

Let; Gen. xlii. "Let there be no strife," saith he, "between us, for ye are brethren." And we read, of Moses, in Acts vii. 26, ~~for~~ this argument to reconcile those that strove together, and to set them at one again: "Sirs," saith he, "you are brethren, why do you wrong one another?" A deep sense of this relation, that we are brethren, would keep us from dividing.

7. If we would preserve peace, let us mind the gifts and graces and virtues that are in each other; let these be more in our eye than their failings and imperfections. When the apostle exhorted the Philippians to peace, as a means hereunto, that so the peace of God might rule in their hearts, he tells them, iv. 8, "That if there were any virtue, or any praise, they should think of these things." While we are always talking and blazoning the faults of one another, and spreading their infirmities, no marvel we are so little in peace and charity; for as charity covereth a multitude of sins, so malice covereth a multitude of virtues, and makes us deal by one another, as the heathen persecutors dealt with Christians, viz., put them in bears' skins, that they might the more readily become a prey to those dogs that were designed to devour them.

8. If we would keep unity and peace, let us lay aside provoking and dividing language, and forgive those that use it. Remember that old saying, "Evil words corrupt good manners." When men think to carry all before them, with speaking uncharitably and disgracefully of their brethren or their opinions, may not such be answered as Job answered his unfriendly visitants, Job vii. 9, "How forcible are right words; but what doth your arguing reprove?" How healing are words fitly spoken? A word in season, how good is it? If we would seek peace, let us clothe all our treatises for peace with acceptable words; and where one word may better accommodate than another, let that be used to express persons or things by; and let us not, as some do, call the different practices of our brethren, will-worship, and their different opinions, doctrines of devils, and the doctrine of Balaam, who taught fornication.