

selves, that we might be there indeed, and our despair might be incurable. How blind is he that seeth not the devil in all this!

CHAPTER IX.

Directions for the forgiving of Enemies, and those that injure us; against Wrath, and Malice, and Revenge, and Persecution.

It is not only actual murder which is forbidden in the sixth commandment, but also all inordinate wrath, and malice, and desires of revenge, and injuring the person of our neighbour or our enemy; for so the Prophet and Judge of the church hath himself expounded it, Matt. v. 21, 22. Anger hath a hurting inclination, and malice is a fixed anger, and revenge is the fruit of both or either of them. He that will be free from injurious actions, must subdue that wrath and malice which is their cause. Heart-murders and injuries must be carefully rooted up; "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts and murders," &c. This is the fire of hell on which an evil tongue is set^b, and this must be quenched if you would be innocent.

Direct. i. 'See God in your neighbour, and love him for that of God which is upon him.' If he be holy, he hath the moral image of God. If he be unholy, he hath his natural image as he is a man. He is not only God's creature, but his reasonable creature, and the lord of his inferior works: and art thou a child of God, and yet canst not see him, and love him in his works? Without God he is nothing, whom thou art so much offended with; and though there be somewhat in him which is not of God, which may deserve thy hatred, yet that is not his substance or person: hate not, or wrong not that which is of God. It would raise in you such a reverence, as would assuage your wrath, if you could but see God in him that you are displeased with.

Direct. ii. 'To this end observe more the good which is in your neighbour, than the evil.' Malice overlooketh all that is good and amiable, and can see nothing but that

^a Matt. xv. 19.

^b James iii. 6.

which is bad and detestable : it hearkeneth more to them that dispraise and open the faults of others, than to those that praise them and declare their virtues : nor that good and evil must be confounded ; but the good as well as the evil must be acknowledged. We have more use ourselves for the observation of their virtues than of their faults ; and it is more our duty : and were it never so little good that is in them, the right observing of it, at least would much diminish your dislike.

Direct. III. ' Learn but to love your neighbour as yourself, and this will make it easy to you both to forbear him and forgive him.' With yourself you are not apt to be so angry. Against yourself you bear no malice, or desire no revenge that shall do you hurt. As you are angry with yourself penitently for the faults you have committed, but not so as to desire your own destruction, or final hurt ; but with such a displeasure as tendeth to your recovery ; so also must you do to others.

Direct. IV. ' To this end be sure to mortify your selfishness.' For it is the inordinate respect that men have to themselves, which maketh them aggravate the faults of all that are against them, or offend them. Be humble and self-denying, and you will think yourselves so mean and inconsiderable, that no fault can be very great, nor deserve much displeasure, merely as it is against you. A proud, self-esteeming man is easily provoked and hardly reconciled without great submission ; because he thinketh so highly of himself, that he thinketh heinously of all that is said or done against him ; and he is so over-dear to himself, that he is impatient with his adversary.

Direct. V. ' Be not your own judge in cases of settled malice or revenge ; but let some impartial, sober by-stander be the judge.' For a selfish, passionate, distempered mind, is very unlikely to judge aright. And most men have so much of these diseases, that they are very unfit to be judges in their own case. Ask first some wise, impartial man, whether it be best for thee to be malicious and revengeful against such a one that thou thinkest hath greatly wronged thee, or rather to love him and forgive him.

Direct. VI. ' Take time to deliberate upon the matter, and do nothing rashly in the heat of passion against an-

other.' Wrath and malice will vanish, if you bring the matter into the light, and use but those effectual considerations which will shew their sinfulness and shame; I shall therefore next here set down some such considerations, as are most powerful to suppress them.

Consid. I. Remember first, 'That whoever hath offended you, hath offended God by greater injuries, and if God forgive him the greater, why should not you forgive the less?' The same fault which he did against you, is a greater crime as against God than as against you: And many a hundred more hath he committed. It is a small matter to displease such a worm as man, in comparison of the displeasing of Almighty God: and should not his children imitate their heavenly Father? Doth he remit the pains of hell, and cannot you forbear your passionate revenge? Let me ask you, whether you desire that God should forgive him his sins or not? (both that and all the rest which he hath committed;) If you say, 'No,' you are devilish and inhuman, who would not have God forgive a sinner: if you say, 'Yea,' you condemn, yea, and contradict yourselves. While you say you would have God forgive him, and yet yourselves will not forgive him; (I speak not of necessary correction but revenge).

Consid. II. 'Consider also that you have much more yourselves to be forgiven by God, or you are undone for ever.' There is no comparison between other men's offences against you, and your offences against God, either for the number of them, or the greatness, or the desert. Dost thou owe to God ten thousand talents, and wilt thou lay hold on thy brother for a hundred pence? See then thy doom, Matt. xviii. 34.; the tormenters shall exact thy debt to God. Doth it beseem that man to aggravate or revenge his little injuries, who deserveth damnation, and forfeiteth his soul every day and hour? And hath no hope of his own salvation, but by the free forgiveness of all his sins?

Consid. III. 'Either thou art thyself a member of Christ or not. If not, thou art yet under the guilt of all the sins that ever thou didst commit.' And doth it beseem that man to be severe and revengeful against others, that must for ever be damned for his own transgressions, if a speedy conversion do not prevent it? Sure you have somewhat else to

think on, than of your petty injuries from men! But if thou be indeed a member of Christ, thy sins are all pardoned by the price of thy Redeemer's blood! And canst thou feel the sweetness of so great a mercy, and not feel a strong obligation on thee to forgive thy brother? Must Christ be a sacrifice for thy offences? and must thy brother, who offended thee, be sacrificed to thy wrath?

Consid. iv. 'Thou art not forgiven of God, if thou dost not forgive.' For, 1. If ever the love of God and the blood of Christ had come in power upon thy heart, they would undoubtedly have caused thee to forgive thy brother. 2. Yea, God hath made thy forgiving others to be a condition, without which he will not finally or plenaryly forgive thee. Thou hast no warrant to pray or hope for pardon upon any lower terms; but "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; for if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses^c." Likewise, saith Christ, "shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, (even deliver you to the tormenters,) if from your hearts ye forgive not every one his brother their trespasses^d." "For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment^e."

Consid. v. 'Remember also that you have need of forgiveness from others, as well as they have need of it from you.' Have you wronged none? Have you provoked none? Have you not passions which must be pardoned? And a nature which must be borne with? Can so corrupt a creature as man is, be no annoyance to those he liveth with? Sure all the sins which burden yourself, and displease the Lord, must needs be some trouble to all about you: and he that needeth pardon, is obliged the more to pardon others.

Consid. vi. 'Nay, it is the unhappiness of all mankind, that their corruptions will in some measure be injurious to all that they have to do with;' and it is impossible for such distempered sinners to live together, and not by their mistakes, or selfishness, or passions, to exercise the patience and forbearance of each other. Therefore you must either

^c Matt. vi. 14, 15.^d Matt. xviii. 35.^e James ii. 13.

be malicious and revengeful against all mankind, or else against none on such accounts as are common to all.

Consid. VII. 'Observe also how easily you can forgive yourselves, though you do a thousand fold more against yourselves, than ever any enemy did.' It is not their wrongs or offences against you that you are in any danger of being damned for; you shall not suffer for their sins, but for your own. In the day of judgment, it is not your sufferings from others, but your own offences against God that will be charged upon you: and if ever you be undone, it will be by these. Men or devils can never do that against you, which by every sin you do against yourselves. No robber, no oppressor, no persecutor, no deceiver can ever hurt you so much as you hurt yourselves. And yet how gently do you take it at your own hands! How easily do you pardon it to yourselves! How lovingly do you think of yourselves! So far are you from malice or revenge against yourselves, that you can scarce endure to hear plainly of your sins! But are more inclined to bear malice against those that do reprove you. Judge whether this be equal dealing; and loving your neighbours as yourselves?

Consid. VIII. 'Consider how great a crime it is, for a worm to usurp the authority of God, and censure him for not doing justice, and to presume to anticipate his judgment, and take the sword as it were out of his hands, as all do that will be their own avengers.' It is the magistrate and not you that beareth the sword of public justice; and what he doth not, God will do in his time and way. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, (that is, the evil that is done against you,) but overcome evil with good." He that becometh a revenger for himself, doth by his actions as it were say to God, 'Thou art unjust, and dost not do me justice, and therefore I will do it for myself. And shall such an impatient, blaspheming atheist go unpunished?

Consid. IX. 'Consider how much more fit God is than

' Rom. xii. 19—21.

you, to execute revenge and justice on your enemies.' He hath the highest authority, and you have none: he is impartial and most just, and you are unrighteous and perverted by selfishness and partiality. He is eternal and omniscient, and seeth to the end, and what will be the consequent; and therefore knoweth the fittest season and degree; but you are shortsighted creatures, that see no further than the present day, and know not what will be to-morrow, and therefore may be ignorant of a hundred things, which would stop you and change your council if you had foreseen them. He is most wise and good, and knoweth what is fit for every person, and how to do good with as little hurt as may be in the doing of it; but you are ignorant of yourselves, and blinded by interest and passion, and are so bad yourselves, that you are inclined to do hurt to others. At least, for aught you know, you may miscarry in your passion, and come off with guilt and a wounded conscience; but you may be sure that God will not miscarry, but will do all in perfect wisdom, and righteousness, and truth.

Consid. x. 'Do you not understand that your passion, malice, and revenge, 1. Do hurt yourselves much more than they can hurt another, and 2. Much more than any other can hurt you?' Would you be revenged on another; and will you therefore hurt yourselves? The stone of reproach which you cast at him, doth fly back into your face, and wound yourselves. Do you not feel that the fire of passion and malice, are like a scorching fever, which overthrow your health and quietness, and fill you full of restlessness and pain? And will you do this against yourselves, because another hath abused you? Did not he that offended you do enough against you? If you would have more, why are you offended with him? If you would not have more, why do you inflict it on yourselves? If you love disquietness; why do you complain of him that doth disquiet you? If you do not, why do you disquiet yourselves? and that much more than he can do? He that wrongeth you toucheth but your estates, or bodies, or names; it may be it is but by a blast of wind, the words of his mouth; and will you therefore wound yourselves at the very heart? God hath locked up your heart from others; none can touch that but yourselves. Their words, their wrongs cannot reach

your hearts, unless you open them the door, yea, unless it be your own doing. Will you take the dagger which pierced but your skin, and pierce your own hearts with it, because another so much wronged you? If you do, blame no one for it so much as yourselves; blame them for touching your estates or names, but blame yourselves for all that is at your hearts. And if you might desire another's hurt, it is folly to hurt yourselves much more, and to do a greater mischief to yourselves, that so you may do a less to him. If you rail at him, or slander or defame him, you touch but his reputation; if you trouble him at law, you touch but his estate; if you beat him, it reacheth but to his flesh; but the passion and guilt is a fire in your own hearts; and the wrath of God which you procure, doth fall upon your souls for ever! I have heard but of a few that have said openly, 'I am contented to be damned, so I may but be avenged;' but many thousands speak it by their deeds. And O how just is their damnation, who will run into héll that they may hurt another! Even as I have heard of some passionate wives and children, who have hanged themselves, or cut their throats, to be revenged on their husbands or parents by grieving them.

Consid. xi. 'Remember that malice and hurtfulness are the special sins and image of the devil.' All sin is from him as the tempter; but some sins are so eminently his own, that they may be called the nature and image of the devil; and those are principally, rebellion against God, malignity or enmity to good, pride or self-exaltation, lying and calumny, and malice, hurtfulness, and murder; these are above the sins of mere sensuality or carnality, and most properly denominate men (in whom they prevail) the serpent's seed. I speak but as Christ himself hath spoken, John viii. 44. to those that were esteemed the wisest and most (ceremoniously) religious of those times: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." And what pity is it that a man that should bear the image of God, should be transformed as it were into an incarnate devil, and by being like to satan, and bearing his image.

Consid. XII. 'The person that you are angry with, is either a child of God, or of the devil, and one that must live either in heaven or hell.' If he be a child of God, will not his Father's interest and image reconcile you to him? Will you hate and hurt a member of Christ? If you have any hope of being saved yourselves, are you not ashamed to think of meeting him in heaven, whom you hated and persecuted here on earth? If there were any shame and grief in heaven, it would overwhelm you there with shame and grief, to meet those in the union of those blessed joys, whom you hated and abused. Believe unfeignedly that you must dwell with them for ever in the dearest intimacy of eternal love, and you cannot possibly rage against them, nor play the devils against those, with whom you must live in unity before God. But if they be wicked men, and such as must be damned (as malice will make you easily believe), are they not miserable enough already, in being the slaves of sin and satan? And will they not be miserable time enough and long enough in hell? Do you thirst to have them tormented before the time? O cruel men! O devilish malice! Would you wish them more punishment than hell-fire? Can you not patiently endure to see a poor sinner have a little prosperity and ease, who must lie in everlasting flames? But the truth is, malicious men are ordinarily atheists, and never think of another world; and therefore desire to be the avengers of themselves, because they believe not that there is any God to do it, or any future judgment and execution to be expected.

Consid. XIII. 'And remember how near both he and you are to death and judgment, when God will judge righteously betwixt you both.' There are few so cruelly malicious, but if they both lay dying they would abate their malice and be easily reconciled, as remembering that their dust and bones will lie in quietness together, and malice is a miserable case to appear in before the Lord. Why then do you cherish your vice, by putting away the day of death from your remembrance? Do you not know that you are dying? Are a few more days so great a matter with you, that you will therefore do that because you have a few more days to live, which else you durst not do or think of? O hearken to the dreadful trumpet of God, which is summoning you

all to come away, and methinks this should sound a retreat to the malicious, from persecuting those with whom they are going to be judged. God will shortly make the third, if you will needs be quarrelling! Unless it be mastiff dogs or fighting cocks, there are scarce any creatures but will give over fighting, if man or beast do come upon them that would destroy or hurt them both.

Consid. xiv. 'Wrathful and hurtful creatures are commonly hated and pursued by all; and loving, gentle, harmless, profitable creatures, are commonly beloved.' And will you make yourselves like wild beasts or vermin, that all men naturally hate and seek to destroy? If a wolf, or a fox, or an adder do but appear, every man is ready to seek the death of him, as a hurtful creature, and an enemy to mankind; but harmless creatures no one meddled with (unless for their own benefit and use): so if you will be malicious, hurtful serpents that hiss, and sting, and trouble others, you will be the common hatred of the world, and it will be thought a meritorious work to mischief you; whereas if you will be loving, kind, and profitable, it will be taken to be men's interest to love you, and desire your good.

Consid. xv. 'Observe how you unfit yourselves for all holy duties, and communion with God, while you cherish wrath and malice in your hearts.' Do you find yourselves fit for meditation, conference, or prayer while you are in wrath? I know you cannot: it both indisposeth you to the duty, and the guilt affrighteth you, and telleth you that you are unfit to come near to God. As a fever taketh away a man's appetite to his meat, and his disposition to labour, so doth wrath and malice destroy both your disposition to holy duties, and your pleasure in them. And conscience will tell you that it is so terrible to draw near God in such a case, that you will be readier (were it possible) to hide yourselves as Adam and Eve, or fly as Cain, as not enduring the presence of God. And therefore the Common-prayer book above all other sins, enableth the pastor to keep away the malicious from the sacrament of communion; and conscience maketh many that have little conscience in any thing else, that they dare not come to that sacrament, while wrath and malice are in their breasts: and Christ himself saith, "If thou bring thy gift unto the altar, and there remember-

est that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison †, &c.”

Consid. XVI. ‘And your sin is aggravated, in that you hinder the good of those that you are offended with, and also provoke them to add sin to sin, and to be as furious and uncharitable as yourselves.’ If your neighbour be not faulty, why are you so displeased with him? If he be, why will you make him worse? Will you bring him to amendment by hatred or cruelty? Do you think one vice will cure another? Or is any man like to hearken to the counsel of an enemy? Or to love the words of one that hateth him? Is malice and fierceness an attractive thing? Or rather is it not the way to drive men further from their duty, and into sin, by driving them from you who pretend to reform them by such unlikely, contrary means as these? And as you do your worst to harden them in their faults, and to make them hate whatever you would persuade them to; so at present you seek to kindle in their breasts the same fire of malice or passion which is kindled in yourselves. As love is the most effectual way to cause love; so passion is the most effectual cause of passion, and malice is the most effectual cause of malice, and hurting another is the most powerful means to provoke him to hurt you again if he be able; and weak things are oftentimes able to do hurt, when injuries boil up their passions to the height, or make them desperate. If your sinful provocations fill him also with rage, and make him curse, or swear, or rail, or plot revenge, or do you a mischief, you are guilty of this sin, and have a hand in the damnation of his soul, as much as in you lieth.

Consid. XVII. ‘Consider how much fitter means there are at hand to right yourself, and attain any ends that are good, than by passion, malice, or revenge.’ If your end be nothing but to do mischief, and make another miserable, you are to the world as mad dogs, and wolves, and serpents

† Matt. v. 23—25.

to the country; and they that know you, will be as glad when the world is rid of you, as when an adder or a toad is killed. But if your end be only to right yourselves, and to reclaim your enemy, or reform your brother, fury and revenge is not the way. God hath appointed governors to do justice in commonwealths and families, and to those you may repair, and not take upon you to revenge yourselves. And God himself is the most righteous governor of all the world, and to him you may confidently refer the case, when magistrates and rulers fail you; and his judgment will be soon enough and severe enough. And if you would rather have your neighbour reclaimed than destroyed, it is love and gentleness that is the way, with peaceable convictions, and such reasonings as shew that you desire his good. Overcome him with kindness, if you would melt him into repentance, and heap coals of fire on his head. If thy enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: this is overcoming evil with good, (and not by beastly fury to overcome him); but when you are drawn to sinful passion and revenge, you are overcome of evil^b. If you would do good, it must be by good, and not by evil.

Consid. xviii. 'Remember also how little you are concerned in the words or actions of other men towards you, in comparison of your carriage to yourselves and them.' You have greater matters to mind, than your little sufferings by them; even the preserving of your innocency and your peace with God. It is your own actions, and not theirs that you must answer for. You shall not be condemned for suffering wrong, but for doing wrong you may. All their injuries against you, make you not the less esteemed of God, and therefore diminish not your felicity: it is themselves that they mortally wound, even to damnation, if they impenitently oppress another; keep yourselves and you keep your salvation, whatever others do against you.

Consid. xix. 'Remember that injuries are your trials and temptations;' God trieth you by them, and satan tempteth you by them. God trieth your love, and patience, and obedience; that you may be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect, and may be indeed his children, while you "love your enemies, and bless them that curse you, and do

^b Rom. xii. 19—21.

good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you¹;" and being tried you may receive the crown of life^k. And satan on the other side is at work, to try whether he can draw you by injuries to impatience, and to hatred, malice, revenge or cruelty, and so damn your souls by the hurting of your bodies. And when you foreknow his design, will you let him overcome? Hear every provoking word that is given you, and every injury that is done unto you, as if a messenger from satan were sent to buffet you, or to speak that provoking language in his name; and as if he said to you, 'I come from the devil to call thee all that is naught and to abuse thee, and to try whether I can thus provoke thee to passion, malice, railing or revenge, to sin against God and damn thy soul.' If you knew one came to you from the devil on this errand, tell me how you would entertain him. And do you not know that this is indeed the case? "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful to the death and I will give thee a crown of life^l." As trying imprisonments, so all other trying injuries are from the devil by God's permission, whoever be his instruments; and will you be overcome by him when you foreknow the end of his attempts?

Consid. xx. 'Lastly, set before you the example of our Lord Jesus Christ:' see whether he was addicted to wrath and malice, hurtfulness or revenge. If you will not imitate him, you are none of his disciples; nor will he be your Saviour. A serious view of the holy pattern of love, and meekness, and patience, and forgiveness, which is set before us in the life of Christ, is a most powerful remedy against malice and revenge; and will cure it, if any thing will cure it. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God,—yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant^m." "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mindⁿ." "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully; for what glory is it if when ye

¹ Matt. v. 44, 45^m Phil. ii. 5—7.^k James i. 3, 4. 12.ⁿ 1 Pet. iv. 1.^l Rev. ii. 10.

be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently : but if when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto ye were called ; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an ensample that ye should follow in his steps ; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth ; who when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed it to him that judgeth righteously °.” Think not to live and reign with Christ, if you will not follow him, and suffer with him. It is impudent presumption and not faith, to look to be like the saints in glory, while you are like the devil in malice and cruelty.

CHAPTER X.

Cases resolved about forgiving Injuries and Debts, and about Self-defence, and seeking Right by Law or otherwise.

THE Cases about forgiving, and revenging, are many, and some of them difficult : I shall resolve those of ordinary use in our practice, and pass by the rest.

Quest. 1. ‘ Is a man bound to forgive all injuries and damages that are done him ? If not, What injuries be they which every man is bound to forgive ?’

Answ. To both these questions I briefly answer, 1. We must distinguish between a crime or sin against God, and the common good ; and an injury or damage to ourselves. 2. And between public justice and private revenge. 3. And between those damages which fall upon myself only, and those that by me redound to others, (as wife or children, &c.) 4. And between the remitting of a punishment, and the remitting of reparations of my loss. 5. And between the various punishments to be remitted. He that will confound any of these shall sooner deceive himself and others, than resolve the doubts.

Prop. 1. It frequently falleth out, that it is not in our power to remit the penalty of a crime ; no, not the temporal penalty. For this is a wrong to God the universal Gover-

° 1 Pet. ii. 19—25.