

will be well satisfied; a better appetite would help their reason. If God should say in general to all men, You shall eat as often as will do you good: the sick stomach would say, Once a day, and that but a little, is enough, and as much as God requireth; when another would say, Thrice a day is little enough. A good and healthful heart is a great help, in the expounding of God's Word, especially of his general commandments. That which men love not, but are weary of, they will not easily believe to be their duty. The new nature, and holy love, and desires, and experience of a sound believer, do so far make all these reasonings needless to him, that I must confess I have written them principally to convince the carnal hypocrite, and to stop the mouths of wrangling enemies.

CHAPTER IV.

General Directions for the holy Government of Families.

THE principal thing requisite to the right governing of families is the fitness of the governors and the governed thereto, which is spoken of before in the Directions for the Constitution. But if persons unfit for their relations, have joined themselves together in a family, their first duty is to repent of their former sin and rashness, and presently to turn to God, and seek after that fitness which is necessary to the right discharge of the duties of their several places: and in the governors of families, these three things are of greatest necessity hereunto. I. Authority. II. Skill. III. Holiness and readiness of will.

I. *Gen. Direct.* 'Let governors maintain their authority in their families.' For if once that be lost, and you are despised by those you should rule, your word will be of no effect with them; you do but ride without a bridle; your power of governing is gone, when your authority is lost. And here you must first understand the nature, use, and extent of your authority: for as your relations are different to your wife, your children and your servants, so also is your

authority. Your authority over your wife, is but such as is necessary to the order of your family, the safe and prudent management of your affairs, and your comfortable cohabitation. The power of love and complicated interest must do more than magisterial commands. Your authority over your children is much greater; but yet only such as conjunct with love, is needful to their good education and felicity. Your authority over your servants is to be measured by your contract with them (in these countries where there are no slaves) in order to your service, and the honour of God. In other matters, or to other ends you have no authority over them. For the maintaining of this your authority observe these following sub-directions.

Direct. I. 'Let your family understand that your authority is of God, who is the God of order, and that in obedience to him they are obliged to obey you.' There is no power but of God: and there is none that the intelligent creature can so much reverence as that which is of God. All bonds are easily broken and cast away (by the soul at least, if not by the body), which are not perceived to be Divine. An enlightened conscience will say to ambitious usurpers, God I know, and his Son Jesus I know, but who are ye?

Direct. II. 'The more of God appeareth upon you, in your knowledge, and holiness, and unblamableness of life, the greater will your authority be in the eyes of all your inferiors that fear God.' Sin will make you contemptible and vile; and holiness, being the image of God, will make you honourable. In the eyes of the faithful a 'vile person is contemned; but they honour them that fear the Lord^a.' "Righteousness exalteth a nation," (and a person) "but sin is a reproach to any people^b." "Those that honour God he will honour, and those that despise him shall be lightly esteemed^c." They that give up themselves to "vile affections" and conversations^d, will seem vile when they have made themselves so. "Eli's sons made themselves vile by their sin^e." I know men should discern and honour a person placed in authority by God, though they are morally and naturally vile: but this is so hard that it is seldom

^a Psal. xv. 4.^b Prov. xiv. 34.^c 1 Sam. ii. 30.^d Rom. i. 25.^e 1 Sam. iii. 13.

well done. And God is so severe against proud offenders, that he usually punisheth them by making them vile in the eyes of others; at least when they are dead and men dare freely speak of them, their names will rot^f. The instances of the greatest emperors in the world, both Persian, Roman and Turkish do tell us, that if (by whoredom, drunkenness, gluttony, pride, and especially persecution) they will make themselves vile, God will permit them by uncovering their nakedness, to become the shame and scorn of men; and shall a wicked master of a family think to maintain his authority over others, while he rebelleth against the authority of God?

Direct. III. 'Shew not your natural weakness by passions, or imprudent words or deeds.' For if they think contemptuously of your persons, a little thing will draw them further, to despise your words. There is naturally in man so high an esteem of reason, that men are hardly persuaded that they should rebel against reason to be governed (for order's sake) by folly. They are very apt to think that rightest reason should bear rule. And therefore any silly, weak expressions, or any inordinate passions, or any imprudent actions, are very apt to make you contemptible in your inferiors' eyes.

Direct. IV. 'Lose not your authority by a neglect of using it.' If you suffer children and servants but a little while to have the head, and to have, and say, and do what they will, your government will be but a name or image. A moderate course between a lordly rigour, and a soft subjection, or neglect of exercising the power of your place, will best preserve you from your inferiors' contempt.

Direct. V. 'Lose not your authority by too much familiarity.' If you make your children and servants your play-fellows, or equals, and talk to them, and suffer them to talk to you as your companions, they will quickly grow upon you, and hold their custom; and though another may govern them, they will scarce ever endure to be governed by you, but will scorn to be subject, where they have once been as equal.

II. *Gen. Direct.* 'Labour for prudence and skilfulness in governing.' He that undertaketh to be a master of a fa-

^f Prov. x. 7.

mily, undertaketh to be their governor; and it is no small sin or folly to undertake such a place, as you are utterly unfit for, when it is a matter of so great importance. You could discern this in a case that is not your own; as if a man undertake to be a schoolmaster that cannot read or write; or to be a physician, who knoweth neither diseases nor their remedies; or to be a pilot that cannot tell how to do a pilot's work; and why cannot you much more discern it in your own case?

Direct. 1. 'To get the skill of holy governing, it is needful that you be well studied in the Word of God:' therefore God commandeth kings themselves that "they read in the law all the days of their lives^s;" and that "it depart not out of their mouths, but that they meditate in it day and night^h. And all parents must be able to "teach it their children, and talk of it both at home and abroad, lying down and rising upⁱ." All government of men is but subservient to the government of God, to promote obedience to his laws. And it is necessary that we understand the laws which all laws and precepts must give place to and subserve.

Direct. 11. 'Understand well the different tempers of your inferiors, and deal with them as they are, and as they can bear; and not with all alike.' Some are more intelligent and some more dull: some are of tender, and some of hardened dispositions; some will be best wrought upon by love and gentleness; and some have need of sharpness and severity: prudence must fit your dealings to their dispositions.

Direct. 111. 'You must put much difference between their different faults, and accordingly suit your reprehensions.' Those must be most severely rebuked that have most wilfulness, and those that are faulty in matters of greatest weight. Some faults are so much through mere disability and unavoidable frailty of the flesh, that there is but little of the will appearing in them. These must be more gently handled, as deserving more compassion than reproof. Some are habituate vices, and the whole nature is more desperately depraved than in others. These must have more than a particular correction. They must be held to

^s Deut. xvii. 18, 19.

^h Josh. i. 8.

ⁱ Deut. vi. 6, 7. xi. 18, 19.

such a course of life, as may be most effectual to destroy and change those habits. And some there are upright at the heart, and in the main and most momentous things, are guilty but of some actual faults; and of these, some more seldom, and some more frequent; and if you do not prudently diversify your rebukes according to their faults, you will but harden them, and miss of your ends: for there is a family-justice that must not be overthrown, unless you will overthrow your families: as there is a more public justice necessary to the public good.

Direct. iv. 'Be a good husband to your wife, and a good father to your children, and a good master to your servants, and let love have dominion in all your government, that your inferiors may easily find, that it is their interest to obey you.' For interest and self-love are the natural rulers of the world. And it is the most effectual way to procure obedience or any good, to make men perceive that it is for their own good, and to engage self-love for you; that they may see that the benefit is like to be their own. If you do them no good, but are sour, and uncourteous, and close-handed to them, few will be ruled by you.

Direct. v. 'If you would be skilful in governing others, learn first exactly to command yourselves.' Can you ever expect to have others more at your will and government than yourselves? Is he fit to rule his family in the fear of God and a holy life, who is unholy and feareth not God himself? Or is he fit to keep them from passion or drunkenness, or gluttony, or lust, or any way of sensuality, that cannot keep himself from it? Will not inferiors despise such reproofs which are by yourselves contradicted in your lives? You know this true of wicked preachers; and is it not as true of other governors?

III. *Gen. Direct.* 'You must be holy persons, if you would be holy governors of your families.' Men's actions follow the bent of their dispositions. They will do as they are. An enemy of God will not govern a family for God: nor an enemy of holiness (nor a stranger to it) set up a holy order in his house, and in a holy manner manage his affairs. I know it is cheaper and easier to the flesh to call others to mortification and holiness of life, than to bring ourselves to it: but yet when it is not a bare command or wish that is

necessary, but a course of holy and industrious government, unholy persons (though some of them may go far) have not the ends and principles which such a work requireth.

Direct. I. 'To this end, be sure that your own souls be entirely subjected to God, and that you more accurately obey his laws, than you expect any inferior should obey your commands.' If you dare disobey God, why should they fear disobeying you? Can you more severely revenge disobedience; or more bountifully reward obedience, than God can do? Are you greater and better than God himself is?

Direct. II. 'Be sure that you lay up your treasure in heaven, and make the enjoyment of God in glory to be the ultimate commanding end, both of the affairs and government of your family, and all things else with which you are intrusted.' Devote yourselves and all to God, and do all for him: do all as passengers to another world, whose business on earth is but to provide for heaven, and promote their everlasting interest. If thus you are separated unto God, you are sanctified: and then you will separate all that you have to his use and service, and this, with his acceptance, will sanctify all.

Direct. III. 'Maintain God's authority in your family more carefully than your own.' Your own is but for his. More sharply rebuke or correct them that wrong and dishonour God, than those that wrong and dishonour yourselves. Remember Eli's sad example: make not a small matter of any of the sins, especially the great sins, of your children or servants. It is an odious thing to slight God's cause, and put up all with 'It is not well done,' when you are fiercely passionate for the loss of some small commodity of your own. God's honour must be greatest in your family: and his service must have the pre-eminence of yours; and sin against him, must be the most intolerable offence.

Direct. IV. 'Let spiritual love to your family be predominant, and let your care be greatest for the saving of their souls, and your compassion greatest in their spiritual miseries.' Be first careful to provide them a portion in heaven, and to save them from whatsoever would deprive them of it; and never prefer the transitory pelf of earth, before their everlasting riches. Never be so cumbered about many things,

as to forget that one thing is necessary; but choose for yourselves and them the better part ^k.

Direct. v. 'Let your family be neither kept in idleness and flesh-pleasing, nor yet overwhelmed with such a multitude of business, as shall take up and distract their minds, diverting and unfitting them for holy things.' Where God layeth on you a necessity of excessive labours, it must patiently and cheerfully be undergone: but when you draw them unnecessarily on yourselves for the love of riches, you do but become the tempters and tormentors of yourselves and others; forgetting the terrible examples of them, that have this way fallen off from Christ, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows ^l.

Direct. vi. 'As much as is possible, settle a constant order of all your businesses that every ordinary work may know its time, and confusion may not shut out godliness.' It is a great assistance in every calling to do all in a set and constant order: it maketh it easy: it removeth impediments; and promoteth success: distraction in your business causeth a distraction in your minds in holy duty. Some callings I know can hardly be cast into any order or method; but others may, if prudence and diligence be used. God's service will thus be better done, and your work will be better done, to the ease of your servants, and quiet of your own minds. Foresight and skilfulness would save you abundance of labour and vexation.

CHAPTER V.

Special Motives to persuade Men to the holy Governing of their Families.

If it were but well understood what benefits come by the holy governing of families, and what mischiefs come by its neglect, there would few that walk the streets among us, appear so odious as those careless, ungodly governors that know not nor mind a duty of such exceeding weight. While we lie all as overwhelmed with the calamitous fruits

^k Luke x. 42.

^l 1 Tim. vi. 10.