

low through all the Papal kingdom do discover? Though the pride, and covetousness, and wickedness of a worldly, carnal clergy, is a very great cause, yet the sinful negligence of parents and masters in their families is as great, if not much greater than that. Do you wonder that even in the reformed churches, there can be so many unreformed sinners, of beastly lives, that hate the serious practice of the religion which themselves profess? It is ill education in ungodly families that is the cause of all this. O therefore how great and necessary a work is it, to cast salt into these corrupted fountains! Cleanse and cure these vitiated families, and you may cure almost all the calamities of the earth. To tell what the emperors and princes of the earth might do, if they were wise and good, to the remedy of this common misery, is the idle talk of those negligent persons, who condemn themselves in condemning others. Even those rulers and princes that are the pillars and patrons of heathenism, Mahometanism, Popery, and ungodliness in the world, did themselves receive that venom from their parents, in their birth and education, which inclineth them to all this mischief. Family reformation is the easiest and the most likely way to a common reformation: at least to send many souls to heaven, and train up multitudes for God, if it reach not to national reformation.

CHAPTER VI.

More special Motives for a Holy and Careful Education of Children.

BECAUSE the chief part of family care and government consisteth in the right education of children, I shall adjoin here some more special Motives to quicken considerate parents to this duty: and though most that I have to say for it be already said in my "Saints' Rest," Part iii. Chap. 14. Sect. 11. &c., and therefore shall be here omitted, yet something shall be inserted, lest the want here should appear too great.

Motive 1. 'Consider how deeply nature itself doth engage you to the greatest care and diligence for the holy education of your children.' They are, as it were, parts of

yourselves, and those that nature teacheth you to love and provide for, and take most care for, next yourselves: and will you be regardless of their chief concernments? and neglective of their souls? Will you no other way shew your love to your children, than every beast or bird will to their young, to cherish them till they can go abroad and shift for themselves, for corporal sustenance? It is not dogs or beasts that you bring into the world, but children that have immortal souls; and therefore it is a care and education suitable to their natures which you owe them: even such as conduceth most effectually to the happiness of their souls. Nature teacheth them some natural things without you, as it doth the bird to fly; but it hath committed it to your trust and care to teach them the greatest and most necessary things: if you should think that you have nothing to do but to feed them, and leave all the rest to nature, then they would not learn to speak: and if nature itself would condemn you, if you teach them not to speak, it will much more condemn you, if you teach them not to understand both what they ought to speak and do. They have an everlasting inheritance of happiness to attain: and it is that which you must bring them up for. They have an endless misery to escape: and it is that which you must diligently teach them. If you teach them not to escape the flames of hell, what thanks do they owe you for teaching them to speak and go? If you teach them not the way to heaven and how they may make sure of their salvation, what thanks do they owe you for teaching them how to get their livings a little while in a miserable world? If you teach them not to know God, and how to serve him, and be saved, you teach them nothing, or worse than nothing. It is in your hands to do them the greatest kindness or cruelty in all the world: help them to know God and to be saved, and you do more for them than if you helped them to be lords or princes: if you neglect their souls, and breed them in ignorance, worldliness, ungodliness and sin, you betray them to the devil, the enemy of souls; even as truly as if you sold them to him; you sell them to be slaves to satan; you betray them to him that will deceive them and abuse them in this life, and torment them in the next. If you saw but a burning furnace, much more the flames of hell, would you not think that man or

woman more fit to be called a devil than a parent, that could find in their hearts to cast their child into it, or to put him into the hands of one that would do it? What monsters then of inhumanity are you, that read in Scripture which is the way to hell, and who they be that God will deliver up to satan, to be tormented by him; and yet will bring up your children in that very way, and will not take pains to save them from it? What a stir do you make to provide them food and raiment, and a competent maintenance in the world when you are dead! And how little pains take you to prepare their souls for the heavenly inheritance! If you seriously believe that there are such joys or torments for your children (and yourselves) as soon as death removeth you hence, is it possible that you should take this for the least of their concernments, and make it the least and last of your cares, to assure them of an endless happiness? If you love them, shew it in those things on which their everlasting welfare doth depend. Do not say you love them, and yet lead them unto hell. If you love them not, yet be not so unmerciful to them as to damn them: it is not your saying, 'God forbid,' and 'we hope better,' that will make it better, or be any excuse to you. What can you do more to damn them, if you studied to do it as maliciously as the devil himself? You cannot possibly do more, than to bring them up in ignorance, carelessness, worldliness, sensuality and ungodliness. The devil can do nothing else to damn either them or you, but by tempting to sin, and drawing you from godliness. There is no other way to hell. No man is damned for any thing but this. And yet will you bring them up in such a life, and say, 'God forbid, we do not desire to damn them?' But it is no wonder; when you do by your children but as you do by yourselves; who can look that a man should be reasonable for his child, that is so unreasonable for himself? Or that those parents should have any mercy on their children's souls, that have no mercy on their own? You desire not to damn yourselves, but yet you do it, if you live ungodly lives: and so you will do by your children if you train them up in ignorance of God, and in the service of the flesh and world. You do like one that should set fire on his house, and say, 'God forbid, I intend not to burn it:' or like one that casteth his child into the sea, and saith, he in-

tendeth not to drown him ; or traineth him up in robbing or thievery, and saith, he intendeth not to have him hanged ; but if you intend to make a thief of him, it is all one in effect, as if you intended his hanging ; for the law determineth it, and the judge will intend it. So if you intend to train up your children in ungodliness, as if they had no God, nor souls to mind, you may as well say, you intend to have them damned. And were not an enemy, yea, and is not the devil more excusable, for dealing thus cruelly by your children, than you that are their parents, that are bound by nature to love them, and prevent their misery ? It is odious in ministers that take the charge of souls, to betray them by negligence, and be guilty of their everlasting misery ; but in parents it is more unnatural, and therefore more inexcusable.

Motive II. ‘ Consider that God is the Lord and owner of your children, both by the title of creation and redemption : therefore in justice you must resign them to him, and educate them for him.’ Otherwise you rob God of his own creatures, and rob Christ of those for whom he died, and this to give them to the devil, the enemy of God and them. It was not the world, or the flesh, or the devil that created them, or redeemed them, but God ; and it is not possible for any right to be built upon a fuller title, than to make them of nothing, and redeem them from a state far worse than nothing. And after all this, shall the very parents of such children steal them from their absolute Lord and Father, and sell them to slavery and torment ?

Motive III. ‘ Remember that in their baptism you did dedicate them to God ; you entered them into a solemn vow and covenant, to be wholly his, and to live to him.’ Therein they renounced the flesh, the world and the devil ; therein you promised to bring them up virtuously to lead a godly and Christian life, that they might obediently keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their lives. And after all this, will you break so solemn a promise, and cause them to break such a vow and covenant, by bringing them up in ignorance and ungodliness ? Did you understand and consider what you then did ? How solemnly you yourselves engaged them in a vow to God, to live a mortified and holy life ? And will you

so solemnly do that in an hour, which all their life after with you, you will endeavour to destroy ?

Motive 1v. ‘ Consider how great power the education of children hath upon all their following lives ;’ except nature and grace, there is nothing that usually doth prevail so much with them. Indeed the obstinacy of natural viciousness doth often frustrate a good education ; but if any means be like to do good, it is this ; but ill education is more constantly successful, to make them evil. This cherisheth those seeds of wickedness which spring up when they come to age ; this maketh so many to be proud, and idle, and flesh-pleasers, and licentious, and lustful, and covetous, and all that is naught. And he hath a hard task that cometh after to root out these vices, which an ungodly education hath so deeply radicated. Ungodly parents do serve the devil so effectually in the first impressions on their children’s minds, that it is more than magistrates and ministers and all reforming means can afterwards do, to recover them from that sin to God. Whereas if you would first engage their hearts to God by a religious education, piety would then have all those advantages, that sin hath now. “ Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it^a.” The language which you teach them to speak when they are children, they will use all their life after, if they live with those that use it. And so the opinions which they first receive, and the customs which they are used to at first, are very hardly changed afterward. I doubt not to affirm, that a godly education is God’s first and ordinary appointed means, for the begetting of actual faith, and other graces in the children of believers : many may have seminal grace before, but they cannot sooner have actual faith, repentance, love, or any grace, than they have reason itself in act and exercise. And the preaching of the Word by public ministers is not the first ordinary means of grace, to any but those that were graceless till they come to hear such preaching ; that is, to those on whom the first appointed means hath been neglected, or proved in vain : that is, it is but the second means, to do that which was not done by the first. The proof is undeniable : because God appointeth parents diligently to teach their children the doctrine of his

^a Prov. xxii 6.

holy Word, before they come to the public ministry: parents' teaching is the first teaching: and parents' teaching is for this end, as well as public teaching, even to beget faith, and love, and holiness: and God appointeth no means to be used by us, on which we may not expect his blessing. Therefore it is apparent, that the ordinary appointed means for the first actual grace, is parents' godly instruction and education of their children. And public preaching is appointed for the conversion of those only that have missed the blessing of the first appointed means. Therefore if you deny your children religious education, you deny them the first appointed means of their actual faith and sanctification; and then the second cometh upon disadvantage.

Motive v. 'Consider also how many and great are your advantages above all others for your children's good.' As 1. Nothing doth take so much with any one, as that which is known to come from love: the greater love is discerned in your instruction, the greater success may you expect. Now your children are more confident of their parents' love, than of any others; whether ministers and strangers speak to them in love, they cannot tell; but of their parents' love they make no doubt. 2. And their love to you is as great a preparative to your success. We all hearken to them that we dearly love, with greater attention and willingness than to others. They love not the minister as they do their parents. 3. You have them in hand betime, before they have received any false opinions, or bad impressions: before they have any sin but that which was born with them: you are to make the first impressions upon them: you have them while they are most teachable, and flexible, and tender, and make least resistance against instruction: they rise not up at first against your teaching with self-conceitedness and proud objections. But when they come to the minister, they are as paper that is written on or printed before, unapt to receive another impression; they have much to be untaught, before they can be taught: and come with proud and stiff resistance, to strive against instruction, rather than readily to receive it. 4. Your children wholly depend on you for their present maintenance, and much for their future livelihood and portions: and therefore they know that it is their interest to obey and please you; and as interest is the

common bias of the world, so is it with your children; you may more easily rule them that have this handle to hold them by, than any other can do that have not this advantage. They know they serve you not for nought. 5. Your authority over your children is most unquestionable. They will dispute the authority of ministers, yea, and of magistrates, and ask them who gave them the power to teach them, and to command them? But the parent's authority is beyond all dispute. They will not call you tyrants or usurpers, nor bid you prove the validity of your ordination, or the uninterruptedness of your succession. Therefore father and mother as the first natural power, are mentioned rather than kings or queens in the fifth commandment. 6. You have the power of the rod to force them. "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him^b." And your correction will be better understood to come from love, than that of the magistrate or any other. 7. You have best opportunity to know both the diseases and temperature of your children: which is a great advantage for the choosing and applying of the best remedy. 8. You have opportunity of watching over them, and discerning all their faults in time: but if a minister speak to them, he can know no more what fault to reprehend, than others tell him, or the party will confess. You may also discern what success your former exhortations had, and whether they amend or still go on in sin, and whether you should proceed to more severe remedies. 9. You have opportunity of speaking to them in the most familiar manner; which is better understood than the set speech of a minister in the pulpit, which few of them mark or understand. You can quicken their attention by questions which put them upon answering you, and so awaken them to a serious regard of what you say. 10. You are so frequently with them, that you can repeat your instructions, and drive them home, that what is not done at one time, may be done at another: whereas other men can seldom speak to them, and what is so seldom spoken is easily neglected or forgotten. 11. You have power to place them under the best means, and to remove many impediments out of their way which usually frustrate other men's endeavours.

^b Prov. xxii. 15.

12. Your example is near them and continually in their sight, which is a continual and powerful sermon. By all these advantages God hath enabled you above all others, to be instruments of your children's good, and the first and greatest promoters of their salvation.

Motive VI. 'Consider how great a comfort it would be to you, to have your children such as you may confidently hope are the children of God, being brought to know him, and love, and serve him, through your own endeavours in a pious education of them.' 1. You may love your children upon an higher account than as they are yours; even as they are God's, adorned with his image, and quickened with a divine celestial life; and this is to love them with a higher kind of love, than mere natural affection is. It would rejoice you to see your children advanced to be lords or princes; but O how much greater cause of joy is it, to see them made the members of Christ, and quickened by his Spirit, and sealed up for life eternal? 2. When once your children are made the children of God, by the regeneration of the Spirit, you may be much more free from care and trouble for them than before. Now you may boldly trust them on the care of your heavenly Father, who is able to do more for them than you are able to desire: he loveth them better than you can love them: he is bound by promise to protect them, and provide for them, and to see that all things work together for their good. He that cloatheth the lilies of the fields, and suffereth not the young lions or ravens to be unprovided for, will provide convenient food for his own children, (though he will have you also do your duty for them, as they are your children). While they are the children of satan, and the servants of sin, you have cause to fear, not only lest they be exposed to miseries in this world, but much more lest they be snatched away in their sin to hell: your children while they are ungodly are worse than among wolves and tigers. But when once they are renewed by the Spirit of Christ, they are the charge of all the blessed Trinity, and under God the charge of angels: living or dying they are safe: for the eternal God is their portion and defence. 3. It may be a continual comfort to you to think what a deal of drudgery and calamity your child is freed from: to think how many oaths he would have sworn, and

how many lies and curses he would have uttered, and how beastly and fleshly a life he would have lived, how much wrong he would have done to God and men, and how much he would have pleased the devil, and what torments in hell he must have endured as the reward of all; and then to think how mercifully God hath prevented all this; and what service he may do God in the world, and finally live with Christ in glory: what a joy is this to a considering, believing parent, that taketh the mercies of his children as his own? 4. Religion will teach your children to be more dutiful to yourselves, than nature can teach them. It will teach them to love you, even when you have no more to give them, as well as if you had the wealth of all the world: it will teach them to honour you, though you are poor and contemptible in the eyes of others. It will teach them to obey you, and if you fall into want, to relieve you according to their power: it will fit them to comfort you in the time of your sickness and distress; when ungodly children will be as thorns in your feet and eyes, or cut your hearts, and prove a greater grief than any enemies to you. A gracious child will bear with your weaknesses, when a Ham will not cover his father's nakedness: a gracious child can pray for you, and pray with you, and be a blessing to your house; when an ungodly child is fitter to curse, and prove a curse to those he lives with. 5. And is it not an exceeding joy to think of the everlasting happiness of your child? and that you may live together in heaven for ever? When the foreseen misery of a graceless child may grieve you whenever you look him in the face. 6. Lastly, it will be a great addition to your joy, to think that God blessed your diligent instructions, and made you the instrument of all that good that is done upon your children, and of all that good that is done by them, and of all the happiness they have for ever. To think that this was conveyed to them by your means, will give you a larger share in the delights of it.

Motive VII. 'Remember that your children's original sin and misery is by you; and therefore in justice you that have undone them, are bound to do your best to save them.' If you had but conveyed a leprosy, or some hereditary disease to their bodies, would you not have done your best to cure them? O that you could do them but as much good as you

do them hurt! It is more than Adam's sin that runneth down into the natures of your children, yea, and that bringeth judgments on them: and even Adam's sin cometh not to them but by you.

Motive VIII. Lastly, 'Consider what exceeding great need they have of the utmost help you can afford them.' It is not a corporal disease, an easy enemy, a tolerable misery, that we call unto you for their help: but it is against sin, and satan, and hell-fire. It is against a body of sin: not one, but many; not small, but pernicious, having seized on the heart: deep-rooted sins, that are not easily plucked up. All the teaching, and diligence, and watchfulness that you can use, is little enough, and may prove too little. They are obstinate vices that have possessed them: they are not quickly nor easily cast out: and the remnants and roots are apt to be still springing up again, when you thought they had been quite destroyed: O then what wisdom and diligence is requisite to so great and necessary a work!

And now let me seriously speak to the hearts of those careless and ungodly parents, that neglect the holy education of their children: yea, and to those professors of godliness, that slubber over so great a work with a few customary formal duties and words, that are next to a total omission of it. O be not so unmerciful to the souls that you have helped to bring into the world! Think not so basely of them, as if they were not worth your labour. Make not your children so like your beasts, as to make no provision but only for their flesh. Remember still that it is not beasts but men, that you have begotten and brought forth: educate them then and use them as men for the love and obedience of their Maker: O pity and help the souls that you have defiled and undone! Have mercy on the souls that must perish in hell, if they be not saved in this day of salvation! O help them that have so many enemies to assault them! Help them that have so many temptations to pass through; and so many difficulties to overcome; and so severe a judgment to undergo! Help them that are so weak, and so easily deceived and overthrown! Help them speedily while your advantages continue; before sin have hardened them, and grace have forsaken them, and satan place a stronger garrison in their hearts. Help them while they are tractable, before they are grown up to despise your

help : before you and they are separated asunder, and your opportunities be at an end. You think not your pains from year to year, too much to make provision for their bodies : O be not cruel to their souls ! Sell them not to satan, and that for naught ! Betray them not by your ungodly negligence to hell. Or if any of them will perish, let it not be by you, that are so much bound to do them good : the undoing of your children's souls is a work much fitter for satan, than for their parents. Remember how comfortable a thing it is, to work with Christ for the saving of souls. You think the calling of ministers honourable and happy ; and so it is, because they serve Christ in so high a work : but if you will not neglect it, you may do for your children more than any minister can do. This is your preaching place : here God calleth you to exercise your parts ; even in the holy instruction of your families : your charge is small in comparison of the minister's, he hath many hundred souls to watch over, that are scattered all abroad the parish : and will you think it much to instruct and watch over those few of your own that are under your roof ? You can speak odiously of unfaithful, soul-betraying ministers ; and do you not consider how odious a soul-betraying parent is ? If God intrust you but with earthly talents, take heed how you use them, for you must be accountable for your trust ; and when he hath intrusted you with souls, even your children's souls, will you betray them ? If any rulers should but forbid you the instructing and well-governing of your families, and restrain you by a law, as they would have restrained Daniel from praying in his house^c, then you would think them monsters of impiety and inhumanity : and you would cry out of a satanical persecution, that would make men traitors to their children's souls, and drive away all religion from the earth. And yet how easily can you neglect such duties, when none forbid them you, and never accuse yourselves of any such horrid impiety or inhumanity ? What hypocrisy, and blind partiality is this ? Like a lazy minister that would cry out of persecution, if he were silenced by others, and yet will not be provoked to be laborious, but ordinarily by his slothfulness silence himself, and make no such matter of it : would it be so heinous a sin in another

^c Dan. vi.

to restrain you? And is it not as heinous for you, that are so much obliged to it, voluntarily to restrain yourselves? O then deny not this necessary diligence to your necessitous children, as you love their souls, as you love the happiness of the church or commonwealth, as you love the honour and interest of Christ, and as you love your present and everlasting peace. Do not see your children the slaves of satan here, and the firebrands of hell for ever, if any diligence of yours may contribute to prevent it. Do not give conscience such matter of accusation against you, as to say, 'All this was long of thee! If thou hadst instructed them diligently, and watched over them, and corrected them, and done thy part, it is like they had never come to this.' You till your fields; you weed your gardens: what pains take you about your grounds and cattle? And will you not take more for your children's souls? Alas, what creatures will they be if you leave them to themselves? How ignorant, careless, rude and beastly? O what a lamentable case have ungodly parents brought the world into? Ignorance and selfishness, beastly sensuality, and devilish malignity have covered the face of the earth as a deluge, and driven away wisdom, and self-denial, and piety, and charity, and justice, and temperance almost out of the world, confining them to the breasts of a few obscure humble souls, that love virtue for virtue's sake, and look for their reward from God alone, and expect that by abstaining from iniquity, they make themselves a prey to wolves^d. Wicked education hath unmanned the world, and subdued it to satan, and made it almost like to hell. O do not join with the sons of Belial in this unnatural, horrid wickedness!

CHAPTER VII.

The mutual Duties of Husbands and Wives towards each other.

It is the pernicious subversion of all societies, and so of the world, that selfish, ungodly persons enter into all relations with a desire to serve themselves there, and fish out all that gratifieth their flesh, but without any sense of the

^d Isa. lix. 15.