two persons, *both  
aware of their debt*. This assumption itself   
is *absolutely necessary for the parable*:   
for if forgiveness is to awaken love in  
proportion to the magnitude of that which  
is forgiven, *sin* in such a connexion must  
be the *subjective debt* which is *felt* to  
exist, not the *objective* one, the magnitude  
of which *we* never can know, but God only:  
see on ver. 47 below.

**five hundred**...**fifty**—a very different ratio from  
the ten thousand talents and the hundred  
pence (denarii) in Matt. xviii. 21—35,  
because there it is intended to shew us  
how insignificant our sins towards one  
another are in comparison with the offence  
of us all before

**42. when they could not pay, he frankly forgave them  
both]** What depth of meaning there is in  
these words, if we reflect WHO said them,  
and by what means this forgiveness was to  
be wrought! Observe that the **could not  
pay** is pregnant with more than at first  
appears:— *how* is this incapacity discovered  
to the creditor in the parable? how, but  
*by themselves*? Here then is the sense   
and *confession* of sin; not a bare objective   
fact, followed by a decree of forgiveness:  
but the incapacity is an *avowed* one, the  
forgiveness is a *personal* one,—**them both**.

**which of them will love him most?]**  
The difficulty usually found in this question  
 and its answer is not wholly removed  
in the subjective nature of the parable.  
For the sense of sin, if wholesome and  
rational, must bear a proportion, as indeed  
in this case it did, to the actual sins committed:   
and then we seem to come to the  
false conclusion, ‘The more sin, the more  
love: let us then sin, that we may love  
the more.’ And I believe this difficulty is  
to be removed by more accurately considering  
*what the love is* which is here  
spoken of. It is an unquestionable fact,  
it the *deepest penitents* are, in *one kind*  
of love for Him who has forgiven them,  
the most devoted;—in that, namely, which  
consists in personal sacrifice, and proofs of  
earnest attachment to the blessed Saviour  
end His cause on earth. But it is no less  
an unquestionable fact, that *this love* is  
not the highest form of the spiritual life;  
that such persons are, by their very course  
of sin, incapacitated from entering into  
the length, breadth, and height, and being