

2. That the time is now for the church's restoring, and for bringing in more kingdoms from Antichrist to Christ. What else mean all the shakings in all the kingdoms of the world? Therefore study we this time of God, and, in our places and callings, work with providence, now we have a season, to help up the church, God's holy mountain.

For prayer, observe this method:

1. Confess our former neglect in our several relations: 'O Lord, I have not done my duty in my own family, among Christians, in the churches of Christ; I have not performed my vows, served my generation, helped onward the building of Zion. And now, Lord, what shall I say, but confess it to thy glory, and my own shame?'

2. Pray for a blessing on others, as on our ownelves; forget not our relations to others in our best prayers; be importunate with God, more especially for Zion.—*O look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; let thine eyes see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; let not one of the stakes thereof be removed, nor any of the cords be broken.*

3. Press we the Lord with all his precious promises, either to our families, or Christian societies, or the churches of Christ. We have a promise, that *the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon the assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, for upon all the glory shall be a defence:* 'Now, Lord, make good thy word.'

Conclude with, I believe, that whatsoever God hath said in any of these respects, he will fulfil it in his own time: *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot, one tittle, of God's word shall fail.* It may be for the present things seem contrary, yet God hath said it, and that is enough for me: if I can but really acknowledge and believe that God is able to do it, he will then speak from heaven, as he did once on earth,—*According to your faith be it unto you.*

OF FAMILY DUTIES.

SECT. I.

Of the Nature of Family Duties.

HITHERTO of the duties which concern every man, in his own particular; next to them succeed family duties, which ought to be jointly or respectively observed by the families and houses of the people of God. This is implied by that threat, *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families*

that call not upon thy name; and by that example of Joshua, *But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*; and by that promise of God, *At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.*

SECT. II.

Of the Preparatives to Family Duties.

Now that we may comfortably carry on these family duties, observe we—

1. Our entrance into them.
2. Our proceedings in them.

For entrance, we must lay a good foundation in those that belong to this family:

1st. In the governor, whose duty it is,

1. To endeavour in a special manner for knowledge in God's word, and for holiness of conversation; this would tend much to the preservation of his authority, who otherwise will be slighted and disregarded.

2. To marry in the Lord, and then to live chastely in wedlock, that there may be an holy seed.

3. To beware whom he admits to dwell with him. See David's resolution herein, *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way shall serve me; he that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.*

2d. In the governed, whose duty it is both to join together in the performance of family duties with their governor, and to submit to his government:—*My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother; for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.*

SECT. III.

Of the Duties of Governors in general.

IN the proceedings of these family duties, we are to consider the duties, 1. Of the governors; 2. Of the governed.

1. The governors, if (as it is in marriage) there be more than one, as first, the chief governor, to wit, the husband; secondly, the helper, to wit, the wife: both these owe duties to their families, and duties to one another.

The duties they owe to their families, are,—In general, to the whole: in particular, according to their several relations.

That which in general they owe to the whole family, is both to their bodies and souls.

1. To their bodies; concerning which, saith the apostle, *He that provideth not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

2. To their souls; concerning which, some duties they are to perform to the family, and some to require of the family.

1st. The duties they must perform to them, are—

1. To provide that they may live under the public ministry; for otherwise how should they be brought into the sheepfold of Christ, if they hear not the voice of the Chief Shepherd speaking unto them by those whom he hath sent.

2. To oversee the ways of their families, that they serve God; and as in all other duties, so especially in sanctifying the Sabbath: to this the very words in the fourth commandment bind all masters of families; *Remember thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid:*—where the Lord speaks by name to the governors, as if he would make them overseers of this work of sanctifying of his Sabbaths.

3. To offer prayers and praises to the Lord, morning and evening. This was David's practice; *Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.*

4. To instruct their families privately in matters of religion, that they may not only profess, but feel the power of religion. This duty implies,—

1. A familiar catechizing of them in the principles of religion. Thus were parents commanded of old, *Thou shalt teach these words diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

2. A daily reading of scriptures in their hearing, directing them to mark and to make use of them: so Timothy was trained up by his parents, and that from his childhood.

3. A careful endeavouring that they profit by the public ministry: to this end, they must prepare them to hear the word, by considering God's ordinances, promises, and their own necessities. 2. They must remind them to look into the word for Christ, and for communion with Christ. 3. They must examine them after the ordinance, what they have learned, and what use they can make of it.

2d. The duties they are to require of the family, are both carefully to frequent the public ministry, and diligently to be conversant in the private worship of God, and constantly to practice all holy and christian duties; and they are to require these things, not only by telling them, calling on them, catechizing them, admonishing them; but if they be negligent, by correcting them.

Now this correction must be ministered in wisdom and patience.

1. In wisdom, whose property it is to find out the right party that committed the fault, to consider of what sort the fault is, to weigh circumstances of age, discretion, and occasions; and to look to the mind of the doer, whether negligence or mere simplicity brought him to it.

2. In patience, whose property it is to make the fault manifest to the offender, that his conscience may be touched therewith; to hear what the offender can say in his own defence, and accordingly to allow or disallow; to avoid bitterness, which sooner will harden the heart, than reform the manners of the offender. These rules being observed, and the heart lifted up in prayer to God for direction and blessing, this correction is necessary, as is evident in Gen. xxx. 2. Prov. xiii. 24. xix. 18.

These are the duties that governors owe to families in respect of their souls; to correct them, catechize them, admonish them, call on them, read to them, pray for them.

SECT. IV.

Of the Duties of Parents to their Children.

THE duties in particular which governors owe to the family, according to their relations, are, as parents to their children, or as masters to their servants.

1st. The duties of parents to the bodies of their children, are in many particulars, but may be all comprised under this one head, a provident care for their temporal good.

1. The first age of a child is his infancy, and the first part of his infancy, is while it remaineth in the mother's womb: here the duty lies principally upon the mother, to have a special care of it, that it may be safely brought forth.

The next degree of a child's infancy, is while it is in the swadling-band, and remains a sucking child: in this also the care more especially lies on the mother, whose duty it is to take all pains she possibly may, for the education of her child.

2. The second age of a child is its youth, from the time it begins to be of any discretion, till it be fit to be placed forth: now the duty of parents at this time is, 1. To nourish, and 2. To nurture their children.

Under nourishment, are comprised food, apparel, means for recovery of health when they are sick; in which if parents provide not for their children, *they are worse than infidels*: and under nurture are comprised good manners, a good calling, frequent admonition, reprehension, correction, the last remedy,

which may do good when nothing else can, Prov. xix. 18. xxiii. 13, 14. xxix. 17.

2d. The duty of parents to the souls of their children extends itself also to all times; as, 1. To their infancy, 2. To their youth, 3. To the time of the parents' departure out of this world.

1. The first age of a child is his infancy, and the first part of its infancy is while it remaineth in the mother's womb. Now the duty of parents at that time are these: 1. That they pray for their children: thus did Rebekah, while the children were quick in her womb. Those parents that neglect this duty to their children, consider not rightly that they are conceived in sin.

2. That they make sure, so much as in them lies, that their children be born under the promise, or under the covenant, in respect of the spiritual part of it: how? By making sure that they be under the promise or covenant themselves. If God in Christ be their God, they may have a comfortable hope that God will be the God of their seed, according to the promise, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.*

The next degree of a child's infancy is, when it is born; and the duty of parents then is, to give up their children unto God, casting them into the hands of his providence, into the arms of his mercy, begging for them a gracious acceptation with God; and to tender them to the ordinance, the sacrament of baptism, to get the seal of the covenant set upon them.

2. The second age of a child is its youth: now the duty of parents to their children at this time is, to train them up in true piety, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. To this end,

1. When children begin to read, let them read the holy Scriptures: so was Timothy trained up from a child.

2. Let children be catechized constantly from day to day; only with this caveat, that parents deal with their children as skilful nurses and mothers do in feeding their children, *i. e.* not to give them too much at once; overmuch dulls a child's understanding, and breeds wearisomeness to it. It is most suitable to give them *precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, and there a little*: thus shall they learn with ease and delight, and in time a great measure of knowledge will be gained thereby.

3. Let parents declare to their children, the admirable works that God in former times hath done for his church, especially such works as he hath done in their time. Outward sensible things do best work upon children, and therefore this direction was given under the law, Josh. iv. 6, 21.

4. Let parents be to their children a good pattern, leading them to Christ by their examples: this will take place with children, more than all precepts.

5. Let parents reprove and correct their children for sin; and that the Lord may sanctify this correction unto them, consider this, O ye parents! Do you observe such and such sins in your children? Enter into your own hearts, examine yourselves, whether they come not from you: consider how justly the hand of God may be upon you; and when you are angry with your children, have an holy anger with your own selves, and use this or the like meditation with your own souls: Lord, shall I thus punish my own sin in my child? How then mayest thou be displeased with me for the too carnal conception of my child: it may be, I then lay in some sin, or I asked it not of thee by prayer: be merciful to me, O Lord, and in thy good time shew thou pity on me and my child!

6. As children grow in years, and in the knowledge of Christ, and of justification by Christ, let parents train them up in the exercise of all duties; as prayer, meditation, self-examination, watchfulness, and all means, public and private: if this be done, the world to come may reap the benefit of their education. Such children as you bring up, such parents will they be (when you are gone) to their children.

3d. The last time to which the duty of parents extends itself, is the time of their departure out of the world; and then they owe to their children good direction, and faithful prayer.

1. For direction: when parents observe their time to draw near, it is their duty then especially to commend some wise and wholesome precepts unto their children, the better to direct them in their Christian course. The words of a dying parent are especially regarded, and make a deeper impression.

2. For prayer: then is the most proper time for parents to pray for, and bless all their children. As they commend their own souls unto God's hands, so let them commend their children unto God's grace. God's providence and promises are the best inheritance in the world; and if parents, in their prayers, leave these to their children, they can never want any thing that is good. Oh! the faithful prayers of parents for their children (especially when they are leaving their children and going to God) must needs, in, for, and through Christ, prevail mightily with God.

SECT. V.

Of the Duties of Masters to Servants.

THE duty of masters to their servants, is either to their bodies or to their souls.

1. The duty of masters to the bodies of their servants, consists in these particulars, viz. in a due provision of food for them, Prov. xxxi. 51. and xxvii. 27.—in a wise care for their clothing,

Prov. xxxi. 21.—in a well-ordering of their labour, so as they may be able to undergo it: in their ease, rest, and intermission from labour at seasonable times: in paying them sufficient wages, Deut. xxiv. 14, 15.—in a careful preserving of their health, and using means for their recovery in case of sickness, Mat. viii. 6. and that not of the servant's wages, but of the master's own charge, otherwise they *undo not the heavy burden*, but rather lay burden upon burden.

2. The duty of masters to the souls of their servants consists in these particulars, viz. In teaching them the principles of religion, and all duties of piety;—in causing them to go to the public ministry of the word and worship of God;—in taking account of their profiting by the public and private means of edification;—in praying for them, and, as they observe any grace wrought in them, in praising God for it, and praying for the increase of it.

SECT. VI.

Of the Duties of the Husband and Wife.

THE duties which the chief governor and his helper owe to one another, are either common and mutual, or peculiar to each.

1. The common mutual duties betwixt man and wife, are matrimonial unity, and matrimonial chastity; loving affection of one another: and provident care of one for another.

The former duties presupposed; there ought to be—

1. A loving and tender-hearted pouring out of their hearts, with much affectionate dearness, into each other's bosom. This mutual melting-heartedness, being preserved fresh and fruitful, will infinitely sweeten and beautify the marriage state.—Now for the preservation of this love, let them consider,

1. The compassionate and melting compellations which Christ and his spouse exchange in the Canticles: *My fair one, my love, my dove, my undefiled, my well-beloved, the chief of ten thousand.* Such a fervent and chaste love as this, all married couples should imitate.

2. The command of God; *Husbands, love your wives*, Eph. v. 25. and, *Wives (or young women) love your husbands*, Tit. ii. 4. Methinks this charge, oft remembered, should ever beat back all heart-rising and bitterness, all wicked wishes that they had never met together. When the knot is tied, every man should think his wife the fittest for him, and every wife should think her husband the fittest for her, of any other in the world.

2d. A provident care of one for another; which extends to the body: *No man hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it*: but especially to the soul; in praying together, for, and with one another; in taking notice of the beginning and least

measure of grace, and approving the same; in conferring about such things as concern the same, mutually propounding questions, and giving answers, one to another; in maintaining holy and religious exercises in the family, and betwixt their own-selves, in stirring up one another to hear the word, to receive the sacraments, and to perform all the parts of God's public worship. In case the one prove unconverted, let the other wait and pray, and expect God's good time: or in case the one be a *babe in Christ*, let the other deal lovingly, meekly, and let our Lord Jesus, in his tender-heartedness to spiritual younglings, teach us mercy this way, who is said to *gather the lambs with his arms, and to carry them in his bosom, and gently to lead those that are with young.*

2. The peculiar duties of each are:—

1. Of the husband, whose duty it is—1. that he dearly love his wife;—2. that he wisely maintain and manage his authority over her.

1. No question the wife is to love her husband, and a brother to love his brother, and a friend to love his friend, but more especially is the husband to love his wife. To this purpose she is called, *the wife of his bosom*, to shew that she ought to be as his heart in his bosom. He must love her at all times, he must love her in all things; love must season and sweeten his speech, carriage, actions, towards her; love must shew itself in his commands, reproofs, admonitions, instructions, authority, familiarity with her: the rise of which love must not be from her beauty or nobility, but especially because she is his sister in the Christian religion, and an inheritor with him of the kingdom of heaven; because of her graces and virtues, because she bears him children, the heirs of his name and substance, and because of the union and conjunction of marriage. Love, growing on beauty, riches, lust, or any other slight grounds, soon vanisheth; but if grounded on these considerations, and especially on this union of marriage, it is lasting and true: the want hereof is the fountain of strife, quarrelling, and debate, which converts the paradise of marriage into an hell.

For the manner of this love, the apostle gives it thus, *Husbands, love your own wives, even as Christ also loved the church.* Now the love of Christ to his church, is commended to us in these particulars:—

1. His love was every way free: so should husbands love their wives, though there be nothing in wives to move them, but merely because they are their wives.

2. Christ began it to the church, before the church could love him; so should husbands begin to love their own wives. I know some wives prevent their husbands therein, but the greater is their glory. This pattern of Christ should rather stir up their husbands to go before them.

3. The truth of Christ's love was manifested by the fruits thereof to his church; *he gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle:* so must husbands love their wives in truth, by guiding them in the way of life; for this is the true character of a sincere love.

4. Christ's love is an holy, pure, and chaste love; as he himself is, so is his love: such must be the love of husbands, an holy, pure, and chaste love. Away with all intemperate, excessive, or any ways exorbitant, pollutions of the marriage bed; from which, if the fear of God, imitation of Christ, love of purity, awfulness of God's all-seeing eye, cannot draw; yet that horror, lest God should punish such a couple with no children, or misshapen children, or with idiots, or wicked children, or with some other heavy cross, one would think should be able to affright them.

5. Christ *having loved his own, loved them unto the end.* Such must be the love of husbands, a firm love, an inviolable love: the ground of it must be God's ordinance, and the support of it must be an inviolable resolution, that no provocation shall ever change it. Husbands must pass by all infirmities, endeavouring in love to redress them, if possibly they can, or, if not, to bear with them.

The second duty of a husband, is, wisely to maintain and manage his authority: now the management of it consists in two things:—

1. That he tenderly respect her.

2. That he carefully provide for her.

1st. He must tenderly respect her, as his wife, companion, yoke-fellow, as his delight, and the desire of his eyes, and never be bitter against her. This bitterness ordinarily turneth the edge of his authority; if therefore any matter of unkindness arise, as sometimes certainly it will, then must he carefully, with all gentleness and patience, quiet all; and never suffer himself nor his wife to sleep in displeasure. *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath:* or if he shall have occasion to reprove her, he must keep his words until a convenient time, not in presence of others, and then in the spirit of meekness and love. Surely, if she be not corrected by a word of wisdom, she will never amend by threats or rigorous carriage; and if she once begin to lose her shamefacedness in the presence of her husband, it is likely there will be often quarrels betwixt them, and the house will be full of disquietness: it is best therefore to deal wisely with her, to admonish her often, to reprehend her seldom, never to lay violent hands on her; if she be dutiful, to cherish her, that she may so continue; if wayward, mildly to suffer her, that she wax not worse.

2d. He must carefully provide for her; to this purpose he is

called her head, as Christ is head of the church. The head, you know, is the fountain of motion, quickening, life, to the body; so should the husband be as the well-spring of liveliness, light-someness, light-heartedness, to his wife: she hath forsook all for him, and therefore she should receive from him a continual influence of cheerful walking, and comfortable enjoying herself.

2. The duties proper to the wife, are these:—

1. That she be in submission to her husband.

2. That she be an helper to him all her days.

1st. *Wives must be in subjection to their own husbands.* Sarah obeyed Abraham, and called him lord. But here is a case of conscience:

1. What if her husband be *a son of Belial*, and an enemy to Christ, must she then yield subjection? Yes, because in his office her husband is as in Christ's stead. The church is compared to a lily among thorns, she remains lily-like, white, soft, pleasant and amiable, though she be joined with thorns, which are prickly and sharp: so a wife must be meek, mild, gentle, obedient, though she be matched with a crooked, perverse, and wicked husband: she must, in this case, remove her eyes from the disposition of her husband's person to the condition of his place, and by virtue thereof, seeing he beareth Christ's image, be subject unto him as unto Christ.

2. What if her husband command things contrary to Christ, must she therein be subject? No, *submit as unto the Lord*: if she submits to things contrary to Christ, she submits not as to the Lord. Conscientious wives must remember they have an husband in heaven, as well as on earth, betwixt whom there is a greater difference than betwixt heaven and earth; and therefore in case they bid contrary things, they must prefer God before man, Christ before all men.

2d. *Wives must be helpers to their husbands.* Now this helpfulness consists in these things:

1. That she be careful to preserve his person, in sickness or health, in adversity or prosperity, in youth or old age.

2. That she learn and labour to forecast, contrive and manage household affairs; for which see a glorious pattern in Prov xxxi.

3. That she may help her husband, in erecting and establishing Christ's glorious kingdom in their house, and especially in their own hearts. This is that one necessary thing, without which their family is but Satan's seminary, and a nursery for hell. This will marvellously sweeten all reproaches cast upon them by envenomed tongues; this will sweetly seal unto them their assurance of meeting together in heaven.

Thus much of the duties of governors, we now come to the governed.

SECT. VII.

Of Duties of Children to Parents.

1. THE inward duties which children owe to their parents, are love and fear: love, like sugar, sweetens fear; and fear, like salt, seasons love. There must be a loving fear, and a fearing love. Hence the fear of a child is opposed to the fear of a slave: for a child's fear being mixed with love, hath respect to the offence which a parent may take; but a slave's fear, which is ordinarily mixed with hatred, hath respect to nothing but the punishment which his master may inflict upon him. This love-like fear is so proper to children, that the awful respect which the saints bear to God, is called a filial fear. Children have received their substance from the very substance of their parents, and therefore they are to perform this duty of love and fear to them.

2. The outward duties, or the manifestation of this love and fear in children, appears,

1. In their reverence, in speech and carriage. They must give to their parents reverend and holy titles, meek and humble speeches, obeisance as becomes their age and sex. Thus Joseph and Solomon bowed, the one to his father, and the other to his mother. Contrary thereto is mocking and despising father and mother; of which said Solomon, *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out.* A phrase that sets forth the end of a notorious malefactor, that is hanged in the air till the ravens pick out his eyes.

2. In their obedience to the commands, instructions, reproofs, and corrections, of their parents, Eph. vi. 1. Prov. i. 8, 9. The reason is, because of God, whom the father represents: children must remember, that whatsoever they do to their parents, they do it to God; when they disobey them, they disobey God; when they please them, they please God; when their parents are justly angry with them, God is angry with them, nor can they recover God's favour, though all the saints of heaven should entreat for them, till they have submitted themselves to their parents, only with this limitation, that they *submit or obey them in the Lord*, Eph. vi. 1.

3. In their recompense. This is a duty whereby children endeavour, as much as in them lies, to repay what they can for their parents' kindness, care, and cost towards them, in way of thankfulness. In sickness, they must visit them; in want, they must provide for them; in time of danger, they must endeavour their protection.

SECT. VIII.

Of the Duties of Servants to their Masters.

DUTIES of servants to their masters, are either inward, as fear; or outward, as reverence and obedience.

1. The inward duty is fear: *Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, and account them worthy of all honour.* So proper is this fear to a servant, that where it is wanting, there is a plain denial of his master's place and power. *If I be a master, where is my fear?* said God. I mean not slavish fear, as when a servant fears nothing but the revenging power of his master; but an awful fear of provoking his master, so that it makes him consider every way how he may please him; and such a fear draws him on cheerfully to perform his duty.

2. Outward duties which issue from this fear, are reverence and obedience.

1. Reverence, which is manifested in speech and carriage. Thus servants must give reverend titles to their masters, as father, lord, and master, &c. They must yield obeisance to them; as the children of the prophets, when they saw that the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha, *came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.*

2. Obedience, which hath respect to the commands, instructions, reproofs, and corrections, of their masters, 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19, 20. But here is a case or two of conscience.

1. How far they must obey; or what is the extent of servants' obedience to masters. The apostle answers, *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh.* It is not sufficient that servants perform well their duties in some things; they must do it in all things; yea, in things that may be against their own liking, if their masters will have it so. Like as Peter, when Christ bid him launch out into the deep, and let down his net for a draught, he answered, *Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net.* So must servants say, when they have a peremptory command, though contrary to their own judgments, 'This or that, in all humility, I suppose; nevertheless, at your word I will let down the net, I will do as you please.'

2. But what if God and a master should command contrary things? In such a case, the apostle sets down an excellent limitation in these four phrases, 1. *As unto Christ.* 2. *As the servants of Christ.* 3. *Doing the will of God.* 4. *As to the Lord.* All these imply, that if masters command their servants any thing contrary to Christ, they may not yield to it: upon this ground the midwives of the Hebrew women would not kill the Hebrew children; they feared God, saith the text, and did not as the king commanded them. In this case, Joseph is commended in

not hearkening to his mistress; and the servants of Saul are commended for refusing to slay the Lord's priests at their master's command. When masters command or forbid any thing against God and Christ, they go beyond their commission, and their authority ceaseth; so that servants may say, *We ought to obey God rather than man.*

I have now run through the family, and informed you of the duties, both of governors and governed.—Christians! look within you, look about you; that man is not a good man, that is not good in all his relations. The same God that requires us to serve him as private persons, requires us to serve him in our relations; and therefore though you be never so careful of your duty in the former respect, yet you may go to hell for neglecting your duties as masters, servants, husbands, wives, parents, or children. Though if you should be good in one relation, yet if you endeavour not to be good in every relation, you shall never go to heaven; for the same God that commands you to serve him as a master, commands you to serve him as a father, as an husband. *And he that keeps the whole law, and offends in one point, is guilty of all.*

