

to our peace of mind, spiritual profit, and fellowship with God. The true and fair inference to draw from the circumstance of its being difficult, would be this, that it is our immediate and imperative duty! While it is always right and safe, the path of duty is often an unpleasant, rough, thorny, obstructed path. And it ought to excite misgiving in our hearts that all is not as it should be with us, when we find ourselves avoiding that path, and selecting instead one less offensive, less uncongenial, less antagonistic to our views and feelings. Any path that permits the existence, promotes the growth, or prompts to the manifestation of corrupt affection, is wrong and ruinous. For our part, we should be inclined to think that he is in the right way who is bent on doing that which he feels to be difficult and repulsive, and from attempting to do which evil thoughts and passions strive to hold him back.

But, though difficult, this duty is neither unreasonable nor impracticable. If it were so, it would be but just to assume or infer that our Lord and Master would not have enjoined it upon us. So far from being out of our power, Scripture records notable instances of its practicability, which it holds up to our view, as examples for us to follow.

David was persecuted by Saul, to whom, undesignedly and causelessly, he was an occasion of offence. Often was the life of the youth in the utmost jeopardy. And he himself feared he should one day perish by the hand of Saul. On being put, one time when in pursuit of him with hostile intent, in his power, David did not venture or even desire to stretch forth his hand to touch the Lord's anointed. He departed unscathed!

The proto-martyr Stephen, before breathing his last, "kneeling down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Like his Lord, for whom, and in defence of whose truth he died, his last

breath was spent in prayer for his murderers. Forgiven himself, he could and did forgive his deadliest foes.

Paul affirms of himself and fellow-laborers in the gospel ministry, "being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat."

These and similar cases demonstrate the propriety and possibility of cultivating and displaying such a disposition as shall not only enable but constrain us to pardon, habitually, each and all the injuries done to us. To doubt this, or deny it, is not only to question the wisdom of His own illustrious example, and the justice of his own express precept, but virtually to set bounds to the invincible and all-subduing power of His grace—this being one of the "all things" that the Christian can do through Christ strengthening him.

If any of us really wish to possess and exercise this Christ-like spirit,—if we would rather get rid of than retain a grudge against a friend,—if we love better to crush than cherish this evil feeling, then there is no reason why we should not now and here, by the uplifting of our hearts in prayer to God for promised grace, leave from us, wholly and for ever, the load of sin that burdens, and embitters, and enslaves our souls!

2. Not only the duty itself is here stated, but also the manner or spirit in which it is to be performed; to which it becomes us carefully to attend. It is our duty to "forgive" "from the heart" "every one his brother their trespasses." That is, as it can hardly be necessary to say, sincerely, openly, fully, gratuitously, and once for all. Unless it be of this stamp, it is not entitled to be designated such at all, being, in fact, nothing else and nothing less than downright hypocrisy. The language of the lips and the actions of the life must be the just and suitable expression or embodiment of the state of mind and heart;