

heart utterly obdurate, after long means. 2. Or will procure more suffering to the reprovcr, than good to the offender. 3. That when the thing is ordinarily a duty, the reasons of our omission must be clear and sure, before they will excuse us *.

Quest. 'Must we reprove infidels or heathens? What have we to do to judge them that are without?'

Assw. Not to the ends of excommunication, because they are not capable of it †, which is meant 1 Cor. v. But we must reprove them, first, In common compassion to their souls. What were the apostles, and other preachers sent for, but to call all men from their sins to God? Secondly, And for the defence of truth and godliness, against their words, or ill examples.

CHAPTER XVII.

Directions for keeping Peace with all Men.

PEACE is so amiable to nature itself, that the greatest destroyers of it do commend it: and those persons in all times and places, who are the cause that the world cannot enjoy it, will yet speak well of it, and exclaim against others as the enemies of peace: as if there were no other name but their own sufficient to make their adversaries odious. As they desire salvation, so do the ungodly desire peace; which is with a double error; one about the nature of it, and another about the conditions and other means. By peace they mean, the quiet, undisturbed enjoyment of their honours, wealth, and pleasures; that they may have their lusts and will without any contradiction: and the conditions on which they would have it are, the compliance of all others with their opinions and wills, and humble submission to their domination, passions, or desires. But peace is another thing, and otherwise to be desired and sought. Peace in the mind is the delightful effect of its internal harmony, as peace in the body is nothing but its plea-

* Gen. xi. 36. Job xxxi. 13. Heb. xiii. 22. † Pet. i. 13. ‡ Tim. ii. 25, 26.

† Deut. xxii. 1.

sant health, in the natural position, state, action, and concord of all the parts, the humours, and spirits: and peace in families, neighbourhoods, churches, kingdoms, or other societies, is the quietness, and pleasure of their order and harmony; and must be attained and preserved by these following means.

Direct. 1. 'Get your own hearts into a humble frame; and abhor all the motions of pride and self-exalting.' A humble man hath no high expectations from another; and therefore is easily pleased or quieted. He can bow and yield to the pride and violence of others, as the willow to the impetuous winds. His language will be submissive; his patience great; he is content that others go before him; he is not offended that another is preferred. A low mind is pleased in a low condition. But pride is the gunpowder of the mind, the family, the church, and state: it maketh men ambitious, and setteth them on striving who shall be the greatest. A proud man's opinion must always go for truth, and his will must be a law to others, and to be slighted or crossed seemeth to him an insufferable wrong. And he must be a man of wonderful compliance, or an excellent artificer in man-pleasing and flattery, that shall not be taken as an injurious undervaluer of him: he that overvalueth himself, will take it ill of all that do not also overvalue him. If you (forgetfully) go before him, or overlook him, or neglect a compliment, or deny him something which he expected, or speak not honourably of him, much more if you reprove him, and tell him of his faults, you have put fire to the gunpowder, you have broke his peace, and he will break yours if he can. Pride broke the peace between God and the apostate angels; but nothing unpeaceable must be in heaven; and therefore by self-exalting they descended into darkness: and Christ by self-humbling ascended unto glory. It is a matter of very great difficulty to live peaceably in family, church, or any society with any one that is very proud. They expect so much of you, that you can never answer all their expectations, but will displease them by your omissions, though you neither speak or do any thing to displease them. What is it but the lust of pride which causeth most of the wars and bloodshed throughout the world? The pride of two or three men, must cost many

thousands of their subjects the loss of their peace, estates, and lives. 'Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.' What were the conquests of those emperors, Alexander, Cæsar, Tamerlane, Mahomet, &c., but the pernicious effects of their infamous pride? Which like gunpowder taking fire in their breasts, did blow up so many cities and kingdoms, and call their villanies by the name of valour, and their murders and robberies by the name of war. If one man's pride do swell so big, that his own kingdom cannot contain it, the peace of as much of the world as he can conquer is taken to be but a reasonable sacrifice to this infernal vice. The lives of thousands, both subjects and neighbours (called enemies by this malignant spirit) must be taken away, merely to make this one man the ruler of the rest, and subdue the persons of others to his will. Who perhaps when he hath done, will say that he is no tyrant, but maketh the 'bonum publicum' his end; and is kind to men against their wills; and killeth, and burneth, and depopulateth countries, for men's corporal welfare; as the Papists poison, and burn, and butcher men for the saving of souls. 'Cuncta ferit dum cuncta timet, desævit in omnes.' They are the 'turbines,' the hurricanes or whirlwinds of the world, whose work is to overturn and ruin. 'Tantum ut noceat cupit esse potens.' Whether they burn and kill by right or wrong, is little of their inquiry; but how many are killed? and how many have submitted to their pride and wills? As when Q. Flavius complained that he suffered innocently, Valerius answered him, "Non sua re interesse, dummodo periret." "That was nothing to his business or concernment so he did but perish." Which was plainer dealing than these glorious conquerors used, but no whit worse. He that cannot command the putrid humours out of his veins, nor the worms out of his bowels, nor will be able shortly to forbid them to crawl or feed upon his face, will now damn his soul and shed men's blood, to obtain the predomination of his will. And when he hath conquered many, he hath but made him many enemies, and may find, that in 'tot populis vix una fides.' A quiet man can scarce with all his wit tell how to find a place where he may live in peace, where pride and cruelty will not pursue him, or the flames of war will not follow him and find him out: and perhaps he may be

put to say as Cicero of Pompey and Cæsar, "Quem fugiam soio; quem sequar nescio." And if they succeed by conquest, they become to their subjects almost as terrible as to their enemies. So that he that would approach them with a petition for justice, must do it as Augustus spake to a fearful petitioner, as if he did "assem dare elephanto;" or as if they dwelt in the inaccessible light, and must be served as God with fear and trembling. And those that flatter them as glorious conquerors, do but stir up the fire of their pride, to make more ruins and calamities in the earth, and do the work of a raging pestilence. As an Athenian orator said to the men of Athens, when they would have numbered Alexander with the gods, "Cavete ne dum cœlum liberaliter donetis, terram et domicilia propria amittatis:" "Take heed while you so liberally give him heaven, lest he take away your part of earth." And when their pride hath consumed and banished peace, what have they got by it? That which a Themistocles after trial, would prefer a grave to, "Si una via ad solium duceret, altera ad sepulchrum.—" That which Demosthenes preferred banishment before. That which the wisest philosophers refused at Athens, 'The great trouble of government.' 'Inexpertus ambit; expertus odit.' Cyneas asked Pyrrhus when he was preparing to invade the Romans, "What shall we do when we have conquered the Romans?" He answered, "We will go next to Sicily." "And what shall we do when Sicily is conquered?" said he: Pyrrhus said, "We will go next to Africa." "And what shall we do next?" said the other: "Why then," said he, "we will be quiet, and merry, and take our ease." "And," said Cyneas, "if that be last and best, why may we not do so now?" It is for quietness and peace that such pretend to fight and break peace; but they usually die before they obtain it: (as Pyrrhus did:) and might better have permitted peace to stand, than pull it down to build it better. As one asked an old man at Athens, "Why they called themselves philosophers?" who answered, "Because we seek after wisdom." Saith he, "If you are but seeking it at this age, when do you think to find it?" So I may say to the proud warriors of the world, 'If so many men must be killed, and so many conquered in seeking peace, when will it that way be found?' But per-

haps they think that their wisdom and goodness are so great, that the world cannot be happy unless they govern it: but what could have persuaded them to think so, but their pride? 'Nihil magis ægris prodest, quam ab eo curari a quo voluerint:' saith Seneca. Patients must choose their own physicians. Men use to give them but little thanks, who drench them with such benefits, and bring them to the portion of peace so hot, that the touch of the cup must burn their lips, and who in goodness cut the throats of one part, that their government may be a blessing to the survivors. In a word, it is pride that is the great incendiary of the world, whether it be found in high or low. It will permit no kingdom, family, or church to enjoy the pleasant fruits of peace.

Direct. 11. 'If you would be peaceable, be not covetous lovers of the world, but be contented with your daily bread.' Hungry dogs have seldom so great plenty of meat, as to content them all, and keep them from falling out about it. If you overlove the world, you will never want occasions of discord: either your neighbour selleth too dear, or buyeth too cheap of you, or over-reacheth you, or gets before you, or some way or other doth you wrong; as long as he hath any thing which you desire, or doth not satisfy all your expectations. Ambitious and covetous men must have so much room, that the world is not wide enough for many of them: and yet, alas! too many of them there are: and therefore they are still together by the ears, like the boys in the winter nights, when the bedclothes are too narrow to cover them; one pulleth, and another pulleth, and all complain. You must be sure that you trespass not in the smallest measure, nor incroach on the least of his commodities, that you demand not your own, nor deny him any thing that he desireth, nor get any thing which he would have himself, no nor ever give over feeding his greedy expectations, and enduring his injustice and abuse, if you will live peaceably with a worldlyminded man.

Direct. 111. 'If you will be peaceable, love your neighbours as yourselves.' Love neither imagineth, nor speaketh, nor worketh any hurt to others: it covereth infirmities; it hopeth all things; it endureth all things*. Selfishness and

* 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

want of love to others, causeth all the contentions in the world. You can bear with great faults in yourselves, and never fall out with yourselves for them; but with your neighbours you are quarrelling for those that are less! Do you fall out with another because he hath spoken dishonourably or slightly of you, or slandered you, or some way done you wrong? You have done a thousand times worse than all that against yourselves, and yet can bear too patiently with yourselves! If another speak evil of you, he doth not make you evil: it is worse to make you bad than to call you so: and this you do against yourselves. Doth your neighbour wrong you in your honour or estate? But he endangereth not your soul! he doth not forfeit your salvation! he doth not deserve damnation for you, nor make your soul displeasing to God! But all this you do against yourselves (even more than all the devils in hell do), and yet you are too little offended with yourselves. See here the power of blind self-love! If you loved your neighbours as yourselves, you would agree as peaceably with your neighbours almost as with yourselves. Love them more and you will bear more with them, and provoke them less.

Direct. iv. 'Compose your minds to Christian gentleness and meekness, and suffer not passion to make you either turbulent and unquiet to others, or impatient and troublesome to yourselves.' A gentle and quiet mind hath a gentle, quiet tongue. It can bear as much wrong as another can do (according to its measure); it is not in the power of satan; he cannot at his pleasure send his emissary, and by injuries or foul words, procure it to sin; but a passionate person is frequently provoking or provoked. A little thing maketh him injurious to others; and a little injury from others, disquieteth himself. He is daily troubling others or himself, or both. Coals of fire go from his lips: it is his very desire to provoke and vex those that he is angry with: his neighbour's peace and his own are the fuel of his anger, which he consumeth in a moment. To converse with him and not provoke him, is a task for such as are eminently meek and self-denying: he is as the leaves of the asp tree, that never rest, unless the day be very calm. The smallest breath of an angry tongue, can shake him out of his tranquillity, and turn him into an ague of disquietness.

The sails of the wind-mill are scarce more at the wind's command, than his heart and tongue are at the command of satan ; he can move him almost when he please. Bid but a neighbour speak some hard speeches of him, or one of his family neglect or cross him, and he is presently like the raging sea, whose waves cast up the mire and dirt. An impatient man hath no security of his own peace for an hour : any enemy or angry person, can take it from him when they please. And being troubled, he is troublesome to all about him. If you do not in patience possess your souls, they will be at the mercy of every one that hath a mind to vex you. Remember then that no peace can be expected without patience ; nor patience without a meek and gentle mind. Remember " the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, is of great price in the sight of God ^b." And that " the wisdom from above is first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated ^c." And that the Eternal " Wisdom from above, hath bid you learn of him to be meek and lowly in spirit as ever you would find rest to your souls ^d." And he that loseth his own peace is most likely to break the peace of others.

Direct. v. ' Be careful to maintain that order of government and obedience, which is appointed of God for the preservation of peace, in families, churches, and commonwealths.' If you will break this vessel, peace will flow out and be quickly spilt. What peace in schools, but by the authority of the schoolmaster ? Or in armies, but by the authority of the general ? If an unwise and ungodly governor, do himself violate the foundations and boundaries of peace, and either weakly or wilfully make dividing laws, no wonder if such wounds do spend the vital blood and spirits of that society : it being more in the power of the governors than of the subject, to destroy peace or to preserve it. And if the subjects make not conscience of their duty to their superiors, the banks of peace will soon be broken down, and all will be overwhelmed in tumult and confusion. Take heed therefore of any thing that tendeth to subvert government ; disobedience or rebellion seldom wanteth a fair pretence ; but it more seldom answereth the agent's expectation. It usually pretendeth the weaknesses, miscarriages, or in-

^b 1 Pet. iii. 4.^c James iii. 17.^d Matt. xi. 28, 29.

jurious dealings of superiors ; but it as usually mendeth an inconvenience with a mischief. It setteth the house on fire to burn up the rats and mice that troubled it. It must be indeed a grievous malady that shall need such a mischief for its remedy. Certainly it is no means of God's appointment. Take heed therefore of any thing which would dissolve these bonds. Entertain not dishonourable thoughts of your governors, and receive not, nor utter any dishonourable words against them, if they be faulty open not their shame : their honour is their interest, and the people's too : without it they will be disabled for effectual government. When subjects, or servants, or children are saucily censorious of superiors, and make themselves judges of all their actions, even those which they do not understand, and when they presume to defame them, and with petulant tongues to cast contempt upon them, the fire is begun, and the sacred bonds of peace are loosed. When superiors rule with piety, justice, and true love to their subjects, and inferiors keep their place and rank, and all conspire the public good, then peace will flourish, and not till then.

Direct. vi. ' Avoid all revengeful and provoking words.' When the poison of asps is under men's lips ^a, no wonder if the hearers' minds that are not sufficiently antidoted against it, fester. Death and life are in the power of the tongue ^c. When the tongue is as a sword, yea, a sharp sword ^e, and when it is purposely whetted ^h, no marvel if it pierce and wound them that are unarmed. But " by long forbearing a prince is persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone ⁱ." A railer is numbered with those that a Christian must not eat with ^h. For Christianity is so much for peace, that it abhorreth all that is against it. Our Lord when he was reviled, reviled not again, and in this was our example ^j. A scorning, railing, reproachful tongue, " is set (as James saith) on fire of hell, and it setteth on fire the course of nature ^m; even persons, families, churches, and commonwealths. Many a ruined society may say by experience, " Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth ⁿ."

Direct. vii. ' Engage not yourselves too forwardly or

^a Rom. iii. 13.

^h Psal. lxi. 3.

^j 1 Pet. ii. 21. 23.

^c Prov. xviii. 21.

ⁱ Prov. xxv. 15.

^m James iii. 6.

^e Psal. lvii. 4.

^k 1 Cor. v.

ⁿ James iii. 5.

eagerly in disputes, nor at any time without necessity : and when necessity calleth you, set an extraordinary watch upon your passions.' Though disputing is lawful, and sometimes necessary to defend the truth, yet it is seldom the way of doing good to those whom you dispute with : it engageth men in partiality, and passionate, provoking words before they are aware : and while they think they are only pleading for the truth, they are militating for the honour of their own understandings. They that will not stoop to hear you as learners, while you orderly open the truth in its coherent parts, will hardly ever profit by your contendings ; when you engage a proud person, to bend all his wit and words against you. The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach °, &c.

Direct. VIII. ' Have as little to do with men, in matters which their commodity is concerned in, as you can.' As in chaffering, or in any other thing where mine and thine is much concerned : for few men are so just as not to expect that which others account unjust : and the nearest friends have been alienated hereby.

Direct. IX. ' Buy peace at the price of any thing which is not better than it.' Not with the loss of the favour of God, or of our innocency, or true peace of conscience, or with the loss of the Gospel, or ruin of men's souls ; but you must often part with your right for peace, and put up wrongs in word or deed. Money must not be thought too dear to buy it, when the loss of it will be worse than the loss of money, to yourselves or those that you contend with. If a soul be endangered by it, or societies ruined by it, it will be dear bought money which is got or saved by such means. He is no true friend of peace, that will not have it, except when it is cheap.

Direct. X. ' Avoid censoriousness : ' which is the judging of men or matters that you have no call to meddle with, and the making of matters worse than sufficient proof will warrant you. Be neither busy-bodies, meddling with other men's matters, nor peevish aggravaters of all men's faults. " Judge not, that ye be not judged ; for with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again P." You shall be censured, if you will censure : and if Christ be a true

° 2 Tim. ii. 24. 1 Tim. vi. 4—6.

P Matt. vii. 1, 2.

discerner of minds, it is they that have beams in their own eyes, who are the quickest perceivers of the motes in others. Censorious persons are the great dividers of the church, and every where adversaries to peace; while they open their mouths wide against their neighbour, to make the worst of all that they say and do, and thus sow the seeds of discord amongst all.

Direct. xi. 'Neither talk against men behind their backs, nor patiently hearken to them that use it.' Though the detecting of a dangerous enemy, or the prevention of another's hurt, may sometimes make it a duty to blame them that are absent; yet this case, which is rare, is no excuse to the backbiter's sin. If you have any thing to say against your neighbour, tell it him in a friendly manner to his face, that he may be the better for it: if you tell it only to another, to make him odious, or hearken to backbiters that defame men secretly, you shew that your business is not to do good, but to diminish love and peace.

Direct. xii. 'Speak more of the good than of the evil, which is in others.' There are none so bad, as to have no good in them: why mention you not that? which is more useful to the hearer, than to hear of men's faults. But of this more afterwards.

Direct. xiii. 'Be not strange, but lovingly familiar with your neighbours.' Backbiters and slanders, and unjust suspicions, do make men seem that to one another, which when they are acquainted, they find is nothing so: among any honest, well-meaning persons, familiarity greatly reconcileth. Though indeed there are some few so proud and fiery, and bitter enemies to honest peace, that the way to be at peace with them is to be far from them, where we may not be remembered by them: but it is not so with ordinary neighbours or friends that are fallen out, nor differing Christians: it is nearness that must make them friends.

Direct. xiv. 'Affect not a distance and sour singularity in lawful things.' Come as near them as you can, as they are men and neighbours; and take it not for your duty to run as from them, lest you run into the contrary extreme.

Direct. xv. 'Be not over-stiff in your own opinions, as those that can yield in nothing to another.' Nor yet so facile and yielding as to betray or lose the truth. It greatly

pleaseth a proud man's mind, when you seem to be convinced by him, and to change your mind upon his arguments, or to be much informed and edified by him : but when you deny this honour to his understanding, and contradict him, and stiffly maintain your opinion against him, you displease and lose him ; and indeed a wise man should gladly learn of any that can teach him more ; and should most easily of any man let go an error, and be most thankful to any that will increase his knowledge : and not only in errors to change our minds, but in small and indifferent things to submit by silence, beseemeth a modest, peaceable man.

Direct. xvi. ' Yet build not peace on the foundation of impiety, injustice, cruelty or faction ; for that will prove but the way to destroy it in the end.' Traitors, and rebels, and tyrants, and persecutors, and ambitious, covetous clergymen, do all pretend peace for their iniquity : but what peace with Jezebel's whoredoms ! Satan's kingdom is supported by a peace in sin ; which Christ came to break that he might destroy it : while this strong man armed keepeth his house, his goods are in peace, till a stronger doth bind him, overcome him and cast him out. Deceitful, sinful means of peace, have been the grand engine of satan and the Papal clergy, by which they have banished and kept out peace so many ages from most of the Christian world. ' *Impiis mediis ecclesiæ paci consulere,*' was one of the three means which Luther foretold would cast out the Gospel. Where perjury, or false doctrine, or any sin, or any unjust, or inconsistent terms, are made the condition of peace, men build upon stubble and briars, which God will set fire to, and soon consume, and all that peace will come to nought.

Directions for church-peace I have laid down before ; to which I must refer you.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Directions against all Theft and Fraud, or injurious getting and keeping that which is another's, or desiring it.

HE that would know what theft is, must know what propriety is ; and it is that plenary title to a thing, by which it